

A couple is seen from behind, sitting on a bed with white linens. They are looking out a large window at a cityscape at night, with lights from buildings and streets visible. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the city lights outside.

**YOURS TO LOVE,**  
*HIS TO*  
*KEEP*

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**Yours to Love, His to Keep (Completed) By  
Nolwazi Mbuli**

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## CHAPTER ONE

I've always heard that money doesn't change people it just reveals who they truly are. I've always believed that I just never thought I would experience it all first hand.

Last night at the meeting to say I was shocked would be an understatement. What hurt though was the fact that my family had participated in this stupidity the same people I had hoped to lean on in my time of need were nowhere to be found but I guess I should have expected that. My mum and I were never close she had me when she was a teenager so I was raised by my grandparents. She graduated from varsity when I was nine years old and a year later she married my dad they had three more kids my brothers Siyamthanda and Bongane and my little sister Lenhle. My siblings and I aren't close either. My dad was a principal at the high school I ended up in even that did nothing to bring us closer.

Its moments like these when I miss my grandparents I know for a fact none of this would be happening my grandfather took no nonsense from anybody. I missed them I missed my grandmother's hugs and my grandfather's words of wisdom. The day they died in that car crash will always be etched in my memory.

My parents care about their reputation and anything that drags their name through the mud is the worst thing I can do although I did do a lot of that when I was a teenager even though I outgrew that phase in my life they still see me as that rebellious attention seeking teenager and in their mind they probably think I will do something to embarrass them and if marrying Mcebo will keep me on a short leash they wont hesitate to accept this craziness.

Luckily for me Mcebo was not afraid to tell his family where to get off while I kept my cool like the 'good makoti' that I am supposed to be.

He got up and left with smoke coming out of his ears he was livid to say the least. I also decided to leave them there and go to sleep. I took my son and locked us into my bedroom and left them to do whatever. I got up in the middle of the night to get a glass of milk since falling asleep was a struggle. When I got downstairs I found almost half of my cabinet packed away in boxes. All my glasses cutlery and plates were packed away. I wonder who is taking them and where they are going? I poured my milk in a cup and warmed it up before going back upstairs. I guess the milk is really what I needed cause after that I fell asleep.

I woke up to so much commotion and noise coming from downstairs. I looked at my baby boy Asimbonge laying next to me and he reminded me so much of my husband he was just a walking replica of him. Sometimes I would tease him and say next time I got pregnant I would pray for a daughter who would look just like me little did I know that I will never get that opportunity ever again. He would laugh and say my main job was to carry the babies how they looked was up to him and his Gene's are very strong. He was right and now I am glad they are.

I met Melusi when i was doing my first year at UP and he was doing his third year. He was

studying law even though he hated it. According to him he only did it to make his father happy his passion however was business he had a few side hustles he ran whether it was writing assignments for students at a fee of course or even washing students sneakers and sometimes doing their laundry.

Being the first person in his family to step foot in University meant he carried more than his own dreams on his shoulders he carried his parents dreams his siblings and everyone who believed in him so he had to make it by fire by force even if it meant studying towards a career he didnt love. Even though he was busy trying to make everyone happy he still found time to start his small business when he bought a second hand van that he used to transport anything and everything for people. By the time he graduated he was a fully fledged businessman.

His persistence and ambition is what drew me to him but it was his charm and kindness that cemented him in my heart I fell in love with him and he showed me every day how much he loved me not just in words but in deeds too. Our love was a once in a lifetime kind of love it was what fairytales were made off and now I have to accept the fact that our love story had ended even though we had so many pages to write it still ended.

I wiped the tears that were falling down my face when my phone rang. I looked at the caller ID and I saw it was Mwelase Logistics landline number I really hope everything is going right cause I dont have the energy to think about

business right now. I decided to pick it up anyway.

Me: "Hello!"

Caller: "Mrs Mazibuko its Lindi from Mwelase Logistics I am calling to let you know that the moving truck has left the depot it should be at your house in an hour." I dont remember asking for a moving truck.

Me: "I didnt ask for a truck what is it going to do at my house?"

Lindi: "I'm sorry ma'am we got a call early today from someone who said they were calling from your house and a moving truck was needed ASAP." And then I remembered the boxes I



saw. I guess that explains it. I thanked her and hung up. I swear if these people want war I will give them one.

I sat up and texted our family lawyer and told him what was happening he promised he'd be here soon I then called the security company and changed the access codes to the property. And I made sure to remind them that should they ever give the access codes to anyone else besides me I would sue them and bring that company to its knees. In less than 20 minutes the access codes were changed they sent me a text message with the new codes I memorised them and then deleted the text. And then I waited.

And like a moth to a flame they came. I heard banging on my bedroom door good thing I locked the door otherwise they would be in here doing as they please. I texted my best friend Tshepiso and told her what was happening. She immediately told me she was on her way. My son was woken up by the banging on the door and he was scared. I picked him up and put him on my hip as I got up and went to open the door. And just as I opened Muzi my husband's older brother came crashing into the bedroom and fell on the ground and groaned. I looked outside the door and my mother in law MaZwane was standing there with arms crossed on her chest. Muzi got up and I pushed him out the door and locked it. Him and his mother tried to fight me but I guess those days I spent lifting weights at the gym had paid off and it also helped that the drunkard that was Muzi was already drunk so early in the morning and he is supposed to run a company like Mwelase Logistics. Mxm my husband would turn in his grave.

MaZwane: "MaDlamini vula lomnyango (open this door.)"

Me: "Ufunani ekamereni lami mama (what do you want in my room?)" She chuckled.

MaZwane: "That is my son's room and this is his house I have every right to go wherever I please now open the door." I left her there and went downstairs.

I was brought to a standstill when I found my house empty couches were gone dining table and chairs everything was gone. I looked out the window and all my furniture was neatly

packed in the driveway. I guess that's where the truck comes in.

MaZwane walked downstairs still screaming for me to open my bedroom but I paid little attention to her. I opened the fridge to make food for my son but it too was gone there was no food in the cupboards either. I texted Tshepiso and asked her to bring food for Asi. I went out to the pool area and luckily for me the pool loungers were still there. I sat down and waited.

After a few minutes I got a text from Tshepiso saying she was outside the gate I took out my ipad and opened the gate and made sure it was closed afterwards. I texted her and told her I

was by the pool and she showed up with a wimpy takeaway.

Tshepiso: "Friend what the fuck is happening?" She said sitting down and giving me the takeaway. I chuckled. I put Asi down and gave him the food luckily his independent two years old self loves to do things on his own.

Me: "Friend if I knew the answer to that I would give it to you. Last night I was told I had to marry Mcebo or else I forfeit everything that my husband left me and when I refused I woke up to this mess." She clapped her hands once.

Tshepiso: "When is your lawyer getting here? I'm assuming you called him. And why are you so calm about this. This is a mess." She exclaimed. I chuckled if only she knew in the

outside I am calm as a cucumber but on the inside I am a volcano waiting to erupt and if I let them keep poking me I might just end up erupting.

Me: "I did he is on his way." We saw bab'Mazibuko walking towards us huffing and puffing followed by his wife his drunk son stumbling behind him and his two daughters Cebile and Sbuysile.

Tshepiso: "Friend tell your lawyer to bring the cops with him." I nodded took my phone and texted my lawyer. He replied immediately saying he was on it. The Mwelase's made it to us.

Bab'Mazibuko: "MaDlamini why are you refusing to open the bedroom door?"

Tshepiso: "Because it's her bedroom and there's nothing there that belongs to you."

MaZwane: "Heeeh ngyalingwa yin (I'm being tested) who is talking to you wena?" She asked trying to get close to Tshepi but her husband held her back.

Bab'Mazibuko: "Wentombazane I won't ask you again go and open that door."

Me: "With all due respect Baba this is my house you don't get to tell me what I have to do the same way I would never tell you what to do in your house."

Bab'Mazibuko: "Listen to me and listen to me very well this is my son's house therefore kukwaMazibuko la."

Tshepi: "And your son married her you were there remember so this is her house and she makes the rules here." She said standing up to face bab'Mazibuko.

My phone beeped and it was a text message from my lawyer saying he is at the gate. I opened for him and soon he was walking towards us followed by four police officers.

Advocate: "MaDlamini why is your furniture sprawled out in the driveway?" He asked standing in front of us.



Cebile: "We are moving and taking the furniture home."

Advocate: "Home being where exactly?"

Bab'Mazibuko: "Home being wherever I say it is. And who the fuck are you and why are the police here?"

Advocate: "A man who gets straight to the point I like before I introduce my self I would like for you to put the couches back in the house we cant talk standing up." The family laughed.

MaZwane: "The furniture is not going back into the house. We are waiting for a truck to come pick it up."

Advocate: "Oh you mean the truck that's parked outside the gate?"

Sbuysile: "I'll go open for them." She ran off.

Advocate: "With all due respect Baba we really need to sit down and talk. And we cannot do it out here so please." He lead us into the house while the family reluctantly followed behind us. We got into the house and stood where the dining table should be.

Sbuysile was busy fiddling with the access panel on the wall.

Sbuysile: "I cant open the gate it keeps saying wrong access code."

Tshepi: "Keep pressing that and the security company will be here to arrest you." She came back to us.

Sbuysile: "Baba I think the access code has been changed." She said looking straight at me.

Bab'Mazibuko: "MaDlamini ukhiya iminyango manje sokhiya namagede. (You lock the door and now you lock gates too.)"

Advocate: "Officers please help me bring in the dining table and its chairs."

Officer: "Motsamai we are not your errand boys." He laughed as the officers went out and came back with the table and chairs. We sat down.

Motsamai: "Thank you officers." One of the officers gave him a fuck you sign. They must be his friends.

MaZwane: "Khuluma wendoda iskhathi syahamba. (Hurry up and speak.)"

Motsamai: "Right." He took out a file from his briefcase.

Cebile: "I have a question isnt this supposed to be a family meeting. Where's the rest of the family?"

Bab'Mazibuko: "Ucinisile ntombi (you are right.) Since you can now call family meetings where is the rest of the family shouldn't they be here to see the disrespect you are showing to us?" I swear this family has drama for days. I kept quiet and focused on Motsamai.

Motsamai: "Actually there is no need for them to be here since this does not involve them. In my hands I have the last will in testament of Mr Melusi Ntsikayezwe Mazibuko."

Bab'Mazibuko: "Yima ke nsizwa (hold on) in this family we dont do that shit we dont read wills and what not the family decides what happens to what and who gets what."

Tshepi: "I guess your son never got the memo considering the fact that we are here now." I swear if you ever need a friend to go to war with I can lend you Tshepi my girl has been by my side since varsity I just hope I have been half the friend to her that she has been to me.

Motsamai: "Can we please get back on topic." Everyone kept quiet. "Right now as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted the last will in testament of Mr Melusi Ntsikayezwe Mazibuko in his words." He went on to read the

will and like I had known my husband left everything he owned to our son and I. Of course he left his parents money to take care of them and he made sure his sister's would complete their education too but basically I got everything.

I thank God for Tshepiso thinking about the cops because if they hadn't been there Lord knows what would have happened. The family swore they would fight the will with everything they have. I expected nothing less. They were escorted all the way out of the gate and the cops made sure they took nothing that didnt belong to them.

As crazy as this may sound I had hoped that this would end differently I just never saw myself being the girl who loses her husband and then loses her in laws too. They were family to me even though at this point it seems like it was all pretend them caring about me and claiming to love me it was all a lie. And now I have no choice but to start again alone since my family seems to have chosen a side too and that side not being mine.

This road will be hard and lonely but I have no choice but to walk it since fate has chosen me to take the first step.

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CHAPTER TWO

Every cloud has a silver lining at least that's what my grandmother used to tell me. However I am failing to see the silver lining in my situation it feels like I am in a deep dark hole and a part of me doesn't even want to come out of it at least when i am there it doesn't feel like I am letting go of my husband getting up and facing the world seeing people happy and moving on with their lives is almost hard to bear why aren't they mourning him why have they moved on just like that as if he never existed or meant anything to them.



The responsible part of me however knows i have a responsibility to my son hard as it might be for me he is too young to understand or know what's happening all he wants is his mummy.

I get up and leave him still fast asleep my body hurts after the family left last night Tshepi and I had to bring all the furniture back in the house by the time we were done it felt like we had climbed Mount Everest wearing heels and carrying rocks on our backs. She couldn't even go back to her place so she spent the night.

I decided to make breakfast for everyone after I took a shower. Going down the steps was a struggle but I made it down. I opened the fridge and I don't even know why I bothered since the family took most of the food ate some of it and left nothing for us. Now I need to go grocery shopping. It's so early and I can't leave Asi. Oh well Tshepi is here even though she's still sleeping maybe she can watch Asi.

I struggle back up the stairs and pick up Asi from my bed and walk to the guest bedroom with him in my arms. I tap Tshepi a bit and she doesn't even budge I shake her a bit and she moans.

Me: "Tshepi."

Tshepi: "Mhmm." She says without opening her eyes.

Me: "Listen I need to rush out to buy groceries can you keep an eye on Asi he's still sleeping so I'll leave him next to you."

Tshepi: "Sure." She opens the blankets and I lay Asi down and then she covers him with the blanket. I give him a kiss and walk out.

I fight my way down the stairs and head to the downstairs bedroom turned office I open the safe and take the car keys and drive to the mall. It's almost 9 am and the mall is already buzzing with people really when do people sleep? I drive into Gateway mall and head straight to

Woolies. I buy what I'll need and head to the checkpoint I pay and drive back home.

When I get home I find a car parked outside my gate. I hope my in-laws haven't sent someone to kill me and no I am not exaggerating I've heard stories. I drive slower so I can see the person driving luckily for me they get out of the car before I get to them and my heart goes into overdrive since all I can see is his back and he has a huge coat on. He turns around and I breathe a sigh of relief seeing Mcebo. I drive close to him and open the window.

Mcebo: "Hey I tried going in but the access codes were changed." I smile I know he knew

that I'm sure his father was more than happy to let him know.

Me: "Sorry about that I'll let you in." I press the codes and drive in and he follows behind me and soon as he is in I close the gates. I park by the door and get out and wait for him. He parks and gets out and walks over to me he gives me a hug and I smile.

Mcebo: "I thought my dad was making things up when he said you threw them out and changed the codes." As much as Mcebo has always been good and kind to me his family's treatment of me the past few days has led me to distrust anyone with the last name Mazibuko. A bit of an exaggeration but as they say 'once beaten twice shy.' Or is it 'once shy twice beaten?' Either way you know what I mean.

Me: "And I am pretty sure they played the victim card right?" I ask opening the boot to unload the groceries. He helps me carry them in.

Mcebo: "Obviously but I know better so." He said shrugging his shoulders.

We walk into the house and find Tshepi fiddling with the TV and Asi sitting on the couch I'm pretty sure he woke up and wanted cartoons.

Me: "Friend what are you doing?" She turns around and smiles when she sees us. Mbuso takes the groceries to the kitchen while I go hug my baby.

Tshepi: "This little guy wanted to watch Paw Patrol and so I am trying to connect the DSTV. I laugh.

Me: "Do you even know what you are doing though?" I take out my phone and let him watch cartoons on YouTube.

Tshepi: "Nope I have no clue." She said with her hands on her hips.

Me: "Dont worry friend I'll get someone to come connect it."

Mcebo: "Wow aningboni vele (you dont see me.)" Tshepi and I turn to look at him with questioning eyes. "I am a grown ass man with a Civil Engineering degree and you dont trust me to fix the TV?" I look at Tshepi and we both burst out laughing.

Me: "Okay Mr Engineer the floor is yours Tshepi and I are going to make breakfast."

Mcebo: "Thank you." We leave him there and go into the kitchen.

Just as we finish up with breakfast we hear the sound of cartoons playing. We look at each other and smile. Tshepi keeps her eyes on me for a while longer.

Me: "What? Do I have something on my face?"  
I say trying to wipe off whatever it is that's there.

Tshepi: "Yeah a smile." I smile. "I know this isnt the easiest time for you but seeing you smile



makes me happy." She says and I can see her eyes turning glossy. I walk over to her side and give her a hug.

Me: "Taking each day as it comes friend. And having people in my corner really does help."

Tshepi: "And you know I'll be glued to your corner for a long long long time." We hug again.

Me: "Thank you friend." We wiped the tears and set the table.

We had breakfast and then cleaned up before Tshepi had to go back to her place. I wanted to spring clean the house but my body refused to cooperate so I just laid on the couch since Mcebo and Asi were running around outside. I

was just about to fall asleep when these two came running into the house.

Me: "No running in the house please." They just giggled and threw themselves on the other couch.

Mcebo: "Sorry mummy. Say sorry Asi." He says tickling him.

Asi: "Thory mama." I look at my little boy and smile not a proud happy smile but a sad smile. He will never get to know his dad he will never remember playing with him what if he forgets him or maybe he already has.

I shake my head and try to calm myself down. I take the remote and put on cartoons and we all watch soon enough Asi is fast asleep. Mcebo takes him to his room. He comes back and sits down next to me.

Mcebo: "So what happens now? What's the way forward?" Honestly I don't know the answer to that but like everyone at Mwelase Logistics they are probably looking at me to lead the way and continue where Melusi left off but I think his shoes are too big to fill.

Me: "I dont know. But like Tshepi said one step at a time."

Mcebo: "I'm glad. And I'm sorry my family had to be a stumbling block."

Me: "Its okay just one more thing to get over right?"

Mcebo: "Right and I am pretty sure wherever Melusi is he is proud of you I know I am." I chuckle.

Me: "I hope so." I really hope he is I really hope I can atleast try to fill up even half of his shoes. "So when are you going back to see the world?" He laughs.

Mcebo: "My flight is booked and ready to go I just need to go see my family for a couple of days then it's back to the world."

Me: "That's great

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just dont forget about us." He smiles.

Mcebo: "Never." He smiles and stands up. "I have to get going." I get up and walk him out to his car. He gives me a hug before getting into his car and driving off.

I walk back into the house and the silence welcomes me for the first time since the day those two police officers stood at my doorstep and told me my husband had died I feel empty alone like the life has been sucked out of me. How do I carry on when my husband is lying in

a grave alone and cold. I need strength to carry on but where do I get it? I dont think God listens to me anymore I mean I've asked him many times to wake me up from this nightmare but I am still stuck in it I am still without my husband and my son is still without his father so I guess He really does have his favourites.



MCEBO

Blood is thicker than water. Atleast that's what everyone says apparently family will always be there when everyone else has left. I guess now I know my family fails to subscribe to that

though I mean Sethu is family shouldn't we all be surrounding her and supporting her at this time she just lost her husband her son just lost his father at this very moment she needs her family more than ever but both sides of her family both her parents and in-laws seem to have turned their backs on her.

I like Sethu heck I might even say I love her but she is my brother's wife and she will always be a sister to me. I've always loved how she loved Melusi she respected him and showed him everyday. My father's suggestion was not only absurd it was beyond stupid.



I drove home to KwaMashu to basically say goodbye like I always do before a trip. I don't know if I'll be coming back anytime soon but I don't think I want to the only reason I would come back though would be to see Asi maybe some day when my heart has fully forgiven my father I will come back home. But right now even going home is just me going through the motions.

I drive into the yard at home and find my father sitting outside in his little bench watching people pass by. I miss the man my father used to be a hardworking man whose main mission in life was to ensure his children got to be better than he was we all wanted to make him proud and we did. Somewhere along the line however my dad became someone we didn't know he became greedy and demanding when people

talk about black tax we lived it we still do not that we have a problem with it we love taking care of our parents. But his endless demands make it hard.

Melusi made sure our family was taken care off always so I dont understand where this greed suddenly came from wanting to strip a woman of all her husband's belongings is something I would have never expected from him. I park my car and take a deep breath before walking up to him.

Me: "Sawubona baba."

Baba: "I hope you being here means you have changed your mind." I sigh. I should have expected that.

Me: "No I haven't I just came to spend time with my family before going back to New York."

Baba: "So you would rather leave than take care of your brother's legacy?"

Me: "He has a wife to do that for him Baba."

Baba: "And who is going to teach that boy how to be a man? Her? I dont think so. You know what's going to happen she will meet another man get married move him into my sons house and he will raise his son a Mazibuko being raised by some other rugrat from the streets

and then everything he has worked hard for will go up in flames. Is that what you want."

Me: "You are exaggerating Baba. Let me go see mum."

I leave him there still shouting and head inside I find mum in the kitchen baking but I know she'll also want to know if I've changed my mind so I decide to go straight to our old room I get in and throw myself on the single bed I used to share this room with Melusi Lord knows how many conversations we had in this room about girls soccer and our dreams if theres one person who taught me to never quit dreaming it was him. I miss my brother.

My name is Mcebo Basize Mazibuko. I am 32 years old an entrepreneur and businessman.

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## CHAPTER THREE

No matter how tough things get we still need to get up and keep going. Staying stagnant is not

an option especially if you have a child to feed a company to run and a life to live.

I woke up this morning took a bath put on some makeup wore a power suit put on some heels sprayed on perfume and put on a 30 inch curly wave wig. I guess bathing and putting on a bomb outfit really can uplift your mood.

I dropped Asi off at daycare and drove to Mwelase Logistics. I parked in Melusi's parking spot and sat there for a while. How does one move from being a housewife to running one of the biggest Logistics companies in South Africa? I mean I did help out Melusi from time to time but how do I even begin to fill the shoes that he left behind.

I heard someone knocking on the window. I looked up and it was Tshepi I unlocked the door and she got in.

Tshepi: "Hey. Are you ready for the big time?"

Me: "Nope! I dont know if I can do this."

Tshepi: "Of course you can do this. You do remember you studied business management right? So I think you are very qualified for this job." I chuckled.

Me: "Thank you for believing in me."

Tshepi: "Anytime baby. Now you just need to start believing in yourself." I took a deep breath.

Me: "I guess."

Tshepi: "Good now let's go so you can kick some ass." She said as she got out of the car. I laughed and followed suit. I took out my bag from the backseat fixed myself and walked to the entrance.

I took a deep breath as the doors opened and we walked in. We walked past the receptionist greeted her and proceeded to the lift. My heart was shaking I felt like I was starting my first day at a new job. Tshepi hooked her arm with mine as the lift opened and we walked into the open plan office.



People turned around to look at me soon as I walked in. I didnt know how to react so I just smiled to those who smiled at me and kept it moving. I found Melusi's PA Amanda at her desk. We greeted her and went into the office.

I took one last breath before opening the door and walking in. I hadn't been here since the day he died. I had come to bring him lunch we had lunch while he sat on his chair and I was on his lap. And like all the other times I had brought him lunch before we ended up making love on top of his desk. Little did I know that that would be the last time I saw him talked to him laughed with him or even made love to him. I took

comfort in knowing that our last time was a happy moment.

I wanted to cry but Tshepi holding my hand was the strength I needed. I let go of her and walked to his desk. I sat on his chair and swung around to look at the sea this was why he wanted a building overlooking the sea he said the sea was calming so when the day got tough he would look out the window and just admire the sea and the waves. It took us almost a year to find this building. And when we did he knew he'd make this spot his office just for the sea. He was right though the sea had a calming effect.

Tshepi: "So can I leave you now or you still need me?" She asked taking me out of my head. I turned around to look at her and smiled.

Me: "Of course I still need you but you can go you have a job too. And thank you for walking me in." She laughed.

Tshepi: "I feel like a parent taking their child to grade R." I laughed too.

Me: "Right! And I feel like I am starting a new job."

Tshepi: "Technically speaking you are but I know you will do great. I have to go to work now. I might come pick you up for lunch."

Me: "Okay cant wait." We hugged and she left. Soon as she left I looked around the office and

it honestly looked the same. Except our picture wasn't on the desk. Meslusi always kept a picture of us on his desk me him and Asi. I opened the drawer and it wasn't there. I opened the rest of the drawers and nothing was there.

I looked around and there was a box on the corner that I hadn't noticed. I picked it up and placed it on the desk. It had all of Melusi's belongings. Why was it packed away I know I never told Amanda to do anything to the office. I decided to dial her extension.

Amanda: "Hello!"

Me: "Amanda please come to the office." I hung up and soon the door opened and she walked in.

Amanda: "Yes ma'am."

Me: "Why is my husband's belongings stuffed away in a box? I don't remember asking anyone to clean his office."

Amanda: "Oh sorry about that a couple of days ago a guy came by he said his name is Msandi...Msebenzi....."

Me: "Msizi?"

Amanda: "Yes him. He told me to clean up the office because he would be taking over he was with another older guy he kept calling Baba so I assumed it was his father he said he was Mr

Mazibuko's brother and he would be running the company from now on. So I had to clean the office he said he'd be back today to start work that's why we were surprised when you walked in." I took a deep breath to try and calm myself down I cannot believe that the Mazibuko's would do this I guess they were right they dont care about the will.

Me: "Amanda do me a favour please let security know that anyone without a valid appointment is not permitted into the building. If Msizi and his father show up make sure they do not make it past reception and if they insist on coming up call the police." She smiles.

Amanda: "Will do ma'am." She walks away and then turns around. "Ma'am!"

Me: "Mhmm."

Amanda: "You'll do great. Dont worry yourself too much. If Mr Mazibuko put you in charge it means he has faith in you. I know you'll make him proud." I smile as she walks out.

I dont know why so many people have faith in me but I hope to God I can make them proud. I put the pictures and all Melusi's personal belongings back to their place.

I power on the laptop and start working.

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I've been here for almost four hours and I haven't heard anything about Msizi or his father showing up here. Maybe they finally decided not to come. Great for me cause then I dont have to deal with their greedy asses.

The door burst open and Msizi walked in together with his father and Amanda running



behind them. I guess I spoke too soon. I looked up and I could see them shooting daggers with their eyes. I took a deep breath and sat back on the chair.

Amanda: "I'm sorry I tried to stop them but security is on their way." I smiled at her and turned my eyes back to these men.

Me: "BoMwelase sanibonani. (Hello)"

Bab'Mazibuko: "What do you think you are doing MaDlamini? Who do you think you are trying to stop me from coming into my sons company?"

Me: "With all due respect Baba

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this is my husband's company and he left me in charge."

Msizi: "What do you know about running a company wena? You've never worked a day in your life all you did was spend my brothers money."

Me: "That's rich coming from you you practically lived off of my husband your entire adult life and you think you'll run his business but you show up four hours late to work? Please don't bore me. And as for me spending MY husband's

money well like you said it's my husband's money and I can spend it whichever way I want." I said standing up to look at them.

Bab'Mazibuko: "You gold digging tramp."

Me: "You can call me all the nasty words you want insult me till the sun comes up but I am not leaving this chair your precious son will never ever sit in my husband's chair he will not run my husbands company not while I am still alive."

Bab'Mazibuko: "That can be arranged." He turned and walked out just as the security were walking in. So they also turned and escorted them out.

I sat back on the chair with my entire body shaking. My father in law's last statement send shivers down my spine. What did he mean when he said "it can be arranged?" Who am I kidding I know exactly what he meant.

Concentrating on work the rest of the day was not easy I kept thinking about what bab'Mazibuko said. Could he really kill me? They do say money is the root of all evil so maybe just maybe I need to be careful how I deal with the Mazibuko's from now on.

I called our lawyer and told him what happened just before I packed up my things. He promised he'd look into it and even get me a restraining order if he has to. Although that did not settle the fear I had it calmed me down a bit.

I drove to the day care to pick up Asi we drove home I gave him a bath before settling him in front of the TV while I made supper. We sat in front of the TV soon as I was done and we had his favourite spaghetti with mince. Luckily for me when we are eating spaghetti he finishes all his food. When he was done I put him to bed.

I went back downstairs to clean up in the kitchen and the lounge. I went back upstairs and got into my bedroom. I locked the door I dont know why since I was alone. I switched off the lights and stood by the balcony door since I couldn't sleep. It was cold so I just stood there with the door closed.

Since my bedroom looked out at the road I just stood there hoping the darkness would make me fall asleep instead my eyes landed on a car that was parked a few houses down from mine. Suspicious? No! But after you tell someone that something will happen over your dead body and

then they tell you it can be arranged your mind kind of goes into overdrive.

I kept looking at the car waiting for it to leave but it didnt and I could see atleast two people inside since the interior light had been turned on for a minute or so. The front passenger door opened and someone got out they stretched and then rested their hands on the top of the car looking straight at my house. Call me crazy but something didnt seem right and one thing my grandmother taught me is to always trust my gut.

I took my phone and called Mcebo but his phone went straight to voicemail I tried again and got the same response before I

remembered he was out of the country. I called Tshepi and she answered and I know I woke her up from her sleep.

Tshepi: "Friend!"

Me: "Theres a car outside with two guys and they are watching my house."

Tshepi: "WHAT?" I guess that woke her up. I told her all that happened today and Bab'Mazibuko's threat. "Your car is in the garage right?" I nodded and then remembered she cant see me.

Me: "Yes."



Tshepi: "Good pack your things clothes important documents car keys and all that take them to the garage and put them in your boot. Do not turn the lights on. Just put all you will need in the car in the morning you'll drive out like you are going to work but after work you are going to my flat in Hillcrest."

Me: "And what if they kill me tonight?"

Tshepi: "Call the police and tell them someone is trying to rob your neighbors house tell them theres a getaway car parked on the road."

Me: "You know the police take forever to get anywhere."

Tshepi: "Sweetie you are in Umhlanga where the rich people live. The police will be there in less than fifteen minutes ten if you are lucky call your security too."

Me: "Okay but if God forbid something happens...."

Tshepi: "Nothing will happen stop talking like that. Now do what I said." She hung up. I swear this girl is not taking this seriously these people could kill us tonight and I will die with my belongings in the boot of my car.

I looked out and the guy was still there I guess the cold got to him cause he went back into the car. I called the police and like Tshepi said they were there in less than ten minutes the car drove off soon as the sirens sounded. Another

police car went after them while the other stayed behind to talk to the neighbors I guess. I took a deep breath and did what Tshepi said. I packed all our clothes I took the copy of the will from the safe our IDs Melusi's death certificate business documents and keys to the rest of the cars. I took the title deeds to this house and the others and packed it all.

Once everything was in the car I went back to the window and looked out. The cops were still there but the other car was gone. I went to bed and said a prayer. I really hope I make it through this night.

I wonder if this will be my life from now on will I live in fear for the rest of my life will I have to

look over my shoulder every single day of my life? I swear I curse the day Melusi left me in this mess. Why did he have to die? I pulled the blankets up with tears running down my face and my baby close to my chest. I dont know how but I vowed to keep fighting if I have to die then atleast I'll know I died fighting.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

When all else fails hide. Or try and outsmart the people who think you are foolish.

It's been a week since I moved to Tshepi's flat the fact that my in laws dont even know about it works to my advantage. I've had to hire an uber that takes me from the underground parking at the flat to the underground parking at Mwelase Logistics like I am some stupid fugitive running from the cops. And honestly I am sick and tired of it. I cant be leaving my life in fear. Asi hasn't even gone to day care and I can tell my poor baby misses his friends but luckily there is a lady in the building Mrs Jan who was more than happy to help look after him. The Mazibuko's have showed up here a few times but security

has refused to let them through. They were even served with a restraining order but that didnt stop them from trying to come here.

Its Friday and I cant wait to get home. I need to plan some activities for Asi and I since we can't really be wandering around outside cause you never know who is watching. My desk phone rings and I pick it up.

Me: "Yes Amanda."

Amanda: "Ma'am you have a Mcebo Mazibuko on the line."

Me: "Put him through."

Amanda: "Yes ma'am." She presses her buttons and puts him through.

Mcebo: "Boss lady!" I smile. It's kinda nice to hear from a friendly person even if he is a Mazibuko cant persecute him for that so...

Me: "Mr Mazibuko. What can I do for you?"

Mcebo: "So formal Mrs Mazibuko but I like it. I take it work is going well?" I sigh.

Me: "So far so good. The team has really been helpful in helping me catch up. They are amazing."

Mcebo: "Good. A Great team is the backbone of any company. Have you spoken to your in-laws yet?"

Me: "In a way yes." I tell him all that happened with his dad and brother.

Mcebo: "So you've moved out of your house?"

Me: "I had to." I hear him curse on the other end of the line.

Mcebo: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Dont be it's not your fault."

Mcebo: "Look I have to go I'll call you later." He hangs up before I can even say goodbye. Oh well.



I pack up my things and head down to the underground parking luckily my uber is here. I've been using the same uber since this whole thing started and the driver was kind enough to show up every morning and every evening to drive me to work and back. And the fact that I am paying him triple his usual amount also helped motivate him.

I take out my phone soon as I get into the car. I find almost ten missed calls two from my dad and eight from a number I dont know. I decided to call my dad back before trying to call this number. He picked up after the first ring clearly he was expecting my call.

Me: "Baba!"

Baba: "Ukephi Siphosethu? (Where are you)" I took a deep breath his tone alone let me know I was in for a lecture.

Me: "I'm on my way home from work. Banjani ekhaya? (how is everyone)"

Baba: "Stop asking me that hurry up I'm outside your house." He said before hanging up.

I asked the driver to take me to my house. I then called Mrs Jan and told her I will be a bit late. I closed my eyes and mentally prepared myself for what I am about to face.

We got to the house and I punched in the access code and let my dad drive in before us. We drove in and I got out of the car. I took a two hundred rand note from my purse and gave the driver before watching him drive out and the gates closing again.

I turned to find my dad standing by his car and looking at me like I am the biggest mess he's ever seen. I took a deep breath and walked towards him. I swear with every step I took towards him I could feel the air turn ice cold.

I put the key in the door and opened. I stood aside and let him walk in before me. I followed behind him and put my bags on the table by the door. I followed him to the lounge. He turned

around in the middle of the lounge to look at me. I wish dad and I were close I wish I could be the daughter he wants to protect from the world the daughter he would lay his life on the line for but I'm not never have been and never will be. The sooner I get used to that the better.

Me: "Sibalkhulu I didnt know you were coming. Ngingakwenzela itiyе? (can I offer you tea?)"

Baba: "Awume ngetiya (miss me with the tea) where is your son?"

Me: "He's with a friend." He nods his head and looks around.

Baba: "Is that where you have been staying for the past week. You left your home to stay at Lord knows where? Why?"

Me: "How did you know that?"

Baba: "Does it matter? Where have you been?"

Me: "I needed to be with people who actually care about me."

Baba: "And you dont have family for that?"

Me: "Which family baba? You? Mum? Who? You haven't bothered to call me or even come to see me since Melusi died. It was okay when he was alive because he was the perfect son in law and you had no problem parading him around to your friends and the chief how that he is gone you dont give a shit about me."

Baba: "What you are doing is embarrassing our family. You are a Mazibuko the day you said I do you also agreed to the traditions and customs. And what they asked you to do is normal for most families. Stop acting like they asked you to kill someone." I felt tears make their way down my cheeks. He doesn't hear me he's right in front of me listening but he doesn't hear anything I say.

Me: "With all due respect Baba I will not be tossed around like a piece of meat."

Baba: "They paid lobola for you that means you do anything and everything they require from you."

Me: "Its been six weeks six weeks since I buried my husband Baba and none of you have made any effort to find out how I am doing you

dont care about your grandson you dont care about anything that involves me as long as I don't drag your name through the mud." I go to the door and open it wide for him to get out.

Baba: "Are you throwing me out?"

Me: "I know you've never been much of a father to me and that's fine cause Mkhulu filled that role really well but I had hoped that we could atleast try to be a family but clearly that is just a farfetched dream. So please leave you'll come back the day you decide you want to be a father to me." I say wiping away my tears.

Baba: "You have no shame."

Me: "Maybe but you can tell your friend Bab'Mazibuko that it will be a cold day in hell before him or his greedy son get their paws on my husband's money. Ngcela ungsiye

Sibalkhulu (please leave.)" I hear him breath in and shake his head before walking out.

I closed the door and crumbled down on the floor. I know they say it's always dark before dawn but I am ready for dawn. I am ready for the light now. I am ready for the sun to shine on me now.





MCEBO

The thing about family you cant choose them  
God decides to give them to you whether you  
want them or not. And right now I wish God had  
let me choose my own family

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God decides to give them to you whether you want them or not. And right now I wish God had let me choose my own family as much as I love them I dont think i would have chosen them at this moment in time.

Thank God I was in Cape Town when I called Sethu otherwise I wouldn't have known what was going on or even be here right now. I landed at King Shaka Airport about an hour ago and now I am driving home to KwaMashu. Being a business consultant means I move around the world at the snap of a finger I know business is a far cry from the Civil Engineering degree I hold but they say when you are good at something pursue it right?

I got home and found the lights still on I parked the car outside the gate and walked in. I knocked and my little sister Cebesile opened the door I wonder why she's still up when she has school tomorrow. Soon as she saw me she screamed jumped up and down and threw herself at me. I hugged her and went in. I found my family sitting even my brother Msizi was here. Perfect. I hugged my mum my other sister and then my dad before sitting next to Msizi.

Dad: "Ndodana (son) washlasela ebusuku kangaka kwenzenjani (what are you doing here so late?)" I took a deep breath and looked at my dad straight in the face. One thing I've always been able to do is to read people I know when I am being lied to and I know when I'm being played that's an ability that has gotten me this far in business.

Me: "I called Sethu earlier just to check on her and Asi and she tells me that there's been a car watching her house. So please explain that to me." His face alone just told me the truth and he is being fidgety playing with his hands and still looking straight in my eyes.

Ma: "Ufuna ukthini Mcebo? (What are you trying to say?)"

Me: "I'm just asking a question ma. And I need answers."

Msizi: "It sounds more like an accusation to me. Be specific."

Me: "Right. You two went to Mwelase Logistics wanting this idiot over here to take over." I say pointing at Msizi.

Msizi: "Mcebo yin ngathi uyakhohlwa ukuthi ngimdala kunawe. (You seem to forget I am older than you.)"

Me: "But your actions dont seem like that of an older brother. How do you even do this."

Dad: "I am trying to protect your brother's legacy something you should be doing by marrying her."

Me: "He had a wife for Gods sake. And theres a will how do you not respect that Baba." I ignored the marrying part for a reason I am in no mood to deal with that drama.

Dad: "iwill yoknuka (will my foot.) We do not do that in this house. There was no will when she married into this family so she can take that will and shove it."

Msizi: "Yebo baba and our lawyer says we can fight the will." Wow. My family never ceases to amaze honestly. I got up and stood in the middle of the room.

Me: "I can see you are going out of your minds so I will stop sending you money. If you pursue this thing you can forget about getting shit from me."

Ma: "Hhaybo Mcebo."

Me: "Yebo ma if you want to be greedy and evil then you can forget about my money." I honestly hope and pray this will atleast make them think twice.

Sbuysile: "Kodwa bhuti why are we being punished?"

Me: "Weren't you helping Ma pack up Sethu's furniture?" She looks away. "Exactly."



Msizi: "Inkinga yakho ucabanga ukuthi ngoba unemali kukhala esakho iscathulo laykhaya. (You think because you have money you call the shots.) I will sell my cows and we will be just fine."

Me: "Good. Make sure you sell enough cows to also cover the girls fees. Goodbye!" I walk out as they call out my name.

My family is stubborn that much I know but I didnt think they would be this stubborn. I texted Sethu and she told me she was at her house. I got into the car and drove to her place. I buzzed the intercom and she answered. Soon as she heard my voice she opened the gate and I drove in. I found her waiting for me by the door. I got out the car and gave her a hug she tried not to look at my face though which was weird. I lifted her head up and saw that she has been

crying. I led her back in the house and we sat on the couch.

Me: "So what happened this time?" She smiles.

Sethu: "Arent you supposed to be in New York or is it London?" I chuckle.

Me: "I was in Cape Town when I called so I figured you needed me."

Sethu: "Thank you but you didnt need to come."

Me: "Of course I did so why were you crying?"  
She takes a deep breath.

Sethu: "My dad was here earlier." She tries to fight back the tears but fails. "I dont know what else to do anymore. It feels like I am in some nightmare where I keep fighting monsters left right and centre just when I think I can relax something else comes up. I feel so alone." Her tears flow and I hold her close to me. "I hate him Mcebo I hate Melusi for leaving me in this mess I hate him why did he have to die?"

Me: "You dont mean that."

Sethu: "I do. He left me to fight all by myself. I hate him."

Me: "He didnt leave you by yourself Sethu he left you with Asi he left you with me. You're not alone. You'll never be alone not while I am still around."

I hugged her as she let more tears flow. A part of me believes that this is the first time she had really allowed herself to feel the pain. That and all that's been happening has probably taken its toll on her. It's one thing to cry when you hear someone has died but once that realization hits the pain becomes twice as hard. And maybe my dad was right maybe I should protect my brother's legacy. Even if it means protecting it from his family then I will just to ensure his son has a legacy to grow up and find.

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CHAPTER FIVE

I dont know how or when I fell asleep but I woke up in my bed luckily I still had on the clothes I was wearing last night. I got up and took a shower. It's very early in the morning and I need to go pick up my son from Mrs Jan. I got dressed luckily I didnt take all my clothes so i wouldn't get to work looking the same as yesterday.

I got downstairs and there was breakfast on the table Mcebo must have woken up really early to

do this. I dished up and sat on the highchair in the kitchen and started eating. He came down wearing the same suit he had on yesterday the joys of being a man you can wear the same thing four nights in a row and no one would blink.

Mcebo: "Good morning. How did you sleep?"

Me: "Hi I slept okay. When did I even fall asleep?" I asked as he poured himself coffee before sitting down.

Mcebo: "Honestly I dont know either. You cried yourself to sleep." I looked down at my food almost ashamed. I dont know why.

Me: "I'm sorry I shouldn't be dumping all my problems on you."

Mcebo: "We are family Sethu. Anyways you are going to work?"

Me: "Yeah but I have to go see Asi first and I think I'll take the afternoon off to spend some time with him."

Mcebo: "That's a good idea. Can I drop you off at?"

Me: "That would be nice thanks." We finished eating and left.

We got to the flat and he walked with me to go get Asi. I knocked on Mrs Jan's door and I could

literally hear Asi giggling. She opened the door and soon as he saw me he came running. I picked him up and hugged him. We got in greeted and sat down.

Me: "I'm sorry I didnt come get him last night. Something came up."

Mrs Jan: "Its okay honey. Besides I enjoy having company and this little guy keeps me on my toes. Can I make you something to eat?"

Me: "No thank you. I just wanted to check on him I'll pick him up this afternoon I hope you dont mind."

Mrs Jan: "Of course not baby."



We stayed for a while before I had to go back to work. Mcebo drove me to work. I asked Amanda to cancel my afternoon appointments. I got in and did the work I needed to do and somehow it seemed like the seconds were going at a snail's pace. I just wanted to be with my baby.

Just before noon I had finished all my work and I was ready to go home when Mcebo walked in.

Mcebo: "That chair suits you it's like it was made just for you." He said coming closer to

me. I got up and gave him a hug before perching myself on the desk.

Me: "I thought you'd left already."

Mcebo: "I had something to take care off first."  
He handed me an envelope. I opened it and lifted it up to see the bold letters on the top and I wasnt sure how to react to its contents.

Me: "A prenuptial agreement? Are you getting married?"

Mcebo: "Yes. To you." I laughed.

Me: "You are funny." I took the whole document out and sure enough there was my name on it. I looked up at Mcebo and waited for an explanation but none came. He just looked at me. "What's this supposed to be?"

Mcebo: "I know this is a bit sudden but the fact is my family wont back off and I cant always be here to protect you."

Me: "So you figure marriage is the option?"

Mcebo: "I know it's crazy but we will give the family what they want and they will get off your back. The prenup protects you and your assets. You keep all that Melusi left you the company the houses everything. It will be just a marriage on paper only."

Me: "And how are you going to explain to the family? Your father is more concerned about the money. How will you explain a prenup to him?" I got up from the desk and stood by the window looking out at the sea.

Mcebo: "They dont need to know. The prenup stays between us as far as the family is concerned we will be married." I turned back to look at him.

Me: "I dont know Mcebo."

Mcebo: "Think about it okay. I have to catch a flight I am flying to London for some business I should be back in a week think this through and in a week you will give me your answer."

Me: "Okay." I wasnt sure what else to say.

Mcebo: "Look I know this seems a bit sudden but take time to think about this read the prenup take it to your lawyer and then make a decision."

I'm really not sure about this. I mean sure Mcebo hasn't given me enough reason not to trust him but I still cant help being a little worried.

He decided to drive me to the flat before going to the airport. I picked up Asi from Mrs Jan and went back to our flat. I took a shower and gave my baby a bath. Once we were done we went to Gateway mall and had lunch at spur before driving to Ushaka Marine World.

Spending time with Asi and seeing him happy and having fun kind off took my mind of things for a bit. When we got home he was so tired he just went straight to sleep. Good for him but bad

for me cause now all I could think about was Mcebo's proposal. On paper everything looks good the prenup is straight to the point and I will basically keep all my assets even Asi's inheritance stays untouched. But am I being unreasonable for thinking all this seems too good to be true.

I took a picture of the prenup turned it into a PDF and then emailed it to Tshepi to look at since she is a qualified lawyer even though she hates it so much so she became a PR executive instead. Come to think of it I have been surrounded by lawyers who hate law. I texted her to tell her about the email and within five minutes she called.

Me: "Hello!"

Tshepi: "Bitch what the fuck?"

Me: "I was just as shocked."

Tshepi: "What are you thinking though?" I sigh.

Me: "I dont know. You don't think it's like too good to be true?"

Tshepi: "Have you told your lawyer though? Has he looked at it?"

Me: "Not yet but you are a lawyer so what do you think?"

Tshepi: "Well I'll need time to go through it but from what I can see its literally for your own protection really."

Me: "So there's no manga manga business happening?" She laughs.

Tshepi: "Babe no no manga manga business. Dont rush into it though think about it." I take a deep breath.

Maybe this really is my only protection. I mean I don't have anyone to fight with me at this point so maybe if this will keep the vultures off my back maybe it might work. It's not like we have to be in love or anything like that cause that will not happen. Not now not ever. But what happens when I fall in love with someone else while married? Will I be able to get a clean



divorce cause I have seen divorces getting messy even with prenups.



MCEBO

I will admit I didn't think my plan through. All I heard was Sethu saying someone's been following her and my father and brother doing what they did made me realize that she is alone and they won't stop till they get what they want and if that means killing her then so be it. She is a woman who just lost her husband who is vulnerable and grieving. I never understand people who try to take advantage of women like that.

I called my lawyer last night after Sethu fell asleep. Of course he had reservations but he had to do what I needed him to do. He said he'll charge me double for the rush job I made him do fine by me as long as the prenup was done right.

After dropping Sethu off at work I drove to his offices and found him putting the finishing touches to the prenup. I sat down and waited for him to finish while responding to emails.

Me: "Why is it taking so long advocate Sibiya." He looked up from his laptop and I could tell he was pissed.

Sibiya: "If you want this done right you have to be patient."

Me: "I have a flight to catch."

Sibiya: "Mxm." He took his phone and called his PA. "Sihle please bring me the prenup I asked

you to draw up for me. Thank you." He dropped the phone.

Me: "I thought you were busy with it." He shrugs his shoulders. I smiled. "Thank you."

Sibiya: "Mxm if you were not Melusi's brother I would have told you to go fuck yourself." I smiled again.

Me: "Lucky me then." The PA comes in with the prenup in an envelope and places it on the desk.

Sibiya: "Are you sure you want to do this? Marriage is a serious thing."

Me: "I have to man I cant be here all the time to protect her."

Sibiya: "Or I could just marry her myself and make her my second wife." He says with a smug look on his face.

Me: "Do you have a death wish?" He laughs.

Sibiya: "You know this marriage on paper theory you are pushing might not last. What if you fall in love with her? What if you find another woman you love and want to marry? What if she falls in love....."

Me: "Stop with the what if's I cant be here all the time to protect her."

Sibiya: "Or I could just marry her myself and make her my second wife." He says with a smug look on his face.

Me: "Do you have a death wish?" He laughs.

Sibiya: "You know this marriage on paper theory you are pushing might not last. What if you fall in love with her? What if you find another woman you love and want to marry? What if she falls in love....."

Me: "Stop with the what if's we'll cross that bridge when we get to it." I took the envelope and left him there laughing. I dont know what was funny but who cares.

I drove to Mwelase Logistics and got there just as Sethu was preparing to go home I was hoping to catch her before she goes home. She seemed shocked by my proposal but the fact that she didnt slap me means she is considering her options. I just hope she can agree to this so I can sleep better at night. After

driving her home I drove to the airport and boarded a flight to London.

When I got there I found a car already waiting for me I seriously need to establish a proper office for my business this jet setting life will have to come to an end at some point. And renting apartments in three separate cities in the world is really draining my pocket.

I was driven to my apartment. I got in and found a surprise waiting for me. I walked in and my PA/lover was laying on the table with food surrounding her. I stood at the door for a good minute just trying to digest the sight before me. As beautiful as it was I just had to I dont know.



See Zoey is a slay queen but not the South African slay queen but the American version her ass was fake her waist was fake her boobs were fake basically she is fake. But she knows how to do her job. And the extra work on the side she can do that pretty well too. I walked closer to the table and took a piece of chicken.

Zoey: "So what are you going to have Mr M dessert or dinner first?" She says turning around to lay on her back with her ass all out. Fake or not that ass looks good. I pulled her down from the table with her legs and made her stand in front of me with her hands resting on the table. I unzipped my pants and gently parted her legs before burying myself inside her. She screamed as I entered her and soon her screams turned to moans.

Once we were done we sat and had dinner.

Me: "When did you get here?"

Zoey: "I flew in a couple of days ago I was hoping you would be here when I got here but you weren't what happened?"

Me: "I got held up."

Zoey: "In Cape Town?"

Me: "Sort off I had to go home and sort some things out."

Zoey: "Your father still wants you to marry your brother's wife?"

Me: "Yes."

Zoey: "You would think we are still stuck in the fifteenth century who forces someone to marry a person they dont even love?"

Me: "Apparently its culture."

Zoey: "Culture evolves and that should have stayed in the century it belongs in. So you told your dad where to get off right?"

I didn't know how to answer that as much as Zoey and I had agreed that our relationship was a no strings attached relationship I knew she

had some feelings for me and I knew telling her that I was planning to marry Sethu would not sit right with her so I decided to change the subject.

Me: "So I've been thinking I want to establish a permanent base. This moving around every other day is getting a bit tedious." She put her hands up in the air like someone celebrating.

Zoey: "Finally! So where are we going Manhattan Long Island West New York tell me and I'll find the perfect place."

Me: "Durban!"

Zoey: "Excuse me! What about New York you said you'd settle there eventually."

Me: "I know but a man is allowed to change his mind. I'm going to settle in Durban and that's that." I got up and walked to the bedroom.

Zoey: "Is it about her? Do you want to be closer to her?" She asked appearing from behind me.

Me: "Her being who exactly?" I asked.

Zoey: "Your brothers wife. Is this about her?"

Me: "No it's not. I'm getting old business is becoming busy I need a place where I can establish and grow properly. And Durban is perfect." She laughed.

Zoey: "Not even Joburg or Cape Town why Durban?"

Me: "If I can work from my laptop anywhere in the world then Durban should be just fine. If you dont mind I'd like to sleep I am tired." She clicked her tongue and switched the lights off before walking out.

I got into bed took my phone and texted Sethu asking her about Asi and she sent me a video of him running around at uShaka Marine he seemed fascinated by everything he saw. Its nice to be young and see the world as a perfect place. I'm sure if Melusi was there this would have been a perfect moment. I couldn't help but think about all the things he would miss out on Asi's first day at school his first goal or try or whatever sport he chooses. I know I'll never be able to replace Melusi in their lives but maybe I can try to be there more and moving back to Durban will ensure I do that Zoey will just have

to deal. If she wants to come she'll come but if not then that's her problem.

## CHAPTER SIX

The thing about deadlines is that they come whether we like it or not. Mcebo was coming back in twenty four hours and he needed an answer by then. I was still afraid to go back to my house even though Mcebo said it was safe to go back. Besides Tshepi's cozy two bedroom apartment was small enough for Asi and I being in that big house just the two of us was depressing sometimes.

I decided to drive to the house just to clean up. That was always my favourite thing to do when I needed to distress spring clean the house from top to bottom. We got to the house and the grass had grown a little taller. I need to call Bab'Gumede.



I got into the house and called Bab'Gumede soon as I got in i didnt want to forget. Luckily he answered and promised to be here in two hours. One less problem to worry about. I started in the lounge and cleaned up while Asi watched some cartoons being the energetic toddler that he is it was hard keeping him seated in one place he kept moving from one couch to the next and jumping back again. By the time I finished the lounge my poor baby was passed out on the couch.

Bab'Gumede showed up eventually and started working. I was busy emptying the kitchen cupboards when I got a text from Tshepi saying she was at the gate. I opened for her and she drove in. I was busy wiping down the cupboards when she hugged me from the back and put her

head on my back before taking a cloth and helping me while we chatted and laughed about anything and everything but mostly her busy love life. We cleaned the house and by the time we were done my house smelt brand new. I ordered takeaways since it was getting late and I didnt have the energy to cook.

Soon as the food arrived I dished up for Bab'Gumede and called him to it he asked if he could eat outside because it was sunny and he wanted the fresh air I helped him take a chair for him to sit. I came back and sat down and ate with Asi and Tshepi.

Tshepi: "So your deadline is coming up. What are you going to do?"

Me: "You know the reason I cleaned the house was to not think about that." She laughed.

Tshepi: "But you have to think about it at some point."

Me: "I'll do it. Right now it feels like it's the only option I truly have."

Tshepi: "So it's a case of better the devil you know."

Me: "But I know all the devil's in this case."  
When I married Melusi I never thought not even once that I'd end up married to his brother.

Tshepi: "So what happens when you fall in love with him?"

Me: "That's not going to happen."

I've thought about this and honestly the thought of me falling in love with Mcebo was a far fetched dream. Yes I cared about him but not to the extent that I would fall in love with him. When I made the decision to marry Mcebo I also thought about all that could happen and what would need to happen. I thought about his girlfriend if he has one although he always said he was single he's a man and I'm sure he's not sleeping alone every night. So if he does have a girlfriend how will we navigate her being suddenly demoted to being the side chick when she has been a main for however long they've been together. What about me? What happens if I meet someone and my heart finally allows me to fall in love how will that person feel being in love with someone's wife? As much as the decision has been made Mcebo and I will have

to talk about these things before we go through with this new situation we find ourselves in.

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I woke up the next day with absolutely no idea what to do the house was spic and span so I couldn't clean I lay in bed for almost thirty minutes debating with myself if I should go to church or not. Eventually i decided to go cause i had nothing else to do and Tshepi was back at her place with her man.

I got up and took a shower and since it was still early i decided to pack our bags so we can go back to our house. I decided to take the bull by the horns and face my fears it has to happen at some point right and the first step to doing that is going back to my house. I refuse to be driven out of my own house.

I took all the luggage down to the garage and packed it in the boot of my car. I went back upstairs gave Asi a bath and gave him his breakfast. When we were done I took Asi and we went to say our goodbyes to Mrs Jan. She has been a godsend through this time.

We got to church and I decided to leave Asi with the Sunday school crew I'm pretty sure he's spent almost two weeks with adults he really needs to hang out with people his own age. The service started and hard as I tried to immerse myself in it I just couldn't. A part of me kept trying to fully focus on the words the pastor said but I just couldn't. His scripture today was Jeremiah 29 verse 11 'For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans to prosper you and not to harm you plans to give you hope and a future.' All I could think about was which plan was God executing when he took my husband? which plan was he executing when he let the Mazibuko's treat me the way they did? Why was he quiet when my own family turned their backs on me? I couldn't stomach which part of those plans was meant to give me hope and a future.

I got up in the middle of the sermon and walked out. I wanted to get Asi so we can go home but when I peeped through the slightly open door in the Sunday school room and saw him laughing and playing with other kids I decided to sit in the car and wait till church was over.

I dont know when or how i fell asleep but i was woken up by the pastor knocking on my car window. Embarrassed would be an understatement at this point. I opened the door and he stood back as I got out. I close the door and tried looking at him but my shame would not let me so I just stared at my feet.

Pastor: "I didnt think my sermon was that boring." I mastered enough courage to look at



him but that didn't last even ten seconds before I went looking everywhere but his face.

Me: "I'm sorry I....um.... I"

Pastor: "Its okay I understand after what happened it may be hard for you to reconcile your relationship with God." I smiled a little.

Me: "I dont think he knows I exist at this point."

Pastor: "What makes you think that?"

Me: "Everything. If he knew about me why would he let half the shit I've been through happen. Excuse my language."

Pastor: "This is the part where I tell you that God knows about you he sees your pain and in

time he will make it all better but I know you  
wont believe that right now

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but I know you wont believe that right now so  
all I can tell you is that when your heart and  
soul is ready you will see beyond your pain and  
you will make your way back to him until then I  
will be right here for you to vent and curse at  
him or shout at him whatever you need to do I'll  
be here."

I wanted to laugh but he was right nothing he said to me would make me believe that God is even there. Nothing he said would make me think differently. He walked me back into the church to get Asi. I found him sleeping soundly on top of a little mattress with a little blanket over him. I picked him up and went out again. I strapped him into his car seat and drove off.

I was tempted to get takeaways but we can't live on takeaways all the time so I bought some fruits and vegetables from the women who sell on the side of the road before heading to Gateway to get some groceries from Woolies. Luckily for me Asi was up so I didn't have to wake him up. We walked to Woolies and bought all that we needed before heading back to the house.

I found a car parked in front of the gate and before I had time to panic I saw the number plate and realized it was Mcebo. I used the remote to open the gate since he was right in front of me and I couldn't punch in the access code without getting out of the car. He drove in and I followed behind him.

He got out of the car and helped me bring in the luggage and groceries. He took the bags upstairs while I started cooking and Asi was busy on his tablet. Mcebo came down after a while and helped me pack away the groceries.

Me: "I thought you were coming back tomorrow."

Mcebo: "I know I decided to come back early but you can relax you week is only up tomorrow." I laughed. Not that I wasn't thinking about that but i was hoping he wouldn't bring it up.

Me: "Okay so what do you feel like eating chicken or beef." I asked with both choices in my hands.

Mcebo: "Which one is faster?"

Me: "Chicken."

Mcebo: "Then chicken it is. You need help?" I dont. But I dont want to seem rude.

Me: "Sure why not. You can start chopping the veggies onions first."

Mcebo: "Oh wow you really want to see me cry." He said putting on the apron and I laughed.

Me: "Let's see how strong you are."

He started chopping with a straight face on like he was Mr tough guy but soon he was wiping

tears from his eyes and all I could do was just laugh. We finished cooking and set the table. We sat down to eat. We finished eating and washed the dishes. I put Asi to sleep and came back downstairs to find Mcebo on the couch with two cups of hot chocolate on the coffee table. I took a deep breath and sat down next to him. He gave me a cup and I put my feet up on the couch and got myself comfortable. He sat back on the couch with his cup in hand.

Me: "Nice." I said after taking a sip of the hot chocolate. It tasted great it didn't taste like Melusi's but it was still hot chocolate so I was happy.

Mcebo: "Thank you so have you thought about my idea?" I took a deep breath and tried not to make eye contact with him.

Me: "I have. The prenup seems legit but I have a few questions."

Mcebo: "Naturally." He turned to look at me.

Me: "What does your girlfriend say about all this?" He laughed. And I could tell by his laugh whatever answer would come it would be a lie or maybe just an omission of the truth.

Mcebo: "I dont have a girlfriend." I nodded my head and decided to phrase my question differently.



Me: "Okay so theres no woman out there who believes she's in a relationship with you?" He laughed again.

Mcebo: "Wow you should have been a lawyer. But to answer your question I am sure there are a couple of girls who might think that. But that is nothing for you to worry about."

Me: "So there wont be someone throwing daggers at me?"

Mcebo: "No. No one."

Me: "Okay. Then I guess we can do it then."

Mcebo: "Cool. We'll go to home affairs tomorrow."

Me: "Arent we supposed to make an appointment first?"

Mcebo: "Its already been taken care off. Besides I need to get this out of the way so I can focus on building my base here."

Me: "Build your base? How?"

Mcebo: "I am moving my business to Durban. I've been thinking about it for a while and now I want to put plans into action."

Me: "Okay so no more travelling?"

Mcebo: "I will travel when the need arises but base camp will be right here. Anyways I have to go. I will text you the time in the morning." I got up and walked him out. I decided to give him the gate remote so he can come I should he

decide to come instead of waiting outside. I watched him drive out before going back into the house locking the door and going to sleep.

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I woke up the next day and did what I always do take a bath get dressed give Asi a bath feed him drop him off at day care and then drive to work. I waited for Mcebo's text and all morning I kept checking my phone I even changed it from vibrate to ring with the volume on full blast. I couldn't even concentrate on any of my meetings.

At exactly 10:30 my phone beeped and a text came in. He said he was on his way to pick me up since we had to be at home affairs by 11:30. I'm not sure if what I felt after that was anxiety or nerves either way my heart was threatening to jump out of my chest. I decided to wait for Mcebo outside so I can also get some fresh air to calm me down. He showed up after about fifteen minutes and we drove to home affairs in silence.

We waited for about thirty minutes watching couples go in and come out smiling and happy. Seeing all these couples happy made me reminisce about my wedding day. Even to this

day I still think my wedding day was the most perfect day for me. Although there were a few hiccups here and there but I wouldn't change it for anything in the world. That day felt like the beginning of the rest of my life. If I had known then that I wouldn't get the happily ever after I had envisioned I still would have gone through with the wedding because the days I spent with Melusi were some of the best days of my life. I was brought back to reality when Mcebo placed his hand on top of mine.

Mcebo: "Are you okay." I smiled.

Me: "Yeah I'm good."

Mcebo: "Okay. It's our turn." I took my bag and we walked in.

I walked into that room as Mrs Mazibuko and walked out as Mrs Mazibuko crazy right this felt like something straight out of a movie. Or maybe this is my movie and I am improvising through it all just waiting for the credits to roll up.

I guess now I can reintroduce myself. My name is Siphosethu Simamkele Dlamini-Mazibuko-Mazibuko. Yeah neh.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

I've never really dreamed about my wedding I've never been that guy but I know for sure I never would have imagined it being in a home affairs office. But what is done is done. I've officially been married for a week now and today I went to pick up the marriage certificate.

I sat in the car for almost half an hour just looking at it because I couldn't wrap my head around it. I know it will take time to get used to but it's still a bit surprising. I got a text earlier from my mum asking me to come home for supper. I didnt even tell them I'm back but somehow she knows.



I have a meeting with the estate agent who is helping me find office space for my business. But what's taking long though is the official registration of the business. For years now I've just been working as a freelance consultant but now it's time to get serious.

I am not feeling this building but the agent is going on and on about how great it is. It's close to the beach which has a calming effect on employees not that I have any for now but it's a bit busy for my liking. I like quiet spaces I like calm and controlled and as much as the sea is out there so are the people. There are restaurants on the first floor and this is the side of the beach that has way too many people for my liking.

Agent: "So what do you think?"

Me: "You said you still have other properties to see?" I saw the light go off in her eyes I'm sure I have been stressing the poor girl but I am a perfectionist so I know what I want in my head but for most people it takes a while for them to get to my level of perfect.

Agent: "Yes would you like to see them?" She asked with a fake smile on her face and I didnt miss the sarcasm in her voice but I chose to ignore it.

Me: "Yes I would but not today. Maybe tomorrow or the day after." She smiled and turned around to walk away and I think I just saw her roll her eyes. I just smiled and followed behind her. She opened the door and stood

aside for me to walk out before she locked the door.

We parted in the parking and I decided to grab some lunch. I ended up at Little Havana in Umhlanga. I sat down and made my order. Thankfully it wasn't crowded so I could enjoy some peace and quiet. My food came and just as I was about to tuck in someone sat down across from me. I looked up and saw Sethu's friend Tshepiso looking at me with a smile on her face.

Me: "What?"

Tshepi: "So how does it feel to be married?"

Me: "I dont know. How is it supposed to feel?"  
She shrugged her shoulders.

Tshepi: "I dont know I've never been married."

Me: "Are you planning on it?"

Tshepi: "We'll see. So Sethu tells me you are moving your business this side."

Me: "I am. Why?"

Tshepi: "I want to do your PR and Marketing."  
Wow she's bold.

Me: "Uhm..... I....."

Tshepi: "I'll send you my proposal." She said before taking her bag and walking out. I have to admire her boldness though. After all they do say when an opportunity arises grab it. In this case however I don't see the opportunity so I don't know what she was grabbing. But who knows maybe she knows what she's talking about so hopefully her proposal blows me away.

After lunch I texted Sethu and told her I'd pick up Asi from daycare. She gave me the go ahead and said she'd call the school to let them know. I drove to the daycare and soon as Asi saw me he came running. I picked him up and spun him around while he giggled. I swear a baby's laugh will always be the best thing ever.

We got into the car and drove to the park close to the house. There was an ice cream truck parked by the park so we bought ice cream and sat on the benches and talked. I don't know what kind of conversation you can have with a two year old but we spoke. Just before it got dark I could tell the sugar rush had taken its course and the little guy was so hyper I'm sure if there were walls he would be climbing them.

As we were driving back home I bought him more ice cream big mistake the backseat of my car was covered with ice cream. I need to take the car to the car wash. I got to Sethu's place and drove in. I found her car outside. I took Asi out of the car and carried him inside I put him down soon as we got in and he left ice cream all over me too. Oh well.

Sethu: "Oh wow!" She said soon as we walked into the kitchen. "What happened?" I just smiled and shrug my shoulders since Asi was running around the kitchen island.

Me: "He seems to be happy. He loves spending time with me."

Sethu: "Or maybe he likes the ice cream that's giving him a sugar rush?"

Me: "Yeah theres probably that too." She just smiled and went back to her chopping veggies. "So how was your day?"

Sethu: "Not as interesting as yours clearly. Have you found office space yet?"

Me: "No not yet. I'm going to see more places tomorrow hopefully one catches my eye."

Sethu: "Okay so are you staying for dinner?"

Me: "I would love to but I cant mum asked me to come home for dinner so I have to drive there now."

Sethu: "With that?" She asks pointing at my dirty shirt.

Me: "I'm sure my dad has a tshirt I can borrow."

Sethu: "Or you can take one of Melusi's shirts." She says walking past me. "Come on." I switch on the TV for Asi and follow Sethu up the stairs. We get to her bedroom and she walks straight to the closet. She opens it then turns around to look at me. "Take one." I walk into the closet



and it still smells like Melusi if I didnt know any better I'd think he is coming back. I touch his clothes and strangely enough it feels like I am touching him.

Me: "I thought you would have taken everything down by now." She takes a deep breath before looking up at me.

Sethu: "I didnt have the heart to. Plus your mum tried to and I just couldn't let her. I prefer it like this." I nod my head and take down a baby blue shirt. "Not that one

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if I didnt know any better I'd think he is coming back. I touch his clothes and strangely enough it feels like I am touching him.

Me: "I thought you would have taken everything down by now." She takes a deep breath before looking up at me.

Sethu: "I didnt have the heart to. Plus your mum tried to and I just couldn't let her. I prefer it like this." I nod my head and take down a baby blue shirt. "Not that one that's his favourite." She says. I look at it for a few seconds before putting it back. I take down one of his many white shirts. Just as I am walking out I see his watch collection and cuff links. My brother was obsessed with these he always said a man should always invest in a good pair of shoes a watch cufflinks and cologne. If he has those even if he wore a sack it would still look beautiful. I still don't believe that but I did take

his advice. I noticed one of the watches wasn't there. And it wasn't just any watch it was the one I got him for his birthday last year the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak.

Me: "Where's the missing watch?"

Sethu: "Your dad has it. When the police brought some of the things they found at the accident site your dad took them."

Me: "Was it also burnt?"

Sethu: "It was but not entirely. The police could still see his name engraved on it that's how they knew who he was."

I don't understand why dad would keep a burnt watch I'll have to ask him about it. Sethu went back downstairs and I closed the drawer and went to the bedroom. I took my dirty shirt off and put on Melusi's clean one. I couldn't help but smile when I looked in the mirror. If I closed my eyes I could swear he was standing right next to me.

I took a deep breath and went back downstairs. I found Sethu cleaning up in the kitchen while Asi jumped around the lounge. There will be no sleep tonight.

Me: "Hey I'm leaving."

Sethu: "Okay. Thanks for taking care of him."

Me: "Not a problem." I gave her a hug before driving out.

I got home and found my brother's van parked outside. I guess this really is a family dinner. I knocked once and walked in. My dad was in the lounge watching soccer with Msizi and my mum and sisters were in the kitchen I decided to join the men in the lounge.

Me: "Hello!"

Dad: "Hi what are you doing here?"

Me: "Mum asked me to come."

Msizi: "Oh so you want to eat even though you said you'd never send money home."

Me: "I'm really not in the mood to fight with you bro."

Msizi: "Really? Did you know Sethu bought another truck?"

Me: "I'm sure she had her reasons. Besides how do you know that."

Msizi: "Its my job to know since I'll be taking over when she runs the company to the ground."

Me: "You do know Sethu studied business management right? She knows what she's doing."

Msizi: "Mxm when has she ever used that degree for her to just jump into running a big business like that?"

Me: "Do you have a degree Bhuti?" Silence. "I didnt think so." Mum came in and told us the food was ready. We got up and sat at the table and dished up to eat. There was some awkward silence with my dad and brother looking at me like I took their favourite toy.

Mum: "So we dont talk to each other anymore?"

Msizi: "Ask your educated son."

Me: "I didnt say keep your mouth shut you are allowed to talk just dont be spewing nonsense."  
He chuckles.

Dad: "Mcebo dont talk to your brother like that. He is still older than you in case you forgot."  
Mxm. "Now your uncles and the Dlamini's are coming over this weekend."

Me: "Why?"



Dad: "We need to put a stop to this charade that's happening. Ngeke sizwe ngomuntu wesfazane ukuthi kwenzakaleni emzini wakwa Mazibuko (We wont let a woman dictate to us.) You and Sethu will get married whether you like it or not. And if you still refuse Msizi will marry her." I laughed.

Me: "Msizi is married."

Msizi: "MaZulu has already agreed to it."

Me: "Really? What did you do? Beat her to submission?"

Dad: "MCEBO!"

ME: "What? Everyone sitting at this table knows how Msizi solves his problems. With a fist."

Mum: "THAT'S ENOUGH!" She says banging her fist on the table. "This is supposed to be a family dinner. This bickering needs to stop." I put my fork down and got up.

Me: "I think it's time for me to leave."

Mum: "Mcebo!" I walked over to her and kissed her on the cheek and walked out.

I walked out and I heard my mum following me and calling out my name. I stopped and turned around to look at her while leaning on my car.

Mum: "Mcebo all I want is to have dinner with my family. Why is that hard for you to grasp."

Me: "Your family is incomplete ma. MaZulu and her children are not here. Sethu and her son are not here. Are they not part of your family too?"

Mum: "Of course they are."

Mcebo: "Then where are they ma? MaZulu is probably in her house nursing her wounds inflicted by her husband Sethu is at home with her son and you are all here making decisions about her life."

Mum: "Your father is trying to do what's best for this family."

Me: "No ma dad is trying to do whats best for him and his son's greed. Melusi and I bought that farm for Msizi because you blackmailed us."

Mum: "So saying thank you to your brother is blackmail now? When your father fell sick Msizi did everything in his power to take care of this family I couldn't work because I had to take care of your father. Msizi kept this family together."

Me: "And you will remind us of that till the day we die. But none of that justifies him putting his hands on his wife or wanting to get his hands on Melusi's money by fire by force." She shakes

her head and crosses her arms across her chest.

Mum: "I wish you could step in his shoes and feel what it's like he made sacrifices for you and your siblings and now you want to treat him like this because he doesn't have money like you." If I got a ten rand everytime my mum said that to us I wouldn't need to work.

Me: "Well you can tell your son that he won't be marrying Sethu because Sethu and I are already married." She looked up at me with shock.

Mum: "You are married?"

Me: "You wanted us to get married so we went to home affairs and got married. So you can tell dad theres no need for the uncles to come." Her

shock was replaced with ecstasy. She threw herself at me and hugged me.

Mum: "But that's perfect. Now you can put your brother in charge at the company while you continue with your business. He'll be so happy."

Me: "Ma Sethu will be running the business. Hell will freeze over before I allow Msizi to set his foot at Mwelase Logistics."

I got into the car and drove off leaving her there. I might have saved Sethu from Msizi but now that they know we are married I think I just closed one door and opened another one. And I am afraid of what might come out of there.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

I really need to hire a nanny. Running after Asi every morning trying to get him dressed and ready for school and trying to get me dressed and ready for work is a mission all on it's own. It's like an unnecessary cardio session. By the time we walk out the door I have yelled about ten times changed three times because he spilled food on me and then forgot something atleast two times. I really miss being a stay at home mum but life had to smack me dead in the face and make me face the real world.

By the time I got to the office I wasn't sure if I needed a litre of coffee or a bottle of wine. I had to settle for the coffee since I cant drink at work. Amanda brought in a cup of piping hot coffee and boy did it feel good just what I needed to start the day.



My phone rang sometime before lunch I looked at the caller ID and it was my mother in law. I wonder what she wants. I decided to let it ring until it went to voicemail. She called again and I let it ring again hoping she'll eventually give up. But she was persistent I decided to pick up when she called for the fourth time.

Me: "Hello."

Ma: "Makoti we are having a family meeting tomorrow and you have to come."

Me: "I dont know ma I have to meet some important clients tomorrow. I don't think I'll be able to make it."

Ma: "Tomorrow is a Saturday I'm sure you can make time for your family. We'll be expecting you." She hung up before I can come up with another excuse. I swear this family expects me to dance to their beat.

I tried to put Mrs Mazibuko seniors call out of my mind and focus on the work at hand. I couldn't come up with any ideas as to why they needed to see me but I knew whatever it was it wasn't good. I thought about calling Msizi's wife but she's never really liked me so I doubt she will tell me.

I try to focus more on my work and just get through this day.

I knock off and decide to start at Gateway for some groceries. I park the car and make my way to Woolies. I dont know where my mind went but when I was taking a bottle of wine from the shelf I knocked a couple of bottles of the shelf and the glass hitting the floor brought me back to reality.

I looked around and some people were looking at me with pity in their eyes. I bent down to pick up the glasses when I felt a hand hold my hand away from the glasses.

Him: "Dont do that. You'll cut yourself."

Me: "I cant leave this mess here."

Him: "Sure you can I'm sure someone is already on their way to clean this up." I stood up and looked at this man thinking maybe he works here too but he was wearing those uniforms that farmers wear you know the khaki shorts and shirts with socks up to their knees and work boots.

A lady came with a dust pan and mop and wiped the floor.

Me: "I'm sorry I will pay for those."

Lady: "Its okay you dont need to mistakes happen." She said walking away I dont know why I was feeling guilty.

Him: "So do you always do that?"

Me: "What?"

Him: "Be that sympathetic. Or maybe its guilt."

Me: "A bit of both. Thank you for helping me." I turned to walk away.

Him: "My name is Scelo by the way." I laughed and he looked at me with a confused look in his face.

Me: "I'm sorry I just expected you to say your name is Jan Hendrik or something." He wanted to laugh but the confusion going on in his head kept him from laughing. "I'm sorry that's the dumbest thing that's ever come out of my mouth it's not like black people cant be farmers too I'm sorry I'm stupid." I said looking back down at my trolley. He laughed. I'm not sure if he was laughing at my stupid joke or he was laughing at me for being an idiot either way atleast he was laughing right.

Scelo: "That was actually funny. I dont think anyone has ever said that before."

Me: "Hopefully its because they are smarter than me."

Scelo: "No its probably because they dont have a sense of humor."

Me: "Right!" I turned and pushed my trolley away.

Scelo: "You didnt tell me your name." He says soon as he catches up with me.

Me: "Sethu Siphosethu but everyone calls me Sethu."

Scelo: "Nice to meet you Sethu. I'll see you around." He walks away. I make my way to the tills and pay.

I make my way to the daycare to pick up Asi. I get out the car and make my way into reception.

Me: "Hi I'm here to pick up my son Asimbonge." She looks through her register and then looks up at me like I am an alien.

Receptionist: "Uhm....what's his surname?"

Me: "Mazibuko Asimbonge Mazibuko." She looks back at her register.

Receptionist: "Uhm..... Asi was picked up an hour ago by his uncle." I felt my heart rate go from zero to hundred in less than 2 seconds.

Me: "I dont remember telling you that someone else other than me is coming to pick him up."

Receptionist: "I'm sorry. He said he was his uncle."

Me: "So you handed my son over to a stranger?"

Receptionist: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Stop telling me you are sorry I want my son." She picked up the phone and called someone. Seeing her phone reminded me to call Mcebo since he is the only one who has



picked up Asi from school before. He picked up at the first ring.

Mcebo: "MaDlamini unjani (how are you?)"

Me: "I'm good is Asi with you?"

Mcebo: "No why?" I felt hot flushes cover my entire body.

Me: "Mcebo please

Sponsored

this is serious do you have him with you?"

Mcebo: "Sethu you know I would have told you if I was going to pick him up. What happened?"

Me: "I..... I came to pick him up at school and he's not here apparently his uncle came to pick him up."

Mcebo: "What uncle?"

Me: "I dont know either. But he's not here."

Mcebo: "Are you still at the school?" I nodded my head as if he can see me. "Sethu!"

Me: "Yes yes I'm still here."

Mcebo: "Okay stay there I'm coming."

It seemed like a long time before Mcebo got here. I couldn't even sit still for one minute. The thought of my son being with someone I don't even know was driving me insane. I mentally went down the list of people who would even think about doing something like this and I couldn't come up with anyone. I know for a fact it wouldn't be anyone from my family. None of my siblings have ever met Asi so it couldn't be them my father was too old to pose as someone's uncle. But Msizi could right? I mean it had to be either him or someone he sent question is why?

Mcebo walked through the door followed by two police officers why didn't I think of that. He gives

me a hug while the officers go straight to the receptionist who is now standing together with the headteacher.

Mcebo: "Hey are you okay?"

Me: "My son is missing!"

Mcebo: "Right! Dumb question. Come on let me take you home the police will take it from here."  
We walk out and he leads me to his car.

Me: "My car."

Mcebo: "I'll come back and get it."

Me: "Theres groceries in there and ice cream."

Mcebo: "Okay let's take yours I'll come back for mine." I take the keys out of my bag with my shaky hands. Mcebo takes the keys from me and opens the passenger side. I get in and he walks to the other side and drives off. "We'll find him you know."

Me: "What if your brother took him?"

Mcebo: "Why would Msizi do that?"

Me: "Ransom. He wants the company what better way to get it than take my son from me in exchange."

Mcebo: "Stop overthinking this I'm sure the police will find the person who took him."

We get home and the hopeful part of me hopes I will go into the house and my son will come running to me. But when I open the door it's dead quiet. I turn the lights on and sit on the couch while Mcebo brings in the groceries.

When he was done he came to the lounge with his phone in his hand looking at something. He sat next to me and handed me the phone. And right there in full color was Msizi taking my son from school. Thank God for surveillance cameras.

Me: "I told you Msizi took him."

Mcebo: "I know. The police sent me this just now. I'll go home and talk to him."

Me: "I'll come with you."

Mcebo: "No stay here." He takes his phone and walks out. I hear my car start and soon it fades off. I hope to God he didnt do anything to my son.



MCEBO



I dont know what is happening with my family. Every time I think things cant get worse they raise the bar. A part of me wants to say this is probably the worse they have done but I have learnt over the past few months they always have something up their sleeve.

I got to KwaMashu and headed straight to the house. I opened the door and walked in. I found Asi sitting in the lounge with my dad and Msizi watching TV. My anger wouldn't even let me

greet let alone acknowledge them. I picked him up and my dad turned to look at me.

Dad: "Mcebo!"

Me: "What is he doing here?"

Dad: "We are his family too you know he's just visiting his grandparents."

Me: "And you couldn't talk to his mother about it."

Msizi: "Do you really think she would have allowed him to come visit."

Me: "So stealing him seemed like the best option? Well I hate to break it to you Sethu opened a kidnapping case so you are going to jail." He stood up and looked at me with panic written all over his face.

Dad: "Sethu is coming for the family meeting tomorrow so she would have got him then." How can two grown man fail to understand what they have done?

Mcebo: "Sethu is not coming for your stupid meeting and neither am I. How do you not understand what you are doing. Sethu will not marry Msizi because she is already married to me." Ever seen a balloon slowly lose the air inside it well that's Msizi right now. I guess mum forgot to tell them.

Dad: "What do you mean you are married to her?"

Me: "It means she's my wife so any stupid ideas you have to try and get your filthy hands on her money can go in the trash now." I walked out with Asi and put him in the car. I turned around to get into the car and Msizi was standing right there.

Msizi: "You lousy son of a bitch."

Me: "What now?"

Msizi: "This was your plan all along right? Refuse to marry Sethu get her to trust you and then you strike and take everything for yourself. How selfish can you be?"

Me: "Selfish? Me? Msizi I am not the one trying to get my filthy hands on my late brother's money. You are."

Msizi: "This was my chance to be somebody. You and Melusi always thought because you are more educated and have money you are better than me and now that I have a chance to have money too you take that away from me."

Me: "Did you have him killed?"

Msizi: "Excuse me?"

Me: "Melusi! Did you have him killed? You are working overtime to try and get your hands on

everything Melusi owned so I cant help thinking you killed our brother."

Msizi: "You must be out of your mind."

Me: "Maybe. But to be on the safe side I think I'll ask the cops to take another look at Melusi's accident I'm sure they missed something." I got into the car and drove off.

Until now I hadn't thought about my brother and father being involved in Melusi's death but their determination to get their hands on his money is now making me question a whole lot of stuff. The fact that my dad kept all the things found at the accident site is also worrying why wouldn't the cops keep the things as evidence? I decide to make a call.

Thato: "Mwelase."

Me: "TT how quick can you get to Durban?"

Thato: "When do you need me?"

Me: "Yesterday."

Thato: "Okay I'll fly down in the morning. What's happening?"

Me: "I need you to look into my brothers death. Somethings are not making sense right now."

Thato: "Okay I'll see you tomorrow. Sharp."

Me: "Thanks man. Sharp."

One thing I've always been able to trust was my gut and right now my gut says something is not adding up with Melusi's death I just hope TT can find out the truth.

## CHAPTER NINE



I'm not sure anymore what I need to do for my in laws to leave me alone. They wanted me to marry Mcebo and I did but clearly that wont be enough. I sat up the whole of last night trying to digest everything that has happened. After Mcebo brought Asi back as happy as I was I couldn't understand why they did what they did. Will I live the rest of my life looking over my shoulder wondering where the next "attack" will come from. I cant carry Asi to work everyday so will I have to wonder all day if he is okay? These are questions that went through my head all night. And I realized I wouldn't get the answers I need unless I asked the right people.

I woke up in the morning and got dressed in my Makoti attire. I decided to attend this family meeting because that was the only way I could get the answers I need. I dressed Asi up and we drove to KwaMashu. By the time we got

there I could see my dad's rusty old Mercedes Benz parked out on the street. My uncle's beat up van was parked right next to it.

I took a deep breath and got out of the car. I opened the door for Asi and being the kid that he is he ran straight to the house. I followed him and by the time I got in they were all laughing and tickling him. I greeted and went to the kitchen where the women were.

Me: "Sanbonani!"

Mum: "Sethu I thought you weren't coming."

Me: "I'm here. So when does the meeting start?"

MamMazibuko: "Soon as the men are fed. You can help out if you want." I wrestled with my brain trying to figure out if I should go and sit outside or help if I did sit outside that would just be another agenda to add to the meeting. I decided to do the latter.

I took a knife and started peeling the potatoes. I was hoping to do that till this whole torture was over but that didnt work. The mums decided to go set the table while we finished up cooking.

MaZulu: "So I hear you married Mcebo." She asked soon as the mums were out of earshot.

Me: "Its not like I had a choice."

MaZulu: "Why cant you just do what they want and save us the trouble."

Me: "What kind of trouble? And what exactly is it that I am supposed to do?"

MaZulu: "Give back the family company for one."

Me: "Oh sweety this family has no company that company is my husband's and he'll will freeze over before I hand it over."

MaZulu: "You always did think you were better than us. My husband made sacrifices for Melusi

to even get to where he was he deserves that company."

Me: "If your husband put this type of energy into running the farm MY Husband bought for him we wouldn't even be having this conversation." I left her there and went to the lounge. "Can we start the meeting I have somewhere to be." Everyone turned to look at me.

Dad: "Sethu stop being disrespectful. The meeting will start when it starts."

Me: "Okay so I will just tell you what I came here to tell you I am not handing over my company I am not handing over my husband's properties or money so if you called me here to bulldoze me to do that I'm sorry you wasted your time."

Mum: "Siphosethu!"

Me: "Mum I'm done playing this game I married Mcebo like you wanted me to what're do you want from me?"

Bab'Mazibuko: "Melusi made sure this family was taken care off and I know he would have wanted this why else would he leave his life insurance policy to us?"

Me: "Good for you so why is that not enough why do you still want the money he left for me when you have that how greedy and selfish can you be?"

Mum: "Siphosethu watch your mouth."

Me: "Take the life insurance policy and enjoy it because that's the last cent you'll ever get from my husband." I picked up Asi and we left.

I dont know how I was able to drive all the way home with my shaky hands and raised heart rate. I got home and gulped down a 500 MLS bottle of water in one go to calm my nerves if I had the stomach for brandy or whiskey I probably would have taken that. I've never been disrespectful to my elders if theres one thing my grandparents taught me it was respect. As much as a part of me feels like I had spat on their graves by doing what I did the other part of me knows they taught me to stand up for myself and if that means being disrespectful then so be it.

I didnt get the answers I needed but I said what I needed to say whether or not they choose to

respect that. The rain started pouring soon as we walked into the house. There's something about rain that I find therapeutic. I sat on the couch with a cup of warm chocolate a book and my baby sleeping soundly in his room. I sat there and read my book.

I heard the gate buzzing like someone was dying if this was a fire station I'm sure everyone would be driving out in those big trucks by now. I thought the buzzing would stop but whoever it was was relentless. I got up and answered the intercom.

Me: "Hello."



Dad: "Open the gate Now!" I guess I should have expected that. I buzzed him in and waited for him to come budging through the door. I stood in the entryway and waited for him to come in I knew he wasnt going to even bother knocking. And just as I expected he came budging through the door huffing and puffing with his wife running behind him.

Dad: "What the fuck is wrong with you? Did you have to embarrass us like that?" He asked soon as he stood in front of me.

Me: "Embarass you? You are okay with your daughter being stripped off everything her husband worked for just to satisfy some greedy patriarchal tradition?"

Dad: "You are a Mazibuko they paid lobola for you so you have to do everything they say."

Me: "They did not buy me they paid lobola for you so you have to do everything they say."

Me: "They did not buy me I am not a slave." I turned from them and walked to the lounge. "In spite of my feelings and my views I still married my brother's husband."

Dad: "Good now what is so hard about giving Msizi the company to run. You graduated got married and became a housewife what do you know about running a business?" I turned back to look at him.

Me: "You've always had little faith in me and that's fine but like I said before I will not give up my husband's hard work just to make you or them happy."

Mum: "Sethu this is not how we raised you...."

Me: "That's the thing ma you didnt raise me Gogo and Mkhulu did."

Mum: "And you think they would be happy about this? Disrespecting your in laws like that."

Mum: "Happy? They would be right behind me cheering me on because that's what a parent does. So you can go back and tell your friends I have put the company the properties and everything that Melusi owned into a trust. So even if they think they can kill me they still wont get their hands on anything except that life policy."

Mum: "Do you know how much that policy is worth?"

Me: "150 thousand I know I took it out. The life policy he took out for himself has already been paid out to me. And at this point I regret taking out that policy. They dont deserve it."

Dad: "Where did we go wrong with you?"

Me: "When you figure that out let me know. Until then please leave my house." I went and opened the door and waited for them to leave.

My dad spit on the ground when he walked past me my mother looked at me like I had committed the worst atrocity in the world. I closed the door soon as they walked out and made sure the gate was open too.

I sat back on the couch and took a deep breath. I had never been more grateful than at that point for having a friend like Tshepiso. If she hadn't told me to put everything in the trust maybe these people would still come for me but now I knew even if they did everything would be off limits to them the only person who would have access to it would be Asi even then he would have to be twenty five years old before he can even touch it. So maybe just maybe I wouldn't need to look over my shoulder anymore. Maybe now I can truly mourn my husband and then move on with my life.



MCEBO

I picked up Thato from the airport early in the morning and had breakfast at Mugg and Bean before driving to my house. He set up his laptop on the dining table while I poured him a drink. I've known Thato since our varsity days. He's always been too curious for his own good. When we needed intel on any girl he had it he had some dirt on the lecturers so chances of him failing were zero to nil. Even when he didn't attend classes or write tests he would never fail.

Thato: "Okay so what's going on?" I handed him his drink and sat down.

Me: "I need to find out what happened to Melusi."

Thato: "Why the sudden interest? Wasn't it classified an accident?"

Me: "It was but events that have happened the past few months have made me have my doubts."

Thato: "Okay so who are we suspecting? The wife?"

Me: "Why do you think it's the wife?"

Thato: "Well that's always the wife in situations like these. Especially if she stands to inherit everything."



Me: "No it's not her. I was actually suspecting my brother and my dad." He went silent and looked at me like I was crazy.

Thato: "Your brother?"

Me: "And my father yes. Since he died they've been working overtime to try and get their hands on the company and his properties and all that. They even had someone follow Sethu around after she banned them from the company."

Thato: "You think they wanted her dead?"

Me: "Definitely. Sethu is a fighter and she told them they would only get their hands on it over her dead body. Later that day there was someone watching her house late at night."

Thato: "Yoh bra that's hectic."

Me: "Tell me about it. So you think you can find something."

Thato: "I'll look into it."

I leave him to do some work and head out to the pool to do a few laps. His question about the wife always being a suspect has never crossed my mind. Sethu would never do something like that. She loved Melusi. I decided to get that thought out of my head. Thato was here now so he would find out what happened.

I did about ten laps and when I got out of the water Thato was sitting on a pool chair watching me. I got out and grabbed a towel and wiped myself before sitting down next to him.

Me: "You found something?"

Thato: "You could say that I dont know if it's worth anything. I need to get access to Mwelase Logistics security footage from before your brother died."

Me: "Cant you just hack your way in?"

Thato: "I could but that would take a while. The wife could give us easy access though if you ask nicely."

Me: "Her name is Sethu. I'll call her." I take my phone from the table and call Sethu. I tell her what we need and she promises to meet us there.

I rush upstairs and take a quick shower. I get dressed and soon as I am done I head back downstairs. I find Thato ready and waiting. We drive to Mwelase Logistics. We get there and the gates are closed the security refuses to let us in so we have no choice but to wait for her outside. She shows up ten minutes later and we drive in.

It's the weekend so the building is empty. We walk in and head straight to her office. She turns on her computer and goes straight to the

security file. Lucky for us the system stores footage for up to a year. I play with Asi while Thato is busy going through the footage and Sethu is standing over his shoulder watching attentively.

Thato: "Can we get into the depot footage."

Sethu leans over and goes to the depot file. "Thank you." She looks anxious almost nervous and I'm not sure why. "Bingo."

Sethu: "You found something?" I get up from the couch and stand next to Sethu.

Me: "Okay explain."

Thato: "That's your brother's car right?" Je says pointing to the screen. I nod my head. "Okay." He rewinds the footage and then plays it again. "See that guy he walks to the car and looks around to make sure no one sees him. He gets under the car and does something a week later your brother loses control of the car hits a pole and it blows up with him in it."

Me: "So i was right? It wasn't just an accident." Sethu moves away from us and sits on the visitor's chairs across from us.

Sethu: "So someone killed him?"

Thato: "Yeah and my guess is when that guy cut the brakes he didn't cut all the way through that way he wouldn't even notice that there was something wrong with the car." I move over to comfort Sethu who now has tears running down her face.

Me: "So now we need to find out who killed him?"

Thato: "Yep. We find the person who cut the brakes and we find the killer."

As much as I had thought someone killed Melusi I had hoped that Thato would prove me wrong I was hoping he would tell me that I was just imagining things that all this was in my head. And now to have it all confirmed just sent my anger up the roof. I wont rest until I find out who did this I know Melusi would have done the same for me. And if my brother and dad had something to do with this.....

## CHAPTER TEN

I am beginning to think maybe happiness wasn't written into my life plan. Maybe God really forgot to sprinkle a bit more happiness into my life. First I lost my grandparents my biggest cheerleaders and just when I has found a little bit of happiness with Melusi he too was taken



away. And the worst part he probably died because of his brothers greed.

Seeing that footage really did a number on me. At first I was nervous maybe cause a part of me was hoping that Mcebo's suspicions wouldn't amount to nothing I had made peace with his accident and now I find out it was no accident. I cried when the realization hit me but when the news fully sunk in I went numb. I couldn't even drive myself home.

I covered myself with the duvet trying to shut the world out and just go to my happy place. I closed my eyes and and and remembered the day I found out I was pregnant how I wish I could just turn back the clock and just be happy

again. Melusi was so happy when I told him he couldn't wait to let everyone know it took a whole lot of convincing for him to keep the news secret. And when he did finally get to tell people about it he was happy he told anyone and everyone who cared to listen. Every day after that he treated me like a porcelain doll it irritated the hell out of me but now I would give anything and everything to have it back. I would sell my soul to the devil just to have him cook for me even in if he's food wasn't that good but it was made with love so it tasted like love too.

I heard a knock on the door before it opened I wiped my tears and removed the duvet over my face. Asi came running in and tried jumping on the bed but his little feet couldn't climb up. I helped him up and gave him the biggest hug. Mcebo sat next to me and handed me a tray with breakfast.

Mcebo: "You've been crying."

Me: "No I just woke up."

Mcebo: "Mhmm." I know he doesn't believe me but he's letting it go. "Okay I made you breakfast."

Me: "Thank you." I take the tray and put it on my lap. It's an omelette and freshly squeezed orange juice. I take one bite of the omelette and it actually tastes good. "This is nice."

Mcebo: "Thank you." I keep eating in silence. "So what do you think about the footage we found. You seemed nervous before."

Me: "I dont know I guess in my head I was hoping that your suspicion would be wrong but now that it's true I just feel like the air has been punched out of my lungs. I mean Melusi never had enemies none that I knew of anyway so who would want him dead?"

Mcebo: "I suspect Msizi had something to do with this. Why else would he be fighting so hard to get his hands on Melusi's money."

Me: "So what are we going to do? You know Msizi wont just admit what he did. And even if we went to the cops how sure are we he doesn't have someone on the inside. I mean if the cops did their due diligence then they should know the brakes were cut and the car didnt just burst into flames."

Mcebo: "I know but we cant get ahead of ourselves we need to find the person who cut the brakes first and then we'll go from there."

Me: "You have a point there."

Mcebo: "Are you going to church?"

Me: "Nope! I think the man upstairs is on a sabbatical from me. He has these moments when he shows up he really shows off and when he dissapears he really dissapears. And I think this is one of his dissapearing acts." He laughs. I dont know why.

Mcebo: "Okay then. I have to go meet up with TT find out what he has. Maybe I'll see you later."

Me: "Thank you."

Mcebo: "For what?"

Me: "For everything I dont know what I would do without you."

Mcebo: "Anytime." He gives me a hug then fist bumps Asi before leaving.

I finished my breakfast and took the plates downstairs and washed them. Tshepi texted me saying she was on her way with the trust documents for me to sign. I went back upstairs and took a shower. I put on some shorts and a vest and went back downstairs. I wanted us to go outside to the pool but the weather had started raining. Durban weather is like a moody woman on her periods with her hormones going haywire.

Tshepi called to say she is at the gate. I opened for her. She walked through the door looking rather frustrated. She threw the documents on the coffee table before she threw herself on the couch.

Me: "What's wrong?"

Tshepi: "I hate men."

Me: "Okay what did he do?"

Tshepi: "Who?"

Me: "The man who put that foul mood on your face. What did he do?" She sits up and takes a deep breath.

Tshepi: "I have a new client I'm doing a marketing and PR campaign for him and he is demanding and full of shit."

Me: "And you can't tell him where to get off?" I sit next to her.

Tshepi: "No!"

Me: "Is he cute?"

Tshepi: "Cute? Heck no? He is a tall dark sweet cup of milk chocolate that just came out of the fridge on a hot as fuck day." She says in the most erotic voice ever and I'm pretty sure she just got wet.

Me: "Wow he must be something for you to be this horny just talking about him." She laughed.



Tshepi: "I'm not horny but the guy is way too demanding for his own good. Anyways back to you. You need to sign these." I pick up the papers and look at them.

Me: "So once I sign these theres no going back?"

Tshepi: "Once you sign these all your assets will be protected but even if this whole thing dies down getting the trust dismantled is a way longer process. So chances of you getting back everything in your name will be a long process."

Me: "So what do you think I should do."

Tshepi: "I know I'm the one who suggested this but I actually didnt think you would take me seriously. My advice since we are really doing this put the company in a trust and keep the

properties in your name. This way even if God forbid something happens to you the company will continue to operate and the Mazibuko's will not be able to get their hands on it."

Me: "Maybe I should think about this a bit more."

Tshepi: "Please do." She gets up and goes to the kitchen. She comes back with a glass of wine and sits back down.

Me: "Its a Sunday and it's not even 12 o'clock yet."

Tshepi: "Its Monday somewhere and its happy hour somewhere else."

I decide to tell her about our suspicions and the brakes being cut on Melusi's car and by the time I am done her jaw is on the floor.

Tshepi: "So they killed me?"

Me: "It looks like it."

Tshepi: "Why do you seem unbothered about this? What if they come after you?"

Me: "Its not that I'm unbothered it's just I dont understand how everything went South so fast. Six months ago Msizi and Melusi were thick as thieves Melusi respected his brother. I just dont understand when things turned to this."

Tshepi: "Maybe Msizi was jealous I mean he was the oldest and less successful brother his two younger brothers were living the life while he was stuck in the bundus."

Me: "Maybe but does that justify killing his brother? How long before he gets 'jealous' of Mcebo and kills him too? Heck how long before he comes after me? He has tried it before so what if next time he succeeds? How far is he willing to go to feed his greed?"

Tshepi: "What are you thinking?"

Me: "I'm thinking of moving to Joburg we already have a banch there."

Tshepi: "What about your family?"

Me: "What family? If my dad had his way I would hand over my assets to the Mazibuko's and continue being some helpless Makoti with nothing to her name." I take a deep breath. "I have made peace with the fact that I have no parents anymore. I wish gogo and Mkhulu were here they would know what to say right now."

Tshepi: "Oh friend." She pulls me in for a hug and that just makes the tears flow even harder. I hate this life.



MCEBO

Ever heard of the story of Abel and his brother Cain? Yeah I feel like I am living through it right now. Except i am looking in from the outside like an observer. My one brother is dead my other brother is trying to get his hands on my late brother's assets come hell or high waters.

Msizi has done a lot of shitty things in his life and we've always been blackmailed into helping him because of the sacrifices he made. We did it all because he was our brother and on days when we had no food to eat he always came up with a plan always. I just never thought one of his plans would include killing his brother one day.

I drove from Sethu's house and back to my house to meet with TT. I walked into the house and found him stuffing his face in the kitchen.

Me: "You still love food?"

Thato: "And you still stock shitty food. What the fuck is Kale what happened to normal lettuce? And why do these burgers taste funny?"

Me: "That's cause they are vegan burgers and kale is healthy maybe if you eat a bit more of it you'll lose that beer baby you have in your stomach."

Thato: "Leave my baby alone he's happy. Why are you eating vegan burgers?"



Me: "Because I am vegan." He stops chewing whatever is in his mouth and looks at me.

Thato: "What kind of Zulu man are you?"

Me: "The healthy kind. Have you found anything on that guy?" I walk back to the lounge and he follows me with his plate of food.

Thato: "Well I was able to clear out the picture." He hands me the picture. "Do you recognize him?"

Me: "No who is he?"

Thato: "A ghost. I ran his face through all the databases I could get into. I have ran his face in the SAPS database still nothing. I think what we need would be his fingerprints. He wasnt wearing any gloves when he cut the brakes."

Me: "The car was burnt beyond recognition how will we get his fingerprints?"

Thato: "Well plan B. I sent out his picture to my contacts on the streets if he is well known then we should have a hit by the end of the day."

Me: "Okay. Something positive. Thanks man."

Thato: "I found something else."

Me: "What?"

Thato: "I decided to look into your brothers financial records and his broke."

Me: "Broke as in he has no money at all."

Thato: "Broke as in he lost the farm he has a gambling problem and he owes a whole lot of money." I sigh and run my hands down my face.

Me: "How much does he owe?"

Thato: "I'm not sure yet but he started selling cows at the farm almost two years ago he would win sometimes then a year ago it seemed like his luck ran out and he started really losing. He sold atleast three cows every week."

Me: "He said the cows were dying because of some disease."

Thato: "Well he lied. He sold the last of the cows about two months before Melusi died. From there he moved to the farming machinery.

Once those were gone he gambled the farm and lost."

Me: "So that explains it. But what I don't get is why he thought he could get his hands on any of Melusi's assets."

Thato: "He probably thought he could get his hands on his life policy not necessarily his assets. Melusi took out a life policy when he took out a loan with the bank about eight years ago and in order for him to get the loan....."

Me: "He had to have a life policy."

Thato: "Yes and since he was still a bachelor he registered Msizi as a beneficiary and he told Msizi about it. But he forgot to tell him that after he got married he removed his name from the beneficiary list and he put his wife and then when his son was born he added him too."

Me: "So he did all this for a life insurance policy that wasn't even in his name?"

Thato: "To be fair he didn't know he was no longer on it."

Whether he knew or not didn't really matter to me at this point he lost the farm we bought for him he killed his brother and now he might even be going after Sethu. I need to change my beneficiary list too before he even finds out he is in there.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

If anyone had told me a year ago that I would lose one brother and have the other investigated for his murder I would have laughed in your face.

It's been two days since TT told me about Msizi's finances and honestly I'm still having a hard time wrapping my head around this news.

I've been debating whether or not I should confront him about this but its highly likely he will lie to my face I mean he has been lying this whole time. I decide instead to ask the only two people who would know about this and will probably even be more than happy to hide it.

I drove home around lunch time hoping that Msizi wont be there when I confront my parents. I parked the car outside the gate and walked into the house. The backdoor was open so I decided to check there. I found them sitting under the peach tree. I grabbed a chair and went out to sit with them.

Ma: "Mcebo what are you doing here?"

Me: "I need to talk to you about something."

Baba: "As long as its not about Sethu and her shenanigans."

Me: "No it's about your son. Why is Msizi all of a sudden spending more time here instead of being at the farm?"

Ma: "This is his home too is he not supposed to be here?" And the defences team rises.

Me: "What's going on with the farm?"

Baba: "Its nothing for you to worry about. Msizi will sort it out soon as he has everything in order." I guess 'everything' is the life insurance payout that he wont even get. As if the gods were not done yet Msizi shows up. He walks over to where we are and stands behind ma. I



notice he has a file under his arm. My guess is he just went to claim for the money.

Msizi: "Bafo."

Me: "Mwelase ubuyaphi (where are you from?)"

Msizi: "Just doing some work."

Ma: "How did it go?"

Msizi: "Good I gave them the documents and they said they'll call me soon as everything is ready."

Ma: "That's good."

Me: "What exactly is happening?"

Msizi: "None of your business." Oh okay.

Me: "If you say so. So Melusi's life insurance policy paid out last week." They all turn to look at me. I knew that would get their attention.

Baba: "What are you talking about?"

Me: "I mean his life insurance policy it paid out last week."

Msizi: "No it didnt I just filed the rest of the documents they wanted today and since I am the beneficiary it will pay out to me." And just like that he showed himself. I saw little droplets of sweat forming on his forehead. I shouldn't be enjoying him squirming but its quite nice to see.

Me: "I'm sure he forgot to tell you but he changed his beneficiary when he got married

he removed you and put Sethu and Asi." I see his chest moving up and down in an abnormal way. I hope he doesn't get a heart attack before I can prove what he did.

Baba: "You are lying. Melusi would have told us if he had done that."

Me: "Why would he tell you that? His finances are not anyone's business but his own." Msizi unbuttons the few top buttons on his shirt before sitting flat on the ground. "Bafo why are you so stressed?" The droplets of sweat have now started moving down his face if anyone would see him now they would think he has been running a marathon in the scorching heat.

Ma: "I dont believe this."

Me: "Why? It's not like you need the money. You have the policy that paid out to you and the

farm is still working so why are you all so worried about money that's not yours?" A part of me is hoping they will tell me the truth but knowing these three hell will probably freeze over first.

Baba: "And how are we supposed to pay for your sisters' education without that money?"

Me: "Like I said theres the farm we've always sold the cattle to butcheries and stuff so what's going to stop that from happening now. Theres the vegetables. We do still have cattle right?" I look at each of them and all I got was an Eish from mum. "What's going on with the farm?"

All I got was crickets. I decided to just leave them since no one wants to tell me what's going on. I drove back to my place and there was a

car in the driveway. I know it's not TT because I drove him to the airport before I went home so its highly impossible for him to be back in Durban so soon. I drove in and parked behind the car.

I got out and went into the house. I found Zoey sitting in the lounge with papers sprawled out on the coffee table and a laptop next to her.

Me: "Whose car is parked outside?"

Zoey: "Its a rental."

Me: "How long have you been here?"

Zoey: "Two hours." She said not even turning to look at me.

Me: "And you are already working?"

Zoey: "Work never sleeps plus your British clients are not so happy with you right now." I walk over and sit next to her.

Me: "What are they not happy about?"

Zoey: "You moving back here. They think it might be problematic especially when they need to get in touch with you."

Me: "Mr McCallister needs to get with the problem."

Zoey: "He is a 78 year old racist British man who still believes technology is a way for the government to spy on us."

Me: "Mxm."

Zoey: "So I have cut down the office's to the best three that you need to make a choice from."

Me: "You dont even know the places I saw."

Zoey: "I saw the pictures and since you have been dragging your feet I decided to make things easier for you so all you have to do is close your eyes and choose one."

Me: "Well since you have everything under control I will be back I have to go see someone." I get up to leave.

Zoey: "Your wife?" I stop and turn around.

Me: "What?"

Zoey: "I said your wife you are going to see her."

Me: "How do you know that?"

Zoey: "I found this." She picks up the marriage certificate from under a pile of papers. "I guess you forgot to mention that. Congratulations."

Me: "Its not what you think."

Zoey: "I think you are married. Am I wrong?"

Me: "No but...."



Zoey: "Then its exactly what I think. You got married and you didnt even have the common courtesy to let me know."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Zoey: "Yeah whatever I have work to do." She turns back to the laptop and continues working.

I could try and explain to her why I did what I did but if there's one thing I know about women

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when they are angry there is nothing much you can do to make things better. I decided to let her be. I drove to Sethu's place and found her by the pool with Tshepi and Asi. She seemed happy content but in the time I have been around her and seen her tears and pain seeing her laugh is quite something. I join them and maybe just forget a bit about my own problems although I cant help thinking about Zoey. I tried to save one woman and ended up hurting another. My brother was right. You can never climb a tree with both hands full.



MSIZI

This is bad really bad. This was my saving grace that money was meant to save me and now I am going to lose everything. Why would Melusi change his policy and not even tell me about it. I'm sure he told Mcebo those two always thought they were better than me because they were educated and had money forgetting all the sacrifices I made for them to even be where they are if it wasnt for me they would still be stuck KwaMashu probably selling drugs. Mxm. They have no gratitude. But if Sethu already got the money then why did the lady at those offices tell me they will call me? What kind of game are they playing?

I left my parents and went back to my old house. I can believe I am back here living in an RDP house again. I left this shithole seven years ago but now I am back again. That farm

was supposed to be my key to freedom and now it's all gone. And that idiot Melusi left everything to his wife. What kind of idiot even does that. Nx.

I got home and found MaZulu in the kitchen cooking.

Me: "What are you making?"

MaZulu: "Pap and cabbage."

Me: "Where's the meat?" She closes the pot and turns around to look at me.

MaZulu: "There is no meat. Didn't you say you'd ask your father for some money?"

Me: "I bought meat two days ago."

MaZulu: "Well it's finished." There was a knock on the door before I could even answer her. I went to open and my worst nightmare just came through.

Scelo: "Your time is up." He said walking past me I to the house.

Me: "I know I just need a little more time I'll get you everything you need."

Scelo: "You asked for a month I gave you two and then I added another month on top of that. You are abusing my generosity ndoda and I hate it when people do that."

Me: "I know I know I promise I'll find the money I'll buy back the farm."

Scelo: "Are you planning on winning the lotto in the next couple of days?"

Me: "Eish." I say running my hands through my hairless head.

Scelo: "I'll come back in two days either you have my money ready or the title deed. I'm

done playing games with you." He says and walks out.

MaZulu: "Waze waylanda inkinga wayfaka endlini. (You've brought trouble to us.)" She says coming in from the kitchen making me even angry.

Me: "Asuthule ngsacabanga. (Shut up and let me think.)"

MaZulu: "Ucabangani Msizi (What are you thinking about?) I begged you to stop gambling I begged you but you wouldn't stop look at where we are now." She says coming to stand in front of me.



Me: "Okay ke syazi (miss know it all) what do you suggest I do? Mhmm? What? Cause I cant turn back the hands of time. What do you suggest I do."

MaZulu: "Ask your brother for help. You know he can get you out of this."

Me: "Why? So he can continue to look down on me? Never. I'll get that farm back." I said and started pacing up and down.

MaZulu: "HOW MSIZI HOW?" She shouted at me and I turned around and gave her a backslap that ended with her on the floor.

Me: "I told you to stop I'm trying to think." She balanced herself on the old sofa and got up and wiped the tears falling down her face.

MaZulu: "Hitting me wont change the facts  
Msizi you fucked up." She walks away rubbing  
her cheek.

I've got myself into messy situations before and  
I got myself out but now I'm not sure how to get  
out of this one.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

I am beginning to think people especially males have a hard time taking orders from a woman. This week alone I've had to suspend two male employees because they think I don't know what I am doing. I went down to the depot just to check on things and talk to the manager there instead I found two of our drivers taking a nap. When I checked their delivery schedule I found that they haven't delivered when they should have delivered the previous day and I was the one getting complaints. I went in to see the manager and he was sitting in his office with his feet up and entertaining some girl. I had to fire him on the spot and put these two idiot drivers on suspension pending an investigation. As bad as I almost felt I had to make an example just so these men learn to respect me.

Today I have a meeting with one of our clients we transport vegetables for him and deliver to stores all over the country. I don't know why he wants to meet with me because everything has been going right we haven't had complaints from either him or his buyers. He walks in five minutes before our the time we set for the meeting. I hear the door open and when I look up I see a familiar face. I know him from somewhere. He walks in with a puzzled look on his face like he is also recognizing me.

Me: "Hi. Please have a seat." He pulls the chair back and sits down.

Him: "I know you from somewhere right?"

Me: "I'm not sure although your face looks familiar." A frown pops up on his face like he is deep in thought. I look at him waiting for him to say something. And then he laughs. I guess he just remembered where he knows me from.

Him: "You are the lady that doesn't like wine."  
Huh.

Me: "What?"

Him: "You are the lady who broke a couple of bottles of wine at Woolies a few weeks back." And then it makes sense. That's where I know him from. The SAS part though I don't remember his name. Hopefully he doesn't remember mine either because it would be embarrassing for me to even ask him.

Me: "Okay now it makes sense. It's nice to see you again."

Him: "Sethu right?" Oh God I dont know his name.

Me: "Yes that would be me." Theres an awkward silence soon as I say that.

Him: "You dont remember my name do you?"

Me: "I'm sorry." He laughs.

Him: "Its okay Scelo Scelo Vilakazi." Bingo.

Me: "Its nice to meet you again Scelo Vilakazi. So what can I do for you?"

Scelo: "If I had known you were the one who took over I would have come sooner."

Me: "Oh really you knew Melusi?"

Scelo: "Yeah he was an arrogant self centered son of a bitch but he was good at what he did so I cant complain." I am shocked not because of what he said but because he said it with a straight face he wasnt bluffing or joking.

Me: "I take it you didnt get along very well?"

Scelo: "Outside of business no. But the man knew his job and so I cant fault him on that. But other than that he reminded me too much of me which made it hard for him to be intimidated."

Me: "Interesting."

Scelo: "So did you work closely with him before taking over?"

Me: "He was my husband." The smile on his face disappeared like mist in the morning sun. A part of me wanted to save him from the awkwardness but I was kind of enjoying watching him squirm. I looked at him but he seemed to be looking at everything but me.

Scelo: "I am so sorry. I know I have a tendency to speak without thinking I am so very sorry." He says after getting his bearings.

Me: "It's okay it's quite nice if I can put it that way to have a different perspective to who he was. No the word I am looking for is refreshing. Yeah it's refreshing."

Scelo: "Yeah I'm sure you are going to tear up my contract now so I have to find another distributor." I chuckle.



Me: "Its okay business is business. Speaking of business shall we get to it."

We talked business and steered clear of the Melusi business even though I could see he was thrown off his bearings. Who knew men can be intimidated too. We finished discussing business and he left not before he apologised about a zillion times. It was actually funny seeing him be uncomfortable like that.

I drove home later and found Mcebo in the kitchen cooking.

Me: "Please dont burn down my kitchen." He turns around from the stove to look at me.

Mcebo: "Hey you are back. Asi is not here."

Me: "Yeah Tshepi has her for the weekend. What are you doing here."

Mcebo: "Well I went to pick him up from school came back here to start cooking cause I thought you would be late. Tshepi showed up and took Asi and since I couldn't leave the food I figured I might as well finish."

Me: "I didn't know that I'm sorry i would have told you."

Mcebo: "Dont worry about it but i did send you a text." I take out my phone and sure enough there is a message from him. And one from Tshepi saying she has Asi.

Me: "Right. I'm sorry about that."

Mcebo: "Its okay I'm done anyway."

Me: "Okay

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I'm done anyway."

Me: "Okay so will you join me."

Mcebo: "Unfortunately not I already made plans with a friend. But I can cancel."

Me: "No please dont go have fun you cant be babysitting me all the time. Go have fun."

Mcebo: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes I'm sure. Go have fun"

Mcebo: "Okay." He takes off the apron and places it on the table. He takes his jacket from the back of the chair and puts it on. "Okay then. Call me if you need anything."

Me: "I will. Thank you." He gives me a hug and walks out.

I lock the door soon as he walks out and turn the enable the alarm. His food smells nice I'll give him that. I open the pot and its lamb stew and dumplings with beetroot on the side. I take a piece of the meat and it tastes divine. Even though I wasn't really hungry five minutes ago I think I am now. I rush upstairs and take a quick shower put on my pajamas and head back downstairs. I dish up and pour myself a glass of wine I sit in front of the TV and just enjoy the meal.

I don't know how I ended up finishing the whole plate but I thoroughly enjoyed it and I feel no shame at all. I take the dishes to the kitchen

and clean them up and head back to the couch. I lay down and before I know it I drift off to sleep.

I woke up to something cold on my neck and it was uncomfortable because it was digging into my skin. I lift my arm up to remove whatever it is that's hurting me only to find what seems like a cold blade. And it's only then that I notice a heavy presence hovering above me. I open my eyes and come face to face with familiar eyes although these ones are covered in a balaclava. I feel tears sting my eyes. I say an internal prayer thanking God that my son is not here to witness whatever this is.

Me: "What do you want? I dont have any money in the house but you can have whatever you want."

Him: "Do you have five million?" He speaks and I can tell he has something that disguises his voice clearly this is someone I know.

Me: "No!"

Him: "Of course you do in your bank account." I try to shake my head but the knife cuts into my skin so I stop trying.

Me: "I dont have that much money."

Him: "You do I k ow your husband left you everything and he so happens to have been

rich." A part of me refuses to believe this but those eyes belong to Msizi I've seen them way too many times to not know them.

Me: "He..... He left it to our son and it's in a trust that even I cant touch."

Him: "You are lying what about his life insurance policy?"

Me: "Its also in the trust I cant touch it."

Him: "YOU ARE LYING TO ME!" He shouts and lucky for me he pulls the knife away from my neck and he starts pacing up and down giving me the chance to sit up. "You are lying you are lying." He starts repeating those words over and



over again while pacing up and down. I look around to see if he is with anyone and theres a guy sitting on the dining chair with a gun next to him on the table. My heart started beating out of control. Could this be the day I die?

I sat there and watched him pacing the floor. Even though I could see his eyes and I knew who he was my survival instincts kicked in and I couldn't say his name. He had gone to extremes to make sure his disguise was watertight and if I called him by name I would be putting my life at risk. I need to find a way out of here even if it means offering him some sort of incentive.

Me: "Uhm..... I know I dont have money so maybe you can take the TV theres a computer in the study and its expensive you can have that too." He stopped and looked at me before looking at his friend then back to me.

Him: "Give me your car keys." I pointed to the key on the table. He went over there and took it and put it in his pocket. "The other keys." He said walking back to me.

Me: "I dont have any other keys."

Him: "Melusi has a Maserati where are the keys for it?"

Me: "His brother is using it."

Him: "What brother? Mcebo?"

Me: "Yes." He sat back on the couch in defeat. His friend got up and hurried to me and put his gun on my head and I swear every sweat gland in my body had opened up to five times its size and sweat was just oozing out.

Friend: "You are wasting time open that laptop." I do as I am told. "Get into your banking app and transfer all the money into this account." He hands me a piece of paper with the account number. I log in to the banking app and transferred the money.

Me: "Done." He closed the laptop and picked it up.

Friend: "Bra lets go we are not going to get anything here." He takes the laptop and puts it

under his arm. He walks over to Msizi and drags him out and before I know it my car is driving out.

I get up and rush to the window to make sure they are gone. I rush back and take my phone from under the cushion I was sleeping on and call Mcebo. He doesn't pick up so I call him again and this time he answers and I can tell he was sleeping.

Mcebo: "Sethu?"

Me: "Msizi was here he took my car and my laptop and he had a knife to my neck and his

friend had a gun to my head." I said not missing a beat.

Mcebo: "Sethu slow down. What's going on?" I take a deep breath and start over again. I hear shuffling on the other end before he lets out a fuck.

Mcebo: "Lock the doors I'm coming. And take your phone and reverse that money. Okay." I nod my head and hang up. I do as I am told and luckily for me the reverse is easy and it's done in no time. I'm pretty sure that was an invite for them to come back because once they find out the money is gone I'm screwed.

I started pacing the floor watching the clock and it seemed to be going really slow. After what seemed like forever I heard a car outside. I peeked in the window hoping it wasnt Msizi and his sidekick and lucky for me it was Mcebo. I quickly opened the door and threw myself at him and just sobbed.

Mcebo: "Hey hey dont cry. Come on." He pulled me into the house and sat me down on the couch. He went to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water. "Here drink this." I took the glass and drank the water. "What happened?"

Me: "Your brother happened. He came here with his friend I dont even know how they got in he said he wanted money." I wipe the tears.

Mcebo: "What did the friend look like?"

Me: "I dont know they were wearing balaclavas and Msizi had this thing that disguised his voice."

Mcebo: "So how did you know it was him?"

Me: "His eyes. And the fact that he wanted money life insurance policy money to be precise."

Mcebo: "The son of a bitch. I'll get your car back okay I promise. In the meantime you are moving in with me. Clearly you are not safe here." He left me on the couch and hurried up the stairs. He came back a few minutes later with two suitcases and took them to his car. He came back and stood in front of me. "Let's go." I

get up and followed him to the car. I got in and he drove out.

I watched my house fade as we drove out. Is this going to be my life from now on looking over my shoulder and sleeping with one eye open. For the longest time I had looked to the Mazibuko's as family but now i have to hide from one of their own. And now even my own house is not safe anymore.

Me: "We need to go past the police station."



Mcebo: "What?"

Me: "The police station. I'm going to report my car stolen and open a case of housebreaking against your brother."

Mcebo: "I said I'd get your car back."

Me: "I know and then he will come again and this time he wont take my car but my life. I'm done living in fear Mcebo I'm done running. If Msizi wants a fight he will get one starting by reporting him to the police." He looked at me like I had lost my mind. But I am done running Msizi might have killed my husband and if he wants to kill me too he must know I wont die without putting up a fight.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I'm done running. I've been living in fear for way too long. Instead of mourning my husband I was busy fighting for his inheritance and now I have to fight for my life. I need to make sure my son has some remnant of his father's legacy left to find. And if I allow the likes of Msizi to instill fear in me I will find myself in a coffin and leaving my son with no one to protect him.

It's been a month since I laid charges against Msizi lucky for me the cops found my car before he could destroy it or sell it. He was charged with Housebreaking robbery and attempted murder. To put the cherry on top the Detective I found was a no nonsense man who decided to dig deeper after Mcebo showed him all the evidence against Msizi he had dug up with Thato. He presented the evidence to the prosecutor who decided to add a murder charge on top of the charges already pressed against him. He was even denied bail although he still refused to admit what he had done.

The rift between me and my in-laws has gone from something that could have been fixed over time to something that will never be fixed. I knew they wouldn't support me and now I know

for a fact things between us will never be the same again and my son will never know his father's side of the family heck by the look of things the only family he will ever know is me and Mcebo because even my parents haven't bothered to reach out to me. My family now consists of just three people and I am okay with that.

I was in my office finishing up my work for the day when there was a knock on the door before someone walked in. I looked up to find Detective Khubonye.

Me: "Detective."

Khubonye: "Mrs Mazibuko how are you?" He sat down across from me.

Me: "I'm okay. What can I do for you?"

Khubonye: "Well I thought you might want to know we added fraud charges to Msizi's charge sheet."

Me: "Really? Why?"

Khubonye: "Well the insurance company laid the charges against him because he tried to claim for a policy he wasn't even a beneficiary of. And he has decided to take a plea."

Me: "What does that mean?"

Khubonye: "It means he pled guilty to all charges so there won't be a trial he is going

straight to jail. All that's left now is for the judge to hand out a sentence but basically it's done so you can sleep peacefully now."

Me: "Thank you Detective."

Khubonye: "No thank you for coming forward. God knows how far he would have gone to get what he wants." He got up and shook my hand before walking out.

It's over it's really over. Maybe now I can breath easy. Now I can focus on rebuilding my life and mourning my husband in peace. I stood up from the my chair and stood by the window watching the sea. I closed my eyes and just tried to digest everything that had happened this past few months. I went from losing my husband to fighting for my own life. But now I can rest easy.

I packed up my things and went to pick up my son from daycare. I figured tonight is a good day so maybe we can indulge on some junk food and some good wine. I got Asi from daycare and headed to the mall and got all the junk food I can find before stocking up on more groceries. We drove home and I dished up for Asi and fed him. Soon as he was done I gave him a bath then put him down to sleep.

I figured since he was asleep I would get myself a glass of wine and enjoy my food in front of the TV. I dished up and made my way to the lounge put on my favourite show Chicago Med and put my feet up. I took one wing from the plate and tried to put it in my mouth but I was disturbed by

a knock on the door. Only two people can get past the gate and actually knock on the door.

I got up and made my way to the door I turned the key and opened. I found Mcebo looking like he had been defeated. A part of me was grateful for his support but I also knew how hard it was for him to be caught between me and his family. No matter how righteous or easy it might seem turning your back on family can take its toll on anybody.

I let him in and he threw himself on the couch and loosened his tie. I figured a meal would do so I dished up for him and poured him a glass of whiskey too. I placed the food down in front of him and and sat next to him. He took the



food and we ate in silence. When we were done I took the plates and glasses to the kitchen and washed them before heading back to the lounge.

Me: "I take it you heard."

Mcebo: "Yeah I heard. He is going to jail."

Me: "How long do you think the judge will give him?"

Mcebo: "I dont know. And quite frankly at this point I dont care. I still have to tell my parents that their favourite son is going to prison."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Mcebo: "Its not your fault. At some point his actions were bound to catch up with him. Has my family got in contact with you?"

Me: "Nope I blocked all of their numbers." He chuckles.

Mcebo: "Lucky you."

Me: "Are you sleeping over?"

Mcebo: "Yeah why not."

Me: "Okay. I think I'm ready for bed so you know your way around here so..."

Mcebo: "Yeah thanks."

I left him on the couch and went to my room. I took a shower before getting into bed with a novel. As much as I knew why Mcebo had done what he did I was grateful for his support. But I also understood how torn he must feel right now. The past few months I think I've become too dependent on him. Yes we are married technically but he has given up so much of his life just to be by my side and fight for me even against his own blood. I wish I knew what I could do to thank him.

I switched the side lamp off and got ready to sleep when I heard a knock on the door. I already knew who it was so I told him to come in. He walked in with a towel wrapped around his waist.

Mcebo: "Sorry to disturb you but there's no hot water in my room so I was wondering if I can use your shower?"

Me: "Sure why not." He flashed his pearly white smile and walked to the bathroom. I dont know why or how but I found myself watching him move every muscle in his body glistened in the dim light of the room. But it was the streaks of moonlight rays seeping in through the enclosed blinds that made him look almost godlike. The movement of his muscles was almost majestic.

I was brought back to earth when the bathroom door closed and shame washed over me. Why am I even looking at his muscles? He is my

brother in law for heavens sake. I covered myself with my duvet and tried to let my shameful thoughts go. I closed my eyes and said a little prayer asking God to cleanse me of these thoughts that I do not need. Instead of those thoughts evaporating it felt like they were multiplying especially when I felt the bathroom door open and I knew he was coming out probably dripping wet. Dear Lord please forgive me.



MCEBO

I was parked out of my father's house for almost an hour trying to master enough courage to walk into the house and tell them their son was going to prison for a very long long time. But I couldn't do it. I couldn't be the one to break their hearts. The past month since Sethu laid those charges they have told me I need to make a choice either I stand with them or I stand with Sethu. I chose Sethu for one in reason I know if I had a wife who was in Sethu's shoes Melusi would have done all he could to protect her so I felt obligated to do the same for his wife.

I decided to drive off and not see my family. I drove to Sethu's place because I didnt have the energy to face Zoey

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so I felt.obligated to do the same for his wife.



I decided to drive off and not see my family. I drove to Sethu's place because I didn't have the energy to face Zoey although she has been incredibly amazing since she got here. But I also had to do one thing at a time and unfortunately right now she wasn't a priority to me. Work wise I knew I had to show up anytime she needed me to but for our personal relationship I had to put that on pause also because I was too much of a coward to face her and explain my marriage to Sethu without hurting her.

After Sethu went to sleep I stayed up for a while watching soccer and trying to calm myself down but that didn't work. I went up to the guest room hoping to take a shower and sleep but the water was cold I wasn't sure if it was just this room or the geyser broke. I went to the other bedroom to check if I can have more luck but I

turned on the faucet and the water was hot yay for me. I took the towel off of me but soon as I put my one foot into the shower I was hit by cold water. Shoot its cold outside and I dont think a cold shower will help me sleep and I really need my sleep. Theres one more bathroom I haven't tried.

I put my towel on and went to Sethu's room I was hoping she would be sleeping already so I can sneak in and out without her even knowing I was there but I saw the light under her door and i had no choice but to knock. She told me to come in and i turned the door knob and got in lucky for me the room was a bit dim except for

the moon illuminating the room and the reading lamp next to her bed.

I told her why I was there and she told me to use her bathroom. I walked to the bathroom and I could swear I felt her eyes pierce my back but I couldn't turn to be sure because this was awkward enough as it is.

I closed the bathroom door and decided to take my shower before things get too awkward. Lucky for me the water was hot this side well atleast it was for like five minutes but that's the

standard for quick showers so I was good. I walked out and lucky for me Sethu was already under the covers which made it easy for me to go back to the guest room without any more awkwardness.

I got to my room and got straight to bed. But like every night since this whole mess began I had a hard time getting sleep. I used to actually enjoy my sleep but now I am lucky if I get three hours of sleep in a night. I figured since I cant sleep I might as well get some work done. I put on my underwear and head downstairs. I take the keys from the side table and went out to my car to get my laptop.

I came back into the house and while I was walking up the stairs I came face to face with Sethu going down. This is awkward. I covered myself with my laptop.

Me: "Hey you cant sleep?"

Sethu: "No I just had a bad dream I need a glass of warm milk." I nod my head.

Me: "Okay I cant sleep so I figured I'd do some work instead."

Sethu: "Okay I'll see you in the morning." She said as she walked past me. I moved my laptop from my front to my back. The downside of wearing boxer briefs that are tight.

I tiptoed to my room God alone knows. I got to my room and closed the door before letting out the breath I didnt know I was holding. I need to stop coming here now I've done all I can to protect Sethu and Asi and now that Msizi is going to jail they will be safe they dont need protecting anymore.

I am coward only when it comes to women though. I think my biggest fear with them is hurting them the same way I cant face Zoey and come clean to her is the same reason I

cant wrap my head around these weird feelings I've been having for Sethu. She is my brother's widow and whatever feelings I think I have cannot be explored. I dont think that would be a good way to honour my brother.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Whoever said by 2020 we will have flying cars needs to be arrested and charged with universal treason because they failed to make that prediction come true because if they had just worked a little harder I would be in my flying car right now and flying to work instead I am stuck in traffic.

I've been stuck here for almost forty five minutes. I don't even know what is happening in the front but on the radio it says there is an accident on the intersection it's raining so accidents are bound to happen. As much as I sympathize with whoever got into that accident I still need to get to work. After what seemed like forever the traffic started moving.



I got to the office and my super amazing PA already had a cup of coffee and a donut waiting for me at my desk. I sit down and take a sip of the piping hot beverage and it feels amazing. But I need to get to work I'm already thirty minutes behind and I have a meeting in twenty minutes.

I fire up my laptop and get to work. And exactly twenty minutes later there is a knock on my door talk about being punctual. I tell the person to come in and the door opens instead of a client walking in a huge bunch of flowers enter first in the arms of someone I dont even know. They get in and place the flowers on my desk which blocks my view of the door. I stand up to perhaps read a card if there is any but there isn't one. I pick up the phone to call Amanda but the door opens again and this time two huge

bouquets of flowers are brought in and placed on the coffee table.

The two guys walk out and someone else walks in this time carrying a huge gift basket that's covering their face. I hope these people aren't trying to kill me. He walks over to my desk and stands in front of me but he doesn't put the basket down.

Me: "Hi."

Him: "Dont kill me." Okay this is weird. But his voice sounds familiar.

Me: "Scelo." He moves the basket away from his face and places it on top of my desk.

Scelo: "I know this is long overdue but I came to say I am sorry."

Me: "For what?"

Scelo: "All the things I said about your husband. I should have been a little more sensitive. I'm really sorry." I take the basket and open the lace covering. There is a variety of fruits mangoes litchi pineapples and even bananas and grapes.

Me: "This is nice thanks but it wasn't necessary."

Scelo: "It was. I should not have said that to you." I smile and move the flowers of the desk and put them on the corner table.

Me: "That's very kind of you. And thank you for the flowers." He smiles and takes a seat. "Can we get down to business?"

Scelo: "Yes please. So I just acquired a new farm and I will need more trucks to transport the produce."

Me: "Congratulations. I see farming is a very lucrative business."

Scelo: "It has its downsides but one thing you can bet on people will always need food."

Me: "True. So where is this farm." He gives me the address and I write it down. "Okay then

soon as you have produce for us to pick up you will let us know and I'll make sure there'll be refrigerated trucks ready and waiting."

Scelo: "Perfect. I should get going you will I invoice me for the extra trucks." He says getting up.

Me: "Will do." I shake his hand and he turns to leave. I look at the new farm address and I know it. This is the farm that Msizi lost. I get up and hurry out to see if I can find Scelo maybe I'm just jumping the gun here. Lucky for me I find him waiting for the lift.

Me: "Hey." He turns around to look at me. "Glad I caught you."

Scelo: "What's wrong. Did I forget something?"

Me: "No you didnt I just have a question."

Scelo: "Okay. What is it."

Me: "Your new farm when did you buy it?"

Scelo: "I didnt buy it actually I won it in a high stakes poker game."

Me: "A poker game?"

Scelo: "Yeah. We should do dinner sometime maybe I'll tell you all about it." The lift opens and he walks in. I turn and go back to my office.

So that's where the farm went. I cant believe Msizi could be that stupid oh wait I do believe it. He's always been an idiot and this just took him to the top of the idiot hierarchy. I take a deep breath I guess theres no hope of ever getting the farm back. Someone like Scelo wouldn't just give it up without a fight even if he got it in a shady way it's his now.

I got back to work and decided to not think about this farm anymore. Msizi is in jail where he belongs the farm is gone theres no point in dwelling on this.

I finished working and as usual I went to pick up Asi from daycare. I drove home and there was an old beat up bakkie in my driveway. I got

closer and realized it was Bab'Mazibuko's bakkie. I wonder what they are doing here. The rain had stopped raining for a while so I decided to park a few meters from him. I got out of my car and walked over to the car and knocked on the window. I think he was sleeping cause soon as I knocked he seemed shocked a bit. He opened the door and got out together with his wife.

Me: "Baba what are you doing here?" His wife walked to the back of the van and opened the back of the bakkie and MaZulu and her kids got out. They seemed to be unloading somethings.

Baba: "Sikulethele umthwalo wakho (we brought you your burden.)." This has to be a joke. His wife comes to stand next to him while MaZulu and her kids pile up their belongings on the grass.



Me: "I'm sorry I dont understand."

Mrs Mazibuko: "What's there not to understand? They need a place to stay. You put their father in jail now they have no one to take care of them so you will do it since you caused all of this mess." I chuckle. These people never give up.

Me: "And I lost my husband because of your son. My son will grow up without a father. Atleast you will get to visit Msizi whenever you want I dont have that luxury."

Bab'Mazibuko: "An eye for an eye leaves the world blind." These people had a hand in Melusi's death. Theres no way parents would be so nonchalant about their sons death. The same son who put food on their table. That's

the only explanation I have right now. They had a hand in my husband's death.

Mrs Mazibuko: "We are leaving opentje gate we want to make sure they are comfortable before we leave." I rush over to my car and take my phone. There is no way in hell I'm even opening that gate because once they get in it wont be easy getting them out. I take my phone and text Mcebo. He texts me back telling me he is on his way.

In five minutes he is parked behind me. He walks to his parents.

Mcebo: "What's going on."

Mrs Mazibuko: "I should have known she would come running to you."

Mcebo: "Rightly so. What are you doing here and what's with all these stuff?"

Bab'Mazibuko: "They have nowhere else to go since their father is in jail."

Mcebo: "And you thought bringing them here was a good idea?"

MamMazibuko: "Where else should we take them. That girl is the reason Msizi is in jail so she should take care of them."

Mcebo: "What happened to their house?"

MamMazibuko: "They have no food no electricity. How are they supposed to live?"

Mcebo: "Please take them back I'll come see you tomorrow and we can talk about this."

Bab'Mazibuko: "No they are staying here."

Mcebo: "Baba if you ever cared about Melusi if you ever gave a fuck about your dead son you will take them back."

Bab'Mazibuko looks at Mcebo for a while before he tells the kids to get back in the car. They also get in and they drive out. I open the gate and drive in with Mcebo following behind me. I park my car and get Asi out he runs straight to

Mcebo and I go into the house. Mcebo and Asi come in laughing and giggling.

I decide to focus on making dinner instead of talking about this. I'm upset these people took my husband from me but that doesn't seem to be enough for them they have to torture me at every turn. I need to get a restraining order maybe that should work. I cook dinner and dish up for everyone. Once we are done eating Mcebo bathes Asi while I clean up in the kitchen.

I've been washing the same plate for a while now with everything playing out in my head over and over again. I didnt even hear Mcebo come in. I feel his hands on my arms and that immediately brings me back to earth.

Mcebo: "I'm sorry about that."

Me: "You need to stop apologizing for things you didn't do. You are not Jesus." He chuckles. I turn around to look at him.

Mcebo: "I know. But it's my family."

Me: "Don't worry about it."

Mcebo: "I need to put an end to this before it gets out of hand not that it hasn't already." He moves me from the sink and takes over washing the dishes. I watch him as he moves around the kitchen. His t-shirt isn't helping matters because every time he lifts his arm or bends to do something his t-shirt somehow

morphs into every book and cranny of his muscles.

I dont know when he finished but I looked up and he was looking at me with a smirk on his face.

Me: "What's wrong?" I asked trying to seem cool but deep inside I was hoping the earth would open up and swallow me whole.

Mcebo: "I've been talking to you for about two minutes now."

Me: "Oh I'm sorry. I have a lot on my mind."

Mcebo: "Okay. I need to get going." He covered the space between us in two strides and his cologne alone sends my senses into overdrive. He hugs me and I'm not sure if its because of months not getting some or what but my body reacts to all this and I feel a tingling sensation deep in between my legs and I swear at that moment any common sense I thought I had suddenly deserted me.

I pulled out from the hug and tried to move back but his hands on my back put a stop to that. I looked up and his face was so close to mine. I could feel his warm breath on my face. I dont know what kind of messy emotion was pushing me but I closed the gap between us and kissed him. He seemed shocked at first and I was afraid he wouldn't kiss me back and just when common sense seems to be returning to me I



try to pull away from him but he moves one hand to my neck and holds me close to him. His other hand pulls me close to him by my waist and pins me to him and devours my lips.

He picks me up and places me on top of the counter. I used to think this counter was a bit high but with him standing in between my legs we seem to be on the same level. A little voice in my head seems to be pleading with me to put a stop to this but my body seems to have taken over. My fingers unbutton his shirt and his muscles feel exactly as I had imagined. Soft and hard at the same time.

He moves his lips down to my neck and with every kiss I feel like he unlocks a new sensitive

part of me. I leaned back on the counter as his hands moved up my thighs. It felt like my body was no longer mine. I thought he would make love to me right there on the counter instead he lifted me up like a piece of paper carried me up the stairs with my legs wrapped around his waist until we got to the bedroom.

They say God forgives us every time we ask for forgiveness right well I guess I'll just have to talk to him tomorrow about this because I dont know if I can stop this not that i want to.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I know I should be used to waking up alone but after last night I had hoped that today would be different. I woke up and Sethu wasn't there. I thought maybe she was in the shower but when I got into the bathroom it was empty. I decided to check out the rest of the house and she wasn't there. Even Asi wasn't in his room.

I decided to take a shower and drive to Richmond to talk to my uncle so we can put an end to this harassment of Sethu by my family.

She cant leave in fear for the rest of her life. I got to Richmond and my uncle was already getting the cows milked.

Me: "Baba." He turned around and gave me a hug.

Baba: "Ndodana what are you doing here so early? Is everything okay at home."

Me: "Not really that's why I am here i need to talk to you."

Baba: "Okay let's go into the house." We walked into the house and he led me to the lounge. "Let me get someone to bring us tea." I sat down while he went to the kitchen and he came back followed by a maid with a tea and

scones. She placed the tray on the coffee table and left. I poured for us and gave my uncle his tea.

Baba: "So how is everyone doing at home?"

Me: "Eish baba things are not good."

Baba: "I heard about Msizi being in jail and losing the farm. What happened exactly?"

Me: "Welk he gambled the farm away and I guess as a way to try and get it back he had Melusi killed hoping to get his life insurance policy money and when that didnt work out he broke into Sethu's house and held a knife to her neck wanting money and then he stole her car." By the time I am done he is shaking his head with his glasses in his hands.

Baba: "And how are you parents taking all this?"

Me: "They are upset naturally and they blame Sethu for everything so much so yesterday they came to her house to drop MaZulu and her kids saying Sethu should take care of them since she put their father in jail."

Baba: "And let me guess your mother was leading in all this?" My uncle and my mum have never got along ever so his reaction is not that much of a surprise honestly.

Me: "I dont know what else to do Baba cause they wanted me to marry her and I did hoping they would leave her alone but they haven't."

Baba: "You married her?"

Me: "It was either that or leave her to the mercy of my family."

Baba: "I guess that makes sense plus tradition allows it so..."

Me: "How do I put an end to this Baba I'm tired of being caught in the middle of this whole mess."

Baba: "Honestly it will take a miracle to fix this your mother is not the person she makes herself out to be and your father might appear to be in control of everything going on but he has your mother whispering in his ear and he listens to everything she says."

Me: "I dont understand how a woman who carried a child for nine months would be so nonchalant about her child killing her other child."

Baba; "I wouldn't be surprised if she had something to do with all this." What?

Me: "What do you mean?"

Baba: "Well I know I probably shouldn't be telling you this but you and Melusi had different mothers."

Me; "What's that supposed to mean?"

Baba: "Your father had an affair and that resulted in Melusi being born unfortunately his mother died when he was a few months old so he had to be raised by your parents." I've never been so confused in my entire life. Sure my parents treated Msizi like some fragile child even when he was wrong but I never ever in my life ever thought it's because Melusi wasn't my mum's child. But what reason does my dad



have for acting the way he does. Shouldn't he at least be on his sons side.

But this explains everything right why they have been so cold towards Sethu. Mum I understand questionably so but dad why would he sit back and let his sons family be treated like this and not say anything. Why would he do that?

After speaking to my uncle I drove home to see my parents. I got home and found my mum in the lounge and no sight of my dad.

Mum: "Hi son what are you doing here?  
Shouldn't you be at work?"

Me; "I should be but I am busy running around  
trying to figure out how to put this family back  
together again."

Mum: "This family will never be together as long  
as Msizi is in jail and not home with his family."

Me: "What about Melusi does he not matter to  
you?"

Mum: "Melusi is dead theres nothing anyone  
can do to bring him back. But Msizi is still alive."

Me: "Did you help Msizi kill Melusi?"

Mum: "How dare you!"

Me: "I know Melusi wasn't your son mama."

Mum: "Melusi was my son."

Me: "Because you raised him sure but not because you birthed him. And that's why you tried so hard to take everything from Sethu."

Mum: "Do you know how hard Msizi worked to make sure this family had food on the table when your father was sick? Do you know the sacrifices he made for Melusi to even get to varsity and soon as he has money he thinks he calls the shots and everyone has to bow to him."

Me: "You know Melusi never did that. He looked up to Msizi and he had respect for him even buying that farm was Melusi's idea and this is

the thanks he get? Really mama. I dont believe you."

Mum: "You can shout and scream all.ypu want but that girl is still going to make sure that MaZulu and her children are taken care off

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evening it's the last thing I do." I stand up and look at her.

Me: "No ma she wont. And neither will I. I'm done with you and I'm done with this family."

Mum: "You're turning your back on your family for that girl?"

Me: "No mama I'm going to do whatever it takes to protect Melusi's family and if that means turning my back on you then so be it. Until you realize what you have done I'm done. And you can get a job and take care of your sons family."

I turned and walked away with her calling out my name. I dont know what I had expected when I came here but it wasn't this I had hoped

my mum would tell me this was a misunderstanding but clearly I was wrong.

I decided to drive to the office to check on things before heading back to Sethu's so we can talk about last night. This office is coming together nicely. Zoey is doing the best job. I get into what's supposed to be my office and find her on the phone talking to somebody giggling. She hangs up soon as she sees me.

Me: "Dont stop on my account." She smiles. She seems happy.

Zoey: "I was done anyway. So what are you doing here?"

Me: "I just came to check on the progress."

Zoey: "Well it's going good. We should officially start work on Monday and I already have two employees waiting already. You will meet them on Monday."

Me: "Thank you. I dont know what I would do without you."

Zoey: "Yep and to show my appreciation you are giving me a raise." I cant argue with that.

Me: "Okay I need to go."

Zoey: "Before you go I need to borrow your car."

Me: "Why?"

Zoey: "I have a date."

Me: "With who?"

Zoey: "No one you know."

Me: "Okay. Just be safe." I hand her the keys and order an uber. "Are you sure you will be Okay though."

Zoey: "I'll be fine Mcebo I figured I was done sitting at home moping over you." Okay that kind of hurt.



Me: "I'm sorry."

Zoey: "Dont be. We'll always be friends anyway." My phone beeps indicating that the uber is here. I give her a hug and head out. I ask the uber driver to pass by a McDonald's drive through so I can buy food. I get to Sethu's and she is still not home. I guess I'll have to wait.



SETHU

I've never done this before sneaking out that is. Even as a teenager I respected my grandparents way too much to sneak in and out of their home or maybe its because soon as I started my period my grandmother told me flat out that if I ever came in contact with a boy i would get pregnant. Pregnancy wasnt on my agenda so I stayed far away from them. But now I am grown and sneaking out of my own home.

I woke up as early as half past four in the morning. I took a quick shower and got ready for work making sure not to wake up Mcebo. I decided to just take Asi as he is because it was too early for him to be up anyway. I got his lunchbox ready and pu his school clothes in the car. I strapped him into the car seat and off we went to Tshepi's house.

We got to Tshepi's place and she buzzed us in and by the time I parked the car she was already waiting by the door. She helped me take Asi into the house and place him on the couch. I covered him in a throw and went to the kitchen where Tshepi was already making coffee.

Tshepi: "Okay so what's going on?" She asked as she handed me my cup of coffee. I took a deep breath.

Me: "I slept with Mcebo." I'm not sure what the expression on her face was cause it sure as hell wasnt shock but it wasnt happiness either or maybe I am reading into this way too much. "Say something."

Tshepi: "I dont know what to say. But I do have one question. Was it really so bad that you had to run away?" Trust Tshepi to find a joke in all of this.

Me: "Tshepi this is serious."

Tshepi: "I know that's why I'm asking. I mean I thought someone like Mcebo would know how to satisfy a woman."

Me: "He can."

Tshepi: "Then why are you here when you should be getting imorning glory right now."

Me: "Its not that simple."

Tshepi: "It is actually. He is your husband at some point you were bound to have sex."

Me: "Then why does it feel like I just betrayed Melusi?" She walks over to me and wipes the tear that just fell down my cheeks.

As magical as last night was I cant help feeling like I betrayed my Melusi's memory. Iys barely

been a year since he passed away and I am already riding another man's dick. I know Melusi is not here to even feel betrayed but I can help how I feel. I loved him and now I am busy playing house with his brother. What about Mcebo's girlfriend? Where does she factor in all this? I know he said he didnt have a girlfriend but I'm sure there is a girl somewhere he has feelings for.

I drove to work and spent the whole day daydreaming about last night. I dont think I got any work done honestly cause anytime the door opened all I could think about was maybe that's Mcebo I was a nervous wreck and I didnt know what to do with myself. I drove home in the evening and said a silent prayer when I got in and his car wasnt there.

I get Asi out of the car and open the door and lo and behold sitting on my couch is Mcebo. He's here he is right here.

Me: "Hi!"

Mcebo: "Hey I brought food." I look on the kitchen counter and there's a McDonald's paper bag. I decide to leave them in the lounge and maybe waist time in the kitchen but I feel his presence behind me and my heart starts racing. "You good?"

Me: "Yeah I'm okay."

Mcebo: "So you left early this morning."



Me: "Yeah I had an early meeting." He puts his hands on my shoulders and turns me around to face him.

Mcebo: "What happened this morning and this time please tell me the truth." I let out a sigh and play with the dishcloth.

Me: "Well truth is I felt bad about last night. It felt like I betrayed Melusi."

Mcebo: "I understand. But we did nothing wrong. I mean we are married."

Me: "I know I just cant help feeling guilty." He came closer and gave me a hug and my already racing heart went into overdrive and I could see my daydreams coming into reality. I swear this should be considered a crime. He kissed me on the top of my head and I just wanted him to kiss my lips instead.

Mcebo: "We have to feed Asi." I opened my eyes and pulled away from him. I didnt miss the smirk on his face either.

Me: "Right I'll dish up and bring the food." He smiled and went back to the lounge. I don't know what tomorrow holds but after having a knife held to my neck and a gun held to my head maybe I should just live in the moment and let tomorrow take care of itself.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

It's been a while since I've done this waking up next to a man and not feel bad about it. I woke up almost an hour ago but I still don't have the strength to get out of bed although my bladder is putting the pressure on and soon I will have to go to the toilet. Mcebo is still sleeping I can tell by the rhythm of his heartbeat and his breathing.

I move my head away from his chest and back to my side of the bed and just watch him sleep. He is facing up and the outline of his face is

beautiful. I grab my phone from the side table wanting to take a picture but when I power on the phone I am met with Melusi's smiling face as my wallpaper and then my heart starts beating faster than normal.

Will I ever get over the guilt? I know Melusini's gone and he isn't coming back but I can't help how I feel I was with him for over ten years and it took me less than a year to move on to another man and even worse his own brother.

I put the phone back on the table and get out of bed. I put on my gown and head to the bathroom. I get into the shower and try to just clear my mind. I don't know how long this guilt will last cause as much as I am taking this

whole new relationship a day at a time I cant help how I feel but also don't want Mcebo to feel like he isnt good enough or cant live up to the man that Melusi was.

I get out the shower and go back into the bedroom with a towel covering me. I get dressed and go wake Asi up and get him ready for school. Once I am done I take him downstairs and give him his breakfast while I make our lunch boxes.

I finished feeding him and took the dishes to the sink. I was busy washing the dishes when I felt him behind me.

Mcebo: "You're up early." I turned to look at him.

Me: "No you're up late. Are you not going to work?" His face lit up and I could have sworn he was about to burst out laughing but I guess the frown on my face made him reconsider. "What's funny?"

Mcebo: "I know you enjoy working but today is Saturday you dont work on Saturdays." Oh flip. I close my eyes and when I open them Mcebo is giggling. I hit him with the dish cloth and he laughs.

Me: "Its not funny."

Mcebo: "Actually it is you are in full formal wear on a Saturday. It's funny." I punch him on the shoulder and leave him there laughing. I go upstairs and change to something casual.

I go back downstairs and Mcebo is drinking a shake while chasing after Asi who is busy giggling and laughing. I decide to join them.

My phone rings and I pick it up and look at the caller ID its Tshepi.

Me: "Hey."

Tshepi: "I'm outside open up." She hangs up. I buzz her in and wait for her by the door. I hear her park and I open the door and walk out. She gets out of the car and opens the boot. She gets a picnic basket from the boot and comes over to me.

Me: "And now?"

Tshepi: "We are having a picnic wheres my baby?" She gives me a hug and walks past me into the house. I follow her and almost knock into her cause she seems frozen in one place. I follow her sight and realize she is looking at Mcebo in the lounge. She quickly turns to look at me and the shock on her face is unmissable. "You didnt tell me you had company." She whispers and I want to laugh honestly.



Me: "I cant hear you." I whisper back. She points at Mcebo with her head and I pretend I cant see what she means. "Speak up." I say and Mcebo looks up too.

Tshepi: "I didnt know you had company I should have called first."

Mcebo: "It's okay I have to go anyway." Mcebo says getting up from the floor and coming over to us.

Tshepi: "I didnt mean to disturb you I can come back later." He chuckles and really this entire exchange is funny to me.

Mcebo: "No need. You came prepared so I'm the one who should give you space. Babe I need to borrow your car." He says looking at me. I look behind him and Tshepi is almost

jumping for joy I guess the babe just sent her into overdrive.

Me: "Sure the keys are on the table." He kisses me on the cheek and grabs the keys and leaves. As soon as the door closes Tshepi has a moment of utter joy. She gives me a hug and screams.

Tshepi: "When did this happen? Last time I checked you were feeling guilty."

Me: "I am but if I dwell on that I wont be able to live my life. So here I am." I say and she jumps again.

We go out to the backyard and set up our little picnic and just ran around and talked about

anything and everything but mostly my fears and guilt. Tshepi made me realise that with all I've been through I am allowed to want to be happy I am allowed to want more out of my life I'm still young and I have my whole life ahead of me and i need to live each moment like it was my last and I also need to be happy as a person so I can be the best mother to my son. Tshepi might be crazy

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but when she says I got you she means it and boy am I glad I have her on my corner.



MCEBO

After I left Sethu's place I decided to drive to Westville prison to see Msizi. I dont know why but I still went to see him anyway he is my brother afterall and as much as I am angry at him right now I still feel like he is not telling us

the whole truth. He is the one behind bars while whoever he was doing all these things with is walking out there free as a bird and I cant help feeling like my mother also had a hand in this.

I go in and sit at the visitors area and wait to be called in. Theres about twenty other people here obviously visiting their friends or whoever they came here to see I feel like the odd one out since most of these people have something to give to their families and I have nothing.

We get called in and we follow the officer. We sit down and wait as they bring the prisoners out. I don't know what's more painful seeing my brother in chains and cuffs or knowing I helped put him here. I wish things had turned out different though. He walks over to me and the officer removes the chains and the cuffs and leaves. Msizi sits down and looks at me with his arms crossed on his chest.

Me: "Hi!"

Msizi: "You came to see your handiwork." I take a deep breath and try to calm myself down. I knew he wouldn't be as welcoming but I didn't think he'd be this hostile.

Me: "How are you?"

Msizi: "As if you care. Why did you come here Mcebo shouldn't you be sucking up to Sethu."

Me: "I came to see my brother is that a crime?"  
He chuckles and rests his crossed arms on the table.

Msizi: "So what's the end game?"

Me: "Excuse me?"

Msizi: "I said what is the end game? What are you hoping to achieve with this?"

Me: "I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about." He laughs.



Msizi: "Since you want to play dumb what I want to know is what you are hoping to achieve by turning your back on our family? You've chosen a woman over your own flesh and blood."

Me: "I dont think you are in a position to ask me that. You are the one who had your own brother killed for his money. You are in here right now because you let your greed cloud your judgement and now your wife and kids have no one to take care of them."

Msizi: "My kids will be fine I have parents."

Me; "The same parents who were ready to shop them off and dump them at Sethu's gate? You mean those parents?" I see his jaws clench and I know he wasnt expecting that. "You are the one who is in here alone. Your farm is gone that

RDP house you left them in your parents have already rented it out and now they are stuck in the shack at home. So which parents do you believe have your back Msizi? Help me understand that."

Msizi: "What do you want Mcebo."

Me: "I want the truth. I know you didnt just wake up one morning and decide to kill Melusi. I know someone gave you that idea."

Msizi: "Because I'm not smart enough to think for myself?"

Me: "No because I know for a fact you loved Melusi you did all that you did when we were kids to make sure we never end up on the streets no sane person would sacrifice that much for someone only to kill them like they

aren't important to them. I just need to know what happened Msizi."

Msizi: "Have you spoken to your mother?"

Me: "I didn't." I wasn't about to tell him what mum said I wanted to hear his side of the story and why he felt the need to do what he did.

Msizi: "Maybe you should."

Me: "Why? What will she tell me that you can't."

Msizi: "Probably nothing. But your mother is not the saint that she makes herself out to be."

Me: "Let me guess she's the one who put you up to this whole thing?"

Msizi: "When I told her about the farm she said she would find a way to fix it. I didnt think her fixing 'it' would lead to Melusi's death."

Me: "Why would she want Melusi dead? How was that supposed to fix that?"

Msizi: "She knew that a few years back Melusi put me down as a beneficiary for his life policy so if he was dead....."

Me: "You get the insurance money and save the farm."

Msizi: "A few days before Melusi was buried she found out that the company alone was worth more than the insurance payout and she

also found out about his properties and she figured if I married Sethu then i automatically get all that money."

Me: "But they said I should marry Sethu." He looks at me like he expects me to figure it out on my own and then a lightbulb goes off in my head. "She knew I would say no."

Msizi: "Bingo." How conniving is this woman? She literally thought of everything down to the T. "Except you went and married her anyway."

Me: "Is that why you came to her house in the middle of the night and held a knife to her neck?"

Msizi: "I was supposed to get Melusi's Maserati and the Porsche she already had a buyer for them and that money was supposed to go towards paying for the farm to get it back."

I left the prison feeling like I had discovered a whole new person like the person I had thought was my mother turned out to be a myth a lie. I didnt know what to think or believe to be quite honest. But one thing was clear to me if my mother has done all this then I need to find out of my father knew about this. Even though I was crossing my fingers hoping he wasnt cause I dont think I am ready to face the truth no matter how painful it was. This was already a hard pill to swallow another one would just send me over the edge.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I never thought I'd find myself in a mess like this. I'm conflicted to be quite honest. My brother going to jail for killing our other brother was shattering enough but now finding out that my mother quite possibly orchestrated the whole thing just sent me over the edge.

I haven't seen or spoken to Sethu in a week I'm pretty sure she hates me right now she's been calling me but I couldn't bring myself to answer her calls or texts. I don't know how to even begin the conversation that needs to be had how do I tell her that her husband was killed by his own family? I don't know how she'll take it and how this will impact our fragile relationship.

Zoey: "You know it's easier for you to stay home if you won't work." I look up and she is standing in front of me. I look at the time and it's almost five o'clock the last time I did an productive thing was just before lunch. I guess I understand her frustration.



Me: "I'm sorry I just have a lot on my mind." She pulls out a chair and sits down.

Zoey: "Okay spill what's going on?"

Me: "Its nothing I'll figure something out."

Zoey: "I'm not leaving until you tell me what's going on."

Me: "I promise you it's nothing."

Zoey: "I have a date so it would save us both time if you just told me what's going on right now or I can just cancel my date and sit here with you."

Me: "You have a date? With who?"

Zoey: "Stop trying to change the subject. Spill."  
I take a deep breath and tell her everything that's been happening. And when I am done she stares at me with her mouth wide open.

Me: "Okay so what's your advice?"

Zoey: "My advice you need to sleep with your one eye wide opened where your mother is concerned."

Me: "Tell me about it. I dont think I'll ever be able to look at that woman the same way again. It's like everything I thought I knew about her has been a lie."

Zoey: "So are you planning on telling your wife?" Zoey and I haven't really spoken about my marriage but I can tell by the attitude in her voice when she says the word wife that she hasn't really accepted it.

Me: "I dont know how." She gets up.

Zoey: "Well you cant hide this from her forever."

Me: "What if things change when I tell her about this and if she doesn't look at me the same way again?"

Zoey: "Well you've been there for her this whole time I'm sure she already trusts you enough to know you had nothing to do with this."

Me: "Maybe."

Zoey: "You're a good man Mcebo and I am pretty sure she knows that already."

Me: "Thanks."

Zoey: "I have to go make sure the alarm is set before you leave." She picks up her bag and walks out.

She has a point though I do have to tell Sethu the truth I cant hide this from her forever she deserves to know the truth. And it's only right that she hears it from me. I grab my keys and phone and pack my laptop and get out of the office. I enable the alarm and lock the doors and leave.

I get to Sethu's house and let myself in her car is parked outside I'm sure she just got in from work. I get out of the car and go to the door. I

take a deep breath before I knock and wait. She opens the door and stares at me.

Me: "Hi."

Sethu: "Hello." She says coldly and I cant blame her I have been MIA for almost a week now.

Me: "I can explain." She crosses her arms across her chest and keeps staring at me. "Can I come in?" She stares at me for a while and for a moment there I thought she would tell me to fuck off. She steps back after a while and I walk in. She closes the door and walks to the kitchen. I follow her and she completely ignores me and focuses on her cooking.

Me: "Sethu."

Sethu: "What?"

Me: "Can we talk?" She closes the pot and turns around to look at me.

Sethu: "So now we have something to talk about?"

Me: "Look I know I've been a jerk this past week but I can explain."

Sethu: "I'm listening." I pull out a chair and sit down. I take a deep breath and tell her everything. "So your mother killed Melusi?"

Me: "Pretty much. I'm sorry."

Sethu: "Why you didnt do anything." This is not the reaction I expected. Shouldn't she be crying and screaming? Right she is calm and collected. I just dropped a bomb on her and she is calm.

Me: "You seem calm."

Sèthu: "Are you hungry? The food is ready." She turns back to her pots and I decide to let her be. She will digest and come to terms with this in her own time and her own pace. Right?





SETHU

When Mcebo told me why Melusi had to die and who was behind it I was angry more than I was hurt. I get that Melusi wasn't MaZwane's biological child but she raised him didn't she at least care about him? I'm sure Melusi loved her and I'm pretty sure he didn't know she wasn't his mother but I know Melusi would have loved her regardless so I don't understand her need to kill him all she had to do was ask for help and he would have come running but no she had to kill him.

I couldn't sleep last night I was tossing and turning the whole night trying to digest

everything that Mcebo told me and I still couldn't understand I looked at things from her point of view and I still couldn't understand but I also couldn't understand Msizi how did he even agree to do all this when Melusi did everything to make him happy he convinced Mcebo that they should buy him the farm and if he had been a little more involved in it he would have made a success of it instead he helped kill the one person who had his back always.

I got up since I couldn't sleep and just took a shower. I put on my Jean's and a tshirt then put sneakers on. I wrote a note for Mcebo and left it on the side table. I took my handbag and my leather jacket and left. I needed answers and I wasnt going to rest till I got them.

First stop Westville Prison. It took a lot of begging and pleading and bribing for them to let me in before visiting hours. Lucky for me our correctional system is just as corrupt as the justice system. The warden led me to his office and asked an officer to bring Msizi. As soon as the officer led him to the office the warden got up and left. I got up and looked at Msizi and I hated him. For years and years I had given him respect as my brother-in-law but right now I wished I could poke his eyes out but I had to control myself before I end up in here with him.

Msizi: "I take it Mcebo told you everything?"  
That's the first thing he's going to say to me?  
No I'm sorry I killed your husband. No I'm sorry my greed took your sons father away from him.  
Not even a simple I am sorry.

Me: "Is that all you are going to say to me?"

Msizi: "What else can I say?"

Me: "How about an apology for one."

Msizi: "It doesn't matter how many times I say I am sorry it wont change anything it wont bring back Melusi."

Me: "Of course it wont but maybe it might make me believe you feel bad guilty. Something."

Msizi: "I do feel bad."

Me: "Right. Please explain to me why your parents hated Melusi so much so they had no problem having him killed. That's all I want to know."

Msizi: "I'm sure Mcebo has told you everything."

Me: "Fine your mother hates Melusi because he wasn't her child your mother hates Melusi because he wasn't her child what's your father's reason for killing his son?"

Msizi: "He had nothing to do with this. My dad is innocent in all of this."

Me: "He was ready to marry me off to you and take all my husband's things so how is he innocent?"

Msizi: "My mum convinced him to do all that he would never hurt any of his children not willingly."

Me: "So this was all your mother's doing. Everything from beginning to end?"

Msizi: "Pretty much."

Me: "Okay then." I get my bag and walk out. I find the warden in the hallway. He gives me his cellphone number and I send him an ewallet and leave.

It might have been crazy for me to come here knowing exactly what I would here but maybe a part of me was hoping he would say something different but he didnt. I drove out of Westville my mind trying so hard to digest everything all at once. I dont even know how I ended up here. I parked my car a few meters from the Mazibuko house. I looked out the window and watched MaZwane as she went about in her

mini garden without a care in the world with no remorse. No guilt. What kind of a human being is she?

I get out of the car and walk towards her. She looks up when she sees me then goes back to her garden.

MaZwane: "Are you here to get MaZulu and her children?"

Me: "Why did you kill Melusi well I know it was for the money atleast that's what you want Msizi to believe but what's the real reason you had him killed." She stops what she's doing gets up and takes off the gloves.



MaZwane: "I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about."

Me: "Eversince Melusi died I have tried to respect you as his mother even when you came at me with guns blazing I tried Lord knows i tried so maybe that's what has made you believe that I am some weak pathetic woman who couldn't fight but now that I know the real you trust and believe you will know who I really am." She chuckles and walks closer to me with her gave just inches away from mine. I can literally feel her breath on my face.

MaZwane: "Ntombazanyana (little girl) you dont know me and you dont know what I am capable off." I dont know why her words sent shivers down my spine or maybe it's the deadly look in her eyes if you have ever come face to face with a deadly snake then you know the fear but something in me refuses to back down.

Me: "And you dont know me either."

MaZwane: "Walk away now while you still have a chance."

Me: "I'm done being nice and sweet to you I'm not going to rest until you are behind bars where you belong." She chuckles. I try to walk away but she drags me back with my arm.

MaZwane: "Do not start a fight with me little girl you wont win." I drag my arm away from her and walk away.

I get into the car and take a breath. Something about that woman is not right i don't know why I never noticed it before and her words sent

shivers down my spine and left goosebumps on my skin who is this woman because the woman I've always known as my mother in law doesn't exist anymore or maybe this has always been her we were all just too naive to see through her smiles. I decided to drive home.

I was just a few minutes away from the house when I drove into a pothole and subsequently bursting my back tire. I parked on the side of the road and got out to inspect the damage done. My tire was damaged and I've never had to change a tire so that's a problem. I got my phone from the car and dialled Mcebo's number. I turned around while listening to the dialing tone only to hit my head on a hard chest. I screamed so loud hoping someone would hear me and when he heard my screams he

took a few steps back with his hands up in the air. Shouldn't he be attacking me? Why is he stepping back? My screams died down as I tried to figure out what this man wants.

Him: "I'm sorry I didnt mean to scare you. I just saw your burst tyre and thought j should help." I cut the call on my phone and looked at this man who seemingly just appeared from nowhere.

Me: "Thanks. I'm sorry I screamed."

Him: "I'm glad you did atleast I know next time someone tries something with you all you have to do is scream and the whole SANDF will be here in seconds."

Me: "Right."

Him: "Okay then let me fix that for you. Open the boot please." I opened the boot as he rolled up his shirt sleeves. He took out the spare tyre and got to work while I watched him. He was quite an impressive looking man handsome tall and with just the right amount of muscles on him.

When he was done I gave him some wipes from my bag to wipe his hands. He rolled down his sleeves and smiled at me.

Me: "Thank you how can I thank you?"

Him: "No need. It's called ubuntu."

Me: "Okay then thank you Mr..... I don't get your name."

Him: "Sibiya Mbongeni Sibiya." He held out his hand for a handshake and I took it I swear today must be a day of weird things. Soon as his hand made contact with mine I felt like some kind of energy make it's way into my body. Not the flirtatious we must be meant for each other type of energy. This was something I dont think I want to feel. I looked at our intertwined hands hoping he would let go but he didnt. I looked up at him and his eyes were dark like midnight dark.

Him: "You've started a fight with someone you shouldn't have you will need protection to take on this person as much as you have spirits

walking with you and protecting you it wont be enough when you go into this battle you will lose if you dont do this." I pulled my hand away from him and his eyes immediately changed back to normal.

I turned to grab my phone from the seat where I threw it and when I turned back again he was gone. I looked up and down the road but there was no trace of a car or anyone ever being there. If this is a dream I hope I wake up soon.

I got into my car and drove off. I got home and parked my car. I reached out to the passenger seat and grabbed my bag and got out I walked around the car towards the house. I was about to walk into the house when I noticed there was

something on the seat where I just took my bag. I opened the passenger door and it was a white beaded bracelet. I dont even know where it came from. I took it and threw it into my bag and walked into the house. I hope I never get to experience a day like this again. It was weird and rather crazy. Hopefully the rest of this afternoon will be better.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



I'm scared. I've been scared and freaked out since that man appeared out of nowhere and disappeared again. I've been having nightmare after nightmare I'm beginning to think he was right because with every nightmare there's always a snake wanting to swallow me whole or wrapping itself around me and suffocating me.

I told Mcebo about what happened but he thought I was overreacting until I woke up in the middle of the night screaming and out of breath. It would have been easy to pretend it was just a nightmare but the bad dreams weren't just affecting me Asi has been having them too. He will wake up in the middle of the night scared and pointing to the wall like he sees something.

A couple of days ago he went through my bag looking for my phone instead he found the white beads that I had completely forgotten about he wouldn't let them go he fell asleep with them in his hands and for the first time in a while he slept through the night. He woke up the next day energized and happy. A part of me didnt want to believe the beads had anything to do with it so when he slept last night I took them away and sat in his rocking chair and watched him sleep. At something after one in the morning he woke up screaming and crying. I picked him up and put him back to sleep this time with the beads in his tiny hands and he slept through the night.

Although I didnt sleep I was happy my son had a somewhat better sleep but now I cant figure

out what is in those beads that seem to shield him from all this. I left him sleeping and went down to make breakfast but I found Mcebo already setting up the table.

Me: "Goodmorning." I said taking out a bottle of water from the fridge.

Mcebo: "Hey." He gives me a hug. "You look tired."

Me: "I couldn't sleep. Asi had a bad dream again until I put those beads in his hands and all of a sudden he slept peacefully. Something is going on and I need to find out what it is."

Mcebo: "Maybe we need to see a sangoma I'll ask my mum I'm sure she knows someone." I

can't have that woman knowing my business. As much as I hate her it would be naive of me to think Mcebo would just give up and turn his back on her she is his mother afterall.

Me: "No dont. Tshepi already has someone she recommended. We'll go see her today."

Mcebo: "Okay. Breakfast is done I have to fly to Joburg for a meeting are you sure you'll be okay I can stay if you want."

Me: "No it's okay. I'll go see the lady and I'll tell you all about it when you come back."

Mcebo: "Okay have a good day." He kissed me on my forehead and grabbed his bag and left. Soon as I heard the car drive away I took out my phone and called Tshepi.

Tshepi: "Hey you're up early."

Me: "Hey yeah I didnt get any sleep. Do you know any sangoma?"

Tshepi: "I might know someone. Is this about your nightmares?"

Me: "Yeah do you think you can set up an appointment for me?"

Tshepi: "I will come get you. Get ready." She hung up.

I rushed upstairs and took a shower then woke up Asi and gave him a bath. We got dressed and then went down to eat the cold breakfast. Tshepi showed up while I was packing the leftover food away. I got Asi secured in his car seat and we left to God knows where.

Almost two hours later we parked in front of this huge house in a suburb in Richards Bay it didnt look like sangoma's house I could be wrong though.

Me: "Are you sure we are not lost?" She laughs.

Tshepi: "No babe we are in the right place. Let's go." We got out of the car and I got Asi and we

walked to the gate. The gate opened before we could hit the buzzer. I could feel my heart beating so fast I thought it would jump out of my chest. We walked towards the house and a woman came out she stood by the steps waiting for us. She didnt look like a sangoma she had on a long sleeved black dress that reached just below the knees and slippers on her feet. She couldn't possibly be a sangoma right? I mean arent sangoma's supposed to wear sangoma outfits if there is even such a thing.

We got to her and she had a beautiful smile on her face and she was beautiful with a thirty inch weave. Her ancestors must be the progressive type.

Her: "Tshepiso I haven't seen you in a while."  
She says clapping her hands and giving her a hug.

Tshepi: "Thokoza gogo I was here a month ago.  
Did you miss me."

Her: "You wish." She turned to look at me and I smiled an awkward nervous smile. "I've been expecting you. Why did it take you so long to get here?"

Me: "Oh Tshepi drives like an old lady." She laughs.

Her: "I know that but I mean why did it take you almost a week to come see me."

Me: "I'm sorry?"



Her: "Let's go in. I'll explain everything." She walks in and we follow her. I look at Tshepi who just shrugs her shoulders.

We go through the lounge my mind is so occupied with questions about this woman before me that I cant even admire the decor before me. We walk out to the backyard and right next to the pool house is a rondavel I guess that's where she practices.

She takes off her shoes and walks in and we follow suit and sit down on the grass mats. She takes a cloth hanging from the wall and wraps it around her waist she takes another one and

ties it around her shoulders before sitting down across from us.

Her: "So since This one wont introduce me I am gogo Nkanyezi it's nice to finally meet you MaDlamini I've been expecting you." I thought it was creepy the first time she said this but nope it's even more creepy now.

Me: "I'm sorry you were expecting me? Why?"

Nkanyezi: "Well I had a dream about you well more like a vision. But let's get to work." I have so many questions right now. She lights about three candles and takes her healers bag. She starts chanting and burping she hands the bag to me to blow on to. She continues her chants and saying my clan names before throwing the bones on the floor.

She keeps chanting and one of the candles is blown out. She keeps chanting and chanting this time getting louder and louder

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and one of the candles is blown out. She keeps chanting and chanting this time getting louder and louder which freaks me out even more especially the candle that is no longer burning. She lights the candle again and instead of going out this time it burns brighter than the

rest. She calms down after what seemed like a lifetime but my heart still refuses to calm down.

Nkanyezi: "Thokoza gogo thokoza dlozi nglalele bogogo." She takes a small stick that's been sitting next to her. "MaDlamini you poked a snake in its hole someone wants you dead." I could have told her that. "You were never supposed to marry your husband he wasn't even supposed to have been born"

Me: "I don't understand."

Nkanyezi: "Melusi was supposed to die at birth together with his mother he didn't die because his mother went to a healer when she was still pregnant with him the healer told her she'd have to choose if she chooses her life then Melusi would die she chose to save him."

Me: "But his mother is alive."

Nkanyezi: "I mean his real mother the one who raised her is the reason for his mother's death. She has spent years trying to get him out of the way without success."

Me: "She did succeed cause my husband is dead."

Nkanyezi: "So it seems but I cannot connect with his spirit."

Me: "What does that mean?"

Nkanyezi: "It could be that his spirit is being held captive somewhere." This cant possibly be real right these are things we only hear off in folklore stories not in real life.

Me: "Held captive as in he is a zombie?"

Nkanyezi: "I cant say for sure right now because his spirit is not connecting with me. It could also mean he hasn't fully transitioned to the other side." This is confusing. I came here for answers but now it seems I'll leave here with even more questions.

Me: "You said something about someone wanting me dead."

Nkanyezi: "Yes. You met someone a while back who told you that you need protection and they left you with white beads. Those beads are your protection for now but I need to take you down

to the river to cleanse you before I do anything else."

Tshepi: "So the bad dreams will stop?"

Nkanyezi: "For now but the woman wont stop coming after you she wants all that you have and she will do whatever it takes to get it. The fact that you have her son in your corner doesn't sit well with her."

Me: "But why does she hate me so much what did I ever do to her? And she used to like me before Melusi died so what changed?"

Nkanyezi: "She never liked you honey she's just good at pretending. You remind her of

everything that she isn't everything that Melusi's mother was that's why she killed her you have forces around you that protect you at every turn your grandparents being top of that list and your great grandfather was a well known healer even beyond the grave he is still protecting you and your family and fighting your battles."

I've always thought my grandparents were my guardian Angel's protecting and guiding me but hearing it out loud wow.

Me: "So how do I put a stop to this woman."

Nkanyezi: "We need to go down to the river for your cleansing while we go down I'll get one of



the kids to make some protection beads for the baby because those need to be around your wrist at all times."

She picked up somethings and packed them in a bag. We got up and walked out. She called one of the kids and they took Asi into the house. We got into her car and drove out we drove for about twenty minutes before we got to a river. We got out of the car and walked down to the river. She got in first and submerged herself under the water. She came up after a while and called me to come in. I took off my clothes and joined her. She smeared something on my forehead before cutting little openings on my arms and back and smearing something in them while calling out my ancestors and asking them to continue protecting me. She submerged me into the water and then told me to walk out. I walked out shivering and these

little cuts were painful. Tshepi helped me cover myself in a towel. Nkanyezi got out of the water and told me to get dressed. I didnt think this would be so quick.We went back to her house and went back to the rondavel.

Nkanyezi: "If you are cold I can get you a blanket."

Me: "No I'm good."

Nkanyezi: "Now that we've done that you can go home." She takes a couple of newspapers and pours some herbs in them. "Take these use them to bath every morning together with your

son use these to steam and drink these. And make sure those beads never leave your wrist. We will discuss everything else when you come back." I have to come back? "Protection is a process Sethu." She reads minds surprise surprise.

We got up and walked out. I found Asi running around in the yard with some kids and he has the white beads in his tiny wrists too. I took him and we got into the car and left.

Tshepi; "How are you feeling?"

Me: "Confused. Did you tell her we were coming?"

Tshepi: "Nope I never tell her anything. She just knows she's gifted like that."

Me: "She doesn't look like a sangoma."

Tshepi: "Well she is. Are you going to tell Mcebo what happened?"

Me: "I dont know should I? I mean how do you tell someone their mother is possibly the biggest witch you've ever heard about that their dead brother is probably a zombie sealed in a bottle somewhere. First I had to fight this woman physically and now she has got spirits and the likes as reinforcements. What kind of mess did I get myself in Tshepi? When will I ever rest and just breath?"

Tshepi: "You will I promise you. You've always been a fighter and you heard gogo Nkanyezi you have your own reinforcements fighting for you. You will get through this nana and I'll be right next to you." I took a deep breath and looked out the window.

We got to the house and there was someone standing at the gate with luggage next to her. As if that wasn't dramatic enough she had on heels so high and a fur coat PETA would die if they saw her. I get the car close to her and she has the biggest sunglasses on her face and a blonde weave to boot. I slide the window down.

Me: "Hi can I help you." She takes out her sunglasses and I almost fainted. "Ncane?"

Ncane: "Hi nana." I get out of the car and she gives me the biggest hug.

Me: "Where have you been? I haven't seen you in like forever."

Ncane: "I know and I'll explain everything can we go inside these heels are killing me." I helped her put her bags in the car and she got in. We drove in. I thought my life was a mess before but now with the drama queen of note back in my life Lord help me. CHAPTER NINETEEN

This house is conveniently quiet right now and i hate it cause if I have nothing to do then I spend too much time overthinking. I can't stop thinking about what gogo Nkanyezi said I wish I could forget i wish I could go back to a few months ago when I was just a naive widow trying to run her husband's business but now I'm here fighting unknown entities.

Ncane hasn't told me much about what she is doing here or where she's been instead she wanted to rest and this morning she gave Asi a bath and said she was taking him out to the mall. I might be a lot of things but stupid isn't one of them I know she's just avoiding me cause she'll have to answer the questions I have.

I haven't seen her since she left home when I was in my matric year to go do her masters in the states. Ncane is actually my mums sister when mum had me and then had to leave me to go further her studies Ncane as I called her became my best friend she took me everywhere with her and she would make sure we wore matching outfits all the time. Anyone who didn't know would think she was my mum



some of my best childhood memories have her and my grandparents in them. They made my childhood special and because of them I never knew what it was like to not have a mother or even a fathers live for that matter.

I thought she'd come back for my graduation but she didnt not even when I graduated with my honors. We lost contact with her almost a year after she'd left home my grandparents died still holding out hope that she would come home soon. And now she is here acting like things are still the same.

My phone rang and I picked it up.

Me: "Hello!"

Tshepi: "Hey how are you?"

Me: "I'm good. Just tired. And those herbs Gogo Nkanyezi gave me stink like hell." She laughs.

Tshepi: "You'll get used to it. Have you told Mcebo yet?"

Me: "No plus he is not here so. Are you coming over for lunch?"

Tshepi: "I cant. I have a meeting. I will call you later. And dont forget toh cant tell Mcebo what is going on just yet."

Me: "I wont. Thanks." We hang up.

I finish up cooking lunch and wait for Ncane to come back with Asi. By three thirty I'm still waiting and these two haven't showed up. I wonder what kind of hyper activity I'll have to deal with when they get back cause I know for sure she is busy stuffing him with sugary things.

After what seemed like forever they finally get back. Asi comes in first and I can just tell it's going to be a very long night. Ncane finally comes in with shopping bags. She places some of the bags on top of the dining table and some go into the kitchen I guess those are groceries. She comes back and throws herself on the couch next to me Asi on the other hand is

already changing the channel to watch cartoons.

Me: "I see you cleaned out the shops." She laughs.

Ncane: "Not even. How was your alone time?"

Me: "Okay I guess I cooked lunch."

Ncane: "Asi and I had lunch at spur your kid had energy for days."

Me: "The ice cream you fed him didnt help look at him jumping on the couch."

Ncane: "I did not give him ice cream."

Me: "Really?"

Ncane: "Okay fine you got me I couldn't resist those big brown eyes. He tricked me with them." I chuckled.

Me: "No one can resist those eyes. So where have you been?"

Ncane: "We went to the mall and then....."

Me: "You know that's not what I meant." She sighs and takes her shoes off.

Ncane: "I'm sorry I didn't come back baby I really am."

Me: "Why didn't you?"

Ncane: "Well for starters I flunked school and then I got pregnant."

Me: "That's no reason to not come home for over ten years."

Ncane: "I know I was planning on going back to school but when I fell pregnant it became a bit much and I couldn't come home with no masters and a baby on my hip. I felt like a failure."

Me: "Mum had me in high school in case you didn't know." She smiles.

Ncane: "I know. And after the hell I gave her even though I was younger than her it felt weird somehow."

Me: "So you couldn't come back even when gogo and Mkhulu died? Not even a phone call or even a letter. Nothing!"

Ncane: "I know nana I'm sorry. I saw your message on Facebook months after they had died. I felt so bad not being here to even say goodbye. You even got married and I wasn't here. I'm really sorry Sethu."

Me: "Its okay have you seen mum?"

Ncane: "I sent her a message on Facebook telling I was coming back and I wanted to stay at home and she told me she sold the house."

Me: "She did nothing anyone said would change her mind."

Ncane: "Forget her she's always been stubborn

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she's always been stubborn wena how have you been since your husband died?"

I take a deep breath and tell her everything that has happened. By the time I am done I am laying on the couch with my head on her lap and her braiding my hair just like old times.



Ncane: "I cant believe you went through all that and I wasnt even here to help you through it. I'm sorry nana."

Me: "Its okay I'm just hoping that with gogo Nkanyezi helping me this whole thing should be over soon."

Ncane: "It wont be over until you get that woman out of the way."

Me: "I'm not a killer ncane."

Ncane: "Fine. When are you seeing her again?"

Me: "In about two weeks. Let me go dish up so we can eat and get this one in bed."

I get up and go to the kitchen to warm up the food my phone rings while I am dishing up. I look at the caller I.D and I see MaZulu's name splashed all over my phone. I wonder what she wants.

Me: "Hello."

MaZulu: "Hi uma wants to see you."

Me: "I think you have the wrong number."

MaZulu: "I know your number Sethu." Okay that was worth a try.

Me: "I'm busy."

MaZulu: "She woke up this morning with a marks all over her back like someone was beating her with a sjambok."

Me: "I'm still not sure what that has to do with me."

Mazulu: "She's your mother in law and besides that she's been trying to call you."

Me: "I blocked her. And tell her if she wants to see me she'll have to come to me. Bye." I hang up and take the food to the lounge.

I feed Asi before giving him a bath and putting him down to sleep. Soon as everyone is fast asleep I sit in my bed trying to figure out what could have happened to MaZwane and why is she calling for me out of all people. I decide to text Gogo Nkanyezi and tell her what happened and she texts back a bunch of laughing emojis. Before saying it serves her right and telling me not to go there no matter what happens.

Maybe this has something to do with me going to gogo Nkanyezi what if whatever it is she did is the reason this is happening right now. Am I

really ready to turn into MaZwane who clearly uses muti to get her way.



MCEBO

I got a call early this morning from my mum asking me to come see her cause she wasnt feeling well. I wasn't planning on coming back today but I had too but lucky for me I finished

what I came here to do I was just waiting for Sethu's gift for her birthday since its coming up soon I guess I'll just have to courier it instead.

I got to the airport and decided to start at the office to drop some files off before going home. I parked the car and used my key to open I tried to punch in the security code but I noticed it was inactive either Zoey forgot to activate it or she's here working.

I went to my office and dropped the files off before going to Zoey's office the lights were on

and I could hear giggling from inside. The door was open so I just walked in and stopped dead in my tracks. Zoey had her tongue down someone's throat. A woman even I did not know Zoey played for both teams. I cleared my throat and they both turned to look at me. Holy Mary mother of Jesus Tshepi is gay or bi or..... let me just stop assuming and ask.

Me: "Hi!"

Zoey: "Hey weren't you supposed to come back tomorrow?"

Me: "I was but I finished everything early. Hello Tshepi." She smiled and just waved. "I didn't know that you two were you know.....uhm...."



Zoey: "Together?"

Me: "Yeah when did this happen?"

Zoey: "Its been about a month now."

Me: "Right okay then I need to get going. You girls behave yourselves." I decide to leave before things get anymore awkward. I guess this explains why she wasnt that cut up about my marriage to Sethu. Oh well they do say every cloud has a silver lining.

I got into my car and drove home. I knocked and my mum came to open even though it's almost ten o'clock at night she's still up. She seemed happy to see me. She led me inside and sat on the couch with my dad next to her.

For someone who claimed to be sick she sure looked fine to me.

Me: "I thought you were sick?"

Ma: "I knew you wouldn't come if I had just asked."

Dad: "How was your trip?"

Me: "Fine. Why am I here?" They looked at each other before even saying anything. I hope to God I'm not about to fall for some stupid story.

Ma: "Well Bab'Madlala was here a couple of days ago I've been having these crazy dreams

so we asked him to come over." This is going to be interesting.

Me: "Okay I'm listening."

Ma: "Well he said we need to have a ceremony to bring your brothers spirit back home he said Melusi's spirit is wandering so we need to go to his house and have the ceremony there."

Me: "Okay so why not talk to Sethu it's her house."

Dad: "You married her so that's your house. We have to do the ceremony and we tried calling her but she refused to come and see us."

Me: "Ma you know your relationship with Sethu is shaky right now how do you expect her to say yes to this?"

Ma: "That's where you come in. We need you to speak to her make her realize how important this is. She can hate us all she wants but we cant ignore this."

Me: "I dont know ma I'll talk to her and see what she says."

Ma: "Thank you son."

Me: "I have a condition though. If she says no then she says no. No one will try and guilt trip her into doing something she doesn't want to do. Are we clear?" They look at each other and nod.

I get up and leave. I dont even know why I said I would speak to Sethu cause I know for a fact she will say no. Oh well it wont hurt to try.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

I've been sleeping like a baby lately gogo Nkanyezi knows her stuff. I still dont know why MaZulu called me yesterday and quite frankly I don't want to know. Whatever it is that's happening to that woman should just keep happening.

I woke up and took a shower while humming a song. I haven't felt this good in a while and it feels good to just wake up and feel free. I got dressed and went down to make breakfast for everyone. As soon as I walked down the stairs I was met by the smell of bacon wafting up the stairs. I guess Ncane woke up early. I got to the kitchen and instead of Ncane I find Mcebo busy.

Me: "Hi." He turns around with a smile plastered on his face and walks over to me.

Mcebo: "Hey did I wake you?" I give him a hug.

Me: "No when did you get back?"

Mcebo: "Last night. I slept at my place I didnt want to wake you."

Me: "How did your meeting go?"

Mcebo: "Good. We got the contract."

Me: "That's great."

Mcebo: "Yeah so Tshepi does she have a boyfriend?" Okay that's random.

Me: "She had one but they broke up a few months back. Why?"

Mcebo: "Just asking. Anyways my mum called she asked me to ask you if it's possible for them to have a ceremony here this weekend?"

Me: "Why? They have a house."

Mcebo: "I know but she said it's to bring Melusi's spirit back home or something like that. You dont have to say yes."

Me: "I'll think about it. Let me go wake Asi before he wets the bed."

Mcebo: "Potty training?"

Me: "Yep." I leave him and upstairs. I get to Asi's room and he is already up playing with his



toys. I pick him up and take him to the toilet to pee I come back and check the bed and he didnt pee on the bed. I do a little dance. Potty training is going amazing. I take my phone out and call gogo Nkanyezi.

Nkanyezi: "MaDlamini."

Me: "Thokoza gogo."

Nkanyezi: "What's happening?" I tell her everything that Mcebo said. "Let them come."

Me: "So I must give her full access to do her witchcraft in my house?" She laughs.

Nkanyezi: "Relax I'll be there the day before to ensure we do some things so whatever they do will not work."

Me: "I'm turning into a witch like her for real."

Nkanyezi: "Theres a difference between wanting to protect yourself and harming others just because you can. What you are doing is protecting yourself. Stop worrying. Tell them to come on Friday then I'll be there on Thursday."

Me: "Okay. Thank you bye." We hang up. I pick up Asi and we head downstairs. I find Ncane busy interrogating Mcebo.

Me: "Okay officer can we have breakfast?"

Ncane: "I am allowed to get to know my son in law right?"

Me: "That was an interrogation Ncane."

Mcebo: "Its okay I dont mind." We sit down and have our breakfast. I thought about telling Mcebo to let his mum know that they can come do her voodoo stuff here but I figure letting her stew for a few days wont hurt.

After breakfast I dropped my baby off at daycare and headed to the office. K have back to back meetings today and I need to move all my Friday and Thursday meetings and squeeze them into the next three days and some will have to be moved to next week.



MCEBO

Sethu said she'd think about letting my mum do her ceremony at her house I still dont know why she even said she'd think about it. I was quite certain she'd say no and that would have saved me a lot of trouble if she says yes it will put her and mum under the same roof and I am not ready for the drama that is bound to happen.

I drove to work and found Zoey already in my office swinging around in my chair.

Me: "Dont you have your own office?"

Zoey: "I do but I was waiting g for you. Gibson sent the signed contract this morning

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we are officially ready to help him revive his dying business."

Me; "Good. So you and Tshepi huh?"

Zoey: "What about us?"

Me: "I didnt know you were gay."

Zoey: "I'm not. I am bi."

Me: "So you play for both teams?"

Zoey: "Yes."

Me: "Okay. I have so many questions right now."

Zoey: "Well I dont have time. I have work to do." She gets up and walks out.

I take a seat and get down to business. My phone rings and I know it's not work cause people know we open at nine and it's not even



8:30 yet. I pick up and look at the caller ID and it's my mum. I should have known.

Me: "Mama."

Ma: "What did she say?"

Me: "I'm good mama how are you?"

Ma: "I'm fine now tell me what she said."

Me: "She said she'd think about it."

Ma: "What's there to think about tell her we'll be there early on Friday."

Me: "Ma do you really want this ceremony to happen?"

Ma: "Of course I do you know this is important."

Me: "Good. Then let Sethu make her decision first. Thats her house you cant order her around just because you think you can. I will let you know If and that's a very big if she decides to do this."

Ma: "Fine but make sure she knows how important this is."

Me: "I will let you know mama." I hang up.



SETHU

The week has been busy and I am honestly tired. I miss my housewife days when all I had to do was wake up make lunch take Asi to daycare and then enjoy my day doing whatever. Now I need to get up and go to work. Life will really humble you.

Today gogo Nkanyezi is coming over to do whatever she needs to do. Good thing Mcebo has already left for work. I took Asi to daycare and Ncane went to see my mother as sad as I am that I'll be missing that I'm sure she'll tell me all about it or maybe she'll even come back with a blue eye or two. Those two together in one room is just a bomb waiting to explode.

I came back and cooked some food for gogo Nkanyezi. At exactly ten o'clock she told me she was at the gate. I opened for her and she drove in. When she got out of the car she looked like she was ready for anything. She had on her full sangoma attire with colorful beads to boot. I gave her a hug and we walked in.

Nkanyezi: "So how are things?" She placed her bag on the coffee table and we sat down.

Me: "Well besides the drama that's coming I'm good. I dont know what that woman wants to do in my house."

Nkanyezi: "She probably needs to renew whatever it is that's she put in here. You've been doing all that I told you to do right?"

Me: "Yep I followed all your instructions."

Nkanyezi: "Good let's get down to work."

She emptied her bag on the coffee table and my house smelt like all the herbs in the world had come together in my house.

She did her work and it took longer than I had expected. By the time she was done I felt like I was ready for whatever that woman would bring. She finished doing her thing and went home with the promise that she would be back in the morning before MaZwane and her buddy get here.

Ncane came back pissed as hell. I dont know what went on between her and my mum but I'm certain it wasnt good. She couldn't even eat dinner that's how angry she was. She spent the night locked up in her room and I decided to give her space to deal with whatever is happening with her and her sister.



I woke up early in the morning like the good Makoti that I am and prepared breakfast for the



visitors. Gogo Nkanyezi showed up an hour before these people got here and helped me set up everything.

Mcebo and Ncane came down for breakfast and we had a nice cozy meal before the house got crowded. At around seven MaZwane said they were at the gate and Mcebo got up to open for them.

He came back a few minutes later followed by his parents and one scary man. He was also wearing his attire and he had three steings

twisted together and tied around his head. His eyes were scary. The moment he walked through the door I swear the hairs on the back of my neck stood up. There is something extremely dark about this man.

He stood by the door just looking around with his beaded stick in his hands. He froze soon as he saw gogo Nkanyezi walking out of the kitchen. He looked at her with so much fire and venom in his eyes.

Him: "Nkanyezi!"

Nkanyezi: "Madlala!"

The silence that engulfed the room was strange and everyone could see it. It felt like the battle of good and evil and we were just caught in the middle. These two would not take their eyes off of each other. This is something that should be on award winning shows. Its gonna be a very interesting day.

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

I've never been in a more tense situation than I am now. I've sat in meetings with the most intimidating people fought so hard with pig headed men and honestly I would gladly be in those situations for 24 hours straight than to be here right now. Thank God Asi is at daycare this would not be good for him.

Madlala and gogo Nkanyezi have been slowly taking steps towards each other and right now they are inches apart. Mcebo MaZwane and I have taken steps back my heart is galloping threatening to jump out of my chest.

Gogo Nkanyezi smiles and tilts her head looking straight at Madlala's eyes I'm not sure if that was meant to intimidate him or what but soon as she did that he started burping and groaning his entire body was shaking like he was having a seizure. Gogo Nkanyezi just closed her eyes while facing the ceiling with her hands behind her back and her fingers clasped together. She kept moving her head from left to right back and forth like she was waiting for him to finish what he was doing.

He kept burping and groaning until he was on the floor on his knees. I looked over at MaZwane and she looked like she had seen a ghost. I'm not sure if it was fear that was in her eyes but I know this is not what she had expected.

Madlala: "Suka endleleni yami Nkanyezi (get out of my way) suka (move)." He uttered between burps and groans. I dont even know how we were able to hear him speak because his words came out like a whisper.

"Uyangcindezela (you are stifling me) suka endleleni yami (get out of the way.)"

I clasped my imaginary pearl's around my neck with one hand while the other hand was probably squeezing the life out of Mcebo's hand I'm sure he had lost feeling in his hand but letting go wasnt an option.

Gogo Nkanyezi took a step back from Madlala with her head still moving around and her fingers clasped behind her back. She took another step and grabbed her cow tail whip from the table and started waving it around she paced up and down while Madlala seemed to be slowly coming back to the land of the living.

Nkanyezi: "Awudingeki lapha Madlala (you are not wanted here.) Buyela lapho uchamuka khona (go back to where you came from.)" She chanted over and over again.

I've seen plenty of scary movies in my life but I can assure you nothing compares to this right now. The anticipation of what will happen is

scary this is like the rise of the spirits and none of them is willing to back down.

After what seemed like forever Madlala gets up and picks up his bag from the floor he opens the door and walks out leaving MaZwane and Bab'Mazibuko dumbstruck. Gogo Nkanyezi keeps pacing up and down still chanting the same thing. Now everyone has their eyes glued to her wondering what she will do next.

She stops and walks over to MaZwane she looks her dead in the eyes and I've never seen an adult shake that bad if I didnt know better I'd say she was about to have a heart attack.



Nkanyezi: "Ubumnyama asoze baphumelela (darkness will never prevail.) Lendlela ohamba kuyona izokuholela ekufeni. (The path you are walking on will lead to death.)" She whispers to her or tries to.

She turns and walks to the kitchen and we are still looking at these two. Bab'Mazibuko looks like a deer caught in headlights come to think of it I'm not even sure anything that has happened today has registered in his mind. MaZwane grabs her bag and her husband on the other and walks out. I follow them to open the gate for them. They get into the car and start the engine. I open the gate and Madlala stands up

from the side of the driveway and walks out the gate like a zombie.

I walk back in the house and Mcebo and Ncane are still in the same spot they were in just a few minutes ago.

Mcebo: "What just happened?"

Ncane: "Unyoko ungumthakathi. (Your mother is a witch.)"

Me: "Ncane!"

Ncane: "What? You heard gogo Nkanyezi and why did that other witch walk out of here after he was told he doesn't belong here?

Ubuthakathi (Witchcraft)" she says and walks to the kitchen.

Mcebo: "I cant believe this."

Nkanyezi: "Believe it." She walks in from the kitchen with a glass of wine in her hand like she didnt just make a movie in front of us. "Your mother is an evil woman."

Me: "How do you know Madlala?"

Nkanyezi: "We went to the same initiation school. He was so obsessed with power and he thought that being good wouldn't give him the power he needed. He started by using muti to get people to do what he wanted and lucky for him there were plenty more people who wanted

to use muti for bad things so he found his market."

Mcebo: "So where do my parents fit into all this?"

Nkanyezi: "Not your parents your mother. She has been using black magic since she was young her mother got her into this. It was easy for her to go after Melusi's mother and for years she had Melusi in the palm of her hand. Lucky for you you were her somewhat favourite son so that saved you from her evil until you sided with someone she considers an enemy."

Me: "Am I the enemy?"

Nkanyezi: "Yep. I would love to stay and continue this conversation but I have clients to see. You need to get help for your father." She grabs her bag and walks out.

Mcebo: "I need some fresh air." He grabs his keys and walks out.

Ncane: "That was some scary shit."

Me: "Tell me about it."



MCEBO

I got into my car and started driving. I wasn't sure where I was going I just kept driving. I woke up this morning thinking we would just have a little ceremony and the day would go on like normal I wasn't ready for all the revelations that happened.

I thought my mother being responsible for the death of Melusi was evil and cruel

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I wasn't ready for all the revelations that happened.

I thought my mother being responsible for the death of Melusi was evil and cruel but this this I wasn't expecting. And what did gogo Nkanyezi even mean when she said I should get help for my father? This is all just confusing. I've never figured my mother was a saint but I never thought she'd be this much of a sinner either. My perception of her changed when I found out all that she had done to Melusi but I don't think there is anyway for her to redeem herself from this.

I kept driving for a long time until I saw a sign that said welcome to Gauteng. I pulled up to a



garage that was close by and got out to stretch my legs. I filled up the tank and bought myself an energy drink. I got back on the road and found myself at TT's gate in Soweto. I texted him to let him know I was here I prayed he would see the text because he was probably sleeping. I said a silent prayer when the gate opened and I drove in. I found him waiting for me by the door.

Thato: "Its late for you to be here." He said just as I got out of the car.

Me: "I needed some fresh air."

Thato: "And they told you fresh air was found in Soweto?" He asked leading me into the house. He poured me a glass of whiskey while I sat on the couch. "What happened?" He said handing me a glass and sitting on the couch across from me.

Me: "Let's just say I found out things today that I wish I still didn't know. My life is just a mess man."

Thato: "I don't speak riddles Mcebo spit it out." I tell him everything. "Wow. I've seen some shitty things in my life but this Yoh Hhay." He claps his hands once.

Me: "See why I needed fresh air."

Thato: "You dont need fresh air you need Jesus. Your mother is one badass woman."

Me: "Theres badass and then theres evil my mother is evil. I wish I knew how to fix this."

Thato: "You can start by getting help for your father. If that sangoma said find help for your father then maybe the answer lies with him. He can put an end to this."

Me: "But how TT when my mother literally controls everything that happens at home. How do I even begin to help him without letting her know?"

Thato: "Look you've been driving for hours now get some sleep we'll figure everything out tomorrow."

Me: "You're right I am tired."

We got up and he led me to his guest bedroom. I took a shower and got into bed. I didnt realize how tired I was till I dozed off soon as my head hit the pillow.

I woke up to countless missed calls from Sethu. I decided to call her back.

Sethu: "Hey I've been trying to call you. Where are you? Are you okay?"

Me: "One question at a time." I hear her sigh.

Sethu: "Okay. Where are you?"

Me: "Soweto."

Sethu: "What are you doing in Soweto and how did you even get there?"

Me: "I drove I needed some fresh air and I just kept driving till I got here."

Sethu: "Are you okay? I know everything that happened yesterday was a bit hectic."

Me: "Did you know about my mum?" I hear her take a deep breath and a part of me already knows the answer. "Why didnt you tell me?"

Sethu: "Honestly I didnt think you'd believe me. She is your mother Mcebo and me and her might not be each others favourite but she's still your mother I didnt want your perception of her change because of me."

Me: "I understand. Hows Asi?"

Sethu: "He's good. Running around and being hyper."

Me: "I'll be back soon."

Sethu: "Seriously though how are you feeling?"

Me: "Cards on the table?"

Sethu: "Yep. Cards on the table."

Me: "I'm not sure how I feel right now. I'm confused and angry it's like the rug has been pulled from right under my feet. I thought I knew my mother but clearly I dont know shit about her or what she's capable of."

Sethu: "Dont let this bother you too much."

Me: "I dont know how."

Sethu: "Come home. We'll figure this out together."

Me: "Yeah. I'll drive down soon I should be there before eight."

Sethu: "Okay be safe."

Me: "I will. Kiss Asi for me." We hung up.

I got up and went to the bathroom and washed my face. I need a toothbrush. I went out to the kitchen and found a girl busy cooking with just her underwear on no bra with just an apron on.



Me: "Hi." She turned around and smiled like this was normal.

Her: "Hey you must be TT's friend. He went out he should be back soon. Are you hungry I've made breakfast." So she's not even going to try and dress up.

Me: "Yeah I just need to take a shower. Is there an extra tooth brush in this house?"

Her: "Oh yeah check the cup board in the hallway."

Me: "Thanks." I leave her there and find the toothbrush. I go take my shower and wait for TT

to come back. I am not going back into that kitchen without him there.

I lay on the bed while checking emails on my phone. I hear him knock and walk in after a while.

Thato: "You are up. Good. Come with me." I get up and follow him to the lounge. We get there and there is a sangoma waiting there. He goes into a trance soon as he sees me. How many sangoma's am I going to see in just twenty four hours. When his trance is done he sits down and looks at me. I sit down across from him.

Him: "Thato has told me everything."

Me: "Okay you think you can help me?"

Him: "I doubt it."

Me: "What do you mean? Arent you supposed to help people?"

Him: "Thato gave me your shirt so I could do a consultation. Your father needs help Yes but the problem is he has been fed all this muti for over thirty years now and it's become embedded in him. Its who he is. Getting it out may be fatal or if he is lucky enough to live he won't be the man you want him to be."

Yeah neh.

## CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Mcebo didnt come home last night like he promised he would. I've been trying to call him but his phone goes straight to voicemail. I woke up this morning and his phone was still off I wish he could atleast just tell me he is Okay. I

got up and took a shower before heading downstairs to make breakfast.

Ncane came down while I was busy cooking.

Ncane: "You're up early. Shouldn't you be sleeping in your husband's arms?"

Me: "I would be if he was here but he's not."

Ncane: "Wasnt he supposed to come back last night?"

Me: "That's what he said."

Ncane: "Have you tried calling him?"

Me: "I did. His phone goes straight to voicemail." We sat down to eat.

Ncane: "So what are you going to do?"

Me: "Nothing. If he decides to come back he will."

Ncane: "Or you could go to his house and see if he is not there. You said he has a house here right? Maybe he came back late and went there." I know she might be right but do I really want to go chasing after a man who might not even want to be found?

We finished eating and I went up to get Asi. I fed him and then let him watch cartoons. I took out meat from the refrigerator so it can defrost before cooking lunch. We sat down and watched cartoons with Asi till he fell asleep.

I put him down for his nap and told Ncane I had to go to the mall for some things and she agreed to watch him. I drove to the mall and did my shopping. On my way back I decided to go past Mcebo's place to see if he isn't there and if he is Okay. I drove around the suburb until I found the place. To think I haven't been here since we got married.

I hit the buzzer and the gate opened. I guess he is home. I drove in and parked on the driveway.

I got out of the car and knocked on the door. It took a while for him to open the door so I knocked again. Maybe he is sleeping. I called again and his phone went to voicemail again. I decided to bang the door some more. The door opened and a woman stood there in nothing but her underwear.

Her: "Its too early for you to be banging on the door." Maybe I have the wrong house.

Me: "I'm sorry I think I have the wrong address. I'm sorry for disturbing you." She rubbed her eyes like she had just woken up from sleep.

Her: "Who are you looking for?"



Me: "I'm looking for Mcebo I dont think you know him he just moved into the neighborhood." I said with the biggest smile on my face. All I wanted to do was get out of here I've embarrassed myself enough. She crossed her arms across her chest and looked at me from my feet up to my head like she was trying to figure me out.

Her: "So you are Mrs Mazibuko Mazibuko." So she knows him.

Me: "I'm sorry?"

Her: "Mcebo is not here. He hasn't been here for a while now but you should know that you married him." So this is his house but where is he and who is she?

Me: "I'm sorry who are you again? And how do you know Mcebo?"

Her: "Zoey. And you should ask him that. The gates open you can leave." She said before shutting the door on my face. I shouldn't have come here.

I get into my car with my tail between my legs and just drove home. I wasn't sure how I felt about finding that woman in Mcebo's house but I did feel a ping of jealousy in the back of my head I knew that maybe he does have someone he is with even though he assured me there wasn't. But now I just came face to face with her and she hates me. I don't know why that even bothers me.

I drove into my house and got the groceries out of the boot and into the house. I was busy unpacking when Ncane came down with Asi on her arm.

Ncane: "Hey you're back. What took you so long?"

Me: "Sorry I got held up. Did he eat?" I asked as she handed him over to me.

Ncane: "Yep. And he finished all his food." She said tickling Asi who burst out in giggles.

Me: "That's good. I'll get started on dinner." I put Asi down and he ran to the lounge where his toys were sprawled out on the floor.

Ncane: "Okay so what happened?"

Me: "What do you mean?"

Ncane: "You know exactly what I mean?"

Me: "Well i decided to pass by Mcebo's house and he wasnt there. But there was a woman who was literally naked."

Ncane: "He's cheating on you?"

Me: "I think he is cheating on her with me."

She chuckles. "Glad I could make you laugh."

Ncane: "No its I've just never heard of a wife being a side chick."

Me: "Yeah well welcome to the future."



NARRATED

At a restaurant in Umhlanga Zoey and Tshepi are having dinner when they are joined by Mcebo.

Mcebo: "Ladies."

Tshepi: "Hi where have you been Sethu's been looking for you."

Zoey: "I dont know who Zethu is but your wife was at the house looking for you." They both look at her confused.

Mcebo: "Its Sethu and it's the same person. I need to borrow your keys I dont know where I lost mine." She takes out her keys and hands them to Mcebo and he leaves.

Tshepi: "You two live together?"

Zoey: "Forget that

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I dont know where I lost mine." She takes out her keys and hands them to Mcebo and he leaves.

Tshepi: "You two live together?"

Zoey: "Forget that how do you know his wife?"

Tshepi: "His wife is my best friend. Please explain to me what this is cause I am not understanding."



Zoey: "Mcebo is my ex and I happen to stay at his house."

Tshepi: "Okay let me get this straight you and Mcebo are in a relationship meanwhile he is married to Sethu and on the side it's you and me. What the heck is going on?"

Zoey: "That is a question you should ask your best friend. But me and Mcebo are not really sure where we stand right now."

Tshepi: "You do know he is married right?"

Zoey: "And I was there before he got married."

Tshepi: "Okay so what am I supposed to be?  
Your pit stop until Mcebo comes back to you?"

Zoey: "Oh come on you know that's not what I  
meant."

Tshepi: "You know what forget it." She gets up  
and takes her bag.

Zoey: "You leaving?"

Tshepi: "Yes cause clearly you need to figure  
yourself out and what it is that you want.  
Goodnight." She leaves Zoey with her mouth  
wide open.



# MCEBO

After my impromptu meeting with the sangoma Thato introduced me to I was so overwhelmed and drained with everything he said that i just couldn't even drive back. Thato and i ended up drinking the whole day and night. I only got a few hours of sleep then in the morning I got up and drove home. I was so drunk last night I

didn't even notice my phone battery was flat. By the time I realized it I was halfway home.

I got the keys from Zoey cause I couldn't find mine I'm beginning to think maybe I left them back in Soweto. I drove to my place and took a shower before heading over to Sethu's. After I charged my phone I found a bunch of messages from her.

I texted her that I was at the gate and she opened for me. I got in and found her sitting on the couch watching TV. I moved her feet from

the couch and sat down then I put them on my lap. She wouldn't even look at me her eyes were focused on the TV.

Me: "Hey."

Sethu: "Hi."

Me: "My battery died."

Sethu: "Okay."

Me: "I met a sangoma in Soweto Thato introduced me to him. He said that my dad does need help but chances of him being normal again are very slim. He might even die."

Sethu: "That's bad." She says that and she's not even looking at me. It's like she's not interested in anything I have to say. I take the remote and switch the TV off.

Me: "I know you are mad at me and I'm sorry I should have called you." She turns to look at me.

Sethu: "I met Zoey she seems nice." Zoey and nice are two words that most people would never place in the same sentence but here we are.

Me: "Its not what you think." She smiles.

Sethu: "You've become a mind reader?"

Me: "No."

Sethu: "I asked you if you had a girlfriend or someone who thinks or believe they are your girlfriend and you said no. But now I find out there is a girl and she lives in your house."

Me: "Its just until she gets her work permit then she can get her own place."

Sethu: "So she's not your girlfriend?"

Me: "She's not she was but now she's not. We are just friends."

Sethu: "Does she know that?"



Me: "Of course she does she's moved on. She's dating your friend Tshepi."

Sethu: "Okay." She takes the remote and switches the TV on. "You'll have to go and see gogo Nkanyezi about your father. I'm sure she can help."

Me: "Okay. Will you come with me?"

Sethu: "Sure if Zoey wont mind me going with you."

Shots have been fired and they are aimed at me. I leave her there and go to the kitchen. I make us hot chocolate with marshmallows. And then I remember that I have her gift in the car. I go out to the car and get the box from the boot.

I come back and give her the cup of hot chocolate and go back to get mine and the gift from the kitchen. I put it on her lap and she looks up at me before placing the cup on the coffee table and she opens the box.

The smile that creeps up on her face tells me I might just be on my way to redemption. This was supposed to be her birthday present but I guess I have to get her another gift for that.

Sethu: "You got me books?"

Me: "I noticed your South African authors shelf was missing a few books so I thought I'd get

you some." The smile on her face is contagious. She picks up the books one by one.

Sethu: "The Harvard Wife by Busisekile Khumalo nice Siya and Fifi's love story by Simphiwe Molaba Her Broken Pieces by Minesshle Khumalo Grasping at Straws by Yvonne Maphisa Nomaswazi. I think I'll start with this one." She says taking the book The y in Your man is silent. Ironically isnt it.

Me: "Its late we should go and sleep." She lifts up her eyes to look at me like I am crazy.

Sethu: "You just gave me a bunch of books and you expect me to sleep?"

Me: "You have to at some point. And you also have work tomorrow."

Sethu: "I can always take the week off."

Yeah maybe I should have waited for her birthday.

## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

The thing about having amazing books at your disposal is that you get lost in them and a lot of what is happening around you just passes by. However I haven't neglected my duties so that is good. I drove to work this morning with my book sitting snugly on the passenger seat. The plan is to read it during my lunch break

I got to work and got down to work. The meetings were taking too long or maybe I was just too impatient. My last meeting just before lunch took less than fifteen minutes and that made me happy because it means I get a few extra minutes with my book.

I left the boardroom and went back to my office soon as the meeting was done. Amanda wasn't at her desk not surprising though because she has been like my second in command more than a PA. Turns out she is more than just a PA she is studying for her marketing degree via unisa. I think I'll speak to Tshepi about giving her a job in her company so she can have first hand experience in marketing.

I opened the door to my office and I found MaZwane standing in the centre of the office looking around like she is searching for something I don't know what it was but I hope she is not looking for a place to plant her evil spirits.

Me: "Ma what a nice surprise." She turned to look at me with her arms crossed on her chest. I'm pretty sure she was startled by my voice it was almost like she wasn't expecting to see me here which would be weird cause this is my office.

MaZwane: "What game are you playing?"

Me: "Excuse me?"

MaZwane: "Ungzwile! (You heard me.) What game are you playing."

Me: "I don't know what you mean Ma." I walked past her and put the files I had in my hand on the desk. I turned to look at her and the fire in her eyes was unmissable.

MaZwane: "When I asked Mcebo to talk to you about the ceremony I didnt think you'd bring your own person to do it." I knew this was coming.

Me: "Well I figured I would take the load off of you."

MaZwane: "Madlala was going to do the ceremony I had spoken to him about it you had no right to do what you did."

Me: "Well Melusi was my husband and that was my house it's only right that I make the decisions about what happens at my house. Besides why did Madlala leave I'm sure gogo Nkanyezi would have welcomed his help." I could see the smoke coming out of her eyes she was more than just pissed she was fuming. She walked over to me and stood just inches away with her breath hitting my face. My heart



felt like a thousand horses galloping at high speed.

MaZwane: "You are getting way too big for your boots Siphosethu. I have tolerated your disrespect for a while now. You need to get out of my way and stay out of my family business."

Me: "Ma I'm not the one making demands kwakho (at your house) you stay out of my business and I'll gladly stay out of yours."

MaZwane: "You do not know the kind of trouble you are stirring. I hope you are ready for it." She hissed between clenched teeth before turning and walking out leaving me with my knees feeling like they have been turned to jelly.

I held on to the desk and took wobbly steps to my chair. I sat down and let out a slow deep breath. I swear that woman is twins with the devil himself.

I spent an hour after that trying to digest everything that just happened. This woman is out for blood and I know I will not win this fight without someone helping me. I decided to call gogo Nkanyezi and let her know what just happened.

Nkanyezi: "MaDlamini. Unjani (how are you?)"

Me: "I'm freaked out."

Nkanyezi: "What happened?"

Me: "MaZwane just left. She was fuming." She burps on the other end of the line.

Nkanyezi: "That's good. She's getting spooked."

Me: "So what do we do now?"

Nkanyezi: "We keep doing what we've been doing. Eventually she'll expose herself. All you need to do is protect yourself and let her things come back to bite her." I take a deep breath.

Me: "Thank you. I was freaking out that woman scares me."

Nkanyezi: "Dont worry she'll get what's coming to her."

Me: "I guess. By the way Mcebo wants to see you."

Nkanyezi: "I'll be available in a couple of days. I'll be expecting him."

Me: "Thank you. I have to get back to work."

Nkanyezi: "Okay and Sethu I know this is scary but you'll get through this you'll see."

Me: "Thank you." I hung up and counted down from ten with deep breaths in between just to calm myself down.

I got back to work and tried not to think too much about MaZwane and before I knew it the day was over and I had to go back home. Lucky for me Ncane offered to get Asi from daycare and take him home. One less thing to worry about for me. I was packing up ready to go when the door opened and Mcebo walked in.

Me: "Hey what are you doing here?"

Mcebo: "I came to take you out to dinner I figured since our marriage is an unconventional rollercoaster maybe it's time we went back to the basics."

Me: "Okay and dinner is going back to basics?"

Mcebo: "Yes it's our first date." A smile crept up on my face. It's been a while since I've been on a first date. How does one even act? Last time I went on a first date I was wined and dined at KFC well more like coked and chickened if theres even such a thing. But I had the time of my life and I found the love of my life. And how here I am again starting afresh and doing it all over again.

Mcebo drove us to one of the best restaurants in town we had a private table and the head chef himself was on hand to make sure we were well taken care off. We talked we joked we laughed and we had tough conversations that needed to be had. It was a great first date I couldn't help being content about the future despite the drama that's happening I can atleast say maybe there is love in the near future. And I

am happy to just let the universe do its thing  
and lead me to where I need to go.



ZOEY

It's easy to smile and just be 'okay' with whatever life throws at you it's easy to pretend you are Okay when you are not but what happens when everything comes back to bite you in the ass.



I spent months hiding my feelings from Mcebo and by the time I had mastered up enough courage to tell him how I feel he was already playing knight in shining armour to another woman. I thought I would just shove those feelings and pack them away for eternity carry on with my life like all is well but I was just lying to myself.

Seeing Zethu or Sethu or whatever her name is just sent me down a path I never wanted to be on. In my head I had already painted her as some rural village damsel in distress but what I saw there was far different from what I had imagined. She was beautiful and her eyes looked kind and sweet. She was a far cry from the picture I had painted in my head. And because of that I let my jealousy cloud my

judgement and I ended up hurting the one person I had on my side.

I drove to Tshepi's place after work hoping to make things right with her I'm probably not her favourite person right now not that I am surprised

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I wouldn't be my favourite person either. I've been sitting in the car for almost an hour just

buzzing the intercom even though she is in the house she refuses to open the gate. But I am not about to give up.

I keep buzzing until the gate opens. I start my car and drive in. I find her waiting by the door with her arms crossed and pissed. I get out of the car and walk to the door.

Me: "Hi."

Tshepi: "What do you want?"

Me: "Can I come in?"

Tshepi: "What do you want Zoey?" Ok.

Me: "I want to apologize for what I said to you. I shouldn't be taking my frustrations out on you."

Tshepi: "Okay then so why did you?"

Me: "For starters I didnt know that Zethu was your friend."

Tshepi: "Sethu and I speak about her all the time."

Me: "I know but in my defense I've been in Durban for almost five months now and I've met five Musa's so excuse me if I dont automatically

think one name belongs to one person." She rolls her eyes and walks back into the house. I follow her in and find her sitting on the couch with her laptop on her lap. I sit down next to her.

Tshepi: "Why are you so hostile towards Sethu you said you and Mcebo were never a thing to begin with you were just friends with benefits so what changed?"

Me: "Nothing changed I just didn't realize I had so many buried feelings."

Tshepi: "And now that your zombie feelings are running rampant what do you plan on doing about them?"

Me: "I dont know."

Tshepi: "Okay while you are deciding what to do with those feelings keep this in mind Sethu is my best friend we've been friends since we were in primary school she's had my back from day one so if you plan on going after her or her happiness trust and believe I will be standing right next to her fighting back. You hurt her in anyway shape or form I will come after you with guns blazing and you will be lucky if you live to regret it." For a normal person that would have been some scary shit but instead I'm turned on.

I move the laptop from her lap and pin her on the corner of the couch and kiss the living daylights out of her. I let her go after a while to catch my breath.

Me: "I wish I had a best friend like you."



NARRATED



At Mthwalume a lone house stands inside a forest surrounded by the beauty that only nature can provide. A woman makes her way to the house in the still of the night oblivious to the crickets chirping away and the rustling of leaves in the trees. She walks to the house and before she can even bang the door to announce her arrival the door opens.

She walks into the dark house the small candle burning in the middle of the room being the only source of light. She takes a seat in on the grass mat next to the candle.

"You shouldn't be here." A voice bellows in the darkness.

Her: "You made a promise I need you to keep it."

"Woman you dont know the fire that's burning towards you. Quit now while you still can."

Her: "NO!" She shouts. "You promised me Madlala I held my end of the bargain and gave you what you wanted now I need you to give me what I need."

Madlala: "Your greed will be the death of you Mazwane. Walk away now."

MaZwane: "I am not walking away till I have all that I need."

Madlala: "You dont need anything you gave your sons fertility in exchange for wealth you got it."

MaZwane: "Except I cannot even show that wealth no one can know about it. I am tired of it I want to live my life free I want to buy the cars I want and live in the houses I want. How am I supposed to do that with that girl still walking around."

Madlala: "We had a deal. She dies you do to her husband the same thing you've been doing to your husband all these years and you could have it all except the wrong person died."

MaZwane: "That's not my fault. I did what I had to do."

Madlala: "Well whose fault is it then? Mine?"

MaZwane: "You have to help me."

Madlala: "Your need to be seen will kill you you have lived a quiet life for years enjoying the money that you have you never go to work hungry your children are all educated. You should be happy."

MaZwane: "How can I be happy for years I have invested money and made millions but I cant enjoy those millions. Melusi was supposed to be my way out he would fall 'sick' go crazy and leave all his money to me and that would make it easy for me to suddenly enjoy my money. No one would question me suddenly

having money. But now that girl has blocked my way she needs to go."

Madlala: "Except chances of that are slim to zero. She has Nkanyezi on her side. That woman is more powerful than you know."

MaZwane: "And here I was thinking Madlala was a feared person people are supposed to tremble at the mention of your name tell me if you have become weak so I can find someone else to do this." She gets up and prepares to leave. "I will call you tomorrow if you don't have a proper plan tomorrow trust me I'll find someone else to do this."

She walks out back to the darkness that covers the night hopeful that when the sun rises plans

will have been made signaling that her wishes are within reach.

## CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

The past couple of days have been nerve wracking. The anticipation to see gogo Nkanyezi is a bit scary but I think what's really scary is what she is going to say. I've been overthinking a lot and that's probably a habit I

need to let go off cause once I start I end up going down a rabbit hole coming up with different scenarios of what will or wont happen.

Today Sethu and I are driving to Richard's Bay to see gogo Nkanyezi and I am getting nervous cause we've been driving for what seems like a long time. I know I am just overreacting but it feels like we are lost. Sethu keeps giving me directions and I cant help feeling like we are driving around in circles.

We keep driving and she tells me to take an off ramp somewhere and it leads us to a suburb with beautiful homes. And here I was thinking traditional healers are supposed to live in some village but here we are. We pull up to this

beautiful double storey home with amazing landscaping just from the outside alone. The house has a tall wall fence with electric wiring at the top. Sethu sends a text to someone who I assume is gogo Nkanyezi and a few minutes later the gate opens.

I drive in and the immaculate landscaping continues on. We get to the front door and find gogo Nkanyezi waiting for us we get out and Sethu is the first to reach her and greet. I follow behind her and shake her hand. She leads us to her consultation but at the back of the house. We get in and sit down on the grass mats. Gogo Nkanyezi sits across from us and she does her thing. She hands me the bag with bones to blow on before she throws them on the goat skin that's laid out between us while chanting and saying out loud my clan names.



She chants for a while before she calms down and looks at the bones in front of her while shaking her head. She looks up and her eyes shoot straight to me and I might not know how to read the bones but the look on her face tells me whatever she is going to say is not good.

Nkanyezi: "Its not looking good not good at all."

Me: "What do the bones say?"

Nkanyezi: "What does your mother do for a living?" Okay this is weird.

Me: "Uhm she used to be a teacher but she retired about ten years ago."

Nkanyezi: "And your father?"

Me: "He used to work at a mine in Joburg. He fell sick when we were little so he had to come back home. But I don't understand what this has to do with anything." She sighs. I don't know why my parents' careers have anything to do with helping my father.

Nkanyezi: "Look just humour me. When your father fell sick who took care of the family?"

Me: "My mother did. Msizi also quit school to get a job so he can help out at home."

Nkanyezi: "Who paid for your varsity fees?"

Me: "Mum did. She said when my dad fell sick the mine had to let him go so they paid him a lot

of money and that's why they could put us through school."

Sethu: "But Melusi had a sponsor though."

Me: "No he didn't."

Sethu: "He did. I remember helping him type a letter that the sponsor needed to renew his sponsorship and we did that every January. We even went to that company once cause they wanted to see him for something." Okay this is news to me.

Nkanyezi: "Find out the name of that company that sponsored him and that should be your first clue to finding out what you need to know about your mother." Okay I guess I need to call Thato to do some more digging. "Now you came here to find help for your father it wont be easy to help him your father has been fed muti for a

very long time it's become a part of him getting it out will not be easy it might even lead to his death." So Thato's sangoma was telling the truth.

Me: "So there's no hope."

Nkanyezi: "We could try but I'm not promising you that it will be sunshine and roses when all is done. For all we know your father might never be the same again."

Me: "At this point I'll take whatever I can get."

Nkanyezi: "Good. But first things first we need to get your father away from your mother." My parents have never been apart for a very long time how am I supposed to pull that off.

Me: "How? Those two are inseparable."

Nkanyezi: "That's the problem we need to figure out a way to get your father far away from your mother to even try and help him. Nothing we do will work if he is anywhere near her."

Me: "I still dont understand this though."

Nkanyezi: "Like I said your mother has been feeding your father muti for a long time now and that muti is used to control him. Ever notice how your father never disagrees with her?" I mod my head. "Its the muti not him. Also your mother used her sons fertility as a sacrifice."

Me: "Sacrifice for what?"

Nkanyezi: "Wealth!" Okay how is that even possible. My parents live in a four roomed house that they extended over the years and

made it look I guess nicer and we also paid for those renovations so this doesn't make sense.

Me: "I'm sorry but how is that even possible. My parents live in a modest house elokshin."

Nkanyezi: "Which lead us to the company I told you to look into. That's where you'll get your answer."

Me: "Okay so I take it she sacrificed my fertility for whatever wealth she has that no one knows about." I can feel the tears stinging my eyes. Any chance or hope of me ever having a child just went up in flames. My own mother did that.

I came here for answers but it seems like I will leave here with more questions than answers.

First I need to find out about the company that sponsored Melusi i need to find out about my mum's supposed wealth and I need to get my dad away from my mum question is how do I do that without making my mother suspicious. I wish I could do something about me having a child but it seems that ship has sailed.

Sethu: "Are you okay?"

Me: "I'll live. I'm just confused."

Nkanyezi: "That's perfectly normal. But we need to get your father out of there. Take this I just thought of something." She hands me a moneybag filled with muti. "Go to see your father make him something to drink preferably tea put half a teaspoon of this in there and let him drink."

Me: "Is this supposed to help him."

Nkanyezi: "No it will make him weak and that will force your mother to take him to a hospital where he might be admitted. Once that's done I have a friend of mine in Mbumbulu I'll call him and ask if we cant take your father there and we can start treating him from there."

Me: "Okay I guess that could work."

Nkanyezi: "Good."

We left after a while and I needed to go see my parents. I texted Thato and told him everything and what he needs to find. I wasnt sure what he would find but I needed to know the truth. For a



while now I've been peeling layer after layer of what my family is supposed to be and with every layer it's like things get darker and darker. But no matter how scary it is I need to find the truth.



SETHU

Everyday since we started on this journey it seems like things get darker and scarier. After our meeting with gogo Nkanyezi it felt like the life had been somehow sucked out of me.

Mcebo dropped me off at the house saying he was going to see his parents. I guess he wasn't willing to digest everything before moving forward. I can't blame him though we all want this to end and I'm sure for him it's even worse after all this is his family.

I got to the house and Ncane had cooked and got Asi ready for bed. Fortunately for me he wasn't sleeping yet so I could still tuck him in. I sat down and had my dinner and told Ncane all that had happened and what gogo Nkanyezi said. By the time I had finished telling her everything she was gobsmacked. Her jaw was literally on the floor.

Ncane: "Hhay no I've heard about ubuthakathi (witchcraft) but this woman is on top of her game. How do you do something like this and not even feel an ounce of remorse."

Me: "Clearly she has none."

Ncane: "Atleast you have gogo Nkanyezi helping you. God knows what that woman would have done by now."

Me: "I know and whoever that man was that I saw on the road that time he warned me and he was right I did start a fight with someone I shouldn't have. And now I am seeing the results of that."

Ncane: "Maybe that man was your guardian angel."

Me: "Maybe cause I've been searching through Facebook Instagram all through social media and he doesn't exist it's like he was just a figment of my imagination."

Ncane: "He told you his name?"

Me: "Yeah he said he's name was Mbongeni Sibiya." She chuckles.

Ncane: "That's funny my grandfather had a brother named Mbongeni."

Me: "Wait how the fuck did I not figure this out."

Ncane: "What?"

Me: "Mbongeni Sibiya you and ma are Sibiya's mkhulu was a Sibiya so his dad was a Sibiya and if you say uKhokho was a Sibiya then it

makes sense." I get up from the couch and run to the study. I take every photo album that my grandparents kept and head back to the lounge. I hand a couple of them to Ncane and then I go through the ones in my hand.

I page through one till I get to the end and I don't find what I'm looking for. I open another one and go through it and just when I am about to give up I find it I swear at that moment I heard angels singing hallelujah.

Me: "It's him." Ncane gets up from the couch and comes to sit next to me. I point to the picture in the album. It's my great grandfather standing with his brother. "That's him. That's the man I saw that day."

Ncane: "Nana according to mkhulu Sibiyana Mbongeni died a few months after this picture was taken. He was killed because someone said he was a spy for the apartheid government."

Me: "Ncane I'm not crazy this is the man I saw that day. He was right next to me and he left the white beads in my car. These beads." I show her the beads around my wrist.

Ncane: "Wow. I don't know what to say. It seems you have Angel's watching over you babygirl."

Me: "Yeah."

I couldn't sleep after that. I don't know if I've ever believed in Angels but this was some revelation alright. Or maybe that encounter wasn't a figment of my imagination but a vision.

I woke up in the middle of the night and went down to get a glass of warm milk. I warmed the milk up in the microwave and when I was about to walk back upstairs I noticed the patio door was open. I grabbed a knife from the drawer I put the glass of milk and tiptoed until I got to the door. I moved the curtain aside and looked out. I saw someone sitting on the chairs by the pool. I tiptoed till I was a few steps away from them. I took a deep breath when I realized it was Mcebo sitting there sipping on whiskey.



Me: "I almost killed you." He lifted his head and looked at me. "Why are you sitting out here alone it's late "

Mcebo: "I'm sorry I just needed some time to think." I sat down next to him.

Me: "What were you thinking about?"

Mcebo: "Well i did what gogo Nkanyezi said i should do. I went home mum wasnt home so that made things easy I gave my dad his special tea and within minutes he was puking and sweating so i took him to a hospital they admitted him i called gogo Nkanyezi and right now he is on his way to wherever gogo Nkanyezi is taking him to get help."

Me: "That's one less thing to worry about."

Mcebo: "I guess. "

Me: "How are you feeling?"

Mcebo: "Like my entire life has been a lie. Like the woman I had put on a pedestal all these years turned out to be a lie it feels like all that I thought I knew is a lie." I couldn't miss the tears glistening in his eyes that he was trying so hard to blink away.

I pulled him close to me and hugged him. It wasn't long before I felt my pyjama top getting wet. I'm not sure why I was crying though perhaps it was seeing Mcebo in so much pain more than it was about my own. I wish I could fix this for him I wish I could save him the way he saved me from his family I wish I could give him something that would bring hope to him.

But how am I supposed to fix this? How do I make this better?

## CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

I swear when life comes at you it comes fast and deadly for lack of a better word. If anyone had to ask me now how I am feeling I dont think I'd have an answer. After giving my father the

tea that gogo Nkanyezi gave me I waited patiently for something to happen even though she had said my mum would be the one to take him to hospital if he starts getting weak but i had hoped that he would have to go to hospital before my mum got back from wherever she went. The stars aligned and he started vomiting and getting weak by the second. I decided to take him straight to hospital without even informing my mum.

When we got to the hospital he was admitted. I called gogo Nkanyezi and told her what had happened and she came to get him. We had to sneak him out of the hospital in the middle of the night and drive him to God knows where. I couldn't even go cause gogo Nkanyezi said it's better if I dont know where they are taking him so I can't tell my mother when she shows up as if I would knowing what she has done.

The last time I cried was when Melusi died but last night I cried I know they say boys dont cry but I cried I needed that cry to get me back to this road that's ahead. But it also helped that Sethu didnt judge me for my weakness instead she allowed me to cry and she promised me she would be with me every step of the way.

I've been up for almost an hour now and I still haven't left the bed. The door opens and Sethu walks in with a tray. I sit up on the bed and she places the tray on my lap. It's full English breakfast and hot chocolate my favourite. Sethu gets on the bed and sits facing me with her legs crossed like a sweet school girl.

Sethu: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "I'll live. I'm just worried about my dad. I want to call gogo Nkanyezi and find out how everything is going."

Sethu: "I have a confession."

Me: "What?"

Sethu: "I've already called her."

Me: "What did she say?"

Sethu: "She said everything went well. Your dad is getting all the help he needs."

Me: "Okay. Atleast he's okay."

Sethu: "I need to....." before she can even finish her sentence we hear loud noises coming from downstairs. Sethu and I look at each other before we get off the bed and rush downstairs.

When we get downstairs we find my mum shouting and trying to make her way upstairs but Ncane is standing in her way. As soon as she sees me she gets even louder.

Ma: "Mcebo usuyangdelela manje (you are disrespecting me now.)"

Me: "What have I done now?" I ask soon as i get close to her.

Ma: "Where is my husband. Give me back my husband."

Me: "I dont know where your husband is ma."

Ma: "Musa ukungenza islima (dont make a fool of me.)" She is fuming I can see the smoke coming out of her ears.

Me: "I'm serious. Angmazi uyephi. (I dont know where he is.)" She starts pacing up and down anger written all over her face.

Ma: "Niyanglinga musani ukunglinga (dont try me). Mcebo I will ask you one last time where is my husband?"



Me: "I. DONT. KNOW."

Ma: "Mcebo. Mcebo. Mcebo."

Me: "You can call me until Jesus comes back but I still dont know where he is."

Ma: "Okay. I hope you are ready for what's coming your way." She says before turning around and leaving. I let out a sigh. Things are about to get real messy.



NARRATED

At a house in Mbumbulu a car pulls up outside the gate. Before the gates open the lights in the home come on and light up the yard. A traditional healer in full regalia walks out of a rondavel with incense burning on a plate he walks to the gate chanting burping and groaning. He is followed closely behind by people in traditional attire dancing while others stand by the rondavel beating drums.

The man walks up to the gate and opens it he kneels down with the plate of incense still burning he continues to burp and groan while chanting his praise names and calling out to his spirit guides.

Him: "Nina oDlamini nina oSibalkhulu oJama  
kaSijadu Mphinyana Songiya mkhulu lomthwalo  
eningthwesa wona (this burden is a bit much)  
hlanganani nonke ningsize kulobumnyama  
engingena kubo (unite and help me through this  
darkness I am getting into.) Nina boMazibuko  
Khondlo

Sponsored

oMwelase Nzima Muna wena owangena  
neskhuni emzini asaphuma nabo sivutha  
hlanganani nina oHlathikhulu oManzezulu

ingane yenu iyanidinga (Your child needs you.)  
sesisde leskhathi ihamba ebumnyameni (he's  
been in the dark for a long time now.)"

He chants and burps still on his knees after  
some time he lifts his beaded stick up and the  
drums and dancing stops. He gets up and  
walks over to gogo Nkanyezi who is standing  
with her head bowed next to the car.

Him: "Thokoza gogo."

Nkanyezi: "Thokoza khehla Thokoza  
Gugulezulu." She claps her hands and looks up  
at him.

Him: "Uyazi ukuthi angkwazi ukvusa umuntu ekufeni! (You do know I cant raise people from the dead.)"

Nkanyezi: "Uma umphefumulo usehlangene nenyama ithemba lisekhona khehla (if the soul hasn't left the body there is hope.)"

Him: "Hhay asazi. Asibone lomuntu. (Let me see him.)" They walk to the back seat of the car and open the door. Bab'Mazibuko is laying on the back sleeping. "Asimfake ngaphakathi sibone ukuthi singamenzelani (let's take him inside and see how we can help him)." He calls out to the initiates in the yard and they rush to him. They lift Bab'Mazibuko from the car and carry him into the rondavel.

They all follow the others into the rondavel. They get in and kneel while Bab'Mazibuko is laying in the centre of the room. Khehla places plates all around Bab'Mazibuko's body with incense burning while the others sing. Bab'Mazibuko starts coughing and trying to get up but his body is so weak he cant even lift a finger up. Khehla takes a bottle of water and gives a few sips to Bab'Mazibuko he drinks and then goes back to sleep.

After what seemed like forever Khehla releases everyone to go back to their rooms. Gogo Nkanyezi says her goodbyes and leaves.

The next morning Khehla wakes up early and goes up to the mountain to get some roots and leaves. He comes back and grinds the roots and makes a mixture he adds some other muti. He takes the mixture and goes into the rondavel where Bab'Mazibuko is laying and he finds one of the initiates feeding him soft porridge.

Initiate: "Thokoza khehla."

Khehla: "Thokoza gogo. Kuhambanjani (how is it going.)"



Initiate: "Kuhamba kahle Khehla (it's going well.) He has had a few spoons just to give him some strength."

Khehla: "Good I dont know how he has lived for so long with all that dirt inside him."

Initiate: "I dont know either. Whoever was feeding him all this muti really worked on him."

Khehla: "Too bad they used their gift for evil. Imagine what they would have achieved had they used that same dedication to actually do good."

Initiate: "Oh well people forget that darkness never prevails over good. It might derail the

light but it never wins. Do you think you can help him though."

Khehla: "I have to try. It's been so long since I've done this but idlozi will have to do its job and come through."

Initiate: "Let's hope so. Let me go make you something to eat."

Khehla: "Thank you." She leaves.



SETHU

I'm scared MaZwane is spitting fire when I saw her at the bottom of the stairs I could tell she wasn't here to play but what bothered me was seeing my son scared out of his little mind by the screaming and yelling. I had to take him outside just to calm him down.

I played with him outside while the drama was going on inside. Playing distracted him and bless his little heart I hope he never remembers all that mess. Ncane walks out with a cup of tea and hands it to me.

Me: "That was hectic."

Ncane: "Tell me about it."

Me: "That woman is scary. What happened after we left?"

Ncane: "She wants her husband back and she says since Mcebo wont tell her where he is then he should prepare for what's coming."

Me: "What's coming?"

Ncane: "Do you even have to ask. That woman is evil. But you dont need to worry about anything you have gogo Nkanyezi on your side and she'll help you through this. That woman will not win."

Me: "I know. I cant help worrying though. What if she comes after Asi he's just a child."

Ncane: "Stop overthinking this you'll be fine. Go check on your husband I'll watch Asi."

I leave her there and go back into the house. I go upstairs and hear the shower running. I get in and find Mcebo standing under the water with his hands on the wall. I take off my gown open the glass door and get in. He's so preoccupied with his thoughts he cant even hear me close the door behind him. I wrap my hands around his waist and that's when he comes back to earth. I kiss the space between his shoulder blades. He turns around and looks at me.

Me: "Are you okay?" He smiles.

Mcebo: "You do know you dont have to ask me that at every turn?"

Me: "Of course I do. You are not made out of steel Mcebo it's okay to not be okay."

He plants a kiss on my lips and I can feel the intensity of it. He lifts me up and pins me on the wall he moves his lips down my neck and onto my boobs. I moan and groan as he inserts himself into me. He pumps into me like he is pumping a tyre. I'm pretty sure this is not just another love making session it feels more like a release my demons type of thing but it doesn't matter to me right now if it helps him get his

mind straight. Although we'll have to talk about this later.

## CHAPTER TWENTY SIX



It's been a long week. Work is hectic bringing my business back home and building a base here was probably the best decision I've made. I've kept my foreign clients and I also managed to get more local clients. So all is well. Today I am supposed to go see my father gogo Nkanyezi promised she would take me to see him just to ease my mind.

I finish work and let Zoey know that I am leaving. When I woke up this morning the sun was shining but now the weather is changing the breeze is colder so hopefully I can get home

and change to something warmer than a suit before I go see my father.

I get to the parking lot and if I didn't know better I'd say a hurricane is on its way. The sky has turned darker it's not even four o'clock in the afternoon but it looks almost dark. The clouds are dark and there is thunder and lightning it's not yet aggressive but you can tell it's about to get worse.

I get to the intersection that leads to the house and the traffic lights are red I stop impatiently waiting for the light to turn green. I reach out to the backseat to grab my keys from the laptop bag when I turn back to the front everything has turned dark. I know Durban

weather can turn at the drop of a hat but this is not normal. The car before me is gone there are no cars coming from the opposite direction and none behind me. This is weird.

I look around and the light is alternating between all three colors. One moment it's on red and the next second it's on green and then orange. It's like there is a malfunction somewhere. I decide to start the car and go I turn right at the intersection and almost piss my pants when I almost hit someone on the road. I bring the car to a screeching halt and almost hit a pole on the side of the road

I take a deep breath and get out of the car I walk towards the figure that is crouched in the

middle of the road. I walk slowly towards her I assume it's a her because of the long hair it's dark and straight but even in the dark its shiny especially when the lightning strikes providing light for just a few seconds. I walk closer and closer but the closer I get the louder my heart beats. I walk around the figure and stand just a few inches away from it. The person is sitting in a fetal position with their knees up to their chest their arms wrapped around the knees and the head buried between the knees and chest.

Me: "Hello. Are you okay?" Silence! "Are you hurt?" More silence. I take a few steps closer to her and soon as the lightning strikes again I notice the scales on the figure crouched before me. My instincts tell me to run. I take a step back and it's like the figure can feel me moving back it lifts its head up and I'm pretty sure I felt warm liquid move down my legs. The face is

that of a snake with a weave on top of it that looks out of place.

Her: "You cant leave me here." I take more steps back and the figure opens its arms to me but instead of arms and hands it's two more snake heads reaching out to me. I try to turn and run but its snake head arms wrapped themselves around me and drags me back to it. I start screaming asking for help but with every scream my voice gets hoarse and I cant breathe properly. The hands wrapped around me are squeezing me and I can feel the life leaving my body.

My head is turned to face the snake and soon as i open my eyes to look at it i can see the

tongue darting in and out of its mouth coming closer to my face. It moves its tongue all across my face leaving a trail of saliva or is it venom. I close my eyes trying to will myself to fight this thing but the harder I fight the harder it squeezes I feel it bite into my shoulder blade making me groan in pain. At this point my voice is none existent and my tongue feels swollen making me unable to utter a single word.

Her: "Your blood is mine you are mine." It says before biting onto my other shoulder blade leaving me in more pain. It moves from my shoulder and stares straight into my eyes. It moves closer and sticks its tongue inside my nose light its sucking my brain and dragging it down my nose. Just when I think i am about to die I feel it loosen its grip on me and my breathing comes back the tongue is pulled out of my nose.

The looser its grip gets the more air I'm able to get into my body. Before long it drops me onto the middle of the tar road. It slithers and hisses like its preparing for a fight. I try to catch my breath on the ground and I feel warm hands rubbing my arms. I feel my head resting on what seems like someone's lap. The more I come back to life the clearer the voices around me get. I dont know who it is but there is one person shouting and screaming the name of Jesus. On the other side someone is calling my family praise names. I feel what seems like raindrops hitting my forehead.

I open my eyes and the light is back. The darkness that seemed to engulf me just a

second ago is gone. However there is smoke all over the house in fact it smells like imphepho and some other muti. I look up and come face to face with gogo Nkanyezi.

Nkanyezi: "Sawubona mkhulu." I try to open my mouth and speak but my mouth is dry. She reaches onto the side table and picks up a glass of water. She places it on my lips helping me drink. After almost gulping down the entire glass she takes it away. I look around the room and see Sethu on the bed with my head on her lap. How did I even get here? Last time I checked I was in the middle of the road almost being sucked dry by a snake. Sethu has puffy red eyes like she has been crying. I look across the room and see Ncane with a bible in her hand and a sleeping Asi on her back.



Me: "How did I get here?" I manage to ask.

Sethu: "You dont remember anything?" Silly question. I remember everything except how I got here. I try to sit up and my body feels like I've been swimming through the Atlantic ocean for days if not weeks. Gogo Nkanyezi comes back with a tray of food. She gives the bowl to Sethu.

Nkanyezi: "Give him that. It should help him get his strength up." She speaks as if I am not here. But who am I kidding I might as well not be here my mind is foggy. Ncane opens the doors leading to the balcony and the windows just to let some air in. Even though the incense smell is still there the fresh air slowly takes over. Gogo Nkanyezi goes back to the kitchen I assume.

Sethu takes a spoonful of whatever is in the bowl and feeds me. Its soft porridge. Thank god cause I dont think I can stomach anything harder. I open my mouth and she puts the food in my mouth. Soft porridge is supposed to taste sweet but this one tastes bitter. It takes forever to get it down my throat but it goes down eventually. With every spoon that I eat I can feel my strength coming back. I'm able to even sit up.

Gogo Nkanyezi comes back with a small five liter bucket and one of Asi's straws from his sippy cup. She places the bucket on the side table and walks around the bed to where Sethu is sitting. She nudges her and she moves from the bed. Gogo Nkanyezi gets on the bed and helps me sit up and rest my back on the

headboard. Sethu comes around and stands on the other side of the bed.

Gogo: "Take off your tshirt." I try to lift my hands up to take the tshirt off but my strength is not fully back yet. Sethu helps me out and I hear her fast soon as my tshirt is off. I look at her and there are tears glistening in her eyes.

Me: "What's wrong? I'm not dead yet." I try to lighten up the mood but it doesn't work.

Nkanyezi: "Give me that plastic." She says to Sethu. Sethu gives her a small plastic that's rolled up and it has something black that looks like it's been mixed with lotion. She scoops up a bit of it with her finger and runs it on my shoulder and it stings. I look at my shoulder and I see two small holes on my shoulder I look at

my other shoulder and it also has the same tiny holes. And then it makes sense this is where I was bitten by the snake. What the fuck is happening?

Gogo Nkanyezi places the straw on one of the holes and starts sucking. It's like she is sucking out my blood. I groan in pain. She motions to Sethu who gives her the small bucket. She spits whatever it is she sucked out of me into the bucket. She sucks again and spits. She moves from one tiny hole to the next sucking and spitting sucking and spitting. Once there is nothing left to suck she moves to the other shoulder and does the same thing.

After what seemed like a lifetime of her doing this she stops. She takes a wipe and wipes both my shoulders. I am tired and I can feel my eyes giving in but I still need answers so I fight to stay awake.

Me: "What was that for?"

Nkanyezi: "You really dont remember what happened do you?"

Me: "No. Is anyone going to tell me?" Sethu and gogo Nkanyezi give each other some weird looks before turning back to me.

Sethu: "Well a few days ago your mum came here looking for your father. That night we went to sleep and you didnt wake up in the morning. I

tried to wake you but it was like you were dead. I checked for your pulse and it was there you were breathing but you still wouldn't wake up. You kept mumbling some things that I couldn't understand. I called an ambulance and they took you to the hospital but doctors couldn't find anything wrong with you. Everything was fine but no one understood why you couldn't wake up. I called gogo Nkanyezi and she told me to have you discharged and brought home and today you woke up."

Me: "That's impossible I was at work a few hours ago I almost got into an accident I almost got into an accident and then I woke up here."

Nkanyezi: "You were dreaming. The snake on the road the darkness all that happened was in your dream."

Me: "But how do you know about it." She smirks like I should know better. Of course I should

she is a healer who sees beyond what the naked eye can see. "Okay so why were you sucking things out of my shoulder?"

Nkanyezi: "The snake that bit you it wasn't just a normal snake bite. Remember your father is being helped to get rid of the muti in his body that he's had to deal with for years." She takes her phone and shows me a video it's of a three headed snake moving around in a bucket. "That is a snake that came out of your father when Khehla was helping him he sent it to me a few days ago. The snake needs a new place to dwell and since you have the same blood as your father you were the best option."

Me: "So now I have the snake inside me?"

Nkanyezi: "No what I was sucking out was the poison it's sort of like the egg was laying its eggs in you once those eggs grow the snake at Khehla's place dies and the one in you lives."

Me: "But you sucked out the poison?"

Nkanyezi: "Yes. So now the snake needs a new place to dwell I've called Khehla and he says he will make sure to direct the snake somewhere else."

Me: "So my dad is okay."

Nkanyezi: "He is not out of the woods yet but he is getting there slowly but surely."

Sethu: "Why cant Khehla just kill the snake? Surely it will make things easier for everyone."

Nkanyezi: "Maybe but things like this arent as easy as that. The snake wont die just like that. Even when it eventually does die it won't go



down without a fight. But it also doesn't help that MaZwane is also on a war path. "

Ncane: "Dont you think she is the one who put Mcebo in here?"

Nkanyezi: "Its possible. I'm sure by now they know that your father is getting help so they will do anything to keep their hold on him even if its through you."

I knew going against my mother was risky but I didnt think I might end up sacrificing my life in the process but here I am scared as shit of the woman who brought me into the world. And now she wants to take me out or turn me into a little zombie like my father.

Sethu: "Do you think it's over now will he be okay?"

Nkanyezi: "He will be fine but as for it being over unfortunately it's far from it. Until we get that woman under control we have to be on high alert. Anything at this point that even seems useless you have to let me know." She gets up. "Wena I need you to rest. Sethu I need to talk to you." They all walk out leaving me alone.

I look at the tiny holes on my shoulders. I know mothers have a tendency to say 'I brought you into the world so I can take you out' I just never thought I'd live to see it happen.



SETHU

I swear life is like dominoes all it takes for it to crumble is just one domino falling and the rest follow. Things seem to be going from bad to worse and I dont know how to make it better. I need to get my son out of here before he becomes a target.

Gogo Nkanyezi left me something to sprinkle around the house every night before we go to sleep. Mcebo has his own beads too so maybe

now he will sleep and wake up. I'm still worried though about all this I'm scared and the one person who had my back throughout this mess is lying upstairs fighting and trying to live.

I've been in this kitchen for a while now making hot chocolate I need something to pick up my mood. The past few days have been scary I wasn't sure what to do when Mcebo wouldn't wake up but seeing him open his eyes made me happy but I am still worried.

Ncane: "Your hot chocolate is cold." I look up and find her standing across from me on the other side of the counter.

Me: "How long have you been standing there?"

Ncane: "Long enough to see that you have a lot on your mind. Mcebo is up why the long face?"

Me: "Ncane when are you going back to the States?"

Ncane: "Oh wow you dont want me here?"

Me: "Of course not I just mean you've been here for a while so who is taking care of your daughter?"

Ncane: "Siphosethu Dlamini what's going on?"

Me: "I need you to go back to the States. And I need you to take Asi with you." She looks at me like I've lost my mind.

Ncane: "Nana you cant even go to sleep without touching him how will you survive when he's so far away?"

Me: "I'd rather he was alive and far away than for him to be around all this darkness."

Ncane: "Okay I'll book the tickets."

Me: "Thank you." She holds my hands and wipes away my tears from my eyes.

Ncane: "Nana you know I'd do anything for you."

Me: "I'll pack his stuff."

I leave her there and walk to his room and start packing. I take a deep breath and say a little prayer. As much as I want him far from this I'll sleep better once my son and Ncane touch down in the USA. Until then I have to keep praying.

## CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN



I spent hours packing last night and when I was done I texted gogo Nkanyezi and told her that Ncane is taking Asi to the states cause this thing is getting a bit too much for me and I cant be ducking spirits and still worry about my son. She promised to come see me this morning plus she also has to check on Mcebo and see how he is doing. Lucky for me I was able to get a last minute flight for Ncane and Asi I think I'll breathe easier once they are far from here.

I couldn't sleep last night. I kept waking up every ten minutes to check if Mcebo was still breathing. Whatever it is that gogo Nkanyezi

gave him helped him sleep through the night even though seeing him sleeping so peacefully also scared me a bit I thought he would stop breathing at anytime.

I've been up for a while now watching him sleep his little hand movements and were the only assurance I got that he hasn't slipped back into his "coma". I decided to take a shower before running a bath for him. I brushed my teeth while the tub filled with water. I went back to the bedroom and got all the things gogo Nkanyezi gave me to use for Mcebo's bath I poured a teaspoon of each into the bath. When I was sure the water was warm and ready i went to wake Mcebo up.

I shake him and he doesn't respond. And for a second my heartbeat goes through the roof I don't think you can live through this again. I closed my eyes and say a silent prayer when I see his eyes opening. He looks up at me and smiles.

Mcebo: "Hey."

Me: "You scared me."

Mcebo: "You should have just planted a kiss on my lips and I would have been up like a bat out of a cave." It's nice to hear him joking. It means he is coming back.

Me: "Come on you need to take a bath. Your water is ready."

Mcebo: "Yes ma'am." I help him out of the bed and we walk to the bathroom. Well I walk and he faltered but we made it to the bathroom.

I helped him get into the water and wash his back while massaging him with the herbs. The tiny holes on his shoulders are still there and I try to ignore them cause if I pay too much time on them I'll end up crying. When we are done I help him back to the bedroom. Unfortunately I cant help him get dry cause gogo Nkanyezi said we should let the water dry on it's own. Once he is drying I help him put on his pajamas and put him back to bed.

I went down to make him breakfast and I found Ncane feeding Asi. I kissed the little guy and

put the pot on the stove with a bit of water while the waiting for the water to boil.

Ncane: "So how is he?"

Me: "He's okay I think he's getting better."

Ncane: "That's good. Thank God for gogo Nkanyezi we would be planning his funeral right now."

Me: "Tell me about it. Imagine losing two husbands in the space of a year."

Ncane: "Yoooh wena people would be calling you the black widow." I chuckle.

Me: "And written countless stories who knows maybe even movies." She laughs.

Ncane: "Stop joking this is serious."

We hear a knock on the door and Ncane goes to open. I hear mumbling and giggling before Ncane walks in with gogo Nkanyezi followed by Tshepi. Tshepi rushes over to me and gives me the biggest hug. She hugs me for a long time and before long I can feel her sniffing.

Me: "Are you crying?" She pulls away and wipes her tears.

Tshepi: "Heck no you know I dont cry." I laugh. I missed my friend.

Me: "Okay gangster. How was your trip?"

Tshepi: "Forget that how are you? I'm sorry I wasnt here for you."

Me: "You had business to take care of friend it's okay. Breakfast?"

Tshepi: "Yes please."

Nkanyezi: "Now that the reunion is over we need to talk."

Me: "Okay you can make your own breakfast." I sit down on the highchair next to gogo Nkanyezi.

Nkanyezi: "How did you sleep?"

Me: "He slept okay he slept through the night so that's good."

Nkanyezi: "That's good but I was talking about you."

Me: "Well I'm okay."

Nkanyezi: "Good so I got you these." She takes out two herbs wrapped in newspapers. "These are for Asi I'm not sure when he will come back so Ncane will use these for him. Take half a teaspoon of this and pour some water and turn this into a paste. Every night before he sleeps smear it on his forehead and the top of his head." Good thing Ncane is here.



Ncane: "Thank God for that I was worried too."

Me: "About what?"

Ncane: "I know me leaving with him was supposed to get him away from all this but witchcraft has no zip code. But now that I have these I can relax." Okay I didnt know about that but I'm glad he will be far from this dark cloud and protected too.

I take Mcebo's soft porridge and lead gogo Nkanyezi upstairs to see him. We get into the room and he is sitting up on the bed.

Mcebo: "I was beginning to think you had forgotten about me. I'm starving."

Nkanyezi: "Your appetite is back that's good."  
He looks up and smiles.

Mcebo: "Well it's all thanks to you. How are you?"

Nkanyezi: "I should be asking you that." I give him the tray with the bowl of soft porridge and he eats.

Mcebo: "I'm good. Never been better." He flashes his Colgate smile.

Nkanyezi: "Good. I will leave you to it then."  
She walks out leaving me with him.

After he is done with his food he gets back into bed and I take the tray back down to the kitchen. I find Ncane and Tshepi and gogo Nkanyezi laughing and talking.

Tshepi: "How is he?"

Me: "Good I think he'll be fine."

The gate intercom buzzes. I open the gate and a few minutes later there is a knock on the door. I go to open and find Sbuysile Mcebo's sister standing there looking like she is ready to fight. She pushes past me with no greeting and walks into the house.

Me: "Goodmorning to you too Sbuysile."

Sbuysile: "Oh cut the crap where's my brother?"

Me: "Probably at work?"

Sbuysile: "Dont patronize me Sethu I know he isnt there because I've just come from there and they said he hasn't been to work for over almost a week now."

Me: "Have you tried his house?"

Sbuysile: "Mxm." She turns around and tries walking up the stairs but unfortunately for her Ncane and Tshepi are already there standing

guard. "Please move I need to talk to my brother."

Ncane: "You did hear Sethu say he is not here right?" Sbuysile turns back to look at me.

Sbuysile: "Tell your Bulldogs to get out of my way." A part of me wants to tell her to go fuck herself but I am curious about her visit here.

Me: "Its okay guys I'll take her upstairs to see her brother."

Sbuysile: "I can walk by myself."

Me: "If you have a problem with me walking you upstairs in my house you can walk out that door and get out of my house." She clenches her jaw and crosses her arms. "Didnt think so."

I lead her up the stairs. We get to the bedroom and Mcebo is not there. I panic a bit until I hear the toilet flush. He walks out and Sbuysile rushes to him and gives him a hug. They pull apart after a while.

Sbuysile: "Bhuti how are you? I've been trying to call you but I couldn't get through." He walks to the bed and gets inside the covers.

Mcebo: "I'm sorry it's a long story." She turns to look at me.

Sbuysile: "I'd like to talk to my brother please. Alone!" She sneers. I smile and walk to the

other side of the bed and get on it. I sit with my legs crossed looking at her.

Me: "I'm sure whatever you have to say to him you can say it to me his wife." I catch a glimpse of Mcebo on the side of my eye and he has a grin on his face although he is trying to hide it by facing down.

Sbuysile: "Bhuti!" He looks up with a serious face.

Mcebo: "Sbu I'm tired I need to rest so please say what you want to say." She swallows and looks at me I dont know what it is she is expecting.

Sbuysile: "Uphi ubaba (where is our father?)"

Mcebo: "Baba is a grown ass man I have no idea where he is."

Sbuysile: "Really? You checked him into a hospital almost two weeks ago and then he dissapeared and you are telling me you don't know where he is?"

Mcebo: "Yes I have no idea where he is."

Sbuysile: "Really? You checked him into a hospital almost two weeks ago and then he dissapeared and you are telling me you don't know where he is?"

Mcebo: "Yes that's what I am telling you. If you dont believe that then that's your problem."

Sbuysile: "Mwelase ngyacela (please) mum is worried about him she cant even eat she is



getting sick." The chickens are coming home to roost.

I decided to leave them and go back downstairs a part of me is happy if she really is sick and getting weak then maybe just maybe prayers are being answered.



NARRATED

At KwaMashu MaZwane is pacing up and down in her lounge mumbling to herself and scratching her arms a knock comes in and she rushes to the door. She opens and Madlala walks in with his skin carrier in his hand.

MaZwane: "You are late!"

Madlala: "I was busy trying to find your husband."

Mazwane: "Fine have you found him?"

Madlala: "No. I have tried everything and I cant find him it's like he has disappeared into thin air I cant find his spirit and aura anywhere."

Mazwane: "You have to work harder Madlala. Things are not looking good."

Madlala: "What happened?" She unbuttons her shirt and lowers the sleeves to show her shoulders. Madlala gasps when he sees the sight before him.

MaZwane: "See why we need to find my husband. This thing goes down my arms and its painful and itchy." Madlala touches the scales on her shoulders and she cringes.

Madlala: "This is bad MaZwane really bad. When did this start?"

MaZwane: "Yesterday. It started itching and when I woke up and I had this scales all over it started on my shoulders and went down to my arms if things carry on like this I'll be covered by these things all over soon."

Madlala takes a bottle of white powder from his bag mixes it up with a green liquid from another bottle. He smears the paste on MaZwane's shoulders going down to her arms.

Madlala: "That should help."

MaZwane: "For a few hours sure but it wont last we need to get my husband back you have to find him get all your friends to help money is not a problem."

Madlala: "I'll do the best that I can."

MaZwane: "Do you think this has to do with my husband's disappearance?"

Madlala: "Obviously. He is probably getting help somewhere. And whoever is helping him is sending that thing back."

MaZwane: "Then you have to send it back too."

Madlala: "How when I cant even find where he is or who is helping him."

MaZwane: "That woman we found at Sethu's house that day maybe she knows where he is."

Madlala: "I thought of that I sent some things to search her place and they came back with nothing."

MaZwane: "Madlala you know we cant waste time if we dont find him I'm dead. Literally."

Madlala: "I know okay. I know." He picks up his bag and walks out.

MaZwane buttons up her shirt and sits on the couch wondering where her husband could be. She has spent years moulding her husband to who and what she wanted him to be and now it seems all things are falling apart. A voice that she hasn't heard for years pops into her head.

"Take care of my grandson. Dont hurt him or I will come for you."

The voice kept ringing in her head and for the first time since Melusi died it all made sense why things were falling apart now. She had killed Melusi's mother whose father was one of the most powerful healers in KZN his biggest regret had always been that he couldn't save his daughter he had a choice to help save his daughter and sacrifice his grandson or sacrifice his daughter to save his grandson. His daughter had made that choice for him she sacrificed herself to save her son.

Melusi's grandfather was so heartbroken he couldn't stand even looking at his grandson he knew if he kept him around he would end up resenting him for his daughter's death so he chose to give his grandson away to his father and he cut ties with him.



The mind she knew then that convincing Msizi to cut those brakes was a huge mistake and now it's coming back to bite her in the butt.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

I can sleep easy now that Asi is far away from this dark cloud Tshepi and I drove them to the airport a couple of days ago and this morning Ncane called to tell me they were jetlagged but they landed safely I just pray that Asi adjusts quickly I mean it is a new environment.

Mcebo is getting better he can even walk up and down the stairs now although not fully healed he is getting there and I couldn't be more happy. MaZwane hasn't tried making contact which is weird with things falling apart

for her right now one would have thought she'd be here everyday breathing fire by lo and behold she hasn't appeared not even once.

I've been working from home cause well I cant leave Mcebo to fend for himself although he says I'm treating him like a baby I dont think I'd be able to focus at work with him being here alone.

An hour ago Zoey waltzed in here wanting to see Mcebo she came in looking like she stepped out of a glam photoshoot she looked at me with my sweats on like she was disgusted but I am not about to let her rattle my cage. I have bigger fish to fry and she ain't one of them.

She comes down the stairs with her arm hooked around Mcebo's they are laughing and giggling. I know she's trying to get under my skin I can even feel the green eyed monster trying to take over me but I refuse to lower myself to her standards. She says her goodbyes and I put on my best fake smile and watch her walk out the door.

Mcebo: "You're cute when you're jealous."

Me: "I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about." I say fixing my eyes back to the laptop in front of me.

Mcebo: "Right!" He chuckles and goes to the kitchen he comes back with a glass of water and sits across from me. "Have you heard anything from my mum?"

Me: "No come to think of it he hasn't even sent your sisters to fight her battles I wonder what's going on."

Mcebo: "I dont know either. Maybe I should go check on her."

Me: "Why? So she can personally feed you her poison." He looks at me like I just said the most vile thing ever uttered in human history. But a part of me knows he's just hurt she is his mother. "Look I'm sorry I shouldn't have said that but you are suck right now and it's all because of her. I know you care but right now you need to put yourself first. Heal you first before even thinking about anyone else." He

takes a deep breath and covers his face with his hands.

Mcebo: "I know you are right I just....." his phone rings and he picks it up. "TT..... okay I'll see you when you get here." He hangs up and looks at the phone like he's expecting the phone to tell him what TT wants to tell him.

Me: "What was that about?" He puts the phone down and looks at me.

Mcebo: "TT says he has some info he is on his way to the airport now so he should be here in a few hours."

Me: "You think it's something serious?"

Mcebo: "Definitely. He wouldn't be flying here if he didn't have anything important. I wonder what it is."

I guess we are about to find out.



NARRATED



In KwaMashu MaZwane is in her room trying to ease the itching on her skin she moves up and down the wall using it to scratch her back but it doesn't seem to help. She decides to try something else to help her ease her affliction. She goes to the bathroom and fills the tub with warm water she throws in any bath salts she can find she gets in and the bath salts seem to be doing the trick. She closes her eyes relishing the feeling of the soothing water. She drifts off into a peaceful slumber something she hasn't enjoyed in a while.

She wakes up abruptly to a hand wrapped around her neck she opens her eyes and comes face to face with her worst nightmare. She looks at the face she had hoped never to see again hoping and praying that this was just a nightmare but it wasn't the hand around her

neck was proof enough that this was no nightmare this was real life.

She looked up at the eyes that had fire burning in them. This is how it all ends she thought to herself all her greed and need to control anything and everyone around her had led to this if she could only go back in time and heed the warnings that were given to her. If she could only go back in time and not let her anger cloud her judgement maybe she wouldn't be here right now maybe she wouldn't be facing death straight in the face but unfortunately for her time never goes back once it's gone it's gone.

She tried to will her body to let in more air but the hand around her neck was a barrier she

couldn't fight. She had both her hands wrapped around this hand trying to get it away from her but with every fight things got worse for her. She felt her lungs finally giving in and she knew not even prayer could save her now. She closed her eyes shut as she felt the last remnants of air leaving her body but with no oxygen to fill that void she was doomed.

The hand lifted her up as she drifted off to a world unknown. She felt the hand ease its grip around her as bits of air rushed into her fragile lungs. Instead of fully letting her go the hand dipped her into the water for a few seconds before lifting her up again coughing and spitting the water that was now fighting the air for a chance to occupy her lungs. The dipping happened a few more times and each time it felt like death was near.

"You had one job. Just one." Her nightmare finally spoke after what seemed like a lifetime of torture. She was lifted up and made to stand on her feet next to the tub. "Look at all that you have done." She was told as her eyes were directed to the body of water in front of her. The water had turned blood red which made her fear even more. She fixed her eyes on the sight before her. It was like a recording of all the sins she had committed in life from her and her mother making their neighbors lives a living hell to her sending lightning to strike her little sister whose only crime was getting married before her she was angry at her for making a mockery of her in the community. She was supposed to get married first as the older sister but no her sister had to meet the perfect man and barely three months into their relationship he had made the choice to make her a wife afterall she possessed all the qualities he needed in a woman kindness compassion love ambition and

so much more. As if that wasn't enough to make her a laughing stock her sister's husband had done what no man had ever done in their village her sister's husband had done what no man had ever done in their village he sent a hundred fat cows to seal the deal. The community had praised and rejoiced at her sister's fortune. And while everyone was dancing and ululating she was in her room allowing her bitterness to brew into anger.

A few days after her sister's marriage she had cooked up her lightning like her mother taught her she was alone by the river as she did her thing she sat there for about ten minutes waiting to hear the sound of thunder to confirm her job was done. Soon as she heard the thunder she knew the lightning had done its job and it would be a matter of hours or days for her family to be alerted that her sister had

unfortunately passed away. She walked back home with a bounce in her step she was happy.

She got home and went on with her life like normal but there was nothing normal about that day late in the evening they were woken up by a breathless messenger from the next village he struggled to relay the message he had been sent to relay but when he did her family had broken down in tears and wailing. She on the other hand was having a celebration inside. The job was done. She had succeeded. And from that day she knew she had graduated from her mother's school of witchcraft although she would never wear a gown and celebrate it achievement it was still a worthy achievement to her.

She saw all the things she had done time and time again to hurt people even people whose only sin was breathing wrong being too happy around her or even stepping on her toes by mistake. She enjoyed seeing other people suffer it brought her joy but right now she was realizing it wasn't so joyful when the shoe was on the other foot.

She had heard about her having to account for her sins one day in front of God but she hadn't cared after all she'd be dead but clearly she was wrong. Today was the day she would account for all her sins and not to God but a mere mortal she knew better than to piss off. She saw all her bad choices being replayed in front of her over and over again.

MaZwane: "Please stop I'm sorry I know I hurt you and I'm sorry." She cried as sweat and tears covered her face and body. She closed her eyes and hoped that this nightmare would end but unbeknownst to her it was only just beginning.

"Is that supposed to make me forgive you just I'm sorry and all is forgotten?" She was asked as her back made a violent contact with the wall. She cried as she felt her bones crack from the impact.

MaZwane: "Please just kill me and get it over with."

"I'm not a killer you know that I heal that's my calling to heal not to take lives. You think I let you go when you killed my daughter because I



was weak? No I let you go because I knew this day would come. I knew one day you'd fuck up so bad everyone would turn their backs on you. What I didnt anticipate was my grandsons death being the one to unravel your web of evil."

MaZwane: "Please tell me what I need to do and I'll do it. I'll give you my soul on a silver platter please. Make this torture stop." She cried as she sat on the floor where she had crumbled looking up at this figure before her she has never in her life ever felt that small.

"You dont have a soul MaZwane are you forgetting you gave it up to the darkness in exchange for Mazibuko to love you after you killed your sister?" He said as he knelt down in front of her making them level but even in this position he was still intimidating to her. She couldn't even bring herself to look at him. "Your suffering has just begun. You will pay dearly for

all the blood that is in your hands for all the souls you have tortured and imprisoned in your darkness. They are coming for you one by one they will exert their own form of vengeance. And believe you me it will not stop until the last one has had their time."

Mazwane: "Ngyakcela Khehla ngsizise ngilaphe ngyathembisa ngizo shintja. (Please help me heal me and I promise I will change.)"

"Lena yona seyingaphezulu kwami (its above me now.) Ngakutjela ukuthi await amadlozi awalali abona konke okwenzakalayo manje sewakhathele uwe. (I told you my ancestors dont sleep they see everything that happens and now they are tired of you.)"

MaZwane: "Yobe Khehla yobe Khabazela. (I'm sorry.)" She cried but her tears and begging fell on deaf ears.

She opened her eyes and the light was back on in the house. The smoke and darkness that had engulfed her had left. Who knew one day she would be afraid of the dark but then again this was no ordinary darkness this was judgement darkness she could feel the souls she had tortured and hurt whispering in the darkness they were coming for her by fire by force and this time there was no escaping it even her own spirits had turned their backs on her this was a fight she had to fight on her own but whether or not she would win she'd have to wait and see.

## CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

When someone tells you they have information to share but then you have to wait for hours before you can see them to hear what they have to say your mind goes into overdrive trying to think what this person could possibly have to say.

We've been waiting for TT for the past four hours and he is still not here. I thought flights to Durban from Joburg took less than two hours. The nerves are getting the best of me. Now I'm thinking something happened to him somewhere along the way. Sethu is in the kitchen making dinner atleast she has

something to keep her mind off things while for me the TV is not doing anything.

After a long time he texts me that he is outside so I open for him. I go out and wait for him outside. He drives in and quickly gets out of the car before he even stops the car engine. He grabs his bag from the backseat and walks to me. We hug and I lead him back into the house.

Me: "Dude you look like you've seen a ghost. What's happening?"

Thato: "Can I have a glass of water please." He says before throwing himself on the couch. I

leave him there and head to the kitchen. I grab a bottle of water in the fridge and a glass.

Sethu: "That's him?"

Me: "Yep let's go." She switches off the stove and we go back to the lounge. She greets TT and sits down. I hand him the water and he gulps it down. When he is done he takes a deep breath.

Thato: "I'm sorry. I am just out of breath."

Me: "Were you running?"

Thato: "Yep. Anyways the reason why I'm here...." he reaches into his bag and takes out a file. He takes the documents and places them on the coffee table side by side. From the looks of it they look like certificates of some sort. I

pick one up and read and it's a share certificate with my mother's name written on it.

Me: "This is a share certificate?"

Thato: "Yes. All these are share certificates." There's about eight of them on the coffee table.

Me: "So my mum has shares in all these companies?"

Thato: "Yep. And the one on your hand belongs to the company that paid for Melusi's education. Dude your mum has money. And not only that she also has a number of properties all under a shell company that supposedly operates from the Cayman Islands."

Sethu: "Okay so how much money are we talking here?"

Thato: "Its hard to tell honestly cause some of those shares alone are worth more than R50 million each so with everything combined including the money in off shore accounts it's close to a billion."

Sethu: "I'm sorry I dont understand. If she has that much money why was she so adamant on having Melusi's estate. I mean it's nothing compared to what she has. Why would she give to so much lengths just to get her hands on his money?"

Me: "Greed! There is nothing else I can think off."

Thato: "I dont know but after what you told me about your mum I cant help thinking all this was her way to maybe enjoy her money without anyone questioning where it came from."



Me: "Cause everyone would just say its Melusi's estate."

Thato: "Exactly. And if it grows we'll think she just invested right and was smart about it."

Sethu: "But why hide it though. I dont get it."

Me: "Because she sacrificed our fertility for it. She was a nurse with a miner husband if she had started living lavish people would have questioned her sudden wealth."

Thato: "True. But why hide it even from her family though?"

Sethu: "Yoh hhayi I dont know what to think right now."

I didnt know what to think either but I knew I needed answers and TT cant give me those answers. I left them there and went to the bedroom I took a hoodie and put on some track pants with sneakers and headed back downstairs.

Sethu: "Where are you going?"

Me: "I'll be right back." I grabbed my car keys and walked out before they could stop me. I got into the car and drove out. I got to KwaMashu and I wasnt sure how I was even going to begin asking my mother about this whole thing. First we find out she is a murderer a witch and now she has so much wealth she could have helped

us but she chose not to. What kind of mother is she even supposed to be.

I got out of the car and noticed the house was dark the lights were off which was weird enough. I walked to the door and when I turned the knob the door was unlocked. This isn't right. Why would the door be unlocked with the lights off. Something just seemed off. I pushed the door slowly and opened it. I took one step in and almost turned back. The stench that came from the house was just too much. It was like something had died and was now starting to decompose.

I switched the lights on and the house looked normal except for the smell. I looked around

and everything seemed to be in place. I checked every room to see where the smell was coming from. It seemed to get stronger as u got closer to my parents bedroom. So many thoughts were going through my mind was I ready to face whatever was on the other side of this door. What if my mum was in there dead?

After a while of inhaling that God forsaken smell I opened the door and I swear if this smell doesnt kill me nothing will. I walked in and the room was dark. I turned the lights on and i was not prepared for the sight before me. All i could see was a figure that looked like mum. She wasnt moving. I wanted to go to her and shake her to see if she'll wake up but I seemed stuck in the same spot.

I stood there and just watched her as she lay there. I was ready to turn back and call the police or an ambulance when I saw her move a limb. I walked closer and heard her groan like she was in pain. I know I should be thankful that at least she is alive but I also realized a part of me was hoping she is dead.

Me: "Ma!" She groaned louder and her eyes opened even though it seemed like it was a struggle for her. Her eyes finally made contact with me and the pain and sorrow in her eyes was something I couldn't fathom. My mother has always been fearless and strong no one could mess with her but now seeing her like this weak and in so much pain it feels like an out of body experience.

She held out her hand for me and I wasn't sure if I should take it. I got close enough to see her and I gagged a little and I almost threw up. This wasn't the woman I knew. This looked like some monster conjured up in a fictional children's book or even worse a horror film.

She had scales all over her body like a snake the only part of her that was still her was her face. Although it looked like she had lost a lot of weight. Her cheeks had sunk into her face there were dark circles under her eyes and wrinkle lines on her forehead and her lips were dry.

She tried to speak but it seemed even her mouth was dry. I went to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water. I helped her drink. She coughed a few times before she could even speak.

Ma: "Son! You came." With every word out of her mouth it was like she was losing bits and pieces of her life.

Me: "Ma what happened to you? Why are you like this?"

Ma: "I..... I..... am .... paying for .....all that .....I've done. My ....ac.....actions..... have ..... have caught up..... with me." The fact that I can hear her is a miracle all on it's own.

Me: "What happened?"

Ma: "I need..... I need you to..... to ..... bring... bring .....Seth....Sethu and.... and.... and your sisters..... I..... I have..... i have something..... to tell you..... before..... before..... i die..... please." She says before collapsing. I check her pulse and Thank God she is still breathing.

I leave her and text Sethu. I open every window in this house just to let the stench out. I decide to call Sbuysile and Cebile and tell them to come home. Cebile's phone goes straight to voicemail. I call Sbuysile and she picks up after the fourth ring.



Sbuysile: "So you're alive."

Me: "Not now I'm not in the mood."

Sbuysile: "I wasnt in the mood either when I came to the house and asked you to come see mum and you refused."

Me: "This is not the time for your tantrums Sbuysile. You need to come home. Call Cebile too mum wants to talk to us."

Sbuysile: "Are you at home?"

Me: "Yes I'm at home. Call Cebile and both of you come home preferably tonight I dont think your mother will live to see the morning." I hung up.

I sat on the stoep outside waiting for everyone to get here. Sethu arrived first. She parked her car next to mine and came over to me and the first thing she noticed was the smell.

Sethu: "What's that smell?" She asked covering her nose.

Me: "You wouldn't believe me if I told you. Let's wait for the others and I'll show you." She got inside the house and came back with a chair. She sat down in front of me. We sat there in silence for almost an hour. Sbuysile pulled up eventually together with Cebile. They walked over to us.

Cebile: "Bhuti

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what's going? Yini le enukayo (what's that smell)" I got up and led them inside the house. I opened the door to the bedroom and they all walked in. I heard gasping from each of them. Sethu walked out with her hands on her mouth. Soon after that I heard the toilet flushing. I guess she went to throw up. Cebile and Sbuysile were frozen in one place with tears streaming down their faces.

Sethu came back and stood by the door with her mouth still covered by her hands. I walked over to my mother and shook her a bit. For a moment I thought she wouldn't wake up but she stirred and looked around the room. She tried to smile when she saw everyone but it was like Sheldon Cooper trying to smile a scary sight. She pulled herself up and sat with her back on the headboard which revealed her skin from the neck down as the blankets wouldn't go up with her.

Cebile crumbled to the floor in tears Sbuysile tried to help her but instead they both ended up

on the floor. Sethu just stood by the door I couldn't tell how she was feeling but the tears running down her face were as clear as daylight. I gave my mother the glass of water and helped her drink.

I went to the kitchen and came back with two chairs and went back to get two more. I came back and helped Sbuysile and Cebile up and made them sit on the chairs. They wouldn't stop crying and I was beginning to get irritated honestly cause I wanted to hear what my mother had to say.

I helped Sethu sit down and then I sat next to her and waited for my mother to say something. She opened her mouth and coughed a bit. She looked better than she looked an hour ago.

Ma: "I... I'm sorry. I know this is a shock for you." Okay she even sounds better than she did a while back. I wonder now if this whole thing is real or it's just one of her stunts to try and get us all in one room. "I will explain everything to you. First I just want to say I am sorry for all that I've done to you..... I..... I..... know .... I haven't been the best mother to you. I have done some terrible things to you that you didn't deserve. I don't know where to start."

Me: "You can start at the beginning."

Ma: "Right! I..... When I was a little girl my mother taught me how to mix muti and how to use it except the way she taught me wasnt to help people it was to terrorize them. She taught me how to send tikoloshes to make their lives a living hell she taught me how to make lightning and when I was about twenty two my sister got married. I became the laughing stock in my village cause I was older and still not married. Her husband was a good man who made sure she would be respected by sending the fattest cows to my father. I wasn angry at first I was angry at the people laughing at me then I became angry at her for being so happy while I was miserable." She took the glass of water and drank a bit.

"I sent lightning to strike her a few days after her wedding. We got word from her in-laws that she had died. We went to the funeral and I ended up giving her husband some muti to make him love me. A few days after the funeral he came to my home with his elders saying since his wife was dead my family had to give him a wife or bring back his cows. It would have been a shame to my father to give those cows back so I convinced him that I would take my sisters place. And that's how I ended up with your father."

I looked at the girls and the tears had stopped flowing every emotion they had before was now



replaced with confusion. Can't say I blame them though I was just as confused.

Ma: "I stayed with your father for almost ten years and we were happy he worked in Joburg at a mine for a while before the mine was shutdown. His friend then got him a job as a taxi driver. His friend took him to some traditional healer who helped him by making him vomit all the muti I gave him. When he came back here he was a different person he was back to his old self. And the first thing he asked when he walked through the door was what I was doing there. I knew things were about to go downhill from there so I asked Madlala for help. He helped me. When I lost my job I needed to find a way to take care of all of you but I couldn't let your father go back to Joburg. Again I went back to Madlala and he said he can help me make money all i had to do

was give a small sacrifice and everything would work out fine. I sacrificed with your fertility that's why you all cant have kids."

Me: "Wait I thought it was just us the boys what do you mean when you say we all cant have kids?"

Ma: "Well I was supposed to give him Melusi too but since he wasnt biologically mine I couldn't so the trade off was to give up both the girls fertility too."

Sbuysile: "So that's why I cant have children? My in-laws call me names all the time because of you mama." She muttered with her pain ridden voice. For the first time in a long time I felt sorry for her my sisters have always been

brats but the one thing Sbuysile has always wanted was a child. Doctors couldn't find anything wrong with her or her husband but now we know there was something wrong with her.

Ma: "I'm sorry I know I was selfish."

Me: "Selfish doesnt even begin to cut it ma."

Ma: "I know I know I could never make up for what I did to you." She reached into her bedside drawer and took out a big brown envelope. She handed it to me. I opened it and it was the same certificates TT had shown me earlier.

Me: "What are we supposed to do with this? You do know when you die all the things you've accumulated through your evil ways will die with you."

Ma: "Not really. The deal I made with Madlala was that if I wouldn't be able to spend the money freely that's why I ended up investing most of it."

Sethu: "So you would have died without spending any of your money?"

Ma: "I was supposed to start spending it after you died." She says looking straight at Sethu.

Sethu: "I'm sorry what?"

Ma: "Melusi wasnt the one who was supposed to die you were. After your death I was going to do to Melusi what I did to my husband he would be so distraught at your death that he would sign over everything to me to run and in that way I would be able to enjoy my money."

Sethu: "I cant deal with this right now." She got up and walked out of the room.

My mother looked at me and tried to smile.

Ma: "Its fine you can go after her I can tell you everything tomorrow. I'm tired anyway." I got up and left. I heard footsteps behind me. I saw Cebile and Sbuysile following me. I walked out the car and found Sethu standing by her car. Sbuysile walked straight to her car and drove off without a word. I got to Sethu and just gave her a hug.

Me: "How are you feeling?"

Sethu: "Like I've been punched in the stomach."

Me: "I know and I'm sorry. Go home okay and get some rest you'll come back tomorrow." She pulled out of the hug and looked at me.

Sethu: "You are staying."

Me: "I have to. Someone has to watch her. And chances of Sbuysile or Cebile doing it is zero to nil."

Sethu: "Cant say I blame them."

Me: "Me either. But I need to watch over her and make her a decent meal atleast I dont think she has had anything to eat in a while."

Sethu: "Good luck with that. I'm leaving." I chuckled.

Me: "What happened to for better for worse?"

Sethu: "This is worse than worse and I dont think I have the stomach for it. I will see you tomorrow." I gave her a kiss and she got in the car and drove off.

I took a deep breath and went back to the house. If you had to ask me why I was doing this besides the fact that that woman is my mother I wouldn't know what to say.

CHAPTER THIRTY

I couldn't sleep. I was anxious and afraid for Mcebo being alone in that house. What if that women's evil moves over to him? I had all these crazy thoughts in my head. Its after midnight



and sleep still wont come. I close my eyes for a few moments hoping that sleep will take over but I always end up seeing things I shouldn't be seeing. I swear it's going to be a long night.

My phone vibrates next to me and it scares the shit out of me. I reach over and it's gogo Nkanyezi. Why would she be calling me this late?

Me: "Thokoza gogo."

Nkanyezi: "Uphi Mcebo? (Where is Mcebo)"

Me: "He is at his parents house."

Nkanyezi: "Why?" Just one word and it was enough to send my heart into overdrive.

Me: "Uhm.... He said he had to take care of his mum. She's not doing okay."

Nkanyezi: "You need to get him out of there. His good heart will get him into a lot of trouble one day. I've been trying to call him his phone is off. You need to drive there now and get him out." She hung up before I could even say anything. I knew this was a bad idea.

I jumped out off bed and put on a tracksuit and sneakers. I rushed down to the garage and got into my car and drove off. I kept saying a prayer hoping I wasnt late. Gogo Nkanyezi wouldn't

call me in the middle of the night unless it was important.

I got to KwaMashu and found the gate locked. I tried calling Mcebo and his phone went straight to voicemail. I went into panic mode. I tried banging the gate for a while before I remembered this is KwaMashu I cant be drawing unnecessary attention to myself.

I decided to climb up the wall fence. I tried to hold on to the top and lift myself up but i kept falling back down. I tried a couple more times without any success. I remembered i have a spare tyre in my boot. I took it out and placed it next to the wall. I tried to climb but the fear of it rolling away with me in top of it kind of gave me

anxiety. I looked around and it was dead quiet but I'm pretty sure anyone who saw me would think I was a robber.

I mastered up enough courage and got on the tyre. Luckily for me I was able to reach the top and pull myself up from there. I got up and sat on the fence and took a few deep breaths. Now the struggle was jumping down to the bottom if I do this wrong I'll probably end up with a broken leg.

I take one last deep breath and count up to three before jumping down. I made it even though I fell but I made it. I get up and check for any broken bones and I find none. Perfect. I walk to the door and knock. I keep knocking but

there is no reply. I walk around to the window and I can see that the TV is on in the lounge. I'm pretty sure Mcebo is in the lounge. I knock on the window a few times but there is no reply.

I decide to go to check the back door. I knock a few times before turning the door knob. Thank God it's open. I open and walk in and boy this stench is not something I'll ever get used to. I dont even understand how Mcebo can even sleep with this smell filling up the house. I turn the kitchen light on and walk to the lounge. I turn the lights on in the lounge and see Mcebo sleeping on the couch he looks so peaceful. I was about to say a silent thank you God but then I remembered that I've seen this scene before him sleeping like a baby meanwhile he is fighting demons somewhere.

I walk closer to him and pull the coffee table up so I can sit close to the couch. I shake him but he doesn't even flinch. I shake him again calling out his name but nothing. I panic. I cant be doing this again. I cant. I take my phone out of my back pocket and dial gogo Nkanyezi's number. She picks up.

Nkanyezi: "Is he okay?"

Me: "He wont wake up." I say with tears streaming down my face.

Nkanyezi: "Stop crying. Go to the kitchen and see if you cant find some salt. Mix it with water and find jeyes fluid too. Mix everything together and pour drops of it into his mouth. Not too much. Just a few drops at a time and keep

calling his name." By the time she is done giving her instructions I am in the kitchen with salt and water in a glass ready all I need now is jeyes fluid.

I open all the cabinets trying to find even a drop of the jeyes fluid but there is none. I rush to the bathroom and lucky for me I find a small bottle of jeyes fluid. I rush back to the kitchen and almost have a heart attack. I find MaZwane standing by the counter with the glass of water and salt in front of her. How did she even get out of bed cause last time I checked she couldn't do shit for herself. She looks up at me and I feel a cold chill making it's way down my spine and the hairs on the back of my neck stand at attention.

Mazwane: "What are you doing here?" She asks with a hoarse croaky voice.

Me: "I came to see Mcebo."

MaZwane: "Its the middle of the night. Couldn't you wait till morning?"

Me: "I felt bad leaving him alone. I'm his wife

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I just wanted to help him." She looks at the glass in front of her and then back at me.

Mazwane: "What's with the water?"

Me: "I uhm.... I needed something to help me sleep."

MaZwane: "Theres milk in the fridge. Warm it up. It should help." I smile and watch her as she walks away. Her nightdress hides most of her scaly body but the neck and arms are visible and that's just a sight I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.

As soon as she is put of sight I go back to what I was doing. I mix the salt with the jeyes fluid and go back into the lounge. I take the spoon

and scoop up some of the mixture. I use my one hand to open his mouth and pour the drops into his mouth. I finish the first spoon with no change. I scoop up another spoon of the mixture and pour it into his mouth. After about two more drops he stirs a bit. Okay there is hope. I pour the rest of the mixture and he coughs and spits some of it onto my pants.

He coughs a few more times with his hand on his chest. While I was busy helping him sit up I heard groaning and crying in pain. Its seems to get worse the better Mcebo gets. After a while Mcebo's coughing dies down but the groaning and crying gets louder. Mcebo and I look at each other and light bulbs go off. When he was

passed out on the couch MaZwane was getting stronger so much so she could even walk around the house.

Mcebo: "When did you get here?"

Me: "A while ago. Gogo Nkanyezi told me to come get you out of here."

Mcebo: "She did? When?"

Me: "I told you staying here was a bad idea."

Mcebo: "What happened?"

Me: "Your mum was in the kitchen."

Mcebo: "She cant walk."

Me: "Exactly! While you were passed out she was walking around. You wake up and she starts groaning and crying. You see where I'm going with this?" He sighs and runs his hands down his face before burying his head in his hands.

Mcebo: "This will never end will it. She wont stop."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Mcebo: "Don't be. It's not your fault."

Me: "So what are you going to do?"

Mcebo: "I dont know."



We sat up on the couch till morning just listening to the groaning from the bedroom. Even the stench had become part of the 'ambience'. The last time I stayed up for more than twenty four hours was in varsity.

Mcebo: "I should make breakfast. I'm sure she is hungry." He said getting up and headed to the kitchen. A part of me wanted to ask him why he even bothers after everything that she has done to him he still somehow finds a way to dig deep into his heart and find some empathy for her. I guess if someone carried you for nine months and brought you into the world you'll always find a way to put your own feelings aside and take care of them.

He finished making her soft porridge and took it to her. He fed her and came back with an empty bowl. He found me sitting in the kitchen with a glass of water in my hand.

Mcebo: "You should eat something." He says while rinsing the empty bowl.

Me: "I'm not hungry." He turns to look at me with his hands resting in the sink behind him.

Mcebo: "I should take you home then."

Me: "I'm not leaving you alone in this house Mcebo. You saw what what happened."

Mcebo: "Eish....." we are disturbed by someone banging the gate. I get up and go to the lounge. I look through the window and see Cebile and Sbuysile standing by the gate.

I call Mcebo and he goes and open for them. They walk into the house and head straight for their mother's bedroom. Mcebo walks in after them and looks at me. I decide to follow the crowd too. Mcebo gets in before me and I decide to stand by the door. Cebile moves to the other side of the bed and opens the bottle of



water in her hand. She pours the contents onto her mother's face.

Sbuysile: "Vuka mthakathi! (Wake up witch.)"  
Mcebo and I look at each other and we silently decide not to get involved.

Cebile: "Wenja vuka. (Wake up.)" MaZwane struggles to open her mouth with the cold water all over her and her bed. She is shaking.

Mazwane: "Ngane zami (my children)"

Cebile: "Ungalingi! Awunangane wena. (Don't you dare. You have no children.)"

Sbuysile: "We have questions and you are going to give us the answers before you die."

Mazwane: "Okay." She says pain written all over her face. I dont think there was ever a time when she thought she'd ever have to face her children like this and confess her sins. She went from being their protector to being the villain in their lives within hours.

Cebile: "Yesterday you said that you sacrificed with all of our fertility so how is it that Msizi has kids?" Oh this is interesting. Msizi has kids three of them if he is infertile then could this mean MaZulu cheated on her husband?

Sbuysile: "We know MaZulu didnt cheat cause all the kids have the same birthmark that we all have."

Cebile: "Or maybe you lied to us. You used out fertility and saved your precious Msizi's so he can give you your precious grandkids."

MaZwane: "No of course not. I uh..... the kids..... the kids are....."

Sbuysile: "The kids are what? Khuluma! (Talk.)"

Mazwane: "The kids are your siblings." SAY WHAT NOW! This has to be a joke.

Mcebo: "What do you mean siblings?"

Mazwane: "The kids are your siblings because they are your fathers children."

Maria ocwebileyo! My hands immediately went to my head. Not even the best screenwriters in Nollywood could have predicted this. "After Msizi married MaZulu they obviously couldn't have kids. They went to doctors and they found nothing wrong. Msizi then said he would consult with a traditional healer to help them. If he had gone through with that my secret would have been revealed so I invited them here and told them I'd found a traditional healer. They came and slept over. I drugged them and made your father sleep with MaZulu. That's how the kids were conceived. All three times."

The silence that engulfed the room after that was enough for one to hear a pin drop to the floor. Every single day there is a new layer to this woman that is revealed. And just when you

think that is all there is a whole new level that is revealed.

## CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

NARRATED

At KwaMashu Sethu Mcebo and his sisters have gone back to their homes after more of their mothers confession. MaZwane is now alone in her house groaning in pain. Sleep refuses to come and death is a long way away. Every time she tries and closes her eyes all she sees are the spirits of the people she has had killed. And no matter how many times she tries to apologize they wont leave her alone.

She feels footsteps inside the house she moves her arm and slowly tries to switch the side lamp on but fails. She looks at the door with the light streaming in from the hallway a shadow appears and walks inside her bedroom. The person opens the door wide and reveals themselves. MaZwane takes a deep breath when she realizes its Madlala.

Mazwane: "Madlala ufunani lana (what are you doing here?)"

Madlala: "I came to check on you. I've been waiting outside for your kids to leave."

Mazwane: "Well you've seen me. Now what?"

Madlala: "Things are not looking good  
MaZwane I have tried consulting but all I get is  
darkness my guides will not speak to me."

Mazwane: "And you came here to do what  
exactly? What do you think I can do to help you  
Madlala? I'm dying right now. I feel like there is  
something eating me from the inside. There is  
nothing I can do for you."

Madlala: "Of course there is. Tell me where  
your husband is that's all I need to know."  
MaZwane chuckles a but despite the pain she  
is in.

Mazwane: "If I knew that do you think I would  
be laying here right now in so much pain?  
Madlala think after all that we've done do you  
think I'd send my husband away knowing what  
that would do to us? Hhay man." Madlala starts  
pacing up and down.



Madlala: "I cant lose my powers MaZwane I've worked way too hard to just lose them like that."

Mazwane: "Maybe if you go back to the person who initiated you then maybe they can help you." He stops and thinks.

Madlala: "You're right it will probably cost me but Khehla has never turned away someone who needs help. He will help me." He turns and walks out before MaZwane can even reply.

MaZwane laid back on the bed and tried to get some sleep. She heard another set of footsteps coming into her room. She didn't open her eyes because she was already expecting that Madlala would come back. But after the footsteps stopped with no one speaking. She

opened her eyes and came face to face with her daughter. She smiled and closed her eyes again oblivious to the knife in her hand.

Mazwane: "You came back I'm glad." She reached out her hand to hold her daughters hand her daughter came closer to the bed and stuck the knife in MaZwane's abdomen. She screamed in pain and tried to hold on to the knife but her daughter pulled it out and stuck it in again and again. She kept screaming and shouting for help until she had no energy left. By the time her daughter was done she had stab wounds all over her the bed was covered in blood. She took her last breath looking straight at her daughters eyes she saw the hatred in them and she knew it was over. After all she had done after all the atrocities she had committed she never thought she would die at the hands of her own child. Her daughter took

one last look at her before sticking the knife straight into her heart and twisting it.

She pulled the knife out and walked out of the house leaving her mother's lifeless body laying there covered in blood. She got into her car and drove off. She drove until she made it to the beach in Durban. She parked her car got out and walked to the ocean. She took the knife and threw it as far as she could. She then got into the ocean and washed off all the blood spatters from her body. She took her clothes off and tried to wash them. She then went back to her car and used her clothes to clean any blood from the car. Once she was sure that the car was clean she drove off and went back to her place.



MCEBO

I couldn't sleep last night. As much as I wanted to take care of my mother Sethu would here none of it so I had to come back here. I woke up early to try and get to KwaMashu early so I can make breakfast for my mum. I know it's crazy that I would want to tak care of her after

all that she had done to us but the truth is that I'm not doing this for her. I'm doing this for me selfish as it may be. I was raised on some honor your mother and father so your days may be long and that's what I am choosing to do when things fall apart I want to be able to say I did all I could for her and anything else that happens after that will be on her. Crazy I know.

I finished my shower and walked back to the bedroom and found Sethu sitting up on the bed busy on her phone.

Sethu: "You're going somewhere?"

Me: "Yep. Home. I need to make breakfast for my mother before she wakes up."

Sethu: "I wish i had your heart." She says before getting up and hitting the shower. I get dressed and head downstairs to eat before I leave. I decide to make cereal cause its quicker. When i am done I wash the bowl and get ready to leave. Sethu comes down ready to go.

Me: "You're going somewhere?"

Sethu: "Yes I need to see if MaZwane has completed her transition into a python yet." I know it's not funny but I chuckled a bit at that.

Me: "You're not funny Trevor Noah." She smiles and puts on her sneakers.

Sethu: "The smile on your face disagrees with you."

Me: "Can we please just go." She grabs her bag and follows me.

Sethu: "Do you think she has laid eggs yet?"

Me: "Sethu!"

Sethu: "Okay I'll stop." She says hiding the smirk on her face.



We get into the car and drive off. We get to a McDonald's drive through and get breakfast for Sethu. We get to my parents place and she gets out to open the gate so I can drive in. I drive in and we walk to the house. The door is unlocked. Weird cause I know I locked last night before I left. We get in and open the door wide open expecting the stench we've gown used to to come out strong like it usually does but it doesnt. Sethu and I look at each other before walking in.

Me: "I'll go make breakfast can you please check in her." Sethu nods her head and walks off to the bedroom. I go into the kitchen and fill the kettle with water and plug it in. When I take the pot from the cupboard I hear a loud scream coming from the bedroom. I drop the pot and rush to the direction of the scream. I walk into the bedroom and find Sethu standing in the

middle of the room staring at the bed. I look around and there is blood all over the place. The walls are covered in blood.

I walk closer to the bed and pull the duvet down and my heart races

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can you please check in her." Sethu nods her head and walks off to the bedroom. I go into the kitchen and fill the kettle with water and plug it

in. When I take the pot from the cupboard I hear a loud scream coming from the bedroom. I drop the pot and rush to the direction of the scream. I walk into the bedroom and find Sethu standing in the middle of the room staring at the bed. I look around and there is blood all over the place. The walls are covered in blood.

I walk closer to the bed and pull the duvet down and my heart races it's like it will jump out of my chest. My mum is laying there eyes closed with stab wounds all over her body. There's even one that went straight to her heart. I've never seen something like in my entire life. This feels like a scene from a horror movie. I cover her with the duvet. I hold Sethu's hand and pull her out of the room. I close the door behind me.

We walk to the kitchen and take a seat at the kitchen table. We sit there for a while before I remember that I need to call the police. I take out my phone and dial the police. I give them directions to the house and hang up. I text my sisters to come to the house. I hope they get here before the cops do cause I dont think I can tell them this over the phone.

Sethu: "What do you think happened?" She asks after what seemed like a lifetime of silence.

Me: "Someone killed her."

Sethu: "Good thing you didnt sleep here. You would have been killed too."

Me: "I wonder who did it. Cause this wasnt a robbery nothing is missing from the house."

Sethu: "Whoever did this is brave."

We hear a knock on the door before my sisters walk in laughing and giggling with takeaways in their hands.

Cebile: "What's with the gloomy faces who died?" She places the takeaways on the table

and sits down. Sbuysile takes a seat across from her.

Sbuysile: "Maybe your mother finally kicked the bucket." She says and sips on her drink.

Cebile: "That would be something to celebrate." They laugh.

Sethu: "I'm sorry I thought you two would be sad about all this your mother loved you and you were always so close to her."

Cebile: "It doesn't matter how close we were what she did is unforgivable just because we loved doesn't make us stupid and oblivious to her sins."

Sbuysile: "Yep plus if she loved us as much as we thought then she wouldn't have done what she did to us. You dont know what it's like to have a doctor tell you there is absolutely nothing wrong with your womb but five years after marriage and you still have no baby to show your in-laws are at your back demanding a grandchild and then to find out your mother is the reason why you cant carry a child in your womb I'll never forgive her for that." She says with tears streaming down her face.

As much as I have always wanted to have children I've never really got to the point where I actively try to have kids but Sbuysile has been married for almost seven years now and I can only imagine what it's like to want a child and yearn for it and try so hard to be able to even feel the kicks of a baby in your tummy but not

being able to not because of your body's inability to carry a child but because of your mother and her evil heart.

I hear the sirens outside and decide to just blurt it out before the cops get here cause there is no other way to say it. Cebile and Sbuysile look at each other and make a toast. I look at Sethu and she has her arms crossed on her chest looking from one to the other shock written all over her face.



Cebile: "So how do you bury a witch? I'm pretty sure there are rituals that need to be followed before she can be laid to rest." She asks and takes a bite from her bread.

Me: "I dont know. I've never buried one before."

The cops knock on the door and walk in. I get up and lead them to the bedroom and show them. They get the forensic guys in to do what they need to do. I leave them there and head back to the kitchen. After a while they walk out followed by the forensic pathologists pushing the body out . The officers walk over to us and let the pathologists walk out.

Officer 1: "So who wants to tell us what happened?"

Me: "We dont know what happened. We came in and found her like that."

Officer 2: "That woman has a minimum of twenty stabs wounds and your expect us to believe that someone just walked in stabbed her and then walked out just like that." I swear if these people are going to try and pin this on any of us I will lose it.

Sethu: "What are you trying to say exactly? That we did this?"

Officer 2: "I dont know. Did you?"

Me: "My wife did not do this no one sitting at this table did this."

Officer 1: "Okay so what else did the mysterious killer take besides your mother's life?"

Me: "From the looks of it nothing else." They look at each other and back at us.

Officer 2: "From the looks of things this was a crime of passion whoever did this knew her very well and they came here for one purpose only to kill her."

Cebile: "Our mother just died and you are questioning us and suspecting us of killing her? How insensitive can you be?" She says and wipes some tears from her eyes.

Officer 1: "We'll be back. Hopefully when we do come back you'll be ready to talk us the truth."  
They turn and walk out.

I get up and follow them out I look out to the street and I notice that the police cars have drawn some attention. There are people gossiping on the street with gowns on. Mxm. The forensic examiners walk back into the house to collect more evidence. I sure hope this doesn't take too long cause we have a funeral to plan.

## CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

If it were up to me planning a funeral would not be such a big deal. As much as I know everyone wants to give their loved one a dignified send off I just think it's a useless endeavor cause the person is dead already even if you bury them in a diamond encrusted coffin with gold trimmings they cant see and it's just a waste of money.

Lucky for me my sisters and I agreed on a simple funeral a simple coffin and simple food. The downside though my mother had no relatives who could stomach her presence. A lot of them did not like her and when we let them know about her death there was a thousand

excuses why they couldn't come. Which worked for us. Letting them know was just protocol anyway so that tomorrow they dont accuse us of anything shady.

Now the community of KwaMashu is a whole different story. People come in all day everyday to offer their condolences. Most of them I think just come in for the free scones and tea. I've seen one woman come in four times with different people. The surprising thing for people though was that there was no one sitting on the mattress. My sisters refused and asking Sethu would have just been asking for too much. MaZulu came back from visiting her family and she also refused to sit on the mattress. I cant blame her though her husband is still alive.

The problem I am faced with right now is whether to tell her about my mother's confession but then again how do you tell a woman that the children she believes are her husband's are actually her father in laws. How do you tell someone that they unknowingly cheated on their husband and got pregnant not once but three times. Also how do I even face my niece and nephews who at this point are no longer that but they are my brothers.

A couple of days ago I went to the prison to let Msizi know about our mother's death. He took it pretty hard I understood where he was coming from though he was her favourite so this hit him hard. I also haven't told him about the confessions. Right now all I want to do is get through this funeral and go back to my life.

The funeral is tomorrow and all is set. The tent outside is not too big hopefully that will be enough to deter people from coming. A bunch of women are busy cooking for the mourners for tomorrow I still dont understand why they are even here mum was insufferable and got along with no one especially women here so them even showing up is amazing all on it's own. Or maybe they came here for MaZulu she did get along with a whole lot of people either way I'm glad cause they just saved me a tonne of money that could have paid for the catering.

Sethu: "I think we should pay the women who are cooking." She says walking into the bedroom from the shower.



Me: "Why they volunteered mosi."

Sethu: "I know but they didnt have to a little something to say thank you will go a long way." There goes my savings.

Me: "Fine." I close the laptop that was on my lap and watch her as she lotions and gets dressed. We've been sleeping at our house because she refuses to sleep at home she says until gogo Nkanyezi does her thing and removes all the dark spirits in there she is not sleeping there.

Sethu: "When are you picking your mother up from the morgue."

Me: "The undertakers will bring her in the evening."

Sethu: "Isn't there supposed to be a family representative there?"

Me: "Babomncane will be there."

Sethu: "For someone who didn't like your mother he sure has stepped up."

Me: "Well he might not have liked her but he loved us so I'm sure he is going this for us more than her."

Sethu: "True. Go take a shower. I'm going to make breakfast so we can go."

Me: "Wait you have something on your dress."

Sethu: "What?" She asks looking at herself in the mirror.

Me: "Come here I'll move it for you." She walks over to me. "Turn around." She turns around and her round ass is perfect in that dress. I pull her closer and wrap my arm around her waist pulling her down on the bed and she giggles.

Sethu: "You need to stop. We have a funeral to go to."

Me: "The funeral is tomorrow. We have plenty of time till then."

I kiss her and she wraps her arms around my neck. I pull her up and let her straddle me. I lift the dress up till her thighs are visible. I move my hands under the dress and pull her closer. I let go of her lips and move down to her neck. Her moans drive me crazy. I move her

underwear to the side and touch her moist haven and she moans even louder.

I rub her clit and she throws her head back pushing her boobs straight into my face. I let go of her butt and pull her boobs out of the dress and straight into my mouth. I move my fingers from her clit and push them inside her. I move in and out of her and she moans and screams. Good thing we are alone in this house.

After some time I take my fingers out of her and pull down my pyjama bottoms and my manhood springs out tall and strong. I lift her up and place her back down with my dick inside her. She balances herself before moving up and down on top of me sending me close to heaven.

She draws circles around me and I swear I just saw Abraham smiling at the pearly gates.

I decide to take my power back. I wrap my arms around her waist and lay her back on the bed and pound into her. She moans and closes her eyes with her hands fisting the sheets. She moans and screams calling out my name. I move her hand up over her head and hold them in place while I move in and out of her slowly looking straight into her eyes. She bites her bottom lip and I can tell she is about to cum.

I move faster until she throws her head back lifting the top half of her body off the bed. She releases but I don't stop until I also release. I

lay on top of her for a while we catch our breath.

Sethu: "We are late."

Me: "Late for what? The funeral is tomorrow."

Sethu: "I know but we still need to be there to make sure things go smooth."

Me: "Fine let's go take a shower." I pull out of her and get off the bed. She holds put her arms and I pull her up and we go take a shower.

SETHU

By the time we got to KwaMashu it was already in the afternoon. Lucky for us no one was there to look at us sideways when we got there. We got out of the car and there was already a lot of

people moving about in the yard. Babomncane was standing by the gate talking to some other old people. We greeted and I left them there and went to the house. I found the girls sitting in the kitchen busy gossiping and laughing. Even Tshepi was here too.

As soon as I walked in I was handed a cup "tea" by Cebile. I took a sip and realized it was wine. It's crazy how we haven't scratched each others eyes out throughout this whole drama that's been happening but then again we used to be civil to each other until their mother came up with her crazy ideas after Melusi's death.

Sbuysile gave me a key and I left them there to go put my bag in the bedroom. I opened the



door and walked in. The bedroom had all the important things that people could steal locked in here from Tupperwares to pots and plates spoons and knives all the scones were looked up in here. There was even a deep fridge in here with all the meat. I swear MaZulu has seen way too much in her life to even think about doing all this.

Tshepi: "You're not thinking of stealing the scones are you?" She said coming up behind me. I chuckled and turned around.

Me: "Not even. I'm sure MaZulu counted each and everyone of them." I sat down on the bed and she joined me.

Tshepi: "What's happening?"

Me: "Nothing. I'm just thinking about all the hell this woman put us through this past year. Who would have known Melusi's death would be the unraveling of everything she had done. It's like that one action alone was her downfall."

Tshepi: "If she hadn't been a greedy person she probably would still be here. I mean she had done all she did she had money she was living a comfortable life but she wanted to be flashy and now look where she is."

Me: "Yeah hey. Hopefully once we bury her we can also bury her mess."

Tshepi: "Speaking of burying things why were you late?" I laugh cause I know where this is going. "Did you also have something buried deep inside you while we were busy making tea for the oldies?"

Me: "Maybe!"

Tshepi: "That explains the glow. Are you pregnant?" That was random.

Me: "Of course not."

Tshepi: "Your boobs are getting bigger."

Me: "Maybe my period is coming. I mean I haven't had my period for a while now. The stress of everything plus the things gogo Nkanyezi makes me drink."

Tshepi: "Maybe. But are you sure it's not pregnancy."

Me: "Believe you me that is not it." As much as I know Tshepi wont let this go one thing I will not do however is tell her about what MaZwane

confessed. As much as she is my best friend and we talk about anything and everything this is just not going to be one of those things.

We went back to the kitchen and helped with the peeling. Later in the evening the undertakers came and brought MaZwane and I almost laughed seeing people cry. Even people who didn't like her were busy shedding tears. The rest of us who knew the woman laying in that casket could not be bothered to even shed one tear.

The night vigil went on till the early hours of the morning. Speaker after speaker went on and on about how good a person she was and that she was the pillar of the community. I swear to God

the number of times I rolled my eyes I'm lucky they didnt get stuck in the back of my head.

We eventually left all the people lying in the tent and went to get a few hours of sleep. We woke up and showered and got ready for the funeral. We went back to the tent as the service was about to move to the church. The casket was placed in the hearse and we got into our cars and drove to the church.

We got to the church as the pallbearers were getting the casket out of the hearse. We walked behind them as they made their way to the double doors. I dont know why but my gut is telling me something bad is going to happen. I dont know what but something will happen. I

mean we are burying the great witch so something is bound to happen.

As we get closer to the doors the ushers waiting there to open the doors begin to fiddle with the door handles. They pull the doors but nothing happens. Mcebo and I look at each other and I can see he is also seeing what is happening. One of the ushers rushes to the pallbearers and whispers something to them. They stop and he runs around to the side of the church probably to use the other door and open from the inside.

He comes back running and it looks like his shoes are wet and his pants too all the way up to his ankles. He whispers something to the

pastor and he closes his eyes like he is praying. I nudge Mcebo and he looks at me.

Me: "Go find out what's going on." He sulks and walks to where the pastor is now talking to Babomncane. Whatever is happening must be big. Cebile Sbuysile and Tshepi walk over to me and we form a tiny circle.

Cebile: "What do you think is going on?" She whispers.

Sbuysile: "Your mother and her father satan doing their thing." She says sipping "water" from her juice bottle. I'm pretty sure she is drunk. MaZulu being the dutiful Makoti is busy

wiping tears from her eyes. She knew if only she knew. But who is going to tell her cause I know it won't be me.

After a long time of talking Mcebisi Mncane and the pastor went to the church and came back. Unfortunately the church is flooded as to how that happened nobody knows. So we had to go straight to the cemetery. We got there and the funeral proceeded as planned. We sat in the little tent as all the proceedings were happening.

When the pastor was done and people said what needed to be said he told us to close our eyes and pray. Everyone bowed their heads. I just rested my head on the chair and closed my



eyes. I opened them after a while cause the pastor was taking too long. I looked at the other side and looked at the people with their heads bowed and wondered what was going through their minds. After the havoc MaZwane had caused why would they be so forgiving or maybe they were here to make sure she was really dead.

I looked from one person to the next. Everyone with their heads bowed and deep in prayer. Until I came to someone looking straight at me. Those eyes I know them I wouldn't miss them even in the dark. But how is it possible that he is here. I closed my eyes and sat up. I opened them again and he was still there. His eyes hadn't left mine. My heart started beating fast. The sun that was shining it felt like it was right next to me cause I felt sweat dripping down my back.

The pastor said Amen and people opened their eyes and started walking back home. Somehow he got lost in the crowd. I got up to look at where he might have gone but I cant see him. I take my shoes off and climb on top of the chair I was sitting on. Lucky for me its stable. I look around ignoring the stares from people. Tshepi comes over to me and tugs my arm. I get down and sit on the chair. Tshepi sits down next to me.

Tshepi: "What's going on? Who are you looking for?" She asks concern written all over her face. I take a deep breath and come back to reality.

Me: "No one I just though I saw someone I know." I get up and grab my shawl and follow the crowd.

I keep looking around hoping to see him again but he is nowhere to be found. I cant even ask anyone to help me track him down. I mean how do you tell people that you saw your dead husband in the crowd. They will think I'm crazy. But I know for a fact it was Melusi that I saw. It wasnt a figment of my imagination. I saw him. I saw Melusi.

## CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

## CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

It's been a week since we buried MaZwane. I haven't told anyone about what I saw at the cemetery. A part of me is afraid of people thinking I'm nuts but the other part of me is

afraid of actually being g right. What if that was really Melusi? What if he is alive?

These questions have filled my head for the past week now. I dont know how to even begin finding the answers I need. Maybe Gogo Nkanyezi can help me. I know she probably can give insight into what exactly is happening but a part of me is afraid of hearing the truth.

I got to work and got through the day in a daze. If you had to ask me what happened during the past eight hours I wouldn't know. After work I decided to text Mcebo and tell him I'll be having dinner with Tshepi. I texted Tshepi and asked her to cover for me if he called.

I drove to gogo Nkanyezi's place. I got there just after seven. I know she typically doesn't consult after dark but after explaining everything to her she let me in. We went to her hut and she got her tools together. I sat down on the grass mat as she did her thing. I blew on the bag of bones before she threw them on the floor.

I sat with baited breath waiting for her to say something. It felt like my lungs were being filled up with the breath that I was holding in. She went from being on her knees and sat flat down on the grass mat legs sprawled out in front of her and the bones between her legs.

Me: "Is everything okay?"

Nkanyezi: "I dont know I cant..... i cant connect with him."

Me: "Is that good or bad?"

Nkanyezi: "I don't know."

Me: "Could this mean he is alive?"

Nkanyezi: "It could be. Or it could also mean his spirit is caught up somewhere and he cant cross over."

Me: "But I saw him. I know it was him I saw Melusi at the funeral."

Nkanyezi: "I cant tell you if you're right or wrong but if he was really there then maybe he might appear to you again. He's already made his first contact so maybe he will appear again."

Me: "Maybe. Let me get going. It's already late."  
We got up and she walked me to the car.

Nkanyezi: "Dont stress yourself too much about this. Let everything play itself out. If he really is out there then he will come back to you. But my advice dont get so consumed in him being out there that you forget to live your life."

Me: "Thank you." She gave me a hug. I got into my car and drove off.



By the time I got to the house I thought I'd find Mcebo already asleep. Instead he was in the lounge watching TV. I got in and sat down next to him.

Mcebo: "How was dinner?"

Me: "Okay I guess. Did you eat?"

Mcebo: "Yeah I ordered ribs and wings. There's some leftovers in the fridge."

Me: "Good. I'm starving." I got up and went to the kitchen.

Mcebo: "Weren't you just at dinner?" He shouted from the lounge.

Me: "You know those restaurants give out small portions." U said remembering I had lied. I heard him chuckle and let out a sigh. He bought it.

I know I should be honest with him but how do you tell your current husband that your late husband might be alive. And if he is alive how do we even begin to navigate that situation. I know I've prayed for Melusi to come back home for his death to have been one cruel nightmare but right now I'm not so sure. And no it's not because I don't love him it's because I cant even begin to imagine the mess this will create.

I warmed up the food and headed back to the lounge. I sat down and had my food while we watched a movie. When I was done I went upstairs and took a shower got into my pjs and got into bed. Mcebo came in and joined me. We fell asleep after a while well he did I just kept tossing and turning.

By 1am I was still wide awake. Mcebo got up and went to the toilet to pee. He came back and got into bed.

Mcebo: "You should be asleep."

Me: "I cant sleep."

Mcebo: "What's wrong?"

Me: "Work and I miss Asi."

Mcebo: "You can always take some time off work and we can bring Asi back now there's nothing stopping him from coming back."

Me; "Yeah I'll call Ncane and tell her to bring him back."

Mcebo: "Good now that that is out the way. What can I do to make you sleep." He asked his hands going up my pyjama top.

Me: "I dont know do you have any ideas?" He smiled.

Mcebo: "I have an idea." He said his lips making contact with mine.

He kissed me with his hand all over my body. He cupped my boob and played with my nipples making my clit throb. I moved my hands to his back I moved them down into his pyjama pants till I had his tiny firm butt in my hands. Gym really does wonders shem. He giggled in my mouth as I felt his butt tighten in my hands.

He pulled out from the kiss and pulled my pyjama top up leaving me bare breasted. He pulled down the duvet and pulled out my pyjama bottoms. He got in between my legs and buried his head in between my thighs. He licked and sucked the life out of me. I swear that man does magic with his tongue.

I pulled up a pillow from the floor and covered my face to prevent my screams and moans from reaching the wrong people as I orgasmed all over his face. He kept going till my twitching legs and curled toes calmed down. He moved up and kissed me and the taste of my juices on his mouth was so good.

I felt him enter me in one effortless move and started moving in and out of me slowly and oh so sensual. He picked up the pace and went faster and faster till I felt my toes curl again. He went on till he released too. He pulled me to him as he laid back on his back while still buried deep inside me. We sat like that for a while before I felt sleep finally creeping in. The freak in me coupled with his dick inside me made me realise I have one more orgasm left in me.

I pulled out of his hold and slid down the bed to the bottom. I put his dick in my mouth until I could feel him getting close to the edge. I let go and go on top of him. I moved up and down till we both came. I passed out on top of him. Who needs sleeping pills when theres dick around.



NARRATED



At Mbumbulu Khehla is in his hut mixing medicine when someone walks in dripping in sweat. He starts pacing up and down Khehla is in his hut mixing medicine when someone walks in dripping in sweat. He starts pacing up and down frustration clearly written on his face.

Khehla: "Iyahlonishwa indumba (respect my hut)." He stops pacing and sits on the small stool next to the door. "So what's your problem."

Him: "I need to go back home."

Khehla: "You are home."

Him: "You know what I mean."

Khehla: "I know you need to go back home but it's not time yet. You are not ready."

Him: "Why not. MaZwane is dead so why cant I go back?"

Khehla: "Look i know this is frustrating for you that's why i told you not to go to the funeral but because you are stubborn you went anyway. And now you are here frustrated."

Him: "I never should have agreed to this."

Khehla: "You'd be dead if you hadn't and you know that Melusi. Right now we need to make sure you are strong enough to give back. And that house needs to be cleansed before anything can happen to it."

Melusi: "And what about my dad?"

Khehla: "Your dad is a bit more complicated. Your mother dying set him back. She wasn't supposed to die like that. Whoever killed her needs to be cleansed before bad things start happening. She was supposed to have a natural death her own things should have been the ones to finish her."

Melusi: "I don't care about that woman all I want is my life back."

Khehla: "You will now go to my room get my car keys and drive to Durban. Go to the ocean and get me some sea water."

Melusi: "Why Durban? Kingsburgh is right around the corner."

Khehla: "I figured you need the fresh air and the drive will do you some good. And you can also spy on your wife since that's what you want to do anyway."

Melusi left Khehla and went to his room to take a bath. He got dressed and went to Khehla's room and took the car keys. He took a couple of twenty litres containers and put them in the boot of the car before he got in and drove off.

He got to Durban and filled the containers with the water. He put the containers back in the car boot and prepared to leave. He decided to pass by the mall to get something to eat. He drove to the mall and decided to go to the drive through but it was lunchtime and the line was too long.

He decided to inside Nandos He ordered his food and took a seat. He pulled his hoodie close to cover his face so no one can recognize him. He saw TT come in with a girl and they ordered.

The cashier called out his order number and he got up to pick up his order. He walked out and waited by the entrance. He saw TT walk out alone on his way to his car. He followed him. TT got to his car and opened the boot. Melusi put his small phone on TT's spine forcing him to freeze.

TT: "You do not want to do this bro."

Melusi: "Why? You'll shoot me?"

TT: "Your voice? I know you." Melusi moves back a bit giving TT a chance to turn around. He moved the hoodie off of his face revealing himself to TT. "What in the fuck dude you're supposed to be dead." He whispered in shock.

Melusi: "Do I look dead to you?"

TT: "Dude what the hell where have you been?"

Melusi: "Its a long story. I dont think you have the time your girl is waiting for you."

TT: "Wait are you back home? Mcebo didnt tell me you were back."

Melusi: "He doesn't know and you need to keep it that way."

TT: "You need to tell me everything."

Melusi: "I will some other time. For now I need to go and check up on Sethu before I go back."

TT: "Go back where?"

Melusi: "All in due time brother. I've gotta go."

He turned and left TT standing there wondering if he should tell him what's going on and what's waiting for him. But he decided not to. Melusi got into the car and drove off. His first stop Mwelase Logistics. He got there and parked outside. He watched as "his employees got in and out of the building like any normal day. He was about to drive off when he saw Mcebo

pulling up and parking a few meters from him. Mcebo got out of the car and went into the building. He decided to wait a bit.

After about ten minutes Mcebo walked out laughing and giggling holding Sethu's hand and her bag and laptop on the other. They got to Mcebo's car and he placed the laptop in the boot. He opened the backseat and placed the bag. He then opened the front passenger side and gave Sethu a kiss before she got in. He got into the driver's side and they drove off.

Melusi sat there for a few more minutes his knuckles held on tight to the steering wheel. He was angry with his jaws clenched and his eyes turned bloodshot red. He felt his heart rate go



up. He calmed down after a bit and started the car. He decided to drive to Umhlanga. He got there and parked a few houses away from his house. He decided to go into the house. He got to the gate and punched in the code he knows but it wouldn't through. He punched in a few more combinations but nothing. He was about to give up when he decided to try one more combination. Lucky for him it went through.

The gate opened and he walked in making sure no one saw him. He got to the door and tried to open but it was locked. He went around to the backdoor got the key from under the flowerpot by the door. He opened the door and got in. He walked around the house looking at all the changes. He wasn't sure how to react to the pictures on the wall somehow he had been erased from his own home.

He took the stairs and went up to the bedroom. He opened and got in. He looked around and even it didn't feel like his home. His clothes were no longer in the closet. He sat down on the bed and picked up a framed picture of what used to be his family except he had been replaced by his brother. He felt anger boiling down from within his soul. He threw the picture across the room it hit the wall and shattered on the floor.

He got up and decided to leave before they found him in here. He got out the same way he got in he locked the door and left the key where he found it. He got into the car and drove back to Mbumbulu unsure of what his next move will be.

# CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

Dinner was amazing. Mcebo took me out to dinner just so we can enjoy time alone before Asi gets back and I must say I needed that peace of mind and to just be carefree for a while. After dinner we took a walk on the beach.

We got home and I left him in the car and rushed upstairs to take a bath. I was cold all I needed was a shower and my warm pyjamas. I threw my bag on the bed and rushed to the bathroom. I got under the shower and let the hot water just wash away the cold. When I was done I got out and went to the closet to get my pyjamas. I put on my pants and when I put my feet down I missed my slippers and my foot landed on the carpet any other day that would have been no big deal but today I felt something sting the bottom of my foot.

I quickly lifted up my foot and it was bleeding. I hopped to the bed and lifted my foot and put it on my lap. There was a piece of glass sticking out from my foot. I pulled it out and even though the wound wasn't that bad the blood was a bit much for my liking. I wrapped the towel around my foot to stop the bleeding. I walked to where I was and found the source of my pain there was a picture frame on the floor it was broken with glass particles sprawled all over the carpet.

I picked up the picture and I know for a fact this picture was on the other side of the room so how did it get here? I looked around the room but nothing was out of place unless MaZwane had woken up from the dead this just seemed odd. I called for Mcebo and he came rushing.

Mcebo: "What's going on?" I showed him the picture and he took it from my hand. "What's this?"

Me: "A picture. How did it get on the floor?" I saw a frown forming on his face.

Mcebo: "I dont know. Where did you find it?"

Me: "On the floor." I show him and he kneels down inspecting the place like some FBI agent.

Mcebo: "How did the picture get here and what happened to your foot?" He asks noticing my "bandaged" foot.

Me: "I was cut by the glass."

Mcebo: "Are you okay?" I nod my head. "I'll go get the first aid kit. But how did this thing get here?"

Me: "I dont know maybe your mother is haunting us." He laughs.

Mcebo: "I know it's not supposed to be funny but you are probably right. I'll go get the first aid kit. Sit on the bed."

I limp over to the bed and sit down as he leaves. He comes back after a few minutes and cleans my wound before putting a plaster on it. He helped me get into bed before getting a broom and a dustpan to pick up the broken

pieces of glass. We went to bed like nothing was amiss but then again what could possibly have happened to the picture.

I woke up the next morning and called Ncane she was happy she even said she was glad the witch was gone. I was too but I couldn't say that out loud especially not in front of Mcebo. I got a text from Tshepi ordering me to meet her for lunch. We havent spent much time together for a while now. I guess her relationship with Zoey is getting stronger. As much as I didnt like Zoey much i was glad she was making Tshepi happy. Although I've always known Tshepi was bisexual I never thought the person who would end up taking her would be a woman. Oh well it works for me atleast I know Zoey wont be trying to get between Mcebo and I.



I booked Ncane and Asi's tickets before getting ready for work. Of course my decision to go to work was met with resistance from Mcebo who felt I should stay home because of my foot. I was still limping and I must say the pain was still there. I compromised and promised I'd be back by lunchtime afterall I have an important meeting with the depot manager that I couldn't afford to miss.

I got to work and got ready for my meeting. The depot manager showed up just before eleven and our meeting took less than an hour. I was glad most of our workers had given up their misogynistic ways of not wanting to be led by a woman now they listen and take orders.

I left the office at noon and headed to the restaurant to meet Tshepi and trust her to be late when she sent out the invite. I ordered water and waited for her. She showed up and we placed our order.

Tshepi: "So wena have you done the pregnancy test?"

Me: "Why would I do that?"

Tshepi: "To confirm your pregnancy. Have you seen how glowy you are plus your boobs are getting bigger." I looked down at my boobs and

yes maybe some of my bras are a bit tighter but that doesnt necessarily mean I'm pregnant

Sponsored

we all know why.

Me: "Well I hate to break it to you but this" I point to my boobs. "Is because of my periods. I told you I had missed my period and two days ago they came. Not normal periods though cause this time the flow is a bit weak but who cares florence I havent had painful period pains so I am good."

Tshepi: "If you say so. Anyways I have news."

Me: "You are pregnant." She looks at me and rolls her eyes.

Tshepi: "Dont be crazy Zoey and I are moving in together." She says not looking at me. I'm not sure if she expects me to be against their relationship or what.

Me: "That's great. Things are getting serious?" She immediately looks up I'm not sure if its surpriseconfusion or uncertainty written on her face.

Tshepi: "You are not mad? I know you and Zoey aren't the best of friends."

Me: "Maybe but she makes you happy and that's all I want for you." She relaxes a bit and the smile on her face tells me she is really happy. "So where are you moving to? New place or yours?"

Tshepi: "Mine. It's better than having to find the perfect place plus she's always there anyway so..."

Me: "Makes sense. I'm happy for you my friend. I dont know anyone who deserves more happiness than you."

Tshepi: "Dont make me cry." She says and we laugh.

We finished our lunch and she headed back to work while I went home as promised. I got home and decided to do a bit of cleaning. I finished cleaning and started on the laundry. I put the first load in the machine and started cooking. By five o'clock I had finished cooking and I was waiting for the second load of laundry.

I made myself some popcorn and went to the lounge. I picked a movie on Netflix and started to watch. I'm not sure if the movie was boring or I was just tired but I ended up falling asleep.

When I woke up it was dark outside. I took my phone from the coffee table and found a message from Mcebo. He was having beers with TT. I put my phone down and sat up on the couch. I felt a familiar scent making it's way into my nostrils. I hadn't smelt that in a year. I closed my eyes thinking I was probably still sleeping and this was a dream.

I opened my eyes and got up. As soon as I got up and turned around towards the kitchen I saw him. He was sitting on the dining table facing my direction. His eyes were cold. But they were still the same eyes I fell in love with more than ten years ago. It was him. I closed my eyes

and opened them again he was still here. This wasn't a dream.

Me: "Melusi." He gets up and walks towards me. My heart rate is doing a sprint.

Melusi: "Hey!"

Me: "Is it really you?" He walks close enough that I can smell his cologne.

Melusi: "It's me babe." I reach my hand out and touch his face. It's warm and there's a bit of a stubble on his chin probably hasn't shaved in a week or so. My hands make their way down to his chest. They stay there for a while just feeling his heart beating. Tears silently stream down my face. A part of me still feels like this is



a dream but the steady beat of his heart is real he is here. He is real. He moves his hands and touches my arms bringing me close to him. I lay my head on his chest and the beat of his heart gets louder with each beat. I don't know when or what happened but I felt like my world was spinning. I looked around and I could have sworn the room was going around in circles. I closed my eyes for just a second trying to get my alignment back instead I fell into a pit of darkness.



MELUSI

Shit this is not how I thought she'd react but then again I've been "dead" for over a year now. Good thing she was in my arms when she fainted. I laid her gently in the couch and called out her name but she didnt respond. I tried waking her up but she wouldn't wake up. I decided to call an ambulance just to be on the safe side. Soon as I heard the sirens getting close I opened the gate for them to get easy access. I opened the door so they could get in.

They loaded her up in the garney and took her out. I promised to follow them to the hospital. Soon as they left I got into my car and followed them. I got to the hospital and asked the nurse at reception where they took her and she showed me. I went in and the doctor told me to wait outside.

I sat there for a while waiting on some news I couldn't decide if I should call Mcebo or Tshepi or both. But I haven't even explained everything to Sethu I cant have anyone else see me and start asking questions. I finally decided to call Tshepi and tell her. Good thing I still know her number by heart I hope she hasn't changed it.

Tshepi: "Hello!"

Me: "I need you to come to Netcare Umhlanga Hospital Sethu has been admitted."

Tshepi: "What? Who is this?"

Me: "Just a friend hurry up she needs you." I hung up before she could ask anymore questions.

I sat there for about thirty more minutes waiting for Tshepi to get here. I saw her walk in with Mcebo behind her. I took the back exit and went back to Mbumbulu. I got there and found Khehla sitting outside his hut. I walked over and sat next to him.

Khehla: "I take it your trip went well."

Me: "I guess."

Khehla: "You spoke to her?"

Me: "Not necessarily she fainted before I could tell her what happened. I had to get her to a hospital."

Khehla: "So what's going to happen when she wakes up and you are not there?"

Me: "Well my brother is there."

Khehla: "Do you want her back?"

Me: "Of course I want her back she's my wife."

Khehla: "Then go get your wife."

Me: "Oh I am."

## CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

I dont know how many times I've prayed for this. There has been moments I sat alone in the closet crying my eyes out and asking God for a miracle and after such a long time he decided

to finally respond and give me exactly what I wanted and asked for. But I'm pretty sure that man has the driest sense of humor. He never shows up when I need him too and only shows up once I've forgotten what I even prayed for.

Mcebo and Tshepi have been in this room for a while now. I can literally hear them talking. I've been up for a while but I just cant seem to bring myself to open my eyes and face the reality of what is my life right now but more than anything I am afraid of telling Mcebo that Melusi is alive. Or maybe I'm just afraid of what this will do to him to us.

I hear them talking for a while before I feel someone plant a kiss on my forehead I know its



Mcebo as soon as his cologne hits my nostrils. I hear his footsteps make way to the door before he walks out. I open my eyes and look around the room just to be sure he is gone and he is. I sit up on the bed making sure not to disturb the drip stuck on my arm. My shuffling alerts Tshepi who is standing by the window and she quickly rushes over to me.

Tshepi: "Hey you are up. We were so worried about you. Mcebo just left I'll call him." She says taking out her phone.

Me: "I know please dont call him." She looks at me surprised I guess. But then I would be too. Who doesnt want their husband next to them while they lay in a hospital bed.

Tshepi: "Why cant I call him? He's your husband. And what do you mean you know? How long have you been up?" Trust the lawyer within her to show up even at the most unnecessary times.

Me: "I need to talk to you alone." She crosses her arms across her chest and looks at me.

Tshepi: "Fine. What do you want to talk about? Plus what happened to you? Why did you faint?" I take a deep breath.

Me: "I saw Melusi. He was at the house last night." She releases her crossed arms and pity washes all over her face. I knew it would take time for her or anyone to believe me. "Don't look at me like that. I'm not crazy I saw him he was there."

Tshepi: "Babe I know....."

Me: "How did you know I was here?"

Tshepi: "Some guy called me I figured it was one of the Paramedics."

Me: "Who called the Paramedics? I fainted remember and Mcebo wasnt home." I see realization wash over her face replacing the pity and I know a lightbulb just went off in her head."

Tshepi: "No!"

Me: "Yes! He called you."

Tshepi: "But how? He is dead mosi!"

Me: "He is not. I saw him at the funeral first before I saw him again last night. Melusi is

alive." She sighs pulls up the chair and sits down.

Tshepi: "Sethu I don't know what to say to you right now."

Me: "I don't need you to say anything I need you to help me figure out where he might be."

Tshepi: "Where am I supposed to start looking for a ghost Sethu? If he was so worried about you why didn't he stick around to make sure you're okay? You do realise this doesnt make sense right?"

Me: "You know what maybe you are right. Maybe I'm just grasping at straws really." I see relief wash over her face. A part of me really had hoped that she would believe me but the realist in me knew this would be shocking news to any sane person.

Me: "Can you get me some food you know I hate hospital food." I say with a smile on my face.

She gets up kisses my forehead and leaves. As soon as she walks out the door I rip the drip from my arm together with the heart monitor. Lucky for me the clothes I came in with last night are neatly draped on the couch. I take off the hospital gown and get dressed. As soon as I am done I grab my phone and put it in my pocket. I open the door and peek out to make sure no one sees me fortunately my room is a but far from the reception area.

I get out and walk around looking for the security room. I go up and down this hospital like a crazy person till I find the room on the second floor. I try to turn the knob but its locked. I knock and someone immediately opens.

Security: "Are you lost?"

Me: "No can I come in I need to talk to you."

Security: "Hhaybo you cant just walk in here."

Me: "Please I promise I'll make it worth your while." He looks at me before looking down the hallway to make sure no one is there. Soon as he is satisfied he drags me inside the room. I say a silent prayer when I see all ths monitors

watching every nook and cranny of the hospital  
I just hope they have last nights footage.

Security: "You are in

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I just hope they have last nights footage.

Security: "You are in now talk."

Me: "Okay I need to look at last nights security  
footage around 8 or 9." I see a frown across his  
face and I know this will cost me. "I'll send you

a thousand rands right now." He was about to answer me when his colleague started coughing. "Yes I'll give you a thousand too."

Security 2: "Sbonge madam (thank you)." He says clicking his fingers on the keyboard. I walk closer to the monitors and soon as I see myself being wheeled into the emergency area I tell him to stop.

I watch the footage for a while and then see Melusi walking through the doors. Ghosts dont appear on camera right? He walks towards the room where I was wheeled too he starts pacing up and down frustration written all over his face. He then makes a call and then about half an



hour later Tshepi and Mcebo come rushing in. As soon as he sees them he walks towards the back exit. I didnt see a ghost I saw him he is real.

Me: "Can you send me the footage?" They both look at me and the other crosses his arms across his chest and I know he wants more money. "I'll give you double." I guess money really does make the world go round. They take my phone and transfer the footage into it. When they are done I send them ewallets before walking out. I go back to my room and hear some screaming and shouting coming in from inside. I can hear Tshepi's voice. I quickly rush in and they keep quiet. Tshepi rushes over to me and gives me a hug.

Tshepi: "Where have you been? I was worried."  
She let's me go and I get on the bed. The  
doctor and the nurses quietly walk out.

Me: "I'm sorry I just needed some fresh air."

Tshepi: "For a moment there I thought you'd  
gone searching for the ghost."

Me: "Well not necessarily but I did need to see  
the security footage from last night."

Tshepi: "Sethu." I take out my phone and show  
her the footage. She sits down on the chair with  
her mouth wide open.

Me: "See I'm not crazy."

Tshepi: "He's alive!"

Me: "Yep."

Tshepi: "But how? I mean we saw the car it was burnt like really really burnt and there was a body found inside how did he get out and how did the body we buried end up in the car? I'm confused."

Me: "You and me both. He was going to tell me last night but I fainted before we could talk."

Tshepi: "Do you think he might come back?"

Me: "Probably."

Tshepi: "So what are you going to do? You have to tell Mcebo."

Me: "And say what to him? If Melusi comes back it means my marriage to Mcebo is null and void and you and I both know Melusi won't just let his brother live his life."

Tshepi: "That's true. So who would you rather have?"

Me: "What kind of question is this?"

Tshepi: "The kind of question Melusi and Mcebo will ask."

Me: "Mcebo maybe Melusi has no right to ask me that. Where was he all along? I mean if he has been alive this whole time he could have sent a message or a clue and let us know he was okay. Everything Mcebo and I did we did because we thought he was dead and now for him to show up just like that expecting things to be the way they used to be is absurd."

Tshepi: "Okay I understand that. But Melusi will not let you go. Him being back is proof of that. He plans on coming back to his life."

Me: "I dont know what to think right now. I'm most afraid of Mcebo being hurt in all of this of theres one person who doesnt deserve that its him."

Tshepi: "Then tell Melusi to crawl back into whatever hole he crawled out of." I sigh. Things are about to get hella complicated Lord.



MCEBO

I dont know what's wrong with Sethu cause even the doctor said he's not sure what caused her to faint. But now he has to do more tests just to find out what is wrong with her.

I had to leave her earlier cause I had a meeting I couldn't afford to postpone or cancel. Tshepi texted me an hour ago saying she is awake. Hopefully this meeting will end soon so I can go back and see her. I dont even understand why this man is dragging this meeting when he should be halfway across the world by now. I guess he's so relaxed cause he knows theres a private jet waiting for him at the airport.

He keeps going and going but by six o'clock we have figured out a way forward for him and his company we shake hands and he walks out followed by his entourage. I pack my things and



head out to my office. I grab my laptop bag and pack some work to do at home. Zoey walks in.

Zoey: "That was a successful meeting."

Me: "Yep successful but way too long for my liking."

Zoey: "How is Sethu?" I look at her surprised. Last I checked Zoey did not like Sethu.

Me: "She's okay. So when did you start caring about her?"

Zoey: "I'm not heartless Mcebo. Anyways let me go pack my stuff and head out it's late already." She walks out leaving me to pack my own stuff.

I finish packing and grab my jacket. My phone beeps. I open the text and its Sethu saying she has been discharged and she's already home. One less thing for me to worry about. I text her back telling her not to cook I'll bring dinner.

I put on my jacket and turn to leave. I swear if this is some type of prank whoever is behind it really is brave or maybe stupid I'm not sure. I watch him walk over ghosts dont walk like that right? They float. So he cant be a ghost.

Me: "Melusi!"

Him: "Bafo it's been a while."

I feel my tongue get stuck in my mouth. I want to speak but I don't know what to say. It really is my brother. He is alive.

## CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

## CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

Melusi: "Hi!"

I wasn't sure if I should run or wait. I've never seen a ghost before although the stories I've heard about ghosts would probably tell me that right now he should be scaring the shit out of me but even though my heart was beating at a rate higher than normal I wasn't sure what my next step would be.

He walked closer to me and put his hand out for a handshake. I looked at his hand and it wasn't see through that's how you know it's a ghost right cause you can see on the other side of it? I guess this was a good thing then. I took his hand and his handshake was still as firm as I remembered. He pulled me to him and gave me a hug and I swear my heart almost stopped.

I stayed in his embrace for a while not sure what to do with myself. I wasn't sure if I should cry or what but I know I was happy. He was really here he was really alive. He let me go after a while and looked at me with a smile on his face.

Melusi: "You look like you've seen a ghost." He said chuckling. It felt like my tongue was stuck in mouth. He walked around admiring the office. "Nice office. I never thought I'd see the day you would settle down in one place."

Me: "Its not like I had a choice you were dead."

Melusi: "True. But I'm back now."

Me: "Why?" That one simple word left my mouth before I even had the chance to stop it. I am happy he is back yes but now I was getting angry. If he was alive this whole then where was he all along? Where was he when I had to play Rambo against snakes and evil spirits? He turned to look at me surprised.

Melusi: "What do you mean why? Am I not allowed to come back to my life." The way he

said the last two words My Life made me realise he knew about Sethu and I. I was still trying to figure out if he was angry or what was going on in his mind.

Me: "Of course you are I'm just curious what makes you think you deserve to come back to that life after you hid away like a coward while we had to clean up the mess you left behind. Msizi is in jail our mother is dead your wife was almost killed while you were out at God knows where having the time of your life." He chuckled a bit and put his hands in his pockets.

Melusi: "Its quite bold of you to assume that I was having the time of my life."

Me: "Well you weren't here to do what you've always vowed to do protect your family."

He turned around and walked around the room till he stood by the window looking at the ocean.

Melusi: "Nice view!" I cant believe he is seriously going to admire the view at this very moment. I kept quiet and waited for him to say something sensible other than looking at the view. He turned around after a while and looked at my briefcase. "You were on your way home? Let's go then." He walked out leaving me standing there.

I took out my phone and dialled Sethu's number but it went straight to voicemail. I called Tshepi and she picked up after what seemed like forever.



Tshepi: "Bab'Mazibuko!"

Me: "Tshepiso where is Sethu I need to talk to her it's very urgent."

Tshepi: "She's taking a nap. The meds the doctor gave her knocked her out cold but I'm sure she'll be up soon ."

Me: "Damn it!"

Tshepi: "What's wrong. I'm sure I can help."

Me: "Its complicated. Tell her I'll bring food."

Tshepi: "No need I've already cooked supper. Just get home I'm sure Sethu will be up by the time you get here. But you can bring flowers though."

Me: "Sure!" I hung up grabbed my briefcase and walked out.

I got to the parking lot and found him standing next to some old beat up Corsa bakkie.

Melusi: "What took you so long? It's getting late let's go." He got inside the corsa and drive off. I got into my car and drove home. By the time I got to the house he was already parked inside by the front door. I wonder who opened for him.

As soon as I pulled up behind him he got out of the car and waited. I grabbed my briefcase from the backseat and got out of the car. I got into the house with him following behind me. I found Tshepi in the kitchen dishing up I'm guessing for Sethu because the food was in a tray.

Tshepi: "Bab'Mazibuko you are back. I'll dish up for you just now I just need to take this to Sethu." She said not even looking my way. I'm sure by now she would have noticed Melusi standing behind me with his hands in his pockets and his shoulder resting on the wall.

Me: "Its okay I'm not hungry anyways." She grabbed the tray and took one step towards us she looked up and the moment she saw Melusi the tray ended up on the floor with the food spread all over the floor and the glass and plate

shattered into pieces. I looked at Melusi and he had some smug look on his face.

Melusi: "Sawubona Tshepiso. It's been a while." I just shook my head and grabbed a broom and a mop and helped her clean up the mess.

I dont know when Melusi dissapeared but when I looked up he was gone and Tshepi was still standing there like a pillar of salt. I put the mop and broom away.

Me: "Tshepi!"

Tshepi: "Where did you find him?"

Me: "He found me."

Tshepi: "I can't believe he is really alive. I thought Sethu was losing it when she told me."

Me: "Wait Sethu knows?"

Tshepi: "Where did he say he has been all along?" I left her there and went upstairs. I thought I'd find him in the bedroom instead he was in Asi's room with one of his stuffed toys in his hands.

Melusi: "Where is Asi?" He asked I guess he felt me standing by the door.

Me: "He is in the States. We had to get him away from everything that was happening here."

Melusi: "Who is he with in the States?"

Me: "With Sethu's aunt."

Melusi: "I see." He put the toy down on the crib and walked out. I saw him walking towards the bedroom. I followed behind him. He quietly opened the door and walked in. "Where's Sethu?" I looked around the room and sure enough she wasn't there. I opened the bathroom door and she wasn't there either. I thought Tshepi said she was sleeping.

I got out and walked downstairs with the ghost following behind me. I found Tshepi sitting on the couch.

Me: "Where's Sethu?"

Tshepi: "She's here." I came around the couch and she was laying on the couch with a throw over her.

Sethu: "Hey! What's wrong? What's with all the noise?" She asked sitting up and rubbing her eyes.

Tshepi: "You have to eat." Sethu looked up and her eyes met Melusi's. So Tshepi was right she did know.

Melusi: "Hey!" He said taking a seat.

We all sat down looking at him.

The silence was getting uncomfortable as much as I was angry at him I still needed answers.

Me: "So you are just going to sit there and say nothing?"

Melusi: "What do you want me to say?"

Sethu: "An explanation perhaps. Where have you been we buried you so how are you now sitting here?" I'm not sure if it was anger or annoyance that I heard in her voice but my money would be on anger.



Melusi: "I'd like to talk to my wife alone."

Sethu: "No! You dont get to dissapear and go to only God knows where and then come back and give orders. You need to explain yourself."

Melusi: "What would you like to know?" I guess this conversation didnt include us because these two spoke like they were all alone.

Sethu: "Where were you?"

Melusi: "I was in Mbumbulu."

Sethu: "So while your son and I were almost thrown out of this house

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alone."

Sethu: "No! You dont get to dissapear and go to only God knows where and then come back and give orders. You need to explain yourself."

Melusi: "What would you like to know?" I guess this conversation didnt include us because these two spoke like they were all alone.

Sethu: "Where were you?"

Melusi: "I was in Mbumbulu."

Sethu: "So while your son and I were almost thrown out of this house almost killed while we had to hide away for weeks because of your family wena you were holed up eMbumbulu? Dont they have phones in Mbumbulu?" Okay yeah she was angry.

Melusi: "It's much more complicated than that."

Sethu: "Uncomplicate it. I have time." Sethu has never been the type that easily gets angry but right now she was fuming even though she was trying hard to keep her anger in check. I saw Melusi taking a deep breath.

Melusi: "Fine! A few weeks before I "died" I kept having these weird dreams that something bad would happen to you in my dreams it was always a car accident the week before that the

dreams became intense and that's why I started using your car that week. I took it to the dealership for it to be serviced even when it came back I decided to keep driving it. I met Khehla a few months before everything happened. He introduced himself as my grandfather and told me that my father had to do some ceremony for me since I wasn't properly introduced to my maternal ancestors. I asked dad about it and he told me Khehla was crazy that he wasn't my grandfather. I asked MaZwane and she also told me whatever Khehla told me was a lie. I didn't know what or who to believe so I did some investigating of my own." He picked up the glass of water that was on the table and took a sip.

"After finding out the truth I confronted my dad and MaZwane about the information I got and they still wouldn't tell me the truth even though it was right there in black and white. I also found out about the shares and businesses that she was involved in even with all that they still denied everything. That day I got to work and the dreams I had been having became so intense they turned into visions. I called Khehla and told him about them. He told me to drive to Mbumbulu he will meet me there as he was also in Durban and would be driving home soon. I did as he told me it was already late so I got into the car and drove there. Halfway there I felt something sting my leg. I reached down and tried to see what it was but there was nothing there. I kept driving and within minutes I felt the same sting on my other leg. Immediately after that every muscle and vein in my body froze. I couldn't even turn the steering wheel. My hands were stuck on the steering wheel my foot was still on the accelerator and I couldn't stop it. The car hit a tree and the engine started a fire. I saw

the fire getting bigger but I couldn't get out of the car. At that moment I had accepted that I would die. I don't know when Khehla got there but he literally had to break my fingers just to get me out of the car. He put me in his car and drove me to his place and that's where I've been all along."

Me: "So whose body was it that we buried."

Melusi: "Only Khehla can answer that."

Sethu: "So if Khehla helped you why couldn't you call when you got better let us know that you're okay?"

Melusi: "I couldn't I didn't get better until the night MaZwane died. Since the day I "died"

physically I was dead even though I was technically alive my body wasn't. I was trapped inside my own body. I couldn't move or do anything. My eyes could see and I could breathe just fine but other than that I couldn't do anything." He got up and took off the sweater he was wearing and pulled up his track pants revealing a whole lot of tiny holes on his body he looked like a brick of cheese that rats had poked on. "A few months of being there I started developing these tiny holes all over my body maggots had turned my body into their home. They moved in and out of me like they belonged there. I don't know how many times I prayed and asked God to just let me die. I was literally rotting and there was nothing I could do about it. Khehla did all he could to keep me alive promising that I would be fine but I couldn't believe him. The night MaZwane died was the night I got my life back. I was able to move my legs my arms. Every part of my body was alive again. Even the maggots had disappeared like they were never there the only reminder I had

of them were the holes on my body. I went to the funeral just to be sure that she was really dead."

Me: "You were at the funeral?"

Melusi: "Yes!"

I looked at Sethu and saw the pain she was in she wiped her tears with one hand while the other was holding on to Tshepi's hand squeezing the life out of it. I wasn't sure if Tshepi was crying because of the pain or because of Melusi's story. We sat there in silence trying to absorb everything Melusi had just told us. I wasn't sure if I should believe him or not but then the holes on his body corroborated his story.



# CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

Unedited ♥□♥□

Whoever said the truth shall set you free was clearly delusional. I've told everyone what happened to me but it seems nothing's changed. Not that I expected everything to be Rose's and rainbows when I came back or if I would come back but I never thought my brother and my wife would be married.

If TT hadn't explained to me everything that happened after I "died" I'm pretty sure Mcebo would be six feet under by now. But knowing him I know he wouldn't have done what he did if he had any other choice. If there is one thing I could never take away from him is how great of a brother he was to me we were so close growing up people even thought we were twins and as much as it is a bitter pill for me to swallow I know I would have done the same thing for him and his family that he did for mine.

I stayed up on the couch the whole night I wasn't prepared to sleep in a guestroom in my own house like some visitor at 4 AM I left and went back to Mbumbulu. When I got there Khehla was already up and as usual expecting everyone else to wake up at the crack of dawn like him. I parked the car in the yard and went to the hut where my father was. I found him sitting up and looking at nothing really.

Baba: "Ah ndodana sekusile mele ulugselele ukuya eskoleni (son its morning you should get ready for school.)" He's been in and out of this state since Khehla started working on him apparently. Sometimes he remembers that we are grown adults but sometimes he goes back to when we were little or maybe that's the time

everything started getting foggy in his mind thanks to MaZwane.

Me: "Iskole sivaliwe namuhla (school is closed today.)" I saw a smile creep up on his face. It's crazy how before I "died" he was a mean man with wrinkles and frown lines all over his face but today he was different it was like he was aging backwards. His skin was softer and the wrinkles weren't visible as much as before.

Baba: "Ngyayazi lemikhuba yakho yokungathandi iskole wena (I know your tricks of hating school.)" He said with his finger pointed at me while hiding a laugh. I missed this part of him. The playful part of him that would let us get away with a lot of naughty things just because he thought it was funny.

Me: "Ngcinisile baba (I'm telling the truth) let's go for a walk." I helped him put on his shoes and a Jersey.

We walked out to the yard already buzzing. We walked out the gate and took a walk down to the river talking about this and that. My phone rang as soon as we sat down on the rocks watching the river go by.

Me: "Hello!"

Sethu: "Hi where are you?"

Me: "Mbumbulu. I figured I'd give you your space. I know all that I told you last night was a bit much so....."

Sethu: "Oh okay. How are you?"

Me: "I'll still breathing so that's something right?"

Sethu: "Right! Anyways I am going to pick up Asi from the airport if you want to see him you can come by."

Me: "Sure! I'll let you know before I come."

Sethu: "Okay." I hung up and put my phone back in my pocket and watched the sunrise.

As soon as the sun was fully up I texted TT and asked him to help me get my life back. And first things first is to get home affairs to reverse my

death. I need my life back. I've spent way too much time being stuck. I just want to live again.

We went back to Khehla's place and I took my dad to his designated hut. I helped feed him and helped him take his medication before he took a nap. I went to my room and took a bath. I decided to take my own nap cause I didn't sleep last night.



SETHU



Tshepi and I ended up sleeping together in the main bedroom. I figured the two brothers can have the guest rooms. But when I woke up this morning Melusi was gone and from the looks of it the other guestroom had not been used. I found his number stuck on the fridge so I decided to call him. I guess a part of me thought maybe I had dreamed up last night but I hadn't.

I told him about Asi coming back home and he said he'd come by. He was so cold when I spoke to him I dont think he even heard me when I said I loved him cause he hung up before I could even say it.

I made breakfast for everyone that was still in the house before I had to leave and go to the airport. I drove to the airport and waited for Ncane and Asi to land. I saw them walking towards me and Asi immediately ran to me soon as he saw me. I knelt down and he ran into me and gave me the biggest hug. I missed my baby. I got up and hugged my aunt. We walked out to the car and strapped Asi in and loaded the luggage in the boot. We got in and I started the car.

Ncane: "So satan's twin sister is officially gone to be with her brother?" I chuckled a bit.

Me: "Yep! But she's still causing havoc even from hell."

Ncane: "What has she done now?"

Me: "Melusi is alive!"

Ncane: "Which Melusi? Your husband?"

Me: "The one and only?" I felt a hard slap on my arm before she screamed. If I was a bad driver I swear I would have crashed.

Ncane: "Tell me you're joking!"

Me: "I was just as shocked when I saw him."

Ncane: "So he just appeared nje vumbu out of nowhere?"

I explain everything to her that happened since she left. And by the time I am done to say she is shocked would be an understatement. Ncane has never been the type of person to run out of words but right now I dont think she has any words right now. After a while she claps her hands once.

Ncane: "That woman is worse than the devil himself. I'm sure when he got to hell a red carpet was laid out for her and the devil gave up his throne cause the real devil was back. Yoh umthakathi onje zange ngike ngimbone (I've never seen such a witch.)"

We got home and Mcebo and Tshepi had already left for work. Asi was sleeping already I guess jetlag had taken over. We unpacked the luggage from the car and put them inside the house. I put Asi to sleep in his room. Ncane also said she needed to rest a bit so I let her be. I texted Melusi and told him Asi was here already he can come through. He texted back saying he was around Durban running errands for Khehla so he would be here in twenty minutes.

I decided to make some quick creamy pasta and a salad. Sure enough he showed up in exactly twenty minutes. I let him in.

Me: "Hey."

Melusi: "Hi!"

Me: "Asi is asleep but he should be up soon. Would you like something to drink in the meantime? I have beer in the fridge."

Melusi: "Just water please." Okay. I went to the kitchen while he sat down on the couch. I went to the kitchen and got him a glass of water. I switched the stove off to let the food rest a bit.

I went back to the lounge but he wasn't there I noticed the doors to the pool were opened so I went there to check. He was sitting on the patio watching the water in the pool. I walked over to him and put the glass of water on the table next to him.

Melusi: "Thanks." He took a sip.

Me: "Why did you leave this morning?"

Melusi: "I thought I'd give you time."

Me: "Time for what?"

Melusi: "Time to figure out what it is you want. I know me showing up announced was a shock to you"

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I noticed the doors to the pool were opened so I went there to check. He was sitting on the patio watching the water in the pool. I walked over to him and put the glass of water on the table next to him.

Melusi: "Thanks." He took a sip.

Me: "Why did you leave this morning?"

Melusi: "I thought I'd give you time."

Me: "Time for what?"



Melusi: "Time to figure out what it is you want. I know me showing up announced was a shock to you so I just thought I'd take a step back."

Me: "Why did you come back? I mean you spent all this time being "dead" and now to just show up like nothing's happened. How does that work really?" He took a deep breath and turned to look at me.

Melusi: "Sethu I realize I could have handled everything that happened before I "died" a little better. I could have told you about my dreams and everything that was going on but I thought I was trying to protect you. I didnt think that everything that happened after would happen but it did and I wasnt here to protect you like I promised you I would. I hate myself knowing

that I unknowingly put you through that. I know you've moved on and it was a bit selfish of me to think I'd just walk back into your life like nothing happened. You deserve to be happy and if my brother makes you happy then I'll let you be."

Me: "Melusi....."

Melusi: "No let me finish! I love you with every fiber of my being and all I've ever wanted was to see you happy. You deserve to be happy. And if I cant make you happy them atleast I know Mcebo can make you happy. I'm not going to put you through anymore trauma and heartache than you've already gone through."

We were disturbed by Ncane walking out with Asi. She stood by the door looking at Melusi not sure if he was a ghost or not.

Me: "Ncane!" I called out and she walked towards us. She handed Asi to me and I handed him to Melusi. He picked his son up and I could see him holding back his tears as he greeted him and gave him a hug. I decided to go inside to dish up the food. Ncane followed me into the kitchen.

Ncane: "Is that really him?"

Me: "In the flesh!"

Ncane: "Okay so why do you look like you've been crying?" I turned to look at her.

Me: "He says he wont fight for me."

Ncane: "What?"

Me: "He says if Mcebo makes me happy then he'll let us be. I thought he came back because he wanted his family back why else would he just show up here he's not willing to fight for us?"

Ncane: "Sethu let me ask you something who do you want? Mcebo or Melusi?"

Me: "I don't know isn't he supposed to fight for us?"

Ncane: "Who? Mcebo or Melusi? Sethu you need to realise that this is just as awkward for them as it is for you. They are brothers close ones at that. If Mcebo was some stranger who had walked into your life then I'm sure Melusi would put up more of a fight but that's his brother. I'm pretty sure he didnt expect a red carpet to be rolled out for him but he also didnt expect his brother to be the one living his life."

Me: "So he's going to give up just like that."

Ncane: "Sethu stop being stubborn. Only one person can decide where to from here and that's you whichever path you choose

someone's going to get hurt and Melusi and Mcebo's relationship will never be the same again. Ever!"

As much as I knew Ncane was right I couldn't help feeling how I felt. But she was right I had a choice to make and right now I wasn't sure what the right decision was. On the one hand Melusi is my husband for once God has answered my prayers and basically brought him back from the dead. Knowing what I know now he didn't choose to just not be there he couldn't help it. But then on the other side is Mcebo he stepped up and became my protector when I was alone shielded me from everything his mother wanted to do basically turned his back on his family for me. So how do I decide where to go. Do I choose the man who holds my heart in his hands or do I choose the man who chose to be my hero?

## CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

Unedited ♥□♥□

I dont know which part of my life I need to be focusing on at the moment. On one hand my personal life seems to be falling apart meanwhile business is going good. I know people always say focus on the positive things but how do I focus on business when my marriage seems to be on the line. And no I have no idea which marriage I'm talking about either.

I haven't seen much of Mcebo this week he leaves early and comes back really late and sometimes he doesn't come back home at all. I can't blame him though Melusi's sudden "resurrection" threw I of out bearings. Melusi on the other hand comes to the house every chance he gets to see Asi. For once I'm glad Asi is too little to even realize that his father hasn't been in his life for over a year.

I've been so stressed out about everything happening around me that I missed out on my annual check up a few days ago. But lucky for me I was able to make it the next day. Add that to the previous tests I did when I fainted and I'm



pretty sure I've been poked enough. I pray I don't get sick anytime soon.

I figured since Melusi would be at the house when I get back from work I decided to drive to Umbilo to my grandparents graves. I got to the gravesite and parked the car. It was getting dark so I used the torch on my phone to find their graves. Good thing I have an idea of which side they are so I didn't have to search a lot. I made a mental note to erect tombstones for them soon even though my grandmother always said she'd rather her children eat and go to school than spend money on something she wouldn't be able to enjoy. But I won't go hungry just because I do that.

I sat down in between their graves and sat in silence for a while. I said what I needed to say to them. I got up and went back to my car. I decided to drive past their house. I know my mother sold it but for me it was still home. I saw a car parked outside. I looked at the license plate and realized it was my dad's car. I wonder what he was doing here. I parked next to his car and got out. I wasn't about to go into the house so I waited next to my car. He came out after about ten minutes of me waiting. He saw me standing there and he was taken aback. He walked over to where I was.

Dad: "Siphosethu what are you doing here?"

Me: "Why did you let mum sell the house?" I asked completely ignoring his question.

Dad: "Argh you know how stubborn your mother is. What are you doing here?" He asks again.

Me: "I missed them. I want to their graves then decided to pass by here. I cant even go in."

Dad: "I'm sorry. You seem like you have a lot on your mind. What's going on?"

Me: "No one is here dad you can stop pretending like you care." I saw him swallow and look away from me.

Dad: "You know I care Sethu you are my baby my first child."

Me: "And yet you've never treated me as such. You didnt care when my husband died neither you or mum stayed long enough to make sure I was okay you allowed the Mazibuko's to pawn

me off like some rag doll to the next man they wanted to take everything from me and you did nothing even my own siblings have never called me or come to check up on me. So yeah maybe you do care about you that is."

Dad: "I know I've never been the best father to you and I will probably never be able to make it up to you but tell me what I can do now. Anything I'll do it."

Me: "Can you show me a way to choose one man without breaking the other one's heart?" I saw frown lines forming on his forehead and I realized soon as those words were out of my mouth they were just as confusing to me.

Dad: "What do you mean?"

Me: "Let's see since y'all wanted me to marry Mcebo to keep my husbands estate I did

somewhere along the line we formed a relationship and then just when we thought things were settling down a bit Melusi shows up alive bruised and hurt but alive. So now which one of my husbands do I pick over the other?" I dont think I've ever shocked anyone this much. His jaw was literally on the ground.

I decided to leave him there and just drive back home. I got to the house and found the Melusi's beat up van in the driveway u guess he was still here. I dont know why he doesnt take his car in the garage. I park my car making sure I dont close him in. I get out and go into the house expecting to find him in the lounge with Asi but he isnt there. I go into the kitchen and find Ncane cooking.

Me: "Hey!"

Ncane: "Hey nana. How was your day?"

Me: "So so. Where's Melusi? I saw his car outside."

Ncane: "He is out by the pool with his brother."

Me: "Mcebo?"

Ncane: "Yes that's his only brother except the other one who is behind bars."

Me: "What are they talking about?"

Ncane: "I dont know Sethu. Go freshen up

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dinner is almost ready." She said turning back to her pots.

I left her there and went to the patio doors they were opened. I moved the curtain aside to look at them and whatever they were talking about were they even talking? Melusi was sitting on a chair sipping his drink and Mcebo was standing by the railing also sipping on his drink. I couldn't hear a thing and getting closer would just be ridiculous. I let them be and went upstairs to

freshen up. I went to Asi's room and found him playing on the carpet. He got up when he saw me and ran to me with a huge ass grin on his face. I decided to focus on this one positive in my life and let everything else sort itself out some other time.





MCEBO

If anyone had told me a few months ago that I'd wake up and my brother would be back from the dead I would have thought they were crazy.

I have been avoiding Sethu for the better part of the week. I know this whole thing is weighing heavily on her I'm pretty sure she is stressed out and talking about this over and over again just puts more pressure on her to make a decision which is why I have decided to make the decision for her.

For the past few days I've spoken to some of my overseas clients and many of them want me there to be a bit hands on on some projects. Even though I trust the people I've put in place

to take care of those projects it would ease the clients minds a bit if they saw me. And a few days away from everything will give everyone a chance to just breathe.

I booked my ticket and I leave in a few days. Zoey will take care of this side of the business well she does have a reason to stay now since Tshepi is here. I got home and found Melusi's beat up van in the driveway. I didnt think he'd still be here by now.

I got out and got in the house and found him playing with Asi in the lounge. I greeted and poured myself a glass of whiskey and went out to the pool. I dont know why I was finding it hard to talk to my brother once upon a time we used to be close and now I cant even spend one minute in the same room as him. I was still trying to figure out if it was shock or jealousy or maybe both.

I heard footsteps behind me and when I turned I found him standing there with a glass of whiskey too. He walked over to the chair and sat down.

Melusi: "Thank you."

Me: "For what?"

Melusi: "For everything that you did for Sethu and Asi. You didnt have to but you did and I really appreciate that."

Me: "Sure."

We stood there in silence for a while just sipping on our drinks. After a while he gulped down his drink and left. I never thought I'd see the day we barely said a few words to each other who am I kidding I didnt think I'd ever talk to him again but here we are.

I went back I into the house to talk to Sethu and let her know that I am leaving. I got to the room and found her sleeping with Asi. I gave her a kiss on the cheek and went to sleep in the guest room.

I woke up in the morning and went to tie up some lose ends at work. I got there and found Zoey already busy. Good thing we've hired a few more people to help around the office otherwise she'd be overwhelmed with work when I'm gone. I went straight to my office and she followed me.

Zoey: "So I hear Casper the ghost is back."

Me: "You are not funny." I say down and opened my laptop.

Zoey: "Sorry. So I moved your flight to tonight."

Me: "Why would you do that?"

Zoey: "Well Mccallister is panicking and he refuses to listen to anyone but you. He thinks someone or something is planning to disrupt the relaunch so he needs to see you to calm his nerves. You know he can go over the rails sometimes." Zoey is right as childish as Mccallister is we cant afford to lose his business. And once he goes on panic mode no one can predict what he will do.

I finished work and went back to the house to pack some clothes. I found the house empty. I packed my clothes and walked out to the car. Ncane pulled up just as I got out of the house with the bags. I decided to wait for her so I can tell her about my trip. Asi came running soon as he got out of the car. I picked him up and ticked him a bit.

Ncane: "You moving out?"

Me: "No well not yet. I'm going to London on business."

Ncane: "Oh okay. So when are you coming back?"



Me: "I'm not sure yet."

Ncane: "Okay. We'll see you when you come back."

Me: "Sure." I put Asi down and got in the car and drove off.

I remembered some files in the office I needed to get plus I still had an hour to spare before I had to go to the airport. I got the files i needed and just as i was about to leave Sethu walked in.

Me: "Hey!"

Sethu: "No goodbye." I sighed and sat on the desk.

Me: "I thought I'd give you time to figure things out." She chuckles.

Sethu: "You and your brother swapping notes? He seems to think I need time too."

Me: "Dont you?"

Sethu: "Honestly I'm not sure." She says coming to sit next to me. "I have absolutely no idea. I dont know what to do."

Me: "I understand. Seems like life keeps throwing us curveballs from every corner."

Sethu: "Yeah and I'm scared. I'm scared of ruining the relationship between you and Melusi I'm scared of what the future holds for all of us I'm just scared of everything but I'm most afraid of breaking anyone's heart." I get down from the desk and stand in front of her.

Me: "Theres nothing for you to be afraid of. You are not God you cant know what the future holds. So maybe you should rebuild your relationship with Melusi technically speaking he is your husband."

Sethu: "Mcebo....."

Me: "Sethu I know you want sunshine and rainbows but the truth is that's not going to happen. And it would be crazy of me to think that you and I could ever have a future before maybe but now i dont know. Beside you were never mine to begin with." I say wiping the tears that are streaming down her face. She opens her mouth to say something but nothing comes out.

I kiss her forehead and grab my laptop bag and walk out leaving her sitting there. I walk towards the lift and my heart says I should go back but common sense disagrees. I get on the lift and go down to my car. Maybe it's time I make peace with the fact that happiness was never made for me. Maybe I dont have a happily ever after written into my life Maybe just maybe.

## CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

I miss home. I never thought I'd ever get to the point where traveling from one country to the next would get tiring but right now it is. Or maybe it's knowing that home offered more comfort and warmth. I could sleep on Egyptian cotton in one of the best hotels in the world but none of that will ever compare to the warmth that being stable in one place offers.

The past year I've had to turn my life around in the blink of an eye be a family man even before I knew that's what I wanted. But now that I've experienced that and lived it I can fully say I want it. I want a home and I want to come home to a wife and kids. Well a wife i can do but kids are at this point a farfetched dream. Thanks to mummy dearest.

I've been away from South Africa for almost a month now. Sethu has called me a couple of times but each time she calls I ignore her calls I dont think I should be anywhere close to her right now. As much as I love her I cant expect things to just be normal. No matter how much I may want a life with her it would be naive of me to think we'd ever truly be happy together. At the end of the day she is my brother's wife and I

did all that i did for him. It was all for my brother and now he is back to continue where he left off.

I got off the airport in London from Spain and headed straight to the hotel. I got into the lift and lucky for me I was alone. Until someone put their hand between the elevator doors opening them wide open again. A beautiful woman walked in looking like she just stepped out of a glamour magazine. I continued reading emails on my phone trying to ignore her but she kept stealing glances at me and it was getting uncomfortable. She looked at me again and this time our eyes met. I guess she felt embarrassed cause she looked away quickly.

Me: "Do you perhaps have a problem?" She smiled and turned to look at me.

Her: "I'm sorry I didnt mean to stare it's just that you look a bit familiar."

Me: "Right. I get that a lot." I went back to my emails.

Her: "I'm sorry to be a bother but didnt you date a girl named Zoey for a few years?"

Me: "How is that any of your business?"

Her: "Oh it's not. It's just that Zoey and I used to be friends and I've lost contact with her I was hoping perhaps you'd know where she might be."



Me: "Who are you again?" This lift was taking forever to get to where it needed to be. This woman was just suffocating me at this point but I was curious about her sudden concern for Zoey.

Her: "Oh my name is Alicia Alicia Matthews-Jones." I sighed cause I had heard that name before. Zoey told me about a friend named Alicia who had slept with her boyfriend then got pregnant by him.

Me: "Are you married to Steve Jones?" Her face lit up like she had met Santa Claus himself.

Her: "Yes do you know my husband?"

Me: "Not really but Zoey has told me enough about the two of you to know that you two deserve each other. And if you really want to

know about Zoey she is in South Africa heading up a branch of our consulting business." The elevator door pinged just as it reached my floor. I got out leaving her standing there like a pillar of salt.

Girls like her drive me up the wall. She wasn't really concerned about Zoey she just wanted to flaunt her marriage to Zoey cause she had "won" the man. I got into my room and decided to call Zoey to find out about business.

Zoey: "You do know you still have a company to run even here right? When are you coming back?" That was the first thing she said to me. No hello how are you? Nothing.

Me: "I'm fine Zoey how are you?"

Zoey: "Mxm whatever. You do know you have to come home at some point and face your demons."

Me: "I met your friend Alicia. She's cute but vile."

Zoey: "Stay away from that snake. Changing the subject wont do anything Mcebo you need to come home and figure this whole thing out."

Me: "I dont know."

Zoey: "Well I do. You need to come back. Running isnt going to solve anything. You Sethu and your brother need to sit down and figure out a way forward for all three of you."

Me: "And what do you suggest miss know it all?"

Zoey: "I'll let that little dig slide just this once. But if you really want my advice talk. That's it. Talk. Running is always your knee jerk reaction to anything but this you cant run away from it. You and Melusi are brothers and whether you want to believe it or not you need each other now more than ever."

We hung up after speaking for a while. Zoey can sometimes give good advise. I sat down on the dining table and got down to work. I have one last meeting with Mccallister before I head back home. I wasn't even sure I wanted to go back home but Zoey made some valid points I need to sort this out once and for all.

I woke up the next morning and booked my flight back lucky for me I got one for the next morning. I went to the meeting with Mccallister and we ironed out all that needed to be ironed out. I spent the whole day with him and his team just making sure all was going well for the expansion of his company.

The day seemed to fly by pretty quickly. I went back to the hotel in the evening after celebrating the expansion with the team at a dinner party. I packed my stuff and got ready for my early morning flight.



SETHU

I've been standing in this window watching the sea usually its calming and sometimes inspiring but right now it was exactly what I needed to calm my mind. I didnt have that much meetings lately people have got wind Melusi being back and many of them are anxious for him to be back and running things. Me well I'm also waiting for him to decide whether he wants to come back or not.

With Mcebo being out of the country and Melusi somewhat keeping his distance I've had time to

think things through. And I think I've made a decision about what I want and I really want to spend the rest of my life with.

Mcebo has been a constant source of support for me when I had no one in my corner he was there fighting for me. I knew I could count on him for anything and everything. He's been a protective barrier between me and his family

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when I had no one in my corner he was there fighting for me. I knew I could count on him for anything and everything. He's been a protective barrier between me and his family especially his mother and God knows no amount of thank you's will ever be enough for all that he has done for me.

Melusi is the love of my life. He always has been even through the toughest moments my prayer has always been for this nightmare to end and right now he is here alive and well not fully there yet but he is getting better each day. Although he tries to hide it sometimes I've seen him flinch in pain when he picks up Asi and plays with him.

I decided to take the rest of the day off since people were waiting and hoping for Melusi to come back to his post. I went past the mall to get some groceries. I did a bit of retail therapy while I was at it.

I walked to Nandos and bought some takeaways. Soon as I got all that I needed I got into my car and headed home. I got home and no one was home. I guess Ncane maybe went to pick up Asi from daycare.

I started cooking so when they come back food will be almost ready. I heard a car pull up outside and I assumed it must be Ncane and Asi. I heard the door open and instead of little feet running up to me I felt a strong presence behind me. I turned around and Melusi was standing there with his hands in his pockets watching me.

Me: "Its rude to stare."

Melusi: "I'm sorry you just look beautiful doing that."

Me: "Thanks."

Melusi: "Is Asi here yet?"

Me: "No Ncane is still not back with him yet.  
Would you like something to drink?"

Melusi: "Just water please." I open the fridge and take out a bottle of water and hand it to him together with a glass. "Thanks." He says sitting down on the highchair.

Me: "When are you planning on coming back to work?" He looks at me with a frown on his face.

Melusi: "Uhm I dont know where is that coming from?"

Me: "Well most people know you are back and our clients are waiting for you to take over."

Melusi: "I think you are doing just fine they will just have to wait a little longer."

Me: "Okay but when you decide to come back dont blame me when you find no clients." He laughed. I missed his laugh.

Melusi: "I'm pretty sure you are doing just fine."

I finished cooking and by six o'clock Ncane and Asi were still not back. I decided to call her to find out where they are.

Ncane: "Nana!"

Me: "Ncane where are you and where is Asi?"

Ncane: "He is right here having the time of his life. You and your husband can talk about whatever. We'll be back tomorrow."

Me: "I cooked." I said holding back all the shit I wanted to say to her but I couldn't because Melusi was right here watching me.

Ncane: "Then eat and feed him too. Bye" she hung up before I could even say anything.

Melusi: "So where are they?"

Me: "Beats me. But apparently they are sleeping over wherever they are." He chuckled.

Melusi: "She's really not that smooth is she?" I laughed.

Me: "Clearly not. Can I dish up for you?"

Melusi: "Well we cant let the food go to waste so."

I got up and dished up for us. I handed him his food and we ate while reminiscing about the past. This felt right normal like it's how things are meant to be. So maybe my decision was

the right one after all. My phone rang and it was a landline number. I ignored it but it rang again.

Melusi: "Arent you going to answer that?"

Me: "Argh its probably one of those telemarketers wanting to sell me insurance. It's been calling me for a week now."

Melusi: "What if it's important. Telemarketers don't easily give up yes but these ones are way to persistent. You should pick up when they call again." I nodded my head knowing full well I ain't picking up. The phone rang again and with Melusi sitting there starring at me I had no choice but to pick up the call.



Me: "Hello."

Her: "Finally Mrs Mazibuko I've been trying to get hold of you for almost a week now."

Me: "I'm sorry who is this?"

Her: "Its Doctor Moodley I have the results from your blood tests."

Me: "Okay what's wrong?"

Her: "Nothing is wrong. We've finally figured out why you fainted that night." I know why I fainted i saw a ghost. I'm pretty sure i dont need blood tests to tell me that but let me humor her.

Me: "Okay what do the results say?"

Her: "Well I would have loved to discuss this in person. Anyways according to your test results you are pregnant and....."

I didnt hear a thing after pregnant. I sat across from my husband who was anxiously waiting to find out what was happening but how do I tell him that I'm pregnant with his brothers child?

## CHAPTER FORTY

Ever heard the saying when we make plans God laughs? Yeah I'm pretty sure at this point the big guy upstairs sees my life as an entire comedy show just to keep himself entertained. At this point I dont know what these supposedly powerful guides and spirits I have are doing. My life seems like it's on a downward spiral but they are sitting quietly somewhere probably having a laugh at my expense.

I had it all figured out. I chose my husband I chose Melusi and somehow God had to throw a spanner in the works. Maybe being with anybody shouldn't even be something i should be thinking about at this point cause clearly no

matter or who I choose something is going to go wrong somewhere somehow.

I'm beginning to think gogo Nkanyezi was wrong I dont have powerful spirits and guides watching over me if they were I wouldn't even be facing or faced half the shit I've faced this past year alone. If they were there then why do the people closest to me end up getting hurt. First Melusi ended up "dead" trying to protect me then Mcebo almost lost his life doing the same thing. What is it about me that puts these men in danger? What is so wrong with me that I life cant give me a break? Or maybe I was cursed from birth?

First my mother chose everyone else except for me. My dad had his own business to build and had no time to be a parent to me and when he felt good and ready for it he choose my siblings and carried on with life like I was just an obstacle he had overcome. My grandparents did the best they could. The only two people who would have moved heaven and earth for me had to end up dead. And just when I thought I'd found my own little piece of haven he too had to "die". And then I found solace and protection in Mcebo and he too had to face so much darkness and almost died trying to protect me.

In all this I am the common denominator I am the problem not them. I'm the one who is a problem clearly. It's all me as much as I would like to blame MaZwane for this I cant blame her for me being born I cant blame her for my own

existence which clearly has become a curse to those closest to me. Maybe she should have succeeded maybe my guides or spirits should have stood back and let her do her thing then maybe just maybe Melusi and Mcebo would still have their brotherly bond. Maybe just maybe there would be peace instead of the pain and havoc that is happening right now and maybe just maybe if I wasn't so weak I would finish what she started and put everyone out of this misery.

I've sat in this tub for I don't know how long I've been here but I know I still don't have answers to whatever questions I have. How long before my son falls under this cursed soul that is me? How long will it be before he too has to endure pain and suffering because of me? How do I save him? He deserves so much better and right now I know enough to admit that maybe

he doesnt deserve a mother like me. For the longest time I've always looked at him and saw a reason to live a reason to breathe but now I dont know if he should even be anywhere close to me. And this child that I'm carrying why would God throw this poor soul unto the darkness that is my life. He deserves so much better than this. The fact that he is carried by me makes him just as much of a target as Asi. How do I protect my children from me their own mother?

As cold as the water was at this point I couldn't feel it. A part of me just wanted to drag myself under the water and just let it fill my lungs and see what happens. I heard someone banging on the door and I literally had no strength to even tell them to go away. I just sat there as they called out my name. I could hear more than just one voice including Ncane's. The

banging got louder and louder and the louder it got the deeper I slipped under the water. I submerged myself under the cold water and it felt like the voices disappeared.

I could feel water feeling up my lungs even though the process was slow I could still feel it happening. I closed my eyes and decided to submit myself to the process before I felt someone pull me up by my shoulders. I coughed and spit some of the water that had made it's way inside my body. I opened my eyes and found myself face to face with Melusi and Ncane standing a few feet away with tears streaming down her face and her hands on her head.



Melusi: "What the fuck are you trying to do Siphosethu?" He asked with fire burning through his eyes. He was angry I knew that the moment he called me with my full name. Crazy how my name alone feels like a curse.

Me: "I'm not doing anything." I said trying to look as far away from him as possible. He put his hand under my chin and brought my face to look at him. His stare was uncomfortable but he wouldn't let go of me.

He pulled me out of the water without saying anything more. He took a towel and covered me before somehow pushing me into the bedroom. I felt like a little doll being played with and forced to walk. He sat me down on the chair before heading into the closet. Ncane knelt in front of me and put her hands on my knees. The shame of what I had tried to do wouldn't let

me even look at her. How do I explain what they had walked into? How do I explain a lapse in judgment that probably would have cost me my life? She took my hands that were sitting on my lap and covered them with hers. She kissed my hands and got up I knew that the moment he called me with my full name. Crazy how my name alone feels like a curse.

Me: "I'm not doing anything." I said trying to look as far away from him as possible. He put his hand under my chin and brought my face to look at him. His stare was uncomfortable but he wouldn't let go of me.

He pulled me out of the water without saying anything more. He took a towel and covered me before somehow pushing me into the bedroom. I felt like a little doll being played with and forced to walk. He sat me down on the chair

before heading into the closet. Ncane knelt in front of me and put her hands on my knees. The shame of what I had tried to do wouldn't let me even look at her. How do I explain what they had walked into? How do I explain a lapse in judgment that probably would have cost me my life? She took my hands that were sitting on my lap and covered them with hers. She kissed my hands and got up wiped her tears and walked out the door. I felt more tears streaming down my face.

What did I just do? I turned around and faced the mirror that was before me. I tried to look at the person looking back at me and I didnt recognize her. The Sethu my grandmother raised was no quitter she never gave up no matter what she fought through the pain. So who was this girl? Who was this girl that would crumble after fighting so many battles? Who

was this girl that would give up now when she has had to forgive people who've never apologized for hurting her? Who was this girl that would risk it all to leave her children without a mother? Who was she cause I know this is not who gogo Sibiyi raised and forged to be a strong woman.

I was so caught up in my own thoughts I didnt even notice Melusi standing behind me watching me on the mirror. Our eyes met through the reflective glass before us and I saw disappointment in his eyes coupled with pity and pain. He didnt have to tell me he was disappointed in me cause I was disappointed in myself too. After what seemed like a lifetime staring in his eyes my shame finally won and I looked away from him. I felt him sigh behind me before handing me my pyjamas.

I took the pyjamas and waited for him to leave so I can get dressed instead he sat down on the bed. I turned to look at him and I could see he wasnt planning on going anywhere. I put on the top with the towel still covering my body. I put on the bottoms before removing the towel and buttoning the shirt. Soon as I was done he pulled back the covers and I got in the bed. I sat with my head on the headboard and played with my fingers.

Melusi: "I'll get you food." He said and got up. He hesitated for a second looking at the bathroom. I guess he wasnt sure if it is safe or not to leave me with an open bathroom. I guess after making calculations in his head he walked out and went to get the food.

I grabbed my phone from the side table and found a number of missed calls including Mcebo's. I thought about calling him back but I figured he was just returning my missed calls. I decided to focus on the other numbers I found including Amanda's. I decided to call her back.

Amanda: "Boss lady how are you?"

Me: "I'm good how are you?"

Amanda: "Pretty good. You missed your meeting with Mr Vilakazi."

Me: "Shit I forgot about him. Can you reschedule?"

Amanda: "Already did. And since you weren't picking up my calls I decide to reschedule your other meetings too."

Me: "Thank you."

Amanda: "Just doing my job. Another thing I hope you remember next week I'm writing my exams so I wont be in the office for the better part if the week."

Me: "Its okay take the whole week off and get a temp to stand in for you."

Amanda: "Cool. I'll see you tomorrow?"

Me: "Definitely. Thank you Amanda."

Amanda: "You are welcome." She hung up.

I put the phone away and tried to cover myself with the blanket. The door opened and I felt someone sit on the bed next to me. They pulled the blankets off of me.

Melusi: "You have to eat." I sat up and took the tray from him and ate. I wasn't sure if I should tell him about my pregnancy but then it would feel shady for me to tell him before I even tell the person responsible. But then again he is my husband. I was just so confused.

Me: "I need to tell you something."



Melusi: "What is it?"

Me: "I am..... I....." i couldn't bring myself to utter the word pregnant. As much as it is my reality right now I also needed time to get used to it. "I wasnt killing myself."

Melusi: "That's not what it looked like to me or Ncane."

Me: "I know that injustice had a moment of weakness it wont happen again."

Melusi: "When last did you speak to your therapist."

Me: "I dont need one I'm fine. I just had a lapse in judgment it wont happen again. I swear."

Melusi: "Fine. But Ncane is worried about you."  
He said and got up to leave.

I finished eating and decided to take the tray and plate downstairs to the kitchen. I'm pretty sure Melusi wasn't in the house cause I heard his car drive out a while back. I put the plate in the sink and cleaned it. I left it there to dry and went looking for Ncane. I found her sitting by the pool alone just looking at the water. I sat down next to her and noticed she was crying. I wiped the tears from her eyes.

Me: "I'm sorry." She looked at me and I hated myself for causing her so much pain.

Ncane: "Why would you do that Sethu? Why would you even think about that?"

Me: "I'm sorry i just got overwhelmed Bout everything that's happening."

Ncane: "You have fought so many battles Sethu and won but you are ready to give up now?" My guilt and shame wouldn't even let me look at her. I know Melusi said I need to see someone so maybe that someone could be Ncane.

Me: "I know I've faced so many battles and won but sometimes I dont want to fight. Sometimes I get tired of having to be strong and sometimes I just want life to be a little kinder to me is that too much to ask?"

Ncane: "Of course not but we all face battles nana and we keep going."

Me: "Show me a thirty year old who has faced half the shit I've been through. Ncane I get that life is sometimes unkind to us all but sometimes it feels like I get a bulk of the pain the world faces. Right now I am the reason two brothers relationship will never be the same that in itself is a mess but now I will have two kids from two brothers that is something only the writers of the bold and the beautiful could ever come up with."

Ncane: "Wait what do you mean two kids?"

Me: "I'm pregnant Ncane."

Mcebo: "What?"

I'm not sure when he got there and this is sure as hell not how I wanted him to find out about this. I turned and what I thought was a mess had become a catastrophe. Mcebo was standing next to Melusi who had Asi in his arms. They both looked at me waiting for something I'm not sure what but something.

In my head I could feel God laughing his lungs out.

## CHAPTER FORTY ONE

I dont know what's worse losing Sethu or finding out she is pregnant. My brother hasn't even been back that long but he has already scored. It must be nice.

I've spent the week avoiding Sethu. She calls me and I avoid her calls she has even come by here a few times but my PA always tells her I'm not here. And Sethu being the kind of person that she is she never makes a scene or throw a tantrum. She always leaves even when she knows I am in here. I'm not sure if that impresses me or hurts me or maybe it's just my

ego taking a blow because I had hoped that she would fight for us.

I've spent time burying myself in work. In one week alone I've landed two major contracts business is good so maybe that's where I need to pour my energy in. Its lunchtime i texted my PA and asked her to get me lunch a bunnychow from one of those shady places downtown I wish they would get their asses on Uber eats or MrD it would make life so much easier for me.

The door opens and I dont even look up I know its not my PA cause she left less than ten minutes ago unless she is Usain bolt there is no way she would be back already so that leaves only one other person Zoey. I try to ignore her

hoping she would say what she wants to say but she says nothing instead I hear her heels clicking on the hardwood floors and they get closer to the desk. They stop soon as they get to me.

Her scent wafts up into my nostrils and it finally registers this is not Zoey. I look up and find Sethu staring at me.

Me: "Hi!"

Sethu: "Hey I'm sorry for just barging in unannounced I saw your PA leave so I thought I'd sneak in here." I sit back on the chair and clasp my fingers together over my abdomen.



Me: "There was absolutely no need for you to do that." A smile forms across her face.

Sethu: "Right! I wanted to talk to you about the baby." I felt my jaws clench. Nice way to rub it in my face. How cruel can this woman be.

Me: "Oh yeah I forgot to say congratulations. My brother must be happy."

Sethu: "Why would he be happy?"

Me: "Why wouldn't he be happy about his child?" She chuckles.

Sethu: "Mcebo I'm 12 weeks pregnant that's three months Melusi has been back for less than two months."

Me: "Yeah so what?" She looks at me like I have lost my mind and then bells go off in my head. 12 weeks that's three months. If she is three months pregnant it either means the baby is mine or she cheated on me. The latter seems a bit of a reach but I dont want to get my Hope's up. I get up and walk towards her I stand behind her she turns and looks at me. "What are you trying to say Sethu?"

Sethu: "The baby is yours." I felt the air leave my lungs. How is this even possible?

Me: "I'm not sure what kind of a joke you are trying to play but this is not the time for it."

Sethu: "Why would I lie to you?"

Me: "I dont know you tell me."

Sethu: "Mcebo I promise you on our unborn baby's life this is your child."

She grabs my hand and places it on her stomach. I can feel the tiny bump protruding a bit it's hard but there is a bit of movement. I feel a tear stream down my face. I'm going to be a father. Maybe God hasn't forsaken me after all. I get down on my knees and say a silent prayer with my face on her tummy. I feel her hands on my head and shoulders. I thought I'd never get to experience something like this but here I am ready to be a father.

Sethu: "Mcebo we need to talk." She says after a while. I get up and hold her face in my hands and kiss the life out of her. I missed her. I life

her up and put her on the desk and I stand between her legs. I let go of her lips and move to her neck. I feel her hands all over my body and her moans remind me of a time when me and her had a chance at this relationship thing.

She pulls my shirt out of my pants and unbuttons it. I let go of her completely and quickly run to lock the door. When I get back I find her with her blouse off. I turn her around and unzip her skirt. I slowly pull it down while kissing her back. I get down on my knees and pull the skirt down. She lifts her feet up and I take the skirt fully out.

I move my hands up her legs with her ass in my face. My hands make their way between her

thighs and parts them. I pull down her underwear and discard it. She lays the top half of her body on the desk giving me easy access to her sweet little haven.

I suck her clit and she is so wet and delicious. I stick my tongue inside her tight sweet hole and her moans fill the room. After some time I turn her around and sit her on the desk before going back to my now lunch. I put her entire clit into my mouth sending her into a frenzy of emotions and feelings. I feel her cum all over my mouth. I suck the juices dripping from her.

When I am sure that I've got all the juices without spilling even a drop on the floor ready to be a father.

Sethu: "Mcebo we need to talk." She says after a while. I get up and hold her face in my hands and kiss the life out of her. I missed her. I lift her up and put her on the desk and I stand between her legs. I let go of her lips and move to her neck. I feel her hands all over my body and her moans remind me of a time when me and her had a chance at this relationship thing.

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and feelings. I feel her cum all over my mouth. I suck the juices dripping from her.

When I am sure that I've got all the juices without spilling even a drop on the floor I get up and kiss her letting her taste her sweetness from my mouth. I unzip my pants and let them fall to my ankles. I enter her in a slow steady stroke and with each inch she moans. I'm not sure if it's because we haven't had sex in a while or what but she feels a bit tighter than normal. Not that I'm complaining.

Once I am fully inside of her I don't move and instead kiss her. I feel her impatience and know she wants me to move inside her I'm sure if we were in any other position she probably would



have taken charge by now. After a few minutes of her wiggling under me I decide to get her out of her misery. I move in and out of her slowly. When I feel her about to cum I pull out and take a seat on the chair behind me and let her get on top.

She loves being in control I know that but this time it feels different. She takes hold of my dick and just when I think she is about to put it inside her she goes down on her knees and instead puts my dick in her mouth. She sucks my dick and I swear I could feel my soul leave my body. She is definitely good at this.

Just when I think I am about to release she let's go and gets on top of me. She puts my dick

inside her and proceeds to move up and down on top of me. She increases the pace until we both cum. She lays on top of me trying to catch her breath. I felt my shoulder getting wet. I wasn't sure if it sweat or tears. I got my answer though when I heard a snuffle coming from her. I pulled her up.

Me: "What's wrong?"

Sethu: "I'm sorry. We shouldn't have done this."

Me: "Well we did."

Sethu: "I know I'm sorry."

Me: "What are you apologizing for?" She wiped her tears and got up leaving my dick cold. She

picked up her underwear from the floor and put it on.

Sethu: "This. Hurting you. I shouldn't have done this. I came here to tell you about the baby nothing else."

Me: "Sethu....."

Sethu: "Mcebo I love you I really do but I cant be with you."

Me: "What?"

Sethu: "You dont need someone like me in your life let's be realistic about that. You had your perfect life before all this happened and thanks to me and my presence you almost died. Clearly I am the one with a problem in all this." She puts her clothes back and fixes herself up.

Me: "Sethu what are you talking about?"

Sethu: "Everything that has happened was because of me. Melusi almost died because of me you almost died because of me my son came close enough to death because of me. Clearly I'm the one with a problem. You deserve to be happy and I cant give you that." She takes her bag and walks out the same way she walked in.



SETHU

I've decided to get my life back. I still dont know how though but I know the first step is letting both of these men go. I need to fix my life and get everything in order and I cant do that with both men breathing down my neck.

I finally told Mcebo about the baby as happy as he is we will just have to co parent from now on. I drove home after we made love in his office. As crazily beautiful as it was I still had to let him know my decision not that he understood but atleast he knows.

I got home and found Melusi feeding Asi in the kitchen. I stood there and watched him for a while. If there ever was one thing I could never take away from him it would be how great of a father he is. Even before he "died" he was a present father he played his role without missing a beat nappy changes feedings and everything else he made sure he was there for it all.

He finished feeding Asi who seemed rather happy to eat pap and what looks like morogo. Weird considering he hates it when I give it to him. I guess this is a male bonding thing I'm not allowed to be a part of. Asi sees me and screams his little lungs out. I walk over to him and pick him up and tickle him. His giggles fill the room the best soundtrack for any home if you ask me.

Melusi wipes the food Asi's mouth even though most of it has ended up on my shirt. Melusi takes him up to give him a bath. I stay downstairs and make myself some food. I sit in front of the TV and eat my food. Melusi comes down after a while and puts his jacket on preparing to leave.

Me: "Can we talk?" He comes to sit down across from me. I turn the volume down a bit.

Melusi: "What's up?"

Me: "I wanted us to talk about the baby."



Melusi: "Its not mine so it's none of my business."

Me: "I know. But we still need to figure out a way forward for all of us."

Melusi: "Let me guess you and my brother have decided to play happy family so you can bring your child into the world within a proper family structure?"

Me: "No actually. Mcebo and I are not getting back together. And neither are we." That last part seems to have wiped whatever little hope had just welled up inside him.

Melusi: "What's that supposed to mean?"

Me: "I think you and Mcebo are better off playing far away from me. We can all co parent

the best that we could but that's where it ends. I need to fix my life and figure out why everyone around me seems to end up knocking on heavens gate."

Melusi: "Okay. Whatever works for you." He gets up gives me a kiss on the forehead and walks out.

That's was less torturous than I thought it would be. I turn the volume back up and keep on watching. I can feel my heart beating faster than it should. I'm not sure how I expected Melusi to react to this but I'm maybe hopeful for the future. And now the realization hits me. I have no man. I've been with a man since I was twenty years old even after he "died" there was still a man there ready to take his place. But now it's time i figure things out on my own.

My phone rings and Gogo Nkanyezi's name flashes across the screen. I go into a bit of a panic she never calls this late. Something must be wrong and ignoring her wont make the problem go away.

Me: "Thokoza gogo."

Nkanyezi: "Sethu I need to see you tomorrow its urgent."

Me: "What's wrong?"

Nkanyezi: "We need to talk about that baby you are carrying." She hangs up before I can even say anything. Just when I think things are looking up. When will i ever catch a break?

## CHAPTER FORTY TWO

I couldn't sleep Gogo Nkanyezi's call unsettled me. I couldn't help the many crazy thoughts

going off in my head. I kept tossing and turning making up different scenarios in my head of what could possibly be wrong with my baby. I woke up sometime after three and said a prayer. I asked God to spare this child's life whatever happens let it happen to me and not him or her. I don't think Mcebo would survive losing this child not when it's his biggest dream come true.

I got up in the morning and took a shower. I got dressed and in my formal work clothes the plan was to come back to work after seeing Gogo Nkanyezi. I texted Pearl and asked her to send me a copy of my schedule lucky for me it was not full. Just a couple of meetings after lunch hopefully I will be back by then.

I went to check on Asi and found him running around in his room playing with his toys. It's not even seven o'clock yet and he is chirpy as hell. Joy's of being a child I would give an arm and a leg to go back to my childhood years. Adulthood is a well elaborated scam. I picked him up and tickled him a bit and his giggles filled the room. I wish I could bottle this happiness and keep it forever.

I took him down to the kitchen and made him something to eat. Soon as he was done I took him back to his room and gave him a bath. My sweet baby boy is about to be a big brother and he doesn't even know it but I'm pretty sure he will make the best big brother. I hope and pray he is as close to his sibling as his father and his uncle used to be and I pray no one ever comes between them.

Soon as I was done bathing and dressing him I took him to Ncane's room. I said my goodbyes and left them there to bond. I got into my car and drove to gogo Nkanyezi's place. I got there and hit the buzzer the gate swung open and I drove in. I was shocked when I got in and found Mcebo's car parked in the driveway. What I'd he doing here? Or maybe gogo Nkanyezi called him too.

I walked to the door and knocked. One of her helpers opened for me and led me to the hut at the back of the house. The door was opened so I knocked and walked in. I took of my shoes and sure enough Mcebo was sitting there. He

was just as surprised to see me. I greeted and sat down.

Nkanyezi: "Glad you could make it Sethu we will start soon as the others arrive." What others? Who else is coming here?

I sat down quietly and I could feel Mcebo stealing glances at me. I decided to ignore him. We sat for about five minutes not saying anything to each other the only sound in the room was gogo Nkanyezi humming and hitting her beaded cow tail on the ground. We heard a knock on the door and gogo Nkanyezi said come in. I looked up and I almost had a heart attack when I saw Msizi walk in. When did he get out of jail?



He greeted and sat down MaZulu was right behind him. They sat a little further from me. Gogo Nkanyezi said we had to wait a while for the others I swear this others business is starting to irritate me. How many more people are coming here in fact what exactly is happening.

After a while we heard disgruntled voices outside before Cebile and Sbuysile walked in. They greeted and sat down. The irritation on Sbuysile's face was clear she didnt want to be here so how did gogo Nkanyezi even get her to come. Soon after the two sisters came in There was a knock again at this point I had concluded that this is a Mazibuko family get together the

only person missing was Melusi. Speak of the devil he walked in followed by his father. They greeted and sat down. We all looked at each other trying to figure out what's happening before turning to gogo Nkanyezi.

She wouldn't look at us instead her eyes were glued to the door. We kept looking at her and then looking at the door trying to figure out if we can also see what she was seeing but I guess in our curiosity we kind of forgot that she is gifted and we are not. Eventually we heard someone chanting and mumbling some things from outside. Khehla walked in and went to crouch next to gogo Nkanyezi for an old man his knees sure are strong.

Khehla: "OKhondlo oMwelase. Siyabonga ukuza kwenu. (Thank you for coming.)"

Sbuysile: "Sifunani la? (What are we doing here?)" She asked clearly irritated. Khehla looked up and shot her a piercing angry look she literally looked away from him in a nano second and kept her mouth shut.

Khehla: "Njengoba bengisho (as I was saying.) Siyabonga ukuza kwenu (thank you for coming.) Sinbizele lapha ngoba kuneludaba olubalulekile okumele lilungiswe (we called you here because there is something important we need to sort out.)" He turned to look at Sbuysile. "Wena ntombazana kumele ugezwe kususwe legazi egcwele izandla. (We need to cleanse you of the blood on your hands.)" He said pointing his cow tail at her.

We all turned to look at her and I could see she was uncomfortable with all the eyes looking at her.

Sbuysile: "Angazi ukhuluma ngan. (I dont know what you are talking about.)"

Khehla: "Ucabanga ukuthi lamaphupho amabi ohlale ubanawo yiphutha (you think the bad dreams you keep having are a mistake?) Uma singakugezi uzohleze ulandelwa ifu elimnyama (if we dont cleanse you you will always have a dark cloud over you.)" I saw fear and panic flash across her face. She was scared but I couldn't help wondering and trying to figure out whose blood is she supposed to have on her hands.

Nkanyezi: "Ungesabi sisi loku owakwenza yebo bekungunganga kodwa bekufanele kwenzeke (Dont be scared what you did

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even though it wasnt right was supposed to happen."

Cebile: "Thokoza gogo nikhuluma ngan (what are you talking about?)" She asked clearly feeling left out like the rest of us.

Khehla: "Siyeza kuwe khululeka (we are coming to you relax )" She turned her head and played with her fingers in embarrassment. Sbuysile also had her head down but I could tell she was crying.

Melusi: "Kufanele agezwe nini Khehla (when should she be cleansed?"

Khehla: "Tomorrow morning we will take her to the river for the cleansing to happen." Melusi nodded why do I feel like he already knows what is happening here.

He turned to look at me and I felt a shiver run down my spine. Whatever it is they called us here for I hope to God is not something that will be bad. I looked up at his eyes but after a while if trying to be strong and determined to face them head on I cowered and lowered my eyes.

Khehla: "Lengane oythwele izovula iminyango ekade yavalwa (the child you are carrying will open doors that have been closed for a long time.)" I wasn't sure if I should look up or not so I decided to just keep my eyes on the ground. "Abakini MaDlamini banamandla amakhulu akudlalelwa kubona (your ancestors are powerful they don't play around.)"

I dont know why I dont believe that. A part of me feels like sometimes they turn a blind eye to all that's happening then I remember I'm still here. If it were up to MaZwane I would have died a long time ago so maybe I was wrong to doubt God and my ancestors the fact that I am here is proof enough that they are working overtime to keep me safe.

Khehla: "Kumele siyvikele leyongane (we should protect that child) miningi imoya evunguzayo (there are many spirits roaming around.) imimoya emibi enagfuni kukhanye empilweni zenu (spirits that want you all to stay in darkness.)"



He took imphepho from the corner and handed it to gogo Nkanyezi. She put it on the metal bowl in front of her and lit it. She blew the smoke all around the room. She put the bowl back down on the floor and then got her bag of bones. She went around the room letting all of us blow into the bag then she threw the bones on the grass mat in front of her.

Soon as they saw the bones they went into a trance chanting and shaking their heads. They calmed down after what seemed like a lifetime. They said no words. Instead Khehla took a bowl behind him that was filled with water. He walked over to Bab'Mazibuko and put the bowl in front

of him. He took his arm and made a tiny cut as tiny as it was blood still came out. He squeezed the cut until a drop of blood fell into the water. He went to Msizi and did the same thing till all of us had been cut and blood 'drained' from us.

He went back to where he was kneeling took something powdery from his bag and poured two scoops into the water. The water immediately turned white.

Khehla: "Hhay kuyakhanya (it's getting better)" he said with a smile on his face (syabonga kini

OKhondlo oMwelase. Vikelani ingane zenu nivule izindlela ebezivaliwe (watch over your children and open the doors that have been closed.)"

He sat back on the grass mat and lit a candle. The flame from the candle shone so bright and upwards. Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi looked at each other and smiled.

After some time they let us go after making sure we all bath with the white water. Sbuysile was told to stay behind because they had to do a cleansing for her early in the morning. She agreed but not without complaining though. As I was heading to my car I noticed someone following me. I turned and it was gogo

Nkanyezi. I decided to stop and hear what she has to say.

Nkanyezi: "You look good pregnancy suits you." She said after hugging me.

Me: "Well miracles can do that." She smiled.

Nkanyezi: "So how are you feeling? Honestly."

Me: "Honestly I'm scared. I never thought I'd see the day I would have two babies with two different men brothers at that."

Nkanyezi: "I understand your predicament. But you know God and our ancestors always have a bigger plan for us."

Me: "Do those plans have to be so drastic and tear two brothers apart and leave me caught in the middle?"

Nkanyezi: "Dont worry about those two they will fix their issues. They are brothers after all. Wena just focus on carrying that child to term. We need his light on this earth."

Me: "His?" She laughed. I hadn't even thought about the gender but I know I was hoping for a little princess but a prince will do just fine.

Nkanyezi: "Yes he. I'm sure Mcebo is happy?"

Me: "He is."

Nkanyezi: "Good. We will do the best we can to make sure you and the little guy are protected. His birth will also be a rebirth for this family."

Me: "I hope so. We could do with some good energy."

Nkanyezi: "all in due time baby so what's happening with your two husbands?"

Me: "Nothing! I decided to dump both of them and focus on this baby."

Nkanyezi: "Good. Just let things naturally progress with whoever your heart wants. Trust your heart and your gut it wont lead you astray."

She gave me a hug and I got into my car and drove to work. On my way I could see a rainbow in front of me. It felt like I was driving towards it. And for the first time in a long time I could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe this was the break I've been hoping for. Maybe this is God finally coming through and showing me that when he shows up he shows off.

## CHAPTER FORTY THREE

This past year and few months has been a rollercoaster. I didn't even get to celebrate mine or Asi's birthdays. Its been constant bad news one after the other. We were all so caught up in the darkness overshadowing us that we lost touch of the good things happening. Mcebo got to live inspite of his mother's attempt to off him Melusi came back to life Bab'Mazibuko got the help he needed and I'm pregnant basically all seems to be on the right path.

Getting good news about this baby was something I didnt think would happen but lo and behold God and my ancestors have finally decided to come through for me. Business is going well so well in fact that we are planning to



open another branch in Joburg. Yes I said we Melusi decided to come back to work all though I still keep my position as CEO we decided to create another position for him Managing Director.

Professionally we gel well together if I had know we would work so well together I probably should have done this before he 'died' but it's better late than never right. I gave him back his old office and took one of the empty offices on this floor. We share a PA Amanda still works for us she will be graduating in a few months hopefully by then can have a position for her here other than PA. Mcebo well he went back to gallivanting around the world. I sent him a text yesterday reminding him about my doctor's appointment in a couple if days I'm not sure if he will show up. I know we not together

anymore but I still want to make sure he is a part of his son's life.

Ncane is officially back in SA and she even brought her daughter Mia along too. Getting a school for her wasn't easy but we finally got into school and she is doing well. She is a sweet girl and she and Asi get along like a house on fire. It's quite nice to see him with a kid that's older than him. Even though he has cousins/uncles he wasn't that close to them mostly because of everything that happened. When he was a baby they liked taking care of him especially during family gatherings.

I was in my office finishing up some paperwork when Melusi walked in with takeaways. I should

be happy its food but right now I would do anything for a hot plate of chicken intestines with pap and atchar. This baby gives me weird cravings. If it's not Mogodu its chicken intestines or gizzards and sometimes its beans warm spicy home cooked beans with samp on the side. I swear by the time I give birth I will be double my size.

Melusi: "I brought you food." He says placing the takeaways on my desk. I open the packet and there are three takeaways I know I love food but why would this man think I would eat three 'plates' of food all in one go.

Me: "Are you trying to get me fat. I'm already bigger than i should be." He chuckles.

Melusi: "Well i think you are perfect. But I wasnt expecting you to eat all that I wasnt sure what you were craving today so I bought your top three favorites." My heart started beating with excitement. I was feeling all giddy inside as I took out the takeaways. One was pap and Mogodu with chakalaka another was pap and beans and finally chicken intestines and pap. I swear I heard the sound of trumpets and an angelic light shining from the takeaway. "Wow I'm pretty sure you just got turned on by food." I laughed he was right though I did just get a foodgasm.

I ate the intestines while he ate the mogodu. We had our lunch while talking and laughing. I swear letting go of both of these men took a whole lot of weight off my shoulder now I can enjoy my pregnancy without having to cater to anyone but me and my kids.

Me: "Have you found a depot in Joburg we can use?"

Melusi: "Theres a potential one I saw

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it even has a huge warehouse and storage facility so I think it will be perfect. We can fly up to see it if you want."

Me: "No I trust you."

Melusi: "You sure? It could be a shack for all you know."

Me: "Then you'll have to be the one working there so your problem." He laughed.

Truth is I missed this. I missed having crazy conversations with him. Sometimes we would gossip like school girls. Behind closed doors he would be a gossip mongering chick flick watching and zumba dancing man but when he went out to the world he was a tough and ambitious businessman who took no nonsense. It was fun seeing both sides of him but even better was knowing he was only vulnerable with me. But now all that has changed. Sure we

laugh and crack jokes here and there but I can tell he is closed off. Not that I blame him.

We finished lunch and went back to work. I texted Ncane to tell her that Melusi would pick up Asi from daycare since I was going to have dinner with Tshepi we have a lot of catching up to do. I headed to the restaurant and found her already seated. I walked over to her and she got up and gave me a hug before brushing my tummy.

Tshepi: "Hi baby mama."

Me: "Hey babe it's been a while you dont love me anymore." I said sitting down and pouting. She just laughed.

Tshepi: "You know that's not true. Besides you had your men to keep you busy."

Me: "Well actually I am officially single well not officially since I'm not divorced but yeah I'm single."

Tshepi: "So you dumped both men?"

Me: "Yep. I need to get my chakras aligned before I even think of a relationship."



Tshepi: "Okay miss chakra. Hows my baby doing?"

Me: "Which one?"

Tshepi: "That one." She points to my tummy. "I saw Asi earlier I went to daycare took him out and we went out for ice cream and all things nice before I dropped her off at home."

Me: "Oh god we wont sleep tonight." She laughed.

Tshepi: "Glad I could help."

Me: "Why didnt the school call me?"

Tshepi: "You do remember my name is on the pick up list. Plus I told them he had a doctor's appointment."

Me: "Tshepi?"

Tshepi: "What he's three he needs to enjoy life before he grows up."

I took out my phone and texted Melusi and told him Asi was already home. I wonder why Ncane didnt tell me. Or maybe she hasn't seen the text yet. Old people and technology.

We had our dinner we lost track of time and only left when the restaurant was about to close at almost midnight. We paid our bill got into our cars and drove to our separate homes. I must admit even though Zoey and I will probably never be the best of friends she keeps my friend happy therefore I might just be able to tolerate her. I got home took a shower I lit a few candles and prayed before getting into bed.



MELUSI

Ever had a near death experience where you literally see heavens gates and Abraham or angel Gabriel ready to welcome you. Well that's mebeen there done that got the tshirt.

I've decided to use my second chance at life to live and not just to exist. Although getting my family back has been put on hold it's still an ongoing process. Sethu needs time to figure out things on her own and I will be there to help her through everything.

Since I've gone back to work I decided to rent an apartment in town. It's a big enough place with three bedrooms which means Asi gets his own room too. I decided not to go too overboard with the decorations since I'm not planning on staying here forever.

After work I went to Sethu's place to spend some time with Asi. Since tomorrow is a school day all I had to do was play with him a bit helped him bath and put him to sleep. Soon as he was snoring away I left. I went past a nando's drive through and ordered some chicken to eat for dinner. I drove to my complex and found TT parked outside the flat. He got out of the car and followed me inside. I dished up for us and we sat in front of the TV and watched some soccer.

Me: "So have you heard anything from Mcebo?"

TT: "Nope. Last time I spoke to him was a week back and he was in Sweden."

Me: "For his sake I hope he shows up for the doctor's appointment."

TT: "I don't get it. Shouldn't you be happy that he's MIA this could be your chance to play hero to Sethu."

Me: "I dont need to play hero to my wife TT she knows me and that's all I need. But she is pregnant with his child so I expect him to step up and be a father to him."

TT: "You're weird. No sane man would be so calm about his wife having a baby with another man especially his brother."

Me: "What makes you think I'm calm about it? As crazy as this may seem Mcebo did step up when he needed to and I cant pretend that he is my enemy."

TT: "So just like that you will let everything go."

Me: "I'm sorry weren't you the one who told me all that Mcebo did to save Sethu from my family? Why are you surprised?"

TT: "I dont know maybe its because the Melusi I knew would kill anyone who even dared looked



at Sethu sideways. You wouldn't just give up just like that."

Me: "I haven't given up. I will get my wife come hell or high waters. Right now the main priority is making sure she gives birth to a healthy baby. And if Mcebo not being here adds to her stress then I'll kill him. I dont know why he is sulking just because he got dumped. We've all been there."

TT: "Maybe its everything that healer said. Maybe he is afraid to get attached to the baby and then it doesnt make it."

Me: "Maybe. But if the child lives and he missed out on all the doctor's appointments and the sonograms and hearing the baby's heartbeat or movements he wont be able to forgive himself."

TT: "Well I guess we'll have to wait and see if he shows up."

Me: "For his sake he better."

## CHAPTER FORTY FOUR

Hurt people hurt people. I dont even know if that makes sense but that's what society says. My dear brother decided not to show up for the doctor's appointment. I thought maybe he got held up somewhere instead I found out he landed back in the country at least two hours before the appointment and he still didnt show up. Sethu was hurt even though she tried to hide it.

I drive to Mcebo's office after work since he hasn't been picking up anyone's calls. I got to the office and most of his employees were on their way out. I got to his office and his PA was already gone. The door was slightly open so I walked in. He was sitting on his chair looking outside at the sunset.

Me: "Beautiful views." He turned around soon as he heard my voice.

Mcebo: "What are you doing here?"

Me: "You missed the doctor's appointment. Why?"

Mcebo: "I was out of the country."

Me: "Right. So have you checked on your child since you got back?" He chuckled and got up he came around the desk and leaned on his desk with his legs crossed and his hands resting on the desk.

Mcebo: "You can stop putting up an act Melusi this sudden heroism that you have going on may fool everyone else but not me."

Me: "What are you talking about?"

Mcebo: "I am talking about you wanting to play hero with Sethu. You put up this cool calm and collected demeanor but you and I know that is not who you are. So cards on the table why are you back?"

Me: "Is that your way of saying I should have died?"

Mcebo: "It's my way of saying why are you back? You weren't here when your wife and son needed you and now you decide to show up when the dust has settled and MaZwane is dead. Why weren't you here when they needed you?"

Me: "You know exactly why I wasn't here. Why are you so angry? Are you angry I'm alive or are you angry you got dumped? Which one is it?" He stands up and walks closer to me.

Mcebo: "I am angry because you left I am angry because I had to put my life on hold to protect your family I am angry that you think you can waltz back into our lives like your "dying" didn't get this whole mess into motion I am angry that you pretend to be a saint in Sethu's eyes when we both know you are not I am angry that just when we all begin to rebuild our lives you decide to show up and disrupt everything AGAIN!" He shouts. I walk around him and go stand in front of the window.

Me: "If ever there was one person I thought would be happy to see me alive it would have been you." I turn to look at him. "Do you know what it's like to be stuck in the same position for

months on end. With scores all over your body and maggots making it their home and then when you finally get a chance to come back home you find your wife in the hands of another man and not just some random man but your own brother? Do you know what it's like to find out your wife is pregnant with another man's child? Yes I should have been here. Not a single day goes by where I dont regret that even though it wasnt my doing I still regret it even today. I should be angry at you. I should hate you. Heck I should have killed the moment I saw you lock lips with MY WIFE. But for some strange reason I am here trying to get you to be a part of your own childs life. Maybe you are right" I take slow steps towards him till I am standing right in front of him. "Maybe I should stop being so 'calm cool and collected' like you say. Maybe I should be the real me and put a bullet in your head for sleeping with my wife." He chuckles.

Mcebo: "Will you also put a bullet through the child she is carrying?"

Me: "Unlike you I know not to punish a woman and a child for something a grown ass man chose to do."

Mcebo: "She chose to sleep with me she chose to be my wife."

Me: "SHE IS NOT YOUR WIFE! SHE WAS NEVER YOURS TO BEGIN WITH BROTHER! When are you going to get that through your head? Yes you played superman when I wasnt there and I will always be grateful for that. But you catching feelings and sulking when those same feelings are not reciprocated is no reason for you to miss out on your childs life."

Mcebo: "Why should I when you are there to  
Okay daddy dearest? And why would I even



bother when that child wont even see the sun?  
He will die and I refuse to attach myself to  
something I will lose anyway."

Me: "And what happens if the child lives? Do  
you know the kind of stress you are putting  
Sethu through because of your selfishness." He  
laughs.

Mcebo: "Me? Selfish? It must be nice."

Me: "Hate me all you want that's fine but do not  
turn your back on an innocent child. You will  
regret it for the rest of your life." I turn to walk  
away.

Mcebo: "The only thing I regret is your return.  
You should have stayed dead."

I dont know when i turned but my fist made contact with his jaw and sent him stumbling across the room. He came back swinging and we ended up fighting. We fell on the floor punching and slapping each other.

Sethu: "STOP!" I dont know where she came from. But hearing her voice we froze and I looked up at her. I got up. "What are you doing? Since when do you two beat each other up?" I could see her eyes getting glossy. "You are brothers for God's sake why are you even fighting?"

Mcebo: "I'm sorry I missed the doctor's appointment."

Sethu: "Maybe it's a good thing you did. This right here is exactly what I've been trying to avoid. I dont need this right now." She turns and walks out the door.

Me: "If she loses that child because of your stupidity I will kill you myself and bury you on top of your mother." I walked out leaving him there.

I walked down the stairs since the lift was taking to long hoping to catch up to Sethu. Lucky for me I did. I found her leaning on the bonnet of her car with one hand on her abdomen. She looked like she was in pain. I got closer to her and saw tears running down her face.

Me: "Hey

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are you okay? Let me get you to a doctor."

Sethu: "No call gogo Nkanyezi." She said handing me her bag. I took out her phone and searched for gogo Nkanyezi's number. I found it and called.

Nkanyezi: "Sethu?"

Me: "Its not her it's me Melusi. I think something is wrong with the baby. I'm taking her to a hospital."

Nkanyezi: "Dont! Get her in the car and bring her here fast." I hung up and helped her into the car. I drove to gogo Nkanyezi's place like a mad person. Sethu was groaning in pain next to me.

Me: "Hold on we'll be there soon okay." I said rubbing her hand.

We got to gogo Nkanyezi's place and found her waiting for us at the gate. The gate was already

wide open so I just drove in. She closed the gate and rushed over to us. I got out of the car and helped Sethu out. The pain was so severe she couldn't even walk. I picked her up and carried her to gogo Nkanyezi's hut. I laid her down on the grass mat. Her breathing was elevated and she was sweating. I looked down at her legs and said a silent prayer hoping there's no blood because I knew that wouldn't be good. Thank heavens there was no blood. Gogo Nkanyezi came in with a bowl. She placed it next to Sethu.

Nkanyezi: "Take off her top." I did as instructed. Her body was hot. I was scared out of my mind. Sethu cant afford to lose this child. Our family

and its future depended on this child making it out alive.

Gogo Nkanyezi took the bowl and smeared whatever was in it on Sethu's stomach. She told me to help her sit up so she can smear the stuff all around her waist. I did as she said she smeared her then I put her back down. Gogo Nkanyezi then tied a string of white beads around her waist. She seemed to calm down after a while. Her fever was going down.

I sat back and sighed in relief. She fell asleep soon after. Gogo Nkanyezi burnt impepho and moved it around Sethu while chanting the Dlamini and Mazibuko clan names asking the ancestors to protect the child. She then lit a

white candle and placed it above Sethu's head before sitting down.

Nkanyezi: "What caused the pains?"

Me: "I dont know."

Nkanyezi: "Don't lie to me."

Me: "She walked in on Mcebo and I fighting."

Nkanyezi: "I dont even want to know what you were fighting about but just so you know whatever conflict you and your brother have keep it as far away from her as possible."



Me: "He refuses to be in the child's life. It's like he doesn't care."

Nkanyezi: "He is hurt. Let him be. He will come around eventually."

Me: "Works for me. But I don't think it will work for Sethu she wants him in the child's life that's why she keeps reaching out to him."

Nkanyezi: "She can't force him. She will get it eventually. Go home and sleep. Sethu will be fine."

Me: "No I'll stay here with her."

Nkanyezi: "Okay I'll go get blankets."

Me: "Are we even allowed to sleep in an ancestral hut?" She shrugs her shoulders and walks out.



SETHU

I dont which part of my body hurts me my back or my neck. It feels like I was sleeping on an iron bed with nails on it. I moved my head slowly onto one side trying to wake up my muscles but with every pull it felt like my muscles were being pulled through a grater.

My hand immediately went to my stomach. I let out a slow deep breath when I felt the little bump was still there. I opened my eyes and looked around me. Oh well this explains why my back and neck hurt. I slept on the floor in gogo Nkanyezi's hut. How was I even able to sleep? After the pain I was in my biggest fear was losing my baby.

I heard the door open and I looked towards it. The bright light from outside shone into the hut and I closed my eyes. The person walked in and closed the door. I looked up and saw gogo Nkanyezi. She helped me sit up.

Nkanyezi: "I'm glad to see you're up. How did you sleep?" She handed me a bowl with soft porridge.

Me: "Apparently like a baby. I don't remember anything after you smeared that thing on me." She smiled.

Nkanyezi: "Well that thing is the one that helped you rest."

Me: "Thank you. Where's Melusi?"

Nkanyezi: "He went to get you a change of clothes. I don't like this fighting and conflict happening between the three of you. It's not good for you or the baby."

Me: "I know. I thought me removing myself from this triangle would make things better instead it seems to have made it worse."

Nkanyezi: "What happened?"

Me: "I sent Mcebo a message about a doctor's appointment and he didnt show. I thought he'd be happy. He was heartbroken when he found out he couldn't have kids but now there is a child on the way and it's like he's all of a sudden cold."

Nkanyezi: "Or maybe he is hurt?"

Me: "Maybe. But this child didnt hurt him. I get him not wanting to answer my calls or whatever but this is his child. Why cant he understand that."

Nkanyezi: "Give him time. He will come around. Keep sending him information like doctor's appointments and stuff send him the sonograms and all that but dont pester him."

Me: "Yeah."

Nkanyezi: "Stop stressing yourself."

I ate my breakfast before going to the main house to take a shower. Melusi came back with my clothes. I was thinking he would bring back work clothes instead he brought sweats and sneakers. I didnt want to question him about it so I just let it go. We drove back home after gogo Nkanyezi gave me something to drink.

We got home and found Ncane with Asi in the lounge watching cartoons. Asi came running soon as we walked in. I picked him up and played with him a bit. Ncane gave me a hug.

Ncane: "You gave me a fright. How are you?"  
She asked letting go of me.

Me: "I'm okay." Melusi came in while still on the phone.

Melusi: "Sethu we need to go the doctor will see you in an hour." He said and walked out. I dont



remember making a doctor's appointment. I walked out and followed him.

Me: "What do you mean?"

Melusi: "I called the doctor and she said she'll see you in an hour."

Me: "Melusi I'm fine."

Melusi: "I wasn't really asking. We need to make sure the baby is okay." He opened the car and got in. "I'll be back in thirty minutes. Be ready." He started the car and drove off. I went back into the house.

Ncane: "What's going on?"

Me: "He wants to take me to the doctor."

Ncane: "That's good. Go up and take a nap. I'll wake you up when he comes back." I went up the stairs and went to my room. I laid in bed going through my emails. Thirty minutes later Melusi showed up.

I got out of my room and went downstairs. I found him outside strapping Asi onto his car seat.

Me: "He's coming too?"

Melusi: "Yes he's going to see his brother." I decided not to even argue with that. I got into the car and we drove off. We got to the hospital and went to the doctor's office. We greeted and I was led to the bed. She put the gel on my stomach and did her thing. The sound of a heartbeat rung all over the office. I dont think I'll ever get used to it.

I looked over at Melusi and he had Asi on his lap and he was busy showing him the tiny baby explaining to him. I dont think Asi even understands what's happening but he seemed fascinated by the sound of the heartbeat. Maybe this pregnancy wont be so bad after all.

## CHAPTER FORTY FIVE

This baby has mood swings. On some days it's like I'm not even pregnant. I can go the whole day without getting tired or even having to eat. And then on some days I struggle to even get out of bed. But one thing I am grateful for is my baby being okay. I must admit gogo Nkanyezi has been a godsend in my life. I dont know how I would have gotten through everything and still being able to stand. Inspite of everything I am

grateful for the people who've chosen to stand behind me through it all.

I am officially six months pregnant. My baby is growing. Although his father has chosen not to be a part of this pregnancy I have decided to put his absence at the back of my mind and just focus on my baby. Although I still send him any and every information regarding the baby. He hasn't replied to even one message but ke life goes on.

Today is one of those 'cant get out of bed' days. Atleast its Saturday so no work. Ncane brought me breakfast in bed in the morning. I ate and went back to sleep. It's almost lunchtime and I decided to get up and be with people. Sitting in

bed all day will drive me nuts. I got up and went to the bathroom and took a shower. I brushed my teeth before walking out to get dressed. I got a maxi dress out of the closet and put it on. I wore some slippers and headed downstairs.

I found Ncane busy in the kitchen cooking. I stood by the wall and just watched her move around the kitchen. As a kid one thing I've always wished for was to have her as my mum. I dont know how many times I've prayed as a kid asking Him to switch and give me to her. But I guess in a way he already did give me her as my mother she's here taking care of me and my mum is taking care of her real kids. She turned around and smiled when she saw me there.

Ncane: "I didnt hear you come down. Are you Okay." I went over to her and just hugged her. "Sethu what's wrong?" She asked concern evident in her voice.

Me: "I'm okay. I'm just grateful for you and all you've done for me."

Ncane: "You're my baby of course I'll do anything for you."

Me: "Thank you."

Ncane: "You're welcome. Go check on the kids lunch will be ready soon they are out in the pool." I let go of her after giving her kisses all over her face and hearing her giggle just made me happy.

I left her there and soon as I walked out the door I was met with screams and splashing of water. These two you could think they've known each other for a very long time. I sat down on the pool chair and watched them splash around in the water. Mia was teaching Asi how to swim. She's a very sweet girl. I was lost in my own thoughts when I felt a presence behind me. I looked up and Melusi was standing there watching the kids.

Me: "Hey what are you doing here?"

Melusi: "I called earlier and Ncane said you weren't feeling too good so I thought I'd come get the kids and take them to the beach and maybe even go to uShaka Marine for the day."



He said that loud enough for the kids to hear. And soon as they heard that they got out of the pool and came running to us.

Mia: "Can we go? Pretty please?" She said looking at me like I would even say no.

Me: "Yes you can go." She jumped up and down and threw herself at me giving me a hug. Asi joined in even though he probably has no idea what's going on. He just knows they are leaving.

Mia: "Thank you. We'll go get dressed." She took her new besties hand and they went in the house.

Melusi: "So how are you feeling?"

Me: "I'm good. Baby is okay so we good."

Melusi: "I'm glad to hear that. Anyways let me go help those rascals so we can go."

Me: "Thank you. But you know there was no reason to leave whatever you were doing and run here."

Melusi: "I already missed out on a year of my sons life at this point I'll take any excuse to be close to him. And you."

Me: "Thank you. You're an amazing father."

Melusi: "Speaking of fathers Dad is coming home tomorrow Khehla said I can come get him."

Me: "That's great. How is he feeling?"

Melusi: "He's getting better every day. He asked about Asi yesterday. He said he missed him."

Me: "That's amazing. I'm glad he's coming back to his true self."

Melusi: "Yeah it took a while but we are here now. Anyways Cebile was thinking of having a mini welcome home lunch tomorrow you can come too if you want."

Me: "I'd love that."

Melusi: "Cool. Let me go get those two so we can go. See you later." He got up and walked towards the house.

Me: "Cut down on the sugar." I shouted. I heard him laugh and I knew tonight we wont sleep. These two will be on a sugar rush. Oh well as long as they have fun.

I laid back on the chair and just basked in the sun. Vitamin D is very important well this version is important. I closed my eyes and just let the sun do its thing. I was about to doze off when I remembered I still have to eat. I opened my eyes and it felt like I had already dozed off. The sky was dark everything was dark. I looked at the house and the lights were off. Perhaps its loadshedding. I tried to get up from the chair so I can go inside but my legs felt so heavy. It was like they had cement blocks attached to them and I had to drag them.

After a while of struggling to put my feet down on the ground I finally managed to put them down. I got up but trying to even take a step seemed like a struggle. I looked up and somewhere in the distance I could see what looked like a cars rear lights. They seemed to be coming closer and closer. But what I couldn't understand is why the lights were coming in reverse plus there is no road or even a veld in my backyard so how is this even possible.

I felt my heart start racing. I wanted to scream but it felt like there was something stuck in my throat plus there is no road or even a veld in my backyard so how is this even possible.

I felt my heart start racing. I wanted to scream but it felt like there was something stuck in my throat I couldn't breath I couldn't even move. I fell down on the ground I touched the ground and felt something liquidy under my hands. I tried to look at my hand but because of the darkness I couldn't see anything. The sky started flashing with lightning and thanks to that glimmer of light I could see that the liquid i was sitting on was blood. The red lights got closer and closer till I realized they weren't car lights but snake eyes headed straight at me.

I tried to scream again but the thing that was stuck in my throat wasnt giving me a break. I held on to the beads on my hand and started moving them around. Since I couldn't scream I kept moving the beads around and saying a prayer from deep within. With each passing

second i could hear the lump on my throat getting smaller and smaller. The snake before me that was ready to strike retreated slowly. Once the lump in my throat was gone I started screaming.

I woke up to see Ncane's worried face sitting next to me. My eyes moved around and the light was back. The sky was blue again like it wasnt midnight black just a second ago. I sat up and Ncane pulled me in for a hug.

Ncane: "It was just a bad dream baby. You're okay." I let her engulf me in her warmth and I just tried to calm my breathing and calm myself down. She pulled back after a while.

Me: "What happened?" I asked looking at my hand. Even though the blood was no longer there I could still see it in my head.

Ncane: "You had a bad dream. I came out to give you food and you were mumbling something and playing with your beads. I tried to wake you up but it was like you were in a trance or something. What were you dreaming about?"

Me: "I don't know. But it wasn't good."

Ncane: "I can tell."

Me: "Can I have the food?"

Ncane: "Sure." She took the plate of food and handed it over to me. I took a spoon and made



a silent note to call gogo Nkanyezi and tell her about this 'dream' or whatever this was.



## MCEBO

Theres something magical and beautiful about a child being conceived and being born. The fact that in this day and age we can hear a child's heartbeat from inside its mother's womb is still in my opinion the eighth wonder of the world.

I've been sitting in my office for the past hour watching and rewatching this video that Sethu sent me of my son. Yeah MY Son. Crazy how just a few months ago I wouldn't have even dreamed it possible for me to even have a son. But here we are. I'm scared though. As much as gogo Nkanyezi said this baby is a 'miracle' or whatever I'm scared to even get myself attached to it because what if it doesn't make it. What if he dies?

Zoey: "Beautiful." She said behind me. I don't even know when she walked in. I quickly closed the laptop and looked at her.

Me: "Doors are there for a reason Zoey. You knock and wait for a response before barging in."

Zoey: "I did actually. You clearly were so occupied in your own baby world." She said walking around the desk and sitting down across from me. "Why are you torturing yourself?"

Me: "What?"

Zoey: "Why are you torturing yourself? For as long as I have known you nothing brought you as much joy as being around kids. It's like your entire being lights up around them. And now you are about to have one of your own and you can't even bring yourself to be a part of its life."

Me: "It doesn't have a life yet. It's just a clot of blood."

Zoey: "So you were listening to the heartbeat of a blood clot? Mcebo I dont like Sethu for whatever reason but she's doing all she can to make you a part of your childs life. Why are you denying yourself that opportunity?"

Me: "She wanted space and I'm giving it to her."

Zoey: "Right. If you actually believe that then maybe you arent the smart man I thought you were. I dont know if Sethu will go back to your brother and quite frankly i dont care for her Hoeish ways but you are literally missing out on important milestones of your childs life for what? Because she hurt you? Are you seriously going to allow your pain to cloud your judgment? At your childs expense?"

My phone beeped and it was a message from Cebile apparently dad is coming home tomorrow and I need to be there for his welcome home lunch. I dont think I want to be there though.

Me: "My dads coming home and I've been invited to a small lunch at home. Wanna come?"

Zoey: "So you need a shield against your 'wife'?"

Me: "Do you want to come or not?"

Zoey: "I'll come." She got up to leave. "I get that you are hurt with good reason. But dont miss out on experiencing the best thing that's ever

happened to you. Every moment you spend not being there for your son is just allowing your brother to play hero to your son. Sethu can do whatever the fuck she wants sleep with whoever but your son needs his daddy. Not his uncle." She turned and walked out the door.

I swung the chair and looked out the window. Maybe she is right. I mean if there is one thing I've always been able to do and do well it was and always has been taking risks so why am I not taking a risk on my son? Why am i not seeing the pro's of this little life? What the fuck is wrong with me? My son isn't even in this world yet and I've already turned my back on him. What kind of father does that make me?

## CHAPTER FORTY SIX

Family dinners or lunches have always been awkward to me. For starters I never know how to act or what to do. MaZulu as the older bride in this family took it upon herself to play the dutiful Makoti. So much so she even hated the idea of anyone being in the kitchen while she was busy. So I chose to stay away from it completely. But lucky for me my husband didnt mind hiring a catering company to take care of



things especially when there were big family gatherings.

I decided to play my part this time around and make a few salads and bring them with me. I also made a chicken stew just so I dont seem some type of way. I finished with the stew and dished it up in a big serving bowl. I put the salads in Tupperware containers then went up to take a shower.

I got to my room and picked an outfit before going to the bathroom to take a shower. Soon as I was done I put on the black skirt and top i had picked out. It looked great except for the bump that was getting bigger. I decided to

change and put on a maxi dress that would cover up the bump.

I finished getting dressed and took the candles gogo Nkanyezi brought me last night and lit them. After that weird dream or vision I had I called and told her all about it. She brought me seven candles and some white powder. I lit all seven candles and got down on my knees and prayed. When I was done I took the white powder and mixed it with some oil and formed a paste. I took the paste and smudged it on my wrists the back of my knees and the top of my head.

Soon as I was done I put out all the candles and got up. I grabbed my bag and walked out

the bedroom. I got downstairs and Ncane and the kids were ready to go. I wasn't sure about bringing the kids especially Asi but I figured if there was any danger gogo Nkanyezi would have told me. We got into the car and drove to KwaMashu.

When we got there I saw Sbuysile's car parked outside. I parked behind her and the kids jumped out and went to play with Msizi's kids. Ncane helped me carry the food into the house. We found Cebile and Sbuysile sitting in the kitchen watching MaZulu cook. We greeted and placed the food on the counter.

Cebile: "What do you have there?"

Me: "Just stew and some salads."

Cebile: "Good I'm hungry and the food is taking too long." She got up and took a plate from the cupboard and dished up for herself. I turned around to try and take a seat when I caught Sbuysile looking at my stomach. Although my bump wasn't barely visible she knew it was there. Almost like she was in a trance she put her hand out to touch me but instinct told me to take a step back. I did and that movement seemed to bring her back to reality.

Sbuysile: "I'm sorry I shouldn't have done that." I'm not sure what was more surprising her saying sorry or her being so emotional. She got up and left the room. We all looked at each other surprised at her reaction. I decided to go check up on her. I found her in her mother's room sitting on the chair next to the bed looking

at the made up bed like it would say something to her.

Me: "Are you okay?"

Sbuysile: "I'll be okay. I'm sorry about that I shouldn't have done that."

Me: "Its okay."

Sbuysile: "Do you think she's in hell?"

Me: "Who?"

Sbuysile: "The woman who gave birth to me. Do you think she is in hell. I think she is. I mean

that's where all evil hearted people go right?" I leaned on the vanity and looked at her.

Me: "That's what the bible tells us but you never know."

Sbuysile: "I'm pretty sure she is and I'll probably join her there one day."

Me: "Why would you join her?"

Sbuysile: "For killing her I'm pretty sure you know that." Well I did have an idea.

Me: "I'm pretty sure there is a special VIP section in heaven for people who rid the earth of evil witches." She laughed.

Sbuysile: "Well i hope by the time i get there it's not full."

Me: "it wont be. Let me go help out in the kitchen." I walked to the door.

Sbuysile: "Sethu!" I turned to look at her. "I'm sorry for everything that I ever did to you. I'm sorry."

Me: "Its in the past. Let's leave it there." She smiled and turned back to look at the empty bed.

I left her there and went back to the kitchen. MaZulu and Cebile were setting the table up. I helped them set the table and get the food ready since Melusi called and said they were five minutes away. We all gathered in the lounge and waited for them.

Five minutes later Melusi walked in with his father in his arms. Bab'Mazibuko seemed like a whole new person his skin was glowing and his smile matched the look in his eyes. He seems happier. To think all this time the real him was hidden somewhere deep inside him under a pile of MaZwane's evil.

They came in and Cebile and Sbuysile threw themselves at him and just cried. They sat down at the table. Bab'Mazibuko kept looking around the room like this was all new to him. We dished up and held hands. Even though this family was short by one person

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well two since even Msizi was no where to be found either.

We finished praying and just as we were about to dish up Mcebo walked in with Zoey in his arm. They sat down and we ate in silence. We finished eating and I went to the kitchen to wash the dishes. I was busy washing the dishes when I felt someone behind me.

Mcebo: "Hi."

Me: "Hi."

Mcebo: "How are you?"

Me: "Good."

Mcebo: "Hows the baby?"

Me: "He's good."

Mcebo: "Sethu." I turned around to look at him.

Me: "Yes."

Mcebo: "I'm sorry."

Me: "For what?"

Mcebo: "For everything. Ignoring you and missing doctor's appointments."

Me: "Its fine. What's done is done."

Mcebo: "Sethu I know you are angry with good reason I just had a lot going on."

Me: "I'm not angry Mcebo it's not like this baby was planned anyway so I dont expect you to come running just because I called. You have your life to live."

Mcebo: "When is your next appointment?"

Me: "In two weeks. I'll send you the details."

I walked out and went to check on the kids who were playing outside. I sat on a bench with my back against the wall and just watched them laugh and run around carefree. How I wish I could go back to being a kid again with no problems or obligation.

Zoey: "You know your life is like a made for TV script. Pregnant with your brother in laws child while hubby plays hero to his nephew." I took a deep breath and tried to ignore her. I wasn't ready for any of her drama. "You have to sell the rights to your life you'd make millions."

Me: "Can you please leave me alone."

Zoey: "You do know at some point you and I will have to get along. We have two important people in both our lives who will always tie us together."

I was about to answer her when we heard some commotion happening inside. I got up and followed her as she went in. We got inside the house and found Msizi sitting flat on the floor with his siblings and his wife looking at him like he is some crazy being. Well I cant blame them. He looked like he had been in a fight. His clothes were dirty and he only had one shoe on.

Melusi: "Bhuti what happened."

Msizi: " I dont know."

Cebile: "What do you mean you dont know what happened to you? Why are you like this?"

Msizi: "I need..... I..... I need water." He said. Sbuysile ran to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water and handed I to him. He gulped down the water like he hadn't had any in weeks.

Me: "Maybe he should take a bath first. He clearly cant speak right now." Melusi and Mcebo helped him up and took him to the bathroom with MaZulu behind them. They came

back and sat on the couch while we were all worried about Msizi.

Cebile: "What do you think happened to him?"

Sbuysile: "Maybe his mother came back for him he was her favourite afterall." She said while scrolling through her phone. I know they say there's a thin line between love and hate but I've never seen anyone switch from loving their parent to literally despising them. Sbuysile really hates her mother even in death. I know her hatred is justified and I'm pretty sure if she could raise her from the dead and kill her again she would.

Cebile: "You do know she was your mother too right?"

Sbuysile: "Unfortunately for me."

A few minutes later Msizi emerged from the bedroom cleaner and he seemed more calmer. He sat down and looked down while playing with his hands.

Melusi: "Bafo what's going on? What happened?"

Msizi: "I was woken up early this morning by Ndaba he said he was helping dig a grave for some family when he noticed mum's grave was open. I went with him to check it out and sure enough the grave was half open. It was like whoever was digging dug it up got what they



wanted and then filled it up but they were disturbed by something or someone."

Mcebo: "What do you think they were looking for inside her grave?"

Msizi: "I don't know. All I do know is that the grave is empty."

Melusi: "Empty as in....."

Msizi: "As in empty. There is nothing there. I decided to dig up the grave to see what could have happened and to see what they took and I found nothing. Her body her coffin it's all gone."

There was silence all around the room. No one knew what to say. I've never in my life ever heard of a dead body disappearing from a grave before. I've heard people talk about graves being dug up for the deceased's body parts but never a whole entire body disappearing. Maybe Sbuysile was right maybe MaZwane isn't in hell where she is supposed to be. God help us all.

FORTY SEVEN

Have you ever been punched in the stomach so hard you can actually feel the air leave your lungs? That's how I'm feeling right now. Msizi telling us that MaZwane's corpse is not in her grave left everyone numb with shock. We sat there in silence for a good ten minutes trying to digest everything. What could have possibly happened to her and who would be brave enough to dig up a dead body and even take the coffin while at that?

Melusi and Mcebo took Msizi back to the gravesite I guess to figure out what happened and maybe find some clues on what could have happened. We sat in the lounge waiting for them to come back. The kids fell asleep and I couldn't let them out of my site so they are sleeping on the couch next to me and Ncane.

I texted gogo Nkanyezi and told her what happened and she said she's on her way. Hopefully she can have answers for us cause Lord knows we need them. I heard a knock on the door and Cebile went to open. She came back with gogo Nkanyezi and Khehla following behind her. They greeted and sat down.

Khehla: "Nithi kwenzakalani (what's happening?" He asked while burping and groaning. He might be great at what he does but I dont think I'll ever be able to look at him with as much respect as I used to have before. When he was helping gogo Nkanyezi with doing the rituals needed to be done for this family I had respect for him as an elder and someone

who would guide us through this whole journey. But when I found out he knew about Melusi being alive and choosing not to say anything to anyone of us made me lose whatever respect I had for him. Sure he didnt owe us shit but he could have tried to give us clues heck none of this mess I'm in right now would have happened had he opened his mouth and said something.

Cebile: "Bathi isdumbu sika Ma asikho ethuneni lakhe (they say mums corpse is not in her grave.)" He started moving his shoulders in a circular motion while groaning. He had his eyes closed and facing up to the ceiling. Gogo Nkanyezi was sitting quietly next to him with her eyes closed and facing the ground.

We watched them sit like that and doing whatever it is that they were doing. After a while gogo Nkanyezi started groaning and then let out a screeching loud scream waking the kids up before she collapsed on the floor. It was like she was having an epilepsy attack. MaZulu took the kids to another room we tried to go to gogo Nkanyezi and help her but Khehla wouldn't let us.

He put up his hand up telling us to stop. We sat back down on the opposite couch while gogo Nkanyezi was shaking on the floor. I've never been so afraid in my entire life. After a while she stopped. Khehla helped her up and she sat back on the couch. She kept holding the beaded necklace around her neck.

Nkanyezi: "Kubi! Kubi! (Its bad it's bad.)" She kept repeating that word over and over again. That alone made me fear that something bad was going to happen for real. I knew the moment Msizi opened his mouth and said MaZwane was not in her grave that we are in for another battle.

Mcebo Msizi and Melusi came back some time before midnight. They were surprised to find Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi sitting in the house. Soon as they walked in these two started groaning and burping again. The guys grabbed some chairs from the dining table and sat down. We all looked at Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi waiting for them to tell us what's happening.

Khehla: "Ubumnyama buseduze (darkness is near). Lelkhaya lidinga ukugezwa (this home needs to be cleansed.) umnikazi walomuzi uyalwa akafuni ukuhamba futhi nendlela ahambe ngayo akuyona enhle. (The owner of this house is fighting she wont leave and the way she died wasn't a good one.)" When has death ever been good well technically speaking this ones death was a good one.

Nkanyezi: "Ufuna ukubuya

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well technically speaking this ones death was a good one.

Nkanyezi: "Ufuna ukubuya umphefumulo wakhe uyazulazula (she wants to come back her soul is wandering.)"

Khehla: "Theres someone orchestrating this whole thing. That someone wants to use that baby to bring her back. If that baby doesnt make it out alive then we'll have a huge problem on our hands."

Ncane: "I'm sorry arent you supposed to be powerful and strong. Why do all these things have to happen while you are here? Send that witch back to hell where she belongs." She uttered the words looking straight at Khehla's eyes.

Khehla: "Asucale ukhulume iciniso kucala ngaphambi kokuthi ukhulume izinto ongazazi. (You need to start by telling the truth before speaking on things you know nothing about.)" He said anger burning all over his face. Ncane just clicked her tongue and sat back on the couch with her arms crossed. I wonder what truth Khehla was talking about.

Melusi: "Khehla yini okumele siyenze ukuze sivikele lengane? (What do we have to do to protect the child?)"

Msizi: "Akumeli ngabe yinto ebuzwa ubaba wengane leyo (isnt the childs father supposed to be asking that?)"

Melusi: "Do you see him opening his mouth?"

Mcebo: "Stop speaking as if I'm not here."

Me: "Khehla what do I need to do to protect my son?" I decided to ignore the commentary happening behind me.

Khehla: "For starters this bickering needs to end. You all need to work together to make sure this child makes it out alive."

Melusi: "We will try."

Khehla: "This isnt the time to try. It's time for you to do. Uma kungenjalo kuzovalwa

ngehlahla laykhaya (if you dont you will all die.)"  
He said before getting up and leaving with gogo  
Nkanyezi.

I got up and went to get the kids. I got them into  
the car and we drove back home. No matter  
how late it might be i refuse to sleep in that  
house. What if that woman shows up in the  
middle of the night and eats my baby. You  
never know with witches.

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The next morning I got up with morning sickness having it's way with me. I dont know why all of a sudden it shows up when it's been quiet for almost a month now. I sat on the floor with my head hanging over the toilet puking. I sat there for about ten minutes before my stomach relaxed. I got into the shower and let the water rush over me.

I quickly got out again and puked. I dont know why my stomach feels funny today its gonna be a long day. I finished off the shower and got dressed. I went downstairs and made some breakfast. Since I couldn't stomach anything at the moment I decided on black tea and toast. I sat down to eat. I heard a knock on the door before it opened and footsteps came up behind me. I didnt even bother turning around cause I knew by the scent of his cologne who it was.

Me: "Good morning."

Mcebo: "Hi I was hoping we could talk." He came around and sat across from me.

Me: "Talk."

Mcebo: "I'm sorry."

Me: "For what?" I asked not moving my eyes from the phone in front of me.

Mcebo: "For not being here. I know things haven't been easy and I should have been here for you and our son."

Me: "It's fine. I know you've been busy."

Mcebo: "Sethu?" I looked up at him and I couldn't read his face.

Me: "Mcebo it's fine. I get that everything that has happened has been hard on everyone I just thought you'd want to be there for your son."

Mcebo: "I know. And I allowed my pain to cloud my judgment and for that I'm sorry."

Ncane walked in with the kids screaming and shouting before I could even say anything.

Ncane: "Mcebo hi."

Mcebo: "Ncane how are you?"

Ncane: "So so. I'll take the kids upstairs." She took the kids and headed upstairs.



Mcebo: "I have to get going. I'll see you around." He came over to me and kissed me on my forehead before walking out.

I finished eating and went upstairs. I could feel my stomach acting up again but this time it felt like I was having cramps. I crouched in front of the toilet and puked for a while. I guess there goes breakfast. I sat up on the toilet when I felt like peeing. I wiped myself and when I looked at the toilet paper there were spots of blood. I got up and looked inside the toilet bowl and the blood was visible even among the vomit.

I flushed the toilet and tried not to panic. I went back to the bedroom and called gogo Nkanyezi. Lucky for me she picked up.

Nkanyezi: "Sethu I'll call you back I'm in the middle of a meeting."

Me: "I'm bleeding." I heard her take a deep breath on the other side. The tears streaming down my face just made me fear even more.

Nkanyezi: "Drink the mixture that I gave you and get into bed. I'm coming." She hung up. I opened the closet and took out the mixture and took a sip. I got back into bed and just tried to calm myself down.

I said a little prayer before shouting for Ncane. She came into the room and came to sit next to me. I laid on her lap and just let the tears flow. I hope to God this baby doesnt die on me not now not like this. Dear God I cant lose him.

FORTY EIGHT

I'm scared no I'm freaking out. I'm not sure what is happening. Although the cramps have stopped I can still feel some blood making it's way out of my body. I even put on a pad. As much as I want to cry and scream I also need to keep myself calm cause I cant afford to lose this battle.

Ncane has been by my side the whole time. She even read me a bible verse. And she told me to be strong because God gives his strongest battles to his strongest soldiers. If that is true then I resign. It seems like I've been facing one battle after another over and over again and I'm tired. I just need a break. I need to just breath and for once enjoy my life.

Gogo Nkanyezi showed up after about an hour since I called her. Ncane went down to open for her and then came back with her. She came into the room wearing her traditional healer robes. She greeted me and checked my temperature with her hand. She then took out imphepho from her bag and a little plate. She put it into the plate and lit it. I dont know why but the smell of it filling the room calmed me down a bit. Theres just something about it.

She walked around the room with the plate making sure the smell got into every corner of the room. Once she was done with the bedroom she walked out and did the same thing throughout every room. She came back after a while and put the plate down on the floor. She then took out a razor from her bag and a container with some white powder and another with a black substance.

She pulled the duvet away from me and there were spots of blood on the bed. The pad had helped minimize the blood seeping into the bed. She pulled me down so I laid flat on my back. She lifted my top up. She took the razor and cut me all around my stomach. With each cut she would put the white powder in the cut and then cover it up with the black substance.

When she was done she did the same thing on my forehead at the beginning of my hairline. Soon as she was done I could feel myself getting sleepy. I'm not sure what she gave me but all I knew was that the blood wasn't coming out as much and my heart had stopped racing so maybe there is hope afterall. I felt my eyes

get heavier and heavier with every passing second. Before I knew it it was lights out.

MELUSI

I've been sitting in the lounge waiting for gogo Nkanyezi to finish up whatever she is doing upstairs. I rushed over when she called me and told me to come by cause something wasn't right with Sethu. I tried calling Mcebo but his phone was off and when I called his office his PA told me he was out of the country. Sometimes I wonder how his mind works.

I got up when I saw gogo Nkanyezi walking down the stairs and went to her.

Me: "How is she? Is she okay? How's the baby?"



Nkanyezi: "Okay one question at a time." She walked past me and went to sit on the couch while I followed behind like a lost puppy.

Me: "I'm sorry I'm just worried about her."

Nkanyezi: "I know. Where's your brother?"

Me: "I dont know. His PA said he is out of the country."

Nkanyezi: "I also tried to call him but his phone is off."

Me: "I'm sure he is busy. So how is she?"

Nkanyezi: "She'll be Okay she's sleeping right now. It's going to be a long three months."

Me: "But they will be fine right?"

Nkanyezi: "We will do the best that we can. But its one thing to fight spirits from the spiritual world cause our ancestors are always there helping us but now that MaZwane's corpse is missing means someone in the physical world is also trying their best to get to this baby."

Me: "We need to find the person who has her corpse. I asked TT to help me track down that guy she used to work with...."

Nkanyezi: "Madlala?"

Me: "Yeah him. He hasn't come back to me."

Nkanyezi: "That should help. I've also spoken to Khehla and he's also trying to find him."

Me: "When will she ever catch a break?"

Nkanyezi: "What?"

Me: "Sethu when will she ever catch a break?  
It's like all the bad things have to happen to her.  
I wish I could carry some of her pain for her."

Nkanyezi: "She's stronger than you think."

Me: "Even the strongest of people need  
someone to lean on."

I got up and went to the kitchen Ncane was standing by the sink not moving. At first I thought she was washing dishes but the sniffing that came from her made me realize she wasn't. I came closer to her and touched

her back. She jumped and moved away. She wiped the tears that were falling down her face.

Me: "I'm sorry I didnt mean to scare you how are you."

Ncane: "I'll live. I just wish I knew what I could do to help her."

Me: "You and me both."

Nkanyezi: "You could just tell her the truth for a start." She shouted from the lounge. I thought this house was big enough for people to have conversations in one room without another person hearing them I guess I was wrong. I looked at Ncane and she had a scared look on

her face like her mind was calculating and trying to digest some things.

Me: "What is she on about?" I asked her.

Ncane: "Its complicated. Let me go check on the kids." She said and ran off upstairs.

This is the second time someone has said something about her telling the truth what could the truth be and why is she hiding it from Sethu?

I went upstairs to check on Sethu and I found the bed empty. I was five to panicking when the bathroom door opened and she came out. She

was walking slowly like she was in pain. I went over to her and helped her get into the bed. I got in and sat next to her and let her rest her head on my chest.

Me: "How are you feeling?"

Sethu: "Well the bleeding has stopped so maybe there is light afterall."

Me: "Are you sure we dont need to take you to the doctor just to make sure." She chuckles.

Sethu: "I'm fine. I'm just tired of having to be strong."

Me: "I know and once all this is done I am taking you to Bali." She laughs. It's good to hear her laugh.

Sethu: "Isn't that supposed to happen on our tenth anniversary when they hype has died down."

Me: "Well if there's one thing I've learnt recently life is too short and you can't confirm the future. We might make plans and then die before we can even realize them so it's best to live in the moment."

Sethu: "True. We'll have to wait until I get my body back before we go."

Me: "Well your body is perfect."

Sethu: "I'll pretend like I believe you....." we were disturbed by a knock on the door before Ncane walked in.

Ncane: "Hey

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and you can't confirm the future. We might make plans and then die before we can even realize them so it's best to live in the moment."



Sethu: "True. We'll have to wait until I get my body back before we go."

Me: "Well your body is perfect."

Sethu: "I'll pretend like I believe you....." we were disturbed by a knock on the door before Ncane walked in.

Ncane: "Hey you're up." She said coming closer to the bed. I helped Sethu sit up before I got off the bed and let Ncane sit next to her. She gave her a hug and I could see a tear make it's way down her face before she wiped it. I was about to leave when she stopped me. "Dont go. I need to tell you guys something." I went back and sat on the foot of the bed. She let Sethu go.

Sethu: "What's wrong?"

Ncane: "Nothing is wrong nana I just have something to tell you."

Sethu: "Okay what is it?"

Ncane: "Promise you won't hate me." She said looking at Sethu. Sethu chuckled and held Ncane's hands.

Sethu: "I couldn't hate you even if I tried."

Ncane: "I..... you ought change your mind after i tell you this."

Sethu: "Okay now you are scaring me what's going on?"

Ncane: "Your mother..... my sister..... she's not your mother." Sethu laughed I couldn't bring myself to even smile cause I saw the serious look on Ncane's face.

Sethu: "You've never been good with jokes Ncane."

Ncane: "Its not a joke Sethu. She's not your mother I am."



SETHU

I'm pretty sure my lungs just deflated I didn't think about this ever being a possibility even in my darkest moments when I asked myself why my mother couldn't love me like her other kids the possibility that she might not be my mother never crossed my mind.

I looked at Ncane sitting before me and I want to be mad I want to be angry at her but I also need to understand why I was pawned off to her sister and made to feel like an unwanted burden.

Me: "I'm sorry I dont understand."

Ncane: "I know this is probably not the time to tell you this but it's the truth. I fell pregnant when I was in boarding school I had to hide the pregnancy since I was there on a scholarship. If they had found out I was pregnant then I would have lost the scholarship."

Me: "And how did I end up being your sister's child?"

Ncane: "Well our parents convinced her to say you were hers when I gave birth i had to register her name as your mother."

Me: "And she agreed to this?"

Ncane: "Your grandmother could be convincing when she needed to be."

Me: "So in order to protect your scholarship you gave me to a woman who clearly didnt want me? That's nice."

Ncane: "I'm sorry nana I really am."

Me: "I'm tired I need to sleep."

Ncane: "Baby....."

Me: "Please!" I turned away from her and slept on my side.

I heard the bed move as she and Melusi got off. I heard the door open and then I remembered one last thing I needed to ask.

Me: "Wait." I said as I sat up again. She turned to look at me. "If my mother is not my mother that means my father is also not my father. So who is my father?"

Ncane: "His name is Brian Brian Mashabane."



I nodded my head and got back under the covers. The name kept ringing in my head. I knew it from somewhere I just wasn't sure where. I dozed off while still trying to put a face to the name but I just couldn't. Either way I need to find this person. Who knows maybe for once I will be part of a family that actually wants me or I could just be an unwanted illegitimate bastard. Life neh!

FORTY NINE

They say telling the truth lifts a burden off one's shoulder. But for me it looks like it just added another one. I know Sethu deserved to know the truth but now my biggest fear and probably hers too is being rejected by her father. My baby has faced enough rejection and hurt to last her a lifetime. No one deserves the amount of pain that she has gone through.

I woke up early in the morning and booked a flight to Joburg. I needed to speak to Brian and tell him about Sethu. I'm pretty sure he is married with kids by now and as much as I don't want to cause havoc in his relationship or marriage but Sethu deserves to know where she comes from. The truth has been hidden from her for way too long and I can't help thinking all that she's going through right now

may also be because she doesn't know where she really comes from.

I got on the flight and it took off. I was nervous but I was determined to do this for my babygirl I was willing to humiliate myself if i have to but the truth needs to be told. The flight got to Joburg some time before 9 AM. I requested an uber from the airport and went straight to the Constitutional Court in Braamfontein. I got there and the hallways were already buzzing with people.

I asked a security guard to show me the offices of Judge Brian Mashabane he accompanied me to them but assured me chances of seeing him are slim to none but I had to try anyway. I

walked in and found his PA busy with whatever.  
I greeted her.

Me: "I'm sorry to disturb you I'm here to see  
Judge Mashabane."

PA: "Do you have an appointment?"

Me: "No but its important I really need to talk to  
him."

PA: "Ma'am if you dont have an appointment  
you might as well go home. Judge Mashabane  
is a busy man."

Me: "I'll wait for him."

PA: "Well good luck with that." She said looking back at her work. I went to the visitors chairs and sat down.

I kept tapping my foot on the ground and looking at the time. I needed to see him and patience wasn't a virtue I possessed. I looked at the time and it has only been forty five minutes since I sat down here but it feels like a long ass time.

The door opened and he walked in. The last time I saw him was after he completed his matric exams a long time ago he was the most popular kid in school his father was a wealthy Venda Chief so all the girls would literally throw themselves at him. Even though I had a crush

on him I made sure to stay as far away from him as possible. I mean why would a girl from a village in the Bundus with no money think she has a shot with a guy like that? I decided to love him from far and save myself the heartbreak.

Brian was a two classes ahead of me but he was smart. He loved debating which would explain him ending up here. And which would also explain why I ended up joining the debate team even though public speaking wasn't one of my strong suits. Although I would have pictured him more as a defense attorney or even a pro bono lawyer for the poor I guess being a constitutional Court Judge meant he was in some way helping the poor.

Things changed one day when our team had to represent the whole KZN region in the national debating competition. Although our school was the reigning champions already Brian being the captain pushed us every day at practice to make sure we win. There were about twelve of us in the team but only five debators would be doing the actual debating on the day. I didnt think I would make the top five but I was surprised when Brian called out my name and said I would be part of the top five. To this day I'm still not sure what made me more happy being in the top five or my name rolling out of his mouth. I didnt even know he knew my name since everyone called me Darkie because of my dark skin.

We were driven to Joburg and booked into a Guesthouse two days before the actual competition. The top five had to practice the

day before the competition and that meant spending time with Brian. I swear every time he said or did anything the butterflies in my stomach would dance around like they were high on Marijuana.

We won the debate. But what was even more impressive for me was coming in as second best National speaker after Brian of course. I felt like I was on top of the world when he hugged me. I was a love struck teen who thought we would fall in love and live happily ever after. Boy was I wrong. Brian was a player who knew all the girls wanted him. And he played right into their hands. Including mine. It felt like he had some sixth sense when it came to girls and he knew how to use it.



He asked me to be his date for the matric dance and I've struck me agreed. After the dance we went to an afterparty and that's where I lost my virginity. But I didn't care the naive girl in me believed that since I gave myself to him he was now my boyfriend. In my head I already had the names of all our children down to the name of the dog we would have Binky a pure white fluffy golden retriever.

My world came crashing down the next day when I saw him kissing another girl. I was hurt but I was too afraid to even confront him about it. I just went away with my tail between my legs. I never spoke to him again. And when I found out I was pregnant I had to hide it for a while till I got home. I told my mum and she cooked up a plan and convinced my sister to fake a pregnancy that way no one would

question a newborn in the house plus my sister was already in college.

I went back to school and had to hide the pregnancy lucky for me my tummy didnt grow that much people just thought I ate a lot and I was gaining weight so they didnt question my weight gain that much. I faked being sick a couple of weeks before my due date. I was sent home and two days later I gave birth at home by the time the ambulance came the baby was there and my mother had made sure everything was okay

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the perks of being a village midwife.

The ambulance took my sister and Sethu to the clinic. The nurses didnt even do an exam on her they just asked questions and sent her on her way. I went back to school after a couple of days with no one being any wiser and my scholarship still intact. I continued with my schoolwork and never thought about Brian again until now. Even finding him wasnt much of a struggle.

He went over to his PA and picked up some files before he walked to his office. I called out his name and he turned to look at me. He was still as handsome as I remembered him. He hadn't aged much. He came closer to me a smile plastered on his face.

Brian: "Can I help you?"

PA: "I dont know who she is sir but she has no appointment."

Brian: "It's fine Casey. Ma'am can I help you?"

Me: "We need to talk."

Brian: "I'm sorry I don't think we've met."

Me: "Oh we've met alright." I walked past him and went straight to his office. He followed me and closed the door behind him.

Brian: "Look I dont know who you are....."

Me: "My name is Nombulelo Dlamini we went to high school together."

Brian: "I'm sorry my mind is a but foggy."

Me: "You all called me Darkie." The thing about nicknames especially the not so nice ones were easy to remember. His face changed when I said that.

Brian: "Wow you look different." He placed his briefcase on the desk and took of his blazer. "It's been so long. How have you been?"

Me: "I'm fine. But can we skip the niceties I need your help."

Brian: "Uhm.. okay. What can I do for you?" Be sat down.

Me: "We have a child a daughter and she needs your help." He looked at me for a while before laughing.

Brian: "I'm not sure what kind of joke you are trying to tell but it's not that good. When you are done with your little stunts you can leave." He opened up his laptop.

Me: "Her name is Siphosethu." I took out my phone and opened my gallery I found a picture of Sethu and put it in front of him. "She's thirty one years old. She was born nine months after your matric dance you do remember right the one you asked me to be your date at?" He looked at the picture in front of him for a while the looked up at me.

Brian: "You cant possibly expect me to believe this right?" I took out Sethu's toothbrush from my bag and placed it in front if him.

Me: "That's her toothbrush it has her DNA on it. You can have it tested." I wrote down my number on a piece of paper and gave it to him. "You can call me when you get the results." I turn and walked towards the door. I stopped and turned around. "If it were up to me I wouldn't be here. But Sethu needs to be

introduced to her ancestors. With everything she's going through right now she needs all the help she can get."

I opened the door and walked out. I let out the breath I was holding in before I requested an uber and headed back to the airport. I got a flight and headed back to Durban.

I got to Durban in the late afternoon. I headed straight home. I went upstairs to check on Sethu but she wasn't there. I went back downstairs and heard laughter coming from the



backyard. I went there and saw Sethu sitting out there with Tshepi laughing and giggling. With all that she's been through seeing her laugh is something I cherish and hold close to my heart.

I decided not to disturb them and went back into the house to start on dinner. I called my sister and she picked up after letting the phone go to voicemail a couple of times.

Thuli: "Ufunani Nombulelo? (What do you want?)"

Me: "Geez that's no way to greet your sister."

Thuli: "I'm busy so if this is about Sethu I don't care."

Me: "It is actually. I told her the truth so you can stop pretending you care." She laughed.

Thuli: "Really? Did you also tell her that she is a product of a one night stand?"

Me: "I told her everything sisi I wanted to say thank you. Even though you weren't much of a mother to her but Thank you anyway. I know it took a lot out of you to claim her as yours but I'm still grateful anyway."

Thuli: "Whatever. I need to go back to my real kids atleast now you can play happy families with your child. Minus one trouble for me."

Me: "Speaking of minusing and adding. I spoke to the lawyer who created that trust that has Sethu's lobola money she says since I am her mother then the payments will now be diverted to me."

Thuli: "You must be out of your mind."

Me: "Sisi I'm grateful to you for claiming my daughter as your own but if you had atleast pretended like you care maybe you'd be deserving of all that money. But the truth is the only person who deserves it is unfortunately six feet under right now."

Thuli: "Nombulelo I swear to you....."

Me: "Goodbye sis wam you can go attend to YOUR kids now." I hung up and looked at the phone for a while.

"That was harsh." I turned around and found Sethu leaning on the counter looking at me.

Me: "Hey baby how are you feeling?"

Sethu: "I'm okay. Where have you been?"

Me: "Uhm.. I went to Joburg to see your father."

Sethu: "Oh. How did it go?"

Me: "Well he was shocked didnt believe me but I'm sure in a couple of days he will get back to me."

Sethu: "Mhmmm okay." She took out juice from the fridge and walked back out to the backyard.

I watched her walk out and I couldn't help feeling like I have failed her. From birth I wasn't in her life as a mother more like an aunt. If I could go back in time and change things would I really give up school to be a mother? I dont know. But I know I would give an arm and a leg to give my daughter the kind of childhood she deserves. A childhood where she'd never have to question her own existence. I would give it all up just to take the pain away from her at this very moment. Hopefully getting in touch with Brian will help take an ounce of that pain away.

FIFTY

CHAPTER FIFTY

These days everything seems calm almost too calm if you ask me. Or maybe I'm just used to chaos all of a sudden that when things seem peaceful I get anxious cause I know the chaos is probably lurking around in the corner. But right now the only chaos I am enjoying is the one that fills this house with laughter and giggles.

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I woke up early this morning and made myself some breakfast. I was craving amagwinya so I got up early to make them fresh. I went upstairs

and woke the kids up and got them ready for school. Since I was banned from driving Ncane or Tshepi would have to take them whoever comes down first. Soon as the kids were ready we went downstairs and i made breakfast for them. They loved the fresh amagwinya I made Mia even asked if she could bring some to school.

Tshepi walked down first ready to take the kids. They all walked out and I started cleaning. For some strange reason I ended up cleaning the lounge and dining room too. By the time Ncane came down the house was spotless. She found me dusting the last of the vases in the lounge.



Ncane: "Siphosethu what are you doing? You're supposed to be in bed." She says taking the feather duster away from me. I let her be cause I'm done anyway. I go and sit on the couch.

Me: "I was just cleaning Ncane it's no big deal."

Ncane: "Its no big deal? Sethu!"

Me: "Okay ke sorry. I promise I wont donit again." Tshepi comes back and joins me on the couch while Ncane goes to the kitchen.

Tshepi: "What's going on with her?"

Me: "She's mad cause I cleaned." She chuckles.

Tshepi: "She's right though friend. You should be in bed."

Me: "I'm fine. Besides I won't break just because I washed a few dishes and held a duster."

Tshepi: "Fine just this one time I'll let it slide."

Just then there was a knock on the door. Tshepi told whoever that was to come in since the door was unlocked. And in walked Mcebo. He was wearing sweats and he looked like he hadn't slept in a while.

Tshepi: "You know I was rooting for you."

Mcebo: "Excuse me?" She got up and stood in front of him.

Tshepi: "I was rooting for you but you disappoint at every turn. I get your pain but that's no reason for you to turn your back on your child."

Mcebo: "Thank you for the advice now do you mind?" He asked motioning with his head for her to move out of the way. Instead of moving she stood still. Tshepi can be stubborn when she wants to be that's for sure.

Me: "Its fine friend." I said hoping to diffuse the tension that just filled the room.

She clicked her tongue and walked off. Mcebo sat down on the couch across from me. I looked at him and to be honest the man sitting before me wasn't the same man I'd known a few months back. But then again I can't blame him we've all been through some shitty stuff that was bound to change us.

Mcebo: "How are you?" He asked playing with his car keys.

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Mcebo: "Get back from where?"

Me: "Weren't you out of the country a couple of days ago?" I saw a frown form on his face before he relaxed. I guess he remembered that he wasn't actually out of the country. He was here just ignoring everyone. Nice.

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Mcebo: "No I want to."

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Me: "Why? Mcebo if you dont want to be here no one is going to force you. But lying and pretending to be out of the country is not the solution. I'm sorry that you are hurt I'm sorry that I have to bother you with your childs wellbeing I'm sorry. I promise I wont bother you again. You can do whatever go wherever without worrying about anything. Dont ever feel like you have to hide your life from anyone. I'll tell you when the baby is born." I got up and tried to walk away from him.

Mcebo: "Do you think this is easy for me?" I turned around and he was standing looking at my direction. "Do you think it's easy for me to

anticipate the one thing I've wanted my entire adult life when there is a possibility that child might not even make it? Do you think it's easy for me to watch you play happy families with my brother knowing how I feel about you? I know you're his wife technically but I cant help how I feel. I didnt ask for any of these feelings to show up."

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The door opened and Tshepi walked in. I felt the bed move as she got in. She laid on her back too looking up at the ceiling and stealing glances at me.



Tshepi: "Are you okay?"

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Tshepi: "So vele there are no feelings for him none at all?"

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Me: "Why were you eavesdropping?"

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Me: "I know it's just me looked....."

Tshepi: "Hurt?"

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but I could have sworn I saw fear too in his eyes."

Tshepi: "I cant blame him. This is a scary time for all of you."

Me: "Yeah but even if this child God forbid doesnt make it wouldn't it be better to have experienced even a tiny bit of his life? Hearing his heartbeat and seeing him on the sonograms would give him a bit of hope right? Even just a tiny bit for him to see that miracles happen."

Tshepi: "Maybe. But you have enough to worry about on your own plate without adding Mcebo to the mix. You have three more months to go

and that means he has three months to get his act together."

Maybe Tshepi is right I have a lot to deal with right now without having to worry about Mcebo too. As much as I want him to be a part of his sons life even before birth I cant force him. And I cant sit by hoping and praying that he will come back to his senses. I'm just one person and I cant be carrying people's loads like I'm Jesus Christ.



NCANE

I'm not sure if I understand where Mcebo is coming from or even where he is going but I know the pain of having your heart broken. Seeing the person you love being with someone else and knowing there is nothing you can do about it is a whole different kind of pain.

When I heard him pour his heart out to Sethu made me sad. Mcebo is a good guy and he deserves to be happy too. But I also know Melusi is a good guy too and he too deserves to

be happy. But what neither of them are I guess choosing to ignore is how hard this is on Sethu. I wish she had a fairy godmother who would whisper in her ear and tell her what to do.

After Sethu ascended the stairs and went to her room I went to the lounge and found Mcebo sitting on the couch with his head between his hands and his elbows resting on his knees. I've never seen one person so broken. I sat down next to him.

Me: "It's going to be okay you know." He lifted up his head and looked at me chuckled then laid back on the couch.

Mcebo: "No it wont. It will never be Okay and the person responsible is still messing up our lives even from beyond the grave."

Me: "I know. But there's always light at the end of the tunnel." He laughs.

Mcebo: "Well I dont see it."

Me: "You will. A piece of advice though as scary as this is you dont want to regret not being there for your son. Go to the doctor's appointments maybe seeing him on that screen will get you closer to that light." The gate buzzes and Mcebo gets up.



Mcebo: "I'll open for whoever that is. Thanks Ncane." I smile.

Me: "Anytime." He leaves. I get up and go back to the kitchen. A while later the doorbell rings. I go and open and to my surprise its Brian. How did he even know where to find me. I step aside and let him walk in.

Brian: "Nice home." He says looking around.

Me: "Thanks its Sethu's. How did you know I was here?"

Brian: "I did the DNA test. Turns out you are right. She is my daughter."

Me: "That was quick."

Brian: "I know people. So what happens now?"

Me: "She's upstairs if you'd like to meet her."

Brian: "What if she doesnt want to meet me?"  
He was nervous. I've never seen him nervous before but then again I didnt really know the real him. Just the idea of the boy I had a crush on in high school.

Me: "We wont know unless we try. I'll go gey her." I left him there and went upstairs. I

knocked on the bedroom door and walked in. I found her and Tshepi passed out on the bed. I was about to walk out when I heard her calling me.

Sethu: "Is everything okay?"

Me: "Yeah everything is fine I just wanted you to meet someone but if you're tired they can wait."

Sethu: "Ita okay I'm up." She got off the bed even though it was a struggle. She put on her slippers and we walked down hand in hand.

Brian looked up the stairs when he heard footsteps. He stood up and looked at Sethu he looked like a teenager waiting for his prom date. We got close to him and I could have sworn his eyes were glistening with tears.

Me: "Sethu this is Brian Mashabane your father Brian this is Siphosethu your daughter." A tear escaped from his eyes and went down his one cheek. I could feel Sethu shaking. Brian walked close to us and took Sethu into his arms and hugged her. I heard him mumbling something's. I wasn't sure what it was until he said it a bit louder and I could hear it was his clan names. I've done some pretty dumb things in my life but I am proud to say this will probably go down as the best decision I ever made bringing them together.

FIFTY ONE

CHAPTER FIFTY

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I'm not sure if I understand where Mcebo is coming from or even where he is going but I know the pain of having your heart broken. Seeing the person you love being with someone else and knowing there is nothing you can do about it is a whole different kind of pain.

When I heard him pour his heart out to Sethu made me sad. Mcebo is a good guy and he deserves to be happy too. But I also know Melusi is a good guy too and he too deserves to

be happy. But what neither of them are I guess choosing to ignore is how hard this is on Sethu. I wish she had a fairy godmother who would whisper in her ear and tell her what to do.

After Sethu ascended the stairs and went to her room I went to the lounge and found Mcebo sitting on the couch with his head between his hands and his elbows resting on his knees. I've never seen one person so broken. I sat down next to him.

Me: "It's going to be okay you know." He lifted up his head and looked at me chuckled then laid back on the couch.

Mcebo: "No it wont. It will never be Okay and the person responsible is still messing up our lives even from beyond the grave."

Me: "I know. But there's always light at the end of the tunnel." He laughs.

Mcebo: "Well I dont see it."

Me: "You will. A piece of advice though as scary as this is you dont want to regret not being there for your son. Go to the doctor's appointments maybe seeing him on that screen will get you closer to that light." The gate buzzes and Mcebo gets up.

Mcebo: "I'll open for whoever that is. Thanks Ncane." I smile.

Me: "Anytime." He leaves. I get up and go back to the kitchen. A while later the doorbell rings. I go and open and to my surprise its Brian. How did he even know where to find me. I step aside and let him walk in.

Brian: "Nice home." He says looking around.



Me: "Thanks its Sethu's. How did you know I was here?"

Brian: "I did the DNA test. Turns out you are right. She is my daughter."

Me: "That was quick."

Brian: "I know people. So what happens now?"

Me: "She's upstairs if you'd like to meet her."

Brian: "What if she doesnt want to meet me?"  
He was nervous. I've never seen him nervous before but then again I didnt really know the real him. Just the idea of the boy I had a crush on in high school.

Me: "We wont know unless we try. I'll go gey her." I left him there and went upstairs. I

knocked on the bedroom door and walked in. I found her and Tshepi passed out on the bed. I was about to walk out when I heard her calling me.

Sethu: "Is everything okay?"

Me: "Yeah everything is fine I just wanted you to meet someone but if you're tired they can wait."

Sethu: "Ita okay I'm up." She got off the bed even though it was a struggle. She put on her slippers and we walked down hand in hand.

Brian looked up the stairs when he heard footsteps. He stood up and looked at Sethu he looked like a teenager waiting for his prom date. We got close to him and I could have sworn his eyes were glistening with tears.

Me: "Sethu this is Brian Mashabane your father Brian this is Siphosethu your daughter." A tear escaped from his eyes and went down his one cheek. I could feel Sethu shaking. Brian walked close to us and took Sethu into his arms and hugged her. I heard him mumbling something's. I wasn't sure what it was until he said it a bit louder and I could hear it was his clan names. I've done some pretty dumb things in my life but I am proud to say this will probably go down as the best decision I ever made bringing them together.

FIFTY TWO

CHAPTER FIFTY TWO

Ever heard of a risk taker? That would be me. Flying at seven months pregnant. Ncane Melusi and I together with the kids are flying to Limpopo for a welcome ceremony for me.

It's kind of weird to me how welcoming most of them have been. I've spoken to my grandparents a few times and by the sounds of it they seem really nice. Brian's older daughter well technically speaking that's me. His first daughter with his wife Tshilidzi has been calling me none stop. I'm surprised she hasn't shown up here.

Brian has two other kids Mashudu and Rendani. They seem nice enough although Tshilidzi seems like a handful. She is studying

micro biology at Wits. She called me earlier before we even boarded our flight saying she is already in Limpopo and she'll be waiting for us at the airport. And now I am more excited to go home than I've been since I found out about my biological family.

We landed in Limpopo in the afternoon and I thought Durban was hot little did I know Limpopo would come prepared to show me flames. Although I am dressed in a simple maxi dress I can still feel sweat dripping on my back. We got out and Tshilidzi was right not only is she excited to meet me she is dramatic too.

The moment we walked out of the airport we were met with a huge banner with the words

Welcome Home Princess written on it. I wasn't sure if I should be impressed or hide. People were looking at her like she has lost her mind. The guy holding the other end of the banner was busy shaking his head clearly he was forced into this.

We walked closer to them. I gave Brian a hug before he officially introduced me to Tshilidzi and Mashudu. We got into the cars and drove off to the village to meet the rest of the family. It took us about two hours to get there and the sun was not giving up.

We got to the royal house and it was busy people were moving up and down the compound some in their traditional Venda

Attire. The car was parked outside the gate. A man with a kangaroo around his waist stood by the gate. We walked close and he started groaning and saying the Mashabane clan names before asking me to take off my sandals. Lucky for me they were just slip on's which made it easy for me to take them off.

He took a white substance from a bowl that was sitting next to him and rubbed my feet with it. He then moved to my hands and ended up rubbing it on my forehead. He looked at me and smiled.

"Ndi kale ndoni lindela (I've been waiting for you.)" He said before taking a step back. I don't even know him. But okay. I walked through the



gates and the women started ululating. Brian led us to a house. Soon as we got in we saw a man who I assume is my grandfather sitting on a throne with a leopard skin draped on his one shoulder. There were men sitting on his right hand side and women on the other side.

I figured since I dont know much about Venda tradition I'll just follow what the others do. I saw Tshilidzi lay on the ground and i figured i should follow suit. Ncane did the same thing before we were told to get up. It took me a while to get up because you know babies can be a bit heavy. We sat up and Brian introduced us to everyone.

I went on my knees and shook everyone's hands one by one and ended up in front of my

grandfather. He smiled and got up then helped me stand too. He hugged me then pulled away.

"Ni hayani zwino (you are home now.)" He said and the women ululated. It does feel like home. It's crazy how I haven't been here for long but the warmth and love I've found here feels like everything I've ever wanted.



I slept like a little baby. Even though the heat was unforgiving it felt like a small price to pay being with family was beautiful and the best thing I've ever got to experience. I woke up early and took a shower. My welcoming ceremony was happening today and the yard was already buzzing with people.

I woke up the kids and helped them bath. Melusi and Ncane woke up too and got ready. Tshilidzi came in and told us breakfast was ready and in this house we all eat together as a family. We followed her and she led us to the dining room where everyone was seated. I was happy to see that the number of people here

today was lower than the one we found yesterday. Which means fewer names to remember.

We had breakfast then proceeded to the river where I was washed and cleansed. We came back and the introduction to the ancestors was done. My grandmother dressed me up in traditional attire. I must admit it suits me. It looks like it was made for me.

After the ceremony i went up to take a nap because i was dead tired. I woke up just before dinner time. I was walking down the stairs when i heard voices coming from one room. I recognized the one voice as Tshilidzi's. I was

about to pass and go on my way until I heard my name.

Tshilidzi: "Mme I think you are overreacting. Sethu is nice."

Mme: "Of course she's nice now. Until one day you wake up and your position is gone."

Tshilidzi: "Being Makhadzi? Really mum? She's the oldest."

Mme: "Exactly and that's the problem

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and that's the problem with the way your grandfather and you dad think I wouldn't be surprised if they decided that girls can also take over the throne and if that happens guess who will take over from your father? Not you."

Tshilidzi: "Ma no woman has ever sat on that throne. And besides Sethu is a nice person you might not think that but I'd like to get to know my sister without your interference. And if for some strange reason a woman gets to sit on that throne I do hope it's her." I heard footsteps coming towards the door and I waddled away trying to make sure no one sees me eavesdropping.

I knew from the moment I walked through that gate that Brian's wife wasn't too happy about my sudden arrival. I don't understand why though it's not like I was born from an affair or anything like that. I can only hope that someday she realizes that I'm not a threat to her or her family. All I want is to belong.

I got to the dining room and most of the extended family had left. My grandmother was sitting in the lounge talking to Ncane while the table was being set. They seemed weirdly nice to each other. They were smiling and laughing. I decided to join them. Soon as my grandmother saw me she pat the couch next to

her for me to come sit. I went and sat down and she immediately held my hand and looked at it getting emotional. I dont know why though.

Gogo: "It's so nice to have you here. Your father looks happy too."

Me: "Thank you I'm just happy to have a real family."

Gogo: "You are home now ndi ini mukololo wa ha Mashabane (you are a princess.) This will always be your home. And no one can ever take that away from you. Ever. Even the ancestors are happy. The rain is a sign of that."



She said making me feel all giddy and happy inside.

Soon as the table was set and food was brought in we got up and sat down to eat. It was mostly traditional food including Mopane worms. I didn't think I could stomach them but all it took was tasting one and I was hooked. In spite of the deadly stares I kept getting from Brian's wife the warmth that surrounded me at this very moment felt like an out of body experience. I've wanted to belong for so long and eventually it happened. Maybe I needed to go through all that I went through maybe that was just preparation for this moment right here. For me to appreciate a good family a loving kind and caring family.

After dinner we all sat together in the lounge laughing and talking about anything and everything. My siblings were even trying to teach me TshiVenda. I'm sure I'll be a proper Mukololo wa Mashabane.

We woke up the next morning and got ready to fly back home. I realised I hadn't seen much of Melusi since we got here. He's been spending way too much time with Brian. Not that I'm complaining. This might be my family but I'm not ready to explain the complicated situation I find myself in with Mcebo and Melusi.

I took a long warm bath and just took everything in. I wanted to savor the moment and enjoy every bit of it. Although I know I'll be back here sooner than I care to admit but every moment counts right. I got out of the water and felt like I needed to pee. I didn't think much of it till I wrapped a towel around me and walked towards the toilet. I felt a swoosh of liquid run down my legs. And I knew for a fact it wasn't pee. I looked down and I knew my water just broke.

I couldn't understand how this is happening when I havent even felt any contractions or cramps. Something must be wrong. I walked to the bedroom and took out my phone. I called Ncane and she walked into the room within

minutes followed by my grandmother and Tshilidzi.

Ncane: "What's wrong?"

Me: "My water just broke."

Ncane: "Its way too soon."

Me: "Tell me about it."

Gogo: "Go call your father." She said to Tshilidzi who went running out. Ncane got me a dress and helped me put it on.

Brian and Melusi came rushing into the room panicking. I could feel tiny tingles that felt like cramps and only then could I relax. I took my phone as we walked out to the car so I can go to the hospital. I called gogo Nkanyezi to let her know. She told me not to worry and just do what I needed to do to bring this child into the world. But she said I shouldn't allow the doctors to inject me with anything. Not even a drip. I'm pretty sure this woman lost her marbles somewhere in life. Does she not know the pain of childbirth?

We got to the hospital and I was immediately admitted. I texted Mcebo and told him the baby was coming but there was nothing he could do

since he was in London on business. When the doctor tried to put a drip on me I had to fight tooth and nail for it not to happen. Eventually they made me sign some indemnity forms so I couldn't sue them if anything happens because I refused to listen to them.

The contractions got stronger with each passing moment. When they were a few seconds apart I wished for the pain meds but I couldn't take them. Soon as the doctor said push I prayed with every push. I prayed for my son to make it out alive and healthy. Seven and a half months is not an ideal time to give birth but I just pray for a miracle.

FIFTY THREE

I heard the sound of beeping machines sounding from a distance. I wasn't certain of what was happening but my brain told me I should get up. I struggled a bit to open my eyes but eventually they opened. I looked around the room and it was white. Too white if you ask me. But the sun going down outside gave the room a bit of a glowy sunkissed vibe if there's even such a thing.

The beeping sound crept into my mind again but this time it was close. I looked at where the sound was coming from and my heart almost stopped when I saw some pipes sticking out of my skin. The beeping sounds went crazy as I panicked and tried to remove these things on my arm. I felt someone holding my arm and stopping me from hurting myself. I looked up and saw Melusi standing there with a smile.

Melusi: "Relax they didnt inject anything into you. It's just the heart monitor." I let out a sigh of relief as a doctor and a nurse rushed in.

Doctor: "Is everything okay?"

Me: "Yeah I'm fine."



Doctor: "Good thing you're up. Your tolerance for pain is admirable." He said smiling and taking the patient file from the little table at the bottom of the bed.

Me: "Thank you." He put the file back down and walked out. I looked at Melusi and he was looking at me funny. "What's wrong?"

Melusi: "Nothing. The doctor is right though. That was quite impressive."

Me: "Where's my son?" He took out his phone and texted someone before he put his phone back in his pocket.

Melusi: "Tshilidzi will bring him now."

Me: "She's still here?"

Melusi: "Yep. She refuses to leave his side. The doctor's and nurses have given up trying."

Tshilidzi walked in with the little guy cuddled in her arms. She handed him to me and he was perfect. It was like the first time I laid my eyes on Asi. No matter how many times you have kids I dont think the feeling of falling in love with a little human being can never ever get old.

Melusi: "I'll go get you some food." He said before walking out.

Tshilidzi: "For a premie he seems healthy." She said bringing me out of my little bubble.

Me: "What did the doctor say? Is he okay?"

Tshilidzi: "Perfectly healthy. Although they said they might keep you here for a couple of days just to be certain."

Me: "They didnt inject him with anything right?"

Tshilidzi: "Nope. Your mum told me why you didnt want any injections so I made sure they didnt give him any either."

Me: "Thank you."

Tshilidzi: "That's what sisters are for." She said with a huge smile on her face. This will take some getting used to.

Me: "Well if this is what having a sister feels like then I'm happy." She got on the bed looking at my son who was sleeping so peacefully.

Tshilidzi: "You've been through enough Khaladzi it's time you get some much needed Ray's of sunshine. And coming home was just the first step." She said bringing me i for a hug.

Her mother might not be the nicest person on the planet but she seems like a trustworthy person. And as it stands i refuse to judge her and her intentions based on her mother's hatred of me. The door opened and I thought it was Melusi bringing back food instead Tshepi budged in with huge balloons and a big ass teddy bear followed by gogo Nkanyezi.

Tshepi: "We had a deal. I was supposed to cut the umbilical cord or hold your leg or something. Why would you betray me like that." I laughed as she stood by the door pouting with balloons in her hand.

Me: "Don't blame me. It's his fault." I said pointing at the baby. She rushed over and let the balloons float to the ceiling before taking the baby.

Tshepi: "Ooh he's perfect."

Me: "Of course he is. He's my son." They laughed.

Gogo Nkanyezi walked closer and peeked at him over Tshepi's shoulder. She had a smile on her face. Tshepi turned around and handed her the baby. She sat down on the couch with him in her arms. She laid him down on her lap before undressing him. Come to think of it where did they get those clothes cause I know I didnt bring any with me? Oh well atleast he is dressed.

She undressed him and took out a little white powder from her bag. She dipped her hand in it before rubbing the powder on the top of my sons head hands and legs.

Nkanyezi: "You are a little fighter Mwelase. We might have fought for you but you fought harder

for yourself. You little guy are an answered prayer. A gift. And a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day." She dressed him up again and got up to give him to me. I took him and cradled his little sleeping self. It's crazy how he's been passed from one person to the next yet he is still fast asleep

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are an answered prayer. A gift. And a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day." She dressed him up again and got up to give him to me. I took him and cradled his little sleeping self. It's crazy how he's been passed from one person to the next

yet he is still fast asleep oblivious to the chaos and drama he caused.

Tshepi: "Have you decided on a name yet?"

Me: "Well I was waiting for Mcebo to show up but I think he already has a name. Mpendulo."

Tshilidzi: "That's perfect." Melusi walked in with takeaways for everyone.



After eating everyone left and I was left alone with Mpendulo. Melusi said he'd be back cause he had to check on Asi and make sure he was okay. I breastfed Mpendulo then laid him down on his tiny crib so he can sleep and I can get some rest.

I woke up to someone singing next to me. I immediately opened my eyes and saw Mcebo sitting on the couch looking at his son and singing a lullaby. I decided not to disturb their little bonding session so I just turned around and went back to sleep.



I was woken up by the sounds of Mpendulo cooing next to me. The room was dark. I turned the side lamp on and picked him up. Mcebo was sleeping on the couch. I'm sure jetlag got the better of him. I breastfed Mpendulo and changed his diaper before rocking him back to sleep.

I put him back in his little crib and tried to fall asleep again but I couldn't. I had slept way too much and now sleep had deserted me. I took my phone from the side table and opened my WhatsApp. I looked through people's statuses trying to find something to make me fall asleep

but nothing. My phone beeped and I saw it was a WhatsApp message from Melusi.

'Sleep.' I smiled.

'You're awake too.'

'I'm working. Wena you need to rest.'

'We all sleep has deserted me. So I cant sleep. And TV is boring.'

'Lol I'm pretty sure you havent checked the TV to even know that it's boring.' I smiled to myself like a retard cause he was right. I hadn't even checked the TV. Lately TV hasn't been my favourite thing to keep me company.

'True. So what are you working on?'

'Some business we might get this side. Your dad hooked me up with some farmers who could do with the transportation of their products.'

'Mhmm so a branch this side?'

'Possibly.'

'That's good.'

'Where's Mcebo?'

'He's sleeping on the couch. How did you know he was here?' I know the last time I saw Melusi

was when he left with the others so how did he know Mcebo is here?

'I was there earlier to check on you. I saw he was there so I decided to give you guys some privacy.'

'Oh okay.'

'Now go to sleep. It's almost morning.'

'Yes sir.' I logged off and put the phone back on the side table. I turned over and tried to get some sleep again.



MELUSI

There is nothing I hate more than early morning phone calls. But sometimes they come with good news. Khehla woke me up to tell me that they found Madlala and subsequently found MaZwane too welner corpse.

According to Khehla Madlala's hut went up in flames at around one thirty in the afternoon. I noticed that the time his hut went up in flames was the same time that Sethu's son took his first breath on this earth. I guess that was a moment that showed that MaZwane and her

cronies had lost. Khehla said that MaZwane's corpse was found inside the hut burnt to ashes. Madlala on the other escaped. But chances of him ever coming back there are slim to nothing now that the community knows he keeps dead bodies in his hut.

After speaking to Khehla I checked on WhatsApp and found Sethu online. We spoke a bit before I decided to go get some fresh air. I stood on the balcony and I could see the sky getting lighter. I looked down and saw Tshilidzi in her gym clothes probably getting ready for a jog.



Me: "Isn't it a bit early for you to be running around alone?" She looked up and smiled.

Tshilidzi: "Maybe you should come with me since you are up already." I figured I have nothing to lose so I might as well.

Me: "Okay wait up." I got back in the room and put on some sweats and a tshirt. I put on my sneakers and walked out. I decided to leave my phone. I got down and found her stretching by the gate.

Tshilidzi: "You're ready?"

Me: "I haven't done this in a while so don't be too hard on me."

Tshilidzi: "Okay. I will try. Let's go." She said as she went running before me. I followed suit.

I must admit Limpopo is a beautiful place. The greenery and waterfalls we went past felt like we were going through some hidden paradise. We got to the top of a mountain and I could feel my breath coming out in hisses. I need to go back to the gym. I found Tshilidzi sitting up on a rock watching the sun rise. I took the water bottle and gulped down the water trying to get my breathing back to normal.

Me: "This should be considered a crime." She laughed and made space for me to sit next to her.

Tshilidzi: "Probably but theres no better way to start your day than this."

Me: "True. And this place is beautiful."

Tshilidzi: "And that's why I love jogging on this route. It's just amazingly beautiful." She took a sip of her water then turned to look at me. "Can I ask you something?"

Me: "Sure."

Tshilidzi: "How are you Okay with your wife having a child with your brother." I looked at her

with a questioning stare. "Oh Ncane told me."  
That explains it.

I tried to figure out if I'm really okay with my wife having a child with my brother. Truth is I'm not. But I cant change it. A part of me knows and understands that none of this would have happened if it wasnt for MaZwane. Her hatred and greed started a chain reaction that led us to where we are now. Although I'm quite certain that's not how she thought things would pen out but now we are here bearing the consequences of all that she did. My brother is in love with my wife and I am expected to pretend like it's nothing because of all his sacrifices.

I get that he was the one person who stepped up and protected my wife and son when I couldn't but does that really mean I need to give up my family? Does that mean i have to watch my brother play happy families with my wife and son as payback for his sacrifices? In the midst of the hell MaZwane put me in one thing kept me sane and wanting to fight my son and wife. All I wanted to do was get back home and be with them instead I come home to find I've been replaced.

As much as I understand the sacrifices my brother had to make for my wife and son I cant disappear into the shadows like I never existed. It was at that moment that I realised I want my wife back. I want my life back. I've been patient enough while she was pregnant and trying to

protect the baby but the baby is here now alive and healthy. MaZwane is officially gone with no Hope's of ever coming back. It's time to get my family back.

Me: "I have to go." I got up and ran down the mountain like I hadn't struggled to get up to the top. I'm not going back to Durban without my wife.

FIFTY FOUR

I knew one day I would like to have a child. I had it all figured out in my head the games I would take my son to teach him how to be a man teach him how to treat women. And if it was a girl a little princess I knew she'd never have to question her father's love she'd be spoiled in every way and any man who would ever think they have a chance with her would have to climb mountains and go down valleys just to prove they are worthy of her love.

God had other plans though he figured I deserved a son who would be a protector to his future sister or sisters if God permits. I've never felt the kind of love I felt when I held my son for the first time. Even though I got to Limpopo late in the evening my excitement led me straight to the hospital. Holding my son sent a surge of emotions through my body.

Everything made sense for the first time in a while. My brother dying marrying Sethu my mother's true colors being exposed I would go through all of that all over again if it would lead me to this moment. In this little boy I've found joy I never thought I could have. Yes I'll probably regret not being there for Sethu during the pregnancy but I'll spend the rest of my life making it up to my son.

I left Sethu sleeping and went to the hotel last night all I did was check in before rushing to the hospital. I didnt even get time to get myself a decent meal. I got to the hotel and took a shower then changed clothes. I ordered breakfast and sat down to respond to some emails before the food came. Even before I finished I found myself going through my sons photos. He was a perfect tiny little miracle.

My food came and I ate as fast as I could. All I wanted to do was get back to the hospital. I



finished eating and went out to the parking lot. I got into my rental car and headed to the mall first. I found myself at a Babies'r'Us with a trolley full of well everything. Toys diapers clothes literally everything the sales assistant said a newborn baby needs.

I drove to the hospital with everything stacked up in the boot and the backseat. I parked outside and since I couldn't take everything in I chose a huge ass teddy bear to take with me. I got to Sethu's room and she wasn't there. I put the teddy bear down and headed to the nursery. I sanitized my hands and went in. My little sunshine was sleeping peacefully. I'm beginning to think this little guy is a bit lazy.

I saw the nametag on his wrist. Last night it was written baby Mazibuko and this morning it had Mpendulo Mazibuko on it. I wasn't sure about the name though but that is something I'd have to discuss with Sethu. I picked him up and sat

on the chair next to his tiny crib. I rocked him back and forth for a while before I put him back on the crib.

I went back to Sethu's room. I saw my brother coming from the other direction headed to the room too. He was busy on his phone he couldn't even see me. Good for me though cause I wasn't ready for the awkwardness that was sure to come. He got into the room and I walked faster and stood by the door to see what was going on.

Sethu was back and sitting on the bed with her phone in her hand. Melusi walked up to the bed sat down next to her and kissed her. I thought she would resist but her arms going around Melusi's neck made me realise she was enjoying whatever this was as much as he was. I walked back trying to make sure they didn't see me. I bumped into someone and they dropped whatever it was that they were

carrying. I turned around and there was coffee and eggs splattered all over the floor. I looked at this girl and she seemed defeated. I thought she'd be shouting and yelling by now instead she just looked at the contents laying on the floor then looked up at me.

Me: "I'm sorry." I said looking at the food too. There was truly no hope for it. A cleaner was already walking towards us with a mop and bucket.

Her: "Wimpy is less than ten minutes down the road. Let's go." She said turning around and walking towards the exit.

Me: "Excuse me?" She stopped and turned around.

Her: "I said Wimpy is about ten minutes down the road let's go you are buying that breakfast. My sister just had a baby and she needs that food. So let's go." She turned and walked away. I followed her. She's brave I'll give her that

much. Ready to go away with a stranger has she forgotten she's in South Africa?

I caught up with her at the entrance of the hospital. She stood at the door looking around in the parking lot. She turned to look at me.

Her: "Which one is your car?"

Me: "Uhm... the black one."

Her: "Right. It's not like there are forty other cars in the parking lot right?" She's sarcastic plus brave. Cute. I walked past her and went to the car. I opened and got in. She went to the other side and stood with her arms crossed. I let the window down and looked at her.

Me: "Are we not going?"

Her: "The door is closed. Have you never heard about chivalry

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most gentlemen know to open a door for a lady. Are you a gentleman mister?" She asked crouching a bit so she can look at me. I dont know what kind of mess I just got myself into. I got out and went to the other side I opened the door and she got in.

I closed the door and went back to my side and got in. I drove off and sure enough Wimpy was close by. We went in and she made her order. And soon as they asked for payment she stepped aside and let me pay. Next time God please don't ever let me bump into anyone or anything for that matter. We got her order and we drove back to the hospital.

Her: "So what's with the baby stuff? You had a baby?" She asked as we drove back.

Me: "Yeah. A boy."

Her: "Congratulations. My sister had a baby boy too. Cutest little thing ever. Wife or girlfriend?"

Me: "Its complicated."

Her: "Uh so baby mama." I chuckled. I dont know if I'd ever describe Sethu as a baby mama.

We got to the hospital and as expected she wouldn't get out of the car till I opened the door. We walked in and I thought we'd part ways somewhere instead it looks like we were going to the same place. We got to the spot where I knocked her food over and she took the coffee from me thanked me and walked straight into Sethu's room. Her sister is Sethu? I walked in and she was hugging Sethu. She handed Sethu

the food then turned around. She was shocked when she found me standing behind her.

Her: "There is absolutely no need for you to follow me."

Sethu: "You two know each other?"

Her: "Yeah if it wasnt for him I would have been here a long time ago. But he knocked the food over so he had to buy me more. I just dont know why he felt the need to follow me here."

Sethu: "Right. Tshilidzi meet Mcebo Mpendulo's father Mcebo meet Tshilidzi my sister."



## SETHU

The joy of being in a private hospital you get tended on hand and foot. There's always somebody at your back and call. Or maybe it's because they know my father? Either way I'm just happy to be getting taken care of. At around eight in the morning one of the nurses came to get Mpendulo and took him to the nursery.



I got up and went to the bathroom to take a shower. I took a bit of time in there. And when I came back I found a huge teddy bear sitting on the couch. It almost scared the shit out of me cause I thought it was a person. I lotioned and put on some new pyjamas since I will be here for a couple more days.

I got back into bed and waited for Tshilidzi to show up since she said she'd bring me breakfast. I stayed in bed for a while cause when I called the nursery to check on Mpendulo I was told Mcebo was there. And right now I'm pretty sure there is a whole lot of gossip going around with the complicated situation I find myself in. Melusi was introduced as my husband but now another man is with my newborn baby. I'm sure they think I'm a whore. Oh well their problem not mine.

The door opened and Melusi walked in. He put his phone in his pocket and walked over to me. He sat on the bed and without saying anything at all he pulled me close to him and kissed me. I put my hand on his chest with the intention to push him away but somehow my body betrayed me and I found myself returning the kiss. I've missed this. I've missed my husband. I've missed being in his arms and being loved by him. Good thing the heart monitor is not attached to me anymore cause right now my heart is doing somersaults.

He pulled away after a while and stared at me. Even though my eyes were still closed I could still feel his eyes on my skin. I opened my eyes slowly and sure enough he was looking at me.

Me: "What was that about?"

Melusi: "I want my wife back Sethu." He said and I could see in his eyes that he wasn't playing.

Me: "What?"

Melusi: "I want my wife back. I've been patient. I gave you your space and time to deal with everything but now I want my wife back. I want to wake up in your arms every morning like we used to. I want to fall asleep with your big head on my chest. I want to make you breakfast every morning." He took a deep breath and took my hand into his. "I was gone for a whole year and every day I was stuck in that limbo that I was in the only thing I wanted was to come back home to my wife and son. And when I came back things weren't the way I left them. I tried to be understanding even though it tore me apart inside. I tried to push my feelings to whatever corner in the back of mind I could shove them in but like cockroaches they refused to stay hidden. I know why you wanted your space and I gave it to you. But I'm done Sethu I'm done living like some bachelor when I

have a wife and kid. I want my life back. I love you MaDlamini well now its MaMashabane. I vowed that I would spend the rest of my life with you and I refuse to backtrack on that. I'm not going back to Durban without my wife. I need you to tell me now if you don't want me I'll never bother you again. I'll give you a divorce if you want it and let you be free to do whatever you want. It would pain me but if it would make you happy then I would give an arm and a leg to see that it happens."

I wiped the tears that had suddenly streamed down my face. Somehow this moment reminded me of the first time we met. I was just a forward nineteen year old who had tasted freedom for the first time when I came to Joburg. He was relentless in his pursuit of me. Even when I told him I would go on a date with him if he did my assignments he did them all and what he didnt know he took his time to do his research. I never did understand how he could do that and still find a way to do his own

schoolwork and run his small business. But he did it to make me happy. I even got A's and B's on those assignments.

I realised then that I've been lucky enough to have two men in my life who would do anything to see me happy and safe. I live Melusi I always have and I always will. As much as I care about Mcebo it would be unfair on him to choose him when i know my heart belongs to Melusi. It would be cruel of me to be with him when I love someone else instead of letting him go fully so he can find a woman who will fully love him the way he deserves to be loved.

Me: "I dont want a divorce Melusi. I want my family back too." His smile widened and he kissed me again before engulfing me in a hug.

Being in his arms was just a confirmation of all that I've known. I love this man.

We stayed like that for a while before he got a call from my dad to come meet a potential client. I guess the Limpopo branch will happen sooner than expected.

Tshilidzi came in a few minutes after Melusi left with breakfast. She gave me a hug before handing me the food. I saw Mcebo walk in behind her and for some strange reason he was looking at her funny. Not weird funny just curious I guess. He looked like he was trying to piece together some memories so he can figure out where he knows her from. She turned around and soon as she saw him she spoke to him. And from what she said it was like they knew each other. She asked him why he was following her and before he could answer I had to ask where they know each other from.

Tshilidzi explained about their unfortunate incident and when I introduced her to him her cheeks turned bloodshot red. I'm not sure if it was shock or embarrassment. Either way it was quite awkward for them and quite funny to me.

FIFTY FIVE

When things are dark we get so caught up in all the darkness that we fail to see any hope or any way out of said darkness. We focus on our pain and even when theres a glimmer of hope on the other side we get wary of it cause our anxiety tells us it wont last nothing ever lasts.

The past five years have been nothing but a rollercoaster ride scary and traumatizing but I made it. I made it on to the end of this scary ride I freaked out I cried and begged to be let out at times but I got to the end in one piece. And one thing it has taught me no matter what happens there is always light at the end of the tunnel. I've learnt darkness doesnt always last sometimes it needs to happen to teach us how to appreciate the light. The light might not last



either but I choose to enjoy every bit of it while it lasts.

Mpendulo as it turns out didnt just become an answer to my prayers but to every else's. I dont think I've ever seen Mcebo happier than he is when playing with his son. At two years old he can kick a ball around well more like the ball kicks him but he loves it like nothing else on earth if I had to guess now I'd say he will be a soccer player. Or maybe he'll grow out of this little obsession some day but for now it's a marvel to see him happy and running around with a ball at his tiny feet.

Asimbonge took on his big brother role like a duck to water. He is overprotective of his little

brother he plays with him anytime he wants to and he cant seem to get tired of it. He takes his role pretty seriously. And at this point I'm just grateful that both my boys carry the last name but I also know that one day I'll have to explain to them why their father's names on their birth certificates are different. And when that day comes I hope to God i can explain enough to them that they understand.

My new favourite thing to do is watch the sunrise every morning. And lucky for me two years ago Melusi bought me a house with a bedroom that allows me to do that eight in the comfort of my room even. When Melusi "died" I thought my life was over what with in-laws who were ready to throw me to the wolves but as luck would have it the heavens sent me Angel's to watch over me and keep me sane.

I woke up early and watched the sunrise as usual. And once the sun was fully up I went to take a shower. Today is a special day. Tshepi is getting married. She and Zoey finally made things official and they are getting married. Of course it took a while for her mother to accept that but her father was more open minded and happy for her.

I finished my shower and put on my velvet maid of honor engraved sweats. As cheesy as this is it's quite beautiful and as long as my friend is happy then I'm happy too. I got back to the bedroom and Melusi was up already. I sat down next to him and kissed him.

Me: "I have to go. I'm already late."

Melusi: "Its that sunrise that makes you lose track of time." I smiled and kissed him again.

Me: "Well that's your fault you're the one who bought this house. Will you get the kids ready?" He picked up his watch from the side table and looked at the time.

Melusi: "Well the wedding starts in five hours I think if I get up now I should have the kids ready by then."

Me: "Really babe five hours just to get two kids bathe fed and ready for a wedding?"

Melusi: "You know boys and running around for no reason."

Me: "Mxm you're nuts. I'll see you the at the wedding." I kissed him and walked out.

I checked on the ots first and they were already up and messing up their room. I kissed them then went to check on Mia. Even though Ncane now has her own place Mia still likes being here. I found her under her blankets with her ipad on watching something.

I walked out and got into my car. I drove to The Secret Garden in Beverly Hills where the wedding was taking place. I went straight to Tshepi's hotel room. I got there and she was already in the makeup chair getting ready.

Tshepi: "You're late."

Me: "I know I'm sorry. How are you doing?"

Tshepi: "Nervous as hell." I chuckled.

Me: "You weren't nervous last night."

Tshepi: "That was then this is now." I took a glass of orange juice and sipped on it while she got her make up done. A few minutes later another make up artist showed up and started working on the bridesmaids me Tshepi's sister Mapule her cousin Rose and her new friend Tshilidzi. These two hit it off and became inseparable.

When the make up artists were done doing their magic we put on our dresses and waited for the wedding to begin. Yellow might not be my favorite color in the world but I have to admit these dresses look bomb. Especially with everyone together. And my friend looked like a dream in her white mermaid dress. I wiped the little tear that was threatening to make it's way out of my eye.

We stood together in a circle and said a prayer before walking out. Tshepi's dad was waiting in the hallway and the smile on his face when he saw her was incredible he even had a few tears roll down his face. In all the years I've known this man ive never seen him shed a single tear even when Tshepi graduated.

We went down to the little chapel for the matrimonial ceremony. As per plan Zoey walked in first with her bridesmaids with Mcebo by her side. She looked great in her dress too. Then it was our turn to walk down the aisle. The girls walked down first then I followed. My boys seemed well behaved. They smiled when they saw me. I got to the end of the aisle and joined the girls. We watched as Tshepi made her grand entrance.

They said their vows with every word they said more tears seemed to flow from the congregation. When they were done we went out to take pictures then proceeded to the reception area. Dancing and singing was the



order of the day. These were the moments I've learnt to cherish the happy moments the giggles and smiles. These are the moments I keep close to my heart.

At something after three with the party still going on inside Ncane took the kids home a while back. I decided to get some fresh air. I found a small bench in the garden and sat on it with my juice next to me. I felt someone taking a seat next to me. I looked up and it was Mcebo.

Me: "I'm not sure if I should call you a best man or a groom of honor. So which one is it?" He laughed and took the bowtie that was hanging around his neck and put it in his pocket.

Mcebo: "Whatever you prefer really. I also have decided to just keep an open mind."

Me: "That's good. I saw Ntombi earlier."

Mcebo: "Yeah Zoey invited her."

Me: "I like her. She seems like a sweet person."

Mcebo: "She is. Stubborn too."

Me: "As long as she keeps you happy she can be as stubborn as she wants to be."

Mcebo: "Yeah I want to ask her to marry me."

Me: "Really?"

Mcebo: "Yeah I think it's time."

Me: "I dont know anyone who deserves to be happy as much as you do."

Mcebo: "Thanks. Anyways let me go back inside. Will you be fine out here all by yourself?"

Me: "Dont worry about me I'll be going in soon just needed the fresh air."

Mcebo: "Okay I'll see you inside then." He got up and went back inside the venue.

I sat there for a while trying to calm my stomach. It's almost morning and with morning comes morning sickness. The perks of being pregnant. I got up to go back inside. And just

before I could open the door I felt a hand on my arm pulling me back. I was about to scream until I realised it was Mcebo's girlfriend Ntombi.

Ntombi: "We need to talk."

Me: "Okay." I wasn't sure if I should be scared cause the look on her face wasn't a good one or maybe its cause I don't know her that well.

Ntombi: "I need you to stay away from Mcebo."

Me: "Excuse me?"

Ntombi: "You heard me. Mcebo is my man and I also know how he feels about you. And I'm not about to play second fiddle to you."

Me: "Isn't this a conversation you should be having with your man?"

Ntombi: "Well I'm having it with you. You're the one who seems obsessed with the man. Stick to your husband and leave Mcebo alone."

Me: "You do know Mcebo and I have a son together right? How are we supposed to co parent our son?"

Ntombi: "Another carrot you use to dangle in front of him so he stays close to you. I heard your little conversation I know he is going to propose. When we are married I'll make sure he gets full custody of his son and that will be the end of whatever hold you have over him." I stepped closer to her until I was just inches away from her face.

Me: "Listen to me and listen very well. You want to come at me be my guest. Come hard I'm a big girl I can take it. I've fought devils that were bigger and scarier than you so trust me I can hold my own. But dont you ever even in your wildest dreams ever think you will use my son to fight your stupid battles. Yes Mcebo and i have history and if you think that will end just because you want it to then you clearly know nothing about 'your man'. Leave my son out of your petty battles or so help me God you will regret it." I pushed past her and went back into the venue.

I went straight to the bar and ordered a glass of whiskey. I needed something strong to calm my nerves. I took the glass and just brought it up to my nose to smell it since I couldn't drink it.

Melusi: "That is supposed to go down your throat not up your nose." I sighed and put the glass back down on the counter. "What's wrong?"

Me: "Mcebo's girlfriend just told me to stay the fuck away from her man and apparently she and Mcebo will apply for full custody of Mpendulo when they get married."

Melusi: "Is she out of her mind?"

Me: "Mxm that one thinks she breathes flavoured air. I swear if she comes after my son she will wish she had never met me."

Melusi: "Relax. I'll handle this."

Me: "Dont do something stupid."

Melusi: "Like what?"

Me: "Melusi!"

Melusi: "Okay I wont do anything stupid but she better get that idea out of her mind and fast."

We left the wedding long after the couple had left for their honeymoon. And by the time we got home it was almost morning but I was too tired to sit and watch the sunrise. I took a shower and went straight to bed.





MCEBO

Whoever came up with the idea of weddings having after parties needs to be shot straight in the head. We got home before sunrise. I went straight to bed but by 7 AM Ntombi was already up which meant I had to be up. She had the music on blast while she was working out. I love gym but clearly not as much as she does.

I took a shower and decided to join her. I heard the door bell ring while walking down the stairs. I went to open and found Melusi standing there

another early bird. I let him in and I could see from his face that he was unhappy about something.

Me: "You dont look to happy what's wrong?"

Melusi: "I need you to talk to your girlfriend. Tell her to stay away from my wife."

Me: "What the fuck are you on about?"

Melusi: "Your girlfriend threatened Sethu last night well this morning and told her that when you two get married you will file for full custody of Mpendulo."

Me: "What? Ntombi would never do that."

Melusi: "I know you love her and she makes you happy but if she thinks she'll come after my wife then she'll have to go through me first."

Ntombi came in from the gym. I called her over to where we were standing. She greeted Melusi who didn't return the greeting.

Ntombi: "What's wrong?"

Me: "Did you speak to Sethu last night?"

Ntombi: "No! Why? What happened?"

Me: "Apparently you threatened her and told her we would take Mpendulo from her."

Ntombi: "That's not true. Why would I do that?" I looked at Melusi and it was clear he didn't believe her.

Me: "Its fine babe you can go." She turned and walked up the stairs. "See she didnt do it."

Melusi: "Believe her if you want to that's fine but my point still stands. If she comes after Sethu and tries to take Mpendulo from her then I will unleash hell on her."

Me: "You do know Mpendulo is my son too right?"

Melusi: "I know that and for the past two years you've done an incredible job in co-parenting and if you want it to stay that way then get your girl back in line. Or I will do it for you." He said before walking out.

At this point I wasn't sure who to believe. If Ntombi says she didn't do it then why would Sethu lie and if she did do it why? Ntombi is not the type of girl who lies or maybe I just don't know her? Sethu has never tried to keep me away from my son I see him anytime I feel like it day or night so why would she lie about something like this. I decided to ask the person who might have all the answers.

I went upstairs and Ntombi was in the shower. I sat on the bed and waited for her to finish. She came out after a while and started lotioning.

Ntombi: "What was your brother on about?"

Me: "I was hoping you would tell me." She stopped and looked at me.

Ntombi: "You cant be serious. You believe her?"

Me: "Why shouldn't I?"

Ntombi: "I'm your girlfriend why would I lie to you?"

Me: "I dont know. You tell me cause I'm failing to see why Sethu would lie."

Ntombi: "Has it ever occurred to you that maybe she is still in love with you. Maybe the idea of you being with somebody other than her is something she cant stomach maybe just maybe in her sick twisted mind she has fantasies of having you and your brother at her back and

call." I knew right then that maybe Sethu is right.

Yes I love her I cant deny that. But over the past two years I've learnt to accept that she chose my brother over me she is happy with him but why do Ntombi's words give me some glimmer of hope that maybe Sethu does have feelings for me. Why cant I just forget about her?

FIFTY SIX



I need to talk to God about these different timezones why cant we all just have the same time all around. I mean it's not even five in the morning and I'm already in an early meeting with some Asian clients via Zoom. I'm tired but business is business it has to be done otherwise how will I buy soccer balls for the boys since they seem to be aspiring soccer stars.

Speaking of the boys I spoke to Ntombi about Sethu's allegations and she seemed really offended that I would even ask her that. I need to figure out what really happened between these two cause Ntombi is certain she didnt even speak to Sethu. But then Sethu is not the lying type. I was about to drive to her house to talk to her about this when my phone rang. It was my sister Sbuysile.

Me: "Hey."

Sbuysile: "I need your help."

Me: "I dont have money Sbuysile."

Sbuysile: "Dont be a dick I need you to take me to the hospital for my check up."

Me: "Wheres your husband?"

Sbuysile: "He is at work he has a huge meeting today with some people from headquarters. Please come."

Me: "Fine. I'm on my way."

I hung up and got into my car and drove to her place. Ever since she got pregnant she's like a fragile little flower and her husband allows it so the rest of us have to put up with it. When Mpendulo was born it took a while for the effect of his good fortune to fall on this family. There was a time when we even thought it was all just

a hoax and we were ready to give up. But all we needed was patience and faith and boy did it pay off.

When Sbuysile found out she was pregnant she didn't tell anyone for almost six months. I guess the fear of it all being unreal or just a dream was a bit too much. But when she did finally tell us a couple of months ago we were all excited until she started acting like a little baby who needed to be waited on hand and foot.

I got to her place and she was already sitting outside. I opened the door for her and she got in. We drove to the hospital. We went to her doctor's office and all necessary checks were done. I decided to take her out for lunch before

I go to work. Since Zoey is on her honeymoon I have to keep things going this side.

We got to Mugg and Bean since that's her new favourite restaurant. We were sat down and made our order.

Sbuysile: "Okay so what's eating you up?" I looked up at her and she was looking at me intensely. "You've been edgy since you came to pick me up. What's wrong?" I sighed and told her everything. She didnt seem surprised by what I was telling her.

Me: "So what do you think?"

Sbuysile: "My relationship with Sethu might be a bit rocky but I know she's not the type to make things up just for the heck of it."

Me: "Maybe but why would Ntombi deny it though?"

Sbuysile: "I dont know but you need to get to the bottom of this."

She was right. I need to get to the bottom of this before it gets out of hand. We finished eating and I dropped her off then went straight to the office just to check up on things. Everything seemed to be in order. The team that Zoey had brought together this past two years is truly amazing or maybe it's because she runs a tight ship.

Once I was sure I all was in order I went back to the house. It was evening already and Ntombi wasn't here. I was too lazy to cook so I decided to drive to the mall to get some takeaways. I got to Nandos and made my order then sat down. I checked emails on my phone just to pass time. I looked up and Tshilidzi was sitting across from me looking at me funny.

Me: "A greeting would be nice."

Tshilidzi: "I could say the same thing to you. Your psycho is not here today is that why you're eating takeaways?"

Me: "Please stop calling her that you're beginning to sound like a jealous and bitter ex."  
She laughed.

Tshilidzi: "Dont flatter yourself Mwelase you and I both know you cant handle a girl like me."

Me: "You've been saying the same thing for two years now."

Tshidzi: "Whatever Sethu told me what your girl did. Please let her know I will cut her ugly face if she thinks she'll come at my sister sideways."

Me: "Really?"

Tshilidzi: "Yes really."

Me: "She told me nothing happened between her and Sethu."



Tshilidzi: "And that's why I call her a psycho. That girl needs to be checked and if you dont I will check her for you." She got up and went back to her friends. For some strange reason I found that whole interaction quite hot.

Since that unfortunate incident when we met we've somehow been playing a hide and seek game. A part of me thinks she is cautious because of Sethu and their relationship but the chemistry and sparks that fly between is pretty obvious. My order number was called out and I picked up my food and left. I drive straight to Sethu and Melusi's new place.

The moment I walked through the door I was met with loud screams. The boys were running around with Melusi chasing after them. When they saw me they came running towards me so I can 'hide' them. They stood behind me while they giggled and laughed as if no one could see them. Melusi walked towards us pretending as if he cant see them. He reached out and grabbed them from behind me

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their laugh filled the whole house.

Melusi: "You need to bath."

Asi: "No we took a bath in the morning."

Me: "How are you going to get a girlfriend if you dont bath?"

Asi: "Eeuw girls are weird and pink. Nope I dont want a girlfriend." He put them down and they went running up the stairs.

Me: "I guess you won't be getting grandkids."

Melusi: "Yeah right I didnt like girls either when I was his age." We went to the kitchen and he poured me a glass of juice.

Me: "Where's Sethu?"

Melusi: "Out to dinner with her dad. He flew into town this afternoon."

Me: "Oh does he know Tshilidzi is in town too."

Melusi: "I doubt it. You know that one has a mind of her own." That's true.

I went to the car and got out the takeaways and brought them in. Good thing I got a full chicken. I went upstairs and helped Melusi bath get the kids ready for bed. Soon as they were ready we went back downstairs and fed them before they slept. Then we sat up and watched soccer while waiting for Sethu to come back.



SETHU

Being a daddy's girl is probably the best thing in the entire universe. My dad and I have grown pretty close in the past two years. He flies into Durban atleast once a week and sometimes he will fly down just to have lunch or dinner then fly back to Joburg. The fact that I can talk to him about anything and everything is a bonus.

I left Melusi with the kids and went out to have some bonding session with daddy dearest. I was hoping Tshilidzi would join us but girl refused cause she is apparently on a girls trip. I dont know anyone who comes to Durban for a girls trip when they are literally here every other week. I wonder what goes on in that girls mind.

I got to the restaurant and dad was already there. Yes I call him dad now no more calling him Brian. He got up when he saw me and gave me a hug then we sat down. I ordered arrange juice which earned me a side eye from this guy cause usually I am a wine person.

Me: "Dont look at me like that." He smiled and put down the menu.

Dad: "Like what?"

Me: "You're giving me a side eye cause I ordered juice."

Dad: "Well I'm surprised usually you do wine but not today?"

Me: "No not today."

Dad: "Why?"

Me: "Fine since you are so persistent I'm pregnant." He smiled so wide. "You can't tell anyone though not yet anyway."



Dad: "My lips are sealed."

Our food arrived and we ate while I told him all about the kids. And I was able to convince him to sleep over so he can see the kids in the morning cause I'm sure by now they are fast asleep but then again with Melusi in charge you never know. I told my dad about Ntombi and her threats and he promised to look into her.

We finished eating and since he had rented a car we had to drive home with him following behind. We got to my car and my tyres were slashed.

Dad: "What the heck." He said reaching for his gun and looking around. There was no one there. The other cars in the parking lot didn't seem to have anyone inside.

My dad took me to his rented car before he called the cops. We sat in the car for a while till the police showed up. I wasn't really expecting them anytime soon but I guess finding out that a Judge was calling they drove here like bats out of hell. After the cops took our statements before towing my car back to the police station.

We drove home in my dad's car and for some strange reason I couldn't help feeling like we were being followed. We got home and headed straight inside. We found Melusi and Mcebo sitting on the couch laughing and screaming at the TV. Their relationship has improved quite a lot in the past couple of years.

We told them what happened and they were just as shocked and worried. Melusi even offered to get me a guard until this thing whatever it was was sorted. Mcebo's phone rang he went to the kitchen to answer it. He came back after a few moments saying he had to go cause Ntombi was at his house.

I dont know why but I felt like maybe she had something to do with this or maybe I'm just reading too much into this because of our little interaction the other night. I decided to get that thought out of my mind. Yes she might seem a but crazy but I dont think she'd go as far as stalking someone. I hope the police find out who did this and why. I'm not about to live in fear. I've done enough of that to last me a lifetime.

FIFTY SEVEN

Have you ever felt like someone was following you? Like your every move was being watched. It's been a couple of weeks since my tyres were slashed by God knows who and the feeling of being constantly watched hasn't left me.

Whoever it is was smart too cause they made sure to evade the cameras at the restaurant. And they even wore black which made identifying them a lot more difficult. And to make matters worse the testosterone that surrounds me has taken it upon itself to watch my every move and they even hired a guard for me. I dont know why though cause I'm not even allowed to go out the yard and when I do go out to the mall or to pick up the kids from school I

have to have the guard plus either Melusi Mcebo or even my father which is daunting enough as it is.

Today I decided to work from home cause having the guard breathing down my neck is just tiring. I took out my laptop and laid everything on the dining room table and got down to it. The kids were already in school and the house was super quiet. The noise might give me headaches when they are here and screaming their lungs out but when they arent here it feels lonely. I guess I've gotten used to the noise.

I worked for the better part of the day and strangely enough I got more work done than I

thought I would. I finished up and started on dinner. Ncane sent me a text and told me the kids would be sleeping over at her place tonight. I guess I just wasted a whole hour cooking for nothing. I called her back and spoke to my babies and they seemed to be in a good mood so I was happy.

I called the guard and told him to knock off since I wasn't planning on going anywhere and Melusi will be home soon. I dished up for him the extra food and he left. I was about to curl up on the couch and watch a movie when I heard something breaking upstairs. I know I locked the doors and closed the windows so what could it be?

I picked up a fireplace poker and tiptoed up the stairs to see what was happening. Now I regret sending the guard home. I got upstairs and was surprised to find the balcony door in my bedroom open and the wind blowing the curtains all over the room. I know I locked this door. I am not going crazy.

I searched around the room to make sure there was nobody there and it was empty. I closed the door and walked out. Maybe my paranoia is getting the best of me. I closed the door and just as I was about to walk down the stairs I dont know how but I felt something hit me on the head and then break before I went tumbling down the stairs. Then it was lights out.



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I kept drifting in and out of consciousness. I wasn't sure what was happening but my

entire body was in pain. It felt like I had been in a fight with someone and I lost. My ribs were in pain my back hurt my head was throbbing but the worst one was in my abdomen. I moved my hand up to my stomach and it felt like someone was sticking tiny little knives in every corner of my tummy.

I opened my eyes a bit and the light was blinding. I closed them and tried to open them again until I could actually see what was happening.

"You're up." I heard a voice speaking from somewhere. I looked around and I saw her she was sitting on a chair looking at me with a wine glass in her hand. I might have suspected she was psycho but now I was certain. I tried to sit up on the cold tiles but my hand slipped and I fell again. I pulled myself up again until I was leaning on the wall. I looked down and noticed I was sitting in a pool of blood. I went into panic mode my baby.

Ntombi: "Look at that is that your period or you just bleed easy?" She muttered as she sipped on my wine. Tears streamed down my face when I realized what was happening. I was losing my baby and trying to get through to this girl would be a waste of time. But I had to try.

Me: "I need a doctor." I whispered between sobs.

Ntombi: "What was that?" She asked with a smile on her face as she leaned over and rested her elbows on her knees like some gangster.

Me: "Please! I need a doctor." She laughed so loud you would think I just told her a joke.

Ntombi: "It's a bit too late for a doctor girl." She got up and refilled her glass. "Its crazy isnt it finding love finding someone who ticks all the boxes that you've set for your ideal person only to find that you dont tick even half of their boxes and guess who does? His brother's wife! His brother's wife! Not even some ex his brother's wife do you know how crazy that is? "

Me: "Ntombi please I need to go to the hospital."

Ntombi: "Uyarasa (you're making noise.) Stop with the crying." She walked up to me and squatted in front of me. "You and I had a conversation a few weeks back remember that? Well I do and so does Mcebo and your stupid husband. And guess what else I know

Sponsored

and your stupid husband. And guess what else I know Mcebo cancelled his order from the jeweler where he had ordered an engagement ring. You know where that ring was supposed to go? Right here!" She grumbled as she pointed at her ring finger.

I gave up trying to talk to her cause it was clear she was not ready to listen her mind was clouded with whatever craziness she was

dealing with I just need to find a way to get out of here or better yet call for help. I scanned the room trying to locate my phone. I saw it sitting on the coffee table. Getting to it will be a mission and a half.

Ntombi was pacing up and down rambling about something. At this point I didn't even care what her issues were i just knew I needed to see a doctor. And I needed to get out of this mess. I heard a car pull up outside. I summoned all the strength I had left in me and screamed my lungs out which startled Ntombi. For a moment she was rooted in one place looking at me like I was the crazy one.

I kept screaming and when she got her bearings back she ran up the stairs and my guess was she probably left the same way she got in. The door opened and Melusi walked in. He dropped his laptop bag on the floor and ran to me.

Melusi: "Baby what happened?"

Me: "I need a doctor." He scooped me up and took me to his car. He drove out and we went to the hospital. I was immediately wheeled into theatre cause I was bleeding a lot.



MELUSI



I've probably been shit scared a few times in my life. But I dont think anything will ever compare to seeing my wife sitting in a pool of her own blood. I couldn't even get answers on what happened. All I could think about was making sure she gets to the hospital in time.

I stood and watched her as she was wheeled off to theater. I sat out on the cold benches and waited for some word on what was happening

but there was nothing. But then again maybe no news means good news right? I dont know I just need to know if my wife is Okay or not.

I waited for close to two hours with no word on what was going on. I texted Tshepi and Mcebo and told them what happened. Then I texted her dad and her sister. Tshepi and Zoey showed up first and when she asked what happened I couldn't tell her anything cause I also didnt know shit.

We sat and waited and waited and waited some more. Finally the doctor came out and walked towards us.

Me: "Doctor where is my wife? How is she?"

Doctor: "She will be Okay although she did bleed a lot."

Tshepi: "What happened to her?"

Doctor: "Well she had a miscarriage."

Me: "Wait what? Sethu wasnt pregnant. Was she?"

Doctor: "She was. I'm sorry for your loss. She's being taken into the recovery room right now so you should be able to see her in a few minutes."

We waited for a few more minutes before a nurse came and escorted us to her room. We got in and she looked like she was taking a nap she didnt look like she was just bleeding a few hours ago and scaring the shit out of me. She had a drip on her arm and another IV filled with blood. She stirred when she heard us walking in.

Me: "Hey how are you?" I sat down next to her and held her hand.

Sethu: "Hey I'm sorry?" She whispered as tears ran down her face.

Me: "I dont know why you're apologizing when you're the one in a hospital bed."

Sethu: "I lost our baby. I'm sorry."

Me: "Dont do that baby okay this wasn't your fault."

Tshepi: "Babe dont scare me like that ever again. What happened?"

Sethu: "Ntombi happened."

Me: "What?"

Sethu: "I dont know how she got into the house but she hit me with something on my head and I fell down the stairs."

I texted Mcebo and told him what Sethu told me. And I also told him that I'm calling the police cause if I get to her first she'll need a morgue and not a jail cell.

## FIFTY EIGHT

I'm not sure if this was supposed to be a dream or what but the banging going on seemed real. I turned on my side and tried to silence the noise but it seemed to get louder and louder. Ntombi didn't seem to hear a damn thing since she was still sleeping soundly. I looked at my phone and the time was almost midnight. I turned the light on. I got out of bed and made my way downstairs. I opened the door and Tshilidzi nudged in like a bat out of hell.

Tshilidzi: "Where's your girlfriend?" She asked with fire burning in her eyes.

Me: "Do you know what time it is?"

Tshilidzi: "Never mind I'll find her myself." She turned and ran up the stairs taking them two at a time leaving me baffled. I stood there for a while trying to get my bearings before I heard screams coming from my bedroom.

I rushed up and found Tshilidzi sitting on top of Ntombi with her one hand firmly placed around her neck squeezing slowly. I could see Ntombi struggling to breathe while Tshilidzi unleashed slap after slap and throwing in punches here and there.



I rushed over to the bed and tried to pull Tshilidzi away from Ntombi but it seemed the more I tried the tighter she held on to Ntombi's neck.

Me: "Let her go." I screamed at her but she just wouldn't let up. I pulled her hands away and she finally let go. Ntombi gasped for breath while coughing. I put Tshilidzi as far away from Ntombi as I could. I rushed to Ntombi to check on her and she was slowly getting better I quickly rushed to the bathroom and got her a glass of water. I handed her the glass and she drank. I could see her neck turning green and black from the bruising. I turned to Tshilidzi and she was pacing up and down the room still enraged.

Me: "What the heck is wrong with you? Why would you do that?"

Tshilidzi: "Really? You're asking me that? Ask that bitch what she did. Ask her why my sister is lying in a hospital bed right now. Ask her." She shouted. I didnt even know Sethu was in hospital.

Me: "What happened to Sethu? Why is she in hospital?"

Tshilidzi: "You did hear me say ask your girlfriend right? That whore laying in your bed almost killed my sister and she killed her unborn baby." She fumed. I could see the smoke coming out of her. I turned to look at Ntombi.

Me: "Ntombi what is she talking about?"

Tshilidzi: "So you dont believe me? Call Melusi and ask him better yet call Sethu." I kept looking at Ntombi waiting for an answer instead she was silently crying. At this point I wasnt even sure if her tears were even real.

Me: "Ntombi speak." I bellowed which seemed to scare Ntombi.

Ntombi: "I dont know what she's talking about. I landed back in Durban less than two hours ago. How could i have attacked Sethu while I was in Joburg."

Tshilidzi: "You're lying." She screamed.

Ntombi: "I promise you baby I didnt do this."

Tshilidzi: "I swear I am going to kill this girl."  
She muttered under her breath.

I took my pants and put them on. I rushed to the closet and got a sweater and sneakers.

Me: "Tshilidzi lets go." I grabbed my car keys and dragged her out of the room.

Tshilidzi: "I cant believe you're just going to let her get away with all that."

Me: "Not now okay."

Tshilidzi: "Then when? After she finishes what she started?" We drove out of the gate and I immediately changed the access code leaving Ntombi stuck inside.

We drove to the hospital and found Melusi sitting in the hallway with his face buried in his hands. He seemed drained and tired. A part of me wanted to comfort my brother but then the other part of me was riddled with guilt. I had brought this woman into our lives and everything else that comes with her mess is all my fault.

Tshilidzi walked before me and went straight to Sethu's room. I sat down next to Melusi on the bench not even sure what I should say to him.

Me: "I'm sorry."

Melusi: "Where is she?"

Me: "My place." He lifted his head up and looked at me.

Melusi: "Let me guess she told you she was innocent and Sethu was lying about her being at our house?"

Me: "I'll take care of her. Dont worry about it."

Melusi: "I didnt even know Sethu was pregnant. And when I did find out my child was in a pool

of blood in our house. And there was nothing I can do."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Melusi: "I need to check on Sethu." He got up and went into her room.

I got up to follow him but froze at the door. I looked in through the small window at the top of the door and all I saw was Sethu laying on the bed with tears in her eyes. My heart tore into a thousand pieces knowing that I caused that. I caused her pain.

I turned and walked back to the parking lot. I got to my car and drove back to my house. I got into the house and found Ntombi in the lounge pacing up and down her bags were packed and standing by the door.

Ntombi: "You changed the access code."

Me: "Yes. You going somewhere?"

Ntombi: "I'd like to go back to my place please. Since you refuse to believe me I dont see why I should even be here."

Me: "That's a great idea. But the police would like to have a word with you before you leave."



Ntombi: "You called the cops on me? How could you?"

Me: "You tried to kill someone Ntombi and now I actually do believe that you were the one who slashed Sethu's tires. You went to all this trouble for what Ntombi? Explain that to me because I dont understand."

Ntombi: "Fine you want to know the truth. I love you Mcebo but I'm tired of fighting for a place in your heart."

Me: "What the fuck are you talking about? I was ready to marry you."

Ntombi: "As a consolation because the one girl you truly wanted didnt want you. Instead she chose a ghost over you."

Me: "Even if you were right how does pushing Sethu down the stairs solve anything? Right now the cops are looking for you you will be charged with attempted murder and there is nothing I can do for you because Melusi wants your head on a platter not that I blame him." She sat on the dining room chair wiping her tears as the sound of the sirens got louder and louder.

Ntombi: "Did you ever love me?" She asked with a pain laced voice and at that moment I hated myself. My own obsession with Sethu hadn't just hurt me but I had managed to drag Ntombi into this mess and now she was facing jail time because of me. Why couldn't I just let her be.

Me: "Come with me." I pulled her up and led her out the backdoor. I opened up the back gate that led to the golf course behind the house. "Go to the little park down the road and stay there I'll come get you. I closed the gate and went back to the house. The cops were already buzzing at the gate. I quickly grabbed Ntombi's bags and shoved them in the hallway closet. I opened the gate and thw sirens got closer to the house.

I opened the door and the cops walked in with guns already out. They looked around the house looking for Ntombi but they clearly couldn't find her. The lead detective came down and looked at me as I sat on the couch while my house was being turned upside down.

Detective: "Where is she?"

Me: "Werent you supposed to ask me that before you went through my house like you owned it."

Detective: "This is not the time to be smart Mcebo where is she?"

Me: "I dont know. When I came back from the hospital she was gone."

The other officers came back and they left. I waited for the cops to be out of sight before I went down to the park and got Ntombi. I drove her to the taxi rank the sun was almost up and

thw first taxi would be leaving for Joburg in just a few minutes. I paid for her seat.

Me: "I dont know how but I'll try and convince Sethu to drop the charges. As for you go back to Joburg and dont ever come back to Durban we are done. I cant be with someone who would want to have the mother of my child and my brothers wife dead because of your own insecurities. I loved you in my own way and I wanted to build a life with you. But I cant do that anymore." She wiped her tears and got into the taxi. The driver started the engine and off it went. I guess that's the end of my relationship.

I got into my car and headed back to my house.  
Now I need to get Sethu to drop the charges.  
But how?



MELUSI

I feel like my heart has been ripped out of my chest. My baby is gone. I didnt even get to hold him or her in my arms. The sad part though was that I hadn't even known I had a child on the way and now they are gone. Ntombi will regret

the day she ever walked into my house and pulled that stunt. She will pay for this.

I left the hospital early in the morning and went to the police station. I found Detective Ngobese already there. Hopefully this means Ntombi was in custody.

Me: "Detective did you find her?"

Detective: "Unfortunately not. She was gone by the time we got there. But dont worry we will find her."

Me: "For her sake I hope you get to her first."



Detective: "That's not the kind of threat you should be making in a police station Melusi."

Me: "I dont remember making a threat." I left him there and headed to the airport to pick up Sethu's dad.

We drove back to the hospital and when I got there Mcebo was already there with Sethu. She gave her dad a hug and faked a smile. Something wasn't right and I could see it in her eyes.

Me: "Hey are you okay?"

Sethu: "Yeah I'm fine. I just want to go home."

Me: "You'll be out of here soon. The cops are already looking for Ntombi so hopefully she will be out of our lives forever soon." Sethu looked at Mcebo before looking back at me.

Sethu: "Why would the cops be looking for Ntombi? What did she do?"

Me: "You said she's the one who pushed you down the stairs remember?" She looked confused for a second.

Sethu: "No it wasn't her it was probably someone who broke in to steal."

Brian and I looked at each other before looking Mcebo. He had his eyes glued to Sethu and he didnt seem surprised by what Sethu just said. Brian and I walked out to the hallway.

Brian: "I thought you said this Ntombi girl was responsible for this?"

Me: "That's what Sethu said Tshepiso was here too she can confirm that."

Brian: "So why would she change the story now?"

Me: "My guess is my brother had something to do with it."

I took out my phone and texted TT. Since he was in Joburg he would look out for Ntombi starting with checking all airport arrivals and even taxi ranks. If my brother thinks I'll let this go because Sethu changed her story then he is in for one huge surprise.

FIFTY NINE

It's been a month since that fateful day when I lost my child and this house feels cold. Melusi has been distant he works late nights and leaves early in the morning. Even though we work in the same building we hardly see each other. On weekends he's always taking the kids out to the park or the beach or wherever there's anything for them to do. Sometimes I think he blames me for what happened but I can't figure out why.

I decided to wait up for him tonight cause I dont know what is going on and I need answers. It's almost eleven PM when he pulls up. He takes his sweet time coming in. He walks in and since the lights are off in the lounge he cant see me sitting there. The tiny bit of light coming in from the kitchen allows me to see him and his movements.

He leaves his laptop on the dining room table and walks to the kitchen. He comes back with a bottle of water and turns the lights on. He stops in his tracks when he sees me sitting there. He takes a sip of his water and comes closer to where I am.

Melusi: "I thought you'd be asleep by now."

Me: "Are you having an affair?" A frown forms on his face and a part of me wants to take back that question but I also need to know the truth. I need to know why he suddenly feels the need to come home late.

Melusi: "What are you talking about?"

Me: "You come home late you leave early on weekends you are never here so I can't help having questions." He chuckles and takes a seat.

Melusi: "When have I ever cheated on you Sethu?"

Me: "Theres a first time for everything." He chuckles again and now I can tell he is pissed. But then again he could just be deflecting.

Melusi: "I'm not having an affair Sethu. I'm no saint but I've never cheated on you and I'm not cheating on you now."

Me: "So what's with the late nights and disappearing? You havent had dinner with us in

a long time. Or maybe you blame me for losing the baby?"

Melusi: "I dont blame you for that I blame Ntombi."

Me: "What?"

Melusi: "Why did you change your story? When you first woke up You said without a shadow of a doubt that Ntombi was the one who pushed you down the stairs next thing Mcebo shows up and your story changes. Why?" I didnt think this whole time he was holding on to that. Yes I know Ntombi did what she did but Mcebo feels bad enough as it is he blames himself for what happened to me because he brought Ntombi into our lives and Ntombi going to jail would just make things worse.



Maybe I feel like I owe Mcebo for all that he did for me and my son and I figured if this eases his mind and heart in some way then I wouldn't mind doing it. Ntombi being in jail wont bring my baby back plus Mcebo promised I'll never have to deal with Ntombi ever again.

Me: "For the sake of peace."

Melusi: "Peace? Whose peace? Mcebo's? What about mine? Where do I fit into this little peace bubble of yours? Was that not my child? Or my feelings don't mean a thing to you?"

Me: "Of course your feelings matter. I'm sorry I didnt tell you this sooner."

Melusi: "What difference would that have made? You still would have protected him and his 'peace' anyway." I get up from the chair and sit next to him.

Me: "Look I know I should have been honest with you from the get go but Mcebo has done so much for me I felt like I owed him this."

Melusi: "Right. Thank you for clarifying that for me atleast now I don't have to imagine it." He gets up.

Me: "What does that even mean?"

Melusi: "It means you dont care about how I feel I lost a child that I didnt even know about yet you still care more about someone else's

feelings than mine. It's okay I get it Mcebo sacrificed a lot for you and from the looks of it I'll hear about that till Jesus comes back and I just have to accept it cause I love you afterall I was having the time of my life in IBiza right? So I deserve for my feelings to be tossed aside cause they mean nothing."

He turned and walked up the stairs leaving me sitting there unsure of what to say to him. I thought I was keeping the peace by not turning Ntombi in I thought I was doing the right thing but now I know I protected Mcebo's feelings and completely disregarded my husband's. I got up and went up to our bedroom hoping to apologize and make things right but he wasnt in bed. I thought maybe he was in the shower but the bathroom was empty.

I went out to the guest bedroom and tried to open it but the door was locked. I knocked a few times but he wouldn't open. I decided to let him be and just go to bed. Hopefully in the morning he will be in a better mood.

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I woke up in the morning thinking I would at least start by making him breakfast to apologize and then take it from there but like all the other days before today he was gone by the time I woke up. I made breakfast for the kids gave them a bath and got them ready for school. I took a bath while they ate and got ready for work. I finished up and packed them in the car. I dropped Asi off at school then took Mpendulo to daycare.

I got to work and Melusi wasn't there. His PA told me he was working at the depot for the day. I knew that was a lie. He wasn't working there he was just avoiding me. I got to my office and got down to work. At lunchtime I drove to meet Tshepi and Tshilidzi that one needs to relocate to Durban cause clearly this is now her second home. She spends more time this side

than she does in Joburg. I wonder when she works.

I got to the restaurant and they were both already there glasses of wine in hand. I hugged them and sat down. I ordered my own glass and gulped it down in one go and ordered another one.

Tshilidzi: "Why not order the whole bottle cause you clearly need it."

Me: "Ha ha very funny."

Tshepi: "You do look like you need it friend. What's happening?" I told them everything that

happened and when I was done they were looking at me like I was crazy or maybe I was.

Tshilidzi: "So you lied because Mcebo felt guilty about something he had no control off? Completely disregarded Melusi's feelings? Why?"

Me: "I felt bad for him. Besides it felt like a small price to pay for all the sacrifices he made for me." They both chuckled looked at each other and sipped their wine.

Tshepi: "I understand Mcebo's sacrifices heck if he hadn't done what he did I probably wouldn't have met Zoey heck if he hadn't done what he did I probably wouldn't have met Zoey but at some point you are going to have to decide what it is you want cause right now I dont think

you do. You chose Melusi even when he gave you a way out to be with Mcebo you still chose him. Yes Mcebo made sacrifices for you but didn't Melusi also make sacrifices for you? He literally came close to dying or being turned into whatever MaZwane wanted to turn him into to protect you. The man drove your car for an entire week because he was told something would happen to you everything that happened to him was supposed to happen to you and yet you seem to forget that. Why did you choose him then?"

There are a lot of things in my life that have punched me in my gut and made me question a lot of things and this moment was one of those. I've been so focused on myself and my own things that I've been hurting people maybe not intentionally but still I hurt them. I need to fix this before things get completely out of hand.





MCEBO

I haven't heard from Ntombi in a while. Although she did try to call me for the first few days after we broke up but now she had stopped clearly she got the message. And I hope for her sake she doesnt fuck it up by coming back here.

Melusi has been avoiding me for a while now I'm not sure if Sethu told him anything or he's just still reeling from the loss of the baby. I just hope and pray at some point he will come around cause I miss my brother. Since Mpendulo's birth I've been spending more and more time around I've cut down on the travelling and just enjoy being home.

I came home about an hour ago and I've been in the kitchen cooking my doorbell rang and I knew exactly who it was since no one has the new access codes except Tshilidzi. I dont know why she's even ringing the bell cause she has the keys. I go and open and she is standing there like some visitor.

Me: "Is this supposed to be a game of chivalry?" Usually when I make jokes she laughs no matter how dry they are but not this time. She walks past me and stands in the middle of the room. She goes through her bag looking for something. She turns around with keys in her hand. She hands them over to me. "What's going on?"

Tshilidzi: "I came to give you your keys back I'm going back to Joburg."

Me: "Okay but you do know keys are allowed in planes right? You don't need to leave them." She turns around and places the keys on the table.

Tshilidzi: "I'm not coming back if I do come back I'll be at Sethu's."

Me: "Okay what did I do?"

Tshilidzi: "You didnt do anything Mcebo except protect the woman who almost killed my sister."

Me: "What?"

Tshilidzi: "She told us. I'm glad things worked out for you but I dont think I can keep doing this."

Me: "That has nothing to do with what's going on between us." I walk closer to her and she takes a step back so I stop.

Tshilidzi: "When last did you speak to your brother?"

Me: "I don't know it's been a while what's that got to do with this?"

Tshilidzi: "Your brother lost a child he didnt even know about and you havent even bothered to find out how he is doing instead you chose to protect the person responsible for his loss. Why?"

Me: "Its complicated."

Tshilidzi: "What's so complicated about it? You felt guilty for bringing her here Sethu feels guilty for the sacrifices you made for her what about Melusi? Do his feelings matter or you just dont care."

Me: "Of course I care. What do you mean? He's my brother and I love him. I literally put my life on hold for his wife and son I....."

Tshilidzi: "Blah bloody blah. You did this you did that everyone knows Mcebo. Everyone sees you as the hero who swooped in and saved the

day when it mattered most we all know that. But does that have to be thrown at Melusi's face at every turn? Have you even thought about what coming home to find his wife in the arms of his brother might have done to him? The guilt he lives with for not being here to protect his family? The pain of watching his wife pregnant with another man's child he had had to swallow his pain for a long time now and you dont care."

Me: "I am trying to accommodate everyone here why can't you understand that."

Tshilidzi: "If that helps you sleep better at night then keep saying it to yourself."

She walked out leaving me confused as fuck. I picked up my phone and called Melusi but he didnt pick up. Not that I expected him to he's

been avoiding me anyway. Now what am I supposed to do?

SIXTY

Me: "You found her?"

Brian: "Yep she's at the police station as we speak."



Me: "Good. She's not getting bail is she?"

Brian: "Not a chance. I spoke to some friends they'll make sure she stays behind bars."

Me: "Perfect. Do you think Sethu's statement will be needed?"

Brian: "Hopefully not. With the street cameras showing that she was parked outside your house for a few days before that and it shows her even jumping the fence into your house I'm pretty sure it will be fine. Plus I'm hoping the case will go to a friend of mine so even if she can come up with excuses she'll still go to jail."

Me: "Thank you. That's one load off my shoulders. Goodnight."

Brian: "Goodnight."

He hangs up. Even though Sethu decided to recant her story Brian and I decided to continue searching for Ntombi. Lucky for us she wasn't hiding cause I guess she thought all was forgotten but one thing I'm not going to forget is her killing my child. It took a while for the Detective that Brian got to put together a case but he finally did and the police were more than happy to arrest her as it stands now she is in a holding cell awaiting her bail hearing.

It's late in the evening and I should be home but I don't feel like it. But I need to tuck the boys in cause I haven't done that in a while I'm sure they miss me just as much as I miss them. I packed up my things and drove home. Lucky

for me I got there while Sethu was still wrestling with the boys so they can bath. I took over and gave them their bath.

I missed these moments. I got them dressed in their pyjamas and since they have already had dinner I sat with them in their room and read them a bedtime story. Before long they were fast asleep. I decided to take a shower and change to some casual clothes. I grabbed my keys and walked back downstairs.

Sethu: "You're leaving?"

Me: "Just meeting up with some friends."

Sethu: "But I made dinner."

Me: "I'll eat when I come back." I open the door and walk out. I open the car door and she shuts it.

Sethu: "Please come inside we need to talk."

Me: "About what?"

Sethu: "About us and this thing with Ntombi."

Me: "There's nothing to talk about Sethu. I've already taken care of everything so dont worry about that." I open the car door and get in then drive out.

I'm not even sure where I'm going but I know I just don't feel like being in the house. I drove until I got to a bar and got in I placed my order and before long I had a bottle of Hennessy in front of me. I poured myself a glass while looking at the ocean. I looked at the chair across from me and I had company. And all I wanted to do was sit all by myself and watch the ocean.

Me: "That seat is taken."

Mcebo: "I can see that. Shouldn't you be home?"

Me: "Well I'm here so...." I shrugged my shoulders and drank my brandy.

Mcebo: "How are you? I'm sorry about the baby."

Me: "It is what it is."

Mcebo: "Look I know it's hard right now but it will get better I promise."

Me: "You know what would make me feel better? Ntombi behind bars where she belongs."

Mcebo: "Yeah didnt Sethu change her statement?"

Me: "I should be asking you that since you're the one who convinced her to do that."

Mcebo: "Right. Look all I wanted to do was keep the peace I felt bad that Ntombi would

have to go to jail when I'm the one who brought her into our lives she doesn't deserve to pay for my mistakes."

Me: "Right. It's good to know my child meant that little I mean he or she was just a clot of blood right so he doesn't deserve a bit of justice."

Mcebo: "That's not what I meant. "

Me: "I'd like to be alone please."

Mcebo: "Bro....."

Me: "Which part of I'd like to be alone don't you understand?"

He gets up and walks away. A part of me wants to understand where he is coming from but I also can't believe he would put some woman over family. But then again Sethu did the same thing when she chose to lie. Now I dont know what else she's lied about to me.

I finished my bottle and ordered another one. I got halfway through it when Sethu walked over to me. No guess how she found me. She sits down next to me.

Sethu: "Since when do you drink this much?"



Me: "Since my wife started lying to me. What are you doing here? And where are the kids?"

Sethu: "Ncane is watching them. Can we go home and talk about this."

Me: "Like I said there's nothing to talk about. I get it Sethu Mcebo was your knight in shining armour when I wasn't there as far as you're concerned he's a super hero and I'm the deadbeat who abandoned his family right?"

Sethu: "That's not true."

Me: "Why aren't you with him? Since he matters that much to you why aren't you with him? I understood everything that happened even though it hurt me to my core knowing that my brother and my wife were sleeping together I still tried to understand. I gave you a way out as much as I wanted to be with you I gave you the

choice to be with him if you wanted but you chose me

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as much as I wanted to be with you I gave you the choice to be with him if you wanted but you chose me and yet you still find a way to put his needs and wants before my own as your husband. Why?"

Sethu: "This isnt the time or the place Melusi can we please just go home we'll talk about everything at home."

Me: "You know why I bought the new house? Cause I couldn't keep walking around my own house and be reminded that you and my brother probably had sex in every corner of it but I still have to deal with that even in our house. If you want to be with him you have my blessing. Go and be happy Sethu." I took out a few notes from my wallet and threw them on the table before walking out.

I've loved my wife from the moment I saw her in varsity. She was a fresh faced first year student who had hope before the stress of varsity took over. I knew then that I would marry her and I did all i could to get close to her. And it paid off. Getting to know her made me realise my

instincts were right she was indeed the kind of woman I wanted to spend the rest of my life with.

Ever since the day she said yes to us being together I did all I could to make sure she never regrets that decision. But now it looks like I'm the one regretting that. I got into my car and just drove to God knows where. I kept driving until I saw a sign that said I was now in Mbumbulu. I called Khehla soon as I was outside his gate. He got out and opened the gate. I drove in and he led me to an empty room and within minutes I was out like a light.



I woke up to the sounds of beating drums and singing. How could I forget that this is a daily occurrence in this home. My head is pounding and the noise is not making things any better. Why would Khehla do this knowing I was here and drunk oh well maybe I did this to myself. Who in their right mind drinks two bottles of brandy?

I got up and went to the kitchen and got myself a bucket of water to bath. I went back to the room and took my bath then got dressed. I went

out and found Khehla in his hut with some of his students. I needed to get to work and I cant wait for him to finish up what he was doing.

I waved to signal my departure he got up and came outside. He led me to a peach tree that was in the yard and we sat under it.

Me: "You know you didn't have to leave your students. I have to get to work anyway."

Khehla: "They can wait. So what's bothering you?"

Me: "Nothing."

Khehla: "So you came here drunk just for the fun of it?"

Me: "Its complicated Khehla and I dont know if I want to talk about it."

Khehla: "Okay but you need to bring your wife for a cleansing."

Me: "Why?"

Khehla: "Didnt you just lose a child? You need to be cleansed."

Me: "Sure. I will let her know."

Khehla: "What happened to you and your brother fixing things? I can sense the distance between you two."

Me: "Argh dont worry about it. It will work itself out."

Khehla: "No it wont you and your brother together with your wife need to sit down and talk about this. You cant continue on like nothing happened."

Me: "I dont want to talk about anything. I'm done trying. I've already told Sethu if she wants to be with Mcebo she can go right ahead." He



chuckles and draws something on the ground with a stick.

Khehla: "That's not going to happen." He said getting up.

Me: "What do you mean?"

Khehla: "Go home. Dont forget the cleansing." He walked back into his hut leaving me with a zillion questions. Why would he say that it's not going to happen. How is he going to stop her?

I went to my car and drove back home. I was already late for work and I have a meeting in about two hours. I got home and Sethu's car was in the driveway. I let out a sigh cause I was not ready for an altercation right now. I walked

in and Sethu and Mcebo were in the lounge with Sethu in his arms. I guess she's made her choice. I rushed upstairs and changed to my work clothes.

Sethu: "You didn't come home last night. Where were you?"

Me: "Dont worry about it My brother was here to keep you company anyway."

Sethu: "It's not what you think."

Me: "I'm sure it isn't. Besides I gave you a way out and you took it so it's all good."

I grabbed my briefcase and walked out. I'm not sure if this was the end of my marriage or not but if it is I can gladly say I did the best I could. So maybe it's time I start thinking about me but I couldn't help thinking about Khehla's words what did he mean when he said 'its never going to happen'?

SIXTY ONE

I'm caught between a rock and a hard place. A part of me will always feel indebted to Mcebo for all that he did for me and my son. I dont think I'll ever do enough to thank him. But on the other hand my husband feels like I'm choosing Mcebo over him. I dont know why he cant understand that I owe Mcebo a lot.

We havent shared a bed in weeks he's never home and when he is home he spends all his time with the kids. To him it's like I dont exist anymore and that is just heartbreaking. I

thought that after all that we've been through the past few years our lives would be back in track. But it seems I was wrong.

I was woken up by a loud bang. I opened my eyes and the noise continued. It was coming from downstairs. I got up and put on my gown and slippers and walked out of the bedroom. I walked down the stairs behind Melusi seems he too was woken up by the sound. He got to the door first and opened and to my surprise Khehla was standing there in his full regalia. It's not even six o'clock yet and he is already here. When does he sleep?

He pushed Melusi out of the way and got in. I was watching all this from the middle of the

stairs. I figured since this was between these two I will just go back into my room and let them sort out whatever it is that was between them.

Khehla: "Ntombazana uyaphi? Wona la. (Girl where are you going? Come here?)" His bellowed all over the room. I quickly made my way down to where he was. With my head bowed I stood in front of him not really sure what was going on but his voice alone told me whatever he was here for was serious.

Khehla: "Uphi umfowenu? (Where is your brother?)" I figured that question wasnt directed at me so I just decided to keep my mouth shut and let them be.

Melusi: "I dont know."

Khehla: "Mfownele umtshele eze la. (Call him and tell him to come here.) Wena Makoti ngcela itiyiye. (I'd like some tea.)" He said as he marched to the couch and sat down. He took the remote and switched the TV on. I know he is a powerful men and yes I respect him but honestly he still needs to know this is not his house.

I marched my ass to the kitchen and filled the kettle since I didnt have enough courage to tell him what was really in my head. I heard Melusi speaking and I assumed he must be speaking to Mcebo since he also didn't have the guts to tell him where to get off.

The water boiled and like the 'good Makoti' that I am I placed everything in the tray and took it to him. I was about to walk away from him when he told me to sit down and within seconds my butt had made contact with the couch. I waited patiently for him to say something instead he sipped the tea loud enough for someone in Joburg to hear him.

Melusi came and joined us after changing from his pyjamas to some sweats and a tshirt. Why am I not allowed to change again? Mxm. There was a knock on the door before Mcebo walked in. He looked like he had just woken up who am I kidding we all just woke up. He greeted and sat down. We all looked at Khehla expecting him to say something since we were all here but it seemed the tea was more important at



this point. He took his last sip and placed the cup and saucer back on the tray.

Khehla: "Good. You are all here."

Mcebo: "What's going on?"

Khehla: "Kunenkinga laykhaya (we have a problem.)" Mybheart started racing I know when someone of Khehla's standing says theres a problem you can't help but think of the worst case scenario and for me all I could see in my head was MaZwane and her brother the devil coming for us.

Melusi: "Yinkinga yani leyo Khehla? (What problem?)"

Khehla: "Umsebenzi wokugeza lo awkenziwa (the cleansing ceremony has not been done.)" He says pointing at me but looking at Melusi. "Futhi nendlela lengane ehambe ngayo ayilunganga (plus the way this baby died was not right.)"

Melusi: "Khuluma no Sethu Khehla. (Talk to Sethu.)" I cant believe he would throw me under the bus like that. Yes he told me about the cleansing but I've just been dragging feet. I guess a part of me feels like I have failed my child for not seeking justice for his/her passing.

Khehla: "Makoti?"

Me: "Uhm singawenza umsebenzi (we can do the ceremony.)"

Khehla: "Good. I'll be back in three days." He took out a notepad from his bag and started

writing some things. When he was finished he tore the page off the notbook and placed it on the coffee table. "Make sure all these things are here when I come." He got up and walked out with Melusi.

Mcebo: "So why was I here again? "

Me: "Beats me. Khehla is just dramatic."

Mcebo: "Oh well. When did you change your statement to the police?"

Me: "What statement?"

Mcebo: "About Ntombi."

Me: "I didnt. I haven't spoken to the police since that day at the hospital. Why?"

Mcebo: "I found out last night that Ntombi was sentenced to five years in jail for assault your assault."

Me: "What? How?"

Mcebo: "I dont know. But I'm pretty sure your father and Melusi had something to do with it."

Me: "They didnt tell me anything."

Mcebo: "I bet. Anyways I'm going to Joburg today I need to figure out how i can help her."

Me: "Goodluck."

He got up and walked out. I couldn't help noticing the tension between him and Melusi. This whole thing with Ntombi is taking its toll on everyone and now I feel bad. Melusi walked in and headed to the kitchen. I decided to ask him about what Mcebo said.

Me: "So Ntombi has been sentenced to five years in jail."

Melusi: "I know." He took out eggs and some sausages.

Me: "I didnt give my statement so how did she end up in jail?" He shrugged his shoulders and

continued cracking the eggs. "Did you do this Melusi?"

Melusi: "Why do you care? You didnt want a conviction anyway so."

Me: "But I promised....."

Melusi: "Mcebo? I know. But i didnt make that promise. Our baby's death might not mean much to you but it means a lot to me."

Me: "I carried the child I'm the one who was pushed down the stairs how can you say my child means little to me?"

Melusi: "Your actions told me that."

I sighed and walked back upstairs. There's obviously no winning this. I got my phone and called gogo Nkanyezi. It's been a while since I spoke to her. She didnt pick up. And a few minutes later I got a text from her saying she is busy. I should come by later.

I decided to take a shower and get ready for work. I got dressed and went to the kids room to wake them up and get them ready for school but they weren't there. I heard noise and laughter coming from downstairs. I went down and found the kids ready for school. Asi was in his little school uniform and Mpendulo was ready for daycare. I guess Melusi took care of everything. They were already having breakfast.

I stood by the corner and watched them have their time. A few weeks ago I would have been part of their little clique. But now I have to watch from the sidelines. I know that if I show my face it will just ruin the whole mood. And I have no one to blame but me.

I quietly went back upstairs and packed up my work things. I got back downstairs and the kids were already in my car strapped in and ready to go. I've always envied how Melusi is always able to get the kids to do anything he asks. I wish they could listen to me.



Me: "Aren't you going to work?"

Melusi: "Not today. I need to get all the things Khehla said we should get. And I need to get a goat."

Me: "Right. Okay. I will see you when I get back."

Melusi: "Sure." I leaned in closer to him for a kiss instead I was met with a rush of air as he turned and walked back into the house. Yeah neh.

I got into the car and drove off. I dropped the kids at their respective locations and then went to work. My day was long and busy. As if the universe could see how tired I was my last

meeting was cancelled. I saw that as an opportunity to go and see gogo Nkanyezi. I texted her before I drove to her place. I got there and she was already waiting for me. Since I wasn't necessarily there for a consultation we went to her lounge where she had tea and scones waiting.

Nkanyezi: "You seem to have a lot on your mind. What's wrong?"

I tell her everything that's happened since that night Ntombi walked into my house uninvited and pushed me down the stairs to everything else that's happened after that.

Me: "So what do you think?"

Nkanyezi: "Do you want my honest opinion?"

Me: "I wouldn't be here if I didn't." A part of me fears what she'll say cause she's never been one to mince words. But at the same time I need someone who is neutral in all this to be honest with me.

Nkanyezi: "You chose Melusi right?" I nod.  
"Then why are you making it seem like he was chosen for you. You made that choice. No one pushed you to it. Mcebo is a grown man he knows you were never his to begin with. Yes he stepped up for you at a time when you had no

one in your corner but that doesn't mean put him on a pedestal and worship the ground he walks on. He is human too and everytime you choose his happiness over your husband's you make him believe maybe there's a chance with you. He needs to know and understand that it's over between you two so he can move on and find his own happiness. And if things continue this way those two will end up hating each other and it will be all on you and your lack of boundaries."

That was a whole mouthful that seems bitter for me to swallow. I guess u should have been prepared for that or maybe I was I was just hoping she would tell me what I wanted to hear instead she told me what I needed to hear. As much as I would like to shift the blame for the

distance between my husband and I i cant. I know it's all my fault. I did this and I need to fix this cause no one else will.



MCEBO

I should have known Melusi wouldn't take any of this lying down. I should have known. If I had just let the law take its course the first time around and not allow my need to play super hero get in the way. Ntombi fucked up and

thanks to her Melusi and Sethu lost a part of their lives they will never get back.

Last night I drove here after finding out that Ntombi was in jail. I went straight to the prison where she is and tried to speak to her but she wouldn't come out to see me. She eventually sent a note saying I should leave and never come back. All I wanted to do was help her but guess she has accepted her fate.

I booked into a hotel for the night but I still couldn't spend the whole night in it I ended up driving to Tshilidzi's place in the middle of the night. It took forever for her to let me in and when she did she gave me the couch to sleep on. A whole couch while she has a guestroom

in this house. Mxm. Now my back hurts like crazy and I still need to drive back to Durban today.

I heard banging of things around the house and I knew Tshilidzi was up. I opened my eyes and looked around but my back and neck weren't cooperating. I knew this couch would fuck me up and I'm sure this girl knew too.

I managed to get up after a while of trying to get the bones in my body to align and go back to their respective places.

Tshilidzi: "Oh look at that you're up."



Me: "Wasnt that your intention with all the banging?"

Tshilidzi: "Well you did wake me up in the middle of the night and now I cant sleep. Since it's all your fault then you might as well wake up too." She says sitting down with a cup of freshly brewed coffee by the smell of it and she wont even offer me a cup.

Me: "So I don't get coffee?"

Tshilidzi: "Oh I'm sorry. I just had enough for me I wasnt expecting visitors in the middle of the night. So why are you here?"

Me: "Well I needed someone to talk to."

Tshilidzi: "Let me guess you want to talk about Ntombi. Let me save you the trouble. She's not getting out of jail."

Me: "I was just trying to help her out."

Tshilidzi: "Dont waste your time. Dad put her in there and it will be a miracle is she makes it out."

Me: "Maybe this explains why she has given up. But maybe if I....." she gets up and heads to the kitchen. I sat there waiting for her to come back but it looked like she wasnt coming back.

I got up and went to the kitchen and found her sitting there just sipping on her coffee.

Me: "Really. I was talking to you and you just came in here to do absolutely nothing."

Tshilidzi: "I came here to get away from you and your never ending speech about your psycho girlfriend. If you want to vent go find a therapist." She gets up and washes her cup in the sink. "I'm going to take a shower. Please be gone by the time I get back." She walked out leaving me standing there. I wasn't sure how to feel I was more shocked than anything.

I went up to her room and started knocking on the door and calling out her name but she didnt reply. Instead she increased the volume of the music she was listening to. I guess that's my cue. I went back downstairs to the lounge and put my clothes on. I neatly packed the blanket and pillows and grabbed my car keys then left.

I went to the hotel and checked out before starting my long journey back home. My phone rang just as I was getting into the freeway. I took it out of my pocket to answer it but it slipped and fell under the seat. I tried reaching for it but it seemed the closer I got to it the further it slipped away. I was ready to give up when my fingers made contact with it. All I had to do was lean a little bit further down and I would get it. I did that and I touched it. Just as I wrapped my fingers around it I felt the honking of a truck or was it a bus I'm not sure. I lifted my head up to see where the sound was coming from and it was inches away from me. I couldn't even move the car when I felt a bang on the side of the car before it went flying across the road. I'm not sure where it landed cause everything became a blur after that. Is this how I meet my maker?

SIXTY TWO

We all need a friend or someone close to us  
who will not be afraid to say 'But you're wrong

though'. I guess for me at this moment that person is gogo Nkanyezi.

Truth is I already knew the truth but hearing it from someone else just made everything clearer. Yes Mcebo did so much for me and I will always be indebted to him but I cant throw away my marriage just to keep him happy. I need him to know and understand that as much as I can do anything and everything for him some things are just not going to happen. Especially if it means putting my husband in an awkward position or putting his feelings on the back burner.

I left gogo Nkanyezi's place and headed home. I tried to call Mcebo cause I need to talk to him

about this but he told me he was in Joburg trying to help Ntombi. I guess he really did love her but then again he did want to marry her. I guess I'll just have to wait for him to come back so we can talk face to face cause this is not a conversation to be had over the phone.

When I got home I decided to cook a heartwarming meal just to apologize to Melusi for all the mess I created. I decided to make tripe and dumplings. Thank God for the pressure cooker cause I was done in just two and half hours instead of the normal three thousand hours it takes to cook tripe. I made sure the kids were fed and tucked in then I waited for Melusi to come back.

I waited for the entire night and he didnt come home. I went to sleep a few minutes after midnight and he still wasnt home. I hate this I wish he could just come home so we can talk about this and sort it out. I want my husband back.

I woke up the next morning hoping that he would have come back sometime after I went to sleep but the guest room he's been using was empty. I got the kids ready for school and drove them there then came back. I was happy when I came back and Melusi's car was in the driveway. As much as I was dying to know where he was the whole night I figured I have to choose my battles and right now where he slept isnt really important for now that is.



I got in and he was already in the kitchen with a bowl of cereal. He had already taken a shower and he was ready for work.

Me: "Hi!"

Melusi: "Hi."

Me: "Can we talk?"

Melusi: "I'm already late for work Sethu."

Me: "Please its important." He finished eating and put the bowl in the sink then turned to look at me crossed his arms across his chest.

Melusi: "Talk."

Me: "I'm sorry. For everything. I should have never put Mcebo's feelings and needs before your own. I'm sorry."

Melusi: "Where is this coming from?"

Me: "I hate the tension that's been in this house since the whole thing happened. I hate the fact that you dont sleep at home anymore and when you are here we are so distant. I know it's all my fault and I just want to fix it."

Melusi: "So what happens the next time my brother needs you to do something for him."

Me: "Look we're family of course I'll be there for him if he needs me but not at the expense of our marriage."

Melusi: "You say that now but we both know when he calls you'll be the first person to go running."

Me: "I wont. I know this whole mess is my fault and I know that I'm the only one who can fix it. I promise you I will make this right."

Melusi: "I'll believe that when I see it." He grabbed his briefcase and walked out. I have a mountain to climb before he can forgive me but I am not willing to give up just yet.

I went upstairs and took a shower then went to work. It hurts lately being in the office knowing that my husband is on the other side of these walls but it feels like he is a million miles away.



Two days later Khehla showed up to the house before sunrise ready for the cleansing. We did all that was required and by noon we were done. The sad part about it was that Mcebo wasnt here. No one knows where he is cause his phone has been off for a few days now. Last we heard he was headed to Joburg and when we called Tshilidzi to ask if she had seen him she said the last time she saw him he was

headed back to Durban. We all put it down to maybe he got on a plane and headed somewhere. But a part of me felt like he wouldn't just up and leave without letting anyone know. At least someone at the office would know. But no one knows. Something is off about this disappearance. I know he does it all the time but this is just weirdly different. Melusi even got his friend Thato to look into Mcebo's sudden disappearance.

We had a small family lunch after the cleansing. As much as the past few weeks I got caught up in trying to make sure Ntombi doesn't get arrested I completely disregarded my own pain. I lost a child and today it hit me. I guess I was fooling myself in thinking if I don't think about the baby then it won't hurt as much. I fooled myself by putting everything down to 'it was just a clot anyway' but it wasn't. It was a baby a

human baby with a soul and a heart and I didnt get to hold him or her.

I sat out by the pool looking out at the water just floating by and tears streamed down my face. For the first time in a long time I held my tummy and realized I will never get to hold my child again. I looked at the box next to me and it just made everything worse

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I guess. It was delivered today. But i still didnt have the heart to open it.

I felt footsteps coming towards me and i quickly wiped the tears. Melusi sat on the chair across from me and I realized he was here right in front of me but I missed him. I missed the man who knew when my heart was heavy and did everything he could to lighten the load. I miss the man who would dance even though he has two left feet just to bring a smile to my face.

I picked up the box and handed it to him. He was confused but he took it and opened it. He looked at me before taking out the contents one by one. There were five baseball jackets in the box. One had Melusi's name on it another had

mine Asi had his own and Mpendulo had his too and the last one was supposed to be the new baby's. It was probably a little too cheesy but I thought it was cute.

Melusi: "What's this?"

Me: "I would have been sixteen weeks today and that was supposed to be my way of telling you that I was pregnant." He picked up the smallest jacket and ran his hands on the empty space where the name should have been.

Seeing him so engrossed in the moment and having his eyes glued on the tiny jacket. I could see him blink a bit too fast and I knew he was trying to hold back the tears. I did have that much luck though because the tears wouldn't stop falling. I kept wiping them away but the



more I wiped the harder they fell. I don't know when Melusi moved from his side and sat down next to me. I felt his hands engulf me into a hug and instead of feeling better I cried harder.

We sat there for a while even after I'd calmed down I still didn't want to leave his arms. I missed being in his arms and I hate the fact that it took this whole mess to even give us a glimpse of hope for our future.

His phone rang and he ignored it. But the person who was calling was persistent.

Me: "You should get that it could be TT."

Melusi: "Its not." His phone kept ringing but he just wouldn't pick up he even put it on vibrate after a while.

We went back inside the house and his sisters and Msizi had left already. The kids were with Ncane so we had the house all to ourselves. I dished up the leftovers from lunch and warmed them up. I heard mumbling from the lounge and I tiptoed and hid behind the wall to hear what was being said. Even though he was trying his best to speak softly I could tell whatever was being said wasnt meant for my ears. All I heard was him telling whoever was calling to stop calling him.

I went back to the food and took it out of the microwave. I put the plates on a tray and took it to the lounge. I handed him his food and we sat down to eat in front of the TV.

Me: "Who was that?"

Melusi: "Who?"

Me: "On the phone. Weren't you speaking to someone?"

Me: "No. It was the TV." He lied. I heard him speak but he claims it was the TV. Right!

I put that whole conversation to the back of my mind and just focused on the TV. My phone rang from the coffee table. And since I have nothing to hide I picked it up. It was Tshilidzi.

Me: "Hey sis. What's up?"

Tshilidzi: "I have some bad news." She said and i could hear her voice was filled with sadness and it was breaking like she had been crying.

Me: "What's wrong? Is dad okay?"

Tshilidzi: "Yeah he's fine. Its Mcebo." I felt my heart racing. I said a little prayer hoping he is okay.

Me: "What about him? Did you find him?"

Tshilidzi: "Well he kinda found me. He's in hospital. Apparently he had an accident a couple of days ago. They couldn't get hold of any family because his phone got destroyed in the crash."

Me: "Wait so how did you find out? Are you sure its him?"

Tshilidzi: "Yeah its him. Rendani's boyfriend is a doctor at the hospital where he is. He told Rendani about an accident that happened and the driver being admitted but he didn't have any identification cause it blew up with the car."

Me: "Hold up the car blew up?"

Tshilidzi: "Yeah but luckily they were able to get him out before then."

Me: "Okay. Thanks. Can you send me the name of the hospital. We'll be there soon."

Tshilidzi: "Okay. See you soon."

I hung up and looked at Melusi who had stopped eating.

Melusi: "What's wrong?"

Me: "Mcebo was in an accident. He's in a hospital in Joburg."

Melusi: "Let's go." He got up and rushed upstairs. I followed him and packed a small bag. We booked flight tickets on the way to the airport. Lucky for us we got a flight even though it was late in the evening.

We got to Joburg and found Tshilidzi waiting for us at the airport. She drove us to the hospital. We got there and met with the hospital director and identified ourselves. He led us to Mcebo's ward. We walked into the ward and seeing him laying there was weird he had all these pipes all over his face and drips going in and out of his

body. It was really strange seeing him there helpless and vulnerable. The only bit of hope we got though was his steady heartbeat. So maybe just maybe he will be just fine. All we have to do is pray.

SIXTY THREE



Being here right now feels scary. Seeing Mcebo laying in that bed feels rather weird. I'm used to him being strong and brave but now he feels like a whole different person. Laying there helpless and vulnerable is not how I want to remember him so I pray to God he wake up. We might have our differences but he is still my brother and I dont want anything to happen to him.

We've been in Joburg for almost a week and there is still no change. The doctors say his vitals are good all they are waiting for is for him to wake up. I pray he wakes up soon.

I got up in the morning and went for a jog before we head to the hospital. We are staying

with Sethu's dad Brian. Even though we had a hotel booked he insisted we stay with him although I'm pretty sure his wife had her own reservations. She's been cold towards Sethu since we got here.

I got back to the house and went straight upstairs. I found Sethu on the phone talking to Ncane. I went to take a shower while she was busy on the phone. I came out and she was done.

Sethu: "Can we get breakfast before we go to the hospital?"

Me: "Sure. I thought your stepmother was making breakfast when I left?"

Sethu: "She was."

Me: "Then why didnt you eat?"

Sethu: "I know this might sound stupid but she was being nice to me. She's never been nice and she's been cold the entire time we've been here. Call me paranoid but why would she all of a sudden want to make me breakfast especially since my dad is not here?" I laughed.

Me: "Okay you're definitely pretty but I dont blame you. If you've experienced MaZwane then little things like this can seem scary."

Sethu: "Yep. Hurry up. I'm hungry."

I finished getting dressed and we left. We got downstairs and looked for the keys to the car Brian said we could use but they weren't where we left them last night. We searched around but we couldn't find them. We saw the maid coming down the stairs.

Me: "Hi did you maybe move car keys that were here?"

Her: "No."

Sethu: "Where could they be?"

Her: "Madam took them."

Sethu: "Oh do you know where she keeps them?"

Her: "She took them with her when she left."

Sethu: "All of them?"

Her: "Yep." She walked away leaving Sethu and I in a state of shock.

Sethu requested an uber and as soon as it arrived we got in and went to the mall. We had breakfast at Wimpy before we headed to the hospital. When we got there Tshilidzi was already there. She's been here every day since the accident. Maybe I am reading too much into this but I feel like something is going on with

her. Everytime she comes here it's like she's been crying. Her eyes are always red and they seem to get redder by the time she leaves.

We sat down and just listened to the beeping of the machines. To be honest it was becoming depressing for me. Everytime we get here we get an update from the doctor sit in the ward hoping and praying for even the slightest change then head home and come back tomorrow and repeat the same cycle. I just wish Mcebo would wake up. Tshilidzi and Sethu decided to go out and buy lunch.

I sat down on the chair next to my brothers bed and just looked at him. I took his one hand into mine. It was warm. It felt like he was about to

give me a handshake a weak handshake but a handshake nonetheless.

Me: "You know you're full of drama right? I mean who sleeps for an entire week. You need to wake up bra. You got our attention now it's time to get up. You have a company to run and your son needs you. I might be the best uncle/stepdaddy in the world but he still needs you." Saying it out loud seemed weird. I swear my life feels like a script written for tv. Uncle stepdaddy? Yeah neh.

Sethu and Tshilidzi came back and we ate. Later in the evening we went home. Tshilidzi said she would stay a while. We got an uber and headed back to Brian's house. When we

got there we found him and his wife sitting in the lounge. We got in and greeted. Of course his wife didnt even reply. I guess her little breakfast in the morning was just a front.

Brian: "Why didnt you take the car? When I got back I thought you didnt go to the hospital."  
Sethu and I looked at each other not sure if we should tell him.

Me: "Uhm.. wd couldn't find the keys."

Brian: "Hhaybo you know where the car keys are kept. You could have taken any other car."

Sethu: "There were no keys. We looked for them everywhere but they weren't there. Even the maid said she didn't know where they



were." Brian looked at us and then looked at his wife. I saw him clench his jaws. I'm pretty sure he just connected the dots.

Tomorrow I'll leave my keys with you before I leave in the morning. This is gonna be awkward. We should have just stayed at the hotel.



TSHILIDZI

I don't think I've ever prayed as much as I've prayed this week. Ever since I found out about Mcebo's accident I've been riddled with guilt. I can't help feeling like if I hadn't thrown him out that day he wouldn't have got into the accident. He would still be fine and he'd still be annoying me with talking about Ntombi all the time completely disregarding my feelings.

After our little encounter at the hospital when we first met we became close. It felt good to be free around someone. Someone who knew your father and where we come from and still saw me as Tshilidzi as an individual. We became close I could talk to him about anything and everything and not feel judged. It was perfect.

I knew he had feelings for Sethu I mean they have a child together. But I still couldn't help developing feelings for him. Although we had a no strings attached type of relationship

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we still kept everything between us. I thought the feelings would go away when he started dating Ntombi but they didn't. I hid them very well though since I could fake care about their relationship but I never liked Ntombi. At first it

was because she was dating him and then it evolved to me hating her for trying to kill my sister.

I should have hated him too for wanting to protect her but I just couldn't. And now he is laying here close to death. And I wish I could wake him up. Tell him how I feel tell him how sorry I am for kicking him out. Is ish I could wake him up even for just a minute.

I wiped the tears that were now rolling down my eyes. That's been a habit of mine lately crying. I got up and picked up my coat from the couch. I put it on and got closer to the bed. I held his hand and just prayed the same way I've prayed for the past few days.

Me: "You better be up when I come back tomorrow." I said making a lame joke that I wish he could laugh at but I know better.

I felt his hand tighten around mine. My heart skipped a beat I wanted so badly to believe that I didnt just imagine that. U wanted to call the nurse or doctor but I stopped myself they'll probably just confirm that I had imagine this small glimmer of hope.

I loosened my hand from his hoping to let go of his hand so I can go home. I tried to pull my hand away from his but his fingers tightened around mine. I knew I wasn't imagining this. I felt my heart racing.

Me: "Mcebo if you can hear me please open your eyes squeeze my hand something."

I watched his face looking for some small action on his part. I was anxious and hopeful. I saw his closed eyes move around through his eyelids.

His eyes slowly opened and the floodgates in my eyes also opened. He looked around trying to make sense of his surroundings. His eyes landed on me and I swear I could have died from happiness at that moment.

Me: "Hey you're up." He lifted up his one hand trying to remove the pipes that were stuck down his throat. "Okay dont pull on those. I'll get a nurse to get it out for you." I pressed the panic button next to the bed and within seconds a nurse was rushing in with another behind her.



They pulled the pipes out of him then a doctor came in and checked him over. And strangely enough all this is happening with my hand still in his. The doctor and nurses leave as soon as they have determined that he is fine. Well not fine fine cause he still has a long way to go but he is alive so that's good.

Me: "Welcome back." I see a smile form on his face. Although it was a struggle for him but it was still there. He's back.

SIXTY FOUR

Mcebo woke up. Thank you God. Tshilidzi called us in the middle of the night to tell us that he woke up. I said a prayer as we drove off to the hospital in the middle of the night. As crazy and draining as this week has been I'm happy there's a happy ending to it.

We got to the hospital and went straight to his room. Even though it was way past visiting hours we had to see for ourselves that he was really okay. We got to his room and he was sleeping again. Tshilidzi was sitting on the couch in the far end of the room fighting sleep. Mcebo was laying on the bed but the tubes he

had on earlier were gone. He was breathing on his own so that was good.

Tshilidzi: "Hey you're here? "

Me: "Yeah how is he? What did the doctor say!"

Tshilidzi: "He will be fine. The doctor says so far it's looking good. But they still have to keep him here for a few more days just to monitor him."

Melusi: "Atleast he's alive. That's something positive."

Me: "Yeah. I'll have to call the rest of the family in the morning and let them know."

Melusi: "I sent Sbuysile a text on our way here. She'll let everyone know."

Me: "Okay."

We sat there the whole night just waiting for him to wake up. He laid there so still for a moment I thought he was dead. If it wasnt for the heart monitor beeping through the night I'm sure I would have spent hours checking his pulse.

The doctor showed up early in the morning to do her final rounds before knocking off. She checked on him and gave us the thumbs up. And she also said another doctor would be in to check on him too. She left and we went back to

waiting for him to wake up. He eventually woke up around seven in the morning. Seeing him open his eyes sent relief rushing through me.

Me: "Hey welcome back to the land of the living." I said getting closer to him. He smiled a bit.

Mcebo: "I'm glad to be back. MaZwane says hi." I laughed at his attempt to actually make a joke.

Me: "Very funny. How are you feeling?"

Mcebo: "I'll live." I helped him sit up on the bed and handed him a glass of water. "Where's everyone?"

Me: "Tshilidzi went home to bath and Melusi went to get some breakfast."

Mcebo: "Okay."

Me: "Cebile is on her way here Sbuysile cant come though cause of the baby."

Mcebo: "Its cool. I'll see them when I go home. When am I getting discharged?"

Me: "I dont know yet the doctors want to keep you here for a while just to make sure all is okay."

Mcebo: "Cool. Listen I owe you an apology."

Me: "For what?"

Mcebo: "Forcing you to lie to Melusi. I shouldn't have put you in that position. It was selfish of me to try protect Ntombi while ruining your relationship."

Me: "Its fine. It's done now."

Mcebo: "Still I should have known better. You were never mine to begin with Sethu and as much as I love you I need to accept that you are with my brother cause you belong together."

Melusi walked in with takeaways and Tshilidzi behind him.

Melusi: "Ah you're alive." He said looking at his brother.

Mcebo: "I'm a die hard brother. You should know that. We dont die." They laughed and Melusi hugged him.

Melusi: "I'm glad you're okay."

Mcebo: "Me too." He turned to look at Tshilidzi and the smile on his face was unmissable.

We had breakfast and then drove back home to bath. We got home and drove into the house. As soon as we got into the house we found my stepmother in the lounge pacing up and down impatiently. Soon as she saw us she stopped and looked at me. I know this woman hates my guts but the fire in her eyes just make my skin crawl sometimes.



Me: "Hello ma."

Ma: "I need the keys. I've been waiting here for an hour and I can't drive to work." Melusi and I looked at each other. There is a garage filled with cars so what is she on about?

Me: "I'm sorry." She walked closer to me and held out her hand.

Ma: "Keys." Melusi took the keys out of his pocket and just as he was about to hand them over to her I grabbed them.

Me: "Dad said we can use this car and we are going to use it. There are cars in the garage pick one of them." I tried to walking away from her but she grabbed me and pulled me close to

her. Melusi came closer to us but I put my hand up to stop him.

Ma: "Listen to me little girl. This is my house. And that's my car. Now hand me the keys."

Me: "And you listen to me very well. I respect you as my fathers wife. I respect you as a mother to my siblings. But if you think you are going to play the evil stepmother game with me think again. Brian is my father and you off all people should know how he feels about his children. Pull this little stunt one more time and I will be forced to have him choose between you and me

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and you off all people should know how he feels about his children. Pull this little stunt one more time and I will be forced to have him choose between you and me and you know you wont win." She smiled and crossed her arms across her chest.

Ma: "Sweetie I've been with that man for over twenty five years. You're delusional if you really think he'll choose you over his family."

Me: "Keep doing this and let's see." I pulled my arm away from her and headed upstairs.

I got into the shower and tried to calm myself down. A few days ago I was ready for us to move out and go to a hotel but now i know that would be like letting her win and running me out of my own home. One thing i know is that Brian loves me. And ever since i found out about him being my dad he has gone far and beyond to not only be in my life but to make sure i done feel like the unwanted stepchild. For the first time in my life I have felt like I belong. My siblings have welcomed me with open arms. I will be damned if I let this woman take that away from me.



MCEBO

Thank you God I'm alive. When I get home I have to have a Thanksgiving ceremony. Lord alone knows how I made it out of that accident alive. After Melusi and Sethu left I was left alone with Tshilidzi. I know this may sound like some knee jerk reaction to dying but I feel rather stupid. I was so caught up in my feelings for Sethu I didn't even realise what was right in front of me staring right back at me.

Being inside my head for so long with no interruptions gave me a chance to think about things. And one of those was allowing my need to play hero cloud my judgement. Ntombi fucked up and because of her my brother lost

his child. And instead of helping them through this I jumped in and tried to save her.

Tshilidzi came back from the bathroom and sat on top of the bed looking at me.

Tshilidzi: "I'm sorry."

Me: "What for?"

Tshilidzi: "For throwing you out that day. You wouldn't be here if I hadn't done that."

Me: "Please I deserved it. In fact I should be apologizing to you. I shouldn't have bombarded you with my problems especially about Ntombi."

Tshilidzi: "Well we all need a friend to listen to us when we vent right."

Me: "That's the thing I have had time to think and I don't want you to be my friend."

Tshilidzi: "What?"

Me: "No I mean I would like to officially take you out on a date. And maybe you can be my girlfriend. And this time without hiding." She smiled.



Tshilidzi: "Okay."

My sisters showed up around lunchtime with Zoey. And I thought Sbuysile wouldn't come. They almost squeezed the life out of me. We sat and spoke for a while before Cebile and Sbuysile left to go get food. Tshilidzi decided to go home. Zoey sat on the bed looking at me.

Zoey: "You know if you ever pull a stunt like that I will kill you myself." I smiled. Zoey might be tough but deep inside she has a soft side.

Me: "Well I will do my best."

Zoey: "Good. I'm glad you're okay though. Things wouldn't be the same without you."

Me: "Yep. You need me."

Zoey: "Keep dreaming. So when are you getting out of here?"

Me: "Soon I hope. Hows business?"

Zoey: "Still standing. And that's the last thing you should be worried about."

Me: "I know. But I am ready to get out of here."

Zoey: "And you will. I need to get back to Durban. I have a meeting with some potential clients in the morning."

Me: "I'm glad the business is in good hands. Have a safe trip."

Zoey: "Will do." She gave me a hug and left.

As grateful as I am that I am alive I need to put my priorities in order. Family has always been important to me and I need to remember that. I cant be allowing myself to play hero to everyone. At some point people need to fight their own battles. I have my own to fight.

SIXTY FIVE

The highs have been high and the lows have been truly low. But through it all we didn't waiver we didn't give up we kept going no matter how hard it was. And now we are standing on the other side. Victorious.

Yes we don't know what the future holds but we have learnt a lot about ourselves and our capabilities. We know our strengths and weaknesses better now and we are stronger than we were a few years ago. Our lives have taken paths we didn't think we could ever take

but the thing about life is that when we make plans God laughs or so I've heard.

It's been a month since Mcebo was discharged from hospital. And tomorrow is his Thanksgiving ceremony. It's mostly just family and a few friends and business associates but it looks like it might just end up being packed.

Tshilidzi has been a constant visitor to Durban she's even thinking of moving this side. Of course dad doesn't understand why but the rest of us know it's because of Mcebo. They have gotten pretty close and it's amazing to see them together. Mcebo might be a tad bit older than her but they are adults at the end of the day

and they know what they want so who are we to stand in their way.

Tshilidzi and I decided to go help out eMlazi because there was honestly a lot to do and a lot to be thankful for. We got there and got a warm welcome from the Cebile and Sbuysile. Even MaZulu was happy to see us. I must admit though motherhood looks good on Sbuysile. She is glowing and very happy. And her husband has been a doting dad to their daughter. I can tell you now that little girl will be spoiled but then again she deserves it. And she is pregnant again their daughter isn't even a year old but I guess after struggling for so long they are making the most of this blessing and who can blame them after what MaZwane did. I hope she is still burning in hell.

The family held a meeting a few days earlier well just Cebile Sbuysile Mcebo Melusi and I and we made the decision to never tell Msizi or Bab'Mazibuko about his grandkids actually being his children. After MaZwane's shenanigans this coming out would tear the family apart.

Mcebo and Melusi decided to buy another farm for Msizi to utilise. And to avoid any of the problems we had before they decided to put the farm in a trust and not let Msizi own it per say. They had to explain that to Msizi and even though I thought he would explode he was surprisingly understanding. I guess he has owned up to his own mistakes in the past. Hopefully this time he can make a success of it.

Speaking of Msizi he hugged me soon as I walked through the door. Which is quite weird and awkward for me cause inspite of the forgiveness that's been shared a part of me will never fully get over his part in all that happened. A part of me will always fear him or rather what he is capable off. But for the sake of peace I try to be as civil as I can be.

Tshilidzi and I went to one of the bedrooms and changed into comfortable outfits so we can be busy. The kids were already somewhere making noise. We went back to the kitchen and we were met with laughter and warmth. As foreign as this has been to me this past few years where this family is concerned it was quite refreshing to be met with smiles and hugs.



We got down to chopping and cooking while telling stories well more like gossiping. I guess that's what women do when they get together right. Anyways we prepared mostly the dessert for tomorrow and the veggies were prepped and ready. All we had to do tomorrow was throw everything in the fire and cook well more like gossiping. I guess that's what women do when they get together right. Anyways we prepared mostly the dessert for tomorrow and the veggies were prepped and ready. All we had to do tomorrow was throw everything in the fire and cook easy peasy right.

Soon as we were done I wrangled the kids and we drove back home. I dropped Tshilidzi off at

Mcebo's place then headed home. I got home and there was a car parked outside the gate. I dont know who it is and it's dark my first instinct was to drive past cause what if they are waiting there to hijack me or something.

I slowed the car down and tried to see who it was. But I couldnt see anything or anyone. I honked and I guess that got the person's attention cause they turned their lights on before getting out. With my lights directly on them they held their hands up to shield their eyes. I dimmed my lights and that allowed them to come closer and it allowed me to see them.

It was a woman a beautiful one at that. I grabbed my pepper spray from the glove

compartment before opening the window. She came closer and stood next to the car.

Me: "Hi can I help you?" I ask confused as fuck cause I have never seen this person before.

Her: "Hi I'm sorry to disturb you I'm not sure if I'm in the right house. I am looking for Melusi Mazibuko's house I was told this is it but I've been trying the buzzer and no one's opening."

Me: "So you figured you'd park here what if you get hijacked." She chuckles a bit.

Her: "Its a gated estate I'm sure it's safe."

Me: "A gated estate in South Africa." I said trying to buy time and figure out who this is and why she is looking for my husband.

Her: "True. So do you know him."

Me: "I'm married to him."

Her: "Oh!" She mumbled clearly lost for words.

Me: "Would you like to come in and wait for him. I'm sure he'll be home soon." I'm not sure if my invitation took her by surprise or what cause she seemed to have a hard time gathering her thoughts.

Her: "No it's okay I'll come some other time."

Me: "No please come in. You've been waiting for him so it's only right you wait inside." I

opened the gate and I could see she was conflicted on what to do. "After you." I said with the biggest smile on my face.

I'm still trying to figure out how she mastered enough courage to actually drive in. She got in her car and drove in. I followed behind her till she parked close to the front door. I got the kids out of my car and opened the door. They ran in and I waited for this mystery guest to join us. She walked up and got into the house. I followed behind her.

Her: "You have a beautiful home." She said looking around. The kids were already in front of the TV watching cartoons.

Me: "Thank you please take a seat would you like something to drink?"

Her: "Just water please." She said sitting down on the couch. I turned to go to the kitchen to bring her her water then I remembered I dont know her name. I turned back to her.

Me: "I'm sorry I didnt get your name."

Her: "Sindi. Sindi Qwabe."

Me: "Nice to meet you Sindi. Let me get you your water." I turned and went to the kitchen.

I took out my phone and called my dear husband.

Melusi: "Hey."

Me: "Hi. You have a guest."

Melusi: "What?"

Me: "There is a Sindi Qwabe here to see you. She's been waiting a while." There was silence on the other side. A part of me was hoping he would say he doesn't know her.

Melusi: "I'm on my way." He said before hanging up.

I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge and a glass from the cupboard and went back to the

lounge. She smiled when I handed her the water. I decided to take the boys upstairs and get them ready for bed. Good thing they ate eMlazi so I dont have to worry about that right now. I gave them a quick bath and put them in their pj's and tucked them in before heading back downstairs.

I got downstairs and found Melusi arguing with this woman. Although their voices weren't loud enough to constitute an argument but the tension was thick you could cut it with a knife.

Me: "What did I miss?"



Melusi: "Nothing. She was just leaving." He said looking straight at her. She looked at him and i could tell she wanted to say something but the stare she was getting from Melusi somehow prevented her from saying what was truly on her mind. She grabbed her bag and headed to the door with Melusi behind her. She turned around when she reached the door and looked at me.

Sindi: "It was nice meeting you Mrs Mazibuko." She said with a fake smile plastered on her face before being walked out by Melusi.

A part of me wanted to follow them and find out what was really happening cause I wasn't understanding. Melusi came back after a few minutes and completely pretended like nothing just happened. He walked to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water.

Me: "Who is she and why was she here?"

Melusi: "She's a nobody and dont worry she'll never come back here again."

Me: "That doesnt answer my question. Who is she and why was she here Melusi? Is she your girlfriend?"

Melusi: "No she's not. Please let this go."

Me: "Then who is she cause I know she's not a client."

Melusi: "For heavens sake Sethu let it go. She's a nobody." He snapped. Melusi has never been

the type to get angry just nje. And this to me is a bit weird. Which tells me there is more to this girl than her being a nobody. "I have to go back to eMlazi. We need to finish prepping for tomorrow." He garbed his car keys kissed me on the forehead and walked out.

Soon as I heard his car drive out I took my phone and called Tshepi.

Tshepi: "My other half. What's up?"

Me: "I need your help. The PI you usually use for business and what not can he help me find out information on someone?"

Tshepi: "I'm sure he can. Who do you need information on?"

Me: "A Sindi Qwabe."

Tshepi: "Sindi Qwabe tall slender light skin girl that Sindi Qwabe?"

Me: "Yeah how do you know her?"

Tshepi: "Everyone knows her she is a slay queen of note from Joburg. Usually she operates around Sandton and Cape Town. Why? What did she do?"

Me: "She was in my house a few minutes ago looking for my husband."

Tshepi: "What the fuck?"

Me: "Yeah. And my dear husband snapped at me when I asked him about her."

Tshepi: "Okay. I'll call him."

Me: "Thanks friend."

I hung up and went upstairs to take a shower and go to bed. Tomorrow is going to be a long day. Hopefully the new day comes with answers.

SIXTY SIX

I hate surprises nasty ones at that. When Sethu called me and told me Sindi was at the house a part of me didnt believe but the other part had to see for myself. I couldn't believe the girl had the audacity to come to my house unannounced.

I know I have to explain to Sethu what happened but I'm not sure how she'll take it. After Sindi left I decided to go to her hotel room to talk to her. I got to the hotel and I saw her sitting at the hotel bar with a drink in her hand. I went to her.

Me: "Let's go." She looked up and smiled when she saw me.

Sindi: "Where are we going?"

Me: "Let's go Sindiswa!"

Sindi: "Oooh my full name what did little Sindiswa do now has she been a bad girl that needs to be punished."

Me: "Mxm." I left her there and headed to the lift. I heard her heels clicking behind me.

The lift opened and we got in. She pressed her floor number and up we went. We got to her floor and she led the way to her room. She opened the door and stood aside to let me in. I got in and waited for her. She closed the door and took off her jacket and threw it on the couch.

Me: "What the fuck were you thinking coming to my house uninvited?"

Sindi: "Well you've been ignoring me. You even blocked me."

Me: "And that wasnt a clear enough hint for you?"



Sindi: "Thing is I dont take rejection that well. Besides we still have to finish what we started."

Me: "We didnt start anything."

Sindi: "Do you want a recap? Hilton Hotel bar we got drunk and we ended up in my room remember that?"

Me: "The only thing you and I did together was get drunk? And that's it. Now you need to get the hint and leave me the fuck alone. I dont want you. I am married."

Sindi: "A happily married man doesnt drink alone in a hotel bar."

Me: "And where did I say I was happily married? My wife and I might have our problems but even coming to your room with

you that night was the biggest mistake of my life. But I thank God that nothing happened. We didnt have sex so please stay away from me." I walk to the door.

Sindi: "You think your wife will believe that? You really believe she will believe you when you say nothing happened?"

Me: "If you come anywhere near my wife I swear to God you will regret it."

I walked out of there and got in my car and drove off. I called Thato and asked him to get me any info he might have on Sindi. There is absolutely no way she just came back to Durban just for me. She's up to something. I cant believe one lousy night and a lack of judgment on my part is coming back to bite me

in the butt. And as much as I hate to admit it I dont think Sethu will believe me when I say nothing happened. I know I wouldn't. Damn it. How could I be so stupid.

I found myself parked outside Khehla's place. I called him and he came out and opened the gate. I drove in and he led me to the lounge. We sat down and he looked at me suspiciously while drinking his tea. Him and tea are two things that will never be separated by anything not even MaZwane.

Khehla: "Do you I have to force you to talk?" I sighed.

Me: "I did something and now I don't know how to fix it."

Khehla: "What did you do?"

Me: "I got drunk and ended up in some hotel room with another woman."

Khehla: "So you cheated on your wife?"

Me: "I didnt sleep with her. We kissed and stuff but we didnt have sex."

Khehla: "You do know that's still considered cheating right?"

Me: "I know. And that's why I'm scared to even tell Sethu. But I know I have to be the one to tell her before she finds our from Sindi."

Khehla: "So why are you sitting on my couch instead of your own with your wife next to you?"

Me: "Because I need advice. I'm scared."

Khehla: "You should be. With everything that's been happening between you and your wife you have to expect the worse."

Me: "Right. I screwed up and now I need to fix this."

I left Khehla's place and headed back home. I got there and parked the car. I sat in it for a while trying to master up enough courage to walk through those doors and say what needs to be said. After a while of taking in deep

breaths I decide to go in. I walk into the house and it's dark downstairs. The only light is coming from the stairs.

I go up to the bedroom and found Sethu sitting on the bed with a book in her hand. I sat next to her.

Me: "We need to talk."

Sethu: "About what?"

Me: "About earlier. I'm sorry I snapped at you earlier."

Sethu: "It's fine."

Me: "No it's not. You deserve an explanation."

Sethu: "Dont worry about it Sindi already told me."

Me: "Told you what?"

Sethu: "About your affair. She came back after you left and told me everything. She says she's pregnant with your child." I swear I'll kill that girl.

Me: "Look whatever she told you she lied."

Sethu: "So you didnt get drunk and go to her hotel room and sleep with her?"

Me: "I did get drunk I did go to her room but I didnt slepp with her you have to believe me."

Sethu: "How am I supposed to believe you when you spent countless nights not coming home? How do I know that Sindi is maybe one of many women you spent nights with while I was here worried and feeling guilty? How am I supposed to believe you're innocent when your actions say something different?"

Me: "I'm sorry." She wiped a tear from her cheek and I felt my heart break a thousand times.

Sethu: "Like I said it doesn't matter. If this was your payback for me choosing to not put Ntombi behind bars for what she did then you won."

Me: "Sethu that wasnt a competition. And yes I fucked up by going to that room but I didnt



sleep with Sindi. I know I was wrong for going there and I will forever take responsibility for that. But I didnt sleep with her and if she really is pregnant I can guarantee that child is not mine."

Sethu: "Melusi can I sleep?" She switched off the side lamp.m and turned her back on me.

I got up and went to take a shower before getting into bed. I heard Sethu sniffing and as angry as I was at Sindi for telling Sethu about this I was more angry at myself for opening that door. If I could just go back in time and relive that night I'd do thi gs so different. But theres no going back. Theres no doing things over. I guess this is what they meant when they said dont make decisions when you're angry and dont make promises when you are happy.

I got closer to her and put my arm around her. I thought she'd move my hand but she didn't.

Me: "I'm sorry. I'm really sorry."

I woke up early in the morning and drove to KwaMashu to help out. I spent the whole time trying to figure out what game Sindi was playing. She knows very well we didnt sleep together but now she expects everyone to believe we did. And unfortunately for me I cant prove her wrong.

The ceremony went well. It was actually nice to meet with family we didnt think we had. Ever since MaZwane died more and more family has been popping up from the shadows. And many of them say the same thing they stayed away because of MaZwane and her shenanigans. Unfortunately for us we were too blind to see it. I checked my emails during the day and TT had sent me all the info I needed. That was quick. I thought it would take a while but it seems Sindi isnt that innocent afterall.

After the ceremony I went back to Sindi's hotel room. I was surprised when I found Sethu in the same room.

Sindi: "Look at that. Hubby and wifey are both here. Now we can discuss this like adults." I looked at Sethu and she had her eyes glued on Sindi.

Me: "What game are you playing Sindi. You know nothing happened between us you cant go around telling people that."

Sindi: "Look I realize this is a bit surprising for you both but we are going to be family. A little bundle of joy is on the way." She said rubbing her none existent tummy. "Bit I have a solution cause I can see you both have issues with this situation. So half a million."

Me: "Half a million of what?"

Sindi: "Half a million rands. Give me that and I'll get out of your way and you'll never have to see this pretty face again." She said with her arms crossed clearly serious about this.

Sethu: "And if you don't get it. What then?"

Sindi: "Well the press would love a juicy story about a businessman who rose from the dead and got a side chick pregnant or I could just say you raped me." I swear this girl is applying for a first class ticket to hell.

Me: "You know what? Maybe you should do what you need to do."

Sindi: "You really think I'm bluffing dont you?"

Me: "Oh no I know you're serious. But I also know that Chris would love to know where you are."

Sindi: "Who?"

Me: "Chris! You know the one you stole from. His wife wants her jewellery and you know you

cant sell it anywhere cause he's looking for you. So go ahead. Tell the world whatever you want to tell them. And lucky for me....." I took out my phone and showed her that it was recording. Good thing I did this before I got here. "I have this entire conversation on tape. So do what you need to do and I'll do what I need to do." I saw little droplets of sweat forming on her forehead. Now I wish I had done this background check on her sooner. I would have avoided a whole lot of bullshit. I couldnt even enjoy the Thanksgiving ceremony cause I was so caught up in this mess.

Sethu: "I take it we are done here?"

Me: "Yes we are." We walked out of there leaving Sindi standing there like a pillar of salt. We got to the parking lot and Sethu went to her car. I was about to get into mine when she

closed the door before I could even get in. "And now."

Sethu: "This time and this time only I'll let this go. But the next time you get angry at me and decide to get on top of another woman I will cut your balls off and reunite you with MaZwane."

Me: "Yes ma'am."

Sethu: "Ngicinsile njalo Melusi (I'm serious.) I'm not about to do this again telling some straatmate to stay away from my husband. I will not allow you to change me."

Me: "I know. And I'm sorry. I'll never put you in that position ever again. I'm really sorry."

Sethu: "I'll see you at home."

Me: "Come on. Let's drive together."

Sethu: "My car."

Me: "I'll get someone to bring it." I opened the car door for her and she got in.

I got in and drove home. I sent one of my drivers and asked him to come pick up the keys from the house so he can bring Sethu's car home. I held on to Sethu's hand as I drove. Who knew it would take me being on the verge of losing my wife and family to know what I have. Even though I know the source of all this but right now it all seems minuscule. I let go of her hand and took out my phone. I sent a text to Chris with Sindiswa's location. I might not be able to personally make her pay for her lies to Sethu but I trust Christ will take care of that. As



long as she is put of my life and then I'm good. Now I just have to rebuild my marriage. Mcebo is finally happy with Tshilidzi so maybe Sethu wont feel as guilty or feel like she owes him anymore. So now I can have my wife back.

SIXTY SEVEN

I've fought so many battles in my life I just never thought a side chick would be one of them. Well not necessarily a side chick per say but you know what i mean. I never thought I'd be that

woman who tells another woman to leave her husband alone.

I never thought I'd ever be dragged to that level where i have to fight for a man who willingly gave himself to another woman but for me there was a 'happy ending' if I can even call it that. Or maybe I should just call it a fresh start.

Even though Sindi was technically out of our lives I couldnt help feeling like there was more to the girl than just what we saw. A part of me feels like she came here for a purpose and not just to blackmail Melusi. I mean she spent months calling him and even when he blocked her she found a way to get to him she even found his address and showed up here as if she

didn't know he was married. My spirit was still heavy when it comes to her. A part of me feels like we haven't seen the last of her yet.

I picked the kids up from their respective schools and we went past a McDonald's drive through for some burgers before heading home. We bought an extra meal for Mia since the kids would be spending the weekend with Ncane. I drove them to Ncane's place and I found Mia already waiting by the door. I parked the car and even before I could get out she had already opened the back door for these two rascals. I handed her the takeaways and she ran into the house with her little minions behind her.

I got in too and found Ncane in the lounge busy on her laptop.

Me: "Hey how are you?" I gave her a hug and sat down.

Ncane: "I'm good how are you? I havent seen you in a while."

Me: "I'm good. Just paranoid I guess." She closed the laptop and turned to me.

Ncane: "Paranoid about what?"

Me: "Well this whole Sindi thing is weighing heavy on me. I cant help feeling like we haven't heard the last of her yet."

Ncane: "You worry too much Siphosethu. At some point you need to stop thinking about the

what ifs and focus on the here and now. She's gone you and Melusi are working things out Mcebo is happy with Tshilidzi. Just this once stop expecting the worse to happen."

Me: "I guess you have a point. I'm just so used to bad things happening that when something good happens I feel anxious about when it will end."

Ncane: "Exactly. Live in the moment for once."

I sighed and let out a deep breath. Maybe Ncane is right. I need to just enjoy the moment. The past few years I've dealt with every kind of pain thrown my way. And now that its somehow slowed down and things are looking better I need to enjoy my life again. I need to let go of the anxious guilt ridden woman who felt like she

was responsible for every bad thing happening to her. I need to come home to me again.

Ncane: "By the way your father was here a few days ago." This is a surprise. Usually when he comes he let's me and Tshilidzi know. And I can bet my life on it Tshilidzi has no clue either.

Me: "Okay what did he want ?"

Ncane: "Surprisingly he came to take Mia to the daddy daughter dance at school."

Me: "What?"

Ncane: "I was just as surprised. I told him about it in passing about a week ago. I felt bad that Mia would be the only one with her mum there

next thing I know he shows up and offers to take her."

Me: "Wow that was nice of him."

Ncane: "Yeah and Mia was super excited."

Me: "I bet. I'm glad he showed up. Anyways I have to go. Let me say goodbye to the kids."

I went down the passage to the extra guestroom that Ncane had turned into a playroom. The kids were sprawled out on the floor with toys all over.

Me: "Okay babies mummy is leaving." They came and gave me hugs and quickly went back to their toys. That was a cold goodbye. But I

guess I should be used to it by now cause that is all I get everytime i bring them here.

I went back to the lounge. Ncane walked me out. I got the kids bags out of the boot and handed them to her. I gave her a hug before driving out. I decided to call my dad. He picked up after the first ring.

Dad: "Babygirl." Its weird how close we've gotten. If I could tell anyone that I met this man less than four years back for the first time they would think I'm lying. But here we are

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Dad: "Babygirl." Its weird how close we've gotten. If I could tell anyone that I met this man less than four years back for the first time they would think I'm lying. But here we are two peas

in a pod and as close as any father and daughter can be.

Me: "Daddy dearest. How are you?"

Dad: "I'm good nana how is you?"

Me: "Me is good. So Ncane tells me you came to Durban and you didnt tell your daughters." He laughed and his laugh is contagious so I found myself laughing too.

Dad: "Well I had a daddy daughter dance to attend."

Me: "She told me. Thank you."

Dad: "For what?"

Me: "For taking Mia to the dance. You didnt have to but I'm glad you did."

Dad: "Me too. I had fun. It was a bittersweet moment though."

Me: "Why is that?"

Dad: "Well it just reminded me that I never got to take you to a daddy daughter dance. I did it with Tshilidzi and Rendani."

Me: "We can't change the past Baba."

Dad: "I know. But I'm glad you're in my life now so I wont miss anything else."

Me: "Yep. And you get to be a grandpa."

Dad: "Yey I'm not a grandpa. I'm not that old. I am papa." I laughed out loud. He's not ready to be a grandpa yet so he prefers for the kids to call him papa.

Me: "Okay papa. I'm driving to meet your other daughter. I'll tell her you say hi."

Dad: "And tell her I love her."

Me: "Will do."

Dad: "I love you. Bye."

Me: "I love you too daddy."

Miracles really do happen. Who knew I would one day tell my dad I love him and him say it too. In my big old age. Yeah neh. You can never say life is predictable.

I met up with Tshilidzi and Tshepiso for drinks. Lucky for me I dont have any more meetings to get to so I have officially knocked off. I can drink some wine without worrying about work. I got to the hotel where we would be meeting and headed straight for the bar. I found them already waiting.

Me: "Ladies." I gave them hugs and sat down.

Tshepi: "You seem happier. What happened?"

Me: "Well I was worried about this while Sindi thing. But Ncane made me realize that I had to stop looking for problems where there are none. She's gone. Hopefully for good."

Tshilidzi: "She has a point. Although I would have loved to slap the shit out of that girl."

Tshepi: "You and me both. I was ready for war."

Me: "Well calm down soldiers the battle has been won so we good. I need a drink."

I lifted my hand up to get the attention of the waiter. He came by and took my order and the girls ordered refills. We ordered more drinks and talked about anything and everything but

mostly this was a catch up session. We had a great time.

After a few drinks when we could feel ourselves getting tipsy we decided to call it a night. We got into our cars and headed home. I got home and found Melusi's car in the driveway. But it wasn't only his car that was there. I noticed a car that I didn't know. I wonder who it is.

I parked my car and got out. I got to the house and found him in the lounge with TT. I greeted and headed to the kitchen to get myself a glass

of water. I need the cold water to sober me up. I saw the pots on the stove and the aroma told me Melusi had cooked. I went back to the lounge.

Melusi: "How are the girls?"

Me: "Good. I did tell you the kids will be with Ncane for the weekend right?"

Melusi: "Yeah you did. TT apparently has some information and he wouldn't tell me anything until you showed up."

Me: "Oh. What is it?"

TT: "So after Melusi told me to do a background check on Sindi....."



Me: "I thought we were past that?"

TT: "The blackmail yes. But I dug deeper after Chris asked me to get more info on her he needed to have her prosecuted for the theft of his wife's jewellery and he needed to make sure he had as much ammunition as possible."

Melusi: "Okay but shouldn't you be telling Chris all this?"

TT: "This has nothing to do with Chris. I found out Sindi is not just some popular slay queen but she is Madlala's niece."

Me: "Madlala as in MaZwane's partner in crime?"

TT: "That one. This might just be a coincidence but I'm not really a fan of those."

Melusi: "Maybe it's not a coincidence. I mean the first time I met her she came up to me and sat at my table and just started making conversation."

Me: "So you think Madlala sent her?"

TT: "Its a possibility. The man was embarrassed in his community his hut was burnt down with all his tools inside so maybe he is out for revenge."

I knew this was too good to be true. My gut is never wrong. Even though I didn't know why I knew something was off about her and I knew we hadn't seen the last of her just yet and now I'm certain she is coming back. But she's not coming back alone she has Madlala in her tiny little corner.

I decided to call gogo Nkanyezi and tell her about this. As soon as she picked up I told her everything that has happened and what TT had found.

Nkanyezi: "I thought Madlala would have given up by now."

Me: "Me too. But we were clearly wrong."

Nkanyezi: "Tell you what I'll speak to Khehla. I think it's time we put an end to this once and for all. If Madlala wants to join his friend then so be it."

She hung up. I guess Madlala has a lot coming his way but gogo Nkanyezi is right. This has to end. It's been going on for too long and I am tired of fighting. But a part of me was still curious to find out what it is that Madlala wanted.

SIXTY EIGHT

Life has a bad habit of coming at me and coming fast. It feels like I am dodging life's punches at every turn. I fight one battle and win before I can even take a breath and relax something always comes up.

Melusi and I woke up early and drove to Khehla's place. Gogo Nkanyezi will meet us there so we can figure out what to do with this whole Madlala issue cause he clearly seems to be determined to carry out MaZwane's evil deeds. Say what you want about that woman but she clearly knows what she's doing even from beyond the grave her minions will still do the work for her.

We got there and gogo Nkanyezi was already parked outside. We got in and headed to Khehla's hut. We knocked and went in. We greeted and sat down on the grass mat by the door.

Khehla: "Good thing you are here. We will wait for the others to come. They are almost here."

Me: "Who else is coming?"

Khehla: "Mazibuko and his kids. They should be here soon."

I didnt know that. Now I'm curious to find out what exactly is it that these two have planned. We were served some tea and scones by Khehla's initiates. We had our tea and waited. The others showed up and joined us in the hut.

Khehla: "Good. You're all here. Let's get down to it. Gogo Nkanyezi told me about this girl that showed up we consulted the ancestors and they confirmed that this girl was sent to seduce Melusi. Lucky for us the ancestors showed us

the plan she had. She was going to sleep with Melusi pass something on to him sexually and then Melusi would pass that on to Sethu."

Melusi: "So his plan was to get to Sethu through me?"

Khehla: "Yes."

Mcebo: "Why her?"

Khehla: "She is royalty. MaZwane knew that. She hid it for her own selfish reasons."

Me: "How did she even know that?"

Nkanyezi: "Madlala is technically supposed to be a sangoma and we know these things."



Mazibuko: "So what's the way forward."

Khehla: "Good thing you asked. We have decided that since Madlala wont stop what he started with MaZwane we need to put an end to his deeds once and for all."

Nkanyezi: "Yes so in order to do that we need to lure him back to KZN."

Msizi: "And how are you going to do that?"

Khehla: "That's why you are all here. We will need your blood. MaZwane died before her time so her spirit is wandering around. So what we want to do is use your blood since you're her children to summon her spirit. Once we

capture her spirit we will use it to lure Madlala back here and then end this once and for all."

Cebile: "How sure are you that he wont know what you're planning?"

Sbuysile: "Yeah what is he counters this whole thing and we end up dead or something."

Khehla: "We are hoping for the best but expecting the worst." Does he seriously think that is a comforting statement. Plus what's the worse that could happen?

Me: "I have a question. You say you're hoping for the best buy expecting the worst what's the worse that could happen?"

Nkanyezi: "If this backfires MaZwane might just end up as an uncontrollable zombie."

Melusi: "Basically making our lives a living hell."

Cebile: "And if we say no to this then what?"

Khehla: "Then you'll have to be prepared to fight Madlala for the rest of your lives."

Me: "But if I'm the one Madlala wants then why involve everyone in this."

Khehla: "He might get to you. All he needs is your blood. If he gets his hand on even a drop of it he will use your blood to make himself as powerful as he can be. And once he becomes powerful there is no telling what he can do."

Mcebo: "So we might just be his first stop?"

Khehla: "Pretty much."

Honestly if it was up to me this wouldn't even be up for discussion. Everyone would just give Khehla their blood so we can get this over and done with. But it's not my blood he wants so I will just let those whose blood is needed speak.

Melusi: "I'll do it."

Nkanyezi: "You can't. Biologically you aren't MaZwane's child so that might be a problem." I felt him sigh next to me. One thing Melusi has always been is a fixer. He likes to fix things. I don't remember a time when I came to him with

a problem and he didnt know what to do. Even if at that moment he didn't have a clue what to do he would always find a way. And right now I can tell its killing him not being able to do this.

Mcebo: "I'll do it." He said that and somehow it I guess made everyone comfortable enough to also give their consent. Before everything began Khehla lit the incense and placed it in the little bowl. He moved the incense around the room blowing it in everyone's faces.

When he was done he took a small black calabash and poured some water in it. He first went to Msizi he took a razor and cut him on the top of his hand and let his blood spill into the calabash. He took his other hand and did the

same thing. When he was done he took a black paste and put it over the cuts. He moved to Mcebo and did the same thing before moving to the sisters.

Soon as he was done he brought the calabash to the center of the hut. He burned the incense around it and said somethings that no one could hear or understand well maybe gogo Nkanyezi could hear and understand him but the rest of us were just clueless.

Gogo Nkanyezi and Khehla then cut themselves. They mixed their blood before pouring it into the calabash. They started chanting and speaking some things. Whole they were busy chanting the smoke from the incense

seemed to get bigger it was now feeling up the room. The weather outside seemed to have changed the sky was dark and there was thunder rambling and lightning fueled the sky. Any other day seeing a sight like that I would have got into the house and just kept away from the lightning. But now as much as it was scary I couldnt help feeling like maybe this was a sign of a new beginning. A better more calm and happy beginning. I was ready for it to be quite honest. I was ready to just breath.



MELUSI



I'm not sure what kind of magic these two were conjuring but it was clearly working judging by the blue sky that had turned black and gloomy in just moments.

Ever since I've known about Khehla I've heard stories about him. As much as he is a good sangoma whose only obligation was to help people if touched the wrong way he can just as easily turn into a monster. Which then began the question why couldn't he turn into a monster when MaZwane killed my mother? Why couldn't he save her and send MaZwane to hell where she belonged a long time ago? If he had done that we wouldn't be having any of these problems. Of course that would mean not having my brother and sisters but honestly I wouldn't have known any different.

For the first time since I found out about my mother I missed her I know she died when I was born and I didnt even know about her until a few years back but still

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I know she died when I was born and I didnt even know about her until a few years back but still maybe if she had been alive my life would have been different. MaZwane pretended to love me and care about me and my entire life I

believed that but there were moments where she wouldn't even pretend. Even though she never uttered the words 'you're not my son' it still hurt to see her favour her other kids over me. Of course being the naive child that I was at that time I just thought she had favourites like every other parent. Either she was a damn good actor or she had an end goal in mind. And now I see it.

The darkness that was outside seemed to have made its way into the hut. The hut was now dark and only Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi's voices were heard. I held on to Sethu's hand as we heard groaning and it sounded like someone was writhing in pain.

Voice: "Ngyekeni (leave me alone)." The voice kept saying. I'm not sure who it was but it sounded like the person was in deep pain.

Khehla: "Vuka sikuthume (get up so we can send you somewhere.)"

Voice: "Ngyekeni ngyasha (leave me alone I'm burning.)" The voice was slowly becoming clear I could have sworn that was MaZwane.

Khehla: "Uyathunya MaZwane thumeka (we are sending you) sukuma umele ingane zakho (stand up for your kids.)"

MaZwane: "Ngyasha kuyashisa la ngphen amanzi (I'm burning it's hot this side give me water.)"

Khehla: "Yenza loku othunywa kona kucala (do what I'm sending you to do first.)"

MaZwane: "Ngyasha ngphen amanzi (I'm burning give me water.)"

Khehla: "Uzokwenza loku engfuna ukwenze (will you do what I want you to do?)"

MaZwane: "Yebo ngzokwenza ngiphe amanzi (I'll do it. Give me water.)" The fog in the hut seemed to slowly fade away. I'm not even sure we should be hearing this but ke here we are.

When there was a bit of light in the hut Khehla took a hug of water next to him and poured a few drops into the calabash information front of him. He stopped and poured more drops slowly.

Khehla: "MaZwane ngyakuthuma manje lalela ulalelisisise (I am sending you now listen and listen carefully.) Landa uMadlala laekhona umtjele ukuthi konkhe sekulungile (fetch Madlala from wherever he is tell him all is well.) Mtjele abuse ekhaya azoceda loku akucalile (tell him to come home and finish what he started.) Gijima MaZwane (Run.)"

There was silence after he said that and the sun came out again. I looked around the room and everyone was looking at Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi.

Khehla: "Well now we wait."

Mcebo: "It's done? "

Khehla: "Yeah."

Me: "What does she mean when she said ayesha?" I asked. Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi looked at me like they were seeing a ghost. I looked behind me cause I thought maybe MaZwane was behind me but I had my back on the wall so theres no chance of that.

Nkanyezi: "What do you mean?"

Me: "She said she was burning and she asked for water. What did she mean? Is she in hell being fried by the devil himself?" I said trying to ease the tension that seem to have filled the room.

Khehla: "You heard that?"

Nkanyezi: "How much did you hear?" Okay this is weird. It thought we all heard that so what are they asking me what I heard.

Me: "I heard everything."

Nkanyezi: "Everything everything?"



Me: "Yeah. Were we not supposed to hear that?"

Sethu: "Babe we didn't hear anything."

Me: "What do you mean?"

Sethu: "The only thing we heard was Khehla and gogo Nkanyezi groaning and chanting. That's it." Either these people are lying or they think this is a joke.

Me: "So y'all didn't hear MaZwane saying she is burning and she needs water? You didnt hear her groaning it was like she was crying."

Everyone shook their heads and I realised they were serious. They heard nothing. So how was

I able to hear her but the others couldn't? I need answers and these two better give me some cause now I feel like maybe I'm going crazy.

SIXTY NINE

I've heard stories of people seeing and hearing things that other people cant hear or see and somehow they are labeled as crazy. Am I about to be one of those people? I dont know.

Ever since that little encounter at Khehla's place I've been wrecking my brain trying to figure out why I could hear MaZwane and the others couldn't. Khehla couldn't give me an answer at the time instead he promised to do a consultation some other time to figure out what was going on. It's been almost two weeks and I'm still waiting for him.

I figured burying my head in work and trying my hardest to put everything behind me and wait on Khehla would make this whole thing go away but I haven't been successful in that department. I've even had to cut down on work cause everything is just crazy. I finished the only meeting that I had for today.

I got up and did something I've been overdoing lately. I stood by the window and watched the ocean doing what it does every day sit still or dance around causing waves to hit the shore and drag the water back to its depth.

I wished I could be like the ocean have a set routine and just go crazy every once in a while but I dont have that luxury.

I felt Sethu wrap her arms around me and rest her head on my back. I knew it was her because of her perfume. Her latest obsession Hypnotic Poison by Christian Dior. It announces her presence before she even makes it to you.

Sethu: "You have to stop thinking about this or else you'll drive yourself crazy." She said with her head still resting on my back.

Me: "I need answers Sthandwa sam. Are you certain you didn't hear anything that day? Something? Even just one word?" She let go of me and walked around to stand in front of me.

Sethu: "You have asked me that question almost a zillion times now and the answer will be the same today as it was yesterday the day before last week. I didnt hear anything except Khehla and Gogo Nkanyezi chanting and groaning." I sighed and sat on top of my desk. Sethu walked closer and stood between my legs.

Me: "I know. I just have too many questions and no answers."

Sethu: "I know. So how about I distract you for a few minutes." She said with her fingers making their way down my chest.

Me: "Oh yeah and how are you planning to do that?"

She kissed me on the cheek and moved down to my neck while her hands were busy fiddling with my belt. She came up and kissed me on the lips while her hand had found what it was looking for inside my pants. She played with my dick while kissing me. I guess she was right. This was a great distraction.

She pulled my pants down a bit setting my nature free. She went down on her knees and immediately filled her mouth with my manhood driving me nuts. No pun intended. I held on to the desk as she moved her head up and down on me. I closed my eyes and threw my head back as the feeling of euphoria engulfed me. I heard a knock on the door.

Me: "Who is it?"

Voice: "Its me sir you have a guest." That was Sihle my PA. I dont know why she's telling me about guests. My meetings are done for the day.

Me: "I dont have any meetings."

Sihle: "I know. He says its urgent."

Me: "Give me ten minutes."

Sihle: "Yes sir." I heard her move away from the door and then I focused back on what's happening in front of me.

I felt myself getting closer to my climax. I pulled her up and sat her on the desk. I lifted her skirt up and pulled down her underwear. I held her behind her neck with one hand and kissed her while the other hand went down to the pearly gates and I could feel she was ready. I made my way in slowly. I had to muffle her moans with a kiss. I moved in and out of her slowly and just upped the pace as time went by. Soon as I got to a faster pace I let go of her lips and just focused on the strokes. I went in harder and



harder till I felt her walls close in on my dick and her juices drip onto the desk. I kept going till I cummed all over her insides.

Sethu: "Was that distracting enough for you?"  
She asked with me still inside her.

Me: "Yep. I think I might need some more distracting later." I pulled out and headed to the bathroom. I came back with some toilet paper and cleaned us both up.

Sethu: "I have a bunch of meetings later.  
Maybe when we get home."

Me: "Works for me. I'll take the kids to Ncane's place." She laughed and walked towards the door. As soon as she opened the door I saw

Khehla standing there probably ready to come in.

Khehla: "Makoti." He said. Sethu nodded and quickly walked out. He walked in and for some strange reason he had a smile on his face.

Me: "Khehla I didnt know you were coming." He sat down.

Khehla: "Ten minutes? That's all you needed? Ten minutes? Are you sure you dont need help?"

Me: "Hahaha very funny." I sat down as he threw his head back laughing. "So do you have an answer for me?"

Khehla: "Somewhat. Madlala was spotted back at his hut. He's trying his best to hide from the community but I have people watching him."

Me: "So what's the next step?"

Khehla: "We will send MaZwane to kill him."

Me: "What if it doesn't work?"

Khehla: "Have faith son we've already got Madlala here all that's left is to finish him off and put a stop to this."

Me: "So still no answers on why I heard MaZwane while the others didn't?"

Khehla: "Not yet. But I'm trying my best to figure out what happened. Stop worrying about it. If

this was something bad I'm sure we would have a clue by now what's going on."

Me: "If you say so."

Khehla and I spoke for a little while before he had to leave. As promised I decided to call Ncane and ask her to take the kids for the night. I decided to end my day early. I went straight to the mall and got a few ingredients for the dinner I had impulsively decided on for tonight. Since Sethu has so many meetings I wanted her to come home to a nice meal. I bought some dessert as well and some flowers.

I got home and set everything up. I decided on something simple but nice. I made some chicken livers and rolls for the starter and beef lasagna a salad on the side and the Zulu man in me doesn't believe a meal is a meal without some sort of meat so I decided to roast some chicken for the main course.

A few minutes before Sethu arrived I set the table and I must admit I didn't do so bad. It actually looked decent. I lit some candles and put some petals on the table and the floor. I switched the lights off soon as I heard her car pull up outside. She got in and the smile on her face was all the confirmation I needed that I did good on this dinner.

Sethu: "And now?"

Me: "The perfect distraction. You approve?"  
She walked closer to me and gave me a hug  
and a kiss.

Sethu: "Definitely. You did all this?"

Me: "I have many hidden talents Sthandwa  
sam." I pulled out the chair for her to sit.

Sethu: "So what's the occasion?"

Me: "I dont need an occasion to treat my wife. "  
I poured her a glass of wine.

I went to the kitchen and brought out the starter. Her smile made me happy. As long as she was happy then I can give myself a pat on the back and say well done.

We finished our dinner. I got the bubble bath running and soon as it was ready we got in and just relaxed. Well there was some lovemaking in between but it was relaxing nonetheless. When the water got cold we got out and headed to the bedroom. We had some more lovemaking before we passed out on the bed.

I haven't had a peaceful sleep like this in a while. I could literally feel my bones and muscles relaxing. I woke up to the sun shining bright like it was competing with something. It

wasnt hot though weirdly enough. I got up and opened the French doors leading out to the balcony. I got out and almost had a heart attack when instead of stepping on some tiles in the balcony I stepped on grass. Green luscious grass that looked like it was fed a three course meal every morning lunch and dinner with some few healthy snacks in between.

I could feel the grass between my toes. It felt like the grass was massaging my feet. I took another step and another one and it felt like I was walking on clouds. I looked back at the house hoping to wake Sethu up so she can feel the grass. Instead the house had dissapeared. My heart started racing. I took a few steps back but it was a futile exercise cause the house wasnt there.



I looked around me hoping to see some sign of life but there was nothing. I wanted to scream for somebody anybody but there was nothing. I walked back towards the direction of the house. I kept walking and walking the sun was now beginning to be scorching hot. I looked around for a tree or something to rest under just so I can get away from the scorching heat. I saw a tree up on what seemed like a hill. I walked towards it and sat down. I took a deep breath and just took in the coolness of the shade.

I closed my eyes for a few seconds. When I opened them and looked down the hill I saw a hut with smoke coming from it. I got excited when I saw that. I quickly got up and ran down the hill towards the hut. I could feel sweat dripping down my face and my back as I ran I

didn't care though I just needed to find a living being that I could talk to.

I got to the hut and called out announcing myself but no one came out. I got closer to the hut and the door was opened. I knocked but I still didn't get a reply. I got in and almost shit my pants when I saw MaZwane standing there with Madlala sitting on a chair looking at her.

Madlala: "Ngazile uzobuya Mangweni. (I knew you'd be back.) Kufanele sicedele lokhu esakcala (we need to finish what we started.)" He said not even paying any attention to me. It felt like I was invisible to them.

Mazwane: "Sekwanele Madlala (we need to finish what we started.)" He said not even paying any attention to me. It felt like I was invisible to them.

Mazwane: "Sekwanele Madlala ngfuna ukphumula manje (it's enough now. I want to rest.)"

Madlala: "No kufanele sicede lokhu esakucala singalthola igazi lomuntu wasebukhosini salthola umkhovu wakho uyophila ingunaphakade lemali abesolo akwenzela yona iyohlala njalo ingeyakho akekho oyoythatha ezandleni sakho futhi nengane zakho ziyophila ngayo nezizukulwane zakho ziyoceba. (No we need to finish what we started we can get royal blood when we get it your zombie will live forever the money she's been making for you will always be yours no one will ever take it from you your children will live off of that money even your great grandkids will be rich.)" This

seemed to be an interesting conversation so I decided to listen.

MaZwane: "Uyayazi inkinga Madlala ingane kaSethu noMcebo iyigazi lami yebo inegazi lika Sethu lasebukhosini Kodwa uma sithola igazi likaSethu sizomoshisa yonkinto. (You know the problem Sethu's son with Mcebo is my blood. Yes he has Sethu's royal blood but if we get Sethu's blood we will ruin everything.) Igazi likaMpendulo ilona elinghlanganisa no Sethu uma nginikela ngegazi lika Sethu kuzofana nekuthi nginikela ngegazi lami ucobo. Uma ngikwenza loko umuzi wami uyovalwa ngehlahla. (Mpendulo's blood is what connects me to Sethu. If I sacrifice Sethu's blood then I might as well be sacrificing with my own blood. If I do that my whole family will be wiped out.)"

Madlala: "Manje ubuyeleni uma ungakazimiseli ukukwenza loku? (Then why are you back if you aren't prepared to do this?)"

Mazwane: "Ngibuyele lokhu. (I came back for this.)" I saw her walk closer to him she put her hands around his neck and tightened the grip. Madlala tried to fight but the more he fought the tighter MaZwane's grip around his neck got.

I saw him take his last breath and his pupils roll to the back of his head. He fell off the chair with MaZwane still on his neck. I dont know why she wasn't letting go cause clearly this man was dead.

Voice: "Myeke. (Let him go.)" I heard a voice speak. Soon as MaZwane heard the voice she let go of him. (Come back.)" She turned and walked out the door passing me like I wasnt

even there. As soon as she walked out i checked Madlala's pulse and sure enough he was dead. His body was even getting cold.

I followed MaZwane out the door and saw her walking away. I decided I'm not staying here. If people get here and find him dead I will be the first suspect. No one is going to believe that a woman who died years back is responsible for this. I ran and ran till I made it to a river. I needed to cross the river to get to the other side. Since I couldnt see a bridge I decided to trust in my swimming abilities and get in. I swam and swam. I could feel my arms getting tired but I needed to get to the other side so I kept going. I felt water making it's way into my mouth and nose. My arms gave in and I felt my lungs filling up with water.

I woke up panting. I felt someone throw water on my face.

Melusi: "What the fuck?" I looked up and Sethu was standing there with a glass of water. The duvet and sheets were wet. How many glasses did she pour on me? She quickly put down the glass and gave me a hug.

Sethu: "Thank God. I almost had a heart attack. Are you Okay?"

Me: "What happened?"

Sethu: "I think you were having a bad dream. What were you dreaming about?"

Me: "I dont know."

I got up and went to the bathroom to pee. I came back to find Sethu changing the sheets. I helped her then we got back into bed. I couldn't sleep after that. I dont understand why I heard MaZwane that time and now I am seeing her in my dreams. But most importantly who was her Mkhovu?

SEVENTY



I've never been more confused in my entire life. This seeing dead people is really starting to freak me out. I know I shouldn't be but the fact that Khehla and Gogo Nkanyezi also have no idea what's going on is also scaring me.

After the dream I had seeing MaZwane kill Madlala I woke up the next morning to news of Madlala having passed away in the middle of the night. Of course an autopsy was done and as far as medical reports say he had an asthma attack while sleeping. I know asthma is dangerous but I also know better I saw him being killed.

I thought by now those dreams would be over but instead they keep coming back. This time it's like I get to see all the shit MaZwane did. From everything he fed my father and her sacrificing her children's fertility for her own selfish reasons. It's like an entire movie being replayed over and over in my head. If anyone could ask me about MaZwane's shenanigans I would tell you from beginning to end. I'm not sure what kind of jokes my ancestors are playing but I wish they could stop. Im tired of seeing the lengths MaZwane had gone to for her evil ways to manifest to the world.

I've told Sethu about these dreams and she has been supportive. Although she I'd also a bit anxious especially when we have to go to sleep at night cause that's when the dreams play out and almost every single time they happen I

wake up with sweat dripping all over me and my heart racing.

I decided to drive to Khehla's place this morning cause I seriously need him to figure this out. I got there and he summoned his initiates. If theres one thing I've also learned about Khehla no matter how powerful he is he knows he can never have all the answers and sometimes when abadala have concealed the truth from him he passes on the baton to someone else to try and help even his own initiates have helped him solve some problems.

He got the initiates together and they formed a circle around me. I sat on a grass mat in the centre of the circle. Drums started beating

around me. The initiates started singing songs and dancing around me. I wasn't sure how this would help but at this point I was willing to try just about anything if it will give me answers.

As the drums kept beating I felt myself get into a trance. I wasn't sure what was happening it was like my body had a mind of it's own and my brain had become numb. I started slowly moving side by side. Anyone who didn't know better would think the rhythm of the beating drums was a nice melody hence my body had automatically started moving all on it's own.

My head started moving slowly from side to side until I passed out on the grass mat. I woke up to silence. I didn't know where I was. I

looked around me and it looked like I was in the middle of nowhere. There was a lone hut standing in front of me. The hut was painted a dark grey color but the lush greenery surrounding it made the color pop.

I heard a woman screaming from the hut. And a couple of other voices gently saying it's almost time push. I figured someone was giving birth. The only time I've ever seen anyone giving birth was when Sethu gave birth to Asimbonge. Even then I made sure to stand next to her head so I wouldn't see whatever was going on down there. So I decided not to go into the hut.

I figured I'd sit outside and wait for whatever is happening in there to be over and done with

then I try and ask whoever came out if they can show me the way home. There was a stoop outside the hut so I decided to sit on it. I walked towards the stoop but i found myself inside the hut. How? I dont know.

I saw a woman laying on a grass mat with two others on either side of her. She was sweating profusely and I could tell she was in so much pain. The women next to her kept telling her to push. She kept pushing and pushing but the baby would not come out. It felt like it was stuck. I looked up and again MaZwane was standing there with a black calabash in her hands. It had a black lid on it.

Woman 1: "Sizakele you have to push harder. The baby is getting tired. Push."

Sizakele: "I'm trying. I really am." I've heard that name before but I just can't remember where I know it from.

She kept pushing and pushing until the second woman literally stuck her hand inside Sizakele's vagina and tried to pull the baby out. After a few minutes of trying the woman pulled the baby out. The baby wasn't crying though. And he looked like he was blue. I got nervous a bit cause it looked like the baby was dead.

The second woman who pulled the baby out started shaking the baby a bit. She even put her mouth on the baby's tiny lips. I wasn't sure if she was breathing into him or sucking something out of him. I got my answer when she spit something on the floor then went back and sucked again. She shook the baby one last time and his cry reverberated all around the small hut.

I looked up at MaZwane and her face had changed from a creepy smile to a frown. I thought she'd be happy. The baby was alive. I guess she didn't want the baby to live. The women wrapped the baby in a small blanket and put him on his mother's arms. She held him and tears fell down her eyes. She kissed him on the lips and forehead.



Sizakele: "Mfanwami (my boy.) I prayed for you. I might not be able to see you grow but I know you will be a great man." One of the women took out a little plastic that was tied tightly. She opened the tiny plastic bag and handed it to Sizakele. Inside the plastic bag was a white powder. She put her finger in the powder then proceeded to draw a cross on the baby's forehead his feet and his hands.

"Ngyakuthanda mfanwami (I love you my boy.) Ngzokuvikela impilo yam yonke (I will protect you my whole life.) Noma sengfile ngyohlala ngingawe (even in death I'll be with you.) I will name you Melusi because like a shepherd you shall lead."

And that's when everything came together. The name Sizakele was my mothers name. Did I just witness my own birth?

While i was trying to figure all that out Sizakele or my mother started convulsing. She was shaking like she was having a seizure. I wanted to go to her so I can help her but it seemed like I was stuck in one place. My voice was stuck in my throat so I couldn't even tell her to hold on I couldn't tell her to fight. MaZwane on the other hand was standing there her creepy smile back on. As my mother took her last breath MaZwane opened her little calabash. I saw my mothers soul leave her body and get dragged into the calabash. MaZwane closed the calabash.

MaZwane: "This will be your punishment for sleeping with my husband. You will be stuck in

this little dark place. You will be my helper I will send you to do anything and everything that I need you to do and you will do it without question. Rest for now. When the time is right I will send you out to the world very soon." She walked out with the calabash in her hand.

Now everything made sense. When Madlala spoke about MaZwane's umkhovu it never crossed my mind that it could be my mother. But how do I free her from that darkness? Now that MaZwane is dead how do I free my mother and let her rest in peace?

I woke up panting. The drums were now silent. I looked around and there was no one there except Khehla and one of his initiates. She had

a wet cloth in her hand and she kept patting it on my forehead. I sat up and Khehla came closer.

Khehla: "Welcome back."

Me: "Please tell me you have the answers to what is happening to me cause I am tired of this."

Khehla: "I dont. But Ntabazwe over here does." He muttered as he sat down on the grass mat. I looked at this girl and she smiled at me. She looked so young. Any other day I probably wouldn't have taken anything she said seriously but right now I need answers. And Khehla seems to trust her. But then again she wouldn't be here if she wasnt gifted.

Me: "So what's wrong with me?" I asked her.

Zeze: "Nothing is wrong with you. All the dreams you've been having they were a cry for help."

Me: "From my mother?"

Zeze: "Yes. Now that MaZwane is dead no one is feeding your mother or looking after her. Even though it took a few years MaZwane's hold on her slowly disappeared. Now we need to find that calabash and destroy it."

Me: "So she couldn't just say that? The dramatics of making me have those horrible dreams." Zeze smiled and so did Khehla.

Khehla: "Your mother was dramatic even when she was alive."

Zeze: "The good thing is that now we know where your mother's spirit is kept all we have to do is find that calabash and destroy it and you will be free from these dreams."

Me: "Does this mean I have a gift or something?"

Zeze: "Not necessarily. You don't need to be gifted to get messages from ancestors. Some people have dreams others have visions and sometimes it's specific for whatever the ancestors are trying to show you and then once you get the message they take a step back."  
She got up and left us.

I let out sigh of relief after Zezwe had gone. I was just happy to get the answers I needed. Now all I need to do is find that calabash. I took a bath to wash off the sweat before I leave. Khehla walked me to my car. He seemed down a bit.

Me: "What's wrong?"

Khehla: "Nothing. I'm fine."

Me: "No you're not."

Khehla: "I feel guilty I guess."

Me: "Why?"

Khehla: "It's been almost forty years since your mother died. And in those years I had no clue what was going on. I knew MaZwane had killed her and I should have retaliated a long time ago but I couldn't. Not because I didn't want to but because my guides and spirits wouldn't let me. I guess they figured if I took a step into MaZwane's world it would be hard for me to come back. So I stuck to helping people but I couldn't help my own child. And now she cries out for help and I still couldn't help her cause everything was hidden from me. I don't know why."

Me: "I understand. But I think in a way she did come to you. Ntabazewe wouldn't have been able to figure this out without your guidance."  
He smiled.

Khehla: "Thank you but I know you are trying to make me feel better. Drive safe and let me know when you find that calabash."



Me: "How will I find it though?"

Khehla: "Your mother has gotten you this far trust that she'll take you to where you need to go."

Me: "I guess."

I got into my car and drove home. By the time I got there Sethu was pacing up and down the lounge. I got in and she threw herself at me.

Sethu: "Where have you been? Do you know how worried I've been?"

Me: "I'm sorry. I was at Khehla's."

Sethu: "So toh couldn't answer the phone?"

Me: "I left it in the car." I went and sat down on the couch. "Where are the kids?"

Sethu: "Upstairs playing. Did Khehla help you?"  
She sat down next to me.

Me: "In a way."

I told her everything that happened.

Sethu: "So where are you going to find the calabash?"

Me: "I dont know."

We had dinner and played with the kids for a while before they had to go to bed. I was tired too so I decided to go to bed early. I left Sethu working in the lounge.

I was woken up by Sethu in the morning. For the first time in a long time I actually had a good nights rest so when Sethu woke me up I wasn't as grumpy as I have been these days.

Me: "Why are you up so early?" I asked after noticing that she had changed her pyjamas and she was now wearing a dress.

Sethu: "We have to go. I think I might have an idea about where the calabash might be." I sat up and looked at her.

Me: "Where?"

Sethu: "At home. MaZwane's closet."

Me: "Baby it's been a long time since MaZwane died and the closet was cleaned out. Her clothes were burnt. I'm sure we would have found the calabash."

Sethu: "I'm telling you the calabash is in that closet. I remember one time when we were there for umsebenzi one time she got up and went to the bedroom. I followed her cause I needed scones that were locked in her bedroom. I saw her get into the bedroom but when I got in she wasn't there and the closet door was wide open. Some of her clothes had

been pushed aside. At the time I didnt think much of it I just figured maybe I had imagined it cause I was tired from cooking the whole night. And there was no ensuite bathroom for me to think she could have gone into so I just took the scones and walked out."

Me: "Okay baby I know you want to help but....."

Sethu: "Tell you what if we dont find anything then we find nothing. But what do we have to lose?" I guess that made sense.

I got up and took a shower. I wore some sweats and a tshirt with some slip on's and made way downstairs. Tshepi and Tshilidzi were already there together with Mcebo. I greeted and ask to speak to Mcebo. We walked out and I told him

everything that's been happening. He agreed to go home with us and help us find this calabash.

We left the kids with Tshepi and Tshilidzi and drive home together. We got there and found my dad sitting outside with Sbuysile's youngest daughter in his lap and the other kids playing around him. We greeted and I told him everything too. He told us to go in and do what we need to do.

We got in and found Sbuysile

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MaZulu and Cebile in the kitchen cooking. We greeted and went past to the bedroom. We got into the bedroom and took out all my dad's clothes from the closet and put them on the bed but there was nothing there. We emptied the closet and left it empty even the drawers were empty but still nothing.

We all stood there trying to figure out where the calabash might be but we all came out blank. Sethu walked into the closet and started gently hitting the back of the closet with her fist like they do in the movies. She got to the far corner of the closet and the sound changed. Mcebo and I looked at each other before getting into

the closet. We hit the back of the closet too and sure enough the sound was different from one corner of the closet to the other. I knew then that there was something behind that wall. Sethu was right.

We tried to figure out how to open the wall. It took us a hot minute before we found a tiny switch on the corner of the closet. I pressed it and the wall opened up. It opened up to a room that was dark. I switched on my phones flashlight and koved it around the room. It was dark and quite scary. I went in slowly but my flashlight didnt have the best brightness. I went out and found one of my dads torches in the



kitchen. I came back with it and it was a better option than my phone.

The room wasn't that big. It was narrow I could literally touch one side of it with my arm wide open and the other hand on the other side. I told Sethu to call Khehla. Even if we don't find the calabash in here we still need him to banish whatever bad spirits are in here.

I flashed the light on the wall and there was blood on the walls. There were drawings too in different shapes. But the one consistent thing

was that each drawing or shape was drawn in blood. I wonder whose blood it is.

Mcebo: "This feels like a horror movie."

Me: "Tell me about it. I keep expecting someone to jump out of the wall and scare the shit put of me."

I shone the light to the end of the room and lo and behold the calabash was sitting there. There was some candle wax all around it. The wax looked like it was from some black candles.

We decided not to touch the calabash until Khehla showed up. We waited outside the

closet and kept watch over the secret room as if the calabash would disappear. I mean it's been there for years and even after MaZwane's death it still did not move.

Khehla showed up almost an hour later with gogo Nkanyezi and Ntabazwe in tow. We showed them the room and they checked it out. Ntabazwe took the lead on this one since she was the only one who could figure out what was happening to me. She lit imphepho and went into the room with it. We heard her chanting and groaning for a while then things went quiet. She walked out after a while with the calabash in her hands.

Zeze: "We have to go to her grave."

Me: "Whose grave?"

Zeze: "Your mother's. We need to destroy this calabash on top of her grave."

We quickly got up and got into our cars and went to the grave. It took us a couple of hours to get to her grave which was at Khehla's old home. We got there and Zeze led us to the grave. My siblings and I were now seemingly in an entire shock phase. I know nothing about MaZwane should surprise us but I don't think we'll ever get used to her brand of evil.

Zeze laid the calabash on top of my mother's grave. I've only been here a couple of times and each time it feels like the first time. She knelt down next to the grave. She lit imphepho again and took out her snuff. She opened the calabash and poured something inside that made smoke come out of the calabash.

Zeze: "Sizakele Mntungwa Mbulaz'omnyama sikuzwile ukukhala kwakho sisizwile isililo sakho. (We've heard the cries.) Sesikuletheli ekhaya lapho lokugcina (we've brought you to your resting place.) Sale uphumula siyazi ukhathele phumula manje (rest now we know you're tired. Rest now.)"

She lifted the calabash up and threw it on top of the tombstone. The calabash shattered into a thousand pieces. There was a black liquid that flowed out of the calabash. It was dark and sticky. Soon as the sun hit the liquid it evaporated right in front of our eyes. For some strange reason soon as the calabash was broken a felt a sense of peace overcoming me. It felt weird but good.

I took a deep breath and for the first time in a long time the air felt fresh. It felt clean and it felt like the beginning of new things. My siblings Sethu and I drove back home while Khehla Nkanyezi and Ntabazezwe headed back to Khehla's place. We got home and sat down in the lounge just silently trying to absorb

everything that had happened. We sat there silently for what felt like a lifetime.

Cebile: "Am I the only one who feels like the air is fresher now."

Sbuysile: "I thought I was the only one. After everything that mum put us through we can now officially start over and rebuild our lives."

Me: "Yeah. A new dawn has broken."

Sethu and I together with Mcebo drove back to our house. We got there and Mcebo took Tshilidzi and Tshepi and drove them home. I made some hot chocolate Sethu and I watched the kids play on the floor while sipping on our hot chocolate.

Sethu: "So its really over?"

Me: "It looks like it."

Sethu: "I cant believe it took so many years but we are here now free and looking forward to a brighter future. Now I know It's true when they say Modimo o phala baloi."



Me: "Right. Now we can sleep better at night. She didnt win. No matter how many times she came for us she didnt win."

Sethu: "All this because of my blood."

Me: "Of course. Your blood is special babe." She sipped her hot chocolate and rested her head on my shoulder.

Sethu was right though goodness always wins even when we doubt and question it goodness will always win. And our lives are a living testament to that.

My dad is now completely free from MaZwane's evil he's back to being himself again the real him. Cebile being the academic that she is is more focused on getting her PHD right now but its comforting to know that when she decides to start her own family she will without too much hassle.

Sbuysile is living her best life right now. Even though her husband was loyal to her when she couldnt give him kids their marriage was beginning to take its toll on them. He defended her when his family came for her now he gets to bask in fatherhood and his family has been silenced. Two kids later and they are already ready for more. Cant blame them though. They've wanted this for so long and now its here.

Msizi and MaZulu have added a couple of additions to their brood. We've all made the decision to never tell him about his older kids and how they came to be. It would break him especially seeing as he was mums favourite. I'm sure he'd have a million questions that we cant answer the only person who can give him the answers is already six feet under. So that's one secret we will carry to our graves.

Mcebo has finally found his little piece of heaven with Tshilidzi. They are happy together. Brian had his reservations at first but he is slowly warming up to the idea of them together. I guess he can see how happy Tshilidzi is. He spends as much time as he can with Mpendulo

and he is the best father to him. I'm just glad that with all that has happened my brother and I can still go back to being as close as we used to be.

And speaking of Brian he seems to be spending a lot of time in Durban lately. Yes his kids are here but I think he has another reason to be here besides his two girls. I dont know what's happening between him and Ncane but I can smell trouble brewing with his wife. But then again a part of me feels like his wife needs to be shaken a bit so she can come back down to earth and stop treating Sethu like she's some product of infidelity when she was here before her.

Me well I think I got my life back. My wife is back in my arms and the devil has officially lost. Sethu and I are in a good space now. And I am looking forward to the rest of our lives. In spite of everything we are still here still standing. And the future looks brighter than ever.

Me: "I love you."

Sethu: "I love you too."

Me: "Forever and a day."

Sethu: "Forever and a day."

THE END

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