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Banele Series Ndu & Zama by Yenziwe

Zungu

Chapter 1

Zama:

I've been living in Johannesburg ever since I finished my matric. I moved out here to be away from my "Princess" status out in Durban. I just hate it and I don't think there's anything that would make me date someone who knows me through it. My twin got married three years ago and she is a mother and wife now. She did exactly what I want to do. Marry someone I love. Not someone who wants to marry royalty. My friends have never understood but they didn't grow up like this so I understand why they don't get it. I have a bae, my boo, my baby! He's originally from Mpumalanga. He's not exactly what people expected from me but he's pretty. Light skin, tall and skinny. He doesn't have much but he's not struggling either. He

lives around Auckland Park since he's a journalist and works there. Then I have my five girls, Mbali and Thuto who were my first friends in Joburg we met at VC on my first year. Thuto is gay and living his life like it's golden. Then there's Hunandi, Dudu and Minenhle. They're the socialites in our squad because their families aren't loaded but they're living the life here. I swear they have blessers. I have been studying and changing courses since I came here. Not because I don't know what I want but because I don't want to finish and have to go home or work or get married. However now I'm doing the last year in Sociology at Wits. I feel like going forward until I have a masters but I'll see at the end of the year.

I send a message and wish my niece a happy birthday. Akin, my brother's daughter. She's turning one today. I wish I was in Durban for that.

My father called and asked me to have dinner with Ndu because he's now working in Johannesburg and only knows me here. I highly doubt that we haven't seen each since I was thirteen and he was seventeen. I was very awkward then and had a little crush on him. He was full of himself and was only excited to go to Harvard the following year. I just could never say no to daddy.

Isn't it just fun going out with someone because your father said so? I love my dad but he's getting old if he doesn't realize what's happening here. Ndumiso Dube, son of Reggie Dube cannot possibly be living alone in Johannesburg and lonely.

He has money. Hoes will follow him. As to why I have to entertain him... Well let's just say his father knows my father. Now I have to dress up and look good for him. Spoilt little brat is seriously ruining my life. My baby is going to freak out if I told him so I had to lie and lie about us being friends and having to talk about business and, and, and.

I wonder where around Sandton he's taking me. Forget that we both live in Paulshof. I could take my C-class and go to wherever it is but he insisted he'd come pick me up.

Oh it seems he's here. He just texted.

Ndu:

I wonder how many grown men get emotionally blackmailed by their mothers into almost everything.

I don't complain though because I love her. She's the definition of perfect and usually she steers me right. My father and I hardly talk but I know he loves me too. I actually studied Law at Harvard just for him. He never said it but I knew he wanted me to be a lawyer. However I had to come back and decided to finish it at WCU because South African law is not American law.

I had a great time in the States being someone who comes from a well off family. I met people that I'll consider friends forever. I fell in and out of love there too. Since then I'm happy with casual fucks. I'm into thots cause you know you're getting laid with them and no feelings or strings attached.

My mother really needs to let me be. I've been abroad for crying out loud. I lived in the U.S for five years and the past six years I've been in Cape Town, alone. I move to Joburg and she sees the opportunity to set me up with some spoilt princess. I haven't even seen that girl in eleven years. How my mother thought I'd like to take her out is beyond me. I'd rather I saw Hakeem again. It's been years since I saw my boy and he's married now with three children. I've thought about it and I think I know exactly where to take her. I'm already waiting for her outside her house, I'm sure she can't afford this, she's still studying. Just as I thought she's living off her father. Typical.

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Zama:

Let me make him wait a bit. I already have my make up done. I just need something to wear. I settle for a Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt with a Tommy blue jean and red Louboutin heels. I decide to wear diamond earrings too. My weave is short so they'll be visible. I don't care about brands anymore but this guy is rich and stuck up.

Does that mean I'm trying to impress him? Nah. I'm just wearing brands.

I go to the car.

A Ferrari... Typical. Clearly he's not opening the door so I hop in. Oh he's on his phone.

"Sorry I just have to text this one thing and I'll be all yours princess." He says without looking up from his phone.

Did he really have to call me princess? It's clear that's the only reason we're here.

I look at him. Okay he's good looking. He has a short fade haircut which has two lines at the side, bushy eyebrows. Dark skin, broad shoulders. I see muscle, I've never been with a muscular person. Mhm.

He's wearing a tight t-shirt and jeans with Nike sneaks, a Hublot and gold chain.

He looks and smells rich.

Say it with me, TYPICAL.

"Let's hit the road." He says looking at me.

Yes it's those big dark brown eyes I remember. His lips are full and his lower lip is pinkish. Isn't he 28? He's so sexy and looks so young. Should I focus on the road or him?

Gosh he drives with one hand on the wheel. I know a lot of things are sexy in a man, but a good and confident driver is my thing.

My baby tries but I swear he's worse than me and I'm sure his seat is closer than mine to the steering wheel.

I decide to take a boomerang clip showing the speedometer and the road on Instagram and then on my Whatsapp. I'll have to amend status privacy before bae thinks I'm having fun though. It's just social media. I'll add TGIF and #Ferrari to that.

"So that's my punishment for earlier?" He asks with that deep voice.

I swear I feel my girl get warmer.

"No I'm just taking a vid for my IG." I reply.

"So, how are you doing princess?" He asks.

"I'm fine. Just didn't think I'd be doing this with you." I say trying to sound calm.

"This refers to going out right?" He asks glancing at me again.

"Yeah. It's been what? 11 years?" I say with a giggle.

"Too long. You've grown boobs." He replies shocking me.

"Really dude?" I say trying not to be embarrassed.

"Yeah. The pimples cleared too." He's trying to embarrass me.

"Well I grew up. So did you." I reply avoiding talking about my boobs.

"I guess so." He replies and we've stopped.

Soweto? That's so not like him.

"Maybe I should show you what grown men do." He says and licks his lips.

Too much temptation here. I feel my girl get wet.

We walk out and immediately eyes are on us.

Ndu:

She looks beautiful. Honestly

she always has been. She just grew up more. Her body looks really good. Ass on steroids and boobs to boot. She's light skinned like most of them at that palace. Brown eyes and pink lips. She even has a dimple on her right cheek. Her body and eyes still scream innocence. I guess she listens to the rules.

She's sexy above all else. I wish I could just strip her down and make her scream out my name right now.

It's just the families would make that so much drama with meetings and paying and a whole lot of bull.

"So princess, what do you think?" I ask about the place.

"Well I wouldn't expect you here but I'm impressed." She smiles.

Her smile is perfect.

A waiter collects our order. I get steak and chips for myself with a beer and she gets wings and chips for herself with a virgin mohito.

"Do you still have a crush on me?" I ask randomly.

She looks at me with her eyes popped out.

"I never did." She's avoiding eye contact.

"Hmm okay. You still keeping the royal rules?"

"Yeah I kinda have to." She's acting cool.

"So you're a virgin." I say.

"I'm not." She's lying to me.

"Oh so you won't mind if I hit it?" I look at her eyes.

She almost choked on her drink. Good. She's lying. I'm an attorney I know about lies and liars. She's not a very good liar.

"I don't want you to hit it." She's still feisty with me huh?

I laugh and look into her eyes longer. She drops hers. Perfect.

"You look like you need a good fuck."

The shock on her face! Priceless.

She's saved by the waiter as I was about to get her even more uncomfortable.

I'm enjoying seeing her squirm. This "hangout" isn't as bad as I thought it'd be. Actually, mother knows best. I'm into the perfect princess over here.

"Want to hit the club?" I ask.

"Sure. We can go now." She's clearly embarrassed. There's still three wings on that plate.

"If you can just bust it open for me and I'll hit it from behind, we won't need a club for a banging time." I say winking at her.

She's immediately uncomfortable and I want to laugh at her so bad, but I'll wait till she admits she's a 24 year old virgin.

I signal for the bill.

"I'm paying." She already has her card out.

"Okay I'll tip." I'm sure she thought I'd fight her on it.

The smile on this waiter's face when he sees my tip. It's far more than the money we spent on the meals.

We walk back to the car and we get stares again.

Zama:

Gosh this person is too much. Ndu just can't seem to let me catch a break. I know he knows I lied about not being a virgin.

My boyfriend understood who I was when I told him. We do raunchy things but we've never went as far as popping my cherry. He knows he wouldn't afford the penalty for it.

It's part of the rules for all the girls at home. No one has openly broken it except Lango. She's my uncle's daughter.

The poor guy was white so he didn't understand why he was buying livestock and giving an already rich family money.

Lango has always been the one who could never be confined. She still is.

We're at a club now and the bouncers greet us. It's clear they know him too.

I wonder why I'm here when he's already a regular in Joburg clubs.

We go to the VIP and Mbali is here. No surprises there. We're seated at the corner. He's actually sitting at the corner I'm next to him.

Mbali comes to us.

"Hey can I steal her?" She asks Ndu with a wide smile.

He looks annoyed. Good for him.

"Alright." He says dismissively.

"Please tell me that's your brother so I can let him dip." That's what she says the minute we get to the little girls room.

"He's a family friend who took me out." I reply and I'm uninterested.

"So he's the Ferrari guy?" She asks.

"You saw my IG?" I wonder when she did that with all her Friday night partying.

"Yeah. I hope you won't cheat with this guy. Siya loves you." Since when does she care about others?

"I won't cheat." I snap.

"I saw that food you had in Soweto too. I would've expected more from him."

"I liked it." I'm so over this conversation.

"Okay girl." She says and we go.

I go back to our table.

"I'm back. Sorry about that." I say sitting next to him.

We're at a corner table so it looks cosy.

"I didn't know you had friends like her." He looks rather pissed.

"What's wrong with her?" I ask him.

"Nothing. Do you want a drink?" He already has a Heineken in his hand.

"No. I'm still tryna catch the vibe." I look at him.

He smiles but I can tell he's still not happy with me leaving to talk to Mbalz.

"Hey guys." A voice from behind me. I know exactly who it is.

"Tharh! Hey cuz." I stand and hug her.

"Ndu, she was young when you left but this is Tharh, my cousin."

"Thabiso's sister right?"

"Yeah" She replies.

"Pleased to meet you."

"Join us." I offer.

"No I'm leaving now cuz. Enjoy." Tharh says with a suspicious smile.

"Bye."

I watch her join her squad.

I turn back to look at Ndu and I see Siya coming straight at us.
Oh shit.

Ndu notices there's something going on but instead of freaking out he holds my hand and lies back on the couch.

Really? Not now.

Siya stands in front of me.

"What is this?" He asks.

Ndu isn't even bothered.

"Baby this is Ndu. I told you about tonight." I tell him.

"You didn't tell me your family's business talks get so cosy." Siya is looking at our hands.

"Babe I'm not even dressed for a club." I defend myself.

I try to stand but Ndu tightens his grip on my hand. Dude really?

I turn to Ndu and I feel a hard slap on my cheek. Oh My Goodness! He hit me! Ndu's face doesn't change. He let's me go and stands up. Siya has no chance. He's on the floor in seconds and the bouncers collect him from the floor. I'm just crying. Nobody has ever laid a finger on me. Ever.

Ndu:

That stupid, stupid idiot. Look at what he did to her? I pick her up and we make our way out.

"I want a man like this. He's treating her like royalty." Some girl.

"She's just a hoe though. She two timed them." That voice sounds more familiar.

I look for her face and it's that girl Zama was with and is her friend. She immediately regrets saying it.

Too late missy. I put Zama in the car and we drive off. Her cheek is red. I can see that fool's handprint on her face.

I will put that idiot in jail so fast! Nx.

I drive to my place.

"Ndu" She's speaking with a hoarse voice now because she's been crying so much.

"Zamagwili." I reply.

"Where are we?" She looks around my garage.

"My place. You can't be alone tonight." I reply firmly.

"Okay." She says simply.

I was so ready to put up a fight and threaten to call her father if she was going to be stubborn.

At least she's no longer crying. We walk inside and I sit her on the bar stools and put ice cubes inside a bowl. I grab a towel and Detol at the bathroom by the first floor bedroom. I put some of the ice in it. It seems like there's a scratch on her face but it's just swelling for now.

"This will sting a bit." I tell her.

"Mhm" That's all she said and it sounded like a sexual moan to me. Don't judge me for it! I'm a man and she's still sexy.

She checks her phone and it's Siya calling. She ignores it and whoah! So many missed calls from her sisters, her step mothers and her father too. She calls Ntombi. I can hear this phone call. That's how close I am. Maybe I should go but I'm still trying to nurse this person.

"Sis are you sitting?" Ntombi

"Yeah what's going on?"

"I'm sorry Sisi... It's bab' omncane. He's gone."

"No no no. No Ntombi. No. That's not funny. No." She's freaking out.

Ntombi just cries on the other side.

She drops the call and looks at me with tears running down her cheeks. Her face is red all over at this point.

She puts her arms around me and I let her cry on my chest untill stops and stares into space. I pick her up and take her to the bedroom on this floor. I cradle her untill she sleeps. I then leave her there. I don't want her thinking I'm trying to to take advantage.

3

Ndu:

I'm up early everyday for gym but today I'll skip it. I check on Zama and she's still asleep. I go to the kitchen and check if Serena is up. She's cleaning good.

"Serena please make breakfast."

"Sir?"

"No not for me. I'll blend a smoothie"

"Oh sir has a guest."

I've never asked her to make breakfast for any girl that's been here before.

"Yes Serena. I have a guest. Please hurry before she wakes up."

"Okay sir."

"Cheese on toast and a cup of coffee."

She looks at me but doesn't protest. Good.

If I'm giving Zama breakfast, I'm giving her something I can make.

She's done and hands me the plate.

I walk in and put the plate on the bedside.

"Zama." I say brushing her face and sitting on the bed.

"Mhmm?" She sits up and has her back on the headboard.

Oh wow she woke up and took off her jeans. I couldn't. I just took the shoes off last night. She looks sexy. She notices her thigh is out and so she covers it.

"Have some food." I say pointing at it.

She seems to remember something. Then she pulls the cover and I can tell she's crying.

I pull it off her and hug her.

"It will be fine. I promise you in time you'll heal." I don't know what else to say.

"Ndu it hurts." The way she says that makes me feel sad.

"I know princess. I know." I'm cradling her and brushing her hair.

She reaches for her phone and I go out to the kitchen and grab it from the charger here. I guess Serena charged it. I come back to her.

"Here." I give her the phone and sit again.

She takes a deep breath.

Zama:

I'm a wreck. I feel terrible. I look terrible and I'm deeply hurt. My uncle wasn't perfect but he was my uncle. For him to pass on the day his granddaughter was born is just horrible. I cried in Ndu's arms last night until I fell asleep.

I'm checking my phone now and I have multiple messages from my family and that idiot who hit me. He's apologizing and saying he was angered by that I wasn't letting go of Ndu's hand. The last message from him... It's a threat. He says he'll leak my

nudes and be the first to write an article about it if I don't talk to him.

After all we've been through for the past two years!? He can't be serious.

Ndu made me food and I can't eat but I'll try drinking the coffee. I put my phone next to me and look at him.

He's looking at my eyes. I turn away and drink the coffee.

"At least eat one slice of toast. You can't function well on just coffee." He sounds like he's telling not asking.

I look at him. I'm not going to eat. Not now.

"Or else I'll blend a breakfast smoothie for you." He says with a smirk.

I know he's talking those terrible smoothies with eggs or whatever else. I grab a slice and eat.

He smiles. I like the way he smiles.

"So you have to let the university know and take next week off. I'll go to Durban with you." I look at him and he's not joking.

I can't take the whole week off.

"Ndu I can't take the week off

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the university has been understanding about my status as princess but I can't abuse my lecturers' kindness. I'll go home in Thursday." I tell him.

"Okay then I'll look after you till then." He says still looking at me.

"How?" I'm confused...

"I'll go to your house, grab your stuff and you're coming to stay here till you go home" That doesn't sound negotiable.

"Ndu I can't expect you to do that..."

"Then don't but I will do it." He dismisses me.

To think I didn't want to go out with him. I'd still be with that woman beater and blackmailing piece of shit! Ndu is... Different from Siya. Siya doesn't really have time. He'd never offer to take care of me.

I don't know if I'm over Siya but I know I'm mad at him.

"That face tells me you're thinking about that idiot." He sounds like he's annoyed.

"I am. I'm mad at him Ndu. How could he?" I ask him.

"Was it the first time?" Okay he's a lawyer with me now.

"Yes. He's never done that with me. Well to be fair I've never went out with another guy since we got together." I hope he doesn't think I'm blaming him.

"So that excuses it?" He's not giving me a break.

"No Ndu but he loved me when no one would. He picked me up and he stood by me." Why am I explaining?

"Who told you no one would love you?" He's concerned.

"I know. We've talked about it and we realized no other guy would stand for this. He did though. He's never forced himself on me. He respected my family rules." I'm over explaining and overthinking.

"Did he say no other guy would stand for it or did you?"

Can't Ndu just drop it?

"He said..."

"He's been manipulating you." He responds quickly.

"No way." I say

"He told you all that so you think he's doing you a favour when it was the other way around."

Wait... What?

"No. He wouldn't have told me after he cheated if that was true." Siya loved me.

"He's cheated on you?" He seems even more annoyed.

"Yes. It was just once when he was back at his home." I'm making excuses? This isn't me at all.

"Hmm did he ever say he's planning on marrying you?" Ndu.

"Yes but he'd always complain how he wouldn't afford it." I say.

"Did he ever ask you for money?"

"No. Not cash at least. He did borrow my petrol card a couple of times and I'd pay for his car service at Hyundai and I didn't mind that." I really didn't.

"So what did he buy for you?"

"He took me out." I reply.

"I'm talking something tangible."

"He bought me books. Twice." I don't really care about material things.

"Did you ask for them?" This guy!

"No I had been obsessing over them though" That counts for something.

"So nothing spontaneous?"

"I know where you're going with this and no. Ndu he's not rich and he has a family to look after back home. He pays for a car and an apartment too." I snap.

"That doesn't sound like someone who can't afford a bouquet of flowers. You're defending him because he managed to make you feel sorry for him. Unfortunately I don't feel any bit sorry for him." He says and stands up.

I don't even know what to say. So I pull the cover and turn away. He walks out. Mxm. He doesn't even know Siya.

4

Zama:

I spoke to daddy and he said the jet won't be available. I have to book a flight. I don't mind that at all, I just don't even remember what it's like to book a flight.

I've been living with Ndu since that Friday and today it's Monday. I gave him keys to my place and he picked up my things that Saturday.

My friends have been hounding me since Saturday. Thuto even said he was parked outside my place the other day. I told him I wasn't there. Mbali wanted to sleepover. She can miss me with that. Hunandi called to say she heard and was sorry I'm going through this. I really miss her and Dee (Dudu) but I couldn't give them Ndu's address. It's too much admin. No one has heard from Minnie yet.

Ndu and I spoke and he showed my why he thinks I've been manipulated and emotionally abused by Siya. I believe him. I noticed the excuses I kept making for his bs. Ndu is smart and

quite funny. He's made me feel better, I haven't cried since Saturday, even though I know as soon as I get home I'll cry my eyes out again.

I'm done with my classes and I text Ndu so he can get me. He insisted he'd do this. I wait for him.

Someone taps my back. I turn and it's Siya with a huge smile and chocolate.

I look at him and step back. He holds my arm, painfully.

"I've been asking to talk to you, babe. Why are you ignoring me?"

"Leave me alone Siya." I snap at him.

"You know I have those pictures right?" He gives me a look.

"Stop blackmailing me. I don't care. Use them. Don't forget to start with research on who Ndu is. You'll be in jail before you can say nudes." I know he wouldn't touch me after that.

"Oh he's taught you to resist me?" He has a disgusting sleazy look on his face.

"Siya. Do your worst." I tell him.

"Who do you think will love and marry you? You? A spoilt little princess with no backbone? Mxm. You forget that I've been waiting for you to grow some courage and lose your virginity that's hardly there anyway. You forget we've had so much oral sex all that's left is that cherry and your anus cause you're too scared." Siya. He's an idiot! I can see what Ndu was talking about now.

"I don't care what you..." He seems scared and let's me go slowly.

I turn around and it's Ndu. I've never seen him angry before, just annoyed. Today his eyes scream anger.

He pulls me to him.

"If you even so much as look at her again, you'll know me." He doesn't wait for a reply and just pulls me and gets me inside the car. He doesn't come in though. Five minutes later he comes inside and just drives.

I used my phone to play music via Bluetooth in the morning so I connect again. I play Martin Garrix.

"If I warned you that the fire's gonna burn. Would you walk in? Would you let me do it first? Do it all in the name of love." I sing along softly.

My phone rings and it's MaVezi, my big brother's wife. I take the call.

"MaNgubo." She sounds exhausted.

"MaVezi. How are you?" I ask her.

"As well as can be expected. Are you okay? Ngxabi was complaining because he couldn't get you the jet." MaVezi.

"I'll be fine MakaNokwa. I'm going to book a ticket." I reply.

"We could always ask Mike to borrow us his jet." MaVezi sounds worried.

"No no. I'll be fine." I don't like fuss over me.

"Okay. Can you get Tharh to do it with you so you're on the same flight at least?" MaVezi.

"I will talk to her. Don't worry about us." Me.

"Okay. Hakeem will get you from the airport." MaVezi.

"Thank you Sisi." I'm a little teary but hiding it

"Okay. Talk later." MaVezi.

We're at his gate and we drive in.

He seems to be thinking. I get inside and find that Serena cleaned, I'll cook. That woman has been helping so much. I need to tell her to slow down while I'm here since I don't do much and I'm so used to DIY.

I begin cooking. I'll make something simple. Savoury rice, chakalaka

grilled chicken. Maybe I'll add more salads.

He comes downstairs and he seems surprised. He's in sweatpants only. No t-shirt. I think I'm going to burn this food if he doesn't get a t-shirt on.

"You cook?" He seems shocked and impressed.

"I cook." I reply with a smile.

"Well my two friends are coming over right now. Mind making a little extra?" He asks pouting. I smile at him. It's cute.

"Uhm sure... Wait... Friends?" I thought he was new here.

"Yes princess. I have mates all over the country and abroad" He says with that confidence he always has.

"Alright then. Any girlfriends coming?"

"I didn't ask." Ndu.

"Please ask them to. I don't want to be alone." I ask him and he nods.

Ndu:

I didn't know she'd cook. I text the guys to bring salads only and a couple of drinks. Also to have bring their partners. It's only Monday.

I hope it's not too late for me to request these partners.

She looks so cute cooking in my kitchen. It just feels right. Like all the decisions I've ever made, including the ones my parents made for me, lead to her. It may have always been her. I just didn't know it.

I walk upstairs and grab a t-shirt and put it on.

These guys are almost here. I play music and check on her.

She's dancing along while cooking. Mhm. I could get used to this, and that scares the shit out of me.

The boys are here. Different cars? I hope that means they brought partners.

Yes they did.

I open the door and they come in. Sandile is in first with his girl and he says she's Dee.

"Ndu you puss! Why the fuck are you asking for salads?" He asks handing me the drinks. Dee makes her way to the kitchen with the salad.

Dee and Zama scream. We check and they're hugging. Huh?

"Babe! Why are you here?" Zama.

Before she can answer they realize we're looking at them confused.

"We're friends..." Dee says.

Zama screams again, and I check behind. Lungelo is inside with a girl who runs to them and they have some sort of group hug. We look at each other.

"Let me guess, you're all friends?" Sandile.

"Yes! These are my girls! How did this even happen?" Zama.

She looks happy. Genuinely happy for the first time since Friday.

We sit on the bar stools with beers while the girls are on the other side cooking.

"Well we're friend's in a circle of five." Nandi.

"It's four now girl. I'm tired of Mbali and I've cut her off. She can miss me." Zama.

"Finally! She was always really your friend and not a good one at that." Dee.

Lungelo clears his throat. They've forgotten us.

"Sorry guys, it's just this Mbali girl is a demon." Dee.

I can tell she hates her most.

"Where's Minenhle?" Zama.

"Actually no one knows. You know her though she could be in Zanzibar." Nandi.

"Yes but she should have posted something by now. I think something is wrong." Zama seems worried.

"The girl is probably hoeing with someone's husband. Let her be." Dee

They all laugh.

At this point Lungelo, Sandile and I are looking at them in awe.

Damn women love talking.

"So how did you guys end up with two friends?" Zama asks Lungelo and Sandile.

"We met at a club two months ago." Lungelo.

We're not going to say much just sit this one out and let the ladies talk.

"A whole two months and you kept this from me?" Zama says dishing up the rice.

She sounds a bit hurt by this.

"Well no one meets two guys at a club and expects them to stick around so we thought they were going to disappear soon, but a month passed and another one and now we're here." Nandi is dishing up the meat.

"Besides friend. You know that Mbali thing would've judged." Dee is dishing up the salads.

"So you kept quiet? Ahh you guys." Zama.

"Well you also owe us an explanation..." Dee looks at me and doesn't continue.

Good for her. No one will mention that Siya thing in my presence.

"It's a long story. I'll talk about it when I can catch my breath... Or after the funeral" Zama says.

"Funeral?" Dee says and all eyes are on Zama.

"Bab' omncane passed on. Last Friday."

"Aaah girl I'm so sorry. When are you going to Durban?" Nandi.

They hug her.

"Not sure yet. The jet isn't available." Zama seems a bit teary.

"My family jet is available. I can take you and whoever else wants to go." I'm extending an invite and I hope these idiots next to me don't say anything dumb.

"I'll definitely come... I mean private jet..." Sandile.

I give him a look. He couldn't help it could he?

"I'd love it if you came guys." Zama.

"Of course girl." Dee.

"Okay then. Tell Tharh too she can bring a friend or two." I tell Zama.

"I doubt she will bring anyone but I'll let her know we don't have to book anymore." Zama.

"Let's all sit in the dining room." Dee, I can tell she's the talkative one.

Everyone grabs a plate and goes there. Zama sits by my side, Dee sits next to Sandile and Nandi next to Lungelo.

5

Zama:

I don't like wasting someone's time when they're helping me. I really hope these people we're going with are prepared and going to be on time. Tharh said we'll find her at the airport. The boys decided we'd Uber XL to the airport but they're leaving the cars at my place since I only have one car and a lot of parking space in my garage.

Dee is stressed about her and Sandile. She says they're not official while Nandi and Lungelo are already. I had to explain to her that Ndu and I aren't even dating, we just know each other and I consider him a friend. I offered to pack Ndu a bag but he reminded me that his home is in the KZN too so just like me he's not even going to pack. Well our homes are more closer to Richards Bay than Durban. Which is why I wonder if we're going to Richards Bay Airpot.

I'm alone in the house but I'm already set to go. Ndu went to fetch them from my place. They'll park and come here. I'm making sandwiches for them incase they're hungry.

Since I'm going straight home I'm wearing a white maxi dress with spaghetti straps and

black sandals. I look more ready for a relaxed day at the beach. I'll add a black sweater.

Finally! They're here. Nandi is in first followed by Dee. The guys don't come in. The girls and I hug.

"Are you okay girl?" Nandi.

"I'm okay for now." I really am.

"We're here for you okay nana?" Dee.

"I know baby. I'm fine really. Why aren't they coming in?" I look at them.

"They're discussing how and where we'll sleep." Nandi lets me know.

"We have to go in an hour and they're still not sure?" I ask.

The boys walk in.

"Hi Sandile, Hi Lungelo." I greet.

"Hey Zama." Sandile.

"Pretty mamie" Lungelo.

Ndu gives him a nudge. Gosh.

"What's this about sleeping arrangements?" I ask looking straight at Ndu.

"Nothing big. We were going to sleep at the house in Birdswood but it seems my parents and my sister are there. There's still enough rooms but... Awkwardness." He replies.

"Maybe you guys should book somewhere." I suggest.

"Maybe we could just drop you off in Richards Bay, we'll come to the house in Durban and take the jet back in the morning " Ndu.

Does he hear himself? That will cost a fortune.

"I don't need this stress. Please just be there on Saturday guys. I'll be home for Friday and Saturday only. Sunday we're coming back." I honestly don't get what's wrong with being at Ndu's home. His parents won't mind.

"Okay, I'll be sure to sort it out." Ndu.

"Have sandwiches and juice or whatever and then we can request the Uber." I tell them.

"You don't have to ask me twice." Lungelo says already taking a sandwich.

They all eat and in less than ten minutes everything is gone. I wash the plate, jug and glasses. Sandile requests the Uber and offers to pay for it.

Ndu:

Throughout the journey Zama has been too quiet. I know she's overthinking about everything. Tharh calls Khulekani to find out where they are. Zama is just holding on to me.

"Zamagwili" I say.

"Ndumiso" Zama.

"You're going to be okay." I say.

"You don't know that." Zama.

"You survived far worse." I tell her.

"Ndu losing Bab' omncane means I only have dad left. Just one." Zama.

"You have your mothers, your brothers, sisters
nieces, nephews, you have me Zama." I say.

She looks at me.

"Yes. You have me. We'll talk when we get back to Joburg." I
kiss her forehead.

Tharh sees the car and we walk to it.

Tharh reaches him first and they hug, she gets inside the car.

Now it's just me and Zama in front of him and she's still clatching on to me.

"Dube" Khule says to me. I can't read his face, but he's so much like his father, every move is so perfect it's like it's scripted. I wonder if he's ever fallen.

"Ngubo" I reach to shake his hand.

He shakes my hand and looks at Zama.

"I'll see you Saturday. Thank you." She rushes inside the car.

"Dube, if you hurt her you know we're enemies right?" Khule says with a straight face.

"Right." I understand fully.

"Good. I trust you though boy. It's been too long." He says and we shoulder hug.

"Haha way too long. Can't believe you're still a cockblocker when it comes to your sisters." I reply.

"I have to be my nig' you know you do it with Mandy too." He says laughing.

"True. You don't even have to worry though. Your sister and I are just friends... For now." I tell him.

"Waah boy don't worry though. Not for long. I saw you two... Just don't break anything" He says laughing.

I laugh at him. This guy is still insane. We fist bump and he gets in the car and drives off.

I've never wanted to change for a girl. I'll change for her though. I need to deserve her. I look through my phone and I suddenly delete all the pictures and numbers of the hoes I used to keep. Even the booty calls. I need to be loyal to her. As loyal as I, a certified playboy can be.

6

Ndu:

I wonder what's going on. Hakeem tapped my back and asked me to follow him and Mike. I had to leave the guys and their women there in the tent.

I get in and close the door. They turn to look at me. We all have our hands in our pockets.

"Sorry to take you from your friends man." Khule.

"We just really need you to balance us." Mike.

"Sure guys." I reply, what's going on?

"Who is this guy who slapped my sister?" Khule.

Oh now I understand the seriousness here.

"Siyabonga Dlamini. He's a journalist. I don't even know for what. I just know he threatened Zama days after he had slapped her." I say.

"What exactly happened?" Khule.

"You know our parents dude. My mother called and asked me to take her out while her dad called her and asked her to go out with me. We went out and after we hit a club. Not partying just sitting and having drinks. I saw some scronny guy come our way and he seemed mad. I held her hand to make sure she doesn't leave with him. He then slapped her. I couldn't help it but I roughed him up and he got thrown out of the club." I tell them.

"He slapped her because she was with you?" Mike.

"Yeah." I say.

"That idiot! What about this emotional abuse shit?" Khule.

"That guy made her think he was a gift to her. He used her money for services to his car

Advertisement

I'm sure not just that, he also used her petrol card. You should've seen her make excuses for him. He made her think no one else would be down for her and love her because she's royal or whatever." I say shaking my head.

"He's asked for it Hakeem." Mike says looking at Khule.

"True. We'll get it done." Khule.

"You two." I say shaking my head again.

I know whatever they're planning is illegal and I can't talk sense into their heads. Mike once came to my place in Cape Town after "getting rid" of someone and told me he was using me as an alibi.

Forget that he didn't physically do it himself.

"You'll be our lawyer boyyy" Mike says.

We laugh and have a catch up session. It's already after the burial anyway and though she was hurt, I can tell Zama is doing a lot better.

7

Zama:

We're back in Joburg and I'm at Ndu's just to get my stuff and leave but he's been looking at me funny. I hope I'm just imagining things.

I get a phone call from an unknown number.

"Hi..." I say.

"Hi Zama please I need your help." I know this voice.

"You?" I exclaim.

"Please Zama I lost my job today out of the blue." He says sounding sad.

"I'm sorry but why do you think I'll help you?" I'm worried this guy is crazy.

"Because for the longest time we were best friends and lovers." He says softly.

"You mean you were and still are a mosquito? No Siya. I will not help you." I reply.

I get off the call and turn around.

Ndu.

When did he get here?

"Why is he bothering you?" He asks standing at the door with his hands in his pockets.

"He says he lost his job and asks that I help him with something. I don't know what." I reply.

"You didn't block him? Zama!" He exclaims.

First of all, I did!

"Excuse me, who are you to me? A friend right? It wouldn't matter if I didn't." I tell him.

He looks at me and removes his hands from his pockets.

"Wrong question to the wrong person. Do you know what your brother said to me?" He asks. His eyes have changed. Did I hurt him with that friend thing? Nah not possible.

I nod no.

He steps forward and boxes me in on the bed with his arms. Is it weird that it's sexy to me?

"He told me in very clear words you are my responsibility since you got yourself involved in dodgy relationships with dodgy people. So don't give me that crap." He says firmly.

I didn't even know MaVezi did tell Bhuti. I'm in deep shit.

"You're not going anywhere too. Not before we talk." He says, moves away and leaves the room.

What does he mean not going? I have a whole house waiting for me. I'll be fine now. I'll cry a bit I can tell, especially since my brother knows I have a crazy ex. I've always been the good one without any scandals or whatever.

I decide to pack my bag anyway. If I stay over it's only a night.

I'm dreading having this "talk" with him. I already know it's a long ass lecture on guys like Siya and yada yada.

I get out of the bedroom and he's on his phone, standing by the kitchen counter. He doesn't look at me. Okay he's on his arrogant mode I guess.

I walk past the living room to get to him and just as I'm about to walk past him to cook he grabs my arm, puts his phone next to him and turns me to him.

His eyes look so sexy right now but I don't understand what he's doing. He grabs my waist with his hands and places me on the counter. Understand I have a little black dress on so it's high up right now. I feel a little uncomfortable since I feel some type of way right now and he's in between my legs and looking straight at my eyes. Of course I dropped mine but he's still looking at them. My face and body feels like I'm under a spotlight. I don't even know how to be suddenly. Should I look away or at him?

I decide to look at him. He smiles. Whew gosh this man!

"Hello" He says suppressing a laugh.

I wish I could laugh. I look down again.

"Are you okay?" He asks now with a naughty smile on his face.

Gosh he can't do this to me!

"I'm fine." I whisper looking down.

I guess this moment is about trying to kill me. He is too close, smells divine and literally breathing on my face at this point.

I look up and my lips meet his. He sucks on my lower lip and I suck on his upper lip. I want to pull away but this is so nice. Siya always had his tongue down my throat so I hate tongue kissing. It's like Ndu knows that. It's like he understands what I want because his hands are on my ass. He holds on to my waist and pulls away right after biting my lip.

We stare at each other. His eyes seem to be smaller and I just want to rip his clothes off! Curse this princess bullshit!

I want to ask what's going on but I'm totally in the moment. I go in first for a kiss and he responds. I take his shirt off and I keep touching his muscles. He tenses and stops. He lays me on the counter and pulls down my panties. They're wet. I already know they're wet. He pushes my dress up and I look at him, he's smiling. A very naughty smile.

What the fuck is going on? I close my eyes and I feel his fingers in me. I can't help but moan
it feels so good.

"Mhm" he says softly.

Oh wow tounge! I feel his tounge on her. My clit vibrates and he sucks on it with his finger still inside me. Gosh! He removes his finger and stretches her. I feel his tounge go in and I almost scream. Nothing I've ever felt!

He takes me somewhere else with his tounge and I feel something all over me. I don't understand but I'm leaking and

shaking. What the fuck has Ndu done to me. By the time I'm done he is looking at me shake on the counter and he has this huge grin on his face.

Now understand Siya has done this to me before but his always involved his teeth and I guess it was just because I'd give him a blowie.

"Why are you shaking?" He asks still on that grin.

The idiot just did things I don't know to my body and he's asking me about it. Mxm.

Ndu:

She finally slept on my bed. It felt great holding her like that. Sure we didn't have sex because I respect her fathers rules but I made her have her first orgasm. She was so shocked and didn't

understand what was going on. It was a sweet sight for me. I really wanted her like that.

The initial plan was to talk about things and find out if a relationship was doable but I'm Ndumiso Dube. I seduce, I don't court. I don't know what we are right now but I swear we're behaving like a couple even though it wasn't discussed. She was hanging on to me after that. I don't know if it's being clingy but I don't care. I want her obsessed with me like I am with her. She can't steal my heart and expect me not to want hers.

The last time I felt like this... Well I'd rather not talk about it. Let's just say I thought I'd never love again.

Oh but princess had other ideas. Like batting those eyebrows and big brown eyes. The innocence she has. I mean who wouldn't fall for that? She's just... A gem.

Sure a part of me wants to change her to a freak but if I want that,.I should send a letter to Ngxabi and ask for her hand.

I know the main reason for that is that I can't be taking cold showers for months and months. Besides, I know what or in this case who I want.

We still need to decide how she feels though. I'm so there. Maybe I did grow up with age because I always thought I'd only get married after 35.

I'm driving her to campus and as she's playing music, her father calls. She takes it.

"Daddy!" She exclaims.

"My little girl" Her father says... I mean this means to him she's still a baby.

"Is everything okay dad?" She asks and looks at me nervously.

"No no baby, you need to be home next Saturday though. My brothers lawyer said he needs everyone there." He says.

"Oh alright dad. I'll get there on Friday." She tells him.

"Do you need the jet?" He asks.

She looks at me, I shake my head.

"No daddy, thanks." She replies quickly.

"Okay, be a good little girl nana. I love you." Her father says in a loving tone.

"I love you too daddy." She replies.

She looks at me nervously.

"Don't worry. He doesn't know anything." I can tell she thinks he sees something. I mean over the phone? Seriously?

"I know it's just... I feel like he knows someone is tempting me." She says looking at me.

I laugh loudly.

"Who might that be?" I ask and lick my lips.

She gives me a look and we laugh.

I dropped her off on campus and now I'm going to work. Joburg traffic or not I'd still rather take her to campus than let her drive. I just, I like it.

My mother calls me. Okay time to get bullied.

"You have to come down to negotiate Lobola for your sister."
My mum says.

My heart almost stopped.

"Ma?" I think she's joking.

"UMandisa uyalotsholwa." She says.

"Ma Mandisa had UMemulo three months ago." I say trying to reason.

"Yes and now she's getting married." She sounds excited.

"To who?" I ask her in an angry tone.

"Just come down on Saturday. We'll have it at Richards Bay."
She says still sounding excited. What is this?

"Ai ma. Akukho Mandisa oshadayo." I say firmly trying not to raise my voice at my mother.

"Ohh well. Be here." Ma says and drops the call.

What the fuck? I'm going to kill someone!

8

Zama:

I miss my girls but they're working already and I'm the only one still studying, except for Minnie because her mother couldn't afford to pay for her any more. I wanted to ask dad if we could help but she flatly refused. I'm on campus at the caf. I miss the girls let me call Thuto. Yes, he's one of the girls.

"Biaaaaatch" He yells.

"Aren't you at work?" I ask.

"I am... However I have news. I need us to gather for a drink later." He sounds serious.

"You sound serious for a change." I say.

"That's because I am boo. I'll call the others and send you the details." He says.

"Will Mbali be there?" I ask.

"That one has been crying because her bae can't afford to give her a wedding anymore. I doubt it." He replies.

"Wedding? Her? With which one of the boyfriends?" I ask laughing.

"Yes. I don't know which one but apparently he payed Lobola last year and was working on making more for the rest of the things to be done. Talk later. Bye" Thuto.

"Bye boo." I reply still in stiches.

Who in the world would pay to be with that hoe?

Thuto can make your mood ten times better though I can't wait to see them girls.

Thuto sends the details and I text Ndu so he knows I'll go there and he can pick me up from there.

My next class in ten minutes. Let me get closer.

Ouch! Someone pulls me to a corner.

Siya? What the hell?

"Let me go!" I say.

"Listen babe I'm sorry okay. I've been having a week from hell. First I lost my job. Then I found my laptop in the tub under water and my phone got stolen somehow. My Google account was deleted when I checked at an internet café. I can't prove anyone got into my place. The footage shows nothing, the locks weren't picked. I don't know what's happening. I need a place to stay that's all. Please." He sounds really frantic.

"Are you insane? My brother would freak out if he knew you were even here. Let me go! I'm not your bank. Fuck off." I yell.

He looks shocked. People are looking at us and he lets me go slowly. Nxx the idiot. I walk away.

I can't believe him. Anyway I won't let him get to me.

The lecture is over and it's time to go meet up with the girls. I call an Uber and go to Tashas.

Dee and Minenhle are already here. They scream when they see me, eyes on us. The drama begins.

I hug them both.

"Minnie! I can't believe it!" I say.

"I know right?" Dee.

The waiter comes over and I order a coke.

"You look beautiful!" I tell Minenhle.

"She really does!" Dee says.

She looks like she's glowing. Her skin is flawless.

We see Nandi and Thuto. More screams.

Thuto looks, different. He has a beard. It's trimmed and all. His dreadlocks are gone and he has a fade haircut and a straight afro. He seems to be going to the gym and has on a grey long t-shirt with skinny jeans and sneakers. He definitely looks different. If I didn't know him I'd think he was straight. He has light skin, small 'China' eyes, beautiful high cheekbones and pinkish lower lips, it reminds me of Ndu's. Thuto is oxygen right now.

They sit and after ordering and getting our food the catching up continues.

"Minnie what's going on with you?" Thuto

it's weird but he doesn't change his voice anymore so it's a baritone.

"Well... You guys I made a mistake... I'm pregnant." She says without looking up.

We look at each other.

"Yes. I know. It was a mistake but when I tried to have an abortion he came to me at the clinic and he almost slapped my ass in front of everyone. For the first time I saw Samuel angry. He dragged me out of there and told me I'll die with his child if I did an abortion. I didn't understand how he knew but then I remembered I used his phone to search for a clinic. Stupid mistake on my side." Minnie says.

Samuel is one of her three blessers and I've met him once at a club.

"Samuel is the white guy from Cape Town right?" Nandi.

"Yes. I don't even know how to tell my mum I'm pregnant by a white person, who is ten years older than me." Minnie.

"So he's 33? He looks younger though." I say.

"What about the others?" Thuto.

"I only slipped up once and it was with Sam. I've had to break up with the other guys. They're both married anyway." Minnie.

"Wow. Congratulations girl!" We all say.

She gives us a look. I know it's just stress on how she'll deal with her crazy drunk of a mother.

"Well I'm in a relationship." Nandi.

"Oh wow with who?" Thuto.

"Lungelo, Dee and Zama know him." Nandi.

"Yeah because I am dating his friend Sandile, and missy here is Ndu's childhood friend." Dee.

"We met them at the same party." Nandi.

I didn't know Dee and Sandile are official. I'm happy for her though.

"And you Zama?" Thuto turns to me.

I don't know what they want me to say.

"I.. I broke up with Siya." Me.

They all clap and cheer. What?

"I been waiting for this day!" Minnie.

"Who hasn't?" Thuto.

"Am I the only one who didn't know I was dating a fool." I ask.

"Yes. Yes you are." Dee.

Mxm. These people. I decided to tell them what Ndu did to me and by the time I'm done their mouths are on the floor.

"Don't let him go! What?! That's a man!" Minnie.

"And can I just say he is too fine! Sexy as fuck! I'm sorry to say girl but that man is a beast, a sexy beast." Nandi.

I laugh. At least they approve of him.

"Well my turn. I called you all here." Thuto.

"Yes babe." Dee.

"I'm getting married." Thuto shocks us.

I didn't even know he had a serious boyfriend.

What the fuck? We all look at him.

"To who? When? How?" I'm first to talk.

"Well I'm marrying Koketso Bokaba." Thuto.

What the fuck? A girl?

"A woman?" Minnie asks.

"Yes. A woman. A princess too, like you Zama" He says.

Thuto!! We're all shocked.

"No wonder you look more masculine but friend you know you love dick. What are you doing? Is your father forcing you?" Dee.

"Well. I don't love dick. I actually was never gay." He shocks us again.

Thuto!

"What do you mean?" Nandi.

"I mean I've always loved women. When did you ever see me with a boyfriend?" He looks at us.

"You always talked like you don't have relationships just fuck buddies." I say.

"That's true but I only had female fuck buddies. Who here came to my house and found a man? Or has met some guy I fucked?" He asks.

We all look at each other.

"No but remember I told you I saw you with a very tall man at Mugg and Bean the other time?" Minnie.

"That was my big brother." He replies.

Thuto!! My eyes are all out.

"Have I ever been in the room when you guys would get naked?" He asks.

Silence.

"Shared a bed? Not counting when one of you was hurt and I was cheering you up." He continues.

Silence.

"So you lied? Why?" Dee.

"It was assumed. I went with it. I mean I had girls with me 24/7. I didn't mind." Thuto.

What the fuck?! I don't know how I feel about this.

Minnie stands up.

"Sorry guys, Sam is here. I have to go." She says.

We turn and he's by the entrance.

"I love you guys... Thuto... We'll talk." Minnie.

She leaves and when she reaches Sam he touches her stomach first, she laughs and they hug before leaving. Now that's beautiful.

I check my phone too while they're grilling Thuto. Ndu said he's in the car and I'll text when I want to leave. I text and ask him to come here.

"It's not like I did it with bad intent. I'm sorry girls." He's pleading to the angry ladies.

"Do you know this Koketso girl?" I go out of topic.

"Sort of. My father being a farmer was popular with the royals. We had many dinners there and Koki and I would play together." He replies.

"Are you going into an arranged marriage?" I ask him.

"Yes. Well we both don't mind and we talk and all. She's coming over next week from North West." He says.

"Can we meet her?" I ask.

He looks at me and says,

"Alright."

"Ndu is here." Dee.

I say my goodbyes and walk to him. He always looks good. He's wearing a white shirt and jeans. Simple but so good. He hugs me.

"Let's get a take away and leave." He says as we walk out hand in hand.

9

Ndu:

You know when you initially love someone you just do. However when you start picking up things about them it's real. Zama is funny. The way she's telling me about this Thuto friend she's hilarious.

"I mean imagine we used to talk about cute boys with him. He would even point some out first. The guy screamed the first time he met one of Mbali's boyfriends." She says.

I laugh loudly and shake my head.

"So you're saying he just switched up?" I ask.

"Yeyi!! He sounds straight and he acted atraight. I say acted because I don't know what's normal anymore." She says laughing.

"I doubt he'd lie about it though. It must be real." I say.

"How can you even say that Ndu? He has been gay for six years and suddenly he's straight and has a fiancé? He can lie about it." She's still laughing.

"That guy is a G though. I'm sure he's learned how girls think by now and will treat his wife well." I say laughing along.

"You don't understand though. He was our number one. Everyone's favourite and he could always cheer us up. He had tough love and a tub of ice cream for every situation." She says and looks like she's reminiscing.

That's the other thing I've noticed about her, whenever she's thinking she pushes her lower lip out.

"Did he put the toilet seat down?" I ask.

"No." She's still doing the lip thing.

"Pee standing?" I ask again.

"Well he was never that open but his bathroom door is clear glass so yeah I once saw him pee standing." She replies.

I'm starting to question how they didn't see he wasn't gay.

"Can he cook?" I ask again.

"If you count eggs." She replies.

"Watch sports?" I ask.

"Well not with us but he has those sports t.v. games." She says.

"Haha this guy was never gay." It's hilarious really.

"OMG you're right! How didn't we see it?" She asks putting a hand over her mouth briefly.

"Well he deserves an Oscar." I reply.

"I'm mad at myself for not noticing." She pouts. That's when she's angry.

I laugh at her. She's just too cute.

We're done with dinner and she washes the dishes. Another thing I've noticed, she's domestic. I don't know how her father managed that but if I were to marry her I'd have to ask Serena to go back to my parents place.

She's done and then she looks at me, she's biting her lower lip. I don't know this one yet. So I ask.

"What's up?"

"Nothing." She replies and looks at her feet.

Okay it's clear. When she's nervous she bites her lower lip.

"Hmm okay, want to go to bed?" I ask.

"Yeah..." She replies and slowly walks past me. I follow her but she doesn't take the steps. She's going to the other bedroom.

I chuckle.

This is what the nervousness is about.

"Come sleep in my bedroom. You're my girl now." I say and she runs to my arms.

She looks at me and blushes. Red face same time. I smile. If I didn't care about her I'd be having her tonight. I don't know if it was the first orgasm thing but she's just easy around me, yes I've noticed that too. I know she doesn't realize it because she's

never been easy before but she really is. If I wasn't experienced I'd be rushing to deflower her now. I love it about her though. It tells me she wants me just as much as I want her.

Zama:

Honestly Bab' omncane was something else though. He just had to have us united in his name for this. Well at least he worked, hard. The family trust has 130M in value. Then he left the shares and four houses for Bhut' Khule, Mfundo

Lango and Khulani. His wife got 5M, the house she lives in and we basically share the rest as the whole family because it was put in the trust. Except the four million education trust for Khulani Nokwanda, Zethu, Bonga and Abo.

I know he knew they'd have more than enough for education but he was just reminding us to not to forget his grandchildren. I loved Bab' omncane but I could've been called for this. Anyway at least I'm with Ndu here. He was grumpy because his sister is getting married. He just doesn't want anyone near her.

He thinks she's too young and, and, and. It's annoying but funny how he's protective. The guy is apparently a rugby player for one of the popular rugby teams.

Ndu's calling me again for the twentieth time. I find a corner. Can't let MaNdosi or dad see me on a call. MaSodi is the coolest so I don't mind with her. I have this thing about calls in front of parents, it's like they'll think I'm talking to my boyfriend, even when I'm not. In this case I am.

"This guy is going to kill my sister." The paranoia.

"Huh?" I wonder why he thinks so.

"He's huge and tall." He's finding everything an issue.

"You're the same though." I mean come on.

"I'm her brother it doesn't matter." He protests.

"Oh and for me?" I ask.

We laugh.

"Well you're a big girl you can take it." He finally says.

"Ah! Don't even." I'm cracking up.

I hear someone clear their throat behind me. Shiit.

"I have to go." I say to Ndu and get off the call before he can reply.

I turn around and it's MaVezi and Lango. These "twins" will be the death of me. They laugh when I sigh. Well I'm just glad it's not the parents.

"Come we're going to the pool and you're telling us everything." Lango says pulling me.

MaVezi laughs and grabs a cold drink and cookies. If I'm going to do this I need my twin too, but knowing the new her she's probably in a love bubble with her son Tiisetso and her husband Theo.

10

Ndu:

I really am not happy with this. They paid and agreed to our terms and all but I'm not happy. She's 21 for crying out loud! She's supposed to enjoy her life and then think about marriage at like 30. I haven't even spoken to her since I came home. I don't want to because she'll know I'm not happy about this and feel bad.

My bully mother made me be a part of the negotiations. The 'uncle' is clearly a yes man.

"We the Van Zyls are this and that." He kept saying.

Well he's clearly not a Van Zyl but hey whatever he says. Probably they picked up any of their neighbors or colleagues for this job.

I've been bugging Zama because I just wanna leave already. I'm tired of being away from her.

Someone knocks on my door.

"Come in" I say.

Oh it's Mandisa.

"Brother." She says.

"Yah Mandisa." Me.

"I'm sorry." Mandy.

"Why?" Me.

"Don't do this Ndu." Mandy.

"Don't do what?" Me.

"Don't make me feel worse. I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Liam." Mandy.

"You didn't do just that you also got engaged." Me.

"Ndu. Have I ever made you feel bad for leaving me? You left our family. I have never said anything about it. It hurt me. I needed my big brother Ndu." She replies. Damn.

"I didn't leave the family Mandy. I had to work." I didn't know she felt like that.

"Well I've chosen to do love Ndu. Please let me be that girl." Her eyes are begging.

"I'm sorry I wasn't here for you. I'm sorry I wasn't the best big brother but just know I love you and I really love you." I say and she sits on the bed next to me.

"I love you too. You're the best big brother. I wouldn't trade you for the world." She says and hugs me.

We laugh and catch up. I tell her about Zama and she's a little too excited for my liking.

"You have to get engaged. Like asap." She blurts.

"You and marriages" I reply laughing. She joins me.

"No but Ndu look at it like this, if you're engaged and pay Lobola for her she'll officially be yours, no owings to the royals." She's persuading me.

"You know I've been thinking about that. The king would kill me if he knew we sort of live together." I'd be screwed because that's definitely a penalty.

"See? Don't you just want her to be yours? Fully?" She takes my hand.

"Brother, you know I wouldn't tell you this is the way if I didn't think it was. You know I'm your little sister and I'd never steer you wrong. I know you love her. Maybe for the longest time because I believe this is since way back when you two were younger." She says.

"I do. I also am certain she's the one. I just don't want to scare her away." I'm looking at her eyes. My sister will always tell me the truth.

"Then tell her how you feel. Ask her to marry you. Ndu, from what I'm hearing she won't say no." She's got the hugest smile on her face.

"Well no lady would say no to all of this." I smirk.

"Mxm." She laughs and throws a pillow at me.

Zama:

The past three weeks have been, amazing! Ndu is just there for me, in a way no boyfriend has ever been.

Most nights I spend at his place. Some nights I spend at my place but he's always there with me. Most girls want space, I want him here all the time. Today is a Saturday and I'm seeing Minnie at Mugg and Bean. I'm early and already seated with a cup of coffee.

She comes in looking all sorts of gorgeous in a strapless white flowy dress with a baby bump. Let me tell you about my dark skin tall and slim friend.

Minenhle was born to her mother in Soweto and they lived as well as they could being mother and daughter at a four roomed house with five other people

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being an uncle, aunt and three older male cousins. She never met her father and two of her cousins molested her as a child.

Her mother being a drunk was never sober enough to notice. She doesn't know up to today that it happened. Only one of her cousins, Zweli the younger one didn't molest her. He's also the only one to become something in life. The other two are into Nyaope and are just problems even in the community.

Minnie being clever made her way to University but her mother told her she can't afford it so she found herself a way to bring money home. That was being a blessee. Her mother couldn't care less that she was basically prostituting herself, long as she got money out of it.

I stand and hug her.

"You look so cute." Me.

"Thanks baby, I just feel like I'm going to be a whale." Minnie.

"No you'll be a mother." Me.

She looks at me with nervousness.

"What if I'm like her?" Minnie.

Her mother.

"You can't be. You know better." Me.

"That's what Sam said. He's a bit too over the moon so I don't really think he's right." Minnie.

"You're lucky. You got pregnant for the right one." I say.

"Really? I don't think his family likes me much." She drops a bomb.

"You met them?" I'm shocked.

"Yeah. They were nice but I can tell when people are fake." She says

"You thought I was being fake to you. So you don't know." I reply.

The waiter takes our orders and she asks for tea since I'm having coffee.

"You still remember? I used to hate you! I was sure you were just pretending to like me."

"See?" I reply.

"Yeah I guess... We went to see my mother and let her know." She says with a sigh.

"Yho!" I exclaim.

"Thinking of it upset me so Sam asked that we don't go. I couldn't though. So we went and my aunt chased us away,

mum cursed us and my uncle didn't even show his face. Him and his kids." She tells me.

"They do know that without you their only source of income is Zweli?" That wasn't very smart of them.

"Yup. I don't care though since they don't either." She replies simply.

The waiter comes back and gives her the tea she asked for

"So baby will be using Sam's surname?" I ask

"Yeah. Who would've thought I'd be 23 and pregnant?" She asks me.

Well to be honest I thought it'd happen sooner but I don't say that.

"At least Sam is here for you." I reply with a smile.

"I don't think he loves me." I wonder what she's on about.

"Why not?" I ask her.

"I don't know. I guess because he only started really giving me attention after the pregnancy." She seems worried.

"Hmm" I say.

"Yeah. Only after that he gave me his cars, cards and whatever I ask for. You know the other day he got angry because I was texting some guy. I thought he was going to hit me. His whole face was red and he was swearing." I can tell she was scared.

"You wanted him to do that before? While you were just a blessee? And about getting angry, who would want the mother of their child texting random guys?" I ask.

"Okay you have a point." She replies.

"Just be happy you have this hot, successful and smart hunk taking care of you and caring for you." I tell her and our food is here.

We have lunch and I tell her about Ndu too. Honestly I always miss him when he's not next to me.

11

Zama:

Ndu is too excited today. He picked me up and is taking me to his house. He's singing Body Smile by Dvsn and he's such a good singer. I didn't know.

I'm blushing because the way he's singing is making me all giddy. Though some of the lyrics are a bit contradicting to how we feel. I hope.

"... For everytime I let you cry. I have to make your whole body smile..." He sings to me.

I join him and we sing our hearts out. Gosh this man is crazy

We're at his house and I'm out first. He follows me. I open the door and to my surprise all my friends and their partners are here. What?

I look at Ndu suspiciously and hug everyone. I get to meet Koketso. When she was here I was out of town.

I look at Thuto and he's grinning. Idiot.

I hug and greet her too.

She's beautiful. Quite petite and dark skinned. Those cheekbones would make any girl jealous.

"Well why is everyone here?" I ask.

Ndu steps forward and takes my hands.

"Zamagwili" He says.

"Ndumiso" I reply.

"I think it's no secret that I love you. I've been trying to tell you how much but since words fail, I decided on action." He tells me.

I raise an eyebrow and he smiles.

"Zamagwili Ngubo

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" He kneels.

Whaaaaat?

"Please say yes to being Mrs Dube." He says looking into my eyes.

What? What? I look around and everyone has their eyes on me. Nandi is making a video. I smile.

"Yes. I will become Mrs Dube." I reply and he gets up and hugs me.

"Our tradition doesn't allow rings but I decided to buy ucu. It's this beadwork I had made for us. I'll wear mine if you wear yours." He says getting up and taking a box from the table behind us. Our friends are cheering.

It's beautiful and made with mostly orange beads. He puts it on me and I put his on him. Identical and beautiful.

He picks me up and puts me on the table. Then he kisses me for dear life.

Wow! I'm getting married.

I can't wait to tell my sisters. Gosh I just can't wait.

Ndu:

I can't stop watching our video. It's beautiful. I can't believe she said yes. I was so nervous but being a lawyer I'm used to speaking confidently and convincing people even when I think what I'm saying is rubbish.

My beautiful fiancé is next to me on my bed. Most our friends left last night except Minnie and Sam. Sam was tipsy and his girlfriend was tired. Samuel is my client so at least I sort of know him. One thing is, he's filthy rich but quite friendly. I used to think he was a bit racist but finding him with a black baby momma proved me wrong.

I walk downstairs to make a breakfast smoothie. As I'm blending someone buzzes from the gate. I open and continue.

There's a knock at the door.

I walk there and open. What? Why is she here?

I just look at her.

"Miso. I found you." She says and smiles.

Is she crazy?

I already know how she found me. Nxx.

"Ashley why the fuck are you here?" I ask.

"I had to look for you Miso. I'm sorry I came here unannounced." She says with a frown.

"Leave please." I reply.

"Miso please. Can we at least talk?" She says.

I hear footsteps. Shit!

"Fine not now. Go to a hotel and come back some other time." I say rushing her.

"Your number?" She hands me a phone.

I punch it in and close the door on her face.

I turn around and Sam is in the kitchen. At least its not Minnie or Zama.

"An ex." I say.

"From Harvard I presume." Sam.

"Yeah. I don't know why she's here." Me.

"Just make sure you sort it before Zama finds out." Sam.

"Dude! Why today of all days? Shit!" Me.

Now I have to deal with all this stuff I had locked away. Fuck!

12

Ndu:

This is one talk I thought I'd never have. I wanted to tell her to go back to America but a part of me was angry enough to let her have her say.

I knock and she opens the door.

"Miso! I thought you changed your mind." She says leaning in for a hug.

I walk past her.

"Talk." I say.

"Miso please." She begs.

"You wanted to talk. Now talk." I look around the hotel room a bit.

"Okay. Please sit." She points at a couch.

"Ashley I'm not here to play games." I reply.

"What happened to Ash?" She asks getting closer.

This bitch thinks I forgot who she is.

I step back.

"Talk Ashley man!" I won't fall for this.

She moves closer. Mxm.

"Ashley King!" I yell at her.

"Wow. Okay. Well you hurt me Miso." Really? That's what she says?

This crazy bitch!

"You left me to deal with things by myself. You stopped talking to me or taking my calls. You even left the country. Miso I was alone." She is seriously insane.

"Don't fucking annoy me! Who sent you to kill my child?" I snap.

"I thought it was the best way..." She's asking for it.

"Best for who? You know I wanted that child. You on the other hand went behind my back. For what? For a career in law? You know I would've been able to take care of my child. Then the first thing you do when you come here is ambush me in my home, followed by telling me I hurt you. I hurt you? Fuck you! You killed my child." I'm yelling at this point.

"It was my choice too..." The nerve of this bitch!

"That you made without telling me? Nx. Leave this country. There's nothing for you here." I say and walk past her. She sits on the floor and cries. Mxm.

I have a lovely fiancè at home this bitch can miss me with her selfish ass.

I have to do a ceremony for the child. I just remembered my father said that ages ago.

I turn.

"There's a ceremony to be done for the child. After that you can leave. Never come back." I say.

"Miso what about us? Miso we share a child. Even though that child is gone." She asks dumb shit.

"There's no us. The only thing we share is the child you killed, I wouldn't be here if not for that." I reply and walk out.

I get to the house and call my father.

"Dube." Me.

"Son." Dad.

"Ashley is here" Me.

"What for?" Dad.

"I don't know but we had a talk and we can do the ceremony soon." Me.

"Okay son. This weekend. Next weekend I'm thinking should be Magobeni." Dad.

"I was thinking that too. I don't want a long engagement." Me.

"Okay. Talk to makoti and have her here too this weekend."
Dad.

"I will dad. Thanks." Me.

"Bye." Dad.

We get off the call.

It's time to talk to Zama about this.

I walk to my study where she's studying. I knock and walk in.

She smiles. Gorgeous.

"How was the gym?" She asks.

"It was okay... We have to talk." I say.

"Okay." She gets up and walks to me.

I sit on the sofa here. She sits on my lap.

"You're beautiful." I say.

"You're handsome." She replies and kisses my forehead.

"Zamagwili." I say.

"Ndumiso." She replies.

"I haven't been entirely honest with you." I start.

"Uhuh...?" She says with a frown.

"Remember I told you I was in love ages ago?" I ask.

"While in America right?" She asks.

"Yes. I didn't tell you that the girl I loved fell pregnant and had an abortion without my knowledge." I say.

"What?" She looks at me.

"We had discussed it and I wanted my child. She decided to abort my baby without telling me." I explain.

"Ndu! I'm sorry you faced that." She puts her arms around my neck.

I put mine around her waist.

"Well the real issue is that she's here and saying I left her to deal with it alone." I tell her.

"Here?" She seems shocked. Eyes all out.

"Joburg. She's in Joburg." I reply.

"Ndumiso! Is that where you went?" She asks.

"Yes. I'm sorry." I reply.

She tries to break free from me and I tighten my arms.

"I'm sorry. I don't want her. She's selfish. Only reason I want her here is that we'll be able to do a ceremony and she'll go." I say.

"So you called her here Ndumiso?" She asks.

"Zamagwili no. She just came to the house unannounced." I say.

"Why didn't you let me know?" She's angry

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her eyebrows are lowered.

"I wanted us to not fight. Like we are right now." I reply.

"Okay. Fine. I'll deal with her from now on." Okay that's risky.

"I don't mind that. Anything for you to trust me." I say.

"I trust you. I don't trust her. No one travels this far to play the blame game." She replies.

"We're going home this weekend. We have to do something for the aborted child." I say.

"We're?" She asks with her eyebrow raised.

That's her curious face.

"Yes. You're included." I say.

"Ndu I don't like this." She confesses and collapses into my arms.

Neither do I. Not one bit.

Ashley by the way is African American. She's my age, tall and caramel tone. Beautiful but more deadly. She used to be my weakness. Almost like Zama now. Difference is, Zama is actually human. Unlike Ashley with a heart of steel.

We were in love and very much inseparable. I was certain she was the one. Then she hurt me in the worst way possible. I couldn't forget that.

She fell pregnant and we talked and decided we were keeping the child. She went and had an abortion without telling me. She came back and told me she did what was best for our careers. I wanted to kill her. I couldn't believe it. I left the States shortly after and told ma and dad everything. Ashley and I ended there.

13

Zama:

I don't want this girl here. You should've seen her act important when she took his hand and walked inside the bedroom they use for ancestors.

I wanted to stop everything but I know how important this is to Ndu. One thing I hate is that she's fake. She talks to me like I'm her best friend. I'm not fooled. She's a high class hoe that's what she is.

Who kills an innocent child and then comes back to point her dirty fingers?

I'd get it if Ndu didn't know but he knew. He wanted the child.

I won't lie and say part of me isn't glad there's no child.

I'm helping with the cooking. It's the least I can do. I'm busy making some salad when I look up he's by the passage looking at me.

"How did it go?" I ask stepping forward to hug him.

"Let's go upstairs." He says and takes my hand.

I want to finish this but I think he's more important right now. I cover everything and walk upstairs with him. I see Ashley sitting on the couch as we walk past the living room.

We go into his bedroom and lock the door. He sits on the bed and I sit on his lap. His hands are tight around my waist. I can't really see his face.

"It went as well as it could've." He says.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"I don't know. I had to name the child and explain what happened also ask for the ancestors to accept him or her." He sounds sad.

"What name did you give?" I ask not knowing what else to ask.

"Phumlani" He replies.

"Is there a reason?" I ask.

I really don't know what to say.

"Yes, I wanted my baby to rest. It could've been a girl but I just decided on the male version of the name." He explains.

"So Ashley is leaving?" I ask.

"This house? Yes, later. The country? Well that's her own choice." He doesn't seem to care.

"I'm glad you got to do this." I tell him.

"So am I." He says.

"Let's go downstairs." I suggest.

"Can I just chill here?" His voice is low.

"Okay baby. I'll get you some food." I tell him trying to get up.

He tightens his grip around my waist

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"Can't wait to make you mine." He says laying his head on my back.

"I'm already yours." I reply.

I get downstairs and everything is done. I take food up to Ndu and come back to help with the dishes. Ndu's mother is a darling but she doesn't get why I'm working when she has help. I don't know but I think some of Ndu's cousins don't like me. I heard one laugh loudly and say, "She thinks she's better."

And I know it was about me because she was passing by the kitchen as I was chopping.

I'm done and I head upstairs. Ndu's door is halfway open. I stop when I see Ashley standing inside.

I can hear them. My heart is beating out of my chest.

"Miso you know you still feel for me. Remember how wild we used to get? You once even tore through my dress for your cake. It's still yours you know." What the fuck?

Ndu please tell her where to get off!

"Mhm damn don't make me take you." Ndu replies. He speaks with so much lust. I'm disgusted.

"Take me Miso. I'm still yours." That bitch! I'm just more disappointed in Ndu. I walk away. I decide to take a walk since I don't have my car with me. Ndu is so good at pretending. He told me he hates her. Why would he do this to me? I'm crying as I run down the street. I don't even know this neighborhood on foot.

Ndu:

"Mhm mine you say?" I ask her.

She must think I'm a fool.

"Yes baby. Yours." Ashley.

She moves to touch me. I duck.

"No boo. I need you to go to the bedroom you used last night and wait for me. I need to be sure no one catches on." I use my charm and lie to her face.

She giggles and winks. Then she leaves my room.

Mxm the foolish bitch will wait till Jesus comes back.

Mandy runs into my room.

"What did you do to Zama?" She asks.

"Huh?" I'm confused.

"She came up to check on you and she came back down and just ran off." Mandy.

Fuck! This is not good. She must've heard me indulge Ashley.

"Sis, I'll be back. Where did she go?" I ask.

"Towards the Petzer home." Mandy.

"Thanks." I grab my keys and fly out of the house. I drive around and ten minutes later I find her at a park on a swing. It's time to explain myself. I walk out of the car and sit next to her on a swing. She's crying. Shit!

Time to be a lawyer.

14

Zama:

"I'm sorry Zamagwili. I know how that looked. It wasn't like that though I promise. You're enough for me. I'm sorry about that." That's the first thing he says.

I don't even turn to look at him. How could he make me a joke to her? He never cared about me.

"Zamagwili I entertained her, yes. I didn't mean a word. I promise you. She's in a bedroom right now waiting for me and I won't show up. I wanted her to realize what kind of fool she was." He continues.

I look at him. He doesn't get it. It's not about how he made me feel, it's about how he made me look.

"I know I made you look like you're the dumb one to her but that wasn't my intention..." He says.

So he gets it? Then why did he even do it? I stand up and as I try to take a step something trips me and I almost fall flat on my face. He caught me. Ndumiso caught me.

"What's wrong? Zama are you okay?" He's panicked.

"I'm fine Ndumiso let me go!" I scream at him.

"I can't." He says and picks me up.

He's carrying me to the car. I want to protest but... This is Ndu.

I'm still not speaking though.

"Look, I'm sorry okay? I really am. I'll make sure you realize I respect and love you even if it's the last thing I do." He says before going to my playlist and playing Alessia Cara.

"I've had my heart broken before, made room for one, baby I'm yours, oh baby I'm yours."

I'm listening to the words and I'm reminded of how much this person means to me. I'm mad at him but now I'm sure it'll be fixed. I don't know how but I know I'll forgive him.

We get to the house and he takes my hand as we walk past everyone.

We get to the room Ashley used and he knocks.

"Come in. I've been waiting" The hoe says in a lowered voice. Mxm.

We get inside and she's in lingerie. Wow.

She's shell shocked and just standing in front of us. I close the door.

"Miso..." She doesn't seem phased anymore.

"Don't Miso me." He yells at her.

"You could've just said..." She's calm.

"Just said what? I have a fiancè? You know that." He continues.

"I thought..." She talks.

"You thought wrong. I love Zama. Get that through your head."
He says.

"Stop!" I yell.

"Ndu please leave us." I say.

He looks at me and walks away slowly. I promise you he's just
outside that door.

"Cover yourself." I tell her.

"Why should I?" She asks looking at me up and down.

"I thought you'd like some dignity but okay

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keep trashy." I say.

She rolls her eyes. Mxm.

"Listen, Ndu is getting married soon. He's no longer into you. Why you were so prepared you even had lingerie is beyond me but just know he's not the one for you. Move on. Go back home." I tell her.

"Miso loves me. Miso said he'd always be mine. He didn't lie to me. He wouldn't. He couldn't. You're lying to me." She is raising her voice.

She's twitching and pulling her hair.

Okay this is getting weird.

"You're a liar! You stole him!" She's screaming.

Ndu opens the door and pulls me away. He locks the door from outside and we hear her crying and screaming from inside. There's a crowd now outside the door with us.

My heart is racing and I'm running out of air. She's insane. I just hope she doesn't hurt herself in there.

"Call Dr Ngubo, he'll refer us to someone who can come get her." Ndu says to someone.

"Son, makoti, what's happening?" His dad asks.

"I'll explain it to you later dad. I have to take Zama upstairs." He replies.

What the hell?

Ndu:

Ashley has major issues. I won't lie and say I feel for her though. She murdered my child. I heard the ambulance come and take her away but I haven't been downstairs, I'm calming Zama by cuddling with her. I know dad is expecting answers downstairs but the best is that she's crazy.

Shit. Khulekani is calling. This guy really? I decide on honesty.

"Dube." Khule.

"Ngubo." Me.

"What's going on?" Khule.

"Nothing dude. It's just a crazy ex, literally. She was here to do a ceremony for the child she killed and almost went crazy on Zama." Me.

"What the fuck? Did she touch her?" Khule.

"No no. Luckily not. She seemed to hurt herself more." Me.

"We'll talk." He says and gets off the call.

Khule is really the last of my worries. Zama is sleeping so I decide to go downstairs and tell the parents everything.

My mother seems confused on why Ashley was in lingerie but they both understand what happened. I have to chill with my cousins because well they're family and my uncles who only came here for the traditional beer. You can't choose family hey.

15

Ndu:

I thank God we're back in Joburg. I think Zama has forgiven me but I'm afraid to ask. I can't have her mad at me, not when I'm planning on taking all my riches to her father this coming weekend. Well let me be honest, I won't really lose much with dad doing everything.

He insisted on paying even though I wanted to pay my wife's Lobola myself.

"Zama have you called and informed your dad?" I ask.

"I'm afraid. I asked Lango to do it." She says biting her lip.

Cute.

"I'm sure he knows by now. The letter arrived today." I say.

"Letter?" She seems puzzled.

Yeah it's a bit 20th century.

"Dad wanted to do it that way." I say.

"Shit! Then why isn't anyone calling?" She's panicked.

"I don't know babe." I tell her.

"I'll go try Lango." She says going upstairs.

I watch her until she disappears after going up the spiral staircase.

I'm thinking of changing my line of work. Dad's businesses need a new minder. I can't be CEO, I don't have time. I can however just do what dad does and look over the CEOs' shoulders. My dad owns shares in mining companies and he has his own

transport company. There's no foul play in how he makes his money. However his associates not so much.

I personally want a change and something that brings in more cash especially since I'll have a family. I'm tired of the same old and sure I'll open a firm just to still be in law. I'll just hire lawyers.

Khulekani calls as I'm busy with work. Zama is still upstairs.

"Ndoda" Khule.

"Yebo" Me.

"I spoke to the psychiatrist and Ashley's husband." Khule.

"She's married?" I'm shocked.

"Yeah. Apparently the issue began when she couldn't conceive. She would daydream and be heard mentioning Miso in her

riddles. She went to a doctor over there and she got better or at least they thought, then she up and left." Khule.

"Hectic!" Me.

"Yeah. Look, I'm sorry I had to check her out. I just had to be sure you're not fucking around with my sister." Khule.

"I understand. I'd do the same for Mandy." Me.

"Glad you get it. Congratulations on the engagement." Khule.

"Oh so you heard?" Me.

"Yeah Ngxabi called and asked me to be there." Khule.

"Hmm. I don't even know who dad is sending." Me.

"I trust everything will go well though." Khule.

"Same here." Me.

"Take care of my sister Dube." Khule.

"I will Ngubo. Trust me." I assure him.

"Good." He hangs up.

Zama walks downstairs. My girl is beautiful though.

"Lango says they're overjoyed but daddy can't speak to me about it." She tells me.

"Really?" I ask.

"Yes. She said oMa bebelilizela." She says.

"I'm glad baby. Come sit next to me." I point to the couch.

She struts her stuff and sits by my side. She then lays her head on my shoulder.

"Baby

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are you sure you're ready?" I ask.

"I'd be lying." She replies.

My heart sinks.

"Don't hear me wrong, I'm ready for getting married and having a wedding and being your wife. It's the duties and marriage itself and children and being a part of a new family that I'm not sure I'm ready for." She says.

Whew! At least it's not me.

"Please don't worry yourself about that. You're going to be a great wife, Ngxabi raised you well." I assure her.

"I know I can work and I don't behave like I lost my hands but what about issues between you and Rhulani?" She asks.

Damn. That's one thing I always stress about. My brother.

"He's your brother Ndumiso. You don't even talk to him. Infact even your father forgets his own son. Why? Is it because he's not your mother's child?" She asks.

It's not even about who his mother is.

"No it's complicated than that babe. You know this." I reply.

"Do I really?" She removes her head from my shoulder and looks at me.

"Okay look, I'll fix it." I reply.

"So you promise me Ndumiso?" She asks.

"Yes Mrs Dube. I promise." I say.

"I love you." She says laying her head back on my shoulder.

"I love you more." I kiss her forehead.

Later I decided to call dad.

"Son!" Dad.

"Yes dad. How are you?" Me.

"I'm fine boy." Dad.

"Look, I need Rhulani to be one of the delegates sent to Magobeni." Me.

There's a long pause.

"I don't want to be associated with him. If that's what you want though, okay."

"Thanks dad." I reply.

He hangs up.

Rhulani is my little brother at 26. My father cheated on my mother and he came to existence. Make no mistake though, the issue dad has with him is fairly new.

Rhulani is in business and he's not exactly squeaky clean. He used to work with Mike when he was still in that drugs stuff. He's a lot like me and dad. I love him but it was kinda hard maintaining our brotherhood with dad hating him so much.

It's time now. I need my brother back. We share the same blood.

16

Zama:

Ndu is on the phone right now with his brother. I'm happy he listened and has started fixing things.

I'm doing my schoolwork and waiting for him in his study. I have some catching up to do. I always have catching up to do.

I don't think I like Sociology so much anymore. I should just quit and go into property. It's a thing in my family.

I can also afford to do nothing so maybe I'll go for that as Ndu and I plan a family.

Ndu walks back inside.

"He's coming over today. As in right now." He says.

"What? Ndu!!" I rush out to go cook something so he can eat when he gets here.

He follows me.

"Chill we can buy something." He says.

I give him a look and he throws his hands up.

I decide on mac and cheese. I'll grill some beef and add salads too.

"Why again is he coming now?" I ask.

"He's in Jozi. The only other time he has off is the weekend and I wanted us to talk before that." Ndu.

Understandable.

"Okay. I'm glad then." Me.

"Can I help?" He asks.

"Uhm... Yes braai the meat. I don't have enough time to grill."
Me.

"Okay I'll use the electric braai. I can't be out there." Ndu.

"Yeah it's a bit chilly plus you'd have to wait for the charcoal."
Me.

"Yup." Ndu.

"Ndu. What happened to Ashley?" I finally think I'm ready to
talk about her.

"She's going to the States again in two weeks. Apparently she's
married." Ndu.

"Married?" That's news.

"I was shocked too. However she started losing it when she couldn't conceive for her husband. Kept mentioning me in her dreams and I guess she got a chance and came here. She was always the type of lawyer that's quite investigative. I'm sure she hired someone and found me." He tells me.

"So she was just not okay in her head?" Can't say I'm surprised...

"That's all. She didn't want me back. Her mind played tricks on her." Ndu.

"So you actually triggered her crazy with that little stunt you pulled on her?" I ask.

He looks shocked.

"That wasn't cute at all Ndumiso. I don't want anything or anyone, not even you undermining my position in your life. Don't try it." I warn.

He just looks at me with his jaw dropped. I continue cooking.

"I'm sorry baby. I won't do it again. I'll always fill you in and I'll make sure everyone knows your position as my wife." He assures me.

"Thank you. It's all I ask." I say.

I like this wife thing no lie.

"Have you spoken to Dee lately?" Ndu.

"No. Why babe?" Me.

"Sandile said they had a major fight and she's been awol. Even Nandi says she doesn't know where she is." Ndu.

"What? I didn't know all this." I'm shocked. I wonder where she went.

"Yeah Sandile told me today at work." Ndu.

"I wish she had called me. Now I'm worried." Me.

"Yeah please let's not get involved. We'll just tell Sandile if she comes up and that's it." Ndu.

"Oh..." I say.

"I just don't want people in our business so I'd rather not involve myself in theirs." He sounds serious.

"Okay then babe." I say.

There's a long pause.

"I spoke to Minnie though. She is having a baby boy." Me.

"That's nice." Ndu.

"I really wanted to throw a shower for her." Me.

"You can. At your house. We're not using that space anyway."
Ndu.

"Yeah. I will. I'll call Hunandi and Thuto for help. Or should I call Koketso rather than Thuto?" Me.

"Yeah the woman. The ex gay has a replacement in her." Ndu.

"Baby!" I exclaim.

"What?" He asks.

Mxm this guy.

We're both done cooking when Rhulani buzzes at the gate. He opens for him and we wait. I plate for us three and he knocks at the door.

Ndu opens for him and I hear their voices. Definitely doesn't sound awkward. Wait there's a third voice. I didn't know he was bringing a partner.

I see Ndu first seems they're bearing gifts , then Rhulani a lighter skinned version of Ndu, he hasn't changed and then a gorgeous brown skin girl behind them. She is huge! Must be about 8 months pregnant.

"Hey Rhu!" I greet him first.

"Hey Zama!" He replies hugging me.

"And who is this beaut you're with?" I ask trying to hug her, yeah not really working.

"She's giving me my first neice." Ndu replies first excitedly.

I wonder why he didn't tell me beforehand. Anyway this is harmless.

"I'm Karabo." She replies with a smile.

She's short and kinda reminds me of MaVezi in her pregnancy with Nokwanda.

Luckily Ndu and I made extra food.

I show them to the lounge and go back to plate the extra plate and give them the food. Only after giving them a bowl and cloth. I don't normally do this but with guests it's a must. MaSodi taught me this of all my mothers. She's the one who goes all out for guests. The socialite wife

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easiest to chat to.

"Where's my girlfriend Ntombi?" Rhulani asks as I sit next to Ndu with my plate.

"Married." I reply and they all laugh.

"Ah she's the one that got away." Rhulani says again.

I check Karabo and it seems she doesn't mind this at all.

"You decided not to visit anymore." I say.

"I explained to her on Mxit though." We all burst out in laughter.

"Karabo what did you get yourself into?" Ndu asks.

"I ask myself that everyday." She says and Rhulani looks at her like he's hurt.

"Ouch! Chest pains. I'm not that bad baby." He says touching his chest.

They're lovely to watch.

"At least my woman knows she's with a human." Ndu says kissing my cheek.

"Mxm. It's a trap Zama. Trust me. Uzokugila." Rhulani.

Mxm these two.

Karabo and I are in stitches. I wonder how they do it. No contact for ages and come back to be crazy and it's as if there's never been time apart.

By the end of the day Karabo and I are chatting in the kitchen while they're up in Ndu's study.

"Yho she's heavy now ausie. I'm just rushing to deliver her now. I wish I could do it today. I can't wait to see her." She says.

"I'm sure that'll be miraculous. How's Rhu?" I ask.

"Overjoyed and over protective. There's really no need to be here in Joburg for me but he wouldn't let me stay behind. Something about safety. If this was America I'd think he was a CIA agent." She shares.

"Nah I'm sure it's okay. He's just being a boyfriend." I reply.

Sounds like my brothers when something weird is going on.

"I've never told people but there's a house he has in Pretoria North, I've never been inside. We went there before coming here but he didn't let me go inside, again." She says.

It's creepy but I know a lot of people like Rhulani.

"I'm sure there's a good reason for it." I lie through my teeth.

"Yeah but..." Karabo.

We hear them walk downstairs.

"It's time to go baby" Rhulani.

"Okay babe. It was great meeting you Zama." Karabo.

"MaNgubo, we'll definitely be back." Rhulani says with a slight smile.

He has that bad boy swag famous by Mike.

I smile at them.

"Let me walk you out." Ndu says.

They go and luckily I cleaned so now I'll rush through my work and finish it so I can submit tonight.

Ndu comes back.

"That was lovely. Thank you for being such a great wife." He hugs me.

"Thank you for being such a great husband." I reply hugging him tight.

He kisses my forehead.

"Now, I have schoolwork." I say breaking free from his embrace and taking his hand. We walk upstairs.

17

Ndu:

I really have never had this much stress in my life. It seemed dad had everything set though with the expensive spirits and all. Zama's status makes her Lobola about half a million. Dad, Rhulani and my uncle went in with a whole million so I'm sure we afford it. I'm actually the one who wanted everything done in a day. I just want my wife.

Dad though not a fan of Rhulani was extremely happy when he saw Karabo. He was clearly excited to be a grandfather.

My mother is the one person I'm not sure about though she had never had any issues with Rhulani before.

I'm in the car and anxious as ever. I tried talking to Zama but her phone is off.

I see Ntombi approach the car with what seems like food and some cold drink on a tray. I jump out of the Maybach first.

"Hey!" She seems a bit startled.

"Hey, Ntombi, sorry but are they done?"

"Not quite. Your bae sent me here to give you some cookies at least." She says.

It's too much for me. Cookies and muffins and brownies all here.

"What? So they're still negotiating?" I ask taking the stuff and putting it on the concrete table here.

"Not really. I left as they were picking their bride to prove they know her." She says.

"Who went in with her?" Me.

"Raina and Lango." Ntombi.

"That's easy enough." I say.

"Enjoy. I have to get back." Ntombi.

I wanted to ask her how she felt seeing Rhulani but it's none of my business.

After a while I see Zama running towards me. I run to her too and catch her halfway.

I swear if anything is wrong we're eloping.

"My husband!" She says.

There's warmth in my heart.

"My wife!" I say still holding her right.

"Thank you for keeping your promise and not playing with my heart and time." She says.

"I'd never. I love you baby. I'm sorry you went through awful relationships before I could reach you and protect you." I say.

"They sent Thabi here actually to come ask you to come inside. I hijacked the duty from her. I need to run back. I love you." She says kissing me.

"Take the stuff Ntombi came with earlier back." I say going back with her to the concrete table and chairs.

She took it and walked to the house.

I checked if everything was still in order with me and took the walk to the front door.

The Royal homestead is large so I'm not sure exactly where in it I'm going but luckily one of the helpers is showing me the way.

I walk into a lounge and see my father, brother and uncle. Then I see the king

Khule and an elder. Time to be respectful and a true mkhwenyana.

We have lunch and chat. Dad and the king are old friends so they keep telling us long ancient stories. Khule and I have our own too from our childhood.

On the way to Richards Bay Rhulani and I are in the same car, dad and uncle in another. I'm driving.

"The old timer doesn't like me but he clearly loved Karabo." Rhulani.

"He loves you. He's just not happy with your line of work." I reply.

"He hasn't even spoken to me much." He says.

"If he didn't love you he wouldn't care about Karabo and the baby." I assure him.

"Perhaps." Rhulani.

"I'm sure. Now come let's have that mini celebration with the fam." I say.

"I have missed them. Even the ratchet Nondu." He says laughing.

Nondu is the wildest of my uncle's children. She's 27 with three kids and no husband, she still goes out to clubs even.

We're home and I park inside the gate. Rhulani's car is parked outside the gate. I don't even know why.

We walk in and it seems they're already celebrating.

Rhulani finds Karabo and sits next to her. I sit next to my sister.

"Mrs Van Zyl." I tease.

"That's me." She smiles.

"So? How's the big guy?" I ask.

"He's fine but had training today so he's tired." Mandy.

"Ayt." I say.

Maria comes with drinks to the lounge and everyone cheers.
Prudence follows with meat and there's another cheer.

It's like a bar in here. Rhulani and I decide to stick to spirits.
Karabo ditched us for ma in the kitchen. Seems they get along.

I'm sloshed and I make my way outside to call my wife. One of dad's drivers goes to Rhulani's car outside the gate. Karabo appears behind me.

"I am going now. Your mother lent me a driver." Karabo.

"Rhulani?" Me.

"Too drunk. I don't want to make him go back to the hotel now." Karabo.

"So you're going on your own?" Me.

"I'll be fine. I just have a craving to nurse." Karabo.

"Sure? There's room here." I ask.

"Positive. I'll get the driver to bring the car back for Rhu." She replies.

"Okay bye Makoti." I say.

"Bye." She smiles.

She walks to the car.

I punch in Zama's number and it rings.

BOOM!

There's an explosion. I'm on the ground and I get up after about a minute of shock.

Rhulani's car is up in flames.

It was too loud. I am hearing everything as if it's happening far when it's in front of me. My sister and Nondu are screaming and

crying on the floor behind me. I don't even know when they got here.

Rhulani appears, he screams and runs towards the car and I tackle him. We're on the concrete.

He'll hurt himself if he goes there. There's nothing that can be done.

He's crying and screaming.

Karabo and the baby are gone, just like that.

18

Zama:

I'm numb. I can't move. What's going on? When I picked up my phone I heard a really loud noise on the other side. Ndu never spoke again. Instead all I could hear were screams. I had to tell my brother and now we're driving to his house. Khulekani has been on the phone non stop. I know he knows something I don't. He kept mentioning Rhulani, talking to Mike and mentioning Puerto Rico, a girlfriend and baby. I haven't been paying attention long enough to understand what's being said. I'm worried about Ndu. What if he...? No no no.

I'm crying and praying silently.

There's so many cars on his house street. Police

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fire fighters and ambulance lights too. What in the world happened? Khule opens his side and I follow him out.

We walk and as we get closer I notice the police and the tape around what looks like a burnt car. Parts of it are scattered. I see him first. He's on the pavement looking down. Rhulani is next to him also sitting on the pavement looking down. I run to him.

"Ndu!" I shout.

He raises his eyes and looks at me. I can see he's been crying.

He looks at me till I'm right next to him when I get to him. He's dirty. It's as if he was rolling on the floor. Him and Rhulani.

Khule comes up behind me as I sit on the pavement with them. I don't know what else to do.

"Michael is on the way. The Puerto Rican's are in town." Khule.

Rhulani looks up for the first time. The rage in his eyes.

"Here?" Rhulani.

"Yes." Khule.

"Where?" Rhulani.

"Mike will take care of it Rhulani. Please just keep calm. You can't do anything at this state." Khule.

What is actually going on here?

"What the fuck? Don't fuck with me! Listen to yourself Khule. Dude no. This is my child and my girlfriend. Gone! Because of those bastards." Rhulani shouts.

What? Karabo? The baby? No! What happened?

Tears fall down my cheeks. Ndu holds me close.

"Rhulani calm down! We can't lose you too to those people. Listen. Calm yourself down! I'm not going to allow you to be negligent and get yourself hurt. I know you're hurting, just try. At least wait for Mike." Ndu says sternly.

Rhulani looks down again.

What in the world is going on? I look at them with a puzzled face.

"Zama please go inside and check on Mandisa." Ndu.

I'm being dismissed.

"Okay." I reply.

"Mike will sort it!" Khule.

I just... I don't understand. This is one of those weird things that happen.

Like when Mike just ups and leaves with his family to London for a week or two.

Anyway I'm not here to solve these mysteries. I don't think I want to. I do know the wives know though. Lwazi, MaVezi and Raina seem to know something.

I get inside and walk to the front door. Mandisa is here outside by the door with that cousin of Ndu's who doesn't like me.

"Mandisa." I say.

She gets up and hugs me.

"What happened? Ndu hasn't said anything to me." I ask.

"Dumisani was supposed to drive Rhu's girlfriend home. All I know is that the car blew up with both of them inside."
Mandisa.

"Dumisani was such a good guy. An even more amazing fuck..."
The cousin.

We both look at her.

"Nondu you didn't! He's married!" Mandisa.

"I'm an adult yho." She says looking the other way.

I think she's the problem child, along with Rhulani.

Ndu:

We wanted to be in Mamelodi so bad but Karabo's family banned us. They didn't want us at her funeral. Apparently Rhulani promised to protect her and he didn't so they're

blaming him. It doesn't make it any better that he's blaming himself too.

Dad was on his case too. He just couldn't control himself could he? How do you tell your own mourning son you're disappointed in him. This isn't even Rhu's fault. He's trying to get out of the dark world.

According to my gatherings the people who blew up his car are angry because they lost business in SA after Rhulani and Mike cancelled their "agreement". It seems Rhulani was working for Mike. The only illegal thing they currently have is millions they can't account for. Some are even in offshore accounts.

"Drop the bag at her house Major... I don't care. Get in to her parent's bedroom and leave it there.... Major! Major dude just get the money there and leave before anyone even sees you." I hear Rhulani say as he walks down the steps.

"The bag?" I ask him.

"Money. Zama is still on campus?" Rhulani.

"Yeah catching up with all her schoolwork."

"I miss dropping and fetching Karabo from school. I even miss her calling me to say she's sick and wants to leave then when I'm there she tells me about a craving." Rhulani.

"I'm sorry bro." Me.

I don't know what more to say.

"My daughter dude. I watch that 3D scan daily." Rhulani.

"I wish we could've met her." Me.

"You know what sucks? Knowing I'm the reason they're gone. It makes me want to jump off a building." Rhulani.

"Don't you dare!" Me.

He just looks at me. No emotion. I need my brother back.

"Eventually I have to go back to Pretoria." Rhulani.

"No you're moving here." Me.

"I can't just go." Rhulani.

"You can and you will. You're moving to Joburg. If not this house then anywhere else around here though." Me.

"Fine I'll move but to Durban." Rhulani.

"Durban?" Me.

"Yes. We were planning on raising our daughter there. By the beach." Rhulani.

"It's fine but you're not going back to Pretoria." Me.

"I need a way to move my stuff."

I know exactly what he means.

"Don't worry. We can do that." I reply lying. How the fuck do I know how to transport bags and bags of money? By car? I don't know.

"No you don't have to worry. Mike and I have a way we've always used." He says.

"Okay." I say raising my hands.

I get a text from Zama. I can come get her now. Finally! My wife!

19

Zama:

So today I'm having a baby shower for my Minnie. It's mostly white and gold decor. There's a beautiful cake and a chair for her.

Samuel paid for everything. He really can't wait to be a father.

We also got news that Mike and Nolwazi are expecting again too. She apparently fainted and Rhu called to tell us on his way to the hospital. Rhu moved to Durban. I don't know why but I think it's because they're working on something with Mike.

All our friends are here, except Thuto. He's one of the guys now. I've gotten to talk to and like his fiancè though. Koketso is such a sweet person, she even laughs at the gay Thuto stories.

We found Dee, she went to her home back in the South Coast of KZN. She's back and still not talking to Sandile. We're all afraid to ask what happened.

We have balloons, white and gold with strings attached and they're floating up to the roof. It's pretty. Everything just looks amazing. Samuel is really loaded.

Ndu and I bought the baby a pram/car seat, a baby pillow and two blankets. We're all seated and waiting for Sam to bring her here.

He just texted, five minutes.

"She's five minutes away guys!" I say.

"Shhh" someone says.

Nandi and I chit chat for a while and we hear them drive in.

Minnie is first in the door and she screams.

"I knew it! I knew it!" She says.

We all laugh and get up to hug her.

"Thank you so much guys!" She shouts.

"Thank your baby daddy mostly." Koketso.

She turns around and kisses him.

She looks so cute in a white maternity dress. She looks like an angel. A pregnant one but one none the less.

She's glowing and happy. Her baby boy loves her clearly. Her skin is smoother even.

"Thank you baby. Thank you for this. For everything. For loving our child..." She says.

"And you." He interrupts.

Aaaaaaaw we all say.

"And me with all my flaws. I love you." She says getting teary.

"I love you too. Have fun with your ladies." He says.

They kiss again. It's so beautiful. I'm happy for her.

We sit down and it's time to have fun!

After all is done and the other guests have left, it's just me,
Dee, Nandi

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Minnie and Koketso left.

"The caterers are taking care of cleaning so I guess we just sit and wait for them ladies." I say.

"Don't mind if I do." Dee.

"Me too. I'm tired." Nandi.

We sit in front of the television and watch a movie.

"Koketso have you and Thuto done it?" Minnie.

We all laugh.

Trust her to ask.

"Well... Actually we did." She replies.

"And?" We all ask.

"He's amazing! Like really. He knows exactly where to touch me, how to touch me, when to complement me, when I want it rough. He's just heaven." Koketso.

"What? Our Thuto is really straight." Minnie.

"He's very straight." Koketso.

We all laugh.

"Dee, what happened with Sandile?" Nandi.

"He cheated. I was mad at him and I lost our baby. I didn't know I was pregnant till I bled and went to the doctor. She told me I was four weeks along." Dee.

"What?!" We all exclaim.

"Yup. Apparently it was my blood pressure." She says.

"Does he know?" I ask.

"No. I'll tell him later today. I told him I want to talk." Dee.

"Girl I'm sorry you went through that alone." I say.

"We're all sorry girl" Minnie.

"No I went home and they helped but ma and dad said we need cleansing and a ceremony for the child... Even though it wasn't much of a child then." Dee.

"Next time don't shut us out. We want to be there for you."
Minnie.

"You guys know I don't do that. I can't talk about it as it happens. Only later." Dee.

"We understand." I say.

"Let's group hug." Koketso.

She's the new one but she takes Thuto's spot perfectly.

We get up and hug.

A balloon pops and we're all startled so we scream.

The guys laugh, they're by the passage. I wonder when they got in. Mxm these idiots scared us.

I'm so excited to see Ndu though. I've spent today without him. He looks too good. Tight blue shirt, jeans, formal shoes, a pinky ring, one of the Hublots and a fresh cut. Mhmm my man.

20

Zama:

My husband to be is rushing everything. I have Umbondo coming up and then it's Umembeso, then I guess the traditional wedding. He says he wants his wife.

And I know exactly what kind of want this is.

I'm so worried about that. I want to satisfy my husband. I hope he's happy with me.

We could do it now but I'm the one who's afraid so I didn't tell him it's actually fine now.

Anyway for now I have my mothers planning my events. MaCele for Umbondo and Umembeso, MaSodi for both weddings.

MaCele takes the other stuff because she's not exactly someone who knows trends and there's not much needed for the two events.

MaSodi for the weddings because she is younger and knows more about trends and my taste. She'll have a planner on both weddings though.

Being in Joburg is really annoying. It's far from the venues and I can't do much from here. Lango is helping out on everything too so that keeps me at ease.

MaVezi is always busy with the twins and Nokwanda. They're so grown. Nokwanda is worse

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and she's so clever. They actually had to tone it down with some pills.

She can be doing something like writing or reading something in class while the teacher instructs but when she's asked about the topic at hand she can answer without even thinking about it.

I know Uthando is also a bit like that but it's normal. She just knows business. She knows budgets and business plans. The rest of the kids in the family are normal. Some less smart but still go at a normal pace.

I think there's something brewing between the guy who's a part of construction at the dam in Magobeni and Lango. She's almost always home now and goes to check the dam regularly.

"Stressing about the weddings again?" Ndu asks.

I almost jump. He startled me.

"What? No babe. When did you come in?" I ask.

"Just now. Are you okay? You seem zoned out." He replies.

"I was thinking about Lango." I reply.

"I'm hurt!" He says.

"Why?" I ask.

"I thought you were thinking about me." He says.

He puts his phone in the bedside table.

"I always think about you." I defend myself.

"Ai hau" He complains.

"Umona!" I laugh at him.

"I should be jealous over my wife." He says leaning in.

"Mhm your wife is glad." I say.

We kiss and he goes to the bathroom.

His phone rings.

"Get that for me babe." He shouts.

Unsaved number.

I answer it.

"Hey Ndu, I'm in Joburg. You said I should holla if I'm ever this side." A girl on the phone says.

I feel my blood boil. What the fuck?

Ndu walks out of the bathroom and stands in front of me.

"Who's on the phone?" He asks.

"Ndu?" The girl in the phone.

I give him his phone and get up to leave. He grabs my arm.

"Yes?" He says on the phone.

"Oh no I'm a married man now. Sorry." He drops the call and looks at me.

"Let me go so I can leave you with your hoe!" I shout.

"Don't fuck with me. Didn't you hear me tell her I'm married?" He shouts.

I'm too shocked to reply. Ndu is always soft with me.

"You're going nowhere. If you want to waste valuable time fighting then you're doing it right here. Not moving out. You don't leave your house just because you fought with your husband Zamagwili." His voice is softer now but still firm.

He lets go of my arm and walks out.

I hate to admit it but he's right. I need to be here, even if we fight, ngimele umuzi wami.

21

Ndu:

I don't understand Zama sometimes. She knows all about the old me but she still wants to play disappearing acts in this marriage.

I've been understanding with her not being ready for sex and I really don't mind waiting longer.

I don't get why she's being the type to leave instead of facing things head on. I worry she's not ready yet to be with me in a marriage.

I get a call from my brother and answer it.

"She said yes." Rhu.

"Where is she now?" Me.

"In my house." Rhu.

"I'm glad she agreed." Me.

My brother met a woman at the hospital. She has amnesia and says her family hasn't visited her nor does she know anyone, just a person who says he's her fiancé. She doesn't trust the apparent fiancé because she's afraid of him.

"Hakeem helped me with that." Rhu.

"Don't disappoint him." Me.

"I won't." Rhu.

"Did you find her family?" Me.

"It's not my place." Rhu.

No way. Rhulani doesn't know anything about boundaries when it comes to research on a person. He'd find her pets name if she had one.

"I see... Rhu...?" Me.

"Ndu..." Rhu.

"You don't want her to remember herself do you?" Me.

"I'm not sure Ndu." Rhu.

"Is it the apparent fiancé." Me.

"Yes. I'm afraid she might already be in love, she just doesn't remember it." Rhu.

"You'll cross that bridge. For now be a great host to her." Me.

I really don't know how he'd deal with that.

"I will bro. Talk later." Rhu.

"Love you blood." Me.

We're weird like that.

"Love you too." Rhu.

We get off the call.

Maybe I need to get Intel on Yandie. My brother is afraid of losing this one glimpse of hope. However it's not my place. I'll let him figure it out.

Oh another call. It's Sandile.

"You've been scarce." Me.

"I know. I've been with my demons. Battling them to save myself." Sandile.

"What's wrong?" Me.

"Dee was pregnant. I caused her stress and we lost our baby. We didn't even know about it." Sandile.

"What? Dude I'm sorry." Me.

"I don't think she'll forgive me." Sandile.

"I think it'll be hard but it'll happen eventually." Me.

"How do I keep her? I don't want to lose her." Sandile.

"Honestly? You didn't care before. Had you loved her enough things would've been different." Me.

Zama is at the end of the staircase and she looks my way before walking on to the kitchen.

"I do love her a lot." Sandile.

"What stopped you from changing for her?" Me.

Zama is cooking and she keeps stopping, I can tell she's listening to this.

"I don't know. I guess I didn't want her to hurt me." Sandile.

"But instead you hurt her." Me.

"I didn't want that. " Sandile.

"Does she know that?" Me.

Zama is looking at me.

"I don't know. We hardly talk." Sandile.

Zama walks towards me.

"Then why are you telling me instead of her?" Me.

"You're right. I need to talk to her." Sandile.

Zama is in front of me now.

"Go boy." Me.

I hang up first.

Zama sits on my left leg and looks straight at the kitchen.

"I do love you." She says.

"Are you sure?" I ask brushing her face.

"I'm certain." She says looking at me.

"Hmm." Me.

"I know sometimes I act like I don't. I do. It's just hard for me to think about you and your life before me." She confesses.

"I'm sorry. I love you though, please never doubt that." She continues.

"It can't change. It happened. I'm here now, it all led up to you and nobody else. I tried to love after Ash but I couldn't. I kept thinking women are the same and then I saw you again. Brave, innocent

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beautiful." I say.

"Thank you babe. I just, I didn't know how to handle that call, that's all." She confesses.

"It was a Cape Town fling. Old ass one even. Probably just desperate." I tell her.

"We need to change your number." She says frowning.

I laugh and she joins me. This princess right here is mine.

I'm in love with her, a hundred percent, though she drives me nuts. She's my weakness, the girl that I love. Trials and tribulations will come I'm certain, but I'll forever choose her. We just have to make it work..

22

Zama:

I hated being the cause for doubt in my marriage. I think I need to talk to MaVezi. She got married young and seems to have this thing on lock.

I'll do it this weekend before Umbondo ozohanjiswa kwaDube. I need to speak to someone who might understand.

Speaking of young married people, I can't believe Thabiso and Raina's wedding is coming up, they so deserve it. Sphe has also allowed Mfundo to do right by her. Fanele and Matt are getting married in Thailand and everyone is excited for another destination wedding. I think they're going to live there for now. Something about work for both of them.

On the other hand Ndu's sister Mandisa is getting married about two weeks before Thabiso's wedding.

It's wedding season it seems.

I'm very excited to be doing this with uMbuyazi wami, I'm sure about it. I just am not really sure I'll be a good wife, thoughts about not being worthy haunt me daily. Last thing I want is being the first to dissapoint my dad. Ntombi has her house on lock. I can't be anything below exceptional.

It's the pressure killing me.

"Mrs Dube." Ndu says from behind me.

I'm in the jacuzzi playing some Beyonce. I'm Beyhive forever.

He's standing by the door looking all kinds of sexy. He went to court today, I can tell. Navy three piece suit on, he looks dapper.

"Mr Dube

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you went to court?"

"Yes my angel." He says getting closer and sitting by the jacuzzi.

"Well I officially dropped out of school today." Me.

"What happened?" He asks.

"I was too behind on schoolwork so I just stopped." I say.

"Okay. Let me get undressed and join you." He says and kisses my cheek.

"Oh and I do love you." He continues and exits the room.

I realize he's saying that because I'm playing Beyonce's Why Don't You Love Me.

A phone call from Dee.

"Friend." Me.

"Hey my baby. I was calling to ask when we go down?" Dee.

"Thursday my love. You'll sleep at my home, all of you." Me.

"Okay cool, I wish Minnie was coming." Dee.

"She's too close to the date she so, I understand. Just can't wait to see her baby boy." Me.

I'm really excited.

"Nothing annoys me like Mbali. How she was busy with Siya under our noses is a mystery." Dee.

Busy with who?

"What?" Me.

She's not saying what I think she's saying right?

"Siya, he's the guy who was paying lobola for her." Dee.

"I have to go Dee." Me.

I get of the call.

What? I know Mbali wasn't an deal friend but this? This is just below anything I've ever encountered. I'm gobsmacked.

"I'm not getting in there if you're still that far." Ndu says bringing me back.

When did he get back in here?

"I'm here it's just, I heard something disturbing from Dee." Me.

"Which is?" Ndu.

He sounds a bit annoyed.

"Mbali was with Siya under our noses." Me.

"Oh, how does that make you feel?" Ndu.

Something is off here.

"Betrayed. How could she?! After everything I did for her. I'm really pissed off." Me.

"This is exactly why I didn't tell you." Ndu.

"You knew?" I ask.

How could he keep that from me?

"Yes. I knew you'd get mad over your ex. Enjoy the jacuzzi." He says and walks out.

What? I'm so not mad over my ex! Is he kidding me? He's the one who kept things!

23

Zama:

Ndu and I had a huge fight on the way here. So much so I had to ask Mfundo to get me from the airport. I lied and said I missed my brother to get Mfundo to come.

"You just don't understand how it feels Zamagwili." Ndu told me.

I don't understand what he meant.

"How it feels? I was the one betrayed." I replied.

"It's deeper but you know what? Fine. Be like this." He said.

"Yes it is, you just can't stop your stupid jealousy over my ex." That was me and it came out wrong. I really wasn't trying to hurt him. I was too mad to apologize though. He kept quiet and so did I.

On the way here Mfundo told me how things were busy here. Baby Zethu was becoming naughtier by the day and they were buying a new house for his and Sphe's marriage.

Lwazi and Mike's next baby was a boy again. They're excited about it.

I got home to my dad's hugs and my mothers were waiting with twenty thousand advices, except for MaSodi. She was just interested in me fitting the dress I'll wear. I love all my mothers equally but I do sometimes wish my biological mother was still alive. I miss her everytime I reach milestones like this in my life.

I make a mental note to see Yandie while I'm down here.

Someone knocks on my door.

"Come in." I shout.

"Mrs Dube" Banele says enthusiastically.

"Oh MaVezi. When did you get here?" I say hugging her.

"A while ago. You don't look like someone ozohambisa umbondo in a couple of hours." She hugs me back and looks at me.

"I'm... We fought." I tell the truth.

"Oh sisi." She says and hugs me again.

"I'm angry at him

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he's furious at me." I say.

"What happened." She asks sitting me down.

"My ex was marrying my friend right under my nose. I felt betrayed and he didn't understand why. Also, he knew about it all along." I tell her.

I'm still boiling a bit inside.

"Okay so far sounds like he's wrong." She says. Doesn't sound like she believes me.

"He is. He should've told me." I protest.

"This ex is the guy who slapped you?" She asks.

"Yes." I reply.

"The guy who used you for cash?" She asks again.

It's not even about that.

"Yes but this isn't even about that." I say.

"Same guy who fed his colleagues down here information about us?" She asks again.

No way.

"What? He wouldn't!" I'm astonished.

"The guy who leaked where I was getting married?" She asks again sounding so sure.

"He couldn't have... That was Khulani's mother. We weren't even together..." I say.

"Khulani's mother knew nothing about my wedding. She only knew about me and Daya. That's what she revealed... He wasn't in your life then but he was in Mbali's. Also, why are you protecting him?"

That last question. Ndu has asked me something similar before.

"MaVezi..." I really didn't know.

"Do you know why Ndu didn't tell you? Because he thought you'd blame yourself if you knew. He didn't tell you because he loves you... You're not to blame for that bastard ex though. Trust me. I understand and will never blame you so please don't fulfill his nightmares and think it's your fault." She says.

"I... I didn't know... I'm sorry Banele." I say.

"Please don't be. I need you to be fine. Talk to your man and fix this tomorrow." She tells me.

Wow. I was wrong. I didn't know it but I was wrong for being mad at him. He was just tired of seeing me hurt over Siya. Of seeing me protect the wrong Siya does. Even now. I didn't learn did I?

What have I done?

This is going to be hard to do.

24

Ndumiso:

Zama has every right to be angry and feel betrayed. I should've been honest with her. It's just I don't like the part where I'd have had to explain how I know it. I like Zama not knowing her big brother and Mike's shadier sides.

It's not as busy as you'd expect here. The tents are up and ready and my mother, let's just say it's her event. My dad isn't much involved.

Rhulani was here earlier but he left saying he didn't want to leave Yandie alone for too long.

He's found some Information about her and wants to share it with her even though it might take her away from him. I'm proud of my brother, he's growing up and not being selfish with Yandie. He showed me a picture and Goddamn I won't lie I understand why he initially didn't want to help her remember. I'd be afraid to lose that myself.

Well I'm already afraid to lose Zama.

I'm alone in my room. My sister is out being a Rugby wife watching her husband tackle other men. I have a hate for rugby that started when I was in high school and I was forced to play. Well we were all forced to play. The huge Afrikaner guys would practically abuse us during practice.

That's what they don't tell you about some of the "elite" schools. There's a lot of racism. Some underlying, some straight up. Never mind the showing off. I was lucky I had Khule to protect me. The guy was a beast in rugby. Everyone respected him. I mean everyone.

He just never liked it. He learnt it for school. He wasn't even as fit as he is now then.

I don't know how I'll deal with tomorrow's event knowing me and Zama aren't okay.

Her words about me being jealous over her ex are still haunting me and that makes my blood boil. I'll go see her. Right now this very instant. Magobeni isn't that far from here.

I take a quick shower and get out of the tracksuit I had on. I put on jeans, sneakers and a T-shirt. I hope there's no custom against this.

Zamagwili:

There are mountains of food in one of the kitchens. That's the food we're taking to Ndu's. Umbondo is about me taking food and whatever else they ask for to his place. I'm not sure why it's done but it's culture. I also got his mother a television, microwave

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and a lot more. Well to be honest dad used his own money for it and my mother, MaCele went and bought it. I just had to show up.

The only planning I'll be involved in is my white wedding. Even then I'll be picking stuff. Nowhere near execution.

I should go see my father. It's a tad cold today so people are minding their own business.

I haven't seen MaVezi since last night and Nomalanga I saw this morning. My twin sister isn't even going to make it. There's a funeral at Theo's side of the family. MaSodi, MaCele and Mrs Mthembu my aunt went to represent the family that side. My mothers both went because they're not allowed at my event anyway. Dad didn't want to go, too much to do apparently. My friends? Oh well those crazy people are only arriving today due to some delays.

I'm in the Kappa tracksuit Ndu bought me. It's one of my favorites.

I've spoken to Rhu and I'll meet Yandie soon. I saw her on his WhatsApp status. She's breathtakingly beautiful. So hard to believe she hardly knows herself.

I need to curl up next to the fireplace and watch some tv. There's nothing to do since I can't even talk to Ndu. Well to be honest I'm afraid to even try.

I just can't believe he did all that to protect my heart. I guess he was right I'm too trusting. How Mbali did this under my nose is beyond me, literally. As for Siya, what a liar. He deserves an Oscar. Actually they both do. Him and his girlfriend.

I miss Ndu. I need to talk to him.

25

Ndumiso:

I'm already inside the gate and I park and walk to the house.
Seems like there's not much going on.

Banele or Nomalanga walks downstairs.

"Hey old pal!" She shouts.

It's Lango.

"I was still figuring out who it is." I say smiling.

"Banele is with her children and husband. They're always like that." She says laughing.

"Alright. How are you?" I ask.

"Great but I know you're not here for me." She says smiling.

"Where is she?" I ask.

"The lounge being sad." She says.

That stabbed my heart.

"Which lounge?" I ask.

"Oh right. Sorry." She says laughing.

"Let's go." She continues and leads the way.

"This is sweet of you by the way. I don't know what the fight is about but you're sweet for fixing it." Lango says.

"Thank you. I hope we're okay by the end of the day." I say.

"She's in there." She points me to the lounge.

I walk into the room. She's watching a movie.

This room is warm.

Oh fireplace.

I walk to her and stand behind her from the couch she's on.

"Hey." I say.

She looks up and gets excited. I can tell because of the Colgate smile.

"You're here?" She says and her face changes.

She just remembered.

I walk around and I sit next to her.

"In the flesh." I say.

"I missed you." She confesses.

Lord knows I missed her too.

"I missed you too." I say.

"Come." I say patting my lap.

She stands and sits on my lap with my legs in between hers.

This is sexy. I like.

"I'm sorry I wasn't sympathetic to your situation. I understand why you'd feel betrayed. I do. I was just mad as hell because I thought Siya couldn't get to you and he did. I told myself I'd

protect you from him." I say and watch her bite her lip. It's driving me nuts but I have to focus.

"I'm sorry I didn't realize that me hurting hurt you. You don't have to protect me by keeping things from me babe. MaVezi told me everything and honestly I understand why but please don't. You love me so much you only want me to feel happiness but that's what my dad has been doing all my life and did it help? I wasn't a good judge of character through it. I thought Mbali was good. I thought Siya was good too. How did I not see through them? I've been this princess cooked up in a life where I've never seen the bad of this world. Now it's time for me to be a wife, maybe even a mother

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I need to be a good judge of character for that. My kids will have friends, how can I tell them so and so is bad for you if I can't tell that in my own life? I hopped from course to course because I knew I'd get whatever I want from dad anyway. I didn't realize then but I was just being a shielded princess. You no longer have to protect me as much as you do. I love you for it though, I really do." She pours her heart out.

My baby is a grown woman now.

"I'm sorry I tried to shield you. I'm not saying I'll stop but I'm saying I'll try my best to let you know. I just love you too much to let you suffer ngikhona." I tell her.

"I love you." She says and smiles.

Beautiful.

"I love you too." I reply.

"Do you realize how much we've grown?" I ask.

"I do." She says.

She doesn't.

"You used to sit on my lap and your back would face me. Then it evolved up to now. Your face is facing me." I tell her.

Red face. She's blushing. My baby though.

"You noticed all that baby?" She asks excitedly.

"And a lot more my love." I say and look into her eyes.

She kisses me. I kiss her back. My hands go straight to her hips and I start grabbing on them. Her hands are on my face and neck as she lets out soft moans. I feel myself get harder the more I feel on her body.

I move my lips to her neck and she breathes heavily.

Then my mind comes back to me.

"Baby. We can't do this here." I say.

"Come on babe there's no one around." She says.

"You really want your first time here?" I ask.

She pauses.

"I don't care long as it's you." She replies.

"Oh no way babe. This is your father's house." I say.

"I hate it when you're right." She says getting off me and cuddling next to me.

I kiss her forehead.

I'm just happy we're okay.

26

Zama:

You won't believe it but Minnie had her baby today and we're all here. I'm no longer staying longer here, I have to see baby Syre, yes that's his name given by Minnie, yes after Jaden Smith. Apparently Sam doesn't mind, he likes it. I'm counting the hours till we can leave. I don't understand why we're still here because I'm stuck at a table set for my family instead of with my husband.

My friends are here too and they are having fun. I'm not.

The event is over. We gave the guests food. Sifunani la?

I'm irritated.

Okay maybe I'm just being a princess but I'm not with Ndu so let me bitch about it.

Dudu is flirting with Ndu's cousin and I swear if Sandile could he'd strangle someone.

Poor thing.

Nandi is still drowning in love for Lungelo. They've really lasted shame.

I got to meet Ayanda too. She is something else. Beautiful, like really. She has a weave on, nails done and she looks like a million bucks. She definitely isn't stuck up though

she's beautiful and humbled. Heads were turning with her but equally so for Rhu, their other cousins, and even my Ndu which annoyed the hell out of me.

I'm irritable lately actually. My period is arriving soon anyway.

When Ndu came to talk to me at home I was happy about the talk but mostly the oral sex we had after in my room. We didn't go all the way because he decided he can't do it in my home before we even moved to the bedroom.

"Wanna go?"

She can tell I'm not happy. I smile and look around. Dee and the others would hate me. Besides. I plan on kissing my husband.

"My friends. I'll stay longer."

She smiles.

"Okay. Goodnight, you'll find me already asleep."

With that, Lango is gone. I doubt she's going to bed alone though. She's getting closer and closer to the guy who works on the bridge at Magobeni.

I'm left with MaVezi, my friends and of course my brother would never leave his wife. The Mthembu and Sihlahla families left already.

I can smell his perfume.

I turn around and he's behind me. I almost jumped but I contained myself and stood up slowly.

He takes my hand and we walk outside. There's people everywhere here. Those in the tent are still there too. I don't know if they want seconds or it's the alcohol.

He opens his car and I go inside. He walks to the other side and gets in.

He looks at me like he last saw me 25 Christmases ago. He leans forward and kisses me.

I return the kiss.

I missed him too. I know he's telling me he missed me.

It's a good thing this car is huge and has tinted windows.

He stops and his eyes seem smaller. He crawls to the backseat and takes my hand so I follow him. He sits upright and kisses me again. Long wet kisses that leave other places wet.

His hand is on my inner thigh and the maroon dress I have on is high up. He keeps rubbing my girl on the outside and plays with my clit. My panties are still on he just pushes them to the side.

I lower his zip and take out Mbuyazi.

I want him in so bad. Actually ever since I saw it. I know he'll say not in the car already though.

We hear some voices outside.

I stop and look at him.

We both want to laugh but suppress it.

The voices fade and move my waist closer to him.

"Not allowing your first time to be in a car." He says whispering.

It's the first time he's spoken and I knew he'd say that.

Well we have rubbed it outside before so I decide it's best we do that.

Just as I'm about to suggest it, a knock on the front window.

Shit.

I want to yell at whoever is there but I'm also afraid.

"Uncle Ndu" A little voice from outside.

"Mooom! He's not here." The voice says and fades.

Children!

He hardly even tried.

"Nondu's son." Ndu says still whispering.

Nondu is the wild child cousin.

"Let's go." I say. I'm spooked.

We decide to fix ourselves before walking back.

My gosh he looks like he wasn't born from a vagina but brought straight from the heavens in an elegant carriage.

Minnie and Sam's son is really beautiful.

Syre Johnson.

"I promise you he'll be a heartbreaker this one." I'm smiling.

Minnie gives me a look.

"My son is going to be a good guy." She says and I laugh at her.

"Did you see how beautiful he is?"

She looks at me again. I laugh.

I'm holding him while she's fixing up some things in his room. The white grandparents are coming over to see him. He's a week old.

Sam walks in the room and he looks like he's been running.

We look at him.

Weird.

He doesn't say anything but he gets closer and kneels in front of Minnie.

Is this?

I take my phone out with one hand and press on the camera. I'm making a video.

"I'm supposed to be at work. I had everything planned out and I was going to do this over dinner somewhere. I can't wait that long. I can't have you live in doubt that long. I love you and I want to marry you. The right way. I'll pay damages and whatever else I have to. I love you. Please marry me Minnehle." He says and takes out a ring.

Okay that looks expensive.

She seems like she was frozen.

"YES!" She shouts and the baby wakes up.

Cici. Wow. This mother.

27

Ndu:

Zama has been acting weirdly lately. She's been sick and hardly gets out of bed unless it's for baby Syre. I think she's coming down with some flu.

I left her in bed this morning and I'm taking the morning off tomorrow to take her to the doc.

Of course she thinks it's unnecessary but I can't risk with my baby. I love that girl so I notice the little things even she doesn't see.

My morning today was long. At least I'm done with the busiest part.

I've just been to court and the rest of my day doesn't have much. I'll still go to the office though.

I drive out and I notice a flower shop and immediately think of my sick wife.

I stop in front of the shop and I decide to have orchids delivered to her. I then use Uber Food to send her her new favorite sticky wings from Mr. Browns.

I text her to tell her about the food.

The moment I enter the building Sandile's eyes meet mine first and I realize something is wrong.

I walk to him and he moves first indicating that I should follow him with his hands.

He walks into Lungelo's office. I follow and go in.

Lungelo is pacing up and down and he stops to look at me and Sandile by the door. Our eyes lock.

There's a girl here, sitting on Lungelo's chair. I've seen her in the clubs before. She looks heavily pregnant. Wait! Shit!

We're all still and looking at her belly.

She's from the orgy a couple of weeks before Zama and I spoke again.

I remember her being with three friends. The boys and I kept exchanging with them because there was an extra girl we had an orgy. I'm sure condoms were there but you never know slip ups happen.

She seems stressed. Like really stressed.

There's silence.

"I pray to God it isn't me. Nandi will kill me." Lungelo says after forever.

"Zama will just leave me." I say.

"If it's not me I'm not claiming a kid just cause you two are in relationships." Sandile

"You three better know I ain't ready for no baby. Whoever it is better take him. I didn't come to SA for this" The girl speaks.

She should've thought of that before orgies.

I don't even remember her name.

She's Mozambiquan and looks exotic.

We all look at each other. It's a boy.

"Dee would skin me alive for this. It really can't be me." Sandile.

He just remembered his unborn baby.

This is going to get me murdered by the Ngubos and trust me

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no arrest will be made, no lead found. Just like Siya has been "missing". The guy's ashes might be scattered all over the ocean if not the gate at his home.

I need to pray.

I really need to pray.

I'm already imagining my funeral.

"Where are you staying?" Lungelo.

"Res." She replies.

"Are you comfortable? We could book you into a hotel close to a private hospital. You said you had a week before you deliver?" Lungelo again.

Sandile and I look at him with a wtf look.

"That would be nice. Thank you." The girl.

If we were all single we'd laugh but shit is too real right now.
Too much has happened.

"I'll pay for your Accommodation." I offer.

"I'll do hospital bill." Lungelo.

We look at Sandile.

"I'll do transport and food. I'll link your Uber to my bank account." Sandile finally says.

"Okay. That works for me." She says and rubs her belly.

This is really happening.

We're in deep shit. Fuck.

28

Zama:

Ndu is such a fusser it's getting to me. He made an early morning appointment at the doctor. I don't know if that was to piss me off or what but I don't like it and I'm not speaking to him as he drives me there.

He's given up on talking to me so we're just sitting in an awkward silence. Just because that is who he is and he wants to talk through everything.

We're at the GP and still in silence.

I sit at the waiting area as he speaks to the receptionist.

He comes to sit next to me.

"You didn't even grab breakfast. Want something?"

He's kidding me right?

"I want to go back home. I'll be fine without a doctor." I reply.

Okay that was bratty.

"All my efforts. All I've tried to make sure you're okay and this is really the thanks I get Zama?" He asks.

He has a point. I'm just a bit irritable.

"I do appreciate it and I wouldn't mind fries. Lots of fries, no ketchup." I reply with a smile.

He smiles back.

"Uhuh okay baby. It's time to see the doctor now though. Do you want to go in with me or can I go get your food."

I want him next to me.

"I wanna do it with you."

"Okay baby."

We get to the doc and he asks me about fever, my periods which strangely never came last monthly and my eating patterns.

He then asks to run some tests and I agree.

After a while we sit in his office.

"What if you have iList Yalosisi?" Ndu teases.

I laugh.

"It's listeriosis and if I have it, so do you." I say.

He laughs.

"I'm sure Sqi is the one who used that list yalosisi term." I say still in stitches.

The doctor comes in with a smile on his face.

"I see you two are happy." He says sitting on his chair.

"We are Dr Dladla. I really hope you don't break our hearts."
Ndu says squeezing my hand.

"Well

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I am not. In fact congratulations you two. You're having a baby."

Wait. Whoah. A what now? How? We've never had sex.

We look at each other.

"You're a month along Zama and doing quite well."

Ndu and I are just staring at each other.

"How?" I'm first to ask.

"I've never had sex doctor." I turn to look at him.

"Well it happens. I'm sure you guys fool around and well one can fall pregnant with precum, hence people get pregnant even if the male pulls out. Honestly slip ups happen in oral sex too."

He says.

Precum? I didn't know that.

"Oh okay doc. Thank you." Ndu says.

We look at each other again.

He smiles. I just look at him blankly.

This was not the plan.

The plan was to have kids later. We were supposed to enjoy our marriage while it's just us.

He holds my hands together.

"Babe, listen I know this isn't part of the plan but let's just be happy for our baby. He just couldn't wait to get here. Forgive him."

Did he just?

"Who told you it's a he?" I ask.

Him and the doctor laugh.

"Well if it's a girl she's hyper for being here without being asked to come."

He must never!

"Eh! Don't you dare! That's my baby."

They laugh louder.

"I'm going to need you to use a gynaecologist now. I can refer you to one of you don't have one already." The doctor says.

"I do have a gynae. Thank you doc."

"Goodbye and pop that cherry already." The doctor says and we laugh.

I can't believe I'm pregnant. I have to tell my twin sister first.

Ndu takes my hand and we walk out.

He seems a little off. I'm not sure if I'm imagining it but he seems like he's not even here.

"Baby, thank you for making me a father." He turns awkwardly and says.

It's just happiness I guess.

I smile and hug him.

He kisses me. A wet slow and very seductive kiss that leaves me breathless.

He always leaves me dizzy.

29

Zama:

I can't believe my sister laughed at me when I told her we hadn't had sex and I'm pregnant.

She asked me how old I am to not know that I could've gotten pregnant through ukusoma. I swear I'm mad at her.

I'm in bed, having fries and Ndu's getting ready to go to work.

"Why are you mad?" He asks.

I'm not mad.

"I'm annoyed."

"Why?"

"Ntombi was being annoying about my pregnancy. She's excited though."

"Ohw, awesome."

"Ever since she got married she divorced us. She's almost always with her family."

"Well, she had to. It's her new family, traditionally they're her people now."

"I know. I understand too but sometimes I miss my twin sister."

"Remember you left her for Jo'burg way Back?"

Mxm.

"Okay go to work. Leave me."

"I love you."

He tries kissing me and I duck so he kisses my cheek and leaves.

I spend my day in bed and eating. I really don't feel well, this baby is making me eat and vomit. I had a call from MaVezi inviting me to her house next weekend to meet the ladies we'll share a house with in Thailand for Matt and Fanele's wedding.

Ndu:

Lungelo and Sandile aren't here and that Erica girl is in hospital about to give birth. She called me after they didn't pick up.

This should've happened after I tell Zama. She's gonna kill me if that little boy is mine. Especially now that she's pregnant. Still very scary to me how that happened.

I'm packing up and I rush to the hospital while I keep trying to call the gents.

When I get there I'm told to wait outside so I call Zama to come to the hospital. After assuring her I wasn't sick or hurt she said she was on her way.

I see Lungelo and Sandile run to me.

"Dude what's up?" They ask at the same time.

"I was told to sit here and wait. She's giving birth." Me.

"Have you told Zama?" Sandile.

"No. I called her here though." Zama.

"Nigga fuck you I'm calling Nandi too. We'll tell them together."
Lungelo.

"Y'all tryna get me killed I'm calling Dee too." Sandile

I wonder who's son is being born right now in that room.

They sit next to me.

"I'm dead if this baby is mine." Lungelo.

"You're already dead for having the orgy. Forget they didn't know us before that." Me.

"Shit is fucked up. I been through so much with losing a baby and now this? Dee will skin me alive I swear." Sandile.

Zama and Nandi arrive at the same time and we don't know what to do so we suggest waiting for Dee.

"What is going on? Why are we here? At the maternity ward nogal?" Nandi.

"Please just trust us and wait for Dee." Sandile.

I can't even look at Zama.

I'm sitting and facing down. They're both opposite us.

Thank God this waiting room is private.

Dee walks in.

Perfect.

I look up.

She doesn't ask anything but sits next to her friends.

"So. What happened is, about 9 months back. Before we met all of you. We had a wild night and well eventually there were four girls at my house

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we had... We had group sex." Sandile.

"What the fuck?" Dee.

"Now what? You impregnated them? You're having kids?"
Nandi.

"No. Just one." Lungelo.

"Are you having a child Ndumiso?" Zama.

"I don't know. We don't know who's going to be the father."
Me.

"Great." Nandi.

A doctor comes in.

"Hello. I'm Dr Bhengu. Who's the father please?"

"They don't know. One of them." Zama.

"Oh... Okay... A bouncing baby boy, healthy and at 3.4 kg. has arrived." Dr Bhengu.

"Great, can you refer us to someone who can do parternity tests?" Lungelo.

"Yes... Uh we'll make sure to have it done for all three of you."
Dr Bhengu.

"Thank you." Me.

"You need to see and name the baby, the mother said she was a surrogate which is why I don't understand this." Dr Bhengu.

"She doesn't want to keep him. That's why finding the father is important." Sandile.

"Oh. Right. I'll speed up the process. For now he'll have to go by some name." Dr Bhengu

"Nhlalohle." Dee.

"Oh, nice name. Thanks." Dr Bhengu.

We all can't stop staring at her.

"I'm crazy. I know it. I'm angry at you Sandile but the baby did nothing. Innocent, just like my baby. Now if you'll take me to see him please. Ndu." Dee.

Why me?

I want to protest but Zama gives me a look.

"Okay." Dee.

"I'm coming too." Zama.

"Me too, so it's fine, Ndu you can stay behind." Nandi.

They get up and go.

We look at each other.

"Yeah we're dead." Lungelo.

I bury my face in my hands.

30

Ndu:

We drove separately to the house.

I arrived after her. Mostly because I needed to be sure she'd go to our home and not her house.

I find food on the counter, wrapped up with cling wrap. I'm guessing she cooked before this whole thing.

I take it and eat.

She's becoming more and more a wife and not just because of this. She's always been the type to clean up and cook and all, I just fell more in love with her for not leaving me because of this.

I can't stop thinking about that baby it's light skinned like it's mother. Lungelo is light skinned too so he admitted to being bothered by that.

We're waiting for the results. The doc promised to rush them.

I wonder if Zama won't kill me before then.

We're going to Durban together in a couple of days.

I can't finish this food so I put it in the fridge and head upstairs and find her in bed.

I take a shower, brush my teeth and sleep.

I kiss her cheek goodnight and I guess she's asleep. I turn off the side lamp.

The room is dim.

"I love you Zama. I'm sorry."

I say before I shut my eyes.

"I love your stupid self too."

I open my eyes.

I want to laugh but I know Zama, she's not trying to be funny.

I get closer to her and wrap my arms around her
shut my eyes and try to sleep.

Honestly I don't even remember how it felt to nut that day. Yet I remember everytime Zama made me nut while blowing me. I remember how I feel after. I remember how her mouth tastes mixed with my semen. I can imagine the way her temperature rises after she cums.

I've waited so long to have sex with her because I want her first time to feel better than all those times when I only used my mouth and hands. I know her body, I know when she's enjoying what I'm doing. I know when she's a little uncomfortable so I can throw in a compliment and make her feel at ease. I haven't banged my own wife out of studying her and wanting to give her the time of her life, always.

Now I face this for a stupid fuck with some girl I didn't even kiss. It wasn't about her, just me, enjoying three girls with my friends swapping. Look where it's got us.

Zama:

We're leaving for Durban today. Tomorrow we're going to my brother's house and spending time with the ladies.

I don't talk to Ndu much since I found out about Nhlalohle.

Actually I think I should poison him and raise my baby and Nhlalohle if he's the father. He had to fuck this up didn't he? I had planned that we'd finally do it that day and the guy goes and drops a bomb on me.

I don't even care about him having a child it's the way it happened. Why would they be so irresponsible? All three of them.

Men think with dicks. I saw that girl. She's beautiful. Even after giving birth she looked beautiful.

The bitch.

I'm honestly tired and I want to talk to Ndumiso now but I can't. Not yet.

I need to know if I'm going to be a mother to his son or not. I need to know if I have to make plans for a new baby boy or not.

Minnie has been supportive to all three of us and she's already availed herself for help because we haven't told the guys but we've chosen to mother that baby, even if the father isn't one of them.

31

Zama:

We're finally in Thailand and I'm trying to forget the baby thing but the results are out.

The six of us decided on finding out together so they're also waiting on me and Ndu to get back.

For now the baby is being taken care of by Hunandi. Dee also helps.

I'm laying in bed looking up and lazy to do anything.

I actually thought I'd go help out my aunt with the many kids the grandparents are taking care of.

All the kids are with them. From the teens to the almost teens.

Speaking of teens, I can't believe Lwazi's twin sisters are thirteen. They are so beautiful, photocopies of Lwazi actually. Huge eyes and amazing lashes.

I get up out the bed and walk downstairs where the ladies are at the bar having virgin cocktails.

I join in the conversation and drink a virgin mojito.

By the end of the day we've had dinner together

all the couples and now it's time for bed. Only a few hours to the wedding.

It's a night wedding though, with burgundy and silver being the dominant colours.

I'm not really friends with the bride and groom but it's MaNgubo's sister and Akin' s best friend. The families eventually became family friends too.

"You look beautiful." Ndu.

"I don't feel it."

"Still look it." Ndu.

I smile and kiss him.

"I need to drink some juice or something. I'll be right back."

"I can get it for you." Ndu.

"I know baby. I want to walk downstairs."

"Mmh okay babe." Ndu.

He thinks I'll fall.

Crazy right?

I walk out of the bedroom and Mike's behind me going downstairs too.

"Who would've guessed?" He asks.

"Guessed what?"

I know he's about to insult me.

"Someone would actually love you!"

I laugh. Mxm.

I'll always be the little sister to him and Khule.

"I could say the same for you brother."

"You know your big bro has always been loved by the ladies."

Mike.

"You're right. Who would've guessed someone would have you this whipped?"

"Mxm."

I laugh at him.

I guess he's also looking for something to drink.

"Milk." He says when I open the fridge.

"I think I'll join you on that."

I pour us glasses of milk.

He sits opposite me at the kitchen bar.

"Lwazi really did a number on you."

He laughs.

"I'm even thinking of cutting my dreadlocks actually."

"Oh wow. Really?"

I never thought I'd see the day...

"Never! I have girly hair. I'd have to just cut it all off" Mike.

We laugh.

"I do really love her and our children. The twins are showing me flames though."

"How so?"

"They're teens now and I'm so afraid they'll make the wrong choices."

"Don't be too overprotective. They're teens so they'll rebel."

"True but I've seen the young boys from their school and how they look at my daughters when I drop them off in the morning. Boys doing Grade 10 even."

It's understandable if you think about High school though.

"Don't kill the poor kids. The girls have bodies like Lwazi. Beauty like her, and they're younger. Have you seen the stares Lwazi gets?"

"Yes and I hate them. If I could I'd kill any man who even begins thinking of her."

"Well they use her pictures to..."

He looks at me like he's ready to go off.

"Don't even finish that sentence."

I laugh.

"Relax bro. The twins are going to be alright. They're going to worry you because they're young but don't even worry about it much."

"I just can't let any boy play with their hearts. I really wouldn't forgive myself."

I take the glasses and wash them.

"Or the boy."

"The boy dies."

I laugh but I know he'd do it.

"Come, let's go back upstairs before Ndu thinks you ran."

"You're right. My poor baby is so anxious lately."

He laughs as I walk in front.

I think he also thinks I'll fall down The stairs or something.

Men are too cautious with a pregnant woman.

32

Zama:

The wedding yesterday was beautiful, the decorations and the ceremony to the party. All just beautiful.

Today is the day after and it's been crazy and fun to just relax with other couples. I even forgot we had a baby issue back home.

Lunch is being served by a catering company because these men said no more chefs.

I didn't understand it until I was told something about a chef who was flirting with Ayanda.

The lunch is indoors because the sun isn't really playing with us. It was better in the morning but not anymore.

This baby in me wants popcorn all the damn time so I'm having a bowl in the lounge as the caterers set up in the dining room.

Ndu is outside swimming.

I can't even.

I'm not friends with sunburn.

Neither of the women are so we're all indoors except for Neleh and Lwazi sitting in the shade out there.

The men on the other hand are having fun splashing water all over the place.

I forget they're all adults when they do these things.

At this moment I miss home a bit.

Trust me this is nice and all but the truth is that we're not a close group of friends.

The guys are sure, but not all the ladies. It's more like family

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not friends.

Of course except for Banele and Lwazi.

"Nope I cannot do this for long, we're going back home soon."
Banele says walking in.

"I know right? I need my baby boy with me." Lwazi is walking behind her.

"I need my children back shame." Banele.

I laugh.

"You'll understand when you have that little man or girl in there." Banele

"You guys sound so hurt. It's like you were forced to part with them."

"Oh trust us, we were happy. Athenkosi would make you need a holiday in a week. But he's my boy and I miss running around after him and finding him unloading all the toothpaste inside the toilet." Lwazi.

Banele and I laugh out loud.

"Athi needs to stay with my mothers. Oh he will behave."

"Who? The same ones who let him get away with everything?"
Banele.

"Well that's true."

"He's a charmer that's the problem." Lwazi.

"Like father like son." Banele.

We break out in laughter.

"It's like I have two babies already sometimes. They don't mind playing together all over the house and falling asleep on our bed dirty and tired from making a mess all over my house. Worse when the twins join in the madness of letting Athenkosi lead." Lwazi.

"They play together? That's so cute!"

"Not when you have to now deal with the mess. Khule and Kai's tea parties are the worst. They decide to grab everything in the

pantry. Get full and go sleep. Mommy has to sort out the pantry alone." Banele.

"The helper?"

"She can't. I watched The Kardashians this one time and fell in love with how Khloé does her own pantry, and adopted her system. So I sort that out myself." Banele.

"They always look so adorable in your Instagram stories."

"Of course. I love it. Even when they do daddy daughter dates with Mike and the twins joining. It's always great to see." Banele.

"Your families are basically one. That's beautiful."

"Yes. We do way too much together." Lwazi.

"I wonder if I'll ever have that." I'm starting to get emotional.

"Are you crying?" Banele asks hugging me.

"No it's just amazing how..." I sob away and they laugh.

"Your hormones are cute. Relax babes." Lwazi.

I really don't know why I'm crying.

33

Ndu:

Zama looked so beautiful today I couldn't take my eyes off her.

Hats off to Nomalanga and Connor for a great time too. We went and tried out Thai food, had a little tour and then went on little boats to see the beauty of Thailand.

We're packing to go back home now and Im

I'm anxious to know if I have a son or not.

I hope not.

I want my first baby to be with my wife.

"Nandi sent some pics of Nhlalohle. He's so adorable." Zama.

"Oh"

I don't really know what to say to her.

"I was thinking and it wouldn't be so bad if he was yours."

Huh?

"Really?"

"Yes. He's so precious!"

I can't believe she said that.

"Wow okay babe."

"I really miss Minnie and baby Syre too."

Okay she's really chatty.

"I know. Her wedding is coming up so I'm sure you want to be there for that." I reply.

"I do baby. She's gonna be there for mine too."

"I know

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and Thuto's wedding?"

"That's coming up too. But Thuto doesn't really have time anymore."

"Well he's got a new wife."

She's so chatty today. I don't know if it's hormones but this is the longest we've spoken in a while.

"Yeah. I wish you had met him before. He was convincingly gay!"

"I remember you told me."

"Baby, let's go back home and work on our wedding and our baby. I can't wait to be a mother."

She sounds so excited.

I don't know how we got here but I nod and hold her.

Zama:

We got to the airport and drove straight to see Nhlalohle. It's early in the morning and we're waiting for Lungelo who's gone to fetch Dee.

Today we find out if Nhlalohle has a father between these three idiots or not.

Nandi made breakfast but none of us want to eat yet.

Nandi and I are sitting in the lounge waiting.

"So you had to temporarily move in?"

"Yeah. I couldn't trust Lungelo with the baby alone." Nandi.

"I'm sure you're gonna miss him if he's not his."

"I feel like crying just thinking about him being taken away."
Nandi.

"Relax babe. I'm sure whoever is the dad won't take him far from us."

"Sandile has no obligations. He's not even with Dee anymore."
Nandi.

"We'll just have to hope."

"They're here." Sandile says as he walks in with Ndu and puts the three envelopes on the table.

Shit.

Dee and Lungelo walk in.

I guess it's time.

After we greet each other and settle down we address the elephant in the room.

"Okay so how do we do this?" Ndu.

"Randomly pick an envelope each and we'll start with one person reading it out loud. Until one is the father." Nandi.

"Okay." Sandile.

The three of them pick up envelopes without reading who they're for and open them.

"I'll start... Ndumiso Dube, is not a match." Lungelo.

Relief flushes all over me.

I had accepted the possibility but it doesn't mean I would've loved it.

"Okay me next... Shit..." Ndu.

"Who is it?" Sandile.

Ndu looks up.

"Sandile bro... You're a match..." Ndu.

"Really?" Dee.

"Shit!" Sandile.

He grabs the results from Ndu.

"Give it here." Dee.

She gasps.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Dee.

She gets up and walks upstairs.

"You don't have to take him with you yet. You can adjust and baby proof your place first..." Nandi.

"Yeah dude. The little man can stay here." Lungelo.

"Sandile asambe." Dee.

She has the baby and she looks ready to get out of here.

"Dee... You don't really have to take him now." Nandi

"We do. He needs to readjust and bond with..." Dee.

"He's Sandile's son!" Nandi.

"Wow." Dee.

She walks out.

"Yo man I'm sorry guys but we have to go." Sandile.

He follows her outside.

"She really didn't have to do that. We could've kept him longer." Nandi.

She needs to let it go now.

"Maybe not but he's Sandile's son. He chose to leave with them anyway."

"Sandile is single. He can't take care of the baby alone. What's gonna happen now? She'll replace her baby with Nhlalo? He is not hers and neither is Sandile. Her jealousy is driving this. She just didn't want the baby to be with me" Nandi.

"Wow Nandi. I can't do this with you right now. Ndu let's go."

She just looks away and I stand up.

Nandi of all people knows how broken Dee has been. Why would she say those things?

"Goodbye Lungelo. Bye Nandi."

"I'll see you man. Bye Nandi." Ndu.

We walk out.

34

Zama:

Everything screams money. The white and gold everything with crystal chandeliers all over it's absolutely gorgeous.

I expected no less from Minnie. She loves the finer things and she deserves them.

I don't know how her fiancé managed to get her mother to say yes to his Lobola, have a traditional wedding and now the wedding but he made things happen for them and now she's well on her way to becoming Mrs Johnson.... Well technically she already is.

I wanted to be a bridesmaid but I'm quarter to popping a baby.

Thuto married Koketso about two weeks ago and they're also here fresh from the honeymoon.

You should see the excitement and ass kissing from Minnie's family. I think they realized just how rich Sam is and want in on that.

Ndu wipes the tear that escapes from my eye. I smile and look at him.

'It's so beautiful.'.

I whisper to him.

He holds my hand and kissed my forehead.

"We're going to get married too baby, it'll be more beautiful."

I nod and watch baby Syre crawl to his parents.

The church erupts in laughter and Sam picks up his son with Minnie laughing at the situation.

Trust Syre to steal the spotlight.

The reception is similar to the church decor but with more to look at it's much more gorgeous.

The set up is intimate with round tables that sit ten people and gorgeous crystal and flower centerpieces.

The food is to die for and honestly I might just choose to marry in Lesotho myself. It's breathtakingly beautiful and the snow just makes it that much more special.

All my friends are here, Dee and Lungelo are raising a baby boy but none of them know what's going on between them

Nandi had a fallout with Sandile and still hasn't apologized to Dee.

It's all a bit draining but I'm just focusing on Ndu and myself, infact I'm actually getting closer to Koketso and Minnie.

Ndu:

Ever since Rhu along with Mike and Khule had their partners pull a runaway prank on them they've been more obsessive with security and knowing where they are at all times.

According to them they're saving them from getting themselves killed.

According to Zama she was going to do it to if she was in Durban, well me being Ndu I would've probably panicked because I would've wanted my baby not her. If she would've been childish enough to do that, then she could keep on going.

However that doesn't mean it wasn't funny for me roasting my brother and them about it.

Apparently Mike was spitting fire and even fired some people.

Zama and I are at her friend's wedding and she's so emotional, infact she's been emotional since she became pregnant.

I'm always there comforting her over movies and books and and and.

Honestly I can't wait for the baby to pop out and she can hopefully get back to normal.

I don't even mind the constant foot rubs and chicken feet cravings it's the constant crying I'm tired of.

Sigh. Just one more month and we're done.

35

Ndu:

"Bro I'm freaked out by how much I love Yandie." Rhu.

"To be honest so am I."

"Haha funny guy." Rhu.

"No but for real, you clearly love her and I think it's meant to be. She won't be going back to that ex of hers for sure so you just need to keep her happy."

"What happens when she realizes I'm too broken?" Rhu.

"Your heart can love bro. You're so not too broken."

"I guess. Well let me let your working class ass back to work."
Rhu.

"Oh now you're funny?"

We laugh and get off the call.

Lungelo runs inside my office.

"Dude your wife is giving birth right now." Lungelo.

"What? Shit! Okay! Thanks uhh I'm going."

"She's at the hospital. Dude. Same one Nhlalo was born in."
Lungelo.

"Thanks man."

I literally leave most of my stuff and run out.

Lungelo will sort it out.

My innocent virgin wife is no more, she wants sex all the time now, infact she picked skills up quicker than I thought.

With her being pregnant we had to have sex and goddamnit I'll never forget how amazing it was.

It was just after a nice dinner together, she was a bit stressed about her friends and I guess I saw an opportunity to make her feel good, trust me when I say she forgot all about why she was stressed.

I laid her on the bed and first had to make her shower me with her juices using my tongue

after that she looked me deep in the eyes and I asked her if she was ready. She nodded and just then I slowly inserted myself in.

I could feel her body go into shock and she moaned with pleasure. Through all this I kept the eye contact and when I increased the pace she was cursing and kissing me and moaning making me want to give my all to the session. We became one after that and you know what? We even fight less.

She's now the first one to ask for it, infact beg for it. It's always such a turn on when she does that because she just wakes me up to a blowjob and I know we're having a session.

No more sexual frustration for me. No lie I love Zama and whoever doesn't believe that just needs to know I, Ndumiso Dube kept her in my bed and didn't have sex with her.

Nevermind the whole oral stuff, I didn't actually use my dick. Now that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt I love her. I never would've done that shit for anyone else, princess or not.

I still want to rush the wedding but she wanted to have the baby first.

So now we're here I'm late and rsn in to beg her to push while she screams at me.

"Baby you heard the doctor, just one more push. One baby."

"Fuck you! Ndu I'm never doing anything with you again! Uyangizwa!" Zama.

"Miss Ngubo one more he's almost out. Push!" Dr.

She pushes and I can tell it takes everything she's got.

Then a loud cry.

I let go of her and go look at him.

"He's here babe. Our boy is here."

She smiles looking at me.

I look at the baby again and he's honestly the most amazing little human I've ever laid my eyes upon. I turn to look at Zama and she's not awake.

I rush to her side.

"Doctor why is she sleeping? Zama! Zamagwili baby wake up!"

The doctors rushes to her side and I'm pulled outside by nurses.

No!

"Zama! Zama!"

I'm screaming her name and she's not responding. Why isn't she responding? Not my wife no!

"Zamagwili!"

"Sir please calm down, the doctors are doing everything they can." Nurse.

My heart sinks.

I might lose my wife.

Dee who was waiting outside just begins sobbing at this sight.

36

Zama:

My eyes feel heavy, very heavy.

I force them open and I'm blinded by the light.

It burns.

Okay try again Zama.

I open my eyes again.

That damn light!

I manage to keep my eyes open and look to my left, I'm at a hospital that much I realized.

I look to my right and there he is.

He's asleep on the couch.

"Ndumiso... Ndumiso!"

I'm trying to shout.

He wakes up and blinks a few times looking at me before flying to the bed.

"I love you. I love you. I love you." Ndu.

He's kissing my forehead repeatedly.

I smile.

"Where is our baby?"

"He's here, healthy and can't wait to meet his mama." Ndu.

I smile.

"I love you too."

"Okay wait here I'll ask the nurse to get him." Ndu.

"I wouldn't go anywhere." I say smiling.

I don't feel energetic.

In fact I'm exhausted.

The wall clock says it's 11pm.

I'm trying my best to keep my eyes open.

A doctor walks in with Ndu.

"Zamagwili

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hi I'm your doctor how are you feeling?" Dr.

"Exhausted."

"Lets get you some food and see if that changes. You're alright though. You scared us there for a second." Dr.

"I just need to see my son."

"He's coming with a nurse. Don't worry." Dr.

I smile and look at Ndu.

"Thank you doc." Ndu.

"You must be home free now, I'll see you later." Dr.

"Thanks."

The doctor walks out.

"I love you." Ndu.

He kisses my forehead.

Then he grabs a drinking yoghurt from the stuff next to my bed and gives it to me with a straw.

Dramatic.

I sip on it.

The door opens and a nurse has my baby in her arms.

She smiles at me and gives him to Ndu.

Ndu takes him and hands him over to me.

"Hey baby. Hey my love."

They told me it would be overwhelming but wow.

He's so beautiful and precious.

Looks more like his father but hey, he got my skin tone so at least I'm represented.

He keeps moving his arms but his eyes are shut.

I wonder if he's dreaming or just doesn't want to open his eyes.

I look at Ndu who's looking at us like we're some sort of rare creatures.

"What's his name?"

"Oh... Uh I haven't thought of a name. I couldn't." Ndu.

Isn't he adorable?

"Oh... Okay well I'm fine now."

"How about... Khaya? Khaya Dube." Ndu.

Perfect!

"I love it! When he thinks he's too fresh he'll want to be called KayDee."

"Or starts a failing rap career." Ndu.

We both laugh.

Khaya starts crying... More like screaming really.

I look at Ndu.

"Do you think I should try breastfeeding him?"

I'm nervous.

"Yes baby." Ndu.

He's more excited than me.

I take out my breast and try. After a while Khaya starts literally milking me.

It hurts though I don't want to lie.

"Thabsile was here to see him and you, she left the yoghurts and fruits here. Your friends came too and I've already gotten a

call from my parents, siblings and your family they're over the moon about the baby but they were worried about you." Ndu.

"Thanks babe. Have you told anyone I'm up?"

He looks at me.

"Uh... I'll be right back." Ndu.

I laugh and shake my head.

Oh Khaya my boy. You have quite the dad.

37

Ndu:

I don't even know how many times Zama's mothers and her sisters have called, nevermind my own mother and sister. And they're all video calling trying to see Khaya.

I'm glad they're excited but I'm still at the house changing and going to see them only in a few minutes.

I spoke to my brother and he congratulated us too.

Khaya has the biggest family with a lot of love waiting for him.

I honestly can't wait till he's grown and understands just how loved he is.

I get in the car and drive to hospital.

Another call on Zama's phone from one of her mothers
MaSodi.

...

Me: Ma

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I'm still not with them yet.

MaSodi: (sobs) son, please tell her Nobuhle and Nosigcino were
shot at on their way home from school.

Me: Ma? Don't they get picked up when they want to come
back?

MaSodi: They were in a car... Son just tell her that her sisters
are in hospital.

...

She dropped the call.

Zama can't take this right now.

She won't be able to handle it. She just got her son now and her sisters are in hospital fighting for their lives.

I call Khule.

...

Khule: Don't bring Zama to KZN.

...

He drops it before I can even say anything.

What the fuck is going on?

How am I going to tell Zama a half story?

Man fuck this shit.

I park and go in.

My mind is racing.

What do I say to Zama?

Another call.

Khule.

...

Me: Hello.

Khule: As discreet as you can bring Zama home. We lost Nobuhle.

...

He drops the call.

FUCK!

I can't do this.

I can't tell her this.

I take a deep breath and walk into her room.

She's talking to Khaya who seems asleep.

"Hey daddy." Zama.

I smile faintly.

"Zamagwili I need to tell you something."

"Sounds serious. What's up?" Zama.

Tears are threatening to fall.

I compose myself.

I take Khaya from her and put him on the couch wrapped in his blanket.

"What's going on Ndu?" Zama.

"It's Nobuhle... She's gone."

"What do you mean gone?" Zama.

Her voice is breaking.

"She passed on Zamagwili I'm so sorry."

"She what? How? She was okay just days ago telling me she can't wait to meet my baby. Ndumiso this is not funny." Zama.

Tears are falling freely from her eyes.

Well it's not a joke either.

"I'm sorry Zama."

I can't even look her in the eyes.

She screams and I hold her.

I don't know what else to do.

"Ndumiso no! Take those words back! My sister is okay. She's fine! She's happy. She's alive! She's alive!" Zama

She can't stop shaking.

What the fuck is going on?

38

Zama:

I'm dreaming.

I'll wake up.

I'm dreaming.

It's a nightmare. A long. Terrible nightmare. When I get home she's going to run to me and take Khaya. She's going to tell me how she also wants to fall in love with a good man like her bhut' Ndu.

She's going to smile that warm smile exposing the family dimples so perfectly.

She's going to tell me about her science stuff that I never understood and she's going to tell me how she will study at Wits. Her loud husky voice will fill the room. She sounded like Nomalanga more and more every day.

My sister is not gone.

It can't be.

I haven't been saying much to Ndu or taking care of my son like I should.

I haven't been moving much at all.

I reach for my phone.

Ndu's eyes are on me and I don't care.

I finally open my WhatsApp and messages flood in.

I search her name and find her contact.

I open the unread message.

"Sisi I heard my baby is here. I can't wait to see him and you, get better soon nkosazane kababa. I love you." The text reads.

I can't stop myself from the loud cry I let out.

I read the one above it

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"Sooooo Mama said yes to me visiting to look for a sorority to join!"

My eyes get wet again.

Nobuhle. What will MaNdosi be without you? Her first baby.

The love of her life. Her best friend.

Who's going to take Tiisetso's side even when he's being a naughty boy?

Who's going to make us all feel good and tell us she looks up to us as her sisters?

Who's going to do stupid prank calls with Nomalanga pretending to be each other?

Who's going to take care of Nosigcino in that school full of snobs?

I just can't believe you're gone sisi.

It's like I'm going to see you.

The car drives into the gate and my tears are still falling freely.

Journalists are here.

Why? They didn't care about my sister before this.

Why are they here to profit from our pain.

I feel myself get angry.

The car parks and I'm first out.

I run inside ignoring everyone who calls my name.

I run upstairs and all the way to the wing with her bedroom.

I get to her room and open the door.

My eyes land on the pictures on her wall that her mother complained about all the time.

It's pictures of her and every family member all over. She knew all our birthdays and would be first to send midnight texts.

I look at her picture with me. It's already three years old and I still remember that day. She came into my room and said she wanted to make a scrapbook.

Little did I know it would become Ma's worst nightmare. A scrapwall.

I look at her school uniform, torn and folded on the bed.

I take it and stretch it out.

Who shoots at a child? I hug it tightly and the waterfall in my eyes keeps flowing. I sit on the floor.

I feel arms around me.

It's Nomalanga.

"Sisi why would anyone want to hurt them?"

"I don't know. I don't know Zama. Gcino is broken. We all are. Ma hasn't eaten in days. Baba is a walking corpse." Lango.

"I don't want her to be gone Lango."

My heart breaks as I even utter those words.

We both sob.

"No one wants that sisi. No one." Lango.

"Lango I need her. She was supposed to come to Joburg to look for a sorority house."

"She was supposed to help me prank Connor with a call."
Lango.

"She was excited to meet my son."

"I miss her laugh." Lango.

"Because it sounded like yours."

We chuckle a bit.

"Nomalanga I don't want to bury her. I don't want to do it. I won't do it. She should be here."

My voice is breaking.

We cry together and honestly I'm getting a headache.

39

Ndu:

Her room has been changed for us to use and it even has a crib for Khaya.

I last saw her when she ran inside the house.

It's been two hours.

I've been taking care of Khaya for all this time.

He's fallen asleep in my arms and I put him down.

"Mama will be with us boy. She's just going through a lot."

I kiss his forehead and I leave him in our room.

I need to find Zama.

Lango walks to me.

"Hey Ndu." Lango.

"Hey"

"She's in Buhle's room. I'll go get her." Lango.

I guess she can tell I'm worried.

"Okay thanks."

I walk back to the room.

A few minute later she walks in looking like a wreck.

"Hey..." Zama.

She sits on the edge bed with me.

I put my arms around her and she cries again.

"She had a future. She was going to join a sorority and live in Joburg. She was supposed to meet Khaya. Ndumiso why my sister?" Zama.

I have no answer for that but I just tighten my arms around her and let her be.

We must've fallen asleep.

I wake up and call Lango to bring us something to eat. Zama will need strength. She gets up and walks to Khaya's crib.

"I wonder who got this done." Zama.

"Probably one of your mothers."

"He's beautiful. Looks like you." Zama.

"A me with your light skin."

"I wish he was dark." Zama.

"Why?"

"I like your skin better. But I'm still happy to be represented."
Zama.

"He's beautiful as he is."

"I know. He's gorgeous." Zama.

"Thank you for him."

"Well you know I didn't mean to bring him so early but I guess he's God's plan." Zama.

"That he is."

We hear a knock and I go open.

It's Lango with some food.

"Thanks MaNgxabi."

"No problem. Mam Mthembu wants you to call her sis." Lango.

"What did you say to her?" Zama.

"Nothing. You know she has spies in this house." Lango.

"She's such a mom. Tell aunty I'll call asap." Zama.

"Okay. Enjoy guys." Lango.

She gives me the tray with food and walks out.

Khaya starts crying and Zama picks him up and checks his diaper.

Then she goes to the bathroom with the baby bag. When they come back in he's latching on her boob and halfway back to sleep.

"Dirty diaper." Zama.

She sits on the couch below the bed and has her food.

Thank God she's eating.

"Stop staring." Zama.

"I'm looking at my favorite people."

She smiles faintly and keeps eating.

40

Zama:

Gcino just arrived with the Mthembu's. It was so hard seeing her like that. Her left leg is in a cast and her face has minor bruises we were told would heal.

She got shot on her arm but luckily it's a flesh wound.

Her eyes are red and swollen.

I can't even think how painful this is to her and Thabang. They were closer to Buhle.

Speaking of Thabang, I'm not sure if he can even cry. He's just angry and with red eyes too. That boy has had issues with expressing himself for the longest time, I'm hoping he'll be okay and able to just react in a way other than anger.

MaCele is sitting on that mattress and crying. She's been doing that since finding out. Bhut Khule is making sure she gets food and water so she doesn't faint or get sick. She looks like a corpse herself. It became even worse when she saw Gcino. She couldn't stop crying and saying how she almost lost both her daughters.

It's sad. I'm sad. My dad's not even talking much. I've seen him hurt many times and lose his unborn son's and lost his brother but it's never been like this.

I don't even know who to be there for.

Heck, I need someone to be there for me.

Well I have Ndu and my son. I'm lucky.

My twin sister is coming on Saturday because of something at Theo's family that they had to go to Lesotho for.

The funeral is on Saturday and it's Thursday today.

Everything is set. Dad already picked where her grave will be, next to Sibongakonke's. Which I'm sure will evoke memories and hurt to MaVezi, Sibongakonke was her son. Stillborn.

Hurt in this family is a constant thing. A curse.

"Princess

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your husband is waiting for you in your room." Lango.

"Princess, where is Connor?"

"He's not my husband so he can't be here, but he's close by."

"When is he marrying you?"

"I don't know. I want to get married though."

"I'm sure he'll do it soon."

"Come let's go, Ndu awaits."

I take her hand and she walks me to my room.

I can't believe we once felt like this about her. We thought she was dead. I wish this was the same thing. I wish Buhle would make it back to us.

We pass by Gcino's room and she's there with Daniella being sad.

This is all too depressing.

I get to my room and Ndu and Khaya are sleeping in bed.

"If I get up he wakes up so I'm pretending to be asleep." Ndu whispers.

I want to laugh, but I suppress it.

"Then why did you guys call me?"

"He wasn't sleeping." He whispers again.

"How long are you going to keep that up?"

"Till he doesn't fidget when I lift my head." Ndu.

"Try it now. He looks fast asleep."

Ndu slowly lifts his head and Khaya doesn't move.

He eventually gets up from the bed and comes to hug me.

Unexpected but I put my hands around his neck and lay my head on his chest.

"You're going to be okay Zama." Ndu.

I believe it.

I really do.

Ndu:

Today is the Saturday of the funeral and I think Zama is being slow on purpose.

Khaya and I are dressed and ready.

Someone knocks on the door.

"It's Ntombi." She's on the other side.

Zama smiles and nods. I open the door and Ntombi smiles and takes Khaya.

"Hello my baby. Hello boy! You're so cute!" Ntombi.

"Wow."

"Sorry, hey Ndu. Where's the other me?" Ntombi.

Come in.

Zama walks to her sister and hugs her.

My poor soon will think he's seeing double.

I give them space to talk and catch up.

A few minutes later we walk downstairs to the tent outside.

Seeing the coffin there just makes it all so real. Zama lost her little sister.

I can't even imagine losing mine. I understand why she's crying so much and I must be there for her.

We left Khaya with the house help because we didn't want the press even getting a glimpse of him.

Yes they're not allowed inside the gate but people would do anything for money.

This is why only family and close friends are allowed inside the Royal house.

MaCele is tired and looks distraught.

Everyone really.

Some of her classmates are here and it's so sad looking at them in their uniform thinking how Buhle used to wear the same thing and was just another school girl a few days ago.

I have Zama in my arms and trying to be her strength.

41

Zama:

Being back in Joburg makes things slightly easier for me. Ndu and I got back tonight and I honestly can't say I even saw much of the funeral because I can't recall. I fainted during the whole thing and so did my twin sister. Weird sometimes how what happens to me, happens to her.

She gained a bit of weight after having Tiisetso and I was smaller, then after having Khaya I've gained and we're back to looking like the same person.

I miss Buhle. I wish she could've at least seen her nephew

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but I guess it's God's plan.

I don't want to question God but I do wish I could change things. Take her position in an instant, but I can't.

"Stop drifting off." Ndu.

"Hey..."

"Are you better?" Ndu.

He looks concerned.

"Yeah."

"Okay come eat. Khaya is literally milking you dry." Ndu.

I smile faintly and get up.

He holds my hand and we walk downstairs.

"Ma said to make you soft porridge and that's exactly what you're getting." Ndu.

"Thank you babe. Powder milk?"

"You forget I know you." Ndu.

I smile and dig in.

"Mhm it's not raw."

"Wow! I'm hurt MaNgxabi." Ndu.

I laugh.

"I missed your laugh." Ndu.

I look at him.

"Thank you. For being by my side during this time."

"Khaya actually persuaded me to." Ndu.

I laugh again. Mxm.

"But really, you are our world. Of course we'll be by your side through anything." Ndu.

"My family couldn't even be excited for him."

"They were it's just... Well they were also hurt." Ndu.

I know. I was too. I am actually.

"Besides he wasn't supposed to be out of the house yet."

"True. We'll take him back in a couple of months. After the ceremony we'll have at home." Ndu.

"Okay baby."

"When last did you speak to Dee and Minnie?" Ndu.

"I haven't really checked my phone."

"They're worried sick. You aren't picking up your phone." Ndu.

"I'll call them."

I'm lying.

I can't speak to them. I'll break down and cry again. I did that a lot already.

"Okay I'll remind you." Ndu.

I forget he knows me like the back of his hand.

I smile and look at him.

"Aren't you working?"

"I'm a new dad. Of course not." Ndu.

We hear Khaya scream through the monitor.

"Can't he cry? Why the screams?" Ndu.

I laugh.

"You're a new dad akere? Please bring him babe. I'll breastfeed from here."

"Okay babe." Ndu.

He dashes upstairs to fetch his screaming child.

When he walks downstairs Khaya isn't crying.

"He fell asleep again." Ndu whispers.

"Maybe it's being in motion." I whisper back.

"Well it's feeding time anyway." Ndu.

"Yeah. The nurse was annoying enough about a schedule." Ndu.

"She spoke like we're murderers taking her baby away."

"She had reason to worry though." Ndu.

I roll my eyes. There are many first time parents.

"I didn't mention it before but... Rhulani and Ayanda lost a baby." Ndu.

"What?!"

I did not know of this.

"I know. I was just as shocked too." Ndu.

"They must be devastated. Poor Rhu."

"Yeah I don't even know how to be there for them." Ndu.

"I doubt we can. I really do. Just be there when he needs to talk and stuff."

People grieve in different ways. They probably don't need us hovering over them. They get that enough with each other. I'm talking from experience.

"Yeah hey. Here you go." Ndu.

He gives me his big headed son. My big headed son. Our. Our big headed son. He's gorgeous.

42

FINALE:

ONE YEAR LATER

Zama:

Ndu can be so annoying man. I want to leave but no. He must see his daughter on the screen before we can go. He's obsessed with her. Khaya is too young to understand but he giggles and watches with his father. Yes, I'm pregnant again and the 3D ultrasound is all Ndu watches.

We finally left and got to the wedding just before it began. Ndu ditches me for the fathers and sons club. Well it's just Lungelo, Sam, Sandile plus him with their sons. They call themselves that when they're together. I go to the ladies.

"Looking beautiful mama bear." Minnie.

We're literally pregnant at the same time. My estimated delivery date is only two days after hers.

"You look amazeballs. All of you guys."

"Thanks beautiful." Dee.

"Are they really getting married for the second time? They look so happy." Jane.

Jane is new. Well Lungelo and Nandi broke up then he met Jane, the mother of his son Kyle. She's a beautiful blonde who just fell for him when he was representing her in her fight for her father's estate.

"Yeah. Their traditional one was last year, then Koketso took a year to plan this white one and boy is it spectacular!"

"Lungelo and I were just starting out then. Oh how time flies."
Jane.

Part of me does feel guilty about Nandi but we've tried reaching out. She just doesn't want anything to do with us.

"It's starting!" Dee.

"Who would've imagined our gay Thuto wasn't gay." Minnie.

"You say this everytime we're with him and Koki."

"I'll never stop." Minnie.

We chuckle and fix our focus on the pretty little flower girl throwing the petals on the floor and stopping halfway to smile at her mother

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Koki's sister.

The wedding was beautiful and now we're sitting next to our partners at the reception hall.

"They're an awesome couple." Sam.

"I can't wait till Thuto joins the Dads Club." Ndu.

"They're not rushing children. I hope. I love Lonhle but he's now two and I understand why people say it's the terrible twos."
Dee.

"Okay I'd say our son is an angel." Sandile.

"An angel who crawls into cupboards and sleeps there." Dee.

"I can't believe Khaya is going there. He's been such a good boy. Except for the crying a lot."

"We're really mothers and fathers." Lungelo.

"And I was so scared when I found out." Jane.

"Just plan our wedding, maybe I can make it up to you."
Lungelo.

"What?" Jane.

Is he proposing?

He stands and gets on one knee.

OMG!!

"In my tradition, there's no engagement ring. In yours, there is. I decided to let you have what you've probably always imagined. Jane DuPlesis, will you make me the happiest man in the world and marry me?" Lungelo.

She just kisses him and hugs him tightly before nodding.

I look up and see Nandi by the entrance. She's looking directly at the scene of the proposal. She drops her eyes and walks out. I want to walk out and follow her but I no one else saw that and it would look shady of me. I make a mental note to call her later. That must've hurt.

After getting to speak to Thuto and Koki we left and went back home. Ndu's daughter made me so tired. I call Nandi as soon as I put down Khaya who hanged out with his father only the whole day.

Luckily she picks up.

"Zama."

"Hunandi. How are you?"

"As well as can be expected. I lost the love of my life Zama."

"I'm sorry girl. I'm here for you though. We all are."

"I know. I chose to leave you guys when things fell apart between me and Lungelo. I'm sorry."

"It's okay girl."

"I'll call Dee to apologise to her too. Then I'm leaving."

"Where are you going though?"

"I don't know yet. Just know it was never you guys. I changed."

"You don't have to go though Nandi."

"I do. I love you."

With that she gets off the call and I have a feeling I won't see her again. I just hope she's not suicidal. Wait... What if she is?

Ndu

I will not lie, being married has been the best thing ever. I don't even imagine cheating on her though a few temptresses have made their moves. She loves me and I love her. We both love Khaya and our baby girl who's on the way. I can't complain much really. This life thing has been going quite well.

I think Nondu is in love. I never imagined that but here it is my cousin is with someone and serious about him. The man is a bit older but hey, I don't judge. My brother... Well Rhulani is still Rhulani. He is being driven crazy by Ayanda and to be honest I think they're the perfect match. Zama and I are going to see them soon before the baby girl arrives.

"Dude I now understand why you married Zama almost immediately. There's just this unexplainable thing when you meet the one." Lungelo.

"I also married Dee." Sandile.

"Not immediately you idiot."

"Oh... Right. Still though." Sandile.

"Zama spoke to Nandi yesterday. Turns out she saw the proposal."

"Yeah she called me with an apology and congratulations before saying she's leaving. I hope she didn't kill herself."
Lungelo.

"Things did get rough in the end with her but no one wishes her any bad." Sandile.

We chat some more till we decide to leave the bar and I drive straight home with doughnuts and plain yoghurt. Zama's cravings.

I find her in the shower so I undress and slip inside.

"What did I say about showering? You use the tub MaNgubo."

She lays her head on my chest pushing her behind towards me.
I know what this means.

She moans as soon as I thrust inside. Damn she's so hot and tight.

"I love you." She whispers as I go in deeper.

"I love you too." I whisper back before taking myself out and slamming on to her again.

.....**The End**.....

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