



For daily latest books please visit <https://novelsguru.com/>

And also visit my Facebook page, and like and share it

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623>

Thank you guys for downloading this book from my site please keep visiting <https://novelsguru.com/> for supporting me and also don't forget to share it with your friends.

Dear Friends please download these books direct from <https://novelsguru.com/> bookmark this site for latest African books, and also supporting me Thanks.

## **Holding On by Mrs-Sir**

### **Prologue**

Most people say that life is unpredictable, unfair, and most certainly not for the faint-hearted. We go through life asking ourselves: “what could I have done better?”, “what could I have done differently?”, “what should I do?”. Life is just a constant journey of uncertainty, endless decision-making and a lot of “I wish...” and “I wonder...”. For most people, the path that has been paved for them is not of their choosing but is of the consequences of those who came before them. We often battle with trying to pull away from these predetermined paths but with the load that we carry: family demands, our personal demons, pressures of society and expectations, we are in a constant state of tug of war with ourselves and with those around us.

One of those people who had to struggle and endure throughout their life was Nomzamo. Nomzamo, 9 years old,

daughter of Makhosandile (32) and Zandile Mcunu (30) who was raised in a small village just outside of eNgcobo with her four siblings Thandiwe (7), Mpumelelo (5), Anga (3) and Inga (1). Nomzamo's family was considered wealthy back in the day as her father battered livestock to cater for the needs of the household. By profession, Makhosandile was a pastor and Zandile was a teacher - professions that most people once aspired to. Her father made sure that they went to the best schools that money could afford. Despite the social stance bestowed upon him by his fellow villagers, a noble and reputable villager, which he hated by the way since wealth automatically afforded one these traits and a higher position in the societal hierarchy, Nomzamo's father was a humble, loving husband and father who was a huge advocate of unity within the family and as a result, he often organized family gatherings to bring all the members together.

Based on the conversations that Nomzamo had with her father regarding their future and how excited he was to be part of their journeys, Nomzamo never thought they would lose him so unexpectedly. After her 9<sup>th</sup> birthday, Nomzamo's father fell sick and was taken to various doctors, but the doctors were unable to diagnose or treat him. Subsequently, her father lost the battle and passed away after a short period of fighting his undiagnosable illness. Nomzamo's mother had now become a widow at a young age, which required her to have strength for

her to be able to continue taking care of her family just as her husband had done throughout their lives.

Hopeful, Nomzamo's mother drew her strength from knowing that her in-laws were a loving and supportive family, that they would be there for her and her family during their time of need... little did she know. Soon after her father's funeral, Nomzamo's uncles ripped them off of all their father's fortune, leaving them to fend for themselves. The greedy bunch wanted to go as far as kicking them out of their home however her mother fought tooth and nail to ensure that they were not without a roof over their heads. Reminiscing on the conversations that she'd had with her father, Nomzamo knew that as the eldest, she had to be strong for her mother and her siblings and not focus on the cruelty that had just befallen her family, but rather focus on ensuring that the dream that her father had for them is accomplished.

Follow me as I take you through Nomzamo's life journey on how she overcame the wound that her father's family had inflicted on her; how she continued to persevere even though the odds kept piling up against her. Buckle up as we will laugh, cry, hate and love all at the same time. I hope that Nomzamo's journey will show you how paths paved before us do not have to be all that we are.

20 YEARS LATER

## Chapter 1

### *\*Alarm ringing\**

Damn it, I'm late. Mr Phakade is going to kill me. I snoozed this alarm once, right? Once being 'ring again in 10 minutes', right? How am I 30 minutes late then? The time is 07:15 now and I must rush through my hygiene process if I have to make it on time to work. I aggressively shove the blankets away from me and jump out of the bed with my feet making contact with the cold tiles in my bedroom reminding me just how brutal winter is. I run towards the bathroom while I take off and drop my pyjamas along the way; my mother would be so disappointed at the pig that I have become but honestly there's no time for order right now as I must make it to work by 08:00. Perhaps I can call Thulani, my colleague and ask him to pick me up on his way to work as he lives within the same vicinity as I, but should he agree to pick me I may not be ready by the time he gets to my apartment. I guess I must just hurry up and make sure that I make it on time.

I rampage through my bathroom sink looking for my toothbrush and toothpaste and once I find them, I aggressively start brushing my teeth with the hopes that I would have to do the back-and-forth movement too many times. I finish brushing my teeth and take a quick shower by just lathering the shower sponge with shower gel and run it briefly over throughout my

body. This quick process doesn't guarantee cleanliness, it only guarantees that I smell like water and soap; the rest I'll figure out when I come back from work. I close the shower faucet, stepping out the shower while I wipe myself dry. I apply face cream to my face, apply some body lotion to my body, use some deodorant for my under arms, and roughly run my afro comb through my hair after which I wear my undergarments. I did not prepare any clothing yesterday for today because I was too busy catching up on the most recent episodes of National Geographic, and yes, I'm one of those boring individuals that would rather watch nature-oriented TV shows than watch romantic comedy series or movies. I suppose my love for nature and animals stems from growing up in a village and in a household where we had livestock that I used to help herd... oh how I miss those good old days.

The pinging sound from my phone, indicating that I have just received a message, snaps me out of my train of thoughts and I find myself rushing toward it with the hopes that it's Thulani saying he will pick me up. Unfortunately for me it's my younger brother, Inga (21), reminding me that I need to send him money for his school trip for next week. Inga is currently studying Law at Wits and the university has organised a trip for the students to go spend a day at the Constitutional Court as part of their curriculum. Where will I even get this money? I'm flat broke and I don't want to deplete my savings as that money

will be used to help my mother out during the December holidays and I'll also use it for Inga's registration fees next year as he currently does not have a bursary. I set a reminder on my phone to get back to him or rather send him his money as I don't have time to respond right now. When done, I dash towards my closet and grab the nearest dress that I can find that will not require me to do any ironing. I opt for a long sleeved black woven turtleneck dress that hangs just below the knees, and I pair it with a pair of mid-level heeled black ankle boots while spritzing some perfume on my neck and wrists.

The time now reads 07:38 and I have 22 minutes to get to school. Oh

Advertisement

I almost forgot to mention that I am an educator at eTembeni Primary Senior School teaching grade 10-12 Geography and Biography and yes, I followed in my mother's footsteps. I dash towards the lounge and grab my apartment keys, purse, and rush out the door not forgetting to lock it behind me. I take a brisk walk towards the taxi stop, which is almost 5 minutes away from my apartment, to catch a taxi with the hopes that when I get there the taxi will be almost full and ready to leave. To my luck, I get to the stop and find a taxi that is short of one passenger, me, ready to depart. I jump in, closing the door behind me and sitting right behind the passenger seat. My



laboured breathing is a clear indication that I was walking fast, close to jogging even. I really need to do something about my health. The school is not that far when you drive, it is almost 10 minutes away from my apartment. I make it to the school gates by 07:56, I jump off the taxi and dash towards my classroom. Fortunately, these rascals are still making their way to the classroom which gives me enough time to pack away my purse and quickly prepare for today's lesson.

The rest of the day proceeds rather smoothly, considering how rushed I was this morning, and soon it is time to knock off. I can't wait to get home and take off these clothes, especially this bra. I just want to relax in front of the TV and watch a few episodes of National Geographic while stuffing my face with chips. The blaring sound from my phone snaps me out of my daydreaming; it's the reminder I had set in the morning regarding Inga's school excursion money. Without having found an alternative solution of where I could get his money from, I am left with no option but to dip into my savings and send him the money. I don't want to burden my mom with this as she is already taking care of a lot. I grumpily pack my bag, walk out of the school premises and head towards the taxi rank to catch a taxi to town to deposit Inga's money at the bank.

Upon arrival, I observe that the queue for making deposits is not that long meaning I could be out of here soon but upon

further investigation I find that there is only one teller working... great, just great! Andilambe ngeloxesha ndingatya umntu (*I'm so hungry I could eat a whole person*). I am beyond exhausted, and this queue is moving at a snail's pace. There is no way I'm cooking when I get home, I will just have to have tea and bread. Ten years later, just kidding, I finally got assistance depositing Inga's money. I send Inga a message before I exit the bank informing him that I'd sent him the funds and that he must use them wisely. After sending him the text I shove the phone in my purse and proceed to walk towards the exit of the bank. On my way out I bump into a wall...a wall? A warm wall at that... or is it? Oh no, it's a chest.

## Chapter 2

I stumble backward grabbing everything and anything that I possibly can to prevent myself from falling. The 'chest' quickly rushes towards me and lays his hands on the lower of my back and breaks my fall. I freeze for a bit because firstly, I'm still waiting to feel my body land solid on the ground and secondly... who is he again to hold me like this? Anyway, he pulls me toward him but continues to leave his hand at the lower of my back and murmurs "sorry sisi, uright?" (*Sorry miss, are you okay?*) I look up to see the face of this mellifluous voice and I'll be damned... Yho umhle lobhuti! (*This man is handsome*) His eyebrows are sculptured to perfection, better than mine if I may say so myself, his eyes are hazel brown and are so captivating. Hai no uThixo (*No God*) is so unfair, how can He allow for such creatures to exist amongst us? I get disturbed from my staring and train of thought when he coughs and raises his right brow as somewhat of an indication that he is still waiting for a response from me. In my response to his gesture, I find myself mumbling "ewe bhuti ndiright." (*Yes sir, I am fine*) ... and then? What happened to my voice? Yehake Nomzamo! (*yehake is an exclamatory remark like saying 'wow'*) The 'chest' continues to stare at me as if he is trying to determine whether

I am being truthful in my response or not. I start fidgeting with my fingers and feel even more uneasy under his gaze because undijongele ntoni? (*What is he looking at me for?*) I decide to interrupt the moment and shove him out of my way because he is being weird right now and uyandilibazisa. (*He is delaying me*) Umhle yena ubhuti yes (*he's handsome*) and is worthy of being stared at the entire day, no lies detected there but andizelanga lonto apha! (*I am not here for any of that*) I need to head home!

The rest of the week is rather uneventful although the 'chest' keeps popping up on my mind rent free. Labhuti (*that man*) is handsome yho (*wow*). Although I did not get enough time to analyze every part of his body during our 'encounter' because I was too awestruck to move my eyes below his chest... oh that chest, I could still tell that umhle man (*he is handsome*). The next day, I wake up with a banging headache which I do not normally get, my nose is blocked, my eyes are painful, and they have a burning sensation, it's as though they have sand particles inside. I know I won't be able to function properly when I am this sick and there is no way I am going to be able to teach a class of rowdy grade 10s and 11s in this condition. I call Mr Phakade and inform him that I will not be able to make it to work as I am not feeling well. Being the diplomatic person that

he is, he encourages me to take the day off, and go consult with a doctor and nurture myself back to health. After speaking to Mr Phakade, I call my doctor, Doctor Ndamase, and schedule an appointment for 10:00 and fortunately he has a gap in his diary to see me.

After scheduling my doctor's appointment, I lazily drag my body out of my bed and make my way towards the bathroom to take a shower. After completing my hygiene process, I choose to wear a white long-sleeved vest with my grey tracksuit, warm socks, my black Nike Air Force one sneakers and I complete my look by wrapping a woven scarf around my neck just to keep the winter breeze out. With the knowledge that I will probably be given medication at the practice before I leave, I know that I have to eat something before I head out. The one thing that sucks about being sick with flu is that your taste buds are never fully functional which means your appetite levels are also reduced. I force myself to drink a cup of mushroom instant soup just to elevate my sugar levels and keep warm. Once done with slurping my soup, because honestly that is how I was having it, I make my way out of the apartment to the doctor's practice.

The taxi drops me off at the corner and I sluggishly make my way up the street. If I had money, I would have called a cab to pick me up but the way my finances are set up this month, and'kwazi nothini. (*I can't do anything*) Upon arrival at the doctor's surgery, I am welcomed by a lovely middle-aged woman, who looks like she bathes in milk, yho! (*Wow*) She has the most beautiful smile and perfectly aligned teeth, her English is that of kids who have gone to private school, siphuma ngempumlo sana. (*She is so well spoken*) I am asked to confirm my details and the time of my appointment, and once all the necessary protocol has been observed I am asked to wait for the doctor in the waiting area. I don't necessarily like nor enjoy this waiting part much because it means that ngoku ndizofriva izitulo zalapha ngempundu zam (*now I will have to wipe down the chairs of this place with my bums, wow*). A short while later, I hear a male voice that I can recall even in my sleep calling out "Nomzamo Mcunu?" I raise my head to the direction of the authoritative voice to confirm its owner and I am not wrong as it really is Doctor Ndamase's voice. This man has been my doctor ever since I've lived eNgcobo and because I am a sickling, which we will not dwell into right now, you can imagine how many times this man has seen my face. I respond

to his call out with a “yes” while getting up from the chair that I was sitting on, following him to the consultation room.

He allows me to enter first, what a gentleman, and closes the door behind me. He takes a few steps towards his seat and opens my file before he says, “good morning, Miss Mcunu, what brings you in today?”

Me:                    Good morning doc, I’m not feeling too well this morning.

Him:                  What seems to be the matter?

Me:                    I have an excruciating headache, my nose is blocked, my throat is sore, I feel a bit weak, and I also do not have much of an appetite.

Him:                  Since when have you been feeling this way?

Me:                    I woke up feeling this way this morning.

Him:                  Okay. Are there any other symptoms that you are experiencing?

Advertisement

serif;">Me: I feel a little bit nauseated as well, but I guess that could be due to my lack of appetite although I did drink a cup of soup before I came here.

Him: Okay Miss Mcunu, could you please move the observation bed so that I can check your vitals. If you could please take off your tracksuit top and slightly shift your beanie above your ears as well that would be great.

I stand up and remove my beanie and tracksuit top and make my way towards the observation bed, sitting on it. He walks towards me and inserts the thermometer under my tongue, thereafter, takes my right arm inserting the sphygmomanometer to set it to read my pressure. He moves from my right hand and walks to stand behind me and places the stethoscope on my back, where the lungs are situated, and asks me to breathe in and out. I comply and he keeps shifting the utensil throughout my back while I keep repeating the process. As soon as he is done with his assessment on my back, he proceeds to my chest, and we go through the same procedure all over again. Once done with that, he picks up an otoscope and checks both my ears and mouth and mentions that it seems like I have some swelling in one of them. He walks



back to his desk leaving me behind while I get off the observation bed to get dressed again.

Him:           Your temperature doesn't seem too high, it's currently 38.7 degrees and your blood pressure seem to be fine as well, it's sitting at 120/80. It does seem as though you have an infection which has caused a mild case of bronchitis. I will prescribe some antibiotics for you which you will need to take for a week. Please finish the course as this is very important in your recovery. I will also prescribe you some pain medication for the headaches and some lozenges to soothe the scratchy throat.

Me:            Thank you doc.

Him:           I presume I will need me to write a sick note for you as well, correct?

Me:            Yes.

Him:           Okay. I will book you off just for today and hopefully by Monday you will have recovered. Should you not feel better by Sunday, please come back to see me.

Me:            Perfect. Thank you once again Doctor Ndamase.

I stand up and collect my prescription and sick note from him and head out of the consultation room. Next stop, the pharmacy. I am famished but I must wait until I get back home to eat something. In a jiffy, I am done collecting my medication, which I was required to co-pay R120 for by the way... medical aids are a scam guys, honestly. Between me and poverty I only have R50 and pay day is only next Tuesday, so I still need to have a solid survival plan until then. Anyways, it doesn't take long and I'm already home. The first thing I do when I arrive is go to the kitchen to boil some water to make my tea while I make myself a tomato and cheese sandwich. The kettle boils and I prepare my cup of tea after which I grab my sandwich and make my way to the lounge to watch my favourite show, of course.

I've just finished eating, about to get up from the couch with the intention of going to take my medication from the kitchen and the power goes off. Shit! I know ayiyo (*it's not*) load shedding because I did not get a notification on the Eskom push app alerting me. Oh Thixo wam, uphelele lombane (*Oh my God, the electricity is finished*) I don't have strength to walk to the

garage right now so I decide that since I am warm and fed, I will take a nap after I take my medication. I stand up from the couch and head to the kitchen, dropping the dishes inside the sink and taking my purse from the kitchen counter heading towards the bedroom. I change from my tracksuit to a very warm onesie, and it's lights out for me immediately when my head hits the pillow.

The buzzing sound of my phone disturbs me from my peaceful sleep, and I am tempted to ignore it. The phone stops buzzing after a while, and I thank the Gods that be that the caller got the message uba andifun'uthetha namntu (*that I don't want to speak to anyone*). To my misfortune, my phone starts buzzing again and I annoyingly answer it without looking at the screen "hello?" Someone on the other end of the line responds by saying "Mhumhu?" Only my mom calls me by that nickname.

Me: Ma?

Mom: Ewe nono ndim. Kutheni ingathi ulele nje? (*Yes, baby it's me. Why does it sound like you are asleep?*)

Me: Ewe mama bendilele, ndine fever. (*Yes mama I was asleep, I have the flu.*)

Her: Oh, uxolo baby I hope uyile kwagqirha? (*You went to the doctor?*)

Me: Ewe mama ndiyile and uye wandinika amayeza that I took when I arrived home yilonto unfifumana ndisalele. (*Yes mama I did go and see him, and he prescribe medication for me...that is why I am still asleep*)

Her: I am glad to hear that you are taking care of yourself my baby. Zamo, sinengxaki man apha (*We have a problem here*)

I jerk up from my sleeping position and sit up straight.

Whenever my mom calls to report a problem it's never small nor is it ever easy to resolve. Yazi kwenzeke ntoni ngoku? (*I wonder what happened now*) ... sigh

Me: Ewe mama? (*Yes mom?*)

Her: Your brother, uAnga, got into a fight last night at some bar where he was out drinking with his friends, and he got badly injured. He is currently in hospital and needs an emergency procedure as one of his ribs is pressed against his lungs which is limiting his breathing capabilities. The doctors say they need to operate on him soon before his situation worsens

Me: Haibo mama! Yintoni ngoku le undixelela yona? (*My goodness mama! What are you telling me now?*)

Her: Injalo mhumhu. (*It's like that*) I don't know what possessed your brother to partake in bar fights, knowing fully well that he could get injured, and possibly die! And on top of that, he knows how much we struggle ngoku (*now*) we must cough up R20 000 for this procedure of his because the medical doesn't cover all its expenses and the doctors will not operate on him until lemali siyibhatale (*we pay*)

I think I just went deaf there for a second... Did my mother just say R20 000? Like *i20-thaw*? Haibo! (*Goodness me*)  
Ndizoyithathaphi lomali nkos'yam? (*Where will I get such money?*)

Yho, iingxaki zam azipheli honestly. (*My problems are never ending*)

## Chapter 3

Honestly, I am so tired of these never ending problems. If it's not this, it's that and they all require an extensive amount of money. I'm not sure whether the problems that I face are also problems that other adults face too or whether these are just problems that my kind face; my kind being the first-born children of a family, individuals raised in single parent households or individuals that have responsibilities that they take care of back home. Please do not get me wrong, I am not complaining or anything like that, and neither am I saying I do not want to assist my mother but when will I ever catch a break? Kucacile uba umntu uyofela enkomeni (*it's clear that a person will always struggle*). After being stuck in my mind for a second, I remember that my mother is still on the line and decide to enquire further about this Anga/R20 000 saga from her

Me: R20 000 mama?

Mom: Ewe Nono, and they need it before the proceed with Anga's procedure

Me: Yho (wow) mama this is a lot of money. Where are we going to get it?

Mom: Ei andiyazi nam sis kodwa (*I also don't know but*) uAnga needs this procedure done, and soon or else he will suffer and face further complications.

My phone starts beeping and I move it away from my ear to see why it's doing so. I look at it and see that it's beeping because the battery is flat, it is currently on 10%. That just reminds me that akho mbane kulendlu (*there is no electricity in this apartment*); yet another problem.

Me: Mama ibattery yale phone iflat and izocima (*the battery of this phone is low, and it will switch off*) very soon. I will take a taxi to Port Elizabeth tomorrow so that we can see uba senza njani ngalemeko kaAnga. (*How we will resolve Anga's issue*)

Mom: Oh, Nono ingabe usincedile sisi. Uyayazi kaloku ukuba ulithemba lam sana lwam (*Oh nono, you have helped us a great deal. You know that you are my only hope baby*)

Me: Okay ke mama, I will call you in the morning tomorrow before I leave

Mom: Okay ke sisi. Ungalibali ukusela amayeza akho later. (*Don't forget to take your medication*)

Me: Asoze mama. (*I won't*). Okay ke sharp sisi

Just when I drop the call my phone's battery dies... *sigh*. My phone is just another pandemic nje on its own nje yazi. (*You know*) I still have an old J5 Samsung with a screen protector

that is no longer clear but grey and a cracked screen. The camera stopped working years ago and this is because I am a clumsy, messy individual who constantly drops things, like my phone. I wander my eyes around my room and my eyes land on the window and I can see from the sun's position that it's already late in the afternoon. I must go to the garage to purchase electricity before it gets even darker outside. I contemplate purchasing my electricity when I get back from home, but I end up reconsidering the option when I realise that with my phone's battery dead and with Anga in hospital, I need to always be available in case the doctors or my mother need me. In addition to that, I take into consideration what I would be able to eat for supper as I can't afford to order in. After reaching my decision to go to the garage, I drag my body out of my bed and change from my onesie back into the tracksuit that I was wearing when I went to the doctor earlier. I peruse through my purse to find my wallet and take out R100, this should afford me with enough electricity to last me till payday, next week Tuesday.

I walk out of my apartment and head towards the garage. In no time, I am standing in front of the cashier ready to make my purchase. I inform the cashier that I am here to purchase R100 worth of electricity and after which I hand him the paper with my meter box number. While he is busy punching my meter number on the till, I notice that he keeps throwing glances at



me which at first I assume are meant for somebody else but when he continues with this act, I decide to confront him about his shady shenanigans

Me: Sorry bhuti (*brother*), ndingakunceda? (*May I help you?*)

Him: Hayi sisi, akho nxaki (*no sister, there is no problem*)

Me: Then why do you keep looking at me like that?

Him: Hai sisi akhonto imbi (*no my sister, there is nothing wrong*) it's just that I am a very observant person and I can see that you are not okay

Me: And how can you tell that? *I say with an attitude*

Advertisement

folding my arms in the process

Him: Your hair is a mess; your eyes and nose are red, and you look like you have just woken up from sleep with all those lines on your face and I just wanted to make sure that you are okay.

I stare at this wondering if he just called me ugly or? I contemplate with myself on whether I should go off at him, releasing all my frustrations on him or if I should inform him that I am not that well? Like, ungenanphi ezintweni ze-appearance yam mm? (*How is my physical appearance of concern to him*) Ndiyagula (*I am sick*), my brother is in hospital, my mom needs R20 000 and here he is highlighting casting

judgement on my appearance, as though he is perfect. Who died and made him God mm? I do appreciate his concern but as abantu sinengxaki zethu (*people we have our own problems*) and we don't need people, especially strangers, prying into our lives.

Me: Hai but ndiright (*I am okay brother*) I just woke up from a nap hence ndinje (*that's why I am like this*)

Him: Oh, haike sisi, ndiyavuya ukuva ukuba uright (*I am glad to hear that you are okay*). A lot of women get abused right in front of our eyes and we often ignore the signs by choosing to 'mind our business' whereas a small intervention or inquiry could save someone's life. I am one of those people who are very observant, and I cannot turn a blind eye to such possible atrocities that is why I asked you uba uright na. (*Are you okay*)

I am left dumbstruck... I mean how thoughtful is he? It never occurred to me that that could have been his reasoning behind his question. Thank God I opted to be polite to him and not jump off the rails.

Me: We need more people like you in society bhut'wam (*my brother*). Thank you

Him: Ndiyabulela sis. Nanku umbane wakho (*Thank you my sister. Here is your electricity voucher*)

I take the slip and thank him once more and start away, but just as I am about to exit something tells me that I need to know the name of this mature and lovely man. I turn my head back to look at him and yell back “I’m Nomzamo by the way” and he responds “I am Vuyolwethu” ... mm Vuyolwethu neh? (*right*) He brought joy to my day. Walking out the sun is beginning to set, and the chilling winter breeze is making its presence felt. I pull the strings on the hood of my sweater even tighter and shove my hands inside my pockets and continue with my journey. I get home, walk to the electricity box, punch in the voucher and 3 seconds later, the power comes back on... makukhanye! (*Let there be light*) I decide that I will pack for my trip tonight so that I don’t have too much to do in the morning.

In the morning I wake up already dreading the day ahead of me. I must go to the bank to make a withdrawal from my savings account to contribute towards Anga’s surgery then I have to make the daunting trip to Port Elizabeth. Getting ready is a breeze and I thank myself for the decision of preparing for my journey last night. I gather my phone, purse, apartment keys and drag my suitcase heading out the door. I still feel a bit under the weather, but the medication seems to already be doing its job as I feel much better than what I did yesterday. The taxi I took to town drops me opposite the bank and I walk in with the hopes of concluding my business within the next 20 minutes. At the back of my mind, I kind of hope that I bump

into the 'chest' just so that I can stare at his face and temporarily forget about my problems. Obviously, that does not happen, which I am bummed about but then I console myself by saying 'would I even have been able to stare at that tall glass of chocolate?' ... I doubt it. Anyway, I exit the bank in 30 minutes, which is not too bad and head towards the taxi rank to catch a taxi to Port Elizabeth and luckily for me, the next taxi leaves in the next 15 minutes. Throughout the journey I am deflated and, in my thoughts, thinking about how much my efforts for the last 6 months have just gone to waste. It always seems like I take two steps forward and tens steps back. When will the struggle ever end? All my efforts have always been for the betterment of my siblings' lives. I try to pave a path for them that will not require them to work backwards but a one that will propel them even further, with no baggage or unnecessary loads. But I guess one has to bear the cross right, and that person has to be me... *sigh*

## Chapter 4

The taxi leaves at 13:23 and arrives in Port Elizabeth at 18:56, which is a bit late as I am not familiar with the area that I am going to. Before we arrived, I called my mother and informed her that I was close to Port Elizabeth and she mentioned that she had organized Anga's friend to pick me up at Greenacres Mall, where the taxi will drop me off. I hope this friend arrives soon because I do not want to stand alone in unfamiliar territory and risk being robbed and my phone's battery is flat. I arrived at Greenacres Mall and already called my mother to telling her that I had arrived. She informed me that Anga's friend was on the way and that she had given him my numbers... I wonder why she would do that now this boy, which I assume he is, has my numbers. Ai umama. I don't like strangers having my numbers, and I especially don't like, nor appreciate someone giving my numbers to someone before they check in with me, but then again this is my mother that we are talking about here. Which African parent has ever asked for consent from their children? Not uMadlamini (*clan name*). I stand next to where the meter cabs park and wander my eyes around both directions of the road hoping that one of the cars that are approaching is him; mama said his name is Siyabulela. Almost 20 minutes later of me standing next to these cabs looking like a stuck up *b!tch* because I keep refusing their services repeatedly saying "hai ndiright bhuti, ndilinde umntu"

*(I am okay brother, I am waiting for someone)* my phone rings and it's a number that I don't recognize

Me: Hello

Him: Hello sisi, ndim uSiyabulela *(it's me Siyabulela)*.

Ndisandongena ngoku eGreenacres ndikwelicala lima ibus, uphi wena? *(I just arrived at Greenacres, I'm parked by the side where the buses park, where are you?)*

Me: I am standing by the side where the cab park. I am wearing a grey tracksuit.

Him: Oh, I know which side you're referring to, let me drive to you. I am driving a blue Polo.

He hangs up soon after and I shift my gaze toward the direction where I saw buses to try and see him, well his car. Soon I see a blue Polo headed my way and collect my bags and walk toward the road so that he can easily see me. When he gets to me, he parks next to the cabs, hits the hazard lights as he is parked on the road, and gets out of the car headed to me, oh odriver bePolo kanene *(oh Polo drivers and not obeying the rules of the road)*. First of all, this person is not a boy but a man, like indoda *(a man)*. Kanti uAnga utshomene nabantu abadala kanje? *(Is Anga friends with such grown people?)* He does not look like a 24-year-old... more like a 34-year-old. Yho! Anyway, he greets, again, and takes my suitcase and loads it in the boot while he

apologizes for taking so long, which he didn't. I mean 15 minutes isn't that bad if you are a patient person? Nothing. We get in the car and drive off almost immediately heading towards a direction I don't know. I keep stealing glances at him to kind of analyze his features, my favorite thing to do. His one hand, which is very veiny, has a firm grip on the steering wheel while the other changes the gears smoothly every now and then. His face is very hard, and he keeps clenching his jaws, his brows are always furrowed as he concentrates on the road and navigates through the traffic. We are silent throughout the trip and the only thing that is emitting sound is the radio that is playing a nice RnB song.

It doesn't take us that long before we arrive at The Bed and Breakfast that mom had booked for the duration of our stay... This reminds me that I need to inform Mr Phakade that I may not make it to work on Monday. Siyabulela drops me off outside the B&B's gate after I'd called mom to inform her that we are outside. Mom makes her way out of the guesthouse meeting me halfway as I walk in and she immediately wraps her arms around me engulfing me in a warm hug and starts sobbing, violently.

Mom: Oh Nono, I am so happy that you are finally here.

Me: Don't cry mama. I am here now, all is going to be well, and we will resolve this together.

Her: uAnga ufuna undibulala. (*Anga is trying to kill me*) He saw how I struggled with you all after your father passed away and how I've always mentioned that I don't ever want to go through that ever again but here he is putting himself in harm's way, deliberately. Surely ufunda ukundingcwaba. (*He wants to bury me*)

Me: Hayi mama, suthetha njalo (*No mama, don't speak like that*)

Her: But it's the truth Nomzamo. He knows I would not be able to survive losing any of you, he knows.

Mom continues to sob uncontrollably.

Me: Ngxesi kaloku ntomb'endala (*I'm sorry my love*). Let's go inside and I will make you a nice cup of tea, how about that?

Her *\*sniffs\** Okay ke sisi

We've been standing in the driveway throughout her breakdown and I'm sure some of the guests are wondering what's going on. We make our way inside the beautiful house, which I currently don't have time to admire as I'm dog tired, with me following her with her wiping her tears with her doek. (*headwrap*) We walk inside a very beautiful room that has two  $\frac{3}{4}$  beds (thank goodness), a couch on the far right of the room that stands next to a tea and coffee station and a small fridge with the TV right above the couch. I drop my suitcase and purse



on the floor next to the beds and flop on top of the bed heaving out a very deep sigh. I know I promised to make my mom her cup of tea, but I am just too damn exhausted to move from this position.

I silently lie on my back staring at the ceiling taking shallow breaths thinking about the mess that Anga has managed to put us in. I raise my upper body using my forearms and elbows and look at my mom. She seems so deep in thought, staring at the empty wall in front of her while sipping on her tea which she had to make herself. It takes no fool to see that my mother is deeply hurt by this situation we are in and how her fears of losing one of us, or anyone she loves for that matter, are rattling her in peace.

Me: Mama, how do you suggest we resolve this matter?

Mom: Ei Nono, andiyazi. (*I don't know*) I managed to come up with R10 000 which is from my stokvel combined with some of my savings

Advertisement

but I don't know where we will get the rest *\*wails\**

Me: Sukhala mama mna... (*Don't cry mama I*)

Mom: Ndiyayazi Nono (*I know*), I know awunamli mntanama kaloku nam (*you don't have money*) I am an educator, so I know ezi peanuts ugovernment asinika zona (*these peanuts that the*

*government pays us*). I also know and understand that you already do so much to assist me with your brothers and I wouldn't expect more of you.

Me: Mama! Stop crying. I will be able to assist you. I withdrew some money from my savings, R10 000 to be exact, so we will be able to pay for his procedure okay? Let us get some rest now, it has been a long day. Tomorrow we'll go to the hospital and speak to Anga's doctor and see how we proceed, okay?

Mom: Okay Nono.

The next morning we woke bright and early to make our way to the hospital. Siyabulela called to inform us that he would come and fetch us, how considerate. Anga was admitted at the Life St George's Hospital. Siyabulela dropped us off at the hospital entrance and I followed my mom towards the direction of the doctor we were here to meet. I guess because mom had been here in the past two days, she already knew her way around. Throughout our walk through these cold and dull hospital passages, I keep on wondering how badly Anga is injured and whether this procedure would really make him better or whether it was a money pit where we would be required to fork out more should it not be effective. I didn't even notice that uSiyabulela was walking behind me, I am not sure if he was making sure I don't run out of this hospital, which I probably would, or if he is here to check on his friend. Again, why is Anga

friends with amadoda amadala? (*Old men*) I ask my mom which room Anga is in and she says that he has been admitted in the ICU wing of the hospital, in ward 107. We keep on walking until we come to a halt at some reception and mom says something to the receptionist. I am not sure what the doctor's name is as I am standing a bit further away so I am unable to make out what they are saying exactly. I see the receptionist pick the phone up and punch a few numbers on it and a few minutes later she is conversing with someone on the other end of the line while we stand there, like statues, waiting for her to provide us with feedback. After she drops the call she says, a bit louder and firmer for all of us to hear "Dr Makhanda is ready to see you. Please go to room 204, it's the second door to your left."

At this point my heart is pounding out of my chest, my hands all of a sudden become moist, my throat is dry and my ears feel hot. I'm not someone who is usually easily shaken but now, the fear of the unknown is threatening to cripple me. My mom knocks on the door and a deep voice on the other side of the door responds "come in." Mom enters with Siyabulela and I hot on her tail... uselapha lo? (*This one is still here?*) The doctor instructs us to sit down, at least there are enough seats to accommodate all three of us.

Doctor: Mrs Mcunu, I am so pleased to see you again.

Mom: Ai doc I can't really say I am pleased to be here, based on the circumstances that have led us here.

Doctor: Not to worry Mrs Mcunu I understand the predicament you are in. It must be hard looking at your son and seeing him suffer the way he is. But luckily we have a solution to the problem, so why don't we rather focus on that?

Mom: I agree with you doctor. With me I have my daughter, Nomzamo, and Siyabulela, who is Anga's friend. I brought them here so that you could explain to us what is happening with Anga and why he needs this procedure. I am aware that you'd told me what the issue is on Friday but I was too distraught to recall and reiterate everything to Nomzamo.

Doctor: Well, Anga is currently suffering from what is known as a Pneumothorax injury. This injury often occurs when a lung collapses due to the change in pressure within the chest. A patient with a collapsed lung will experience shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, chest pains or could start coughing up blood. If we do not relieve the pressure that is on the lung right now, Anga could possibly suffer from a ruptured spleen which could cause bleeding into the abdominal cavity, which could ultimately lead to his death. Currently he is under ventilation as he is unable to breath for himself and we have stabilized him enough to hold on for his procedure though we don't have much time.

Mom: You'd mentioned that the medical aid doesn't cover the entire cost of this procedure, why is that?

Doctor: Well Mrs Mcunu, the medical aid scheme that your son is currently on only pays a certain portion of the full amount of specialized procedures and this procedure that we are trying to conduct on him is one of those. The total cost for this procedure is R59 678, and your medical aid is only contributing R30 000 towards it. That is why I had informed you that we won't be able to proceed with his surgery unless the balance has been settled.

Suddenly I feel hot, I mean how can doctors and hospitals be so cruel? A person could literally die all because they want money?

Me: Why isn't it possible that patients are given the option of paying off their balances in increments? Like having an account? It's not everyday that people have R20 000 that's lying around.

Doctor: Well we have a certain amount that we do not exceed when it comes to accounts. Bills that are more than R10 000 need to be settled beforehand. Unfortunately, as much as we are in the business of saving lives, we are also an organization that functions with money which means money will come first, to a certain degree. We have had numerous occasions where patients don't settle their debt once they have been discharged

and rather than going the legal route, chasing patients, the hospital chose to request balances that are above R10 000 up front.

Me: I understand doc although I still think it is a bit selfish to expect patients' families to co-pay before any procedure is done. Families are already going through a lot emotionally and they don't need the additional financial pressure.

Mom: Hayi Nomzamo yiyeke ngoku! (*No leave it now*) Doctor Makhanda, we have managed to come up with the money that is required, how do we proceed?

Doctor: Okay Mrs Mcunu, I will inform our accounts department that you will be making the copayment for Mr Mcunu's surgery thereafter I will schedule his surgery for one o'clock this afternoon. The procedure shouldn't take us more than three hours. Let me call our...

He was about to continue when the door busted open and a nurse who seemed frantic yelled "doctor, please come and assist us. The patient in ward 107 is crashing, we are losing him"

Ward what? 107? Wait, is that not Anga's ward? Before I can even utter a word, the doctor springs out of his chair and runs behind the nurse who delivered the news. I look around the room to make sure that I heard correctly, ward 107? My mom

releases a gut wrenching sob. Siyabulela is already on his feet taking giant steps towards the direction that the nurse and doctor disappeared to while I sit, frozen, wondering if my worst nightmare has come to fruition.

uAnga angakhe alinge! (*Anga mustn't dare*)

## Chapter 5

I stay put in my seat with my head buzzing trying to wrap my head around what the nurse just said. For all our sakes, I hope that there is more than one patient in ward 107 and whoever that patient is, it is not Anga. When my mind comes back to me, I realize that Siyabulela has long left us, and I am left with my sobbing mom. I snap out of my trance and tend to mom, she can't afford to be crying like this, she has a heart problem, and I can already tell that this situation is causing her strain as I find her clutching her chest from time to time. I don't want to stress much about that right now, because even I can only handle so much. I promise myself that after we've passed this ordeal, I will take her to the doctor for a thorough check up. I stand up and walk to where mom is seated and hug her, asking her to calm down.

Me: Mama, please calm down we don't know who the patient is, the nurse never said it's Anga (*I'm not sure if I'm trying to convince her or myself at this point*)

Her: Nono I know that it's him, I can feel it.

Me: No mama you don't. Please stop crying, this is not good for your heart. Jonga (*look*), let me go to the reception and try and find out what's going on then we can take it from there, okay?

Her: Okay ke sisi



I wipe off the tears from her face and give her a brief smile hoping that will make her feel a bit better. I step away from her and walk towards the direction I think I saw the doctor and Siyabulela head to. As I walk through this passage, I start praying that it is not Anga because I don't know what I would tell my mom. At the rate that this situation is stressing her, I'm worried that she may also be one to require medical assistance. As I'm about to reach the reception, I see Siyabulela walking towards me and something about the way he is clenching his fists and taking less 'determined' steps tells me that whatever news he has or knows is not good. We meet each other midway, and he furiously rubs his face with the palm of his hands and releases a deep sigh... and says, "Ei Zamo I just spoke to the nurse now and she confirmed that nguAnga lo bebethetha ngaye (*it's Anga whom the nurse was referring to*)."

Suddenly I feel hot, I struggle to breathe, my knees start to buckle, and I feel my legs giving in. He quickly catches me before I make contact with the white tiles and gently places me on one of the hospital chairs that are lined up in the passage.

Him: Zamo hai kaloku (*no Zamo*)

Me: Is he dead? He can't die Siya

Him: Nomzamo I never said he was dead I said...

Me: No uthe (*you said*) he is the patient that was crashing (I say hyperventilating and removing the cardigan that I have on)

Him: Yes, he is the patient that the nurse informed the doctor about, but he is not dead he just needs surgery now as his lungs are flooded with blood, that's why he crashed. The doctor has already rushed him to theatre we just need to go and settle the bill with accounts while they are busy working on him

Me: Kodwa uAnga yintoni lento asifake kuyo? (*What is Anga putting us through*) Now we must sit here and worry even more about his state of well being all because he couldn't stay out of trouble! Would he have died if he had just walked away? No, but then again, he is the almighty Anga Mcunu! Angaske afele pha mos! (*He can just die in there*)

Him: Hayi Nomzamo! Uthi umama wakho azive njani xa enokuva uthetha kanje? (*No Nomzamo, how do you think your mother would feel if she heard you speaking the way you are right now*) I understand that you are worried, frustrated, and angry right now, but you need to focus on being there for your mom and your brother, you can deal with your anger after he has recovered.

At this point I am a weeping mess; I have mucus running down my nose and my outfit is disoriented because of how aggressive I was when I was taking off my cardigan. He is right, now is not the time for me to lose my cool but I am so mad at Anga I can't even hide it. Siyabulela is calm throughout my meltdown and is

gently rubbing my back while I lay my head on his shoulder...  
ungandibuzi (*don't ask*)

Me: *\*sniff\** Okay, let's go back to mom and tell her what we need to do while we wait for Anga to come back from theatre. Did the nurse say how long the surgery would take?

Him: No, she did not, but if I recall correctly the doctor did say about three hours if I'm not mistaken.

We get up from the chair and start making our way towards the doctor's office. As we are walking, he gently places his hand on the lower of my back, and every now and then rubbing my back soothingly in an up and down motion. I don't want to read too much into this right now so I will settle for interpreting this moment and gesture as a concerned friend comforting a friend's sister. Immediately when we walk in the doctor's office my mom gets off her chair and starts throwing questions at us "was it him?", "is he alive?", "can we see him?", "what is the doctor saying?" All these she says in one breath and very hurriedly.

Me: Mom calm down. Yes, it was Anga that needed urgent attention

Advertisement

but he should be fine. Siyabulela says that his lungs were full of blood hence he crashed but they have rushed him to theatre and Dr Makhanda is already operating on him now as we speak.

Mom: Oh, nkos'yam lomntana! (*My goodness this child*) Ngoku (*now*) what must we do?

Me: We need to go to the accounts department and pay the balance for the surgery and wait in the waiting area until Dr Makhanda is done, which should take approximately three hours.

Her: Okay. Masihambeni ke (*let's go*)

We all gather our stuff, well mom and I, Siyabulela didn't bring anything with him besides his phone and car keys, and we walk out of the Dr's office and head towards the direction of where the accounts department is. Siyabulela is leading the way this time around and I am so thankful that he is here because I don't think I'm able to speak to anyone, especially to ask for directions. Mom is walking silently beside me, and I am sure she has the same thought in mind as I do, that his surgery is a success. We get to the accounts department, and we fill out forms with the patients and doctors' information then proceed to make our payments separately, yesterday I forgot to transfer my money into my mom's account so that we can pay in one increment but at least the clerk that's assisting us doesn't seem

to mind that we are splitting the payment. Once we are done with everything, we head to the waiting area.

Siyabulela disappeared just before we sat down, and I have no idea where he went. Come to think of it, I have not even checked in with him if he knows what happened exactly to Anga because this entire time it's just been a roller-coaster of events and emotions, I make it a point to remember to ask him when I get a chance. A few moments later I see him approaching us with a plastic in one hand and what looks like coffee/tea cups in the other... mm izigweqe (*bowlegs*)...

Yindoda lena guys andifuni ungatsho. (*This is a man; I don't not want to mention it*). I may be going through something right now, but my eyes aren't blinded by my situation... Nomzamo stop it! I am disturbed from my drooling when my mom nudges me on my arm, and I quickly raise my head to face him. Gosh I'm so embarrassed, now he saw me drooling over him and now he's going to think I go around drooling over random sexy men. Hayi awuna timing Nomzamo shame. (*No, you lack timing*) He informs me that he's bought some sandwiches and tea/coffee, how thoughtful of him. I opt for tea with a chicken mayo sandwich on brown bread while mom takes her tea and has it with a cheese and tomato sandwich.

We have been sitting in silence for almost two and a half hours now, glancing at the theatre doors every now and then hoping

to see Dr Makhanda emerging with no luck. The waiting is frustrating us all and the annoying part in all of this is that I can't even play games on phone because my phone has a battery life that last only 20 minutes when being utilized in full capacity *\*eye roll\**. A few minutes later the theatre doors burst open, and we all stand up when we see a bloodied and exhausted Dr Makhanda makes his way towards us looking defeated. My first thoughts are that he is here to deliver bad news and I don't want to be here to receive those. I start walking, backing away without any idea of where I am heading until I feel Siyabulela's hand grabbing my wrist pulling me back to my seat. My heart is pounding so hard against my chest, and I'm scared that I may get a panic, if not a heart attack. As soon as I'm standing in front of my seat, I feel Siyabulela release his hold on my wrist and rests his hand on my lower back and begins to move in that soothing up and down motion again. This is the second time that he is doing this to me, but I tell myself again that he is just comforting me. Dr Makhanda reaches us and roughly removes his scrub cap before releasing a deep sigh and says "Mcunu family, I don't know who you pray to, but if it's to God, then I say your prayers were powerful and were well received by the man upstairs. We nearly lost Mr Mcunu because the chest tube that we had inserted in his lungs to remove the excess blood couldn't draw the blood as fast as

he was bleeding out therefore his lungs became filled with liquid thus temporarily suffocating him, that's why he crashed."

At this point my mom has started with her bawling, though it's silent this time. Me on the other hand, I am standing frozen in front of the doctor, blinking a million times trying to fight back the tears because I'm scared of what he'll say the outcome of the procedure is. He continues to say "we were fortunate enough that one of the nurses picked this up while doing her rounds and alerted us in time to take him to surgery. I won't lie it was touch and go throughout the surgery and he slipped in and out of consciousness many times however we were able to stabilize him and relieve the pressure that the rib was causing on the lung and stop the bleeding. Currently Mr Mcunu is in very critical condition however we hope that within the next 24 hours his condition will improve. For now, he is recovering in the ICU where we have sedated him. You can see him for 5 minutes should you wish to do so as his body needs the rest."

I release a breath I wasn't aware I was holding and thank the Almighty for sparing his life.

Mom: Thank you so much Doc, thank you for taking care of my son and saving his life. May God continue to bless you and your family (she says this while hugging him)

Doctor: It's a pleasure Mrs Mcunu. I am happy that we were able to catch the problems and stabilize him before any further damage was done.

Mom: Can we see him?

Doctor: Yes, you can, follow me, I will take you to his ward.

We all follow the doctor and make our way to the ICU wing. When we arrive there, he is in a ward with one other patient who also seems badly injured judging by the machines connected to him/her. As soon as my mom's eyes land on Anga, she wails yet again and rushes toward him. I on the other hand am frozen at the door, stunned at the state he's in. He has a bandage around his torso, pipes coming out of his nose and mouth and so many machines surrounding him. I can see his chest moving up and down but the amount of clutter that's surrounding him right now makes it hard for me to believe that he is alive or that he will make it. I start backing out of his ward because this site in front of me is overwhelming, please remember that this is my first time seeing him, while mom and Siyabulela had seen him before surgery. I bolt out of the recovery ward and run towards the exit of the hospital. I can hear a male voice screaming my name behind me, but I continue to run without looking back until I'm outside the hospital premises and in the parking lot. I run across the parking lot heading towards the gate that leads to the main



road when I hear screeching tires... I look to my right and see a black car fast approaching and I shut my eyes and wait for impact.

## Chapter 6

I hear deafening screams around me and waiting for impact but to my surprise nothing happens instead I find myself on the ground, on top of Siyabulela. I look up and see a black Audi just a few steps away from us and begin to wonder whether the car hit the us both or not, or whether Siyabulela jumped in front of it to get me out the way. The bystanders are still watching the incident before them with some clutching their purses and mouths while some have already taken out their cellphones and have started recording all of this... ngumntu omnyaman for wena ke lowo. (*That's a black person for you*) Instead of helping they would rather record an incident just so that they can have evidence that they were part of the observers that actually witnessed it... *sigh*. The doors of the Audi open and a man wearing an Italian suit step out and begins to hurl insults our way "uphambene?" (*Are you crazy?*) "Ufuna ukuzibulala?" (*Do you want to kill yourself?*) "Uba ufuna ukuzibulala (*if you want to kill yourself*) there are other alternatives that are less stupid and more guaranteed than running in front of a moving vehicle sisi! Don't you dare try and include us in your selfish antics, some of us still want to live our lives, guilt free. Do you know what you could have done? I could have gone to jail because of your recklessness!" The man says all this while taking stading steps towards us, pointing his finger at us in a warning manner. To my surprise, Siyabulela has long gotten up from the ground

and and is brushing the dirt off his clothes. When he's done, he extends his hand toward me and helps me get up from the ground. "Ingxaki yenu bafazi nizizi..." (*The problem with you women is that you are all*)

Siyabulela: Sikuvile mjita, uxolo (*We have heard you man, we apologize*)

Man: Bendingathethi nawe wena sgora (*I wasn't speaking to you, bodybuilder*)

Siyabulela: Masingaqhelani ke bra! (*Let's not be disrespectful toward each other my guy*) There's no need to hurl further insults at us. We are aware of what could have happened and we apologize sincerely for what could have happened but mayiphelele apho (*let it end there*)

The man clicks his tongue and gets into his car, banging the door and drives away with his tires screeching... unnecessary much. I get that he is shaken, but so am I and my intentions were not to kill myself I just wanted to get away from the hospital that's all. After he's driven away, I look around me and notice that the bystanders are still watching us, and some still recording but at this point none of them matters, all I want is to get away from here. Siyabulela grabs my wrist and pulls me towards the direction of hospital gate. He is taking giant steps and I am unable to walk as fast as he does because I have short legs. I try and wiggle my way out of his hold but his grip on my

wrist is firm “Siyabulela uyandilimaza.” (*You’re hurting me*) I say but he says nothing and continues to take long strides towards the direction of the parking lot where I assume he parked his car. “Siyabulela” I say more firmly but still he keeps quiet and continues to walk. “Siyabulela” I scream. He stops immediately and turns his entire body to face me “what!?” he snaps. My eyes are popped out at this moment, firstly because I have never heard him speak like that since I’ve met him and secondly who does he think he is raising his voice at me? “Uyandilimaza” (*You’re hurting me*) I say, and he just looks at where his hand is holding my wrist and slowly eases his hold, although not letting go of my wrist and turns his body and starts walking away again.

At this point my eyes are blurry and these damn tears are ready to fall. I’m still shaken about what could have happened just now and I also don’t understand why this man is so angry at me... why is he manhandling me like this? I see his car in the distance and assume that indeed that is where he is taking us. He opens the passenger door for me to get in and after I do, he closes the door and walks over to the driver’s side. By now I am crying without mercy because the adrenalin has started wearing off and the reality of what could have happened to me starts to sink in. How could I have been so selfish to almost get myself killed while my brother is still fighting for his life? What could have become of my mother and siblings if such had

happened? Although it was not intentional, I still could have handled my reaction to seeing Anga like that a bit better. Siyabulela gets in from the driver's side and bangs the door. He huffs and turns to look at me.

Him: What's your problem huh? Did you not hear me calling me out your name just now?

Me: I ...

Him: I asked you (*he snaps*), did you not hear me call out your name when you were running out of the hospital?

Me: I did.

Him: Then why didn't you stop huh? Why?

Me: *\*silence\**

Him: Ndithetha ndodwa ngoku? Ndiphendule Nomzamo! (*Am I speaking to myself now? Answer me*)

Me: I'm sorry Siya, I didn't mean to run out like that I was just overwhelmed with the state Anga was in. I wasn't prepared for what was in front of me. I generally have a fear of hospitals since my father passed away and seeing Anga like that just brought back all the memories of witnessing my father connected to multiple machines to help him breathe and I just couldn't handle it. I'm sorry.

Him: Kodwa Nomzamo ayithi lonto (*but that doesn't mean*) you should run out into the streets like a crazy woman and cross busy roads without observing where you are going. What would have happened if that man had hit you with his car huh? Nawe ngoku ubuzo add(a) kwingxaki zikaMaDlamini? (*Were also going to add to the problems that you mom is faced with*)

Me: Those were not my intentions I swear. I just wanted to get away. I really didn't mean to.

He releases a big sigh and rests his hands on the steering wheel of the car while he slumps in his seat, resting his head on the head rest and closing his eyes while facing up. We sit in silence for a while with me sniffing and wiping my tears while looking at this man. He starts shaking his head left and right, his eyes still closed, and says "kodwa bafazi yingxaki nyani." (*Women are a problem, truly*) I squint my eyes and look at him, at this point I'm not sure if he's referring to me being a problem or... "What do you mean 'women are a problem'?" I ask. He says nothing instead he opens his eyes and turns to face me with his eyes on my wrist, the one he held "does it hurt?" he asks, I respond "no it doesn't although there is a bit of discomfort because you were holding me too tight." I see some remorse in his eyes, and he gently takes my hand into his, his hands are so warm, and starts caressing the area he held gently and says "I'm sorry MaDlamini (clan name), I didn't mean to hurt you, I

would never hurt you, at least not intentionally” ... Would never hurt me? Not intentionally? Huh? “You are too...” he sighs, shakes his head, and stops speaking. My mind starts running, I am too what? Yeyi bhuti (*please man*), finish your sentence, I am too what? I look at him waiting for him to continue with his statement but instead he lets go of my wrist and says “let’s get back to the ward now I’m sure your mom is worried about you. Are you feeling better now?” I nod my head because suddenly, I don’t trust my voice. He lets go of my wrist and gets out of the car, making his way to my side and opens the door for me to exit while offering me his hand... ndakubetha gentleman. (*What a gentleman*) I take his hand and for some reason this gesture gives me so much comfort and peace.

We make our way to the hospital, still hand in hand, and head towards Anga’s ward. Upon arrival we see my mom sitting next to Anga

Advertisement

gently rubbing his hand and Dr Makhanda is nowhere in sight. As soon as mom hears our footsteps, she raises her head to look our direction and gives us a weak smile when she sees us, glad to see that she was worried about me *\*eye roll\**.

Her: Oh Nono, nibuyile? (*Oh, baby you are back*)

Me: Ewe mama. I'm sorry for running out of her like that. I didn't mean to, it's just that when I...

Her: No need to explain baby, I know that awuvani nezibhedlele kaloku wena (*I know that you don't like hospitals*).

She shifts her gaze from me and looks at Siyabulela and says "thank you mntanam ngokundijongela uNono (*my child for looking out for Nono*), I know she can be a handful" she giggles while staring at our intertwined hands. After realizing what it is that she's actually saying I try and yank my hand away from Siya's but instead this fool tightens his grip. Bathong! (*Wow*) Is this fool trying to make my mom think that there is something here when in actual fact there isn't? This idiot even has a slight smirk on his face... I wish I could just wipe it off with a warm klaap (*slap*) but then again, this is not the time nor place for such and, he's way too tall for me to reach his face nje (*like that*) I decide to let him be even though I am not impressed with him right now. "Akho ngxaki mama" (*no problem*) he responds and walks us to the chairs that are placed on the other side of Anga's bed, and we take our seats.

Me: Mama, how is he doing?

Mom: Still no change Nono but at least the doctor left saying that his vitals are improving although he's still in critical condition.



Me: I'm glad to hear that his vitals are improving. Did the doctor say how long they'd have to keep him in ICU before moving him to a general recovery ward?

Mom: No, he didn't say anything Nono, but he'd have to wake up first then only he can be moved. Hopefully he wakes up soon and can be moved within the next couple of days.

Me: Oh okay. Now all we have to do is wait. Oh, I also need to call Mr Phakade and inform him that I won't be able to make it to work tomorrow, and possibly Tuesday as well.

Mom: Ubungekamxeleli kanti? (*You hadn't informed him yet*)

Me: No ma I hadn't because I didn't know how long I'd possibly be here for.

Mom: Oh haike (*well*) Nono, go ahead and call him even though it would have been better if you'd spoken to him yesterday as it was a Saturday. Sundays are for family baby and it's important that we respect people's family time. You don't want to disturb other people's bonding sessions just because wena ungena ndoda andithi? (*You don't have a man, right*) *\*she giggles\**

Siyabulela starts coughing viciously beside me and I don't understand why. Mna (*I*) on the other hand am too shocked at the words that are coming out of my mother's mouth right now and wonder why she would embarrass me like this in front of a

stranger. Yho umama akana timing tu sana. (*Mom has no timing*)

Me: Kodwa (*but*) mama there was no need to add the fact that I don't have a man, khona uyazelaphi uba andinayo indoda (*also, how do you know that I don't have a man*), did I say that?

Siyabulela releases my hand so fast after I say that, like I'm burning him or something and asks "unendoda?" (*You have a man*) I look at him surprised... Surprised because he let go of my hand like that and secondly, why does he care whether I have a boyfriend or not? I respond by saying "no I don't, not that any of that matters nor is it any of your business, but I was just saying" I pout. He chuckles while looking down... Yho (*wow*) what a sexy chuckle. My mom interrupts him just before he can respond and says "hai kaloku Nono sukulwa, suthi xa sizama ukukuzama ungazameki" (*Don't argue, don't refuse our assistance when we are trying to help you*) she says all this while laughing lowly. I wonder what my mother is up to.

I decide I can't deal with her silliness any further and excuse myself and inform them that I'm going to give Mr Phakade a call to inform him of my current whereabouts. I stand by the cafeteria and make my call. Mr. Phakade informs me that I can take two days leave and take care of the situation with my mother and Anga. I thank him and promise to stay in touch. After I conclude the call, I decide that I'll get everyone

something to eat and drink as we all haven't had anything to eat since this morning when Siyabulela bought us those sandwiches and tea. I'm still standing in the cafeteria queue, conflicted as to what I should get everyone, well for uSiyabulela because I don't know what he likes or doesn't like to eat, what he's allergic to etc., and just as I'm about to call him and I feel a presence behind and soon thereafter hot air hits my ears and a voice whispers follows and says "quarter chicken leg and chips with a bun and a can of coke." My entire body gets covered in goosebumps instantly and I turn to see who said that only to find this fool that I was about to call standing tall, almost in a domineering stance, towering over me with a slight sneer on his face. His eyes have this sparkle all of a sudden, not that I'd seen how they were before, but I presume that people don't just go around having sparkling eyes, right? Anyway, I look at this fool, crossing my arms across my chest, and ask, "mild or spicy?" He stares into my eyes for a bit and says "wena, ungandifuna ndinjani?" (*How would you like to have me*) ... Yho hayi kengoku (*Wow*) I don't know what the hell is going on here, or where this sudden tension is coming from but whatever it is, I'm not going to entertain it. I turn around and see that I am next in line. I place a beef burger meal order for my mom and I and place a quarter chicken leg meal for this idiot behind me. Just before the cashier finalizes the order, I say to her "please make the chicken spicy" and she nods in

acknowledgement. I hear this fool behind me mumble a “great choice” and I snap my neck back to look at him only to find him walking away from me while whistling a stupid melody. *Nxa* idiot!

## Chapter 7

Since we'd left the hospital, we hadn't received any updates regarding Anga's condition which we gladly accepted as 'good news' as we considered no news is better than bad news. I was really hoping for Anga to wake up before I head back to eNgcobo the tomorrow because him and I really need to discuss the incident that landed him in hospital. I tried to inquire from Siyabulela yesterday about the incident, but he politely brushed me off, and told me that Anga would be the one who would tell me. To be honest, I was expecting such a response from him although I had hoped that he would at least show some level of understanding as to why I'd question him as opposed to waiting for Anga to inform me, but nonetheless I respected his response and kept it moving.

Mom and I decided we'd go visit Anga in the afternoon because we were both exhausted from the events of the previous day and there really was no need for us to go to the hospital immediately that morning. Siyabulela, yet again, offered to be our chauffeur. I appreciated his, let's call it, hospitality although I didn't see the need for him to do so. When he called me to tell me that he is waiting for us outside mom couldn't wait to mention that I was now his 'girlfriend' *\*eyeroll\**. "Mama he is not my boyfriend! How many times must I tell you that?" My mom being herself responded by saying "maybe you're not his

girlfriend, but he is definitely your boyfriend.” Hai lomfazi. (*hai this woman*) We locked up our room and made our way to Siyabulela’s car. Upon arrival he greeted us, and mom and I sat in the backseat. There was no way that I was going to sit in front with him. Throughout our car ride, he kept throwing glances at me through the rearview mirror and as much as I tried to ignore them, I would find myself looking right back at him. I have said that this man is a man, like a manly man and as much I may not be into him like that, I’m a woman who knows when to acknowledge God’s creations and this, this is one of His greatest creations. Soon we arrived at the hospital and made our way towards Anga’s ward.

When we arrived in Anga’s ward, we found one of the nurses checking his vitals. This time around I noticed that he was not connected to any tubes or machines and that gave me a great sense of relief so much so that I found myself releasing a deep breath. Siyabulela, who was sitting next to me, might have noticed my reaction, as he decided to stretch out his hand to hold mine and gently rub it with his thumb. Yet again, this was one of his gestures where he offered me comfort which I gladly welcomed and accepted. I turned my body to face him and found that he was already staring at me. We stared at each other for a moment, and something passed between us briefly, but left just as fast. Whatever it was, I had no intention to delve deeper into its meaning, and I think we were both comfortable

with not knowing or understanding what it was. Throughout this time, the entire ward was dead silent as the nurse continued to do her job. I guess we were all caught up in our thoughts as the reality of what has brought us together was staring back at us yet again. Mom was the one who broke the silence

Mom: Nurse, unjani namhlanje? (*How is he today*)

Nurse: He is doing much better mama. He has improved since his surgery yesterday. Dr Makhanda removed his ventilation tubes this morning as he showed great improvement.

Mom: Oh, that is wonderful news, makabongwe uThixo. (*Glory to God*)

Nurse: Indeed mama. Now we must just wait for him to wake up, which will hopefully be soon.

Suddenly we hear some mumbling and grunting, and we all look towards uAnga. He starts fluttering his eyes which open almost immediately, and he releases a low “w...ater.” Mama springs up from her chair and heads towards the end of his bed where a jug filled with water and a glass is placed. She pours water for Anga in the glass while Siyabulela helps him sit up in the bed; mom helps him drink the water. Throughout this riff raff that’s going on, I am stuck in my seat, frozen, maybe due to the shock and relief that my baby brother is alive or from the

realization that we could have lost him. Someone snaps me out of my state by tapping my shoulder, I look around and see that it's the nurse.

Me: Huh?

Nurse: Your mom is calling you.

Me: Ma?

Mom: Yiza kaloku uzobulisa uAnga (*come and greet*)

I try standing up by my knees and start to wobble and I can feel myself losing my balance. Siyabulela, who is nearest to me, quickly lets go of Anga and comes to my rescue. At this point my heart is beating out of my chest and my tears are threatening to fall, I look up to try and hurl them back, I don't want to break down just yet. Siyabulela walks me towards Anga with his hand still on my back. I look at umntan'asekhaya (*my sibling*) and wonder what my life would've been like if I'd lost him. We stare at each other with no words exchanged, I guess our eyes are doing the talking. Moments later I decide to say the first word "Anga?"

Him: Sisi?

Me: Anga?

Him: Sisi?



Me: Uyenza njani into enje? (*How can you do something like this*)

Him: Uxolo si...

Me: Thula! Ndiyakubuza, how could you do something like this? (*Shut up! I'm asking you*)

Him: Nono it wasn't on purpose. Ibiyimpazamo (*It was a mistake*)

Me: Ibiyimpazamo? Uyayazi yintoni impazamo? (*A mistake? Do you know what a mistake is*) A mistake is when you spill a glass of milk, a mistake is when you accidentally denting a car!

Pouring salt instead of sugar in tea is a mistake! But getting into bar brawls is NOT a mistake. Sundinxilela! (*Don't speak rubbish*)

At this point, the tears that were fighting to fall have vanished, the shock and relief that I experienced earlier has left my body and the only emotion running through my veins at this moment is anger, pure rage!

Siyabulela: Za...

Me: Andithethi nawe Siyabulela! (*I am not speaking to you*) Ndiphendule Anga (*Answer me*) I snap!

Siyabulela: Nomzamo!

I ignore Siyabulela and continue to release my wrath on this one.

Me: Anga andivakali? (*Can you not hear me*)

Anga: Zamo I'm sorry. I'm sorry mntase. (*My sibling*) I really wasn't out in the streets looking for a fight. Bonga, Siyabulela, Luyolo and I went to a club to grab a few beers and relax. A fight broke out between the girls who were seated in the table next to ours and some guys who were seated elsewhere in the club and somewhere between trying to diffuse the situation and staying safe, I managed to get hurt.

Me: Ngoku wena uli polisa? Uhamba unqandana nabantu abalwayo? (*So now you are the police? You go around stopping fights?*)

Anga: Sisi, those guys were throwing insults at those girls calling them whores, telling them how cheap they are, they were also pouring liquor on them. I couldn't just watch and let them carry on manhandling those girls, you know how I feel about men disrespecting and abusing women, I had to stop them. Ungabuza noSiyabulela, he can attest this. (*You can ask*)

Me: Andinaxesha likaSiyabulela mna! (*I don't care about Siyabulela*) I'm concerned about you! LoSiyabulela uthetha ngaye, did he protect you? (*This Siyabulela that you are speaking of*) Is he injured? Hee?

Anga: *\*silence\**

Me: Anga?!? (*I scream*)

Siyabulela: Zamo, sukumkhwaza. (*Don't yell at him*)

Anga: Sisi... I'm sorry for getting injured but I'm not sorry for standing up for those girls. If that was you, I would hope that someone helps you and does the same.

Me: Yey! Yey! Yey! Sanundinxolela (*Don't make a noise*) Uthini wena Siyabulela? Hee, uthini? Ungenaphi futhi? (*What are you saying? How does any of this involve you?*) Wena Anga, andiyiva yonke lenonsense uyithethayo (*I can't hear this nonsense that you are saying*)

Siyabulela: Nomzamo! (*He says firmly*) Nomzamo! Stop it. Just stop it! I understand that you're upset and frustrated right now but you'll not speak to me or anyone else like that. You'll calm down and address all of us with respect, uyandiva? (*Am I clear*) Have you forgotten that your mom is here? When did you become a parent?

Yho this man! I have no words. Instead of responding, I just keep quiet, look down and start fiddling with my fingers. How can mom allow him to speak to me like this? Surely, they understand where I'm coming from.

Siyabulela: Nomzamo, ndiyavakala? (*Am I clear*)

Me: Yes (*I say lowly*)

Anga: Sisi, I know I scared everyone but like I said it was not intentional. I know how we struggled after we lost dad and I'd

never want to put any of you through that again. I'll be more considerate in future regarding the type of situations I decide to involve myself in. Ndicela nindixolele. (*Please forgive me*)

I just look at him, and I can't believe the turmoil he's put us through. I know how protective he is of women since the time my dad passed away and mom had to struggle with us after dad's family emotionally abused mom so I kind of understand where he comes from. But nonetheless, that still doesn't make the situation that we are in now any better. I get overwhelmed with emotions and decide to bolt out of there. I can hear Siyabulela screaming after me, deja vu right? Right. Anyway, I continue to run out of the ward without looking back. I'm almost by the door when I feel hands wrap around my waist, I scream and shout for whoever is holding me to release me

Me: Ndiyeke! Ndiyeke! (*Leave me alone! Leave me alone!*)

Person: Zamo, hayi man suyenza lento. Suyenza lento. (*No man don't do this. Don't do this*)

Oh it's Siyabulela

Me: No Siyabulela, leave me alone. Leave me alone. I can't do this. I can't.

Him: Bhabha (*Baby*)

Me: No Siya. It's too much, it's too much. Why can't you all understand this?

At this point I'm sobbing uncontrollably and I'm trying to wiggle my way out of his hold but with his tight grip around my waist and with my legs up in the air... yes, they are up in the air because he has lifted me up and we are headed to a direction I'm not too sure of. Yet again, I have become a spectacle at this hospital within a space of 24 hours. Yho hai sana is'dima sam sirhuqa phantsi (*My dignity has been tarnished*) I want to go back home, home being eNgcobo to my little apartment and deal with my mundane issues, because this situation we are in is opening old wounds that I would prefer left unopened. I hear what sounds like a door opening and in seconds I am let down, oh we are in his car... again. I am still sobbing uncontrollably, and this man has not said anything to me since he hauled me from the hospital entrance. He gets in the car, and brings the engine to life, driving out of the hospital. At this point I don't care that he hasn't said anything, nor do I care that he is taking me somewhere I have no idea of, all that I care about is that he is taking me out of this place, out of these walls.

We drive for about 20 minutes, and we find ourselves in some suburban area that has beautiful houses. The houses aren't that big, but you can see that this is the uptown of Port Elizabeth as these houses are well-kept with their white picket fences and beautifully mowed lawns. He puts his hands between the compartment between us and fiddles for a bit before he comes out with a set of keys that have a remote. He lifts his left hand

and points the remote towards a gate, wait he stays here? The gate opens and he slowly drives in and parks in front of the garage... wow this house is beautiful. He kills the engines and gets out of the car and walks over to my side; he extends his hand for me to take, and I gladly accept it. He shuts the door behind me and leads me towards the main door. He opens the door and leads me down the passage of this beautiful home. We get to what I presume is the lounge area and he seats me in one of the couches. He stands up and looks at me, as though he would like to say something but decides against it and exits the room. I'm still recovering from my hysterical moment earlier but at least my tears have now stopped rolling down my cheeks. I sit in silence and just wallow in my thoughts.

A few moments later he comes in with a glass of water and a container with pills and hands them both to me for me to drink. I accept both as I can already feel the headache seeping in. He pulls the coffee table toward me and sits directly opposite me with his elbows on his knees and his head resting on his hands and looks directly at me as though he is trying to read me. He does not seem frustrated, nor does he seem upset, but he exudes a different emotion that I cannot make out right now. His continued stare makes me uncomfortable and I end up losing the staring contest and drop my gaze. He releases a deep sigh and reaches for both my hands and gently rubs them with his thumbs. I must be honest; his hand rubs are now starting to

become my favorite thing and I find the gesture so calming and comforting. He sighs and says “kodwa maDlamini, kutheni uyihlukumeza intliziyo yam?” (*Why are you breaking my heart*)

Me: Mna? (*Me*)

Him: Ewe maDlamini, wena. (*Yes you*). Every time you cry, my heart bleeds. The pain you feel, I also feel. Bhabha you... you have no idea, no idea.

Me: No idea of?

Him: *\*silence\**

Me: Siyabulela, I have no idea of what?

Him: *\*silence\**

Me: Please say something.

Instead of saying something, this man gets up and leaves me without uttering a word. I stare at the door, and I’m left in awe. What just happened? Yho! (*Wow*)

## Chapter 8

Here I am, sitting in a house whose owner I don't know, waiting for a man, whom I am not too familiar with twiddling with my thumbs. I really don't understand Siyabulela's need to always want to set me straight, almost as though he is reprimanding me and I honestly don't like it. I don't really know this guy; I have heard Anga mention him a few times during the holidays when we would be home but either than that, I really don't know this guy from a bar of soap. Instead of sitting around and wondering where this guy could be, I decide to call my mother and inform her of my whereabouts, or at least whom I'm with. She lets me know that she will be taking a cab back to the B&B, which is where I will find her when I return, as visiting hours are done now at the hospital. After our brief conversation I decide to keep myself entertained and switch on the TV, I browse through the available channels and my eyes land on my favourite, National Geographic. I decide to really settle in and remove my shoes from my feet and grab the fleece that's placed on one of the arm rests of a sofa adjacent to the one that I'm currently seated on.

As I continue watching I start hearing sounds coming from somewhere around the house. I try to listen to determine which area of the house the sounds could be coming from, but I fail to locate the direction, probably because I don't even know



north to south in this house. If I was a normal girl, and I say normal because I am not, I would probably be scared but because I grew up amongst boys, namely my brothers, I know I can protect myself from whatever or wherever is making that noise. I've been told numerous times that I throw a mean left hook, so whoever wants to feel a taste of my fist and wrath must just head to where I'm seated and I sure won't disappoint them. They will come to know why abantu (*people*) from back home call me ntombikayise. (*My father's daughter*). I start hearing heavy footsteps coming closer to the living room and I hope to *gwad* that those are Siyabulela's footsteps otherwise, kuzof'umntu ndiyakuxelela. (*Someone will die I tell you*) I sit up from the couch, as I was lying down, yes, I know I know, I really made myself feel at home, and wait to see the person behind the footsteps and luckily, it's this idiot. I stare at him, deep inside I'm fuming because I don't understand how he could take me to a place, no, a house, that I don't know and leave me ALONE for almost an hour without saying anything. What if I needed something, or even worse hurt? Ebezothini? (*What was he going to do?*) This idiot is just standing by the door, leaning on it with his hands deep inside his pockets and his legs crossed. He is just staring at me and not uttering a word. I'm not sure if I'm infuriated by the fact that he's not saying a word or whether infuriated because he's still on his feet, staring at me and possibly intimidating me.

I decide to break the ice, and speak

Me: Siyabulela, xa undijongile ubona ntoni? (*When you look at me, what do you see?*)

Him: Bhabha? (*Baby*)

Me: Ndithi Siyabulela, xa undijongile, ubona ntoni? (*I'm asking you, when you look at me, what do you see?*)

Him: Umfaz'wam (*my wife*)

Me: Mna ubukhe wandiva ndisithi ndifuna uba ngum'fazi wakho? (*Have you heard me say that I want to be your wife?*)

Him: Akhange nditsho, kodwa mna ndithi, xa ndijonge wena ndibona umkam (*I never said you did, but all I'm saying is that when I see you, I see my wife*)

Me: Why did you leave me here all alone huh? How could you disappear on me kanjalo nje (*like that*) knowing fully well that I'm not familiar with my surroundings mm? How could you?

For a while he says nothing, and continues to stare at me, as though trying to read me. I maintain the stare because for once, I want him to stop thinking he can do as he pleases with me and that I will always fold over. Yes, he's an alpha male, bold, confident and dominant but still, I refuse to go down

without a fight, or at least without being heard. My father did not raise a wuss.

Him: But bhabha (*baby*) you could have made yourself comfortable wayoku zenzela into yokutya (*prepared yourself something to eat*) and toured around the house, kukwakho mos apha (*this is your house after all*)

Me: Siyabulela, yimbhudane yantoni na le undixelela yona? Ayingomzi wam lona! (*What nonsense are you talking about? This is not my house*)

Him: Okay Nomzamo, I know I left you alone, and I probably scared you with my disappearance and I apologise for that, but awuzokuthetha nam kanjalo. (*You will not speak to me like that*) I needed to get some air... to think.

Me: To think? To think about what?

Him: You... and what you are doing to me.

Me: Doing to you? What am I doing to you huh? All I've been doing since I arrived in Port Elizabeth is stress about my brother, cry and run out of hospitals, none of which had anything to do with you. So please explain to me how any of what I've been doing involves you?

Instead of responding to my questions, he takes a deep sigh and shifts his body away from the door frame and starts walking towards the couch that I'm seating on. He removes the

fleece from my feet, lifting my feet in parallel and takes a seat next to me. He places my feet on his lap and covers us both with the fleece. It feels nice to have my feet elevated, and somewhat cuddled, if you know what I mean. I stare at him, still waiting for my answer. When he sees that there is no way out, he finally responds.

Him: Let me tell you a little story. Yazi (*you know*) I've known about you from the first day I met uAnga. I was walking out of Seattle Coffee when he bumped into me, spilling my coffee on my shirt. I was so annoyed at him because I was on my way to a meeting with the association, and now I was going to be late because I'd have to change my shirt. Throughout the ordeal he kept apologizing for his mistake and explained, well more like ramble, that he was stressed out about someone, you, andazi kwakutheni (*I don't know what had happened*), hence he was absent minded. Mna ke (*well*) I'm a very understanding and forgiving person as I don't believe in dwelling too long on something as that may hinder your joy, I understood and forgave him for his mistake. To compensate me for the inconvenience, he asked to take my shirt to the dry cleaners and that's how we exchanged numbers and became friends. Zamo, not a day goes by when I'm with him does he not mention you. He never fails to mention how selfless, loving, overprotective and big-hearted you are, how you stepped up to assist your mom in raising them when you could have chosen to

improve your life. Whenever he spoke about you, I always knew that I'd do anything to meet this phenomenal woman he spoke so highly of and when I eventually did, I was hooked.

Me: Hooked? Wakhe wandibona phi wena? (*Where have you seen me before*) This is my first time meeting you

Him: Sund'phazamisa kaloku bhabha ndisakubalisela mos (*Don't disturb me baby, I'm still telling you my story right*)

There we go again with the bhabha (*baby*) nonsense, but I choose to ignore it and just giggle instead. I won't lie and pretend that I don't like how smooth the word flows out of mouth when he says it... and it may sound even smoother because he's directing it to me but one thing I know for sure, amadoda ngekhe uwa confirm(e) (*You can never be certain when it comes to men*) Me: Okay qhubeka ke (*carry on*)

Him: Okay like I was saying, I always I shied away from you whenever you were near. Remember last year in June when you were supposed to buy a bus ticket for uAnga but he said don't buy one for him because he was going to travel with Luyolo and his parents? That was a lie, he was traveling with me because I begged him to allow me to take him home so that I could see you. If uyakhumbula (*if you remember*) he asked that you meet him etown (*in town*) to help him with his luggage as iparents zika Luyolo (*Luyolo's parents*) were in a rush and wouldn't be able to drop him off at home? That was a lie, I'm

the one who wanted you to come to town so that I could catch a glimpse of you before heading back to PE. I didn't want to disrespect your parents' home by lurking around in the bushes like izuma (*a paedophile*) while hoping to catch a glimpse you, so you coming to town was the best option. I could count so many other instances where I saw you and shied away, whether I was with uAnga or not.

Me: Haibo Siyabulela (*no*), were you stalking me?

Him: *\*chuckles\** No, I wouldn't say I was stalking you, I was just keeping tabs on my love interests

Me: *\*laughs\** Love interests? Hai Siyabulela (*no*)

Him: *\*laughs\** Nyani MaDlamini, (*I promise you*) Whenever the chance presented itself for me to catch a glimpse of you, ndandiyithatha ngazo zoz'bini (*I'd welcome it with both hands*). Anyway, that's not the point of my story. The point is that whenever I saw you, you always seemed like you were in your head, as though you were carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders but whenever I saw you with your siblings, it seemed as though all your worries fade away. Your smile was brighter than normal, and it would reach your eyes, your eyes would sparkle, and you would have an almost instantaneous glow. In all of that, I wanted to bring you more of whatever it is that you were experiencing whenever you were surrounded by your siblings, which is why my heart bled every time I saw you

cry over the past two days. Nomzamo, I am so drawn to you it's not even funny, I'm like a moth to a flame, I want to get closer to the flame even if I will burn and die.

At this point I am left gobsmacked, andiyazi noba ndithini. (*I don't know what to say*) Me: Lela!

Haibo Nomzamo! (*Wow*) And then 'Lela'? Where is that coming from? Uyazithanda izinto! (*You are a liker of things*)

Him: Bhabha (*baby*) you don't have to respond to anything I'm saying right now, because I know that this isn't the time to be discussing any of this, but I thought I could give you context behind my behaviour when it comes to you.

Me: Kodwa (*but*) Siyabulela you don't even know me, and neither do I know you. Besides what you hear and gather from uAnga and whatever else that you've gathered during your stalking escapades, awundazi (*you don't know me*)

Him: Ndiyakuva Zamo (*I hear you*), but honestly, none of that matters to me. We have a lifetime to get to know each other. Endiyaziyo ngoku (*all I know now*) is that I don't ever want to see you cry, I don't want to you to carry your burdens alone, I want to be the one who helps you carry your burdens, the one who makes you smile, well besides your siblings of course *\*chuckles\** and I want to be the one who shields you from all the hurt and pain. I know I'm not perfect, I'm far from it futhi

(*as well*), but I know that this is something I want, no, something that I need, I need you and I know I'd never jeopardise what we could have, at least not intentionally. I have spent so many months fixing and preparing myself for you, for this day, and I'd be damned before I let anything, or anyone destroy all of that.

Me: Yho kodwa Siyabulela (*but*), I didn't expect this, nor do I know how to respond to what you have just shared with me. Dating is not one of my priorities right now?

Him: Ngubani ebethe sizojola? (*Who said we will be dating*)

Me: But you sai...

Him: Nomzamo, I am not planning to court you for long, I've already told you that you are my wife. Kanti ucing'ba ndiyadlala na wena? (*Do you think I'm joking*) Jonga (*look*) MaDlamini, I know that right now you are overwhelmed by a lot of things, and I certainly don't want what I've just shared with you to add on to any of that. I will give you time to think about what I've said, and once things have mellowed down, we can revisit this conversation, what do you say?

Me: Thank you, I'd appreciate that very much. Siya, although I'm saying that I will think about what you have said, I'm also not promising you anything.



Him: You may think so now, but wena, ungowam (*you are mine*)

At this point I'm a blushing mess. Ndiyityisile iteam (*I have failed the team down*). You guys must never send me to war to fight the other gender because I will fail you all, I've already lost this fight I can tell. I may drag it out for now, but I know myself, it's only a matter of time. One thing I will say though about amadoda aseBhay' (*men from Port Elizabeth*) is that they are good with words. Jonga lo undibethe ngobhabha noMaDlamini ndatitseka inqondo tsi amadoda! (*Look at this one who simply said 'baby' and I became dizzy. Wow men*)

Him: Let me make you something to eat before I take you home. What would you like to have?

Me: Anything quick and simple will be fine thank you.

Him: Okay let me make us something quickly. Khona, yintoni le uyibukeleyo? (*Also, what are you watching*)? I can see you really made yourself at home "Miss Ayingomzi wam lona" (*Miss This is not my house/home*)

Me: *\*giggles\** That's not true. I didn't know where you were, and I was getting cold, so I decided to keep myself snug with the fleece and entertain myself by watching a little bit of National Geographic.

Him: You're entertained by watching izilwanyana? (*Animals*)

He asks as though he is disgusted by something.

Me: Yes, and it's not just about animals Siya, it's about nature in general. Subaliqaba (*don't be naive*)

Him: Oksalayo (*basically*) all I'm saying is that you're entertained by animals, not fashion, not food, not reality shows but animals. Hai MaDlamini (*no*), you're truly a different breed. I'm truly a lucky man.

He stares at me for a bit, as though asking himself if I'm really in front of him. After a while he removed my feet and fleece from his lap *\*sulk\** and stands up heading towards what I would presume to be the kitchen. I'm left shaking my head in disbelief of what I just heard from him, for one I didn't expect it and secondly, what I am going to do with a man, a dominating alpha male at that. I'm a very independent and strong-willed woman and my 'consideration' abilities are limited to my siblings only, so what am I going to do with a man whom I'm perceiving as very considerate and loving? I don't have much to give besides what I give my family, at the same time I don't want to downplay the benefits of having someone to lean on, being it a friend or partner but we all need someone. I guess the only question on my mind right now is who and what do I need?

## Chapter 10

The trip back to eNgcobo is lengthy and exhausting. We are all crammed up in this Avanza and the driver is driving like a mad man. He is rarely adhering to any rules of the road, but then again, South African taxi drivers are renowned for not adhering to the regulations of the road. Normally when I travel, I sleep to make time pass quicker but with everything going on in this taxi, I decide to rather stay awake than fall asleep. I know that I'll be tired tomorrow but I console myself by knowing that it's mid-week and I'll get time to rest during the weekend soon. I haven't prepared for any of my lessons this week and honestly, I don't think I will, I'll just wing it or go through some revision. That is the laziest and safest way to get away with being unprepared as an educator. We arrive in Queenstown just after 2pm and we all exit the Avanza and head towards our relevant taxis that will take us to our final destinations. In no time my connecting taxi from Queenstown to eNgcobo is full and we are soon on our way. Throughout this final leg of my trip, I'm excited to get back to my apartment. I've been missing my daily routine; these past three days have really drained me, and I could do with some normalcy.

We arrive eNgcobo at just after 5pm with the sun about to set, which makes me panic a bit as I don't like being outdoors at night. I'm about to scurry off home when I remember that I

don't have food back in the apartment. I quickly dash to Spar to get myself a few things that I can eat for the rest of the week; The rest of the items that I'll for the month I will come and purchase on Friday after school when I also run the rest of my errands. Luckily for me, when I get to Spar it isn't that full and I take less than 30 minutes to buy all that I'll need and I'm soon done and I head on home. I arrive at home safely and inspect my apartment to see if anything has changed since I left, and fortunately everything is still in the same condition as I had left it in. I decide to change out of the clothes that I'm wearing and head to the shower to freshen up before supper. After completing my hygiene routine and getting dressed warmly, I head to the kitchen to warm up my supper and make myself a nice cup of tea. One thing about this winter is that it's brutally cold and this apartment seems to mirror the weather outside quite well. I know that I need to get myself a heater otherwise I will not be able to survive these cold winter nights. I'm about to settle down when I remember that I haven't called my mom or Anga to inform them that I have arrived safely. I dash towards my bedroom, bumping my toe in the corner of the couch, *ouch*, to grab my phone and call mom. When I unlock my phone, I see that I have lots of missed calls and texts. I peruse through the list of missed calls, and I nearly fall over when I see the number of missed calls I have from my mom... 9! Oh, my goodness that woman is going to kill me. You see, in the Mcunu household,

you never, and I mean, EVER miss, or ignore moms phone calls or else you will never hear the end of it. Not only does she find it disrespectful and inconsiderate for one to not answer their phone, but she also starts calling everyone whom she knows to help her in trying to get in touch with you and that just opens an endless process of explaining to people why you went MIA. As though that's not bad enough, she starts telling people that you have gone AWOL because you are with someone, in my case, a man, doing ungodly things. Now imagine the judgemental tones you'll be dealing with when those phone calls start coming through with relatives judging you for being an ungodly and unruly child... So not fun. In this instance though I can count myself lucky because judging by the individuals behind these missed calls, it seems like she hadn't reached out to the entire clan just yet and I'm relieved at that. I take a deep breath and dial her numbers hoping and praying that she doesn't go off at me. I mean just yesterday I 'disappeared' on her and now less than 24 hours apart I'm already going AWOL on her... eish (*disapproval*). I silently hold my breath when the ringing tone on the end of the line stops, and I hear a faint "hello". Judging from the salutation alone I can already tell that I'm in big trouble. I decide to wear my big girl panties and speak to her "Hi ma, I'm sorry I missed your calls, we arrived a bit late eNgcobo and I had to rush to Checkers to get a few things to eat for the week and I forgot to

inform you of my whereabouts.” I say all of that in one breath and in the fastest pace hoping that she hears my reasoning and understands that none of my actions, or lack thereof, were intentional. “It’s okay Nono I was just worried about you because you’d stopped communicating with me after you’d reached Queenstown. I’m glad that you arrived safe and sound baby” she says, and I release a sigh of relief that she isn’t going off the rails at me. “Did you find everything still in order in your apartment?” she asks, and I swell at her benevolence, “Everything is as I’d left it mama, don’t worry” I respond, and I sense her relief when both my answers are to her peace of mind and satisfaction. “Haike (*oh well*) that’s good Nono. I was just checking up on you my baby, we thank God for the traveling mercies. Let me leave you then, I’m sure you still want to prepare for tomorrow” she says with her voice trailing off. My mother’s prayers are honestly what fuel me to carry on “Yho (*gosh*) mama I’m so tired I think I will wake up early in the morning and prepare something to wear otherwise if I fail to wake up early, I’ll just wear something that won’t require an iron” I giggle. She chortles on the other end of the line and says “Ndikwazi unjalo ke wena. (*I know you to be that person*) Sleep well Nono I love you.” A mischievous smile spreads on my face as I hear her disgruntled response regarding my ‘refusal to iron’ habit because I know just how much she hates it. “Good night ma, thanks for checking up on me and I’m sorry for not calling

you earlier. I love you too MaDlamini” I respond and end the call.

I wake up bright and early the next morning to prepare for the day ahead. I’m excited to see my rascals even though I know they will drain my energy very quickly. I’m glad that my flu is almost gone, especially because I know how groggy and unbothered I get when I’m not feeling well. The time now is 07:22 and I’m about to leave my apartment when my phone rings and I pick it up to see who could be calling me this early... It's Siyabulela. Oh, snap. I forgot to return his call last night after I spoke with my mom. He must think that I’m the most unreliable and dishonest person ever. I pinch the bridge of my nose dreading how this conversation may go and answer “Siya?”

Him: Zamo, uright? (*Are you well*)

Me: Ndiright, uright wena? (I’m well thank you, and you)

Him: Hai nam ndiright. Bendithi mandikuchekhe (*I’m also well. I thought I should check up on you*) before you head out to work. I hope I didn’t catch you at a bad time.

Me: No, you didn’t, I was just about to head out.

Him: Oh, okay.

... silence looms and for a second, I assume that he’s dropped the call. I remove my phone from my ear to check if he’s still on

the line, and he still is. I return my phone back to my ear and ask “Siya, are you still there?”

Him: Yes, I am.

Me: Kutheni ingathi undiqumbele nje? (*Why does it seem like you are upset with me*)

Him: Why would you think that?

Me: Andiyazi (*I don't know*), it just seems like your mood is not alright this morning, ingathi udown. (*Like your mood is down*)

Him: No, I'm fine Zamo

there's nothing to worry about, I guess I am, or rather was, worried about you since you didn't call me last night to let me know that you'd traveled safely. I mean you did see my missed calls, right?

Me: Yes, I did. I'm sorry for not calling you back izolo. (*Last night*) We arrived quite late in the afternoon apha (*here*) and when we arrived, I had to rush to Checkers to get some food for the week so by the time I settled down endlini (*at home*) I only managed to return mom's call before I passed out. I'm sorry Siya.

Him: Apology accepted Zamo. I worried about you the entire night and I couldn't exactly call your brother and ask him



whether you'd arrived safely, bendizothi ndibuziswa yintoni?  
(*What would I say my reason is for asking such*)

Me: I understand and I'm sorry Siya for worrying you like that but like I said, I am well and I arrived safely and I can't wait to see my learners.

Him: You seem very excited? I can hear it in your voice. Khona, (*also*) where do you work?

Me: I'd presumed you know Mr Stalker *\*giggle\**

Him: *\*chortle\** I know you're an educator. I just don't know which school you teach at. And by the way, I know all of that because uAnga mentioned it in passing once.

Me: Andiyazi ke mna lonto. (*I can't confirm that statement*) But to answer your question, I'm an educator eTembeni Primary Senior School and I teach grade 10-12 Geography and Biography.

Him: Geography neh? (*Right*) Now it makes sense why you were glued to that show I found you watching when you were here.

Me: I wouldn't say I was glued but yes, I love Geography and that show. Siya, let's talk later neh? (*Right*) I have to get going, I don't want to be late for work.

Him: Oh yes, let me not keep you any further. Enjoy your day neh mkam? (*Okay my wife*)

Me: Uqalile kanene ngalento yakho. (*You're starting with this thing of yours again*)

Him: \*chuckles\* Uxolo MaDlamini (*My apologies*). Call me later alright?

He says that in a low deep tone, almost sultry even... okay! What's with that? Hai, let me not read too much into it.

Me: Okay I will. Bye now.

Him: Bye Zamo.

I drop the call and proceed to go about my day which goes smoothly but by the end of the day, I am beyond exhausted, those mischiefs managed to drain all my energy in just two periods just as I'd anticipated. By the time I leave the school premises, I'm already fantasizing about what I'll do as soon as I arrive; I will get out of these damn uncomfortable clothes and wear my warm onesie then I'll snuggle up in front of the TV and watch a nice romcom or chick flick while stuffing my face with any junk and sip on a nice glass of red wine. For me, relaxing in front of the TV after a long day is a form of self-care, my kind of self-care. I'm approaching my block of flats when I see a crowd of people gathered by our parking lot and there seems to be a commotion going on. Next to the crowd is a police van and an

ambulance and I can see a police officer is speaking to one of the guards from our complex, gosh I hope none of what has happened impacts me. The paramedics are railing someone in the back of their vehicle but I'm unable to make out who the patient is. I enter the complex and decide to ignore the buzz and rather head straight to my apartment. I'll ask the guard tomorrow morning what happened here today. Just as I'm about to go up the flight of stairs leading to my apartment, I hear someone say "Sorry sisi, awuzukwazi ukunyuka apho." (*Sorry sister, you can't go up there*) I look to the direction of where the voice seems to come from and furrow my eyebrows together trying to locate whoever uttered those words for them to confirm whether they are speaking to me or not. A man emerges from the crowd and walks towards me and says "sorry sisi awuzokwazi ukunyuka ezo stairs, the police are busy upstairs." (*You won't be able to go up those stairs*) "Busy? Busy doing what upstairs?" I ask him, aggravated by the realization that my plans are now being delayed. He shakes his head lightly and runs his right hand over his bald head before saying "Lamjita uhlala kwa (*that man that stays at apartment*) 16 beat his girlfriend to a pulp earlier and dragged her out of his apartment and left her down here, in the parking lot to die." I gasp in shock "What?" I ask him in shock. He shakes his head again as though in disbelief and says "It's true sister. Apparently, he found her in bed with another man and beat him and her up,

but the man managed to escape and unfortunately the girlfriend wasn't so lucky. Currently the policemen are upstairs gathering evidence against him so all of us who stay on that floor will not be able to go up until they are done." I clap my hands once astonished at what this man is telling me. That couple from apartment 16 was one of the sweetest couples you'd ever meet. Whenever you'd bump into them in the complex or somewhere in town, they were always smiling with each other or goofing around. That guy was the sweetest, he'd always offer to assist in carrying my groceries if we bumped into each other when I'd just come back from town, so to learn that he bashed his girlfriend... no, to learn that the girlfriend cheated is mind boggling. I guess you never really know what goes on in people's lives, especially behind closed doors. My mom always says "never wish for someone's something as you don't know how that person obtained that something." and that has always stuck with me. I may be envious of certain things, but I never wish for anyone else's life but my own. "Now what must we do while we wait for them to finish?" I ask this man, whose name I don't care to know and he responds to me rather flatly and says "Nam andiyazi." (*I also don't know*) I roll my eyes inwardly and walk to the direction of the crowd and decide to stand with them until the police are done.

The police only finished their evidence crime scene investigation after an hour and by then I was fed up with being

on my feet. I mean my profession forces me to be on my feet all day and to have to stand for another hour on top of the 6 hours that I do, is pure torture. I literally drag my legs up the stairs and hope that I reach my apartment within the next 10-15 steps. The plans I had for self care are no longer in my mind now, the only thing I want right now is my bed; I won't even bother eating supper because I don't even think that I have energy to fix myself anything nor do I have the energy to chew on anything. I get into my apartment and head straight to my bedroom to change out of my work clothes and into something comfortable. I get into my bed and decide to call Siyabulela before I doze off or else he will think I'm ignoring him, which I'm not. His phone rings and he picks up on the first ring almost immediately, surprising me even "Sthandwa sam" (*my love*) he answers me, panting. "Siya, uright?" (*Are you well*) I inquired in a concerned tone but instead he huffs and says "ndiright bhabha akhonto I'm at gym." Oh, that explains why he's releasing ragged breaths.

Me: Oh, haike ke bendikuchekha (*Oh, I was checking up on you*)

Him: How sweet of you bhabha. Are you okay? You sound a bit down?

Me: I'm okay, I'm just exhausted.

Him: Askies bhabha. (*Sorry baby*) If I was close by, I was going to prepare a nice bath for you to soak yourself in and feed you ukutya okumnandi (*nice food*)

Me: That sounds heavenly but I guess what I have right now will have to do.

Him: I guess so bhabha (*baby*). Uright kodwa nyani? (*Are you sure that you are okay*) You don't just sound exhausted, it seems like there's something else that's bothering you.

Me: No I'm okay it's just that there's an incident that happened earlier at our complex where one of my neighbors beat his girlfriend up because he found her in bed with another man and that just kind of killed my mood.

Him: Yho that's bad. Is the lady okay?

Me: I don't know. I only arrived home after the incident.

Him: Umjita yena? (*What about the guy*)

Me: He has been arrested by the cops

Him: It's really an unfortunate event. Umjita (*the guy*) shouldn't have beat her up no matter how upset he was. Umfazi akabethwa. (*You don't raise your hand on a woman*)

Me: Let's not speak about the matter any further. It just makes me sad. Anyway, I was just returning my promise to call you before you start complaining

Him: I'd never complain mna qha (*but*) ndizos'ke ndifownele umntu qha (*I'd just call you*)

I giggle at his conviction

Me: Haike xa usitsho ndod'enkulu. (*If you say so big man*)

Him: Ndimkhulu ke futhi (*And I am big*)

Me: Yho hai Siya (*Wow. No*) Hai let me leave you.

Him: No, you can't drop the phone just yet, we are still speaking mos

Me: Hayi (*no*) I have to go and I'm sleepy. I won't be able to hold this conversation any longer.

Him: Haike (*oh well*) it's fine leave me, just like you did izolo. (*Yesterday*)

Me: You know it wasn't like that

Him: It's okay, I'll be alright. You can go to sleep and I'll carry on with my session. Ulale kamnandi MaDlamini, uphuphe ngam. (*Sleep well, dream about me*)

Me: *\*giggles\** Goodbye Siya.

I shake my head lightly as I chuckle, ending the call. One can never be sure how a conversation may end up. He always manages to put a smile on my face whether it's from his cheesy selection of words or just his kind-heartedness. I'm really

starting to like our spontaneous engagements. Anyway, I decide to block out what had happened earlier and just focus on the rest and sleep that I desperately need. It doesn't take long before my eyes get heavy and darkness overwhelms me.



## Chapter 11

The past couple of weeks seemed to have passed by so quickly. We had our sports day where I was the umpire for the netball team. Back in my day, way back in my day, I used to play the center position in the sport. I'm short by nature but fast on my feet so you can understand why that position was very befitting. The September school holidays begin on Friday and both educators and learners are eagerly counting down to the day; it has honestly been a busy term and both parties need and deserve this break. Anga has also recovered well so much so that he returned to Port Elizabeth to attend the rest of his lectures for the remaining quarter. Luckily, he didn't miss much during his recovery period back home as his friends made sure to share with him class notes and submit any assignments that were due. He did mention that he would not be coming home for these holidays as he wanted to revise the work he'd received while he was away to prepare himself ahead of time for his end of year exams. Glad that he was being proactive about his studies, I was also a bit bummed that he wasn't going to be coming home for the holidays. See, I wanted to use him as a scapegoat to mom and say that he is visiting me these holidays hence we are both not going home. You may be wondering why I'm not going home this holiday well... Siyabulela and I have become quite close during the past couple of weeks, so much so that we are spending a few days together

during the September holidays. See what happened was, during one of our daily evening calls, he started being his sulky self, moping that he was missing me so much so that he was planning on driving down that night to see me as he couldn't handle 'the pain in his heart' anymore; by the way those were his words, not mine. His impulsive self would not hear the reason for anything I said when I tried to stop him from taking such a rash decision. He refuted and said the only thing that would make him not come that night was if I agreed to visit him during the holidays. Backed in a corner, I ended up agreeing to his offer under the premise that he'd forget about the trip, or I'd avoid the topic whenever it arose again but to my misfortune, the man never failed to mention the trip every chance he got. He seemed elated to be honest that we'd be spending some 'quality time' together as he mentioned it.

When it came to discussing the logistics of the visit, he wanted to be the one who travels down to eNgcobo as he felt that it was more convenient for him to do so since he had a car, but I didn't feel comfortable with that as it was going to be more expensive for him taking into consideration fuel and stuff and, I also didn't want to risk being seen by people who knew me, or my mother. He found fault with my reasoning stating that I was trying to hide him, which was not true, and that I probably had a man eNgcobo hence my reluctance for him to be the one who visits *\*eye roll\**. We had a huge fall out surrounding that aspect

of the visit, which was so unpleasant for me if I'm being quite honest I'm not used to being at loggerheads with him. He eventually saw reason and agreed that I would be the one who travels as it made more economic sense and we'd only risk being seen by uAnga which was the most preferable option, as opposed to dealing with the people from eNgcobo. As nervous as I am about this trip, I'm also excited about the possibilities of what lies ahead. It's no brainer that I do like Siyabulela and that I do have feelings for him, feelings which I have not disclosed to him as I'm still trying to make sense of what they are and what they could mean but these feelings have not prompted me to accept his proposal for us to court, although I know that it's inevitable, I will end up with this man.

It's Thursday evening and I'm rummaging through my wardrobe trying to decide on the items of clothing that I should pack with me for the trip. The issue is not selecting the weather appropriate item, but rather which item would make me look appealing to this man. I've never been one to dwell too much on my appearance but since the conversations surrounding this trip began, I've become more conscious of what would be more obsequious and what wouldn't be. Take this for an example, normally I shave my bikini area and underarms when I need to, like in summer, but yesterday I found myself going to a beauty parlor to get waxed. I took this decision because I assumed the man would not appreciate any bushes from me, not that I'm

implying that anything of that nature will occur, not that I would stop if the opportunity presented itself either, but I thought that I would not want his first intimate impression of me to be that of an unkept lady. Anyway, I selected a few of my matching lacey undergarments, a few casual dresses, jeans, t-shirts, shirts, sleepwear, and a variety of shoes. I'm mindful that I don't overpack as I don't want this man to assume that I'm moving in; I plan to stay there for three days, four max. The plan is to pack all my clothing items tonight and pack my cosmetics in the morning so that I can just come and collect the bag after school without having to do all this. The following morning, I woke up a little bit tired and anxious, I barely slept through the night, and I know all the anxiety stems from this trip, although I try to console myself with the fact that should anything go south, Anga is close by. This consolation also means that I must inform uAnga that I will be in PE for a few days though I'll not be there to see him. I hope he'll assume that I'm there for work, like umculo (*musicals*) and because of a boy/man.

My day goes smoothly with my mischiefs behaving for the most part of the day, which is surprising really or maybe they could sense that I'm not in my best of moods today. By 2pm I am rushing out of the school premises heading home to collect my bag. I know I will arrive quite late eBhayi (*Port Elizabeth*) which freaks me out a bit

## Advertisement

but I find comfort in knowing that Siya is mobile and will be able to fetch me from wherever. By 8pm we are in Port Elizabeth and the taxi driver has offered to drop us off at our various locations should we wish. I call Siya to find out if I should be dropped off eGreenacres or if I should ask the driver to drop me off at his place, he chooses the latter and says that he will forward me his address. In no time dropped off in front of a familiar house and I can see Siya already standing outside the gate waiting for me... my heart blooms at how sweet and considerate he is. He walks my way, smiling, revealing his pearly whites and kissed my forehead before collecting my bags and thanking the driver for dropping me off. As we walk, he shifts his gaze and looks at me, smiling and says "Mkam." (*My wife*) I blush profusely at his adornment and look down hiding the crimson that has decided to grace my face. "Siya" I respond to him in a low whisper, almost inaudible but judging from his chuckle and demeanor, I guess he heard me. "Uright sthandwa sam?" (*Are you well my love*) he asks as he opens the main door for me making way for me to enter first... aren't we glad that chivalry still exists. "I'm okay thank you how are you" I ask earnestly as I make way to the familiar lounging area, "Ndiright nam Bhabha." (*I am well too, baby*) he tells me to make myself comfortable, which I already have, as he takes my luggage to 'our room'. I take off my shoes and cuddle on top of the couch

while wrapping myself with the fleece that was already laid out on the couch. He comes back and stands in front of me while stretching his one hand out for me to take

“I have missed you so much mnt’wam” (*my love*) he says and pulls me into his warm embrace

“I missed you too, I won’t lie” as I wrap my hands around his waist

“Really?” he asks smirking

“Yes, I did. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want you to get big headed” I giggle, his chest vibrates as he releases a low chuckle

“Oh, now I’m big-headed. I’ll show you what a big head is, don’t say I didn’t warn you”

“Ndiyadlala Siya” (*I’m joking*)

“Yiza (*come*) baby, I prepared a bath for you. Everything you’ll need is the cabinets, but if there’s anything that you need, but you can’t find, we will go and buy it tomorrow, okay?”

“Okay. Thank you, Siya,”

“I’ll warm up our supper while you bathe, okay? You will find me here” he says as he plants a soft warm kiss on my cheek and releases me from his embrace.

He directs me to the door of his bedroom and when I walk in, I gasp at the beautiful set up before me; the room is lit with candles everywhere, there's soft music playing in the background and there are rose petals on the floor leading towards a certain door. I make my way to the second door, which I find is the bathroom. The bathroom follows the same ambiance as the bedroom with candles and rose petals everywhere. There's a glass of red wine placed on the bath caddy; a euphoric smile spreads across my face at the thoughtful and romantic gesture before me. I remove the clothes I'm wearing and get into the bathtub, relaxing my muscles. I sigh in relief as the warm water detangles the knots in my body. I take a sip of the wine and close my eyes as the red liquid makes its way down my throat. I sit in the tub for a few minutes before I hear footsteps coming towards the bathroom and a few seconds later I hear Siya's voice behind the door "Are you still okay in there?" I titter at the sound of his worried voice "I'm fine. I'll be out in a few minutes" I respond with my hands covering my mouth trying to suppress the giggle that's trying to force its way out of my throat. I hear him mumble something under his breath before I hear his footsteps fade away from the door. I quickly get out of the water and clean the tub once I'm done. I dry myself with the towel he'd hung for me on the rail and quickly moisturize my body with my cosmetics that he'd laid out for me on the bathroom vanity. I can't find my bag

anywhere, so I decide to wear the big fluffy gown that's hanging behind the door, which I presume is his and make my way out of the bathroom grabbing his slippers along the way.

I navigate through the house trying to find the kitchen where I assume this man is "Siya? Uphi?" (*Where are you*) I call out when I can't seem to find him. "Two doors to your left Bhabha" he calls out and I head towards the sound of his voice, and I find him placing a casserole dish on top of the dining table. My mouth salivates when I look at the feast that he's prepared for us; this man can cook that's for sure. I'm going to have to up my game here. I walk in and find him gawking, his eyes are all out, roaming all over my body while he stands frozen on the other end of the dining table. His eyes move from my feet to my hips, then they linger on my chest area, and at this point I wonder if he can tell I'm not wearing anything underneath this gown or not. I start feeling hot beneath his gaze and tear my eyes away from him and look at the floor. He seems to snap out of his trance, and I hear him clear his throat as he saunters towards me. When he reaches me, he doesn't do or say anything but simply towers over me, staring into my orbs as though trying to read my soul and I also find myself lost in his hazel brown eyes. After a few seconds of staring into each other's souls, I feel him placing his warm hands on the sides of my waist followed by his head on the nape of my neck, inhaling me and nibbling on my soft skin. I release a soft moan as I feel



the heat of his body and as mine comes alive at the impact. I shift my neck slightly further away from him, granting him further access as he continues with his slaughter. He moves his hands away from my waists and places them on my bums and starts to gently caress and squeeze each bum to his satisfaction. At this point, my knees are becoming weaker, and my breathing is no longer steady. He releases a low growl and my breath hitches at the sound. "You smell divine my love" he says in a low, rough and husky voice. The zoo in my stomach comes to life and I can feel my body being covered with goosebumps. I'm too far gone to even say a word right now, and all I manage to mutter is a low 'mm' in response. He inhales sharply before he removes himself from me while looking at me with hooded eyes. "Let's go have our supper love before I turn you into my supper instead" he smirks, taking my hand leading me to the table. My core moistens at the mention of me being supper, and I know he has me right where he wants me. Gosh, it's only night one and already my thoughts are in the gutter, lord have mercy. I just hope we will be able to sleep through the night without any problems because andizelanga lonto apha. (*I am not here for that*)

## Chapter 12

Siya sits me down on a chair just next to where I presume he will be seated. I thank him and lower myself onto the chair. We are still stealing glances at each other and if it was any other day, I'd unleash my impatient self on him but because I've settled for being a lady for the duration of my stay here, I decide to shut my mouth and let the man feast on this meal in front of him. Oh yes, don't get it twisted, I know that I am a snack and a half, like I've said before, I've never been one who's short of confidence. My mama raised us well and made sure that we're not co-dependent on anyone but ourselves. Anyway, Siya starts plating the starter for the both of us; a miso and butternut soup which he serves with croutons. I close my eyes and release an unintentional moan as soon as the thick and creamy liquid makes contact with my tastebuds. Everything in me is singing 'hallelujah' at this point. One thing about me is that I love food and I'm not shy to express my appreciation for God's delicacies. I have never had soup that tastes as good as this and I'm compelled to ask him to share his recipe with me. I open my eyes to find him staring at me, his eyes flickering, exuding emotions that I can't quite phantom at the moment. He holds my stare "Don't do that" he says in a low rugged voice. Confused at what he's referring to, I raise my right brow, as though I'm asking him to elaborate on what he's referring to but instead of providing me with what I need, this stubborn

man shakes his head in reproof and continues to finish his soup without uttering a word. When we're done with the starters he collects our bowls and takes them to the kitchen and comes back with a glass of red wine and a beer in his hands. He hands the glass of wine to me and pulls out the chair next to me and lowers himself on it. He takes my left hand and pulls it towards his lips and plants a delicate kiss on my knuckles while staring deep in my orbs. I blush at his gesture and a smile spreads wide across my face. "I'm so happy that you are here with me baby" he says while looking at me tenderly. The butterflies in my stomach flutter uncontrollably and I stare back at him in adoration and in awe at how handsome this man next to me is. Instead of responding to his endearing statement, I shift my chair closer to him and snuggle my body in his hold.

We've just finished our three course meal and I'm so full, I literally feel like Garfield and I'm suffering from the worst case of lethargy. I wash the dishes and tell Siya to relax but he refuses and says that he can't watch me 'slave away' in his kitchen while I'm his guest *\*eye roll\**. I end up agreeing with him to help me wipe and pack the dishes while I wash. As I'm washing the dishes, we keep passing glances at each other without saying a word. He passes behind me to pick up one of the dishes that we were using and wipes it down but when he walks back with it to place it in the cupboard, he makes sure to

brush his body on mine. I hold on to the sink firmly and close my eyes as I react to his movement. The sexual tension is so high in this kitchen and I'm wondering if we'll be able to finish what we're doing. He continues with his torture while we're washing the dishes but I simply ignore him, well at least I try to much to his satisfaction as he can see how much effect he has on me. I finish with washing all the utensils we used and start wiping down the kitchen counters. I remove the prop from the sink to release the water and wipe it down. I feel his heavy presence behind me but I don't dare turn my body to face him. He presses his body on mine, trapping me in between himself and the sink and I feel his body heat on mine. His warm breath fans my ear and my breath hitches. He snuggles his face on the nape of my hair and starts planting soft kisses while sucking on my soft skin. I lean back on his chest and open myself up to the pleasure that I'm receiving. His chest vibrates and releases a deep growl and inhales sharply as I push my body further into his with my ass all perched up onto his manhood. He sinks his nails on the skin on my waist and holds me firmly into place as my knees begin to buckle under his indulgence. "Siya" I say breathily while steadying myself

"Your skin is so soft" he groans.

"Mm"

"You enjoyed taunting me throughout dinner, mm?"

“N...n...ooo”

“Then why did you come out dressed like this?” he asks, tearing his hands away from my waist and raising them to my thighs.

“But... I’m, I’m dressed” I say in a whisper.

“In what? This?” he asks mockingly while untying the belt of the bathrobe I’m dressed in. I immediately come back to my senses when I realise where this is going.

“Siya, s..stop” I try to say firmly but in all honesty, I want him to continue doing with his slaughter. My inner whore is doing back flips and vosho’s (*A dance move*) while unraveling joyously at this moment.

“Damn it Zamo, what are you doing to me?”

“I’m not doing anything to you, but I think it’s best that we go to bed.” He groans in disapproval and mumbles something underneath his breath, but I don’t bother to ask him what he’s saying but I continue with the mission at hand... I release myself from his grip, tie my bathrobe and turn back to look at him. His eyes are red and hooded, a vein is visible on the side of his head and based on the tent in his pants, I can tell how dire this situation is. I find myself giggling when he huffs and starts fixing the front of his sweatpants, but I have no remorse for my decision, we can’t be engaging in such activities so soon, well at least not on day one... Just imagine! Yho! (*Wow*) I decide to not

focus on what he's doing as I'm not ready to deal with whatever animal he has stacked up in there. Instead I sashay out of the kitchen and head towards the bedroom. I can hear his heavy footsteps behind me, but I don't dare slow down nor turn back to look at him because I know his eyes will render me weak, and I'm not willing to lose this fight. I enter the bedroom and head straight to the bed to peel off the pillows that we won't be using for the night from the bed and place them on the single couch that he has in the corner of his room. He walks in shortly after me and heads straight to the bathroom... to take a cold shower maybe? I giggle softly at my crazy thoughts.

I'm done with preparing the bed for the night and now I'm busy raking my eyes through this bedroom trying to locate my bag. Yazi iyitheni ibag yam lendoda nkos'yam. (*I wonder what this man has done with my bag*) The bathroom door bursts open and he steps out with a towel wrapped around his waist looking like a god. My mouth becomes dry instantly as he stands tall before me. His stare is still intense and his eyes sweep across my body, as though imprinting each part of me in his brain. It seems like he just took a shower judging by his magnificently toned physique that's adorned with water droplets. My eyes keep moving up and down his torso although they seem to gravitate more towards his Adonis belt. I press my thighs together when my honey pot starts throbbing uncontrollably. I gulp a whole lot of nothing and start fidgeting, this man can't

keep teasing and tempting me like this. Does he know that I'm a child of God and I refuse to be tempted by the devil?

"Like what you see?" he asks but I pretend like I don't know what he's referring to, "I'm not sure what you are talking about?" I retaliate deadpanned. I see a ghost smile curve from his lips. Instead of responding to my question, he walks out of the bathroom and heads toward the wardrobe. He drops his towel, and lets it pool at his feet as he starts to moisturise his body... I'm gobsmacked at this. I turn away from him to avoid salivating any further and I decide to leave the room and go search for my bag in the spare bedroom. Perhaps he has placed the bag in the room where I'd be spending the night. I'm deflated at the thought of being a little presumptuous to assume that we'd be sharing a bed. I'm about to walk out the bedroom door when he gently grabs my wrist while still stark naked, and asks "Where are you going?". "I'm going to the spare bedroom to look for my bag, I need my pyjamas" I say in response. "You could have just asked me my love and I would've told you where your bag is. I unpacked all your clothes and placed them inside the wardrobe next to mine. Your bag is in the spare room inside the wardrobe." I'm left in awe yet again at how considerate this man is. "Oh, thank you ba... uhm Siya. I was wondering where it went" I say attempting to continue with my journey to the wardrobe. He stops me in my tracks with a raised eyebrow. Haibo, yintoni ngoku? (Wow,

*what is it now*) “Uyaphi?” he asks in confusion. Haibo (*wow*), did I not tell this man that I’m looking for my pyjamas

kanti (*but*) what was the point of this discussion if he wasn’t paying attention to what I was saying. “To get my pyjamas Siya” I say in an irritable tone. “For what?” he refutes in an equally exasperated attitude. “Kanti, aren’t we going to sleep now? Or do people not go to bed in their sleepwear xa belala?” (*But... when they sleep*) I enquire with a raised brow and hands folded across my chest. Please bear in mind that this man is standing in the middle of the room, kaal (*naked*) as we’re bickering. “Not kwam they don’t” he responds imperturbably then walks to the bed and peels the covers away and gets inside. (*My house*)

He looks at me expectedly and I wonder if all is well with this one upstairs. What does he mean that people don’t sleep in their sleepwear in his house? Has he had other people sleep here before me? Naked at that? I shudder at the thought of other women sleeping here... and not just that but sleeping with him naked. But then again, he’s an adult with a history, therefore it would be unfair of me to expect him to have a clean slate. I’m snapped out of my thoughts by his voice “Nomzamo, yiza uzok’lala” he says firmly. (*Come and sleep*) “Sleep? Sleep phi?” I respond in a high-pitched voice with my eyes bulging out. Me? Nomzamo Mcunu, sleep next to this man? N-A-K-E-D? Hayi inoba uyadlala. (*No, he must be joking*)



“Where do you want to sleep then?” he asks while getting up from his sleeping position to sit straight against the headboard while folding his arms across his chest. I really don’t know how to respond to his question because it’s not about where I want to sleep but rather how I want to sleep, clothed, and he’s fully aware of this but instead of being understanding he wants to make me suffer. I know that he wants me to sleep next to him naked so that he can continue with his devilish antics, but I refuse to go down without a fight. “Nomzamo, please just come to bed my love” he pleads with me. I give in and walk back toward the bed, nervous as hell. Perhaps I can sleep in this robe seeing that it’s already on and I’m being denied permission to sleep in my nightwear. I stand next to the bed contemplating my next move and he lazily shifts his gaze towards me and says “Don’t even think about it. Remove that robe and get into bed sthandwa sam.” (*My love*) I heave out a sigh and start undressing. When last did I strip for a man? *\*giggle\** Okay, not strip strip but you get what I’m saying. I climb into bed and cover myself with the covers, careful not to sleep too close to him... Gosh this is awkward. He lowers himself away from the headboard and places his warm hands on my waist and pulls me to him. As anxious as I am about being so close to him in this manner, I still find comfortable in his embrace. I snuggle close to his chest and inhale his fresh and earthy scent. He starts brushing my arm with his hand up and down as I rest on

his chest and that alone sends tingling sensations through my body.

We stay in blissful silence for a while, content to be in each other's arms while we listen to each other's heart beats. He plants a pepper kiss on my forehead before releasing a heavy sigh

“You know, I've always known that whenever I meet my rib, I'd know instantly. Like I'd said before, I'm a straight forward man and I know what I want. When I first heard Anga speak of you, I knew I was in trouble. I had not even met you, but somehow you had already managed to lure me in.” he chuckles while shaking his head but continues with his random rant “You know, I always told my father that, the day I find the love of my life, I'd never let them go. I always told him that I'd smother her with love and make sure that she always felt loved and appreciated. Zamo, having you here with me is all I've been yearning for since I picked you up at Greenacres. From the first time I saw you, I knew I wanted nothing else than to fall asleep and wake up with you in my arms. I've dreamt of the day where I'd walk into our house and find you dozing off in front of the TV while your favourite TV show is playing in the background. I know you're still debating on whether you should pursue a relationship with me or not, but I can promise you MaDlamini, awusoze uzisole. I know actions speak louder than words which

is why I hope by the end of your stay here, you'll be able to witness just how deep my love for you is." (*You won't regret it*) My eyes have become blurry due to the tears that are threatening to fall, as a result I'm unable to say anything in response to what he's just shared with me right now, instead I raise my face to look at him and all I can see from his eyes is endearment and love. I raise my body a little and plant a kiss on his luscious lips to show him that not only do I hear and believe what he's just shared with me, but that I also resonate with his feelings.

I place my right hand on his cheek and stare at him while planting another sultry kiss on his plump lips. His lips are soft and taste like a mixture of mint and beer. I think he brushed his teeth after he took a shower. I gently bite and pull on his lower lip. He growls at my tease and reciprocates my tease by doing the same to my upper lip. I involuntarily part my lips and release the moan that is stuck on my throat and he uses this opportunity to invade my mouth with his tongue. I've never been a fan of involving tongues when kissing but whatever this man is doing with his, is glorious. My body temperature has now elevated beyond the recommended degree, and my breathing has also intensified. He swiftly flips the both of us which ends up with me lying beneath him while he's on top. Bazalwane, the zoo that has been unleashed in my stomach right now is indescribable. (*Brethren*) The kiss intensifies, and

his hands roam all over my body. He starts caressing my thighs and sweeps his hands directly to my breasts. His touch is setting my entire body ablaze as gently tugs and squeezes each of my melons. He is touching everywhere except for where I need him the most. He pulls away from me, leaving us both gasping for air. He looks down on me and I'm drawn into those beautiful hazel brown eyes of his and I see all the love he keeps speaking of. He plants a dainty kiss on forehead before slumping his body next to me and lays me gently on his chest. "Let's sleep, my love. I'm sure you're tired." At this point I want to scream at both him and I, at him for getting me hot and bothered like this to only drop me like a hot potato. But then again, wasn't I the one who said I didn't want to engage in such activities so soon? Another example of why I should never be sent to fight the other gender unless you want to lose. I snuggle even closer to him and try to fall asleep. I'm restless for a while as I can't seem to get this ache between my thighs to disappear. I guess my restlessness is disturbing him from his sleep because he holds me still and says "Please sleep my love. I will take care of your itch in the morning. But for now, please try and get some rest. Please, my love. Ungakhe ulinge uzibambe ke or else uzondazi. And don't think that I won't know if you do, trust me, I will." *(Don't you dare touch yourself or you'll know me)* I press my thighs together as I imagine him 'taking care of my itch'. Yeyi, makude kuse man. *(Hey, let it be morning already)*

## Chapter 13

Sleeping was such a challenge for me last night. For one, I'm not used to sharing my sleeping space with anyone, let alone a man. Secondly, I normally have difficulties with falling asleep in new environments irrespective of how exhausted I am, sometimes my body just finds it difficult to familiarize itself with new surroundings. Lastly, as much as Siya tried to prevent me from tossing and turning throughout the night, it made no difference because as soon as he let go of me, the fidgeting began. This wasn't only on my part though, but on his too. The man could not keep his hands off me, which of course worsened the situation. I don't know when we fell asleep, but eventually we did. It's the next morning and I'm wide awake but I'm not sure if he is and I'm scared to check in case I wake him up. I can hear his shallow breathing, but I can't tell if this is his 'sleeping' breathing pattern or whether he's also awake and is just waiting for me to show signs of life. As pressed as I am, I decide to stay put and utilize this moment to have a proper look at this striking specimen lying next to me. He has beautiful long black eyelashes that put mine to shame. His lips are slightly parted and pouted, and his nose keeps flaring with every breath that he takes. His beard is so well groomed that it makes me itch to run my fingers through it. I refrain from doing anything that could wake him up and opt for drawing invisible circles on his hairy chest. His body is so nice and warm that I

find myself pulling closer to him so that I can be all snuggled up next to him. I have my one leg intertwined with his and the other brushing up and down his foot. We are still naked by the way, but I've had the entire night to get used to our naked bodies contacting each other so I'm no longer bothered much by it.

As I'm lying on his chest, the urge to release what's in my bladder intensifies and I'm forced to remove myself from his embrace and make my way to the bathroom. I'm almost out of his clasp when he shifts from his sleeping position and pulls me closer "Where are you going?" he asks in a gruff voice that sends vibrations to my honey pot. "I need to use the bathroom" I respond to him while untangling myself further. He mumbles a "mm" and tells me to return to bed quickly after I'm done. I take hurried steps towards the bathroom and release the pee that has been taunting me since I woke up. I wipe myself and flush the toilet after I'm done and decide to freshen up before I head back to bed. I wash my hands and look for my toothbrush and toothpaste, which I find in the cabinet just above the sink and I brush my teeth. I splash water on my face just to remove the sleep lines that are on my face, and I waltz back into the bedroom. One would think that he would be up by now, but no the man is still asleep. I don't complain though, instead I decide to use the time that he's still asleep to go and make breakfast for the both of us. I look at my phone that's currently on the

bedside stand and I see that the time is just after seven. I think it will be a nice gesture and surprise for him if I serve him breakfast in bed considering he went all out for me last night. I tippy toe around the room looking for something comfortable to wear besides the robe and decide to wear one of his t-shirts that I find on top of the couch in the corner. The t-shirt sits just below my bum, but I don't mind as it's offering me the comfort that I need and I mean, the man has seen me stark naked already therefore I don't see the need to hide myself from him. I gently open the door, careful that I don't make a noise and I head out to the kitchen. When I get there, the first thing I do is brew a cup of tea for myself; I'm not a coffee person as you can tell. I open his fridge to have a look at what he has, and I'm pleasantly surprised to find the fridge fully stocked with food, food that I'm familiar with and food that I will be able to use to make this killer breakfast. I decide on making shakshuka, cheesy beef bangers, pork, spicy beans, and toasted bread and I start taking out all the ingredients that I will need and placing them on the kitchen counter tops. I decide to be a little extra and make oats as well on the side just so we can have a balanced breakfast. I prepare the oats and place it on the stove then I move on to preparing the shakshuka. The way I'm moving so freely around this kitchen one would swear that I own this place, or I've been here before. In my defense, the way he stores his ingredients and utensils is so sensible and

functionable so much so that it's easy to find things. I'm done in no time with breakfast, and I start plating for the both of us. I place the food on a tray and pour him a cup of coffee, which I presume he takes as he has a large container of it here, and a glass of orange juice and make my way to the bedroom. I push the door open with my hips, and he raises his head to look at me when the door creaks open as I walk in. He has a smile on his face as he rubs sleep from his eyes "What did I do to deserve this love?" he says as his eyes move up and down my legs, to the food then to my face. I blush and look down and walk to stand next to his side of the bed, hovering over him. "Nothing, I just thought I would spoil you a bit seeing that you went all out for me last night" I respond as I feel the heat on my cheeks. He gets up from his sleeping position and balances his back on the headboard. He stretches both his hands and takes the tray from me.

"This looks good my love. Thank you."

"It's a pleasure. I hope you enjoy it."

"I will but only after you've greeted me properly,"

"Oh yes, I'm sorry, good morning, I hope you slept well?"

"With you by my side, I slept like a baby even though you kicked me all night" he says smiling and I burst out laughing.



“I don’t kick when I sleep su’xoka nge gama lam.” (*Don’t speak lies about my name*)

“Oh yes you do sthandwa sam, I will show you the evidence one day” he says chuckling. (*My love*)

“No, you’re lying, but you know what I will not argue with you about that. Let me leave you to enjoy your breakfast. I’ll have mine in the lounge, I want to binge watch some of National Geo.”

“But you haven’t greeted me good morning nje my love?” he sulks (*Though*)

“I did nje.” (*Though*)

“No, you didn’t. Where is my good morning kiss? Mm?” Gosh this man. I roll my eyes as though I don't want to do this but deep down, I know just how much I want to taste those lips again. I lower my body and bring my face forward and lean in to kiss him. He places his one hand on my neck and draws me into the kiss and I release a low moan at how sensual and unrushed the kiss is. He growls a bit while he sucks on my lower lip. He uses his other hand to brush up my thighs and to my bum and when his hand lands on my ass, he gently squeezes it, releasing another snarl. From his response I can tell that he is an ass man. I feel the tingling sensation on my madam intensify, and I decide to pull out of this kiss before it turns into something

else, and he ends up spilling the contents of the breakfast I worked so hard for.

“Baby, stop. Your breakfast is getting cold.” I say pulling out of the kiss while panting. The inner part of my thighs is sticky and uncomfortable, and I know that’s what he wanted. He’s looking at me

smiling like a retard.

“What did you just say?”

“I said your breakfast is getting cold.”

“No before that bhabha, what did you call me?” he asks with a smirk plastered on his face. (*Baby*) Snap, I called him baby. Oh well, it was bound to happen anyway. I mean the man calls me Bhabha, mkam, my love and all these endearing words so I guess it was about time I fell into the trap. (*Baby, wife*)

“Hai sudika” I say, giggling. (*Don’t be a bore*)

“I’m not judging you, I just wanted to confirm whether I heard you correctly or not, that’s all.”

“You did now stop making a huge fuss about it and eat your breakfast. I’ll be in the lounge if you need me”

“Will you be sitting around dressed like that?”

“Like how?” I ask, analyzing the t-shirt that I’m wearing.

“In that t-shirt only?” he says, eyeing me from head to toe as he checks me out.

“Yes. There’s nothing wrong with this. It’s only us in the house, right?”

“Yes, it is but I’ll not sit here and eat my breakfast alone while I could do so while watching your creamy thighs” he says in a seductive tone. I roll my eyes at him when I realize what he means by his statement. “Mxm’ I say, and I hit him on his shoulder gently before walking out leaving him calling out my name. I don’t pay attention to him, instead I head to the kitchen to plate for myself and enjoy the fruits of my labor. I take a seat on the two-seater couch and switch on the TV and scroll to my favorite channel. I’ve just begun gobbling down my food when this man walks wearing his briefs only. I choke on my food when I see him, and he doesn’t even bother to attend to me. Instead he places himself next to me and says, “You aren’t the only one who can sit around half naked you know.” I take my glass of juice and take a sip as I try to control my breathing. He starts eating and blatantly ignores me. How can he just waltz in here, half naked, with that junk in his trunk in full display and pretend like I’m not here? He’s even commenting on some of the things being displayed on the show. That's how much he’s ignoring me. At this point I’m not even enjoying my meal; all I want is to grab him and have him

on this couch right now... I know, I know, I know, so unlike me, right? But this man has been leaving me hot and bothered since last night and he did promise to resolve my itch in the morning and well... I'm itching, Sir! I force the food down until I'm finished. He also finishes his meal and collects both our plates and takes them to the kitchen. I watch him walk away with his firm butt perfectly displayed in his briefs. He comes back and sits next to me. He takes both my legs and places them on top of his thighs and starts massaging them. I close my eyes and enjoy the feeling of his tender touch. I can feel the tension caused by the long hours that I spent standing in front of my students leave my body and I moan in pleasure, but he stops when I do so. I open my eyes wide and glare at him, why did he stop? He seems unfazed by my threatening scowl and goes back to massaging my feet.

"What would you like us to do today?" he asks as he continues making love to my feet. I close my eyes again and focus on the wonderful sensation that I'm feeling.

"Anything is fine with me" I say in a low shaky voice as he presses all the right pressure points

"I haven't thought that far my love hence I'm asking you."

"But Siya I'm not familiar with iBhayi nor do I know what we can do for fun around here. I'm sure we can go watch a movie

or go to the beach or go to a nice restaurant close by.” (*Port Elizabeth*)

“There’s a nice restaurant that I know just a bit out of town. It’s called Grass Roof and they sell amazing gourmet meals. Would you like for us to go there for lunch maybe?”

“Yes, that would be fine love” I respond in a shaky and breathy voice. “Harder ” I hear myself say after the relief I feel when he presses a painful part on my foot. My eyes are still shut by the way as I say this, but they shoot open when I feel his one hand moving up my leg as the other continues with the massage and my entire body comes ablaze. He takes my right leg and places it on top of the couches back and shifts to kneel in between my thighs with my other leg dangling from the seat. He gently pulls me toward him and I’m now on my back with my legs wide open. Everything is out on display, with nothing left for the imagination. He lowers himself on me and my body starts to react to his touch. I find myself shifting in my position almost gyrating my hips upward to meet his. Mind you this man hasn’t even done much but rub my feet, run his hand through my thighs and shift me into position but my inner whore is already wilding out.

“Ufunani Zamo?” he asks so closely to my lips, fanning me with his hot breath. (*What do you want*)

“Mm” I mutter

“Tell me what you want my love?”

“You! I want you, Siya.” my mouth quickly utters before I can even recollect what I just said. My goodness, kwentakalani?  
*(What is happening)*

“Sthandwa sam” he says in a low hoarse voice as he plants a wet kiss on my lips. *(My love)*

He makes love to my lips by kissing me with so much passion and intensity that I find myself moaning uncontrollably. Listen, I want this man, and I want him now. He starts groping my thighs tightly, moving up my torso and to my breasts. He breaks free from the kiss and leaves trails of kisses down my jawline and to the nape of my neck. I shift my face away from him and grant him more access to my neck. He starts kissing and biting at the soft skin gently and I the foreign sounds that are escaping my lips right now are shocking. He leaves my neck and plants more kisses down my shoulder, down to my chest, to the area just above my breasts before I feel his warm tongue wrap around my now erect nipple. I squirm and groan in pleasure... Gosh what is this man doing to me. He continues with his torture before I he grated his teeth on my nipple. I throw my head back and I scream in ecstasy. He leaves the one breast shifting his attention to the other. As he showers the other with the same attention, his thumb is running circles on my free nipple. At this point I have no control of the movements that I’m making nor

of the sounds that I'm making. I'm sure the entire neighborhood by now knows that there's a woman being slaughtered in his house.

He leaves my breasts and plants feather kisses all the way from my stomach all the way down to my pelvic area. I curse not wearing any underwear because I could have used that as an excuse to delay the inevitable. He stares intently at me before shifting his gaze to my haven. His eyes are bloodshot red and hooded, he looks so sexy right now. I look back at him with the same intensity before running my eyes down his torso to his member and the tent that I see has me swallowing a whole lot of nothing. I surely won't be able to take in all of that. He must have seen the shock in my eyes because I hear him say "He doesn't bite, he's a gentle lover. You'll get acquainted with him very soon, don't worry" with a smirk spread on his lips and lust plastered all over his face. He must be joking because I am not letting that thing anywhere close to me and my honey pot. I get distracted from my thoughts when I feel his warm breath fan my haven as he sharply inhales my arousal before he plunges his tongue in between my folds. I arch my back and try to clutch on to something with no luck. "Shit" I mutter in a frenzy as his tongue moves up and down my vulva. No one has ever informed me about the pleasure that one can receive from one organ of the body. I can't believe that I've been robbed of such a wonderful experience. He continues with his torment, and I

feel something in me build up. I attempt to clench my thighs together to stop whatever it is that I'm feeling but he slaps them and I find myself opening them even wider than before. I arch my back even further up, calling his name, while trying to control the feeling that I'm feeling. My toes curl and an intense sensation threatens to ripple through me "Cum for me baby" he says in a low growl while buried deep in between my thighs. I follow his command and relax my body to allow the feeling to take over my body. My legs begin to tremble and my toes curl even tighter, and I find myself digging my nails deep into his back. I hear a splash which lasts for a moment and when I'm done quivering, he pulls away from my haven and looks at me adoringly while wiping his beard with his hands. I shy away and cover my face with my hands unsure of what just happened, but he gently removes my hands from my face and says "Don't cower away from me my love. I love seeing you react to my touch" he says with a voice laced with so much tenderness.

"But I just peed on you. I'm so embarrassed."

"You didn't pee on my love, that's called squirting and you just had your first experience."

"I'm sorry I messed up the couch"

"Don't be sthandwa sam, it's nature and I'm so happy that you shared your first experience with me. (*My love*) Now come, let's



go get cleaned up and get ready for our day” he says, scooping me up, walking with me in his arms towards the bedroom.

He places me on top of the cabinet while he opens the shower to allow the water to get to the right temperature. He comes and stands in between my legs and helps me out of his t-shirt. He throws the t-shirt aside and pulls me even closer to him until I can feel his member poking my stomach. “You are so beautiful mkam” he whispers while staring deeply into my globes and plants a tender kiss on my lips. (*My wife*) I turn crimson and shy away from his loving gaze and rest my head on his chest while holding him tightly. I think it’s safe to say that I’m a gone girl, and I don’t think there’s a comeback from this. How this man makes me feel scares me, but I don’t think there’s anyone who can make me feel the way that I do about and with him. I also don’t think I want to feel the way that I do with anyone but him. Perhaps it’s time that I open my heart to feel and experience the love that he proclaims to have for me without limitations. I just hope that I don’t get burnt in the process, at least not intentionally.

## Chapter 14

We just finished taking a shower together, which was an innocent one by the way, and we are getting ready for the day ahead. The weather was nice and sunny which is a beautiful indication that spring had sprung. I wear my off-shoulder mustard maxi dress that is floor length and couple it with a pair of brown strappy sandals. I comb my hair back and tie it into a high bun and complete the look with a pair of gold studded earrings. As I've mentioned before, I'm not much of a make-up girl therefore gloss on my lips with no mascara or foundation is my definition of perfection. I spray my Versace Dylan Blue perfume to complete the look; Oh, I forgot to mention how obsessed I am with scents. Siya comes back to the bedroom after disappearing to God knows where just as I am packing my purse. He comes into the bedroom and stands by the door frame gawking at me. He is wearing beige chinos with a white Lacoste golf t-shirt and a pair of white All-Star sneakers. For a moment I had forgotten just how well he can clean up but as he stands by the door, I can't resist but shamelessly drool over him. He walks closer to me without removing his eyes off me. He is walking as if he is taking calculated steps, like how prey scouts its prey before it attacks. He comes to a halt just in front of me, with my body brushing lightly against his. He is standing way too close for my liking and my body is already reacting to his proximity. My nipples are already erect as the reminder of

what had occurred earlier on comes to mind. I slowly raise my head to look at him since he is taller than me and the fact that he is towering over me doesn't allow me to make direct eye contact with him without having to bend my neck backwards. "Hi" I say in a low, almost audible voice. "Hi baby" he responds in a gruff sexy voice, "You look astounding my love" he continues to say. I blush profusely at his compliment and lower my head placing it on his chest to hide the state of my face. I feel his chest rise and sink as he chuckles, and I slightly hit his arm to stop him from laughing at me. He wraps his hands around my waist and pulls me closer to him.

We stand like that for a minute, with me enjoying the sound of his heartbeat against my ear and I guess with him enjoying me being in his arms. A minute later he breaks the silence between us "We must get going now. I promised you a day out and I intend on delivering on my promise" he says as he released me from his embrace. I nod in discontent as I was enjoying the position we were in although I knew he was right, plus I was the one who suggested this activity as an option to him in the first place. I step away from him and collect my purse from the top of the bed while he collects his phone, wallet, car, and house keys on top of the bedside table next to his side of the bed. He stretches his hand out for me to take and I gladly reach out to him. We walk out of the house, with him locking behind us and head towards the car. He opens the door for me like he's

always done since we've met and closes it behind me after I have settled in. He jogs to his side and after settling in, he brings the engine to life, and we drive out of the yard. The route we take to the restaurant is beautiful and scenic, filled with sand dunes and trees. From the distance we catch a glimpse of the ocean as well. We arrive at the restaurant, but parking seems to be a challenge and we end up parking outside of the restaurant facilities. We get out of the car and head towards the restaurant hand in hand. When we arrive, we are directed to the side of the restaurant premises, which is the restaurant as the premises also have a shop adjacent to it. The waiter comes to assist us. I order the crumbed nacho chicken burger with orange juice while Siya orders the gammon steak stack with coke, yeah, this man and coke. We sit in silence for a bit while admiring the view. The restaurant is placed in a wonderful location, so tranquil and soothing. Siya extends his hand to reach out for mine and softly holds it while staring at me

“What’s on your mind themba lam?” (*My hope*)

“Nothing. I’m just admiring the beauty of this location.”

“It is beautiful indeed, but not as beautiful as you” he says, raising my hand to his face before brushing his lips gently against my knuckles.

“Thank you, baby. Thank you for bringing me here” I respond as I smile at him indulgently.

“You are welcome, my love. I’d do anything to see you happy. So...”

“Yes?”

“Who is Nomzamo? I may know a little bit about you, from what Anga has shared with me and from my own findings but apart from that I would like you to tell me more about who Nomzamo is” he says as he chuckles.

“Findings you say?” I retort, amused.

“Yes, findings” he says as he titters.

“Well, uNomzamo is a 29-year-old teacher, born and raised in eTsomo by my mother. I lost my dad at the age of nine. I have four siblings Thandiwe (27), Mpumelelo (25), Anga, who is 23 and Inga (21). I don’t have any kids and yeah, that’s about it.”

“How did you end up being eNgcobo?”

“I’ve always known that after I complete my degree, I wouldn’t go teach learners in other districts but my own. Often you find that when people from our impoverished backgrounds succeed in life, they don’t give back to the communities that raised them and I wanted to be different, hence I decided to work

eNgcobo as opposed teaching at a private school somewhere in Port Elizabeth or East London.”

He smiled and looked at me as though he’s in awe of what I’ve just said.

“Wow, you’re an impeccable woman MaDlamini. I wish many of us were like minded. However, sometimes people don’t move away from the communities because they want to, at times they are forced by circumstances to go where the opportunities lie to be able to fend for themselves. It could also be that they are refusing to do so because they don’t want to relive their past traumas Nonetheless, that still doesn’t excuse them from being active citizens of their communities.”

“Well, when you put it like that, I understand where some may be coming from however, I still stand firm behind the notion that we should be the generation that breaks generational curses and closes the economical gaps by enabling and equipping those that follow behind us with the tools and opportunities that would propel them further than we have in life.”

“So profound bhabha. So, how is living eNgcobo, away from your family?” (*Baby*)

“It’s not that hard yazi, or maybe I’ve become accustomed to it now I don’t know. At first it was lonely but now I’ve adjusted and settled in well. How about you?” (*You know*)

“Well, I...” he gets disturbed mid-sentence by the waiter bringing us our order. We both thank the waiter and start eating.

“As I was saying, I’m Siyabulela, 35 years of age and I was raised in Lady Frere by my father; my mother passed away when I was young, and I had to step up to take care of my siblings. I have five siblings, four sisters and one brother who are all scattered all over the country. I own a logistics company that transports goods between Port Elizabeth and East London for various supermarkets, and I also own a few taxis. I don’t have children yet, but I do hope to have some one day and hopefully with you” he says the last part with a smile plastered across his face.

“Wow, I wouldn’t have guessed that you own a logistics company or that you are in the taxi industry. I guess it’s true when they say don’t judge a book by its cover.”

“What did you think I do for a living?” he asks me with a raised brow.

“I don’t know really but it was not anything along the line of transportation. Maybe an accountant or someone in IT, andiyazi” I shrug in response. (*I don’t know*)

“Hai Bhabha, IT? Mna? No ways” he says, laughing out loud.  
(*No... Me*)

“Yes, that’s what I thought. There’s nothing wrong with being an accountant or an IT specialist.”

“Nam, anditsho uba there’s nothing wrong with those professions but seriously baby, mna? IT? No ways” he snickers.  
(*I’m not saying that... Me*)

“Mm. Anyway, how is it like being in the taxi industry? Is it as dangerous and cutthroat as it is described to be?” I ask  
concerned

“It’s a very competitive industry I won’t lie  
and it does get dangerous at times, especially when there are route wars or problems within the association but either than that it’s just a very fast past industry that’s okay most of the time” he shrugs as he continues eating his food.

I have nothing more to add to his response instead I nod my head and continue indulging in my food. The food here is amazing no lies and their portions are also quite generous. I mean the burger alone is big enough to feed two people. When we are done with our meal, Siya settles the bill and we make our way out of the restaurant to the car possibly heading home, I presume. When we get to the car Siya asks me where I would like to go, and I decide that a walk on the beach would



be nice considering the beautiful weather outside. At first, he doesn't agree because we are apparently not 'dressed' for the occasion, so we end up agreeing that we'll first go home and change into 'beach appropriate' clothing and then drive down to Seaview beach to relax a bit. On the way home, I decide that it would be nice if we could have a sunset picnic, just a few snacks and wine, well beer for him.

"Baby?"

"Yes, love"

"Do you have a picnic basket at home?"

"A picnic basket? No, why?"

"I was thinking that we can have a picnic at the beach later."

"I love the idea baby but awuhluthanga? I mean we just ate now?" (*Aren't you full*)

"It won't be something heavy love, it'll just be light snacks like fruits, sweets, biltong qha." (*That's all*)

"Oh, I guess we can pass by at @Home and see if they don't have picnic baskets that we can buy."

"No, it's okay love we don't have to. I don't want you spending money unnecessarily."

“Nonsense. If I don’t spend it on you then who am I going to spend it on?”

“Okay then. I guess we can also pass by Mr Price and see if they don’t have any bikinis and shorts that I can buy. I didn’t bring any with me.”

He snaps his head towards me so fast that the car jerks a bit as he shifts his focus off the road. If we didn’t just die right now, I would be laughing at his reaction to my statement but I chose not to. He looks at me like I’ve grown two horns.

“Bikinis?”

“Yes baby, kanti what am I going to wear at the beach?” (*Like*)

“A dress will be fine, or I can lend you some of my shorts but there’s no way in hell you’re going to show off my assets to ezintwana zibatyiweyo zase Bhayi” he says, irritated shifting his eyes back to the road again. (*These horny boys from Port Elizabeth*)

I literally roll my eyes at his statement. It’s cute that he’s jealous at the thought of strangers seeing my body but there’s no reason for him to be. I mean, what do normal people wear at the beach? Bikinis. Secondly, he will be right there with me when I’m in my bikini so these ‘horny boys’ won’t be able to do anything to me. Men and their ego’s though *\*eye roll\** “his assets”. I scoff

“But baby, I didn’t bring a short dress and your shorts won’t fit me, they will be too big for me.”

“We will find shorts that fit you Zamo, but you are not going to buy nor wear any bikinis in public. None of these idiots are going to ogle their eyes at my sexy wife’s body, ever!”

I guess that’s that then, the man has spoken, and his word is final. We drive to a shopping center on our way home and I can see the @Home logo plastered outside one of the walls of the building. I guess we’re here to buy a picnic basket. Immediately after he parks the car we head out to the store and to our luck we found a basket in stock. After paying for the basket, we head straight home. When we arrive, he drops the basket in the kitchen and leaves me in the kitchen heading to God knows where. I decide to first pack the picnic basket with everything that we will need before going to change into whatever this man deems appropriate, argh. Like I’d mentioned this morning, this man’s fridge is packed with a variety of foods and fruits which helps me in my selection of food items. I pack grapes, diced pineapples, strawberries and cream, chocolates, a few biscuits, and juice. I decide to pack the leftover food from last night into a dish as well in case we fall hungry. I also pack a bottle of red wine for me and two bottles of beer for him, I don’t want him getting drunk while he still has to drive us home. After I’m done packing the basket I go to our room, yes,

it's now our room considering I also sleep there, and look for towels that we can seat on and a fleece that we can wrap ourselves in incase it gets chilly later. I find all that I'm looking for and head to the kitchen, placing all items on top of the basket. The house is dead silent, and I have no idea where this man is since he left me in the kitchen when we arrived. Instead of looking for him I decide to call out "Siya?" "Coming" he yells out from somewhere in the house. I wait for him for a bit before he appears all changed, he is now wearing a pair of grey shorts, a black t-shirt with flip flops on his feet. He is holding two pairs of shorts and a shirt in his hands. I guess those are for me. "I was looking for something for you to wear from my old clothes and I found these. I think they will fit you" he says, placing all the clothing items in my hands. I take one pair of shorts and size it against my waist to see if it would really fit me and judging by the waist, it seems like it will fit me just fine. "Thank you. I think they will fit. Let me go and change" I say taking all three items with me making my way to our bedroom. I place the items on the bed and start stripping out of my dress. He makes his way into the bedroom just as the dress I was wearing pools at my feet. He freezes on the spot and gulps a whole lot of nothing when he sees standing in front of him in my black lacy thong and bra set. I see him sweep his eyes over my body with nothing, but lust filled in his eyes. I decide to

ignore him since he refused for me to wear a bikini, I guess he will also form part of the 'horny Port Elizabeth boys'.

I pick a short from the pile he gave me and drop it to the ground. As I'm about to pull the shorts up my legs, I feel his warm hands on my waist. He raises my body upward before he dips his face on the nape of my neck. He inhales sharply while pulling me closer to his body, more like his crotch so that I can feel his now hard member. My body quivers at the feeling of his hands on my waist and of his body brushing against mine. I clench my thighs together as the burning sensation between them erupts.

"Maybe we shouldn't go to this picnic, love" he whispers in my ear.

"No Siya you can't say that after I've prepared the picnic basket."

"Kodwa sthandwa sam how can you expect me to let you go after seeing you in this sexy lingerie?" (*But my love*)

"It's not my fault that you can't control your other brain," I retort.

"Oh, it's like that now. Awuzuthetha njalo xa uJola ephakathi kwalo mathanga akho" he says in a breathy whisper as he plants another wet kiss on my neck while caressing my thighs.

*(You don't be speaking like that when Jola (clan name) is in between your thighs"*

I whimper softly at the thought. He continues teasing me with his tongue as it runs behind my ear and his one hand in between my thighs "Baby please" I cry out. I don't know what I'm saying please to, but I know I need him to do something to stop this feeling that's ravaging through my body.

"Please what my love?"

"..."

"Use words Zamo. Andikuva." *(I can't hear you)*

"I... I... I need you to..."

"To what themba lam?" *(My hope)*

"Siya man! You know what I want" I say rather frustrated.

His hand travels further up my thigh, and I instinctively spread my legs open a bit wider in anticipation of where his hand is traveling to. I feel him shift my thong to the side and soon thereafter his fingers plunge into my haven. I cry out in pleasure "ah" throwing my head back into his chest. He starts thrusting in and out of my jewel while holding me firmly into place. The pleasure that I'm feeling has caused my then whimper to turn into a full-blown scream. I swear there's no body part that this man can't use to satisfy me, first it was his

tongue now it's his fingers. I feel the pleasure building up and just as I'm about to reach my peak, he takes his fingers out of my valve. "We should get going love. We don't want all your hard work going to waste now do we?" he whispers the question in my ear while raising the hand he was using in my valve to pleasure me, which is now coated in my juices to his mouth and sucks them clean. I'm still standing against his body, in awe at the experience and annoyed at this man for denying me my peak but what he just did just now is sexy as hell and has turned me on even more. Surely, he's not going to leave me like this. He did say he loves me, right? I get the answer to my question when his other hand lets go of my waist and I'm left standing alone in the middle of the room, naked, hot, and bothered. "Hurry up love you'll find me waiting for you in the lounge" he says as he throws a wink at me and walks out our room while fixing his protruding bulge. I feel my tears prickling because I don't deserve this, I need my release. He needs to come back and finish what he's started. I stomp my feet in frustration and decide to get dressed and go have fun at the beach, I will get my revenge some other time. *Sigh*

## Chapter 15

The outing to the beach went quite well and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. It's not often that I get to experience the beach as I live in an inland town. We are now strolling to a quieter part of the beach for our sunset picnic. As always Siya is holding my hand while carrying the basket with his free hand. We arrive at our destination, and he starts setting up for us, what a gentleman. After he's done setting up, we sit down comfortably beside each other and start plating the various items that I had packed for us. We eat while simultaneously watching the sun as it sets with the sky adorned in beautiful orange hues.

"Beautiful" I hear him murmur next to me but something about his tone makes me glance up and I catch him watching me instead of the sunset. I turn crimson as I'm unsure whether he is referring to me or the sunset.

I tear my eyes away from him and focus on the delectable food that I'm currently indulging in. As I've said before, I'm a foodie. I start with the strawberries as I'm not that hungry since we just had lunch at the restaurant. I watch him grab the can of whipped cream from the basket while he takes one luscious strawberry removing the calyx. He whips the cream on the rest of the strawberry and says "Open," while already directing the piece of fruit towards my mouth to feed me. I find this so cute



actually so much so that I decide to entertain him and allow him to feed me. I open my mouth wide for him and seductively bite on it. immediately after I've bitten it, juice flows out of it. Just as I'm about to wipe it away using my hand, he leans closer to me and licks it from my lips. I gasp in amazement at this but soon recover and turn this gesture into a full-blown kiss. I wrap my hands around his neck pulling him closer to me and start devouring his lips. His lips taste like strawberries and chocolate, which I love. He shifts my sitting position so that I'm facing him with both of my legs on either side of his waist straddling him. His hands move from my waist and cup my buttocks while pulling me even closer to him. I moan in pleasure when I feel his protruding member pulsating against my nectar. He removes his hands from my bums and places them inside the t-shirt that I'm wearing.

I have nothing underneath this t-shirt as my bra got wet when we were swimming. He glides his hands from my waist to my stomach to my boobs. The feeling of his hands on my body feels like heated feathers and I can't help but shudder.

"Sthandwa sam" he beseeches against my lips as though he's in pain. (*My love*) "Mm" I implore in response as I'm also feeling his frustration. The kiss gets even more heated, and his growing member is not helping the situation. The heat between my thighs urges me to move my waist on top of him in pursuit of some sort of relief but just as I'm about to grind even harder on

top of him, I feel his hands gripping me still into place.

“Ungayenzi lonto” he says in a low hoarse voice. (*Don't do that*)

It dawns on me that we're in public, and we can't be behaving

like this. I mean what would happen if we were both to be

arrested for public indecency? What would I say I was busy

doing to my mom? I jump off him so fast as though I've been

burnt. I gather myself and my thoughts as I think of what could

have happened. “Waxhuma kangaka?” he says, laughing at me.

(*Why'd you jump that fast*) He can see how flustered I am

because I'm the one who had initiated the entire thing but now

indixakile. (*It's beyond me*) I ignore him with his irritating laugh

and focus on this beautiful sunset before me. I hear him

simmer down beside me before he says “Okay, I'm sorry I won't

tease you any further. Kodwa nawe baby...” (*But you too*)

“Nditheni?” (*What did I do*)

“Have you forgotten that we are outside?”

“No... no I hadn't forgotten but nawe you...” (You)

“Nditheni?” (*What did I do*)

“You were the one who came to lick the juice off me.”

“Was I not supposed to?”

“That's not what I'm saying, and you know it. But I could have wiped it off ngezandla zam.” (*With my hands*)

“Kutheni ingathi nje uqumbele enye into nje?” (*Why does it seem like you’re upset about something else*)

“No, I’m not, and what could I possibly be upset about?”

“You tell me. Maybe it’s that little incident in our bedroom earlier” he says with a smirk.

“Psht, no” I scoff

“Oh really? So, you aren’t bothered by the fact that I left you hot and bothered earlier?”

“You did not leave me hot and bothered. And like I said, I’m not upset!” I snap

“Okay, okay. I’m not fighting with you; I was just asking sthandwa sam” he says, lifting both hands in surrender while chuckling. (*My love*)

“Yazi ntoni Siya? Please just leave me alone and focus on your food” I huff, annoyed at him. (*You know what*)

“Okay ke sthandwa sam, I’m sorry. I’ll let it go. Yizo hlala apha endodeni yakho” he gestures with his hands. (*...well my love... Come and sit with your man*)

I throw a death stare at him; he mustn’t be nice now. Although I’m a little annoyed at him, I can’t deny myself the opportunity to be in his arms, so I shift closer to him irrespective of how I’m feeling right now. Amadoda will make you imoegoe I tell you.

*(Men... idiots)* He places me in between his legs, and I rest my back on his chest as he engulfs me in his arms. We fall into comfortable silence as we watch God's creation in front of us. We're both in our own thoughts although from time to time he will plant a gentle kiss on my temple and caress my arms while feeding me. I wish I could store this moment somewhere in my heart and relive it over and over again. I'm so content and at peace at this moment that I don't wish to go back to reality.

The weather begins to change as the sun sets even lower in the horizon and Siya suggests that we head home. We pack all our belongings and make our way to the car. "What do you feel like having for dinner?" he asks me before igniting the engine.

"I'm not really hungry right now, hey?"

"I know but you may get hungry later on in the night and I doubt either of us are in the mood to cook."

"I guess you're right. How about pizza?"

"I'm not really a fan of pizza. How about ribs and chips? We can order them on UberEATS later when we're hungry."

"Okay, ribs will also work."

"Ribs for the win then" he says, bringing the engine to life.

We drive off and maneuver through the busy streets of Port Elizabeth. It seems like everyone is excited about the weekend

and I know how my people are. A weekend must be a weekend. We arrive home in no time and to be honest, I'm beyond exhausted. We've planned to have a relaxed evening in front of the TV while watching movies. We step out of the car and get inside the house. I leave Siya in the kitchen unpacking the left-over food from our picnic while I go to our bedroom to take a quick shower just to get rid of the day.

I'm standing under the shower head with my eyes closed enjoying the hot water droplets as they hit against my skin, soothing and relaxing my body when I hear the shower door open, followed by a cool breeze that hits my body. I open my eyes and glance at the door when I see this man standing before me, in all his naked glory. I'm lost in a trance as I admire his physique, his melanin skin that glistens against the dim bathroom light, his toned arms, and broad shoulders. He's firm in all the right places unlike those Johnny Bravo's who walk around with their chests out and arms apart from their bodies as though they can't even wipe their arses.

"You know it's all yours, right?" he asks with a raised brow, giving me a quizzical look.

"Uhm... Are you joining me?"

"That's if you don't mind."

"No, I don't mind," I say, already making room for him.

He steps in the shower, and stands right behind me, trapping me in between the shower wall and his mighty fine self. I try by all means to not be affected by his presence but I'm failing, dismally. He takes the shower gel and squeezes a generous amount on the sponge lathering it. He gently holds my right arm up and runs the sponge all over it as though massaging it. His touch is so sensual, and the atmosphere in the shower changes almost immediately. He's silent throughout the process and offers minimal eye contact, although my eyes are transfixed on him. When I do find him taking a glimpse of me, he darts his eyes between what he is doing and my breasts... Men. He continues to bathe the rest of my body until he's left with bathing my honey pot. I refuse for him to bathe nor touch me there, firstly because it's taboo and secondly, I don't want him heightening my emotions again with his fondling fingers. "Vula," he instructs me, already directing the sponge to my nuna. (*Open up*) I quickly reach out for his hand and hold it firmly to prevent him from going any further "No. It's fine love, I'll wash that area myself" I say already reaching out for the sponge. He shifts away from me as though he's trying to look at me properly. He furrows his brows together with a bewildered look and asks "Ngoba?" (*Why?*) Haibo, surely, he isn't expecting me to allow him to bathe me in that area, abantu bazothi ndim ddisile. (*Wow...people will say I have bewitched him*)

"Be... Beca... Because... you know" I stutter

“No, I don’t know love.”

“It’s just weird love. What will people say?”

“People? Am I people now?”

“No”

“Ngoku, baphi ababantu othetha ngabo because it’s just me and you here?” (*So, where are these people that you are referring to*)

“ ... ”

“Nomzamo?”

“Siya”

“Thetha. Uthi kutheni?” (*Speak. What is the matter*)

“ ... ”

“Look

I love and cherish every part of your body. I’m not ashamed of anything that I do so please don’t place me under societal standards when I don’t conform to such, siyevana?” (*Do we understand each other*)

“Yes,” I respond in a whisper.

“Good. Now come here” he says, pulling me closer to him.

He squats before me and slightly nudges me on my thighs to open. Although I'm still reluctant, I comply and let him do as his pleases. My breath hitches when his hand lands on my nectar but he pays no attention to me or my incoherent breathing, but focuses on the task at hand. With each movement I get even more aroused, and my legs start to lose stability. As though he sees the effect of his actions on my body, he gets up, grunting, and shifts the shower head towards my body and rinses my body. I sigh in relief when he's done as I want to leave him alone in this torture room of a shower. My dream gets dismantled before I can even shout 'freedom' as I hear him ask "Aren't you going to bathe me as well?" Oh nkosi yam. (*Oh, my goodness*) How does he expect me to bathe him eyi-giant?

"But... you didn't say that I'd have to bathe you love"

"So?"

"It's not fair. If you'd mentioned from the beginning that I'd have to bathe you in return then I wouldn't have allowed you to bathe me."

"And why wouldn't you have allowed me?" he asks with a raised brow.

"Because you're big Siya."

"Of course, I'm big," he says, smirking, as he bops his head in the direction of his pego.



“Eww, that’s not what I mean man” I say, amused, shoving him on his shoulder.

“What did you mean then” he asked, chuckling

“I just meant that, how will I bathe you when you’re taller than me, how will I reach your back and arms and your other areas?”

“Ndizo kunyusa,” he says flatly. (*I’ll lift you up*)

“Hai. Won’t we slip and fall?” (*No*)

“No, we won’t I promise” he says in an assuring voice while handing me the lathered sponge.

I look up at him as I also want to start with his arms. He unexpectedly lifts me up and I squeal in astonishment. I quickly wrap my legs around his waist so that I don’t fall. He holds me firm against his torso with his arms firmly placed beneath my butt. I can feel his member poking me on my opening, but I ignore it as I don’t want to distract him which may cause him to drop me on this hard floor. I begin my process while raising myself up and down when I struggle to reach certain areas. The tip of his member brushes against my soaking wet vulva and I suck in my breath in anticipation. Honestly, I’m seconds away from lowering myself onto his length if he doesn’t stop with what he’s doing. This showering session has turned into something that it’s not supposed to be. I finish washing his upper body and shimmy down so that he can lower me so that I

can bathe his legs. I bend forward, lowering myself towards his legs and get on with it. He uses the opportunity to rub my exposed buttocks and occasionally run his finger through my labia. I'm getting distracted and he knows this. I decide to squat to avoid his advances and I hear him chuckle as I do so. I throw him a death stare and he stops with his chortling and raises both his hands in surrender. "I'm sorry love" he says, nonchalantly. Bloody fool! I'm now done with his legs and I'm contemplating on what to do regarding his private area. I don't want to touch his private area because I know where this will lead to and I'm not about to participate in that with him, at least not in the shower where I can break my neck.

"Awuzo'mhlamba uJola?" (*Aren't you going to bathe*)

"Uhm, no you can do that."

"But I washed yours njena" he sulks. (*Though*)

"Ha.a Siya. I've been in here for too long now and I want to get out now. I don't want to get sick. You can finish up on your own" I deadpan raising myself while handing him the sponge. (*No*)

"Kodwa baby you're not being fair mna..." I leave him there without sparing a second glance at him. I know he'll trap me with those imploring eyes of his. (*But... I*)

I wrap my body with a towel after drying myself and head to our room to complete my hygiene routine. I'm about to dress up in my pyjamas when he walks out of the bathroom, with a towel wrapped around his waist. His head is hanging low over his shoulders, and I guess that means that he is still sulking, *\*giggles\**. I walk over to him, as he stands with his back to me, and I wrap my arms around his waist and say, "Don't sulk Bhabha". He ignores me and continues with what he's doing. He responds a few seconds later and says "I'm not sulking", although it's pretty evident that he still is.

"Okay ke, I'll wash him next time, okay? I promise"

"Okay" he says, turning to look at me, while my hands are still wrapped around his waist.

He lowers his head and brushes his lips against mine and I find myself closing my eyes as I savor the feeling of his soft, plump lips against mine. Just as I'm beginning to submerge myself into the moment, I feel him pull away from me and I flutter my eyes open to find him staring at me, with a ghost smile on his face. Nxa, he's teasing me. I move away from him and get dressed leaving him in his stupor. After I'm done getting dressed, I walk to the kitchen to get a glass of wine and a beer for him before our movie begins. I take both beverages with me and head towards the lounge. I settle down on the two-seater couch that he once left me on the first time I came here, and he comes and

joins me shortly thereafter. He's the one choosing a movie tonight and he goes for "The Unforgettable". I cover both of us with a fleece and snuggle close to him while resting my head on his chest. He wraps his arm around me, and we both focus on the movie as it starts. We're about 30 minutes into the movie, when we hear a knock on the door. "Are you expecting someone, love?" I ask. "No, I'm not. Let me go and check who it is, I'm sure it's one of the neighbors. Sit tight, I'll be right back" he says, planting a kiss on my temple as he untangles himself from me as he gets up and walks off. I quickly take the TV remote and pause the movie as I want to hear who's at the door, ingathi kanti it's his local girlfriend *\*eyeroll\**. (*What if it's*) I hear the rattling keys before the door screeches open. "Tata" I hear him exclaim. (*Father*) Tata? His father is here? Oh, my goodness this is not happening. I jump off the couch and bolt towards our bedroom leaving everything as it is in the lounge, locking the door behind me. I clutch my chest trying to control my heavy breathing. What is his father doing here? Oh, nkosi yam lotata uzothi ndihlalisana nomntan'akhe. (*Oh, my goodness, his father will think that I live with his son*) Oh Nomzamo, you're in trouble now.

## Chapter 16

I'm pacing up and down this room, frightened to death at the realization of Siya's dad being here. You may be wondering why I'm shaken by his arrival. Well according to our culture, you aren't supposed to meet your partner's parents or elderly family members, until you are wedded to them. This is taken as a symbol of respect on both your part and to your partner's family. Our culture supports this idea in that it restricts those in relationships from introducing every partner that they are in relationships with but rather encourages them to rather introduce their wives or husbands as those relationships are more 'final'. Again, this is all dependent on the families as some families aren't as rigid, or strict or culturally centered as others. I'm disturbed from my thoughts when I see the doorknob of our bedroom rattle. I freeze on the spot and hold my breath with my eyes fixed on the handle. I stand still and hope that whoever's trying to open the door will either leave once they notice that the door is locked. "Baby?" I hear Siya's voice echo behind the door, and I immediately release the breath that I was holding and steadily shift my legs towards the door. I unlock it and make way for him to enter as I stand hidden behind the door; I don't want his father to see me in case he's standing behind him. He steps into our room and shuts the door behind him. He walks to stand in front of me while

wrapping his arms around my waist. He stares down at me as though he can see the panic on my face and speaks

“Are you okay?” he asks me, in a worried tone.

‘Yes, just a bit shaken. What’s your dad doing here?’

“I’m not sure, love. I’m yet to sit down with him and find out the reason behind his visit.”

“Okay. Go back to him then. I don’t want him to come in here looking for you.”

“He has to meet you at some point nje bhabha. You will be his makoti afterall” he says smiling adoringly down at me. (*Though*)

“Baby, this is no time for your jokes, okay? Now please go back to him. I’ll wait for you here, that’s if you don’t find me already passed out by the time you return.”

‘Okay love, let me leave you then and go see what brings the old man here so late,’ he says, already untangling his arms from me.

‘Wait...’ I half-yell out to him in slight panic. “Did you remove my wine glass on top of the coffee table?” I inquire.

“Uhm...”

“No Siya, now he’s going to know that someone else is here.”

“There was no time for me to collect the glass nje bhabha. He walked in the moment I opened the door. Nawe mos, you could’ve left with it when you ran in here,” he retorts, while smirking. (*Though baby... You could have also*) This fool.

“Arg Siya man. It doesn't matter then. It is what it is. Now leave before he comes knocking,” I say, already shoving him towards the door.

“Hai don’t push me; you were the one who wanted to trap me here” he says chuckling softly while trying to resist my aggression.

I open the door, gesturing for him to keep quiet and as I’m about to close it, he steals a quick kiss from my lips before jogging off. Nxa, idiot. I don’t lock the door because I know he will be back soon. I make myself comfortable on the bed while waiting for him to return. I’d packed a novel with me when I left Ngcobo, so that I can read it while traveling just to avoid feeling the duration of the trip and I guess it will come in handy now that I’m trapped in this room, alone. I don’t know when I passed out, but I’m startled from my sleep when I feel his cold hands on my waist and I flinch. “I’m sorry. Go back to sleep, we’ll speak in the morning love” he whispers against my ear. I turn myself around to face him, fluttering my eyes open.

“What time is it?” I whisper.

“Just after mid night love”

“Are you okay?” I ask when I see worry lines on his face.

“Everything is fine, sthandwa sam. We will talk in the morning” he responds, planting a gentle kiss on my cheek.

“Is your dad still here?”

“No, he just left my love. He’ll be back tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?” I question, already alarmed by this.

“Yes. Now please go back to sleep.” he persists, drawing me closer to his chest in an effort to settle me down.

I settle down and snuggle closer to him. I won’t lie and say I’m not concerned about him because I am. I can tell just from his tone and body language that something is amiss.

I’m woken up from my slumber by the warm rays that cascade throughout our bedroom window. I’m still coiled in my man’s embrace with him sleeping peacefully next to me. Waking up next to him over the past two days has been the most amazing experience ever. Something about starting your day with the one who holds you dear sets the tone of the day to a great start. I gently untangle myself from him as I’m in desperate need of the lavatory. I get on with my business and head to the shower to get ready for my day. Sundays are normally for church, however seeing that I’m on vacation I may have to miss



it this weekend; I make a mental note to ask him about his spirituality seeing that we haven't touched on that topic yet. I'm done with my morning routine in no time, and I walk out to our bedroom, shuffling around as I look for something to wear. I try to be as quiet as I possibly can as I don't disturb him from his sleep; he does look like he needs the extra shut eye. I didn't bring too many loungewear items, so I opt for wearing some of his, they fit me nice and loose anyway. When I'm done dressing up, I walk out of our bedroom to the kitchen to make myself some breakfast. I will place Siya's breakfast in the warmer. First thing I do when I get to the kitchen is brew a cup of tea for myself as I maneuver around the kitchen looking for the ingredients that I will use. I will make oats and a farmhouse breakfast. I start with the oats and as soon as the oats it's ready, I move on to preparing the farmhouse breakfast; bacon, sausages, eggs, black pudding, baked beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, and toast... *Yum*. It's just after ten when I'm done preparing breakfast and I plate for myself and leave his plates in the warmer. I'm already munching away as I head to the lounge to see what I can watch. We didn't finish the movie he selected last night and it's too early to be indulging in that, so I opt for scrolling through the TV channels until I find something intriguing.

I'm done eating and I'm lazing on top of the couch when I hear one of the doors in the house open and hear feet shuffling

closer and closer to the lounge. I raise my head up because I know that my man is up. He soon appears by the door, peeking his head to check whether I'm in this room or not and smiles when his eyes land on me.

"Morning baby," he says, still peeking by the door.

"Morning my love. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes I did until I woke up to an empty bed" he sulks.

"You were sleeping so peacefully sthandwa sam I didn't want to disturb you." (*My love*)

"I was rather tired. Yesterday wore me out," he sighs in apprehension.

"Come here," I say to him, patting the space next to me. He plops himself on the couch and places his head on my thighs.

"Speak to me love. What's bothering you?" I ask him, concerned.

"Nothing. I'm just -"

"I know that something is bothering you and if you aren't ready to discuss it as yet, then that's okay. For now, how about you take a quick shower and come back here so that I can serve you your breakfast?"

"I would like to eat first love. I'm rather famished," he says to me, already sitting up.

“Okay, at least wash your face, teeth, and hands then I will serve you.”

He gets up and heads to our bedroom while I head to the kitchen to check up on his breakfast. He walks back to the lounge and sits where he was seated before and watches me walk towards him. The wide smile plastered on his face causes me to blush. I place the tray on his lap and sit next to him and watch him eat. My eyes shift between his bopping Adam’s apple and his lips that he licks after tasting an element from his plate. Gosh, everything he does is such a turn on. I know he can feel my eyes burning on his skin but he continues eating without taking a glance at me. “Ndizakuminxwa koku kutya if you keep looking at me like that,” he utters while shoving a spoon loaded with oats in his mouth. *(I will choke on this food)* “I’m sorry,” I respond, shifting my eyes away from him.

I decide to get up and defrost some meat that I will cook for Sunday lunch while he continues with his breakfast; Sundays are after all for church and family over a wholesome meal. I plan on making oxtail stew with basmati rice. I walk back to the lounge, and I find that he’s already done with his meal. Great! Now we can talk about what’s bothering him. He places the tray on the coffee table and waits for me to sit beside him. He takes both my legs and places them on his thighs

Advertisement

covering us both with fleece and starts massaging my feet. I guess that this is our thing now, being in his hold somehow be it that we're holding hands or cuddling or him offering me a massage, but our bodies have to touch. I did say that Siya is a very affectionate lover, and I love it.

"Do you know what I find comforting in this process of getting to know and love you?"

"No. What love?"

"The fact that we were both raised by single parents and we both know and understand the feeling of losing someone that you love at a young age."

"I guess you're right, love but where is all of this coming from?"

"One of my sisters, uKhunjuzwa (31) who works as a nurse at St Dominic's Hospital in East London has been admitted at the Life Huntersraig Private Hospital here eBhayi," he starts speaking.  
*(Port Elizabeth)*

I gasp.

"Did your father mention why she's been admitted?"

"She lost her husband a few years back and has been struggling to come to terms with her loss since. Her difficulty in accepting her loss has led her to suffer from depression which she tries to manage and monitor; however, she's unable to do so. She will

go through periods where she's extremely sad or has angry outbursts or her anxiety is uncontrollable and we just stand and watch her suffer as we don't know how to help her."

"How long has it been since she lost her husband?"

"It's been three years. However, she was only diagnosed with depression two years ago."

"This is so disheartening to hear love. So, who takes care of her when she's experiencing these low periods?"

"At times she aware of when her mood drops beyond normalcy and she'll call my dad, but this time around I guess she wasn't as fortunate because utata received a call izolo for the hospital she works in, informing him that she'd had a meltdown at work and they had transferred her to Port Elizabeth as there were no beds available at the facilities in East London and they were forced to transfer her here." (*Dad... yesterday*)

"..."

"Dad came by yesterday to inform me on what was happening, as he is her next of kin. He is currently staying at The Paxton Hotel which is closer to the hospital. It pains me so much to know that my sister is suffering and that there's absolutely nothing that I can do to ease or take away her pain."

"I'm sure she knows just how much you love her and how you'd go to the ends of the world to take away her pain."

“But it’s not enough bhabha. I mean look at the situation she’s in now. There’s nothing I can do about it besides watch from the sidelines and hope that the doctors at her facility assist her. I just want her to go back to the bubbly, full of life Khunjuzwa that she once was.”

“You know that’s impossible love. All you and your family can do right now is to be there for her and embrace this new version of herself.”

“I hear you love it’s just that...”

“It scares you?”

“It does. You know when mom died, I watched my dad drown himself in sorrow. He would drink himself to a stupor just so he could numb his pain. It was difficult to see him like that; a once proud and happy man who was now paralysed by grief. And in all that, he still had to look after six children that were a constant reminder of what he and my mom had. It was a truly devastating period in our lives, but we overcame it, together as a family. I had prayed to God that he would spare us from witnessing one of our own going through such an ordeal in this lifetime again, but I guess my prayers fell short” he chuckles, while shaking his head.

“I’m sorry that you had to go through that my love, and I truly understand the emotional scars that come with watching someone deal with losing a loved one.”

“I just don’t know how I can be a better brother to her. I want her to call me when she feels overwhelmed with emotions, I want her to know that I’d do anything to see her smile, wholeheartedly again. I just -”

“She will baby, when she is ready, she will reach out to you and you will be right there waiting to catch her. Just give her time, okay?”

“It’s just difficult to sit and do nothing while praying for the best. My dad said he’d be here until the facility is ready to discharge her so that he can drive her back to East London.”

“Yho, won’t that be costly to him, considering that we don’t know how long Jhunji will be admitted for? Perhaps I should leave and go back to eNgcobo so that he can come and -”  
(Wow)

“That’s not happening. Dad likes giving us our space and even if I were to invite him to stay with me for the duration of his stay here, with or without you here, he’ll reject my offer flat out.”

“But baby, he’s -”

“No Zamo, you’re not going anywhere. uTata will be fine, okay?” (Dad)

“I hear you although I’m still not happy with this. Can he at least have all his three daily meals here, at home with us, well you, instead of eating takeout?”

He smiles at me adoringly at my suggestion and cups my face before leaning towards me and plants a lingering kiss on my lips.

“Thank you sthandwa sam. I’ll call him and inform him that umakoti wakhe ufuna ukumondla” he says with a wide smile spread across his face. (*My love... His daughter in-law wants to feed him*)

“No! You can’t say that. I’ll prepare the meals and you two can take some for Khunji as well. I’ll stay behind when you deliver the food for them. If he comes here, I’ll just lock myself in the bedroom until he leaves.”

“But -”

“No love. You know that’s not how things are done, and I want to respect your dad even if this is your house, but the fact of the matter is that he’s still your father and I want to only meet him when the time is right, okay?”

He sulks but ends up agreeing to my request.

“Thank you for understanding love. Now let me go and prepare lunch for all of us and you can give him a call to find out if he’d like to join us for lunch here or if he’ll have his lunch at the



hospital with Khunji, okay?” I ask, before planting a kiss on his cheek while removing my feet from his thighs.

“Okay love, I’ll give him a call. What are you going to be making for lunch?”

“I’ll be making oxtail stew and some rice,” I say, already getting up from the couch, making my way to the kitchen.

“Sounds delicious. Do you need any assistance?”

“No love, I’ll be fine, but thank you for offering. You can come and keep me company in the kitchen as I cook though.”

“Now that I could do” he says, already jumping to his feet, following closely behind me.

He takes a seat on one of the chairs in the kitchen and watches me as I sashay around the kitchen preparing everything. He makes a call to his dad to find out how Khunji is doing, while also informing him about the new eating arrangement that I had suggested. I see him smile widely as he looks at me, with the phone still against his ear and I wonder what his father is saying to him. He is soon done with the call, just as I’m also done placing the meat and rice on the stove. Now all we have to do is wait for both pots to be ready. I take his hand dragging him to the lounge so that we can finish off our movie from last night while we wait for the food to get ready.

“Dad says he’ll meet me at the hospital for lunch. He says he doesn’t want to eat nice food when he doesn't know what his daughter is eating,” he says behind me, in a sulking tone.

I giggle at him and turn back to look at him, “Don’t be sulk love. He also loves you just as much as he loves Khunji,” I tease.

“Mxm,” he sulks but continues to say “He says he can’t wait to meet you” he retorts with a smile on his face.

“Meet me? How does he know about me? Siya, did you say something about me being here to him? Oh my gosh, he -” I say, all at once in panic.

“Relax love. He doesn’t know about you being here, but he did say that he knows that the suggestion for the meals didn’t come from me because I’d never offered such before and that he knew I was with someone last night as he saw your wine glass on the coffee table.”

Gosh I’m so embarrassed right now. I want to bury myself. I cover my face with my hands and sink onto the couch

“Relax my love, my dad is an easy-going guy and I’m sure that he will love you.”

“Even if he’s easy-going love, I didn’t want him to know about me being here.”

“It won’t change anything, okay? You will still meet him when you’re ready, okay love? I won’t coerce you into doing something that you aren't comfortable nor ready to do, alright?” he says gently, pulling me to his embrace.

I calm down a bit and rest my head on his chest. I really hope that Khunjuzwa gets better soon because I’m not ready to deal with her father. I may be falling in love with Siya but it’s still early days and I’m not ready to be meeting family just yet. Yes, Siya may have met my mom but that was due to circumstance but this case is different. I tell myself that I will avoid any chance of me meeting with his dad or sister as much as I possibly can even though I’ll be cooking for him three times a day. I wonder how I’ll successfully pull this off over the next couple of days. *\*sigh\** Gosh the situations we find ourselves in all because of love. Ai.

## Chapter 17

It's Monday morning and Siya is preparing to go to the office to attend a few meetings and go and check how things are at the truck depot. He also said he will pass by the taxi rank to see some of his drivers and check on how his taxis are doing. I'm still not comfortable with him being involved in the taxi industry but there is nothing I can do about it. I mean our relationship is still new and it would be very precipitous of me to start making remarks regarding his involvement or interfering with how he makes a living. I'm currently preparing breakfast for him and the rest of the family while he's getting ready. Yesterday, he went to drop off both lunch and supper at the care facility for his dad and Khunji and when I inquired on how she's doing there seemed to have been no progress since the time of the episode. I can see that Siya is deeply hurt and unsettled by the state that his sister is in, but I guess being the prideful man that he is, he's trying by all means to downplay how deep it's affecting him. On the lighter side of things, both meal packs that I'd prepared for the trio came back empty, on both occasions so I guess it's safe to say that they enjoyed my food. Just as I'm wrapping up breakfast, he waltzes into the kitchen looking like the Adonis that he is. He is wearing a charcoal suit that he has paired with a crisp white wingback shirt with some formal black shoes. He places his laptop bag on top of the kitchen counter while he types away on his phone. I

can't seem to shift my gaze away from him; he is such a sight for sore eyes right now. I keep running my eyes from his shirt which holds his chest so snug and shows all his muscles to his bowlegs that are clearly defined by his slim fit pants. I can literally feel myself getting wet just by the sight of him. Gosh my man is fine. "Earth to Zamo," he snaps me back into the land of the living. "Uhm... morning love" I respond, flustered, after being caught drooling. I console myself with the reality that he's mine, so if I don't take time to appreciate him then who will? "How did you sleep my love?" he asks shoving the phone inside his pants and makes his way towards me before wrapping his hands around my waist. He draws me closer to his body and I find myself inhaling his cologne, drinking it all in. Gosh he smells amazing. Something about his scent always sets my heart at ease. "I slept well thank you sthandwa sam, how did you sleep?" I ask, in between the panty dropping kiss that he just plastered on my lips. (*My love*) "Like a log my love, like a log. You look beautiful this morning," he compliments me. I blush profusely and hide my face on his chest. I feel his chest vibrate as he releases a low chuckle. "Says the man adorned in a suit that looks like it was tailored for him. I'm sure all these vultures zase Bhayi will want a piece of you today," I say in response. (*From Port Elizabeth*) I'm not a jealous person but seeing him this hot has me feeling some type of way. I just want to keep him in this house and rip this suit off of him, but I guess

that's near impossible. "You know that I've only got eyes for you right?" he reassures me while pecking my lips. I seem to have lost my voice as the thoughts in my head seem to want to lead me astray. "They can look, but they can't touch. I mean don't you feel blessed to know that all of this..." he says releasing me from his hold, while taking a step back and moving his hands up and down his body gesturing "...Belongs to you? That you are the only one who gets to see all this, sleep on this chest and taste these lips?" he asks me, with a smirk on his face while pulling me back into his embrace. I can't stop but laugh at his idiocracy and big ego. "You know you aren't all that, right?" I tease. He clutches his chest as though he's hurt and gasps, which I giggle to "Is that so bhabha? Wow, ndi-hurt" he teases back. (*Baby... I'm hurt*) "I'm joking, my love. You are one hell of a handsome man and I'm lucky that you're all mine," I say, as I look up into his eyes. I wonder what I've done in my past or current life to deserve such a man, I think to myself as I'm consumed by his brown orbs. "No, I'm the lucky one to have you" he whispers closer to my ear, sending a tingling sensation down my spine. "Aw, that's so sweet of you love, thank you" I utter in delight, while untangling myself from his embrace because if he continues to whisper these sweet little nothings to me, he will be late for work, and I don't want to be held responsible for that. I hear him chortle as he walks away from

me to take a seat one of the kitchen table chairs. I take that as an indication that he's ready for me to serve him his breakfast.

I plate up for him and place his cup of coffee and glass of juice on the tray and walk towards the table and place the tray in front of him. He takes the plate and thanks me and immediately starts devouring his food. He must surely love my cooking, or he is very hungry.

"Baby is there anything that you'd like me to prepare for lunch and dinner today?"

"Uhm, no love, anything is fine. Those two eat about anything."

"Okay, I will see what I can make them. What time should I get lunch ready?"

"Uhm, say about half past one? Visiting hours are from two till four, so I think that time should work just fine for me to pick up the food and pick up dad on the way to the hospital. We should make it there by two."

"Okay, perfect. I'll make sure that everything is ready by then."

"Thank you so much sthandwa sam. You really didn't have to do any of this, but you are and I'm so grateful for that, words fail me," he says, looking at me with a face that beams of appreciation.

“No need to thank me love, I’m doing it because I want to and I know if circumstances were reversed, you'd be just as considerate, sthandwa sam.” (*My love*)

“I’m glad you know that love,” he says, reaffirming my statement.

“Now hurry up and get done eating. I have already packed breakfast for utata noKhunji so you need to get going Mr in order for you to not miss your first meeting,” I say, placing the basket with all the breakfast items on top of the kitchen counter by the door.

“What did you prepare for them?”

“Fruit salad, yogurt, some muesli, gruyere, bacon and spinach eggs with some toasted bread. There’s hot water in a flask that they can use to make some tea or coffee as well.”

“Yho, that’s more than what you prepared for me, kodwa bhabha,” he complains. (*Wow... though baby*)

“Hai baby, suba nomona. I’ll prepare something extra special for you for dinner vah?” (*No... Don’t be jealous... Okay*)

“Something extra special?” he asks me, already getting up his chair, walking towards me with a silly look on his face.

“Not like that you silly man” I giggle, hitting him playfully with a dishcloth on his shoulder.



“I was just checking mkam. I can’t wait to see what you’ll have prepared for me. Ngaske ndingayi nakulo msebenzi kengoku,” he says drawing me closer to him yet again, while whispering in my ear. (*My wife... Now I wish I didn’t have to go to work*)

He rests his head on the nape of my neck while sucking on my soft skin. Tingles... The zoo in my stomach comes to life. Sindisani umntana wenu bazalwane. (*Save your child brethren*)

“Baby” I moan out

“Mm” he responds in a low hoarse voice, which is almost inaudible.

“You’re going to be late.”

“I don’t want to leave you alone,” he sulks.

“I’ll be fine nje sthandwa sam. I have enough things to keep me busy in between preparing meals for my trio,” I say, while pushing him gently away from me so that I can see his face. (*Though my love*)

I see worry in his eyes, but I return his look with a relaxed one. Yes, it’s the first time that I will be home alone for a while, but he will be back at lunchtime to collect food for his father and sister then he will come back home after visiting hours again so technically, I won’t be home alone all day. It’ll just be a couple of hours.

“You promise to call me if you start feeling uncomfortable or if something happens right?”

Ai my big baby bathong. (*No... People*)

“I promise love.”

“Even if it’s a fly or a rat that’s disturbing you, call me, okay?”

I laugh out loud. A fly? Like really? At least the rats I can understand because some of them get as big as a loaf of bread, okay that’s an exaggeration, but you know what I mean but a FLY? No man, this man can’t be serious.

“Hai baby. Not a fly. Like really?” I continue to ask, while in stitches. (*No*) Gosh this man is crazy.

“I’m serious love. Andifuni niks ngawe.” (*I don’t want anything to happen to you*)

“Okay mnt’wam, I’ll call you should I feel uncomfortable or something happens,” I say as I try to ease his concern. (*My person*)

“Thank you. Now let me get going so I can come back and enjoy ‘my something special’,” he says, making his way to the kitchen counter to collect his laptop bag that he placed on top of the counter when he walked in. He gathers his car keys as well and collects the food basket on his way out of the door.

“Let me place these in the car my love, I’ll be right back” he says a little louder as he’s already out of the kitchen door that is co-joined with the garage.

He walks back into the kitchen and comes to stand in front of me and lowers his face to be on my level. His warm lips brush against mine and I find myself holding in my breath while simultaneously closing my eyes as I enjoy this feeling. His pace is nice and slow as though he’s afraid to break me and I feel myself feeling woozy. As though he can sense that I’m losing balance, he wraps his hand around my waist and pulls me nearer to him. I moan when I collide with his chest and that allows him to invade my mouth with his tongue. Gosh is this how a ‘goodbye

Advertisement

see you later’ kiss feels like? I place both my hands on his chest, careful that I don’t mess on his shirt, and I hear him growl when my hands make contact with his chest. My thong is beyond drenched at this point. I try to clench my thighs together to stop the pulsating need from my core but I come out unsuccessful. He bites my lower lip before pulling away from the kiss. I moan in dissatisfaction; he leaves us both gasping for air and me, unstable. I can literally see stars as I flutter my eyes open. Gosh, what is this man doing to me? He looks down at me, and I can see his red and hooded eyes, oh yini umnt’wam.

*(Shame, my person)* He tugs me even closer to him before he asks, “How am I supposed to go to work like this?” He grinds his waist and I can feel his hardon poking my stomach. I find myself giggling while hiding my face on his chest. I don’t know how he can blame me when he’s the one who did this to himself. A simple peck on the lips would have sufficed but no, he had to go in and make it as panty dropping as possible. I’m still dazed out so I can’t even respond to him but simply shake my head side to side in disagreement. He chuckles and frees me from his hold and starts fiddling with his pants, I guess to try and ease the mighty Jola down. \*giggles\* He seems so frustrated and displeased but uzenzile, akakhalelwa. *(He did it, he didn't cry)* After calming his raging tiger down, well snake in this regard, he pecks me one last time on my cheeks before wishing me a lovely day, which I return, and makes his way out of the house. I walk behind him and lock the kitchen door and walk to the main door just to double check that it’s also still locked since last night. I’m not familiar with this place and though the area seems safe, this is South Africa and I’m a woman who can’t afford to stay in a house with unlocked doors.

I go to the kitchen and start washing all the utensils that I’d used to prepare breakfast and tidy away the rest of the items that are misplaced in the kitchen. After I’m done tidying, I set a midday reminder on my phone so that I can take out fish from the freezer which I will prepare for lunch. I will make fish and

chips and a salad on the side, just something light. I take out the leg of lamb from the freezer so that it can defrost. I will make this for dinner. I walk out of the kitchen to our bedroom to tidy up but to my surprise Siya has already done most of the work. The bed is made and the items of clothing that were either on the floor or on top of the couch, have been placed inside the laundry basket. I smile to myself, pleased that he took time to do this. I decide to wash our laundry seeing that the room is already in order; I also don't want to leave with dirty clothes when I go back home, so why not kill two birds with one stone huh? I sort the clothes out according to colour and start with the whites. While that load is in the washing machine, I sweep around the bathroom and bedroom. When I'm done, I open the windows and mop the floors. Just as I'm about to start cleaning the lounge and dining room area, he calls me to check up on me. I did say this one is a big baby; I mean he hasn't even been gone for that long and he's already blasting my phone. I tell him I'm fine and continue with what I'm doing.

By ten o'clock I'm done tidying up around the house and I go take a shower just to freshen up before having breakfast. Yes, I didn't have breakfast this morning. I just didn't have an appetite. I guess that's what happens when you stand on top of a stove cooking food for too long, you end up not wanting any of the food you'd prepared. I freshen up after which I have

some muesli and yogurt while I catch up on a few episodes of National Geo. My midday alarm goes off and I start with the preparations for lunch. I'm still wrecking my brain on what I'll do for Siya as 'something special' for tonight whether it should be a nice dinner set up for the both of us, or... Wait! I've got it. This should be good, I giggle, please with myself. Just after one, he comes home to change out of his suit as he is done with his meetings for the day. I remove the breakfast containers from the basket, and pack the lunch plates for all three of them. He walks back into the kitchen wearing grey jeans with a grey long sleeved t-shirt and black Nike sneakers. Yho this man looks scrumptious. (*Wow*) "Don't pack dinner for me love, I want to have dinner here at home, with you, okay?" my heart swells and I smile back at him. I've only missed sharing a few meals with him and I really don't mind because firstly, I'm the one who suggested this arrangement and secondly the situation kind of compels us to do things this way but nonetheless I appreciate how considerate he is.

"Okay baby, I'll set our plates aside in the warmer."

"Thank you, my love. Oh, before I forget I'm only going to see the drives after my dinner visit to Khunji so I may come home a bit late for our dinner," he says, fastening the laces of his sneakers.

“No problem, love. You’ll find me right here when you get back,” I respond excitedly.

This will give me enough time to set up for later, I smirk inwardly.

He comes to me and pecks my lips and heads out to fetch his dad at the hotel so they can visit Khunji.

I start with preparing supper immediately because the Slow Roast Leg of Lamb will take a while to get ready. I know that he should be back to pick up dinner for the duo by 18:30 as visiting hours are at 19:00 so that will give the Slow Roast Leg of Lamb enough time to cook properly. The mashed potatoes will be easy to make so I will make them last, closer to serving time. He calls me again just after his visit at the hospital to check in if I’m still okay and I inform him that all is well. He tells me that he’s headed to the depot as there’s a crisis that he has to resolve, something about a delayed delivery as one of his trucks broke down on the way to East London. He still assures me that he will make it on time to pick up the dinner for his dad and sister. Time is moving fast and I find myself already going up and down the house setting up for our dinner, a romantic candle lit dinner for two. By six o’clock the food is ready and I’m plating everything.

There’s some shuffling by the door and I soon see him walk in looking tired. “Long day love?” I ask in concern. “You have no

idea, love,” he responds, while releasing a deep sigh, taking a seat on one of the chairs in the kitchen.

“What happened to the truck that broke down?”

“I’m not sure what happened there because the trucks get serviced regularly but I’ve been suspecting that the driver who’s responsible for this particular truck doesn’t handle it with care hence it’s always breaking down.”

“Yho, that’s not good love. Maybe you should investigate and give him a warning or something should your suspicions be proven correct?”

“That’s what I plan on doing tomorrow, love. His truck has broken down four times in the past six months and it’s not due to mechanical issues but due to some weird malfunctions. Luckily the supermarket that he was delivering to is owned by a very understanding lady, so she didn’t give me too much flack about the delayed delivery.”

“At least that’s one less thing to worry about love, an unhappy client.”

“But I still don’t like making deliveries late, it’s so unprofessional,” he sighs again, roughing his hair with his hand.

I feel so bad for him right now, but I guess that this is the downside of being a business owner. All the troubles lie on you,



and you have to make sure that everything runs smoothly. I also think this up and down to his father and sister is tiring him hence I think what I have planned for tonight will be greatly appreciated. He stands up from his seat and collects the basket.

“I’ll come home straight after the dinner visit is over. I’m too tired to go check on the taxi’s today. I’ll go tomorrow or another day,” he says in a low voice.

“Okay love, I’ll see you just now then,” I say, pecking his lips and walking him out of the house to the car that’s parked up front.

As soon as he drives out, I walk inside the house, lock the door behind me and head to our bedroom to take a shower. I’m done in no time, and I walk out of the bathroom to our bedroom to moisturize my body. After I’m done with my routine, I sift through my bag, looking for that black lacy lingerie set that I’d packed, today it’s going to come in handy. I wear the lacy see-through saffie tanga high waist thong, with the see-through plunge bra, I strap the leg harness on and look at myself in the mirror... I look sexy as hell. I decide to put on the lingerie sets below the butt silk robe while I wait for him just so I don’t catch a cold. I take out the oils that I normally use on me before I go to bed and place it on top of the bed. I walk to the kitchen to boil some water that I can put the oil in so that it stays warm. I pour the boiled water into a hollow dish and

walk back into the room to place the oils inside the dish. I must have been too caught up in what I'm doing that I did not hear him drive in or walk in the house. I'm bending down, facing away from the door, fixing the harness when I hear him curse behind me "Fuck!" I instantly snap into an upright position and turn to look at him. His mouth is agape while his eyes are bulging out. I decide to tease him further and remove the robe off my body and drop it on the floor. I see him clench his fists as though he's having an inner debate with himself before he growls and mutters a disgruntled "Shit" below his breath. His veins are popping out on his temple, and he seems like he's ready to bust a vein. He can't seem to decide on where he wants to look, the exposed breasts, my thighs or my bikini area. His member is growing at an exponential rate inside his pants, and this is exactly the kind of reaction I was hoping for. He keeps opening and closing his mouth as though he wants to say something, but nothing comes out. After a while, I guess he pulls himself together and asks, rather strained "What are you doing to me?" I say nothing but continue to look at him. He stares at me for a while, while sweeping his eyes all over my body and turns back on his heels and walks out of our bedroom. "Fuck" I hear him mumble again under his breath. I smile, victorious! A win for team Zamo! After he's left our room, I pick up the robe and wear it, closing it shut and I dance in glee as I replay his reaction. I sashay out of the room trying to locate

him around the house. I'm sure wherever he is, he's ready to pounce on me but first he has to have his dinner so he can have his dessert.

## Chapter 18

One thing that I have noticed about my man is that he wears his heart on his sleeve. Whether he's upset, happy or sad you'll be able to see that on his face. Him being so in-tune with his emotions brings me so much joy because my mother raised my brothers in such a way that they don't feel embarrassed or 'less than men' when they show or deal with their emotions. My mom is a big advocate of dealing with your emotions as opposed to bottling them up to a point where they destroy you, be it you're a woman or a man. Also, imagine being in a relationship with an emotionally unavailable partner. Yho, could never be me. We are sitting around the dinner table having our supper and this man of mine is struggling through it. He's shoving spoons that are loaded with way too much food in his mouth just so he can get this part of our evening over and done with and as fast as we can so that we can get to the second phase of our evening. His recklessness has caused him to almost choke twice now. He's almost done eating and he's been throwing glances at me nonstop. It's probably because I'm eating slowly as I'm trying to taunt him even further.

"Bhabha, is your food okay?" he asks me as I pretend to be deep in thought while playing with my food. (*Baby*)

"Yes love, the food is fine."

"Then why aren't you eating sthandwa sam?" (*My love*)

“I don’t know. I just...”

I try to hide the ghost smile on my face. What I’m doing is honestly silly, but I don’t want him to catch me out in my lie.

“Should I pack it away so that you can have it later on or tomorrow?” he asks me, already getting up from his seat. I hold his forearm and stop him abruptly,

“No need for that, my love. Let me try and finish it,” I say.

“Okay, but you know you don’t have to force the food down if you don’t have an appetite, right?”

“Yes love I know,” I respond with a smile on my face.

“Okay then, let me take a shower so long. It’s been a long day.”

He gets up from the dinner table and takes his plate and tray with him to the kitchen. He comes back and plants a kiss on my temple before heading out towards our bedroom. As soon as he leaves, I start gobbling down the food, I’m excited now. The fact that he mentioned that he had a long day reaffirms my decision to give him a massage. I just hope this is something that he will enjoy because one can never be too sure when it comes to these men, especially Xhosa men. As soon as I’m done eating, I rush to the kitchen and drop my dish in the sink and switch on the kettle so that I can change the water in the bowl with the oil as it may be lukewarm now. I hurry off to the bedroom to set up for my man. I take some of the candles he’d

used when I arrived on Friday and light them and place them around the room. I find dry rose petals in one of the drawers of the bedroom pedestals and I scatter them around our bed and bedroom floor too. I remove the pillows on our bed and place them on the couch while leaving only the standard pillows on the bed. I take a clean towel from the wardrobe and place it on the bed so that I don't spoil the bed covers. After I'm done, I dim the lights. I take my phone on top of the vanity and start playing music softly. I take the bowl with the oil and head to the kitchen to replace the water inside. When I get back from the kitchen, I find Siya standing in the middle of our bedroom looking around in awe at the setup. He has a towel wrapped around his waist and he looks absolutely magnificent. The soft light that's beaming from the candles bounces so gently against his skin adding an extra element of shimmer to his already glistening skin that's covered with water droplets.

"What's going on, love?"

"Uhm, I thought that I could offer you a massage seeing that you've had a rough day today."

"Wow," he says in amazement "so thoughtful of you my love, thank you."

"It's only my pleasure, my love," I coo back at him.

"So, what do you need from me?" he asks me, already excited.

“I need you to lay down on the bed, on your stomach so that I can start with your back.”

“Okay, but just so you know, I have never received a massage before, so handle me with care,” he says to me, already dropping his towel to his ankles.

He stands in front of me, in all his naked glory, with his member pointing up north. I clench my thighs together as moistness dampens my thong. Gosh, he’s a sight for sore eyes. I snap out of my thoughts and focus back on the task at hand.

“Uhm, there... There was no need for you to remove your towel but if you’re comfortable this way, then I guess we can start,” I say to him, a little disorientated.

“I did say that I’ve never had a massage before so I don’t know how things are done,” he says, as he walks towards the bed to lay down on it.

I walk closer to the pedestal next to his side of the bed and place the bowl down. I take a step back and untie my robe before taking it off, allowing it to pool on my feet. I hear him inhale sharply and mumble something below his breath. When I look down to try and see what’s gotten him in a tizz, I find him ogling at me. His lust filled eyes are sweeping through my body viciously and I get a little self-conscious for a bit, but that self-doubt disappears as soon as I hear him say,

“Shit! You’re so beautiful, mkam.” (*My wife*)

“ ...”

I don’t respond to his flattery, instead I bow my head down and start fiddling with my fingers.

“All of this, for me?” he asks, eyeing me up and down.

“If you’re referring to the massage, then yes, it’s all for you my love,” I retort, teasingly.

“Well, I guess I can’t wait to see what you have in store for me then,” he says, as he further positions himself on the bed.

I walk towards the bed pedestal and pump a generous amount of oil on my hands and walk back to the edge of the bed. I start massaging the oil on his legs, spreading it evenly all across. His legs are hairy, firm and well-toned. I take my time as I work through his legs and admire every detail, from his open pores, to his firm calves, his veiny feet, to his very evident vastus muscles on the side of his thighs. Working through such a big and stiff body is really proving to be a challenge considering how small I am to him. To top that off, the amount of strength that I have to exert on him to make sure that the massage is effective is also proving to be quite a challenge. Though I’m already feeling the fatigue, I soldier on. As soon as I’m done with his legs I move on to his feet; this is after all a full body massage session. He jumps a little as I start pressing and



rubbing his feet, which are by the way are humongous. I'm sure he's a size 10 or 11. He starts fidgeting the moment I touch his feet, and this annoys me a bit.

"Stop moving Siya," I say as I try to keep him still.

"Uyandi nyumbaza nje bhabha ndithini?" (*You're tickling me, what can I do*)

"You know that's not what I'm doing," I humph in frustration.

"Okay should I move on to your back rather and stop with your feet?"

"Ewe bhabha, leave my feet. Noko ndiyindoda endala for uba ndibe ndikitazwa nguwe." (*Yes love... I'm a grown man for me to be tickled by you*)

I giggle a bit at his discomfort. I guess the saying is true that "ungamkhupha umntu elalini, kodwa soze uyikhuphe ilali kuye." (*You can take someone out of the village, but you will never take the village out of him*). Anyway, I oblige to his request and move on to his back. I remove my slippers from my feet and climb on top of the bed. I position myself so that I'm sitting on his buttocks, which gives me enough proximity to reach all the areas that I need to reach. I hear him groan when my core comes into contact with his buttocks but I ignore him. I lean over towards the pedestal and pick up the oil and pump a few

drops all over his back and his shoulders. His body shudders as the droplets make contact with his skin and I internally clench my core as I see his muscles flex beneath me. I know he hasn't been to the gym since I've been here, but I can tell that he's a frequent visitor. I evenly spread the oil all over his back and knead away. I first focus on his lower lumbar and then work my way up to his thoracic. After I feel that I've given his lower and middle back enough attention, I shift to his shoulder area. I run my fists all over his shoulders and he releases a satisfactory moan when I seem to have pressed on a knotted area. He seems very tense on his shoulders, but then again, I'm not a masseuse and I could be wrong. The moans and groans that he releases as I work through his shoulders are making my job even harder. Hearing him moan in gratification is honestly driving me crazy. To know that my touch has such an effect on him pleases me so much. I raise my body a bit as I want to tackle the nape of his neck. "Right there love," he grunts after I press on his trapezius. I exert more force as I focus a little bit more on the area. "Your hands feel so amazing, sthandwa sam," he continues to mumble. (*My love*)

"I'm glad you're enjoying my work Mr.," I mock, smiling down at him. I carry on using the tapotement technique on his shoulders and trapezius and once I feel like I've done enough I ask him to turn over so that I work on his frontal body.

When he flips over, I see that his member is still rock hard. I gasp at the thought of me working through his frontal area while he's that aroused. He smirks when he sees me flush with uncertainty plastered all over my face. I think he likes seeing me squirm over the things that he does to me. His eyes are running all over my body as I'm clothed in this sexy lacy number. After staring at me for a while, he eventually gets on the bed and lies on his back. I'm still not too sure about this idea of mine, I mean where am I supposed to position myself as I work through his frontal area? To avoid dropping the mood and looking like an idiot, I decide to start working on his legs again while I figure out how I'll tackle his upper body. As I work through his legs my eyes keep darting to his ball sack and proud member. I move my eyes further up his torso. My eyes lock with his, but I quickly avert mine away from him.

"You like what you see, bhabha?" he asks me with a smirk clearly visible on his lips. (*Baby*)

"Intoni?" (*What*)

"You know exactly what I'm talking about, or would you rather have me say it out loud?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about, love."

"Oh, trust me, as soon as you're done here, you will know exactly what I'm referring to."

The pit of my stomach gets filled with butterflies and my inner whore starts twerking. I'm tired of playing the meek and "not the on the first visit" girl, I'm over that now. I'm damn frustrated and I need to release, the drought is killing me. I'll deal with the regret later. I mean, when was the last time I succumbed to pleasure under a man? Us ladies need to take care of our needs, especially when the opportunities present themselves. We need to seize the opportunities with both our hands because finding them is rare. I almost start dancing when the idea of how I'm going to massage his upper body comes to mind.

"Baby, please switch your sleeping position so that your head is at the edge of the bed and your feet by the headboard. Please continue lying on your back"

"Won't I get a headache love?"

"No baby, I'll be quick, and I'll use a small pillow to elevate your head a bit."

"Okay then," he says, already laying himself in the position I'd asked him to.

I pump some oil in my hands and hover over him and start working on his lower torso. He groans when my breasts come in contact with his face. As I carry on with the massage, he moves his hands and grabs my breasts. He starts planting kisses

all over my breasts and my body instantly reacts to his touch. My nipples are erect and highly sensitive. Geesh, what is this man doing to me? “Baby stop it,” I say, swatting his hands away from my breasts. Instead of stopping he continues to tease me and plant kisses on my stomach and breast whichever area is within reach. I humph in dissatisfaction because he’s distracting me now. I shift away from him and stand with both my hands on my hips. “Should I stop what I’m doing?” I ask him, annoyed. “No love. You can continue, I promise to not distract you,” he responds, almost sounding sincere. Idiot! I go back to massaging him, but now I’m focusing on his arms. He keeps wrapping his fingers around mine every time I come into contact with his hands, and this has me feeling all mushy inside. “Your hands are so soft MaDlamini,” he says while intertwining our fingers.

I stop with what I’m doing and enjoy the feeling of my hand in his, it’s still my favorite form of display of affection from my man.

I giggle, “That’s how the hands of a woman should be, love.”

“That is true. I can’t imagine if you had izandla ezirhabaxa.”  
(*Rough hands*)

I laugh at his response, “You would have jumped off the bed the minute I started with the massage. You’d have thought that

ubanjwe yenye indoda”, I say, while laughing. (*You’re being touch by a man*)

He releases a belly laugh and I stare down at him as he smiles wide with his pearly white teeth in full display. He’s even more handsome when he laughs. Arg, how did I become so lucky? I notice he’s stopped laughing now and is also ogling up at me, with a look I interpret as adoration,

“Thank you mkam for this evening. I feel so much better.” (*My wife*)

“As I said my love, it’s my absolute pleasure.”

“You’ve shown me over the past few days that you know what I need even before I can decipher that on my own. For example, even though I’m used to my dad not staying in my house when he visits, I know that I was going to stress and worry about him and his well-being, but you sthandwa sam, you managed to find a way to appease my worry without even breaking a sweat about it.” (*My love*)

“Siya -”

“Then today, you organize this in-house spa session for me after a wonderful dinner that you’d prepared. I was really tired as I haven't rested the entire weekend, especially with the Khunjuzwa situation, but yet again sthandwa sam, you

managed to do something for me that I wasn't even aware that I needed." (*My love*)

"My only hope is that I continue to bring you peace and solace mnt'wam." (*My person*)

"You have already bought and shown me so much more MaDlamini. I know it's early to say all of this, but ndiyakuthanda mntuwam. Undonwabisa ngendlela emangalisayo mnta'omntu." (*I love you my person. You make me incredibly happy*)

My eyes well up as I see my man bare his emotions out for me over something that I thought was a simple gesture.

"Sukukhala ntliziyo yam, uyandikhathaza," he says, wiping away my tears. (*Don't cry, my heart, you are hurting me*)

He gets up from his lying position, yes, he declared his love for me while he was still upside down and laying on his back. He sits on the edge of the bed and pulls me towards him and places me on his lap. I wrap my hands around his waist and place my head on his shoulder as my tears continue to run down my cheeks. I have no idea why I'm crying so much but for some reason his words have opened a fountain of tears. He allows me to carry on with my tear fest while he gently rubs my back in a soothing manner. He plants pepper kisses on my temple, forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks then mouth. I giggle at his

light-heartedness and he uses that exact moment to lift my head up, away from his shoulder. He wipes my tears away while staring at me so lovingly.

“Why are you upset, sthandwa sam? Did I say something wrong?” he asks me with concern plastered all over his face.

*(My love)*

“You didn’t do anything wrong, my love. It’s... It’s just... It’s just that what you said really warmed my heart and I became overwhelmed with emotions.”

“I don’t like seeing you cry sthandwa sam, and nawe uyayazi lonto.” *(My love... you also know that)*

“I know bhabha, I’ll try to not cry too often going forward, and if I do it’ll only be tears of joy,” I say, smiling up at him. *(Baby)*

“That would make me so happy ntliziyo yam.” *(My heart)*

He stares at me for a while longer, without saying anything before he brushes my cheek with his thumb. I lean my face into his touch and close my eyes. I feel his hot breath fan my face and I drink in his scent that is now a mixture of this woody fresh cologne mixed with tea tree oil. His lips brush against mine and I welcome him, submitting myself to him. His one hand holds the back of my neck and draws me closer to him to deepen the kiss. I melt into his furnace body as the kiss gets even more heated. I moan out in pleasure when I feel his other hand



running up my thigh. I shift in position, from sitting on his lap to straddle him. Both his legs are now in between mine while mine are on the outer side of both his. He grunts and groans when I start dry humping him. "Mm baby" he beseeches in a low raspy voice. My body is covered in heat and all I want to do is relieve the throbbing that's on my clit. "You need to stop that sthandwa sam," he pleads with me yet again when my gyrating persists. (*My love*) I stop what I'm doing and choose to have mercy on my man. He comes up gasping for air and opens his eyes that are now bloodshot red. "Why did you pull away?" he asks me. I fail to respond to his question as I'm distracted by the wet kisses that he's planting along my jawline down and shoulder bone. I tilt my head back when he starts sucking on the soft skin of my neck and I moan in pleasure. We are distracted from our moment by his ringing phone that's on top of the pedestal. "Leave it," I mumble to him, hoping that the caller gets the message when we don't answer it after the first try. Unfortunately for me, the little devil persists and Siya gives in and says, "Let me get that bhabha, it could be work," as he gently places me on top of the bed. (*Baby*) I groan in frustration although I understand.

"Hello?... Tata?... Nini ngoku?... Yho, okay ndiyeza," he says to the other person on the line, which I now presume is the dad. (*When now... Wow, okay I'm coming*)

He turns to look at me. He looks so pale and his face is covered in panic.

“I have to go. That was utata. Uthi he got a call from the hospital, bathi uKhunjuzwa tried to commit suicide.” (*He says... they say*)

I gasp in shock.

“What? Is she okay?”

“I don’t know baby, utata is already headed there,” he says in a shaky voice.

I can already see the tears lining up in his eyes. Lord please don’t let anything bad befall her. I don’t think Siya will be able to handle seeing his sister any worse off than she already was. Oh nkos’yam please keep his sister alive for him. (*Oh my God*)

## Chapter 19

He runs around the room trying to find clothes to wear and I can see that he's in no condition to drive. His hands are trembling and he's tripping all over these candles. I honestly don't trust him to be able to drive himself to the hospital safely. I can see that his mind is already overthinking especially because he doesn't know what condition he'll find his sister in.

"I'm coming with you," I say, as I get up from the bed blowing out the candles.

"There's no need love, I'll be -"

"Siya! Ndithe, I'm coming with you. You're in no state to drive right now." *(I said)*

He releases a deep sigh and carries on with getting dressed while I strip out of this lingerie that I'm in as it all of a sudden feels uncomfortable. I see him gawk at me when I move around our bedroom, butterball naked but I give him no mind. I peruse through his wardrobe looking for something to wear and I take one of his slacks and hoodie and put them on; I'll wash these clothes tomorrow wethu, akho xesha lokukhangela ipanty ngoku. *(Hey, there's no time to look for panties now)*. I put on a pair of his socks, slip on my slippers and make my way out of the bedroom. He walks behind me silently, clearly deep in thought as we make our way out of the house, locking the front

door behind us. "Keys please," I say to him, with my hand stretched out in front of me and my palm open. He shouldn't think I have forgotten about what I'd said earlier, I will not allow him to drive himself to the hospital in this state. The last thing that his father needs is to have another one of his children unwell. He seems to be unsure about this, maybe because he's never allowed somebody else to drive his car or he's unsure of my driving but either way, he doesn't have a choice, ndizoyiqhuba lemoto! (*I will drive this car*) He places the car keys on the palm of my hand and opens the driver's door for me to get in. I say this again, Siya will remain a gentleman even in difficult situations. I thank him for his chivalry and settle in. He closes the door behind me and walks around the car to the passenger's side. He gets in the car and places his head on the head rest, closing his eyes and releases yet another sigh. He looks troubled and very exhausted. I can't even imagine what's going through his mind right now. I lean over to him and pull the seat belt and secure him in his seat. I can see he is in no mood to speak so I let him be. I punch the name of the hospital on the GPS and bring the engine to life. I drive out of the yard slowly, slowly because I haven't driven in a while and secondly, because I don't want to trash this man's car. I'm also not familiar with driving around this area so that is also contributing to my slow driving which can be seen as beneficial as I'm also buying this man of mine time to settle down and

wrap his head around the situation that he's about to face. I can see, from the corner of my eye his fingertips drumming against his thigh, he's nervous, that's pretty evident. I can't even stretch out my hand and reach for his to console him like he did when I ran away from the hospital when Anga was admitted because, firstly, my arms are too short to reach him and secondly, I can't multitask when I'm driving. I can only do what's required of me, which is driving safely and focusing on the road. We reach the hospital in no time, and he surprises me when he starts speaking to me, directing me to the area where I should park the car. I find a parking bay just opposite the hospital entrance and kill the engine as soon as we're settled. The car is filled with silence, and I fear saying anything at this point because I don't know what I'd say that would possibly comfort this man therefore I hope that me being here is more than enough. He shifts in his seat and fixates his eyes on me. I squirm under his gaze and end up losing the battle and tear my eyes off him and look at the handbrake between us.

"I don't know if I can do this mkam," he says, in a whisper. (*My wife*)

"I can only imagine how hard this is for you. Please try and be strong for her."

"I don't think I have the strength that you speak of Zamo," he says to me, breaking his intense gaze and looks ahead.

“You’re stronger than you give yourself credit for sthandwa sam, trust me I know.” (*My love*)

“How do you know, love?” he asks me, shifting his eyes back to me.

“Because I’ve been on the receiving end of your strength, comfort, and love. When Anga was admitted you always made sure to pick up and drop off my mom and I at the B&B and at the hospital. Whenever I experienced meltdowns, you were always the one who would not only speak sense to me but who would also calm me down, in a caring and lovingly manner. Now if the support and comfort that I received from you during that difficult time is a slight indication of what you possess, then I’m more than certain that you’ll be able to offer Khunji all the support and love that she needs sthandwa sam.” (*My love*)

“You give me too much credit, themba lam.” (*My hope*)

“I speak only the truth mnt’wam. (*My person*)

“Thank you for the vote of confidence and the pearls of wisdom my love. Let me get going. You’ll wait for me here, right?”

“Yes, I will,” I say to him as I lean over to perk his lips.

He places his hand on my right cheek and pulls away from the kiss. He links both our foreheads together and we both stay in that position for a while, both of us listening to our shallow breaths and rapid heartbeats. Gosh, I love this man. I wish I

could carry some of his worry but unfortunately I can't, I can only support him from from the side-lines. He shifts away from me slightly after a while and plants yet another endearing kiss on my forehead. "I'll let you know how the situation is as soon as I can, okay love?" he says while looking at me for understanding and certainty. I look back at him reassuringly and say "Okay love. I'll be right here, waiting for you until you're done." He offers me a ghost smile, which I'm more than happy to see, and nods his head in agreement. He opens his door and steps out of the car but just before he closes it, he halts in motion as though remembering something. I see him take out his wallet from the back pocket of his slacks, opens it and takes out a card. He hands me the card and says "I don't know how long I'll be in there for but in case you get hungry, you can get yourself something to eat. There's a Spar and KFC not too far from here. I'll send you an SMS with the pin." I look at him in awe. I say this again, my man is very thoughtful. I didn't even think of bringing my purse with me when we left the house but here he is thinking of my stomach while he has bigger problems to resolve. "Thank you, baby. I'll let you know if I end up leaving to get food. Now get going before your dad calls asking about your whereabouts." He chuckles, I guess at how overly thoughtful I am regarding anything that has to do with his father or sister. I guess I can't help it, I was a daddy's girl before I lost him so I guess I'm treating his father the same

way as I would mine if he was still alive, with lots of compassion, love and respect. He says his goodbyes to me and shuts the passenger door and walks towards the hospital entrance. I release a throaty sigh and lean back on the seat and watch him as he strut towards the hospital entrance. His entire body language reeks of someone who has the world on his shoulders; his head is hanging low, he walks while looking at the pavement and his shoulders are also hung low, not as bold and straight as they normally are when all is well. I say a silent prayer and hope that God bestows His mercy upon his sister and offers her the peace that she dearly seeks and needs.

I'm startled from my sleep by my ringing phone from somewhere in this car. I don't know how long I've been sitting in this car, but I sense that it's been a while seeing that I even dozed off. I suss out the phone from the cuppy holder and answer it without looking at who the caller is

"Hello?"

"Zamo," I hear Siya's voice echo from the other end of the line.

"Bhabha" (*Baby*)

"I... I... I need you."

"Wha-"

"Please," he beseeches in a low tone.



“Siya, what’s going on?”

“Please come inside.”

“Siya I don’t understand. You know I can’t do that baby. Your dad is in there, and you know I’m not comfortable meeting him until -.”

“Ndiyakucela sthandwa sam. I really need you?” (*Please my love*)

“ ...”

“I’d never ask this of you if I had an alternative solution. You’re my only hope, please. I don’t have anyone else that I can turn to. Ndiyakucela MaDlamini.” (*My love.... I beg of you*)

“I don’t like this Siya, not one bit! Where will -”

“Zamo, plea -” I hear him say as his voice breaks.

He doesn’t sound okay. His voice sounds broken and shaky. Soon I hear a gut-wrenching sob echo from the other end of the line. No no no! He’s crying. Oh my God, he’s crying. What’s going on?

“Baby? Sthandwa sam?” I call out, in a frenzy. (*My love*)

I get no response from him. Only his heart-breaking sob fills my ears. uSiyabulela undenza ntoni nkosi yam? (*What is he doing to me*) My own tears now are about to fall from my eyes.

“Please don’t cry ndiyakucela Dembula (*clan name*), sukukhala. Ndiyeza.” (*I beg of you... Don’t cry I’m coming*)

“...”

“Sukhala sthandwa sam. Just hold on, I’m coming.” (*Please don’t cry my love*)

I open the door viciously, almost banging it against the car that’s parked next to us. I’m now in a state of panic. I close the door, locking it behind me. I take elongated steps towards the hospital entrance although I don’t even know where I’m going because he didn't say which wing or ward his sister is in.

“Siya, please sthandwa sam, hang on, I’m coming,” I implore further, as I wipe my own tears from my face with the back of my hand. (*My love*) “I... I...” I hear him try to speak through his tears. I take even wider steps heading toward the reception area. “Hang on sthandwa sam

ndiyeza Manci (*clan name*), ndiyeza.” (*My love, I’m coming, I’m coming*) I get to the reception area and ask where I can find Khunjuzwa’s ward... Shit! I don’t even know her surname. Mind you, I’m still on the line with him as I speak to the nurse.

“Bhabha, I’m inside the hospital facilities but I don't know where you are. What’s Khunjuzwa’s surname?” I plead with him.

His sobbing is breaking my heart. "She... she... she uses uMatanzima," he responds to me, stuttering. Relief washes over me when I hear his voice. "Thank you sthandwa sam. I'm on my way," I say to him and hang up. I inform the nurse at reception whom I'm here for and she tells me that it's after visiting hours and she can't let me in. I explain the situation at hand and she contacts the hospital management for approval. She gets approval from management and asks me to fill in my details on a form after which she sends me on my way. I jog towards the direction of the ward anticipating the worst already. I mean, what could make Siya break down like that? I just hope she... No. No Nomzamo! Don't think like that, I reprimand myself. Positive thoughts only I say, in almost a mantra. She needs to be okay, not for the sake of her brother and father but for herself. God would never forsake her when He's already brought her this far. She must just hang on and try and reclaim her life as best as she can. Based on what Siya has mentioned in the past few days regarding his family, it's clear that they are a very loving and caring family, which means that they would move heaven and earth for one another. Khunji needs to allow herself to heal, forgive her husband for leaving her alone in this world when he'd promised her a forever which she never got to experience and embrace the new life that has been placed before her. Look at me psychoanalyzing Khunji whereas I'm not even a psychologist nor do I know her or what

she's going through. I reel in my thoughts just as I'm about to reach Khunji's ward. If Siya is already breaking down, I need to pull myself together for him and his sister. I find Khunji's ward and stand outside for a bit as I take a deep breath before walking in. When I'm done straightening myself I walk into her ward only to find it empty. I stand at the door, a little stunned, unsure of what my next move should be, do I enter or do I walk back out? I end up walking out of the ward to find the nurse at reception, so I can confirm that I heard Khunji's ward details correctly. Just five steps after I've walked out of the ward, I spot a waiting area on my right hand side and I decide to walk towards it to check if Siya is there and to my relief, I find him seated on one of the chairs. I look around the waiting area to try and spot his father, whom I have no idea how he looks, and to my relief the area is empty with just Siya inside. I'm relieved when I don't spot his father even though I know that he may walk in through that door at any given minute. I shift my gaze back to Siya and observe him for a bit; I'm afraid to approach him. His upper body is leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. His head is placed in his hands, covering his face. It doesn't seem like he's aware that there's someone in the room with him as he hasn't shifted in the position I found him in since I walked in. The sight before me breaks my heart even further. I walk further into the waiting area to sit next to him. I sit down next to him and gently place my hand on his back. "Baby?" I call

out to him but he doesn't flinch nor move at the sound of my voice but stays in his seated position. I sigh almost defeated but try again, "Love? Love, please look at me." He stays still for a while before he raises his head from his hands but keeps his face away from me. I shift my body closer to his because I want him to not only feel that I'm here, but to see that I'm here with him, for him. I raise both my hands to his face and tenderly place them on both sides of his face. I delicately shift his head to face my direction but he lowers his eyes when I do so. I can see the salt stains on his face but I prevail. "Please look at me sthandwa sam," I say softly to him. (*My love*) He heeds to my plea and raises his eyes to look at me. They are bloodshot red, a clear indication that he has been crying. "I'm here my love, I'm here. Everything is going to be alright, I promise," I say, not knowing whether I'm trying to convince him or myself. He shakes his head from side to side in disagreement but I hold his head firm while maintaining eye contact. "It will be love. Maybe not now, but in the end, everything will be okay, trust me," I reassure him.

"How, Zamo? How?"

"Because we praise a living God, and your sister is a fighter otherwise she wouldn't have come this far."

"You didn't see the state that she was in Zamo, she was...", he heaves a sigh out and trails off.

A tear rolls down from his one eye and I shut my eyes as I feel a pang in my heart.

“Speak to me sthandwa sam.” (*My love*)

“She... she...” he stutters as he fails to find his words.

“Slow down love, slow down. Now take a deep breath in... That's it... Now exhale.”

He does as I say and calms down after a bit.

“When I came in, I found my father in this waiting room saying that the doctors say that she doesn't want to see him since they found her on the bathroom floor bleeding from her wrists. She had apparently found a knife in one of the kitchen trolleys and used that to slit her wrists. They treated her wounds but since then, the only thing she's said was that she doesn't want to see our father and has been unresponsive to anyone who speaks to her, be it a nurse or doctor.”

“Oh my goodness Siya.”

“I persuaded the doctor to allow me see her with the thoughts that maybe if she'd see me, she'd calm down and allow my father to see her. The doctor allowed me to see her briefly, although he was observing us from a distance. When I walked into her ward, she was laying on the bed staring at the ceiling. She only gave me side glance and never placed her eyes on me again. I tried speaking to her but all she kept mumbling was

“Lulama, Lulama”. Lulama is my younger sister, she comes after her and they are very close, best friends almost. I figured she wants to see her, but Lulama is all the way in Johannesburg. When I suggested that we video call her she refused. I called Lulama and asked her to come to Port Elizabeth as soon as she could because Khunji needed her and she said she’d only be able to take a flight to here in the morning.”

“This is heart-breaking to hear sthandwa sam. I am so sorry that you and your family are going through this.”

“She’s my sister Zamo, my own flesh and blood and it kills me to see her this way. I’m scared to leave her alone tonight, afraid that she might attempt to take her life again and-”

“Don’t think like that baby, just don’t.”

“How can I not think like that Zamo when she’s already tried once and failed? She may try again unless we help her or Lulama gets here. The thought of her wanting to kill herself petrifies me. She wouldn’t even look at me, Zamo, she only looked at me once. Once! I want my sister back, not the shell that’s currently occupying her body.”

“You need to be patient with her love. It’s also not easy for her, trust me. Do you think she enjoys living with the pain every day? Seeing her family worry over her? I don’t think so. I think she only hurt herself not because she wanted to kill herself,

perhaps she wanted to feel something else other than the hollow hole in her heart. Please bear with her Dembula.” (*My love*)

“I’m trying Zamo, I really am but I’m just scared of losing her.”

“You won’t lose her sthandwa sam, trust me you won’t.” (*My love*)

“When I called you, she was still begging me for Lulama, and I didn’t know what to do.”

“What time is she landing tomorrow?”

“She hasn’t confirmed it yet.”

“Okay.”

“I know this is too much to ask of you sthandwa sam, and it’s probably selfish as well but I need your help.” (*My love*)

Now I’m nervous.

“With what bhabha?” (*Baby*)

“Please go and see her -”

“What? No Siya! No! You know I -”

“Sthandwa sam I know, I know. I wouldn’t ask you if I had another option.” (*My love*)



“No Siya! No! You can’t put me in this situation, I’m not ready to meet your sister especially under these circumstances. No Siya. No sthandwa sam,” I say, already attempting to get up.  
(*My love*)

He stands up and grabs my wrist just as I’m about to turn my back to him. He pulls me closer to him and looks down at me. His eyes are so red and hollow. I can see sadness all over them and my heart bleeds for all of them but what Siya is asking of me is beyond me. I haven’t even been a girlfriend for a week and I’m already cooking for them, now I’m playing psychologist with his sister. No, this is not what I signed up for. He stares down at me, beggingly and says, “Zamo ndiyakucela sthandwa sam. I don’t think she’ll be able to hang on until Lulu arrives in the morning and I don’t want her doing something crazy over night. All I ask is that you show your face and take it from there. I’m hopeful that when she sees you, she can find some kind of solace until Lulu arrives. Ndiyakucela sthandwa sam, please do this for me. I can’t lose my sister, please MaDlamini.” (*I beg you my love*) Siya is putting me in a very difficult position and I can’t even say no now that he’s explained his reasons behind his request but I’m still uncomfortable with all of this.

“What will I even say to her?”

“Just tell her that you are her skwiza,” he says, chuckling.  
(*You’re her sister in-law*)

This one has time for jokes sixakekile. (*We're busy*)

"No! I won't say that," I respond to his idiocracy.

"Okay ke, don't worry I'll introduce you to her."

"That would be better. Wait! Where's your father?" I ask, with my eyes already bulging out sweeping through the room.

"I told him to go back to the hotel. I told him that I'd stay here overnight and watch over Khunji."

"Oh that's better. Your dad must be worried about her."

"He definitely is. I should actually give him a call when you are with her so I can give him an update on her progress. He's been calling me every hour since he left."

"Every hour? Wait, what time is it now?"

"It's 22:18 bhabha." (*Baby*)

## Chapter 20

Siya takes my hand in his and walks me to the direction of his sister's ward. My heart is drumming aggressively against my chest, and I have a hot lump in my throat. We get to her ward and Siya knocks once before he lets us in. We find her sitting up straight on the bed with her back leaning against the pillows staring at the wall. I can see her wrists wrapped in a cream bandage and my heart bleeds for her when I see the evidence of what she tried to do. When she hears us walk in further into her room, she turns her head to look at us but quickly shifts her blank stare back to the wall. I feel Siya tighten his grip on my hand and I squeeze his back in return to reassure him that I'm here. "Khunji?" he calls out to her but she doesn't respond. "Mntakamama?" he calls out to her again, so softly. (*My mothers daughter*) She shifts her gaze back to our direction and smiles faintly at him. I guess this is his endearing name for her hence she softened up immediately after he called her that. My heart swells as I witness the love between the two. "I have someone here with me that I'd like to introduce you to," he says to her as he turns his gaze on me. I look up at him and smile. "Khunji, this is Nomzamo, iskwiza sakho," he says while still staring deep in my eyes. (*Your sister in-law*) I giggle a bit and punch him lightly on his chest. I told him not to introduce me like that, he could have just said that I'm a friend or

something not her sister in-law. Ai this man of mine. I look back at her and see her smiling at us and I smile back at her, shyly,

“Hi sisi.” (*Sister*)

“Hi,” she responds ever so softly.

“I’m Nomzamo, like your brother mentioned, and it’s lovely to meet you.”

“Likewise. Well, mna ndingu Khunjuzwa, his younger sister, well one of his younger sisters,” she says, as she giggles. (*I am*)

Even though I haven’t known or seen her for over five minutes, something about seeing her smile makes me happy. It feels like it’s her way of communicating with us to tell us that she’s going to get better, that she’s fighting as hard as she can to get back to her old self. Siya’s grip on my hand loosens a bit and he pulls me towards the chairs next to her bed so that we can sit.

“Mntase, I thought I could bring uZamo by should you feel like talking to someone who is not me or utata or a nurse. She will keep you company for as long as you need while we wait for uLulu. You don’t have to say anything if you don’t want to. She’s here to offer whatever you need,” he says to her. (*My sibling*)

“Did she bring more of her food?” she asks him in a low tone.

One can't miss the glimmer of hope and excitement in her eyes as she asks.

"Unfortunately, not, nomdade, but she will make you anything you want if you ask her nicely," he says, staring back at me with humor plastered all over his face. (*My sister*).

Her face falls as though greatly disappointed. I guess I have to step in and salvage the situation then,

"What would you like to have?" I ask her, as I shift closer to her bedside.

"Uhm, I feel like something meaty and spicy. Something like spicy chicken livers."

"I can make that for you."

Immediately after I say that she springs forward to sit in an even more upright position and smiles widely at me.

"Really?" she asks me, with excitement laced all over her face.

"Yes, really. I'll ask your brother to get me what I need because I'm not sure if we have livers back home. Right, love?" I ask, turning my face to look at him.

He stares at me with a smile plastered across his face, and continues to not answer my question.

"Love?"

“Oh, uhm, no we don't have any at home bhabha. I'll go and buy fresh ones in the morning.” (*Baby*)

“Thank you, love. I guess it's set then. I'll be making livers for someone tomorrow morning. Wait, when do you want them for breakfast or lunch?” I ask her.

“Breakfast! I can't wait until lunch to have them,” she utters.

“And for lunch?”

“I will leave that up to ubhuti notata.” (*Brother and father*)

“It's settled then. Are you still full from dinner?”

“Yes, but...” she trails off.

“But?” I ask her with a raised brow.

“I'm craving salt and vinegar chips with coke. uBhuti didn't bring me any snacks this afternoon, uthe he was too tired to pass by the shops.” (*Brother... he said*)

“Siya! Why didn't you bring her anything? You know how atrocious ukutya kwase sibhedlele is, and you know just how early they serve dinner.” (*Hospital food*)

He bows his head a little, in disgrace I'd say because I'm kind of scolding him even though he knows that I'm joking. All this is to make Khunji talk and have her smiling, that's all.

“I’m sorry bhabha, but I was really tired. I did tell you though when I got home,” he sulks. (*Baby*)

I smile at how adorable he is right now. Khunji giggles beside me before hiding her smile with her hands.

“Well now she’s hungry, so what should we do, love?”

“I saw a vending machine somewhere down these corridors, I’ll go and buy her what she needs.”

“Thank you, love.”

Khunji giggles and I look at her and wink. Siya gets up from his seat and leaves us both sitting in silence.

“He loves you,” she says to me after Siya has left.

“Who?”

“My brother, he genuinely loves you. I can see it from the way that he looks at you.”

“How does he look at me?” I ask her teasingly.

“Since you arrived he’s looked at me only once. From the moment you started speaking his eyes have only been focused on you.”

“He was looking at you too though,” I retort.

“Yes, he was, once, and even then he wasn’t as fixated on me as he was with you. Jonga, I know my brother and how hard he loves, and I can tell you now that he loves you.” (*Look*)

“Well, I love him too, maybe a little bit too much and that honestly scares me,” I find myself confessing to her.

“Why does that scare you?”

“Because I’m scared of someone breaking my heart. The first man to ever break my heart was my dad...”

“How so?”

After she asks me this question I realize that I shouldn’t have mentioned anything pertaining to my dad because this topic may trigger her. Shit!

“Uhm... well,” I mumble.

“No, it’s okay if you don’t want to talk about it. I totally understand. Sometimes I also don’t want to be asked about my husband's passing.”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to trigger you.”

“Oh no, you haven’t done that at all. It’s just that it’s difficult for me to speak about my loss to uSiya notata because I know that seeing me suffer hurts them and I don’t like seeing them that way because of me.”



“I understand what you’re saying and going through because I went through the same when I lost my father. It just really sucks that one moment your loved one is alive and the next they are gone.”

“Right?”

“My biggest challenge isn’t necessarily the loss, but it’s having to go through life and not have your loved one be a part of your journey.”

“I think that’s my biggest challenge at the moment too. I just got a promotion at work and the first thing I wanted to do was call him and tell him. When it hit me that I can’t call him to share the good news, I became angry that I lashed out at a patient. That’s why and how I ended up here,” she says sniffing.

My heart breaks for her as she says this. I understand the pain and frustration of achieving certain milestones and not being able to share that excitement with the one person you desire to share it with the most.

“Again, I totally understand how you’re feeling, trust me I do, more than you can ever imagine. Just remember that we are here to offer you any support that you need from us, that’s all. Don’t feel disappointed when you’re overwhelmed with emotions, no. You have to remember that there will be moments where certain situations set you back but don’t let

those moments consume you. Every situation comes to pass and so will this one, it will pass.”

She starts sobbing painfully. I stand up from my chair and take a seat next to her on her bed and pull her to my embrace.

“Kuzolunga Khunji sisi, kuzolunga,” I say, shushing her. (*All will be well; all will be well*)

“Kubuhlungu sisi, kubuhlungu kakhulu

Advertisement

” she speaks through her gut wrenching sobs. (*It hurts sister, it hurts a lot*)

“Ndiyayazi sisi, ndiyayazi. Kodwa thembela kuYehovah. He’ll give you the strength to carry you through this difficult period in your life.” (*I know, sister, I know. But trust in Jehovah*)

“I have prayed and begged God to relieve me of this pain, but it seems like He doesn’t hear my prayers. Every day I wake up and deal with this never healing wound that’s in my heart.”

“Be gentle to yourself sisi. There’s no time frame on when the pain will stop, if it ever will however all you have to do is be kinder to yourself and allow yourself to ride through the wave. One day you’ll wake up and be amazed at how far you’ve come and at what you’ve overcome.”

“When will that day come sisi? When, because I’m tired of living like this.],” she continues to sob.

“It will happen in due course, Khunji. Just trust the process and trust in God.”

“It's just hard, sisi. Hard but I hear you and I appreciate your kind and supportive words. I feel much better now,” she says to me as she wipes off her tears while untangling herself from my embrace.

“It’s my pleasu...”

I’m interrupted when Siya bursts through the door as though he’s being chased by dogs. He stands by the door and looks at us wide eyed. “What’s wrong? Why are you crying Khunji?” Oh, my handsome man, he thinks something’s wrong, how cute.

“Nothing’s wrong bhabha. We were just talking.” (*Baby*)

“Talking? Njani ekhala baby?” he says to me as he points at Khunji who is still wiping her tears. (*How, when she is crying*) I giggle at his panic. “Baby, she’s fine I promise. We were just talking, and we got a little emotional, but she’s fine, right Khunji?” I turn to face her. She smiles at her brother through her glassy eyes and nods her head at me. “She’s telling you the truth bhuti, I’m fine, I promise,” she says to him reassuringly. (*Brother*) Before heaving out a sigh he runs his eyes between Khunji and I as though making sure that we’re telling the truth. He walks in further into the room and raises his hand with

goodies inside to me, “Here are the snacks that you asked for,” he says handing over the goodie bag to me so I can pass it on to her. She takes the bag and mumbles a thank you to her brother before opening a packet of chips. I’m beyond exhausted and need some rest. I’m thinking of going back to eNgcobo tomorrow since Siya’s other sister is arriving. I don’t want Siya to be torn between giving me attention and also being there for uKhunjuzwa. I also don’t want uLulama to feel uncomfortable in her brother’s house, which I presume she’ll stay in, due to my presence. I’m saved from my thoughts when I hear Siya speak up,

“Khunji, how are you feeling now?” he asks her, concerned.

“I feel much better bhuti, thank you. Thank you to my brief chat with sis’Zamo to see me.” (*Brother*)

“Sis’Zamo? You know I’m younger than you, right?” I say to her teasingly.

“I know it’s just that -”

“Uright akubize njalo baby. You are technically older than her seeing that you’re dating me,” Siya says, cutting her mid-sentence. (*She’s correct by in referring to you that way*)

“Wow, okay then,” I say, in disbelief.

“Haike nomdade, xa uright, Zamo and I will get going. I’m sure uZamo is tired. She's had a long day today. We’ll come and see

you tomorrow with Lulu okay?" he says to her as he stands up from his seat. (*Well then my sister, if you're feeling better*)

"Okay bhuti. Thank you for coming by to see me, you too sis'Zamo."(*Brother*)

"It's a pleasure sis," I respond to her.

"Okay ke mnta'kama. Sleep well MaMkhonde," his brother says to her. (*Mother daughter*)

I give Khunji a hug before taking Siya's hand. We make our way out of her ward down the hospital corridors which are quiet as visiting hours are over. "Baby, how did you manage to get us to stay here this long even though visiting hours are over?" I ask him. He chuckles a bit before looking down at me, "Well baby, akhonto ingena xabiso." (*Everything has its price*) My eyes pop wideopen as I think about what he's insinuating. "I'm joking, love. My friend is one of the owners of the hospital, so I asked him for a favor." I sigh in relief, at least he didn't bribe anyone; I can't be an accessory to a crime kaloku, yho. (*Though, wow*) We drive out of the hospital and head home, no one saying a word. As soon as we arrive home, we head straight to our bedroom. Siya doesn't even bother to walk through the rest of the house to check if everything is still as we'd left it. I guess he's just as exhausted as I am. After stripping out of my clothes, because the no clothes in bed rule still applies, I lay my head on

his chest and settle into his embrace. He starts playing with my hair gently, almost absentmindedly before he says,

“Thank you for today, sthandwa sam,” he says to me as he places a kiss on my temple. (*My love*)

“It’s my pleasure, love.”

“I know I freaked out and freaked you out too back there when I called you and I’m sorry about that love. It’s just that I assumed the worst.”

“I saw how panicked you were, love, but in all honesty, she will get better my love, I can feel it. After our brief conversation I’m more certain now that she’ll get better, definitely..”

“What did you two speak about anyway?”

“No love. I won’t be able to tell you what she said during our conversation. She trusted me to listen to what she had to say and not convey it to anyone else, including you.”

“Alright, I hear you. I just thought what you two spoke about was for all to hear.”

“I’m sorry my love. I’m sure when she’s ready to share with you and the family, she will.”

“I hear you love,” he says in a low tone.

“Don’t be disheartened love, it’s not that she doesn’t trust you it’s just that you’re her brother and to a certain extent she isn’t

comfortable sharing certain things with you and your father yet out of fear that whatever she'll share and express to you both will end up hurting you even more. And no, you are not the cause of any of her heartache, trust me on that."

"I hear you bhabha, but like I'd said earlier, it's difficult for me to watch her suffer this way." (*Baby*)

"I know sthandwa sam, I know. But do you want to know something?" (*My love*)

"What?"

"Your sister knows just how far you'd go to take away her pain, hence she's also shielding you away from her pain, or so she thinks. She knows that you'd take her burdens and make them yours. What I can tell you though is that she's close to her breakthrough. She's fighting with all her might to get better. Watch this space."

"You think so?"

"I know so, love. It'll still be a difficult journey for her but I have faith that with all your support, she'll be victorious."

"I really truly hope so, my love. There's nothing that I want more than to see her happy."

## Chapter 21

I tossed and turned the entire night unable to sleep as the quarrel I had with Siya last night kept repeating itself in my mind over and over again. I tried to push it to the back of my mind but I failed in doing so. See, what I've noticed with Siya is that he's very stubborn, and that he wants things done his way. When he doesn't get his way, he'll try and sway your decision in his favor using subtle tactics, which if you're not aware of, you can fall for. I mean look at how he turned my concern for taking care of his father into a whole 'let's meet the family' opportunity? And now look, we're bickering over something as simple as me leaving so that they as a family can get to work through the ordeal without any outsiders in their presence. But do you think this man understands any of this? No! To him it's all about having uNomzamo as close by as possible, regardless of the sensitivity of the situation at hand... *sigh*. I pat the space next to me in bed and to my surprise Siya is not beside me. Well that's a first. Since I've been here I've been waking up a tad earlier than him to prepare breakfast for the trio but I guess today I either overslept or this man is still upset with me and woke up to leave me in bed alone. Sigh! Sometimes Siya can be such a big baby. I wake up a little frustrated and head to the bathroom to shower.



I finish taking a shower and walk back into our bedroom to finish up my hygiene routine. As I'm standing in front of the dressing table applying shea butter on my skin, the bedroom door opens and Siya walks in holding a tray filled with various food options. He's wearing his pyjama bottoms with his chest bare. On a normal day I'd salivate at the image before me but for now I'm more relieved that he's here. I smile at him and watch as he walks to the dressing table to place the tray on it. He stands behind me and fixates his eyes on mine through the mirror. "MaDlamini," he greets in a husky voice as he lowers himself to lay his head on the nook of my neck. I stop what I'm doing and smile back at him. "Hi baby," I respond in a low tone, something about his face being in close proximity with mine sends hot flushes all over my body. "Ulale kakuhle themba lam?" he inquires while planting peppered kisses on the soft skin on my neck. (*Did you sleep well my hope*) I feel my body tingle as he continues to shower my neck with kisses. "Mm" I whimper in response to both his question and his slaughter on my neck. If this man continues like this I might just end up staying. I mean in all the instances where we tried to get intimate it never got that far and mostly because me, your girl, as I wanted to be a lady of stature and not come off as too easy or loose but now? Now I change my mind. I want it all. ALL OF IT. "I can't hear you, my love," he titters. This man! "Uhm, I... Yes... mmm yes, I... I slept well, my... my love and you?" I stutter

in response. At this point my core is damp as fuck and all I want to do is launch myself on him and release all this pentup tension that I have. I open my legs slightly and lean back further into him but upon my movement, he stops with his torture and I flutter my eyes open to find out why he's stopping. I look back at him through the mirror of the dressing table and I see him smirking back at me while fixing the bulge in his pants. Oh no he didn't Siya likes seeing me hot and bothered and I'll show him, akandazi kakuhle. (*He doesn't know me well*) "The plan was to serve you breakfast in bed but I guess I was too late. Come," he says, extending his hand for me to take. I grab on to his hand and he helps me stand. Just as I'm about to step closer to him, my towel loosens around my body and drops to my ankles. I let go of his hand to pick up the towel when he stops me in motion, "Don't! Leave it." I stare back at him in shock. Haibo, how can he expect me to eat while I'm stark naked? (*Wow*) Also, what if I bump the tea cup and the tea spills and burns me? As though reading my thoughts, he continues to say, "Suba nexhala bhabha. Ndizokutyisa ngokukwam. So akhonto ezokutshisa." (*Don't worry baby. I will feed you myself... nothing will burn you*) I reluctantly leave the towel on the floor and follow him with the tray of food in his hands as he leads us to the bed. I position myself properly on top of the bed and he sits next to me, placing the tray on his thighs before he starts feeding me. On the array of foods he has a bowl of granola with

fresh diced fruit and yogurt, then next to it is a croissant filled with cheese, bacon and egg. I wonder uzithathaphi icroissants because we didn't have them yesterday. (*I wonder where he got the croissants from*) The food is scrumptious obviously because this man sure knows his way around the kitchen. He keeps eying me as he feeds me, but ignore his advances and only focus on the food. I can see his eyes turn dark with lust but uyadlala! Nam ndizomenza lento ebendenze yona. (*He's got another thing coming! I'll do to him what he did to me*) "Umhle MaDlamini" he says so randomly while staring deep into my eyes. (*You are beautiful*) I blush and shy away from him. "Thank you baby," I murmur in response without looking at him. I feel his hand cup my face and gently turn it to face him. "Don't ever shy away from me, my love. I want to see you get flustered when I shower you with compliments, that's my job after all right?" I coo at his endearment. "That's right love," I whisper in response.

"About last night, I'd like to apologize for my stubbornness and lack of understanding."

"No worries love, your apology is accepted."

"So, do you still want to go back today?"

"To be honest with you, just before I showered I was certain that I was leaving midday today because I assumed you were still upset with me. However, I'm not so sure anymore. I mean I

would like to leave today but I haven't packed so, I don't know."

"Like I said last night, I wouldn't mind you staying for an extra day or two, however if you prefer to leave then that's also okay, I will respect your decision. So if you leave today, am I still prohibited from driving you back?"

"You can get one request, Sir," I say to him, giggling.

"What options do I have, my lady?"

"Well, either I stay for an extra day and travel down using public transport or I leave today and you get to drive me back, but you can't get both," I affirm.

"That's not fair kodwa Zamo," he mopes. (*Though*)

"Well life is unfair my love, that's just the way it is. So I'll let you decide my fate," I say, kissing him on his cheek and I get up from the bed to get dressed.

"But..."

"Just make sure that you've decided by midday because I don't like traveling at night."

"You really know how to make me suffer. How will I pick between the two?"

"You'll know which one is more important to you, sthandwa sam." (*My love*)

“Yho okay.”

“Thanks for breakfast my love, it was delicious,” I say to him appreciatively as I put on one of his t-shirts.

“It’s a pleasure my love.”

“Did you make extra for utata noKhunji?”

“No love, that’s your department. They will reject my food now that they’ve tasted yours.”

“Hai uyayi baxa baby. You’re an excellent cook,” I say, giggling. *(No, you’re exaggerating)*

“I promise you love. I don’t even know how to make ezilivers zicelwe nguKhunjuzwa.” *(The livers were requested by)*

“They aren’t even that hard to make nje, and I’m sure you’ve made them before emcibini or something.” *(Though... traditional ceremony)*

“That’s not the same love and you know it. When you prepare your food, you select ingredients that elevate your meals, whereas I cook ukutya for ukuba kuvuthwe qha.” *(food for it to be well prepared only)*

“Look at you being all modest, Mr.”

“I’m only speaking the truth, sthandwa sam.” *(My love)*

“Haike xa usitsho bhuti. Anyway, what time does uLulu land? Shouldn’t you be preparing to pick her up at the airport?” (*Well if you say so brother*)

“She said her flight lands at eight. If you’d like we can go and pick her up together or I can leave you preparing ilivers zika Khunjuzwa and pick them up when I come back from picking uLulu up.”

“Ja, I think you should go and pick her up so that you don’t keep her waiting. That’ll also give me time to quickly prepare something for everyone.” (*Yeah*)

“Okay love. Let me take these to the kitchen so I can come back and change.”

“No, let me take that, wena go and get ready.” (*You*)

“Thanks love,” he says to me as he places the tray back on the bed where we were seated and stands to plaster a kiss on my lips.

I take the tray from the bed and walk to the kitchen to get started on the breakfast request from the patient. I hope by the time he gets back from picking up uLulama, whom I’m nervous about meeting, from the airport I’ll be done. I’m also hoping that when he comes back from picking Lulu up he’ll give me an answer as to whether he’d like for to stay for a day and travel using public transport or whether he’s driving me down today

but whichever option he decides on, I need an answer from him, andizo hlalela ilize apha. (*I'll not sit here in vain*) Siya walks in the kitchen just as I start preparing breakfast,

“Love, please buy ciabatta bread on your way back?” I beg him.

“Cia-what now?”

“Ciabatta bread love

Khunji notata will eat it with the livers.”

“Why aren't we giving them regular bread to have the livers with?”

“Because ciabatta bread is nice with soup love. I'm making peri-peri creamy livers and sizohamba kamnandi nezi livers, please torho bhabha,” I beg. (*It will go well with the livers*)

“Sizohamba sisitya izinto esingazaziyo ngoNomzamo,” I hear him mumble below his breath. (*We'll go around eating things we don't know because of*)

“Where can I buy this cia-nton nton of yours?” (*What-what*)

“Ciabatta baby. You can get it anywhere, even at Checkers, love.”

“Okay, I'll get it on my way back.”

He walks in further into the kitchen to stand in front of me and draws me closer to him. He lowers himself toward me and brushes his plump lips against mine so tenderly. I close my eyes

and savor the moment; I can never get enough of his kisses honestly. I gasp and moan when he gently tugs at my lower lip. He uses this to his advantage and pushes his tongue inside my mouth. My body comes ablaze and I begin to feel lightheaded. I arch my back a bit and fist tightly on the t-shirt that he's wearing. I feel his groin poke my stomach and I pull away not wanting to further enrage and deprive our privates of pleasure any further. "Uhm... I... I think you should get going. I don't want Lulu to think I deliberately delayed you," I whisper as I try to calm down my raging hormones and gather my now non-existent voice. He releases a groan and inclines back to his standing position with his eyes closed shut. I caress my lower lip as it's now plump and soft from all the annihilation that this man has put it through. He pinches the bridge of his nose before rubbing his hand aggressively over his face. "We'll fix this tonight MaDlamini, no more," he says in dissatisfaction. Now I'm confused, "What are we fixing now love?" He opens his eyes, which are now bloodshot red and squints them together as though threatening me, "Oh, you'll know when I'm plumbing the problem area." I gasp loudly once I catch on to what he's referring to. Gosh this man has a dirty mind. My nipples get hard instantly and my thong dampens. I cramp my thighs together to compress and suppress the throbbing sensation on my clit. "I guess I'm staying an extra day then?" I ask him. "It may be even more than one, depending on how



thorough my plumbing job is,” he says, with a smug face. Nxa, idiot. He fixes himself up and plants a lingering kiss on lips before collecting his wallet, phone and car keys on the kitchen counter and steps out of the house. I scurry around the kitchen when I realize that I have to prepare the room that Lulu will sleep in as well. Gosh, why didn’t I ask this man before he left where he keeps the linen for the spare bedroom. Wait, let me call him quickly. He picks up almost immediately,

“Bhabha, what’s wrong? Are you okay?” (*Baby*)

“Relax love, I’m fine I just wanted to ask you where you keep the linen for the spare bedroom?”

“Oh I keep it in the wardrobe that’s in the spare bedroom. Uzoyenzani ilinen ye-spare bedroom?” (*What are you going to do with*)

“I wanted to change the sheets on the bed that Lulu will be sleeping on, love.”

“Hayisuka bhabha, uLulu can do that herself mos.” (*Oh come on baby... though*)

“No love, I want to and it wouldn’t be hospitable of us to expect her to do that, especially ndikhona.” (*When I’m here*)

“Haike skwiza sabantu, do as you want. Bendingalwi mnt’wam I was just asking.” (*Oh well, people's sister-in-law... I wasn’t arguing my person*)

“Nam andilwi sthandwa sam. Let me get going then.” (*I also wasn't arguing my love*)

“Thank you bhabha, I love you.” (*Baby*)

“I love you too baby, see you in a bit.”

He hangs up the phone and I proceed to zoom around the house. I'm a little nervous now that I'll be spending a day, if all goes well, with uLulu. I want everything to be as close to perfect as possible. First impressions last and although I've already met one sibling, I want to ensure that my reputation is as consistent as possible throughout the family, at least to the extent to which I can control it. I take a broom and cleaning detergents that I'll use to freshen up the spare bedroom and make my way to the spare bedroom. I walk in and luckily for me it's not that dirty as it seems like nobody really makes use of it. I open the curtains and windows and start sweeping around the room. After I'm done I wipe down the pedestals and place everything back to where it was. I open the wardrobe and look through the variety of linen available. I wonder who ironed the bedding because I was dreading having to iron it, I mean we all know how much I hate ironing. I take out the white linen set and start dressing the bed. There's just something about white bedding, yes it's fussy and all that but for some odd reason it also offers some sort of assurance, especially to a guest that the bedding/linen is clean and fresh. When I'm satisfied with how

everything is I walk to the kitchen to try and find some sort of room air freshener but I find none and I don't want to use le yase bathroom. (*The one used in the*) I mean everyone knows how the Glade lavender air freshener smells like and it always reminds you of a bathroom and I don't want Lulu's room to smell like a lavatory. I want it to smell peaceful and subtle. When I can't find anything I decide to take one of the scented candles that Siya used when I arrived and place it in her room for a bit just until the scent engulfs the room. I walk back to the kitchen to pack the livers and everything else, juice, fruit, yoghurt and utensils in the basket to avoid wasting any time when Siya arrives. I hear his car drive in through the driveway and my heart starts to beat uncontrollably against my chest. Gosh, I wasn't even this nervous when I was meeting uKhunjuzwa. Ai. The main door creaks open and I jump in surprise, as though I didn't know that they were outside, ai idrama Nomzamo *\*eyeroll\**, and start busying myself with nothing. "Honey, I'm home," I hear Siya shout. Gosh why is he like this? Embarrassing me. I don't respond to his outcry but simply carry on busying myself. "Baby, uphi?" he continues to call out to me. (*Where are you*) Yazi uSiya uyayithanda idrama. (*You know Siya likes*) He hasn't even walked through the house to see where I am but he's already calling out my name for the entire neighborhood to hear. I guess it's payback for the time when he was making me... Okay, okay, okay. Focus Nomzamo,

focus. This is not the time for iz'manga. (*Atrocities*) "In the kitchen," I yell back to him. I hear some feet shuffling in the passage and I hold in my breath as I can tell that they are coming towards the kitchen. I turn my body away from the kitchen door and focus on the sink that has NOTHING so that I can at least brace myself when they walk in. "Love," I hear Siya say right behind him. I can tell he's close to me, super close because his heat is radiating through my clothes. Nkos'yam does this man not know how to act around other people. (*My goodness*) I need space. Space, before I collapse. I feel his hands resting on my waist before he turns me around. I clasp my eyes shut because I'm shit scared right now. Of what? Nam andiyazi, but I am. (*I also don't know*) He perks my lips and draws me close to his body. Vuleka mhlaba ndingene. (*Can the earth just open up and swallow me*) I flutter my eyes open and they lay on a gorgeous light skinned lady. She has a thick brown/black afro with big eyes that look like they could see anything from here to Cairo. She has plump lips just like her brother and has an hourglass figure that would put Kim Kardashian to shame. She's wearing a simple black and white Adidas sweat set with matching Adidas sneakers and a white t-shirt underneath. When I tell you that this sweat suit was made for her, I'm not lying. Siya disturbs me from my thoughts as he says, "Love, this is Lulama, my younger sister. Lulu, nguZamo lo, iskwiza sakho." (*This is... your sister-in-law*) I nudge him on his stomach for

introducing me as iskiwaz again. (*Sister in-law*) “Hi Lulu, I’m Zamo, it’s so lovely to meet you,” I say to her shyly while I extend my hand for a hand shake. Instead of responding to my greeting or taking my hand for a handshake, she launches her entire body on me and envelopes me in a hug. I stumble back as my weight can’t carry hers but luckily Siya’s firm body manages to break my fall and I sigh in relief when I realize that I’m still standing.

“Lulu man!” Siya yells at her reprimanding.

She ignores him but says to me, “I’m so happy to finally meet you sisi. This one has been talking all about you since the day he first saw you.”

“Suxoka ngegama lam Lulama,” he groans beside me. (*Don’t speak lies about me*)

“He knows I’m telling the truth. Gosh, you smell so nice,” she continues to say, while still squeezing my tight.

“Thank you Lulu, you smell nice too,” I say in response.

Indeed she does smell nice; she smells of vanilla and cocoa. She loosens her embrace, and stretches our intertwined hands out and she stands in a distance to have a proper look at me. “You are such a beaut. Ubhuti chose well,” she says bopping her head in her brother’s direction to indicate that she is impressed.

I shy away as she compliments me and I feel Siya pulling me closer to him.

“Of course she is. What do you take me for?” he retorts in confidence.

“A pro bhut’wam. Gosh, I’m so excited to finally meet you,” she says to me in disbelief. (*My brother*)

“I’m glad I’ve met you too.”

“Come. Walk me to my room so that you can tell me all about how he’s been treating you. Ndiyamazi kaloku,” she says to me, already pulling me away from Siya. (*I know him*)

“Hayi, wazi ntoni Lulama?” Siya questions her a bit sternly. (

## Chapter 22

Here I am being dragged into this room looking like a deer caught in red lights. She has not stopped talking since she dragged me out of that kitchen. She opens the bedroom door and drops my hand immediately before walking into the room and starts jumping up and down as she screams and squeals. Okay, what is going on here? Siya comes rushing from the kitchen to find out what the fuss is about while I stand frozen by the door. He shoves me slightly out of the way and makes way inside the bedroom. “What’s wrong Lulu? Why are you screaming?” Siya asks her in concern. I’m still frozen by the door, scared that she’s screaming about something that I’ve done to her room because I’m the one who worked on it before she arrived. “Oh my God! Oh my God! It’s so beautiful. I love it! I love it!” she screams at the top of her voice, while running around the room checking out everything. Siya stands in the middle of the room gobsmacked and confused as hell about what his little sister is going on about.

“Lulama! Stop running around this room man! You’re making me dizzy,” he yells at her.

“Sorry bhuti,” she simmers down. (*Brother*)

“So? What are you on about?”

“The room bhuti. Can’t you see how lovely it is? It also smells nice and fresh. And the white linen, oh my gosh, I love white linen.” (*Brother*)

“Ngoku?” (*And*)

“Haibo bhuti, since you bought this house, you’ve never prepared this room this way for when I arrive. It’s clear that a woman took care in making sure that I settle in nicely when I arrive.” (*Brother*)

“And all this noise is because of that Lulama?”

“You wouldn’t understand bhuti, and I don’t expect you to,” she says to him while rolling her eyes at him. (*Brother*)

She observes the room one more time before running towards my direction and launches herself on me once again. “Thank you sisi for preparing my room for me. Like I said, uBhuti never went to such lengths when we came to visit, he’d always just hire someone to clean the house and keep it moving. Now that he’s got a woman in his life...” she starts shaking her shoulders in a shimmy motion (*Sister... Brother*)

“Vala lomlomo wena Lulama,” he says to her in a jokingly reprimanding tone. (*Shut that mouth you*)

“Thank you sisi, I really appreciate your effort.” (*Sister*)



“It’s only a pleasure Lulu, I’m glad you like everything you had me worried there for a second,” I say to her as I giggle in her embrace.

“Where did you get the candles anyway? They smell so nice.”

My eyes bulge out of my sockets because I didn’t expect that question from her. Where will I say I got the candles from “Your brother?” Then she’ll know his other romantic side and I doubt Siya wants her in his business like that because she seems like a handful once she knows something about you. I giggle at her question before trying to respond to it, but Siya interrupts me mid-sentence and says to her, “Shouldn’t we get going young lady or you’re no longer interested in seeing your sister now that uthe phithi sikwiza sakho nale room?” (*You’re obsessed with your sister in-law and this*) The mood suddenly turns sombre at the realization of her visit. She releases me from her hold and stands beside me and says, “Let me quickly change my sneakers so that we can leave.” My heart tugs painfully when I think of what she must be going through, how concerned she must’ve been when she received that call from her brother last night informing her that her sister needs her. I walk over to Siya whose mood has also plummeted at the mention of the situation and hold his hand before looking up to him, “Don’t be too hard on her love.” He looks down at me and offers me a slight nod and smile before he plants a kiss on my temple as he

draws me in for a hug. I snuggle closer to him and inhale his scent. This man's scent is enough to drive anyone crazy. "Are you guys just going to pretend like I'm not here?" says the feisty young lady as she stands a short distance from us with her hands on her waist. I had completely forgotten about her for a second, that's what being in Siya's arms does to me. I giggle and hide my face on Siya's chest before I feel it vibrate against my face, "Yindlu yam le Lulama and I can do anything I want with anyone I want andizova ngawe mna," he refutes, drawing me even closer to him. (*This is my house so I can do anything I want with anyone and I won't listen to you*) uSiya mara. (*Though*) She huffs at her brother's response and stomps her feet before walking away. Siya chuckles at her childishness. I guess this is their relationship, she is always annoying him and he's always playing the typical big brother. I actually like seeing him in different roles and personas around his family. It gives me a glimpse of the man that I'm with. "Please get out of my room before you do something that will give me nightmares tonight," she yells out to us from somewhere around the house. I giggle even more at her statement, especially when I hear her brother grunt in annoyance. Seems like it's going to be an interesting stay with this one as our guest. "uLulama akanambheko yazi," he says in a groan, clearly annoyed with his sister. (*Lulama has no manners you know*) He lets go of me before taking my hand in his and walks us out of her room. We

walk into the lounge where we find yours truly stuffing her face with some leftover fruit while seated on the couch. “So lovely of you to finally join me, your majesties,” she says to us mockingly. We weren’t even in her room for that long, this one is just dramatic. “Haisuka wena, we weren’t even in there that long,” Siya says to her exasperated. (*Hey you*) “It only takes a second to make a baby bhuti,” she says, teasing her brother (*Brother*). I choke on my saliva while Siya grabs a cushion that’s close by and throws it at her. “Voetsek wena, wazi ntoni wena ngokwenza abantwana?” he says to her as he runs towards her direction. (*Go away you, what do you know about making children*) She laughs out loud and gets up from her seat and runs away from him. “Sorry bhuti, sorry,” she says to him as they chase each other around the lounge area. (*Brother*) As Siya tries to grab her, she moves the couches out of place and Siya jumps over them and she screams while running away from him. The entire house is filled with their laughter and her screams. I’m sure the entire neighborhood can hear the ruckus. I leave them playing in the lounge and go check on the food basket that they need to leave with. They will fix the mess they make on that side, andiyo maid yabo mna. (*I’m not their help*)

I hear the noise die down a bit before these two enter the kitchen with Siya’s one arm hung on Lulu’s shoulder. They are so cute.

“Are you two done now?” I ask them with a smile on my face.

“Yes love, we’re done.”

“He’s the one who started it, sisi,” Lulu says. (*Sister*)

“No it’s you who started it,” Siya rebuttals.

“Okay you two, that’s enough now. Please get going. I’m sure my patient is starving where she is,” I interrupt them in their banter.

“Yho asithandwa apha. Mas’hambe Lulu mnta’kamama,” Siya says, sulking. (*Wow, we aren’t loved here. Let’s go my mother’s child*)

“You know that’s not true love.”

“Are you not coming with sisi?” (*Sister*)

“No dali, maybe some other time,” I say as I offer her a sweet smile. (*Darling*)

“Okay,” she says to me.

She comes and offers me a brief hug before walking out of the kitchen followed by Siya who comes and plants a kiss on my lips.

“We’ll be back in no time, love,” he says to me. I nod my head before shoving him out of the kitchen. He chuckles at my efforts to move such a mountainous man with my tiny frame, but I eventually succeed. They eventually leave and I walk back

to the lounge to check whether they've fixed the mess that they made. Luckily for me, they placed everything back to where it was. I decide to read my novel while I wait for them to return from their visit. I will not make lunch or supper today, the naughty duo can take care of that, I need some rest too.

I must have dozed off on the couch again when I'm disturbed from my sleep by my buzzing phone

"Hello?"

"Bhabha? Are you sleeping?"

"Yes love, I was reading my novel, but I guess ndibiwe bubuthongo." (*Sleep overcame me*)

"Oh okay, I'm just dropping off uLulu and utata at his hotel. I will come and pick her up later. I'm also needed at the office quickly

Advertisement

so I'll go there right after I drop off utata noLulu. When I'm done I'll come home okay?"

"Okay love. Thank you for letting me know."

"Pleasure baby... How about we can go out for dinner later? At a restaurant somewhere? I'll ask uLulu to find us a place that's nice because zasiswa nguye ezizindawo." (*She knows these places*)

“I would like that very much sthandwa sam. Oko undivincele kulendlu kaloku wena.” (*My love. You’ve since trapped me in this house*)

“Oh trust me, you’ll know when I do”

I giggle at his statement. How can he speak like this with his dad and sister around, ai this man.

“Hayi Siya stop it,” I say to him as I blush. (*No*)

“Okay ke baby, ndiyekile. I’ll see you soon, I love you,” he whispers the last part to me. (*I’ve stopped*)

“I love you more bhabha.” (*Baby*)

He drops the call and I get back to my slumber, andisavukanga. (*I’m not waking up*) Hopefully I’ll be up by the time that he gets back. Just as sleep creeps in I hear a car pull up in the driveway. I sit upright from my sleeping position on the couch and anticipate the next move. I hear keys rattling as someone inserts them inside the keyhole. Does someone else have keys to Siya’s house? Oh my goodness. I spring off the couch and run to our bedroom, locking the door behind me. Where’s my phone? Where’s my phone? Damnit! I left it on top of the coffee table. Shit! Shit! Shit! I stand with my back against the door while clutching my chest as I try to stabilize my breathing. Please Lord let it not be an intruder. I hear shuffling of feet for a few minutes before I hear a door bang and silence follows. A

few seconds later I hear a car drive out of the driveway, but my fear has crippled me so much that I can't move from my position to check what kind of car it is. I stay put in my position, too afraid to go out even though I heard the car drive out. What if there was more than one intruder? I'm freaking out right now, more so because I have no means of contacting Siya. How can this day turn so sour whereas it started off so beautifully? I slide down the door to sit down as I have no plan in mind on how I can reach out to Siya. I decide it's better to stay put and if one of the intruders, should there have been two, is still inside the house, Siya will deal with him when he arrives. I sit in the same position for what seems like a lifetime before I hear another car pull up in the driveway. Oh my God they are back for me. Surely they know that someone is in the house seeing that I left my phone on the coffee table. Bazondigqibezela ngoku straight. *(They have come to finish me off now)* I start praying profusely behind the door asking God to protect me as I can't die just yet, imagine ufela endlini yendoda? *(Dying in a man's house)* I'll surely not make it nase zulwini and if the intruders don't kill me, how will I explain getting injured to my mom, at a man's house? *(In heaven)* "Themba lam," I hear a familiar voice call out from somewhere in the house. *(My hope)* I sit still because I'm not sure if I'm hallucinating as I'm scared shitless or if that voice really belongs to my boyfriend. I listen attentively once more time and when I hear the voice call out

again, “Sthandwa sam, uphi? I’m back.” (*My love, where are you*) I don’t waste another second as I bolt up from my seating position, unlock the door and run towards the direction of his voice. I find him standing in the passage, with his back toward me, peeping through the kitchen door, I guess to see if I’m in there or not. I launch myself onto his body and he nearly falls over with me piggy backing him. “Well someone missed me,” he says in a humorous tone while I cling tight on his body. He tries to shift my body from his back so that I face him but I shake my head vigorously at him and start sobbing uncontrollably. “Baby what’s wrong?” he asks me in a voice filled with concern. I try to say something but the fear of what just happened revisits my memory and I find myself sobbing even more uncontrollably. “Baby, please, please themba lam, please tell me what’s wrong,” he beseeches me. (*My hope*) I loosen my hold on his back and he lowers me down gently as he turns his body to observe me. I hold onto his t-shirt tightly and continue to wail. “Are you hurt?”, he asks me. I shake my head ‘no’ against his chest and I see him sigh in relief. He whisks me off my feet bridal style and he walks us somewhere in the house. I feel him sit down as I continue to cuddle up to him with my head on his chest. He continues to rub my back in a soothing manner, calming me down in the process. “Themba lam please tell me what’s hurting you, you are worrying me.” (*My hope*) I remove my head from his chest and look up to him



through my glassy eyes. He wipes my tears and looks at me worriedly. "There... there... There was someone in the house." He looks with a stoic face before he relaxes it, "Did you see them?" I shake my head 'no' and he looks at me and smiles. What is this one smiling at now? "What?" I ask him annoyed. He doesn't respond to my question but continues to smile at me. Does this man not hear what I just told him? Someone walked into his house and scared the living shit out of me. "Have you gone to the lounge since the person left?" he asks me with a smile on his face. Haibo lendoda! (*Wow this man*) What does he even mean 'did I go to the lounge'? How would I have gone to the lounge kodwa I just told him that... I huff in frustration. Yazi ntoni? (*But... You know what*) Let me just ignore him, he's clearly not taking me seriously! Nxa. I aggressively untangle myself from him and try to stand up but he grabs my hand almost instantly and pulls me to his lap. "Uyaphi?" he asks me with a smirk on his face. (*Where are you going*) "Ndiyeke Siya! Ndiyeke!" I yell at him. (*Leave me alone! Leave me alone*) His face turns cold, and he lifts his brow before he says, "Why are you yelling?" he asks me in a firm but stern tone. I cringe at the tone of his voice and all of a sudden, I'm not as bold.

"Nomzamo! Ndithe, why are you yelling?" (*I asked you*)

"..."

“Ndithetha ndodwa ngoku?” (*Am I speaking alone*)

“No,” I answer him in a whisper.

“Ngoku? Why ungandiphenduli?” (*Now?... aren't you answering me*)

“I'm sorry.”

“That's not what I asked you, I asked you, I asked you why you are yelling?”

“I didn't mean to. I'm just frustrated by you because ingathi awundiva uba ndithini.” (*It's like you aren't hearing what I'm saying*)

“Ndanditheni kuwe ngo shoutisa?” (*What did I say to you regarding yelling*)

“I'm sorry Mkhonde. I won't do it again.”

“Mm. Ngoku uthi what did this person do?” he asks me again, with a smug face. (*You're saying*)

“I said there was someone in the house earlier, but I didn't see them. I've been locked up in our bedroom since.”

He lets out a belly laugh before he takes my hand and walks us out to the lounge. When we get there, there's a huge bouquet of white roses placed in a round gold box with a white box wrapped in a gold bow next to it placed on top of the coffee table. I gasp at the sight before me. When did they get here?

“I asked uThando, my PA to come and drop these off at the house for you while I was still at the office.”

“Oh my God! These are beautiful. This is all for me?” I ask him as I squeal in glee.

“Yes love, this is all for you.”

“What did I do to deserve this?”

“You’ve been taking care of me and my little family with so much kindness, sthandwa sam and you have done so so effortlessly. I thought it would be a nice gesture for me to do something small in return to show you my appreciation, hence the gift and the flowers.” (*My love*)

I jump on him and start kissing him all over his face. He holds me firmly and laughs as I continue to plaster his face with feather kisses.

“Wait, so the person that was in the house was your PA?”

“Yes love, his name is Thando.”

“He?”

“Yes, he. I didn’t want a female PA. They tend to be troublesome, and I didn’t want any drama hence I chose him. You’ll like him once you meet him, he’s just another version of uLulu, full of life, forever smiling and also naughty,” he says, smiling.

“Now I feel silly for all the dramatic crying.”

“Don’t feel silly love, it’s understandable. We live in a dangerous world, and anything can happen. He must have walked in because I sometimes ask him to collect documents from the house from time to time and he must have forgotten that you are here. I’m sorry that he scared you, love. I’ll have a word with him about it.”

“It’s fine love, no need for that,” I say to him, lowering myself from him as I make my way to the coffee table.

I pick up the bouquet of flowers that probably has about 100 roses in it and smell it. Gosh it smells divine. I eye the box wrapped in a bow and look at him to elaborate,

## Chapter 23

I'm in our bedroom trying to unwrap this box so I can see what he bought me. As I work through the bow, I can't help but feel stupid and embarrassed although I had valid reasons for doing so, at how I reacted regarding the intruder situation. As much as Thando is his personal assistant and has free will to prance around his house, I still believe that he should have knocked even in his absence. I mean, how can one walk into someone's house and not knock to announce their presence? Also, where did he think I was seeing that both parcels were for me?

Anyway, I won't dwell too much on this. I gasp when I see the item inside the box; it's an ivory/champagne mid length satin dress that has thin straps with a deep plunge neckline and an open back. There is a slit on the right-hand side of the dress that looks like it goes all the way up to mid-thigh. I hope Siya is aware of how daring and sexy this number is, otherwise usengxakini. (*He's in trouble*) I scratch around the box a little bit more and find a pair of strappy gold heels that will compliment my look. I squeal in excitement before I hear Siya yell out from the lounge "Stop screaming MaDlamini or else we will be late for our reservation." The smile on my face spreads even wider, he made reservations for us? I wonder where. I definitely have to thank Lulu for helping with the date night. I quickly remove the clothes that I'm wearing and take a quick shower to freshen up. I'm finished in no time and rush out of the shower to

complete the rest of my hygiene process. I wear my set of black lace lingerie because I'm planning on being piped down after this dinner date. Like I said, I've been playing good girl for a while now and I'm honestly over it now. Morals never saved anyone from salt anyway.

I sit in front of the dressing table and put on a bit of makeup, mascara and nude lipstick just so that I can compliment the beauty of the dress and shoes that he bought me. After I'm done with applying makeup, I tie my hair up in a slick bun and lay my edges. I complete my look by wearing a pair of round gold earrings and spray some perfume on my pulse areas. Though I'm not fully dressed, I look at myself in the mirror and I must say I look damn fine even if I say so myself. I can bet my left butt cheek that this man will be eating out of the palm of my hand tonight. I get up from the dressing table and walk towards the bed to get dressed. I pick the shoes first as I don't want to crease my dress. As I'm about to fasten the shoe buckle, Siya walks into our room and stands frozen by the door when his eyes land on me. "Bhabha," he says to me in a whisper. (*Baby*) I guess he's enticed by this lingerie that I have on. It's way different from the one I wore the time I gave him a massage. This one is raunchier and more risqué. I smirk, pleased with his reaction. This is exactly what I wanted from him. I stand up straight as soon as I'm done fastening my shoe buckle and turn around to face him. My man is looking

scrumptious as always. He's wearing a white shirt that hugs his body just right with formal grey straight pants that contour his bowlegs perfectly. He has paired his look with the most stunning pair of black dress shoes that I have ever seen in my life. His Adam's apple bops up and down his throat violently as I come closer to him. His eyes turn dark with lust, and I can see that he's having yet another inner battle with himself... That's right bhabha, this is exactly where I want you to be, I think to myself. (*Baby*) I want you to be so starved that you cannot wait to ravish my body. I stand in front of him and place my hands on his chest and start moving them up and down his chest. His breathing changes and he starts releasing shallow breaths. I smile even wider as I look up to him. I feel his hands snake around my waist before pulling me even closer to him. His groin pulsates against my lower abdomen, and I look up to him before asking, "Are you okay, love?" I bat my eyelids at him. I can see that he's not fine, but I want him to be the one to tell me. He shifts a bit in his stance before he responds, "Uhm... Ja. Ndi... Ndiright. Ndiright sthandwa sam. I... Uhm... I just came to check how far you are... I don't want us to be late." (*Yes... I'm fine. I'm fine my love*) He keeps his eyes away from the entire time as he says this. I wonder. "I'm nearly done, just give me five more minutes. We won't be late I promise," I say to him as I drop one hand that was on his chest a little lower from and direct it to his member. I squeeze it gently and I hear him

groan. He closes his eyes before crying out to me in a whisper, "Zamo." I don't respond to his plea but continue to squeeze and caress his member through his trousers. "Ndiyakucela MaDlamini," he beseeches once again. (*Please*) I can see the vein on his temple throb violently and I decide to let him go. I step back and look at him with a smirk on my face, "Maybe we can just order in themba lam," he says to me with his eyes still closed. (*My hope*) I giggle at his suggestion because now I know that I've definitely got him. He can't say we should order in after I've spent so much time and effort to prepare for this dinner, and him. Angakhe alinge andiqale. (*He mustn't dare try me*) "No baby, we're going," I say to him, already picking up the dress from the bed and putting it on.

He flutters his eyes open and looks at me with so much desire.

"Sthandwa sam," he calls out to me. (*My love*)

"Yes, my love."

"You can't do that to me and leave me like that."

"Like how Mkhonde wam?"

"Like this themba lam," he says pointing to his protruding member in his pants. (*My hope*)

"We will fix that later mos, won't we?" (*Right*)

"I can't wait for later, MaDlamini. Ndiyafa." (*I'm dying*)



“I’m sure you can try kodwa sthandwa sam. I promise you, sobuya, ndim nawe.” (*Though my love... It’s me and you*)

“Kodwa Zamo uzama ukundibulala. Stru,” he says to me in defeat while fixing his bulge. (*But you are trying to kill me. Honestly*)

I giggle as I grab my purse from the dressing table and place my phone, wallets and lip gloss inside it. “Let’s go sthandwa sam. I’m done,” I say to him as I grab his hand leading him out of our bedroom. (*My love*) He grunts in response to my actions, but I ignore him and proceed to walk further out of the house with him on my tail. “Let me grab my wallet and car keys in the lounge,” he says to me as he frees his hand from my hold. I titter at the annoyance in his voice as his frustration is clearly evident. What he doesn’t know is that this will be all worth it by the end of the night. I walk straight to the car and wait for him as he locks up behind him. He walks to the car and opens the door for me, I settle in and thank him. At least his chivalry still stands firm even in his annoyed state. He walks over to his side and my eyes can’t seem to stop looking at him. One thing about this man is that he knows how to dress and how to hold a room, in this case me, under his command without even uttering a word. I must have been eye fucking him so much that I didn’t even realise that he’s already inside the car. Only when I hear his voice boom somewhere in the distance do I realize just

how far gone I am. "I did say we can order in," I hear him say to me. "No baby, let's go," I utter in response. He releases a deep breath before bringing the engine to life and drives us to our destination. I didn't even ask him where we're going but I trust Lulu to have selected a beautiful and elegant restaurant.

We arrive at our destination, Ginger The Restaurant which overlooks the sea a bit and walk hand in hand after he's parked the car. He informs the lady at the front of our reservation, and we are ushered to our table. The restaurant has a beautiful ambiance to it, romantic and cozy. Our waiter comes to us and introduces himself as Siphso. He takes our drink order while we work through the menu. After Siphso leaves I take a moment to take in the place that we're in. "This is beautiful," I say out loud as I catch a glimpse of the ocean in the distance. I shift my gaze to Siya and I find him staring at me, almost like his boring holes into my skin and I turn crimson under his intense gaze. "Not more than you," he says in response to my statement. If I could redden any further, I would. This man sure knows how to build a woman's confidence. "Thank you, baby," I mutter in response. After a few minutes Siphso comes back with our drinks and takes our order. The night progresses wonderfully as we engage in laughter filled conversations talking about anything and everything. My heart is content and I'm so glad that Siya came up with the idea of a date night. I ask him to excuse me as I need to make use of the restrooms, the wine

that I've been guzzling wants to be released. I find the restrooms and go on about my business. As I'm about to walk back to our table, an idea comes to mind. I smile devilishly at what I'm about to do and I sashay back to our table. "You took a bit long, love, is everything okay?" Siya asks me with concern laced all over his voice. Oh indoda yam bethuna. (*Oh my man you guys*) "Yes love, I just had a little trouble with this this," I say to him stretching out my hand to him so that he can take what's in my hand, which he does, "But it's all sorted now," I quickly say as I pull my hand back. He sceptically observes me for a bit before looking down at what's in his hand. He opens his hand and I hear him gasp out loud. His eyes almost bulge out of their sockets when he sees my lacy thong. I giggle at him as I watch him swallow a whole lot of nothing as though he's a fish out of water. "Z... Zamo. Is this your?" he doesn't finish his question as I nod my head vigorously at him. "So, you're not wearing any underwear now?" he asks me with his eyes still transfixed on the item in his hands. "Yes love," I respond to him in my most seductive voice. Immediately after I say that he snaps out of his trance, shoves the thong in his pants and calls out for Siphos like a mad man, "Siphos? Siphos? I need the bill my man. Make it snappy my bra," he yells at the poor guy as he's already standing up, grabbing all our things on the table. (*Brother*) He's breathing so fast with sweat beads all over his forehead. He pulls me up, almost a bit too rough, and walks us

towards the exit. We meet Siphos mid-way and he shoves a bunch of notes in his hands without looking at the bill and tells him to keep the change. I hope and pray that the money is enough, I wouldn't want the poor guy to pay for the balance of our bill all because of an impatient horny man. As he continues to drag me out of the restaurant, people pass glances at us because he's acting abrasively. I want to laugh out loud because if I were to tell these people why this man is behaving this way they wouldn't believe me. He pulls me out of the restaurant and as we head to the car He stops in his tracks and turns to look at me causing me to also do the same. He looks almost deranged, like a predator that's ready to pounce on its prey. He unexpectedly swoops me off my feet before throwing me over his shoulder. I squeal at the unexpected movement and giggle as he starts walking. "You're walking too slow," he says to me as he spans my ass. I giggle and scream as he continues to take wide steps towards the car. Yey, ilambile idyan. (*The man is hungry*) We get to the car and he lowers me from his shoulder and opens the door for me to get in. This time around he doesn't wait for me to settle in properly like he normally does. Instead, he closes the door as soon as my butt cheeks land on the car seat. He literally runs to the other side of the car, starts the car and drives off. The speed that he's driving at is scaring me, "Slow down baby please," I beg him. He listens to my plea

and decreases it a bit although I can tell that all he wants is to find us at home.

He takes his free hand and fishes for something in his trouser pocket. He comes back with my thong, and I get flushed immediately. “MaDlamini, why undilinga?” he asks me in a hoarse voice as he brings the thong to his nose and sniffs it. (*Are you tempting me*) I clamp my thighs together, why did that turn me on so much? I don’t respond to his question but focus on the road ahead. He places the free hand with the thong on my exposed thigh and moves it up toward my core. My breath hitches as my body gets engulfed in flames. Gosh what is this man doing to me? I feel his fingers brush against my vulva and my inner whore comes alive. I slouch down the car seat slightly and spread my legs wide as I want him to take care of this itch that I have. I hear him inhale sharply as I do this before muttering something beneath his breath. All my senses have forsaken me at this point, and I don’t care about the danger of what we’re doing while he’s driving. He separates my lips before plunging two of his fingers into my core. I arch my back and lean my head on the head rest and release an audible moan. He starts moving in and out of me in slow motion and I can’t help but place my hand over his to push him even further into my haven. “Mm baby,” I moan out in pleasure. “You’re so wet, baby. All of this for me?” he asks as he continues with his torture. I can’t seem to find my words, so I simply nod my head

in response. “Words baby, words sthandwa sam,” he says in a low voice. I can tell he’s also struggling just like I am. “Ye... yes lo... Love,” I stammer trying to catch my breath. He removes his fingers from my core, and I whimper in protest. Why did he stop? He looks at me with an intense gaze and says, “We’re home baby.” I didn’t even realize that the car had stopped moving, I was too caught up in ecstasy. I sit up properly in my seat and look around my surroundings. He’s correct, we are home.

He jumps out of the car just as embarrassment seeps in, Nomzamo you whore. He opens my door and helps me step out of the car. Just as I ground my feet, he lifts me up and throws me over his shoulder, taking wide steps towards the house. I don’t even think he locked the car. He roughly opens the door and before I can even reprimand him the door flies open, banging against the door stopper and he walks in heading straight to our bedroom. As soon as he opens the bedroom door, he places me on the floor and starts kissing me passionately. My bearings are a bit all over the place, so I grab on his shirt to try and balance myself. He grabs my ass cheeks and squeezes them causing me to moan in his mouth. He tugs at my lower lip, and I open my mouth to let him in. Our tongues dance in symphony as he continues to dominate my mouth. I lower my hands, wrapping one around his neck to pull him closer to me while the other lowers to his groin to caress it.

“Fuck,” I hear him say as I fondle with his groin. That fuck really came from the depths of his stomach. He breaks the kiss which leaves me panting and yearning for more. He takes both his hands and pulls the dress above my head. I’m left standing in front of him in just a bra and heels. “Undress me,” he says in the most lust filled voice I’ve ever heard.

I step closer to him and start unbuttoning his shirt. Our eyes are fixated on one another as I do this. I remove the shirt from him and crouch down to remove his shoes. I come up after I’m done removing his shoes and proceed with unbuckling his belt. It’s a bit of a hassle but he helps me through it. I unclip the button of his pants allowing it to drop to his knees. I decide to be kinky and turn away from him before bending down to help him step out of his pants. My ass is now against his groin. He pulls me closer to him so that I can feel his hard member. “I don’t think I can hold off any longer,” I hear him say as he rubs my butt cheeks. He steps out of his pants, and I raise my body, turning it to face him, and pull him into another passionate kiss. He unclips my bra during the kiss before tossing it somewhere around the room. His one hand moves to cup one of my breasts as he gently squeezes it. My nipples are erect and super sensitive, and his touch is sending shockwaves all over my body. He leads me back towards the bed before laying me on my back gently. He stands in front of me, getting rid of his briefs. His proud member springs free from the confinement of

his briefs making its presence known. He runs his thumb over his mushroom head that's glistening with precum and groans, throwing his head back as he continues to stroke himself. There's nothing sexier than a man who pleasures himself. What he's doing now is turning me on even more. I find myself bringing my knees up, opening my thighs wide and lowering my hand between them to my core. I need relief, this is too much. "Don't," he reprimands me just as I'm about to plunge my fingers inside my nectar. I didn't realize that he was back to looking at me. I remove my hand between my thighs and look at him.

He lets go of his member and walks closer to the bed, climbing on top of me. He plants wet kisses all over my jawline to my shoulder blade lowering to my breasts. I continue to moan in pleasure. His warm mouth wraps around my nipple and I arch my back calling out his name "Siya." He continues giving attention to my one breast but soon moves to the other. I sink my nails on the bed sheets as the feeling of euphoria continues to overwhelm me. After giving attention to both my breasts he plants kisses down my navel area. Goosebumps spread like wildfire across my body as my anticipation continues to build up. He trails kisses down my inner thigh before planting kisses on my pelvic bone. His mouth moves from my pelvic bone to my scruffy nectar. I feel his warm breath fan my heated core and before I can even comprehend what's going on, he plunges



his tongue in between my folds and starts sucking, licking and grating on my nectar. I arch my back, digging my nails on his back while pulling him closer to me as his tongue continues to torment my vulva. Soon his tongue is replaced by two fingers, and I cry out in gratification. I sink my teeth into my lower lip to try and suppress my moan. "Let it out baby. Let it out. I want to hear you," he says to me as he starts circling nearer to my g-spot. His fingers are magical, but I need him not his substitutes. "Baby, please," I beg him hoping that he understands what I'm trying to say. "What do you need, my love?" he asks me while removing his fingers from my vulva. I look at him almost in tears, I was so close, so close but he's denying me my orgasm. He takes the fingers that are now coated in my moistness and brings them to his mouth and licks them clean. "You taste amazing sthandwa sam," he compliments me. (*My love*) I don't want his compliment, I want him! I look at him teary eyed and he lowers himself on me before planting a sloppy kiss on my lips. "What do you need themba lam?" he asks me again. (*My hope*) "I need uJola," I utter in response.

Before I can even beg him any further, I feel his member on my entrance before it plunges deep into my core knocking out all the air in my lungs. "Ah," I gasp and scream in pain but mostly pleasure. "Shit," I hear him curse under his breath. He stills for a bit allowing my walls to stretch and accommodate him. "Fuck Zamo, uyatshisa," he grunts in between gritted teeth. (*You are*

so warm) "I don't think I'm going to last," he says to me as he starts moving in and out of me. He grabs my ass beneath him and raises me closer to meet his thrusts. His movements are driving me crazy. I feel pressure build up and I start grabbing and pulling at anything that I can lay my hands on including his hair. I clasp my inner thighs together when I can't handle the pleasure anymore, "Shit Zamo, don't do that sthandwa sam," he begs me. (*My love*). I try to release my clasp, but the pressure intensifies even more. "Siya! Siya! I think I'm going to pee," I tell him. I can't afford to pee during our first intimate session. "Wait for me love, wait for me," he says as he continues to pump in out of me at an increased pace. He starts pounding on one area and I scream even louder "Ah! Baby! Ah! Please! Please!" I beg him. He pounds a few more times before he says, "Cum with me love." I let go and feel a liquid substance splash out of me. Siya continues to pump in and out of me before growling as he releases all his load inside of my womb. He drops his body next to me and pants as he tries to regulate his breathing. "You'll be the death of themba lam," he says in a breathy voice. (*My hope*) I close my eyes, smiling as I bask in the euphoria that I'm in right now. "That was..." I trail off, failing to complete my sentence. "Mind blowing, exceptional, out of this world, the best I've ever had," he completes the sentence for me. I smile and look at him as he lays next to me. I bring myself closer to him before planting a kiss on his lips, "I

love you Siyabulela. I love you so much.” He looks up at me with eyes filled with emotions that mirror mine and says “I love you too Zamo, more that you can ever imagine and comprehend. Uliphakade lam.” (*You are my forever*) I sigh and rest my head on his chest. I’m officially an even goner girl than I was. Ten for the other gender and zero for uNomzamo.

## Chapter 24

I lay still on top of the bed as the rays of the sun penetrate through our bedroom window. My entire body is stiff and sore from all the romping that Siya and I engaged in last night. We must have slept in the early hours of the morning because the man couldn't get enough of me, well in all honestly neither could I. He flipped me in all possible directions and positions throughout the night, but I will not lie and say I didn't enjoy it, I did but the repercussions of our actions have left me paralysed. I shift my gaze to watch him as he lays next to me. I'm enveloped in his embrace with one leg sprawled over his legs. I don't know if I'm dickmatized or what but today he seems even more handsome. I run my hand over his eyebrows, down the side of his face, to his jawline and over his luscious lips. They are so inviting that I have to refrain myself from capturing them in mine, I don't want to wake him up. I watch his chest rise and fall as he takes shallow breaths before he stirs, opening his eyes slowly and smiles at me. Yho umhle lobhuti. (*Wow, this man is handsome*)

"You're starrng mkam," he says to me in a groggy voice. (*My wife*)

"I'm not starrng, love. I'm just taking in God's creation."

"Well, He created a lot of things, which are you most in awe of?" he asks me as he pulls me even closer to him.

“This specimen in front of me,” I say in response as I run my hands over his chest.

“Well, I could show you just how perfect His creation is,” he says teasingly as he places his hand between my thighs.

“No baby no. I’m sore,” I whine.

“It won’t hurt I promise you bhabha, plus I’ll be quick.” (*Baby*)

“Don't lie to me. I know where all of this is going. Ndiyeke please,” I say to him as I untangle myself from his embrace.  
(*Leave me alone*)

“Okwe ntloko sthandwa sam,” he begs. (*Only the tip my love*)

“Like I will fall for that trap. Ndiyakwazi unjani,” I say as I get out of the bed. (*I know how you are*)

I wince in pain as pain shoots through my body when I take a step to the bathroom. “Ah,” I yelp in agony. I lean on the bed and try to gather my strength. Siya jumps from his side of the bed and rushes towards me, “Bhabha uright?” (*Are you fine baby*) I whimper out in pain. The fire between my thighs is unbearable, “It’s... it’s sore.” He picks me up and rushes with me to the bathroom and gently places me on top of the vanity. He zooms around the bathroom trying to make a bath for me, pouring all kinds of bath salts and oils as I sit and watch him. Tshini, indonzakalisile lendoda. (*Wow, this man hurt me*) “I’m sorry baby. I didn’t mean to hurt you. The bath is almost ready,

hopefully you'll feel better after you've soaked yourself," he says to me as he stands in between my thighs. He has this concerned and remorseful look on his face which I find adorable and funny at the same time and if it was any other day, I would laugh at him but I know that my laughter would vibrate throughout my body and trigger the areas I need left dormant. He picks me up gently and walks with me still in his arms before placing me inside the bathtub. I wince when the water makes contact with my nana and groan in pain. "Nxesi sthandwa sam, nxesi," he apologizes, sincerely. (*Sorry my love, sorry*) He attempts to walk away from me after he's placed me in the bathtub, but I grab his wrist and ask him to join me. "Are you sure, love?" he asks me as he sizes up the bathtub. I understand why he'd question my request because this bathtub isn't big enough to accommodate the both of us however, I don't care. I want my man with me in this tub. He's the reason behind my discomfort so I'm sure he can endure a few minutes of discomfort in a bathtub nomkakhe. (*His wife*) "Yes baby, I'm sure," I say in response to his question. I see hesitation in his eyes, but I look at him, beckoning him to join me. He finally gives in, and I can't help but squeal in delight as I scoot forward to make room for him. He gets in and I scoot back to lay my back on his chest. I sigh in relief and contentment as we sit in comfortable silence with his arms wrapped around my waist as

he places random kisses on my temple. After a few minutes of sitting in comfortable silence, something comes to mind,

“Shit, uLulu baby!”

“Fuck! I completely forgot about her.”

“How could we be so irresponsible? You were supposed to go and fetch yesterday after our dinner,” I half yell at him already standing up to get out of the tub.

“I didn’t mean to. You were just so tight and...”

“Not now Siya! Not now. What will your sister think of me huh? That I kept you away from her all night!”

“Baby! Baby! Mamela. She will not think that,” he says to me, jumping out of the bathtub following me. (*Listen*)

“You don’t know that, Siya. You don’t. Gosh how could I allow this to happen?” I say, frustrated.

“Oh, it was easy love, you just kept saying...” I cut him mid-sentence.

“Baby just stop it! Now is not the time for your silliness. Siya we forgot to pick up your sister. YOUR SISTER!” I say, wiping down my body.

“Baby. Relax sthandwa sam. I’m sure she’ll understand that we could have gotten carried away after our dinner and she could

have decided to give us time. I mean she didn't call me to remind me to fetch her," he says, grabbing my hands to try and still my movements. (*My love*)

"That's not the point, my love. We should be focusing on Khunji's recovery not dinner dates and sex," I say to him defeated and scared of his sister reaction to our recklessness.

"I hear you my love, I hear you and you're right. However, I wanted to do something nice for my woman seeing that her vacation was interrupted by my family drama. I just wanted to do something beautiful for you as a token of my appreciation, that's all."

"I know baby and I thank you for that sthandwa sam, I really do but we were irresponsible and inconsiderate. I can't help but feel guilty for neglecting her." (*My love*)

"I know, baby. Look, I will apologize to her and make sure that she knows that none of this was your fault, okay?"

"Okay. Let's get going then

I don't want us to waste any more time and I also have to come back and pack."

He snaps his head so fast to look at me when I mention packing. He looks bewildered and a bit angry. He raises his brow for me and says,



“Pack?” He repeats the word slowly and questionably.

“Yes love, pack. Remember I have to go back to my place today.”

“No, I don’t remember.”

“No Siya. We agreed on this, come on.”

“No, we didn't agree, Zamo. Why are you so hell bent on going back to eNgcobo huh?”

“I’m not hell bent on going back home but we did agree that if I stay and meet Lulu, I could go back on Wednesday or Thursday.”

“Well, the options were Wednesday or Thursday and it’s not Thursday yet, so I’ll drive you down tomorrow.”

“But...”

“No Zamo. You’re just trying to run away from uLulu otherwise you would have informed me kwa yizolo if you were planning on leaving today.” (*Yesterday*)

“That’s not true!”

“Oh yes, it is otherwise explain to me how you’re only telling me now that you’re going back to eNgcobo today?”

“It slipped my mind,” I mutter, in a whisper as I twiddle my fingers while looking down.

“Don’t! Don’t lie to me. I said I’d speak to uLulama ngoku, why are you turning this into a big deal?” (Now)

“I’m not turning anything into a big deal!” I say in a slightly elevated voice.

“Nomzamo? Nomzamo! Ndicela singaxabani sthandwa sam,” he says to me in a stern voice. (*Please let's not argue my love*)

I lower my head in defeat and embarrassment. I know how much he hates me raising my voice.

“Now I said that I’ll take you home tomorrow. Firstly, I need to check on utata noLulama then I’ll go to the hospital to see uKhunjuzwa, then go to the office to inform everyone about my trip tomorrow.”

My eyes bulge out in shock. Inform everyone?

“Everyone?”

“Yes love, everyone, utata, uLulu, uKhunji and my employees.”

“What? There’s no need for all of that.”

“Yes, there is,” he deadpans.

“But... What are you going to say?”

“That I’m driving my girlfriend back to her place,” he responds nonchalantly.

“Haibo Siya. You can’t say that. Not everyone knows me and your family doesn’t even know me that well, so there’s no reason for you to be disclosing such information. We haven’t even been to...” (*Wow*)

“Just stop Zamo. Stop with the excuses sthandwa sam. Everyone who needs to know about you, knows about you, including utata. Have you forgotten the wine glass that you’d left on the coffee table when he came over? The meals that he’s been eating since he arrived? Utata is not stupid. He knows that I didn’t prepare those meals.” (*My love*)

I sigh in defeat as he mentions all the above. He’s right, all of these things scream ‘girlfriend’. Ey waze wazenza Nomzamo. (*You’ve shot yourself in the foot*)

“Kodwa...” (*But*)

“No buts love. Now let’s get dressed so that we can call uLulu.”

I honestly have no words for this man. He’s managed to successfully persuade me to stay longer me kweli Bhayi twice already, which I can’t afford to do any longer as uMaDlamini is expecting me to visit her like I normally do during school holidays. (*In Port Elizabeth*) I haven’t spoken to my mom since I arrived here but now that ndine ndoda ndiyanyamalala espacini. (*Now that I have a man, I disappear into space*) What reason will I even give her for going MIA for so long? Tsi. We

enter our bedroom and continue with our morning routine before walking out hand in hand to the kitchen to have breakfast. As we walk out, we hear the TV play in the lounge and we look at each other perplexed as to who trespassed while we were in the house. Scared to move any further into the passage, I stand still and indicate with my head that he goes and checks who the intruder is. As he's about to walk to the lounge, Lulu steps out of the lounge heading to the kitchen and greets us briefly with minimal eye contact. We stand frozen in our spots wondering how she got back home. Siya grabs my hand again and drags us to the kitchen where we find Lulu plating breakfast for us.

"Morning Lu," Siya greets her, testing the waters.

"Morning bhuti," she greets back, without even sparing one glance at him. (*Brother*)

"About yesterday..." he trails off.

"No, it's fine bhuti, don't worry about it. I managed to find my way back to the house using an Uber. I found the spare key under the doormat." (*Brother*)

"Oh okay. What time did you arrive?"

"Just after 11."

"Yho. We didn't even hear you come in, ngxesi mnatakamama." (*Wow. Apologies my mother child*)

“You wouldn’t have,” she mumbles below her voice.

“Uthini?” his brother inquires, with a raised brow. (*What did you say*)

“Nothing bhuti,” she answers him, shrugging her shoulders. (*Brother*)

“Mm. I’m sorry nyani for not coming to pick you up as agreed.” (*Truly*)

“It’s fine bhuti.” (*Brother*)

Siya takes the plate of food before him and starts indulging. I decide to join the conversation and greet her as well, “Morning Lulu.” “Hi sisi,” she greets me with no particular emotion attached. “Did you sleep well?”

“Well, I tried to but...” “But? What was wrong?”

“Well between “Fuck Zamo you’re so warm” and “deeper Siya, deeper” the screaming and groaning...”

Siya chokes on his food and starts coughing profusely. She heard us? I am beyond embarrassed right now. I try to steal a glance at her face, and I can see the smirk plastered all over her face. I guess this little witch couldn’t wait to let us know that she heard all of that. Yahoo vuleka mhlaba ndingene. (*I wish the earth could open up and swallow me*)

“Uright bhuti?” she asks her brother who’s gulping down water, I guess he’s also embarrassed that his sister heard him in the act. (*Are you okay, brother*)

“Ja. Ja. Ndiright,” he responds to her without looking her way. (*Yes. Yes. I’m okay*)

She giggles as she exits the kitchen and makes her way back to the lounge. Siya and I look at each other flushed as the realization of what she just said sinks in. “How do you plan on apologizing now that she knows the reason behind you not fetching her mm?” I ask him. He says nothing but runs his hand through his face frustrated. Just as he’s about to say something to me, we hear her scream from somewhere in the house, “Keep it down next time. There’s a child in the house.” Blood drains from my face in horror while Siya’s eyes bulge out of his sockets. Nkos’yam how could you forsake me like this? (*My God*)

“How will we face her now Siyabulela?” I whisper against his chest which I’ve hid myself in.

“I... I don’t know love; I really don't know.”

“Gosh, I’ve never been this embarrassed in my entire life.”

“I’ll never hear the end of it. uLulu is the last person you want to catch you doing anything embarrassing or out of character. She’ll remind you for the rest of your life.”

“How’s you saying any of that supposed to make me feel any better?”

“I’m not trying to make you feel any worse about this sthandwa sam, but that’s the honest truth. uLulu yiradio, she will inform the rest of my siblings about what transpired izolo.” (*My love... Lulu is a radio... Last night*)

“There has to be a way to make sure that she doesn’t mention any of this to anyone, love,” I plead with him.

“There may be a way, but silence comes at a price and uLulu’s silence doesn’t come cheap.”

“I don’t care what the price is, we’ll just have to bear it. No actually you have to bear it seeing you’re the one who got us into this situation. So please, do whatever it takes to silence her.”

“I got us into this situation? I didn’t hear you stopping me when you were screaming for me not to stop and...”

“Siya please. Focus baby, focus. Sikulemoko nje ngulomthondo wakho.” (*We’re in this mess because of your penis*)

“Ngowethu sthandwa sam,” he teases me. (*It’s our penis my love*)

Chapter 24 continued

“Gosh Siya!”

“Okay. Okay. I’m sorry, let me go speak to her.”

“Please. I’ll stay here in the kitchen while you speak to her.”

He stands up and places a kiss on my lips before walking out. I release a deep breath as Lulu’s words continue to ring in my head. Why couldn’t I be those girls that just enjoy their pleasure in silence mm? Now the entire Port Elizabeth knows how thoroughly fucked down I am. Fuck! I take the plate that was placed before me and shove the food down my mouth. What transpired has cost me my appetite, but I can’t afford to not eat anything because I need the energy. I’m three quarters done into the meal when Siya walks in with a defeated face and my heart starts beating uncontrollably against my rib cage.

“What’s wrong baby? What did she say?”

“I don’t know how to put this to you MaDlamini.”

“What? What did she say, Siya?” I ask impatiently.

“Well... uthi the only way she’ll keep quiet is if you go skinny dipping with her eShelly Beach.”

My mouth hangs wide open. Huh? Skinny dipping? With me?  
No!

“What?” I ask Siya in a whisper, as I’m in utter disbelief.



“She said she’ll only keep what happened last night between the three of us if you go skinny dipping with her. I tried to change her mind but...”

“I can’t even swim Siya, how can she expect me to...” she walks in the kitchen and interrupts me just as I’m about to continue with my protest.

“It’s either we go skinny dipping and mingle with the nudists, or the entire clan will know about you and my brother’s rendezvous,” she says to me.

“Lulu kutheni ingathi uyasi blackmail-a nje ngoku?” his brother asks the question I was about to ask her. (*Why is it like you are blackmailing us now*)

“Oh no bhuti, I’m not. Andithi you two chose to forget about me and focus on engaging in heated coitus then when you’ve been caught and want to buy my silence, you refuse my offer for my silence? No bhut’wam, it doesn’t work like that.”  
(*Brother... My brother*)

Yho, this girl is spitting fire and has us right where she wants us!

“Lulu, I’m not comfortable walking around naked in front of strangers,” I say to her, beggingly.

“Everyone will be naked there and no one cares about the next person's nudity. You’ll enjoy it I promise you.”

“Can’t we please renegotiate?” I beseech her.

“No! That’s what I want,” she says adamantly.

“Lu ka mama...” Siya says endearingly to her.

“Oh no bhuti, that is not going to work on me today,” she says as she places the cup that was in her hands before walking out of the kitchen. (*Brother*)

“Be ready at 15:00 sis’Zamo. We need to catch the golden hour I heard that it offers the best type of lighting for pictures.”

Siya loses his cool and stands up abruptly and walks to her direction,

“Anizo fota anything nihamba ngaze,” he screams at her. (*You won’t take any pictures with you both nude*)

“Bhuti, it’s pictures. Suba tense man, relax,” she says to her brother unbothered by his tantrum. (*Brother... Don’t be*)

Honestly, she loves riling him up the wrong way and I can’t help but giggle at their banter. I have a feeling that this situation is designed to torture him rather than me.

“Lulu uyandiqhela ngoku. My girlfriend will not parade naked for horny little bastards to drool over her.” (*You’re disrespecting me now*)

“You are most welcome to join us bhuti if you feel threatened by other men ogling her,” she says to her brother with a smirk plastered all over her face. (*Brother*)

He almost jumps on her, but I quickly grab him as I can see that he’s clearly upset now.

“Baby? Relax, okay? I’m sure it’s not that bad.”

“Not that bad? Not that bad Nomzamo? Yintoni, you also want to walk around naked and be seen by the entire Port Elizabeth huh?” he bellows. (*What*)

“Baby, nudist beaches are private beaches and are safe. I'm sure no one will care that Lulu and I are there naked as there will be many other nakes people there with us. Look sthandwa sam, it’s either this or...” (*My love*)

“Yazi ntoni Nomzamo? Do what you want because ndiyakubona uba ufuna ukuphathwa bobubu febe buka Lulama.” (*You know what? Do what you want because I can see that you also want to behave like a whore*)

I gasp just as the words leave his mouth and hold back the tears that are threatening to fall.

“Bhuti,” his sister calls out to him when she sees how angered he is. (*Brother*)

“Hai voetsek man!” he lashes out on her as he takes his keys and walks out of the house slamming the door behind him. (*No go away*)

A sob escapes my mouth and I lower myself down and wail as his words pierce through my heart.

“I’m sorry sisi, I was just pulling his leg. We weren’t going to the beach bendimqhula nje,” she says to me sincerely as she tries to console me but I’m inconsolable. (*Sister... I was just teasing him*)

I continue to wail, why would he speak to me like that even if Lulu was teasing him or not, he shouldn’t have addressed me like that. I’m beyond hurt. I stand up and offer Lulu a weak smile and leave her there and walk back to our bedroom. I curl up on top of our bed and continue to bawl my eyes out. I can’t believe how this day has turned out. I can’t wait to leave and go back to my apartment.

## Chapter 25

I must have slept while crying because I'm woken up by a knock on the door. "Come in," I call out to whomever is at the door. My head feels heavy as I lift it from the pillow and my face is itchy from the dried up tears. Lulu walks in with a tray of food in her hands and my stomach growls immediately when the aroma hits my nostrils. She smiles at me gently when she hears my stomach's reaction, although you can still see the pity in her eyes. "Sisi, I made you something to eat," she says to me as she walks further into our bedroom. (*Sister*) She's barely making eye contact with me, I guess she still feels guilty about her brother's outburst but in all honesty, she shouldn't. Siya reacted on his own accord, and no one is liable for his actions but him. "Thank you, nana. Please place it on the bedside table, I will eat after I've freshened up, okay?" I say to her sweetly. (*Baby*) She nods her head as I step out of our bed and make my way to the bathroom. I stand in front of the vanity and stare back at the woman in front of me. I look like a mess, my hair is scrunched up in a weird direction, courtesy of sleeping without tying it into knots, and my eyes are red and puffy, courtesy of the crying and the banging headache is a reminder of my dehydration caused by the crying. I sigh as the pang in my heart tightens, reminding me again of what transpired earlier. One of the things that I can't handle is being spoken ill of, makes me crumble immediately. You see, after we lost our father, our

father's family emotionally abused my mother and constantly hurled hurtful words and profanities her way, blaming her for our father's passing while ridiculing her for struggling to take care of us although they are the ones that ripped us off the wealth that our father had left us. So anytime someone says anything remotely hurtful my way, especially something untrue, I can't help but go back to that nine-year-old who had to listen to her aunts and uncles bash her mother. This pain runs deeper than Siya calling me a whore.

I walk out of our bathroom when I'm done, and I find Lulu seated on her brother's side of the bed with her head bowed down. When she hears me step into the room, she raises her head and looks my way, offering me a faint smile, which I return. "I thought I should wait for you," she says to me as she fiddles with her hands. I don't know why she's nervous. "Thank you, Lu but there was no need," I genuinely say to her. She shouldn't feel the need to baby me, I'm a big girl and I'll be fine. "I didn't want you to eat alone, although I've already had my dinner," she continues to say. I nod in acknowledgement as I have nothing more to say to her. I make my way to our bed and climb on it, taking the tray beside me and placing it on my lap. I look at the offering before me and I salivate immediately. She prepared roasted duck and paired it with vermicelli rice, honey glazed carrots and mashed potatoes. I start digging in immediately before I hear her giggling, "Won't you say grace?"

My eyes pop out of my sockets when I realize that I indeed didn't say grace. My mom would be so ashamed of me. Hayi wethu I'm hungry and emotional so umthandazo is the last thing on my mind right now. (*No... Prayer*) I'm not saying that it's a good thing to not pray when you're hungry or emotional, but I refuse to ridicule God mna, especially kule situation ndikuyo, ngengxaki yendoda engacubekanga. (*Me, especially in the situation I'm in, with the problem of an unchaste man*) "Shit. Okay masithandaze," I say to her as I lower the spoon in my hand, closing my eyes. (*Let us pray*) She blesses my food and immediately after we say "Amen", I continue to stuff my face with the mouth-watering food before me. Though I'm still very upset at her brother I can't help but wonder if he's back from wherever he stormed off to or if he's okay where he is. "Is he back yet?" I ask her in a whisper, completely avoiding her gaze. "Mxm. Why should you even care about him after all he said to you?" she questions me and, in all honesty, I also don't know why I care. No that's a lie, I do know why, it's because I still love him regardless of the fact that he hurt me. I know, I know. Stupid Nomzamo right? Ndanditshilo ndathi y'all should never send me to war with the other gender because I will lose, and this is yet another classic example of me letting the team down. (*I did say*) I look down and avoid her gaze and focus back on my food as she continues to say, "uBhuti is a grown ass man and he shouldn't have spoken to you in that manner no matter

how upset he was. uTata didn't raise us like that." (*Brother*) I release a deep sigh and shut my trap when I realize how upset she is with her brother. I conclude that he's not back from wherever he is. Lulu gets up from the bed furiously and utters a "nxa" before walking out of our bedroom, slamming the door behind her, leaving me in complete silence. I guess slamming doors is another thing that they all have in common.

I finish eating and I take my phone that's placed on the bedside table and check the time which reads 19:27. I gasp in shock when I realize just how long I'd been passed out for. Yho umjolo uyandinyisa! (*Oh, dating is making me see flames*) I get up from the bed and head to the kitchen to drop off the tray and dish that Lulu brought with my dinner. I catch her watching some National Geographic in the lounge and I smile as I realize that we also have something in common. I place the utensils and tray in the sink and walk back to our bedroom to start packing. I want to take the first Avanza back to eNgcobo first thing tomorrow morning. I'm done with trying to be nice and understanding to Siya when he simply throws all my efforts right back in my face. "Lulu, please check that all windows and doors are locked before you go to bed, okay? I'm going to retire early tonight," I say to her as I peep through the door in the lounge. She turns her head my way and smiles when she sees me standing there before saying, "Okay, but don't you want to join me for some ice cream before you head to bed?" If it was



any other day, I wouldn't mind however all I want to do right now is pack my shit and wait for the sun to rise so that I can go back to my sanctuary. "I'll have to pass nana. Maybe some other time?" I smile sweetly at her. *(Baby)* "Okay sisi, next time then. Good night and I'm sorry again about what happened this morning," she says to me, lowering her eyes in humiliation. *(Sister)* I walk further into the lounge and stand before, "Come. Get up and give me a hug," I say to her beckoning her with my hands. She looks up to me with a wide smile on her face and launches herself onto me, just like she did when she first saw me. "You did nothing wrong okay? You just have a crazy, obsessive brother whose brain cells fail to function sometimes, okay?" I say to her as I envelope her tighter in my embrace. I gently brush her back as she giggles at my statement while nodding her head against my chest. I soon release her from my embrace and peck her forehead. "Good night, Lu. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?" I say to her alreading walking away. "Good night sisi, sleep well. I'll see you in the morning," she responds, throwing herself back on the couch. *(Sister)*

I pass by the spare room and take my bag with me and start collecting all my clothes and cosmetics. By the time he comes back I want him to find me already packed and fast asleep. I may still care about him but I'm not ready to engage in any form of conversation with him just yet. Most of my clothes are nicely packed in Siya's wardrobe as a result packing is seamless.

I set aside what I'm going to wear in the morning on top of the couch, including the cosmetics that I'm going to use. When I'm done with all the packing, I place my bag inside the wardrobe and start removing the decorative pillows on the bed, placing them on the couch, leaving only the standard pillows which we use to sleep on. After I'm done with removing the pillows, I strip off the clothing that I'm wearing and settle into bed. I take my phone and text my mom that I'll be coming home for the weekend and that she should expect me on Friday. After pressing send, I lock my phone and place it on the bedside table and wait for sleep to consume me.

I'm deep in sleep when I hear the door creak open followed by shuffling around the room. On a normal day I would panic but his scent that engulfs the room alerts me that it's him and that he's back from wherever he went after his tantrum. I want to wake up and scream at him for not only coming back this late but for behaving the way he did, but I decide to rather ignore. I feel the bed cover being peeled open before a cold breeze brush against my skin followed by the bed dipping. I tighten my eyes shut as I don't want him to see that I'm half awake. He snakes his arm around my waist and pulls me closer to him before inhaling sharply as he places his face on the crevice of my neck. I tense up when the rest of his cold body comes in contact with mine. "I'm sorry love," he whispers in my ear. The lump in my throat rises and fights for release but I gulp it down

refusing for it to make its presence known. Siya doesn't deserve my tears. "Ndixolele themba lam. I didn't mean any of what I said," he continues to say but I offer him no response. (*Forgive me my hope*) I can feel his heart beating violently against his chest as he lays next to me but I remain unmoved. I deserve an explanation behind his irrational outburst, but I don't want to have that conversation now, when I'm half conscious and at my weakest. He needs to face me like a man and own up to his shit. I hear him exhale deeply before planting a kiss on my temple. "Ndiyakuthanda Zamo. Ndicela undixolele sthandwa sam," he continues to say. (*I love you... Please forgive me*) My heart wants to give in but I forbid it, izoba weak ngenye imini not namhlanje. (*It'll be weak on another day... today*) He pulls me even closer to him and his scent hits my nostrils and I find myself drowning in it. I may be upset at him, but I'll never take away from how wonderful this man smells. He gently rubs my back in a circular motion which feels like a lullaby to me and I find myself drifting off to lalaland.

I wake up the next morning just as the rays gently brush against my skin and involuntarily tap his side of the bed to feel if he's really beside me but to my dismay, it's empty. I start to wonder if what I felt and heard last night was a dream. Was I that hurt that I wanted him next to me, apologizing? I sigh and get up from the bed, I have to get ready for the long journey ahead. I

take a quick shower and in minutes I'm done. I moisturize my skin and get dressed in the items of clothing that I'd set aside last night. I pack the remaining cosmetics and items of clothing into my bag before running my eyes one last time around the bathroom and bedroom to make sure I haven't forgotten anything. Satisfied, I take my bag, purse, and phone and make my way out of the bedroom heading to the kitchen. As I'm walking out of our bedroom, I hear two voices arguing in a hushed tone. As I get closer to the lounge, I decipher that the voices belong to Lulu and Siya.

"Why would you say something like that to her, bhuti?" Lulu asks her brother. (*Brother*)

"I didn't mean to Lulu. I lost my temper and I only realized after the words had slipped out of my mouth what I'd said. I didn't mean any of what I said," her brother explains.

"It doesn't matter because those words left your mouth and there's no taking them back."

"I apologized last night -"

"You apologized? When? After you'd disappeared for the entire day?"

"I didn't disappear, I left to cool off."

“You should feel ashamed of yourself after that stunt you pulled. You shouldn’t have left because that made matters worse.”

“I know, I kn-”

“No you don’t! You don’t know. After you left, she locked herself up in your room and cried till she fell asleep. She didn’t eat anything until I decided to take the dinner I’d prepared to your room. She had swollen eyes from all the crying she was doing. You don’t deserve her! You don’t.”

“Don’t say Lulu, please.”

“It’s true. You don’t deserve her. You behaved like an uncultured prick all because I wanted to take her to Shelly Beach, and you know I was teasing. I’d never expect such from her but no... my brother just had to show her how much of an imbecile he is.”

“Lulama! Lulama! I’m still older than you,” he bellows.

“I hope some man sees her for the diamond that she is and swoops her right before of your eyes, maybe then, maybe then -”

“Ndingabulala umntu! Zamo is mine and no one will take her away from me.” he yells out to his sister. (*I’d kill someone*)

“Well, you should have thought about that before you acted like an idiot.”

“I said I’m sorry, what more do you want me to say and do?”

“You know what? You just don’t get it. You don’t, let me -”

I interrupt their argument by walking into the lounge just as Siya is about to pop off on his sister. They both stand frozen in the middle of the lounge, looking at me. “Good morning,” I greet them both. “Good morning/Hi,” they simultaneously say in response. I say nothing further. I place my bag and purse on one of the couches and walk out to the kitchen. They both don’t say anything as I walk out. I hear Siya’s heavy footsteps clomp behind me soon after he appears. “Baby?” he calls out to me. “Mm,” I acknowledge him without looking at him. “Can we please talk?” he asks me. I shift my gaze back to look at him as I was trying to make myself a cup of tea. “About what?” I ask him, raising my brow up. He starts scratching the back of his head with his one hand before he answers me, “Uh, about yesterday.” I look at him as he nervously fidgets but I refuse to have this conversation now. I thought I’d be better in the morning but I’m not. I may be turning this into a big deal, but I don’t care. I’ve never downplayed my emotions and I won’t start now. “There’s no need for that. What happened yesterday has happened and -” he interrupts me mid-sentence and pleads with me. “Please sthandwa sam. I need just a few minutes to

explain and apologize for my behavior,” he says to me, walking towards me and taking both my hands into his. (*My love*) The tears in my eyes well up on my waterline and threaten to fall should I blink. I shake my head no and retract my hands from his. I catch a glimpse of hurt in his eyes, but I couldn't be bothered. “Please,” he pleads, in a whisper. “No. No. I’m not ready to do this with you. Please just take me to the -” the words get lost in my throat as the lump resurfaces again.

“Zamo, don’t run away from me, from this. Please, my love.” I scoff. “Me? Runaway? How rich of you to say that when you were the one who left me here for hours on end after spewing hurtful words and now, I’m the one who’s running away?

Please bhuti, don’t patronize me,” I say to him as I walk out of the kitchen. (*Brother*) I no longer want to be here, nor do I want to have breakfast. I just want to be away from this man and his toxicity. He follows me out of the kitchen calling my name

“Zamo? Zamo? Zamo?” I ignore him and proceed to make way to the lounge. I find Lulu sitting on the couch staring into space and I say to her, “Nana, it was lovely meeting you. I’m going to be on my way now and I hope to see you soon.” She gets up from her seat and walks toward me before she engulfs me in a warm hug. “It was lovely meeting you too sisi. I hope to see you soon as well. I know what you said about yesterday's incident, but I would like to apologize again for the mess I created,” she says to me as she frees me from her embrace. (*Sister*) “You're

long forgiven my love. Please send my love to Khunji and apologize to her on my behalf for not being able to go and say goodbye to her,” I respond to her as a smile spreads on my face. “Will do sisi, will do.” she says to me nodding her head vigorously. *(Sister)* “Oh, could you please order me an Uber to the taxi rank? I’d like to leave as soon as possible so that I can arrive eNgcobo ilanga lisekhona.” I ask her. *(While the sun is still up)* She starts pressing on her phone while her brother stands solid by the doorway.

“Zamo, I said I’d drive you back mos. Now what is this?”

“There’s no need, Siya. I’ll be fine on my own.”

“Nomzamo sundiphambanela. I said I’d drive you back and I still intend on doing so. Zintoni ngoku ezi ozenzayo?” he asks me, in a stern voice. *(Don’t cross me... What are you doing now?)*

“Siya ndithe -” *(I said)*

He raises his hand to stop me from speaking any further and shifts his focus to his sister who’s busy ordering an Uber for me.

“Lulama, don’t you dare order that Uber or uzoxabana nam!” he yells at his sister. *(You’ll have a problem with me)*

“There’s no need for you to shout at her, she was just -”

“Nomzamo! Nomzamo! Uba ufuna uxabana nam, yitsho!” *(If you want to argue with me, say so)*



“...”

“Now wait for me here and stop being stubborn. I’m going to take a quick shower then we can leave.”

“...” I say nothing and just bow my head down in defeat.

“Wena Lulama, cancel that Uber uyandiva?” (*Do you understand me*)

“Ewe bhuti,” she responds to her brother who is now beyond frustrated and agitated. (*Brother*)

“Good. Wena Nomzamo don’t even think of being smart with me or try and leave while I’m showering. I’m taking your purse with me as insurance,” he says, already snatching my purse from the couch. (*You*)

“Siya -” I call out to him but he’s already making his way to our bedroom.

“Have breakfast so long. I’m sure I’ll be done by the time you finish eating,” he yells out from somewhere down the passage.

I sigh defeated and humph as I throw myself on the couch. I don’t even have the strength to go to the kitchen and make myself breakfast anymore. Yho nkos’yam ndandiyithathaphi lendoda? (*My lord, where did I get this man from*) Lulu gets up chuckling lightly as she passes me.

“Let me make you something to eat sis’wam.” (*My sister*)

“How can your brother do this to me mara?” (*Though*)

“He’s your boyfriend, is he not? Look, I know that he hurt you yesterday and you may not be ready to address the situation as yet but one thing you need to know about ubhuti is that he doesn’t like having unresolved matters, so he’ll do whatever it takes to resolve it.” (*Brother*)

“Ngoku ithi lonto makandi fostele?” (*Now it means that he must force me*)

“No but I think he knows that if he lets you go while you two have what happened yesterday hovering over your heads, then it may manifest into something bigger that may possibly tarnish your relationship.”

“I hear you kodwa ubhut’wakho can’t always expect things to go his way, Lulu.” (*But your brother*)

“I know sisi, I know but that’s just the way he is. Maybe he’ll learn to be more considerate as time goes. Nawe uzo’mfundisa.” (*Sister... You’ll also teach him*)

“Ndaze ndazifaka,” I exclaim. (*I have set myself up*)

She giggles and exits the lounge to prepare breakfast for me. She soon comes back with two bowls that have diced fruit and plain yogurt, “I figured you may not be in the mood for something heavy or greasy as you’ll be traveling. I hope this is fine?” I smile at her, she’s so considerate, “Ewe nana, it’s

perfect. Thank you.” (*Yes baby*) I take my bowl and start eating until I’m done. When she’s also done with her breakfast, she takes both bowls to the kitchen leaving me to my thoughts. I hear a door creak open, and I shift my gaze towards the lounge door; I know that’s Siya. Correct in my thoughts, Siya appears in the doorway looking fine as hell. He’s dressed in a white Lacoste golf t-shirt which he has paired with a pair of charcoal jeans and black Nike sneakers. If I wasn’t so upset at him, I’d jump him this very moment. Yho yaze yantle indoda natsi bazalwane. (*Oh, and the man here is beautiful, brethren*) I continue eyeing him and I see that he’s got a brown medium sized leather travel bag in his one hand and my purse, car keys and cell phone in his other. How he’s able to carry all that in one is beyond me. “Masambe,” he says to me in a stoic voice. (*Let’s go*) Yho okay. (*Oh*) I get up from the couch just as Lulu walks back to the lounge. “Lu, sihambile. I left some money on the bedside table for you to use till tomorrow. Ndizobuya ngomso, va?” his brother says to her. (*We’re off... I’ll come back tomorrow, okay*) “Okay bhuti, travel safely,” she says to the both of us as she gives us hugs. (*Brother*) I guess this is it. My vacation has finally come to an end and as much as I enjoyed being in Port Elizabeth, well for the most part, I’m so excited to go back to the dusty streets of eNgcobo and my rascals.

## Chapter 26

We drive out of his house in utter silence with just music playing in the background. I'm not sure if he's genuinely upset with me or if he's just masking his fuck up with my mini-tantrum. He stops at a filling station and asks the petrol attendant to pour a full tank of fuel in the car and also check his tyre pressure, water and oil levels. He leaves the attendant to his tasks and walks inside the stop-shop to buy a few things for the road, I presume. On a normal day he would have asked me what I'd like to have but I guess because we are at odds, he'll just get me what he wants and I'll just have to accept and thank him for his kind gesture. He comes back from the shop with a plastic bag filled with goodies and passes them on to me while he pays for the fuel. Once he's done, he gets in, and we're off. Still, no one has said anything to anyone. If it wasn't for this damn phone that has a battery life span of 20 minutes, I'd be listening to music on my headphones and leave him to his stupidity but here I am subjected to this torture. I must've dozed off because I hear him softly call out to me, "Bhabha, vuka. Sise Bhisho. Would you like to make use of the restroom?" (*Baby, wake up, we're at*) I flutter my eyes open and see him hovering over me on my side of the car. I scan my surroundings and see that we're at some filling station again. "Uhm, yes please," I say to him in response as I shift in my seat, stretching out my neck muscles as the position I was sleeping in

was really uncomfortable. He stretches out his hand for me to take, which I gladly take, and he leads us to where the restrooms are. "I'm going to grab a cup of coffee while you go to the restrooms, okay? You'll find me here," he says to me, already letting go of my hand. I suddenly feel cold without his touch, but I can't show him that; we're still butting heads. I nod my head and proceed to walk towards the restrooms. Luckily the queue is not that long, and I'm soon done with my business and head out to where he said I'd find him. I find him standing outside of the cafe speaking to someone on his phone. His back muscles flex every time he makes hand gestures with his free hand. I stand away from him for a minute and observe his entire physique, drinking him all in. My man is one heck one sexy man: a tall glass of melted chocolate. He turns just as I'm fixating on his firm ass. He says something to the person on the other end of the line before terminating the call. "Are you done?" he asks me with a slight smirk on his lips. He caught me eyeing him, nxa! Bloody fool. "Uhm... Yes, yes, I'm done," I stutter in response. He nods his head and stretches his hand out for me to take again and again, I accept it. We walk towards the car and continue with the rest of our journey.

It's just after two in the afternoon when we arrive eNgcobo and it feels like I haven't been here in a while. Yes, being in Port Elizabeth was a much-needed getaway and break from my routine, but I love being eNgcobo. I shift my focus back to the

present moment and ask this man to pass by Spar as I need to buy a few essentials for us during our stay. He doesn't argue with me and heads straight to where Spar is. I forget that he's been here before, as he'd mentioned to drop off uAnga hence he's not even asking for directions. When we get to Spar, I only buy the items that I will use today and tomorrow morning, the rest I'll buy when I get back from visiting my mom. These are just to make sure mna na lendoda don't starve in the next few hours. (*Me and this man*) We get to the till, and he insists on paying which I don't object to. I'll save all my coins, ipay yetishalakazi is not that much anyway, so where I can save, I'll gladly do so. (*A teacher's salary*) When we get to the car, he asks that I direct him to my place, "Oh leyo awuyazi?" I ask him mockingly. (*Oh, that you don't know*) He doesn't entertain me but looks at me expectedly. I humph in defeat when he doesn't engage in my banter and I eventually give him my address. He punches my address on the GPS and heads to my apartment. When we arrive, I take the plastic bags with the items that we bought so I can get a head start with dinner and leave him gathering our bags so he can bring them up to my apartment after I've told him my apartment number. I'm relieved when I recall that I'd left the apartment clean so there's no need for me to run around and try to make it presentable for this one. I place the plastic bags on top of the kitchen counter, take off my shoes and walk barefoot to the lounge. I throw myself on the

couch and release a knackered sigh; what a trip man. Port Elizabeth is quite a distance from eNgcobo and it didn't help that the sun was scorching hot throughout our trip, however I'm glad we made it home safely. Siya walks in a few minutes later with our bags and asks, "Where should I place these?" "Please place them in my room, first door on your right," I say to him. He walks off to my room and comes back a few moments later to sit next to me. He releases a deep breath after his butt makes contact with the couch, I guess he's just as exhausted as I am. "Would you like something to drink?" I ask him, feeling rather remorseful that he had to drive us all the way in this heat. "Yes, cold water will be fine," he answers. I get up from the couch and head towards the kitchen and fix him a nice glass of cold water. I walk back to the lounge and give him his glass, "You can rest in my room in the meantime while I make something for us to eat," I say. "No, I'll be fine here, thank you. Your TV works, right?" I nod my head in response. He takes the TV remote that's on top of the coffee table and switches the TV on and goes straight to the sports channels. I guess he's settled then. "Okay then. Let me quickly take a shower first, I feel sticky then I'll come back and cook something for us. You'll be fine on your own right?" I ask him, stupidly. Of course, he'll be fine Nomzamo, yintoni le uyibuzayo? (*What are you asking him*) "Ndiyindoda endala

Nomzamo, of course I'll be fine," he retorts. (*I'm a grown ass man*) I nod my head and head straight to my room.

I strip off the clothes that I'm wearing and head straight to the shower. This is not even a shower to cleanse myself more than it's a shower to cool myself down.

I get done showering in the nick of time and head to my bedroom to complete the rest of my hygiene process. I'm busy looking for undergarments to wear when I hear the door open. Siya walks in and looks at me with an intense gaze which leaves me feeling self-conscious as I'm stark naked.

Why's he looking at me like that? He takes a step further into the room before closing the door behind him, locking it. I gulp a whole lot of nothing as goosebumps spread all over my body. He removes the key from the cylinder and shoves it in his pocket. Gosh I hope he's not going to hit me because I'll fight him for dear life. They don't call me ntombikayise for nothing.

(*My father's daughter*) After shoving the key in his pocket he continues taking steady steps towards where I'm standing while removing his golf t-shirt. I clench my thighs when I see his ripped torso glistening against the sun's rays that protrude through my bedroom window.

He stands a few feet from me and unbuckles his belt with his eyes burning holes through my skin. "Si... Si... Siya. Wh... What



are you doing?" I ask him, stammering. He doesn't say a word in return but continues to unclothe himself. He drops both his chinos and briefs and removes his sneakers that he was wearing and stands before me, butter ball naked.

I salivate as I look at his hard member that has a mushroom head leaking with precum. The urge to lick and suck on it while I watch him crumble under my hold overwhelms me, but I contain myself. He takes his hand and takes hold of his groin and starts to stroke it. His slow movements are causing the dampness between my thighs to drip even more.

The urge to plunge my fingers into my core as I watch him pleasure himself drives me up the wall, but I know should I do that, there'll be hell to pay. I clasp my thighs even tighter as he continues with his torture, with me standing frozen in my spot. His moans and groans grow louder as propels himself towards his peak, but he suddenly stops and looks at me with his member still in his hold.

"Why do you like being difficult MaDlamini?" he asks me in a raspy voice. "I... I don't think I like being difficult. I... I don't," I mumble. "Then what do you call what you did this morning?" he asks me, taking a step closer to me. Nkosi yam! (*My God*) Words fail to come out so I resort to lowering my head and focus on the tiles on the floor.

“Oh no MaDlamini. You will look at me when I speak to you,” he says, in a stern voice. I raise my head and look at him, but the intensity and darkness of his eyes causes me to falter, and I end up looking away again. “Not so confident, now are we Miss Mcunu?” he asks, mockingly. Nkos’yam what does uSiyabulela want from me? (*My God*) “You see sthandwa sam, I know I was wrong for what I said and how I behaved izolo, but instead of allowing me to rectify my mistake, and show you how remorseful I am, you decide that it’s better you leave without us resolving the matter at hand.

This, after you’d tried the same thing yesterday morning with the Lulu situation,” he says to me. (*My love... yesterday*) I look up at him, a little scared but mostly turned the fuck on as tears well up in my eyes. The Lulu situation is different from what happened after, and he knows this. He can’t compare the two. When I don’t respond, he takes one final step and reaches where I’m standing. “I know my words were hurtful and uncalled for MaDlamini, and I sincerely apologize for that sthandwa sam kodwa ndiyaku thembisa themba lam, I’ll never speak to you in that manner ever again,” he says to me in a low voice. (*My love... But I promise you my hope*) The tears that were threatening to come out, finally fall and trickle down my cheeks, landing on my chest. “You... You... You hurt me. So much,” I try to say, as I sob uncontrollably. He cups my face with both his hands, raising my head so that I can look at him.

His eyes are filled with sorrow and remorse as he wipes my tears with his thumbs, “Ndiyaxolisa mkam. Ndiyaxolisa phakade lam. Ndicela undixolele,” he continues to beg. (*I’m sorry my wife. I’m sorry, my forever. Please forgive*) Words fail me once again as I continue to wail. He lowers himself and starts kissing me slowly and intentionally. The kiss reeks of unspoken emotions from his and my end. I can feel the sincerity from his end while I hope he feels the anguish from mine. I snake my hands around his neck, drawing him closer into the kiss drinking him all in.

Still swimming in the gloriousness of the kiss, I feel myself being gently lifted. I instinctively wrap my legs against his waist just as my core comes into contact with his groin. I moan out in pleasure and start rubbing my folds against his tip. He groans and tries to free himself a bit from my hold but I tighten my leg and thigh muscles

trapping him in place. He groans as though he’s a wounded animal before he implores, “Zamo.” I ignore his cry and continue with my advances. Just as I’m about to feast even more on his tip, I’m lowered onto my bed, back first, with him hovering over me. The tears that were falling are still flowing down my face, but I no longer care, he needs to mend my broken heart. “Sukhala, ndiyakucela sthandwa sam,” he says, as looks deep inside my orbs, as though searching for my soul.

*(Don't cry, I beg you my love)* I take both my hands and run them on his shoulders. He closes both his eyes as though pained by my touch, "Why did you say what you said," I ask him in a whisper. He opens his eyes and focuses on me once again, "I was just jealous, jealous that other men would see what belongs to me, but I expressed my insecurities in a distasteful manner and ended up hurting you and Lulu," he says, placing his face on the crevice of my neck. I feel my shoulders get wet before I hear him say in a broken voice, "Please don't leave me," he begs in a broken voice. Oh, my goodness, he's crying. I wasn't going to leave him. I'm angry and hurt, yes, but I wasn't going to leave him. "I'm not leaving you Siya," I say as I try to console him. "Please sthandwa sam, I wouldn't cope," he continues to entreat. "Siya? Siya?" I call out to him as I lift his face from my crevice so that he can look into my eyes, "Baby, I'm not going anywhere. You hurt me, yes, but I'm not going to leave you. Please believe me." He shakes his head in disbelief. I have no idea where he got the assumption that I was leaving him but that's the furthest thing from the truth. "Baby? Baby? Please look at me?" I beg him. He eventually looks at me with his beautiful watery hazel eyes that draw me in every time, and I smile at him. "You are so handsome," I say jokingly. He chuckles at my compliment, blushing a bit. "Are you blushing Mr?" I continue to tease. He snorts at my question, "iDyan ayi blushi baby," he retorts, chuckling even further. *(A man doesn't*

*blush*) I giggle before placing a wet kiss on his lips. His hands start roaming all over my body, from my waistline to my breasts, to my thighs... He doesn't seem to know where he wants to place them. I moan against his lips when I feel his hand trail lightly over my inner thigh. "Siya," I call out in a whisper. I arch my back and clutch on the sheets as his fingers plunge into my nectar. "Shit!" Siya says through gritted teeth as he continues to strum my vulva as though playing a guitar. He continues pleasuring me, slowly and passionately, that when the pressure builds up, I clasp my thighs shut to try and control the urge to release but Siya slaps them open with his free hand, "Vula baby," he says against my lips. (*Open*) I cry out as my legs begin to shake as the overwhelming feeling ripples through my entire body. "Ah!" I scream, digging my nails on Siya's back. He allows me to calm down from my high, while planting an endearing kiss on my lips. The orgasms that this man gives me are always mind blowing and feel different from the previous. I take steady breaths as I try to regulate my breathing, but Siya cuts my efforts short and plunges into my core. I yelp, alarmed. Couldn't he wait for me to gather myself at least? I gasp, in desperate need for air as my nectar tries to accommodate the girth and length of his member. "Damn it Zamo," he says, with his forehead pressed against mine. He starts moving in and out of me at a steady pace. He grabs both my butt cheeks and raises them to his pelvic area so that I'm able to meet his

thrust. I start moving my waist in a circular motion and I hear him groan. We continue pleasuring each other, as the room gets filled with the sounds of our skin slapping against each other and our moans and groans. "Harder baby, harder!" I scream out. I don't know how much further I want him to go because his cock is already pressing against my womb, but I continue begging him. He flips me over, now my chest is on the bed while my ass is in the air. He taps his member against my clit a couple of times, and I squirm in pleasure. "Siya please," I beg him. "Tell me what you want Madlamini," he says, while continuing with his torture. "Just... Just put it in love," I tell him, breathily. On cue, he submerges his entire length into my core, and I scream out in pain. Okay, no he's deep... too deep in fact. "You're in too deep, baby. Too deep," I say to him as I try to push him away from me, but he stays firm. He grips on my waist tightly with both hands while giving me long strokes that knock out the air from my lungs. At this point the pleasure I'm feeling is overshadowing the pain as this position allows me to feel everything, and I mean EVERYTHING. His pace changes and becomes fast and rough. Oh, now I'm being fucked...

Thoroughly futhi. (*At that*) "Keep your chest on the bed baby," he says to me, just as I raise it up. I lower my chest back down as his balls slap aggressively against my clit, arousing me even more. Guys ndiyatiwa ngoku, straight. (*I'm being thoroughly fucked right now*) He goes in and out of me, with sweat

dripping down his chest and soon my legs begin to tremble as another orgasm ripples through me. Siya doesn't give me a moment to rest but continues with his torment, it's like he's a dog with a bone, he just won't let go. At this point my legs are numb and I have no strength left within me. He unexpectedly lays me on my side, with him behind me and places my one leg over his shoulder, and pulls me closer to him, his cock still inside of me. He starts moving in and out of me slowly, completely different from the previous position. "I love you Zamo, I love you so much," he bares his heart to me. I try to respond to him, but the pleasure that's building up from him hitting my g-spot and his thumb flicking and pressing against my clit is rendering me speechless. I occasionally clench my vaginal walls, trapping him inside of my furnace. He groans against my ear and immediately halts his movement. "Don't do that baby. Uzondichamisa early," he begs breathily. (*You'll make me cum*) I unclench my walls and free him from his misery. He tightly grips my leg that's over his shoulder and starts strumming my clit with his thumb as he pumps into me with vengeance. He chases his happy ending with determination, while I'm at his mercy. I hear him mumbling nonsensical things like calling out to his ancestors and he soon shoots his load into my womb. I feel him twitch inside of me before he flumps next to me. He lowers down my now numb leg, while placing chaste kisses on my temple. "I hope I'm

forgiven now,” he murmurs as he takes greedy breaths. “You are my love. You are,” I say to him in a whisper as I feel my eyes getting heavier. Thoroughly fucked, sticky and exhausted, I curl up next to my man, resting my head on his shoulder and savour in the moment. Make up sex is going to be my next best thing after today. He wraps his hands around my waist and pulls me closer to him, covering us both with a light fleece that’s on the bed, “Sleep my love,” he mumbles against my ear. I shut my eyes and wait for sleep to consume me. Bethuna, ndiyayithanda lendoda! (*People, I love this man*)



## Chapter 28

My purse slips down my shoulder and drops to the floor with the rest of the items in my hand, the plastics, and my travel bag. I'm so defeated right now. How can Inga be so careless and impregnate someone's daughter when he's so young. He's not even done with his degree, nor does he have a job. I wonder how he intends on fending for his little family now that he's the head of a household? I walk further in the kitchen and plant a kiss on my fuming mother's cheek and drop myself on one of the chairs in the kitchen while Inga is still standing in the same spot that I found him in when I walked in with the baby wailing in his hands. My mom hasn't shifted an ounce from her initial position as she's still throwing daggers at Inga. Inimba ka mama eats away at her, and she snatches the baby out of his arms and tries hushing her down. (*Mom conscious*) "Has she eaten?" she bellows. Inga shakes his head before perusing through the baby backpack that's strapped on his back and hands over a bottle filled with what I presume is Nestlé. My mom grabs the bottle out of his hand, opens the lid and feeds the baby. As soon as the bottle teat comes into contact with her lips, she latches on and starts sucking aggressively. I catch a tear trickle down Inga's eye before he wipes it away. My mom leers Inga's way, "Uyakwazi ukumenza kodwa wohlulwa kukumondla," she snaps at him. (*You know how to make her yet, you fail to feed her*) Inga's shoulders drop and hang low just as he drops his head in

shame. I would feel sorry for him but today I don't. I'm so defeated. "Inga?" I call out to him, softly. He raises his face to look my way with tears glistening in his eyes. "Take a seat bhuti," I beckon him with my hand. (*Brother*) He nods his head before walking towards one of the chairs in the kitchen and takes a seat. "What's going on mntasekhaya?" I inquire, concerned. (*My brother*) The tears that he was trying to hold back trickle down like raindrops and they soon start overflowing down his face. He shakes his head before saying, "I'm sorry sisi. I'm so sorry," he repeats. (*Sister*) "Talk to me, mntase, what's going on?" I plead even more with him. (*My brother*) He looks so exhausted and broken. I shift my gaze to mom and she's paying no mind to us but is engrossed in her grandchild. I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. Was she not the one who was just about to murder uInga just now kodwa mjonge ngoku? (*But look at her now*) Parents! Ai. I shift my gaze back to a softly sobbing Inga who's hunched on the chair with his head held between his hands. He looks like a man who's carrying the world on his shoulders. "I met a girl early last year back in varsity, she's from North West and we met during one of our lectures. We started off as friends before our relationship evolved into a romantic one. Everything was going well in our relationship; she was the epitome of perfection and she had everything that I was looking for in a girlfriend. She was very outgoing, intelligent, and used to constantly encourage me

to be better and do better. Late last year she started not feeling well and when we went to the doctor to find out what was the matter, we found out that we were pregnant. We were both scared and unsure on how to handle our new predicament but in the end, we decided not to tell either of our families and we started preparing ahead for our baby. I started working as a waiter after school while she tutored students in her spare time. In months where we needed to go for a check-up and were short of money, I would use some of my allowance to top us up -” I interrupt him, “The money I sent you for your trip to the Constitutional Court... Was there even a trip like that to begin with?” He nods his head in confirmation which causes me to sigh in relief. I bob my head as a sign for him to continue.” The baby was developing well, and it seemed like we’d got a hang of our new lifestyle. Through it all we always made sure that our marks didn’t suffer as that would raise flags to both our families. The baby was due at the end of May, but she only delivered early-June. After labor, the doctors struggled with controlling her excessive bleeding. They did all they could, but they lost the battle and she passed away. I had never met her family before as the pregnancy deterred us from taking that step in our relationship, but the circumstances forced me to reach out to her family and inform them of their daughter’s loss.” He breaks into a loud sob, and I instinctively launch myself on him and wrap my arms around him. “Ngxesi

mntakamama, ngxesi Zizi,” I say while gently soothing his back as I fight back my own tears. (*I'm sorry my brother. I'm sorry*)

“They... they arrived at the hospital after I'd provided them with the relevant information and as soon as they saw me, they started hurling insults at me, saying that I killed their daughter. They accused me of witchcraft saying that I had sacrificed their daughter for my success seeing that we were both in our final year. They said that I should be jailed for taking away their only daughter from them. I tried to explain to them what happened but that only made matters worse. They said they'd never accept Owam, we chose that name as soon as we found out the gender, as their granddaughter. That they wanted nothing that would tie them to me and remind them of their daughter. I begged them to allow us to say our final goodbye to her but instead they asked the hospital security to throw me out with my 'bastard child' and threatened to have the police lock me up should they ever see me or uOwam ever again.” At this point I've joined my brother in his sorrow as he narrates his tragedy. My mom on the other side has the baby clutched against her chest with her eyes closed as she listens to her son narrate his calamity. He wipes his tears with the hem of his t-shirt and continues to narrate what happened, “I left the hospital with my baby who was wrapped in a beautiful blanket that her mother had bought her a few weeks before her passing. The days that followed her passing were the most difficult. I had to

not only get accustomed to parenting but to parenting alone. Owam used to wail throughout the night, and I hardly got any sleep. My flat mates tried to assist as much as they could, by looking after her when I had to go to work, asking for advice from their siblings or family members who have children on what to do etc. I was lucky that it was school holidays, as that gave me time to adjust to the new routine. When the third term started it was difficult juggling uOwam, school and work. As a result I ended up quitting my job so I can focus on uOwam and my school work. The money we have saved up started drying up quickly due to the doctor's visits and medication and I knew I wouldn't be able to take care of both our needs hence I decided to come home with her and face the music. I've therefore decided that it's best that I deregister from Wits and look for a job so that I can take care of uOwam and -" I gasp. "No Inga! You can't do that!" I yell out. "I don't have a choice sis'Zamo. Wami has needs, expensive needs. I know how strained you are already with Anga and I's fees, and I can't add Wami to your list of responsibilities as well. I can always go back and finish the last term next year." (*Sister*) I shake my head in disagreement, "No Inga, no! There has to be another way." He can't do that; he's almost finished with his degree. "Have you already deregistered at Wits?" I ask him, petrified of the response. He shakes his head no, "I was going to do that next week when varsity opens." Oh Somandla. (*God*) I release a

sigh in relief, “Oh thank God.” After being quiet the entire time that Inga narrated his story, my mother finally speaks, “You will do no such thing! You will leave my grandbaby here with me, and I’ll look after her myself. You’ll go back and complete the rest of your term -” but Inga interrupts her, “Mama -” She simply wags her hand at him, shutting him up immediately, “Inga, I’ve spoken, and my word is final. It’s unfortunate that you hid this from us and I’m deeply disappointed and hurt by your actions, but I will not allow you to make the biggest mistake of your life. If your girlfriend’s family thinks that by cursing and disassociating themselves from you and Owam that you will fall and fail, they have another thing coming. Abandazi kakuhle mna. uTat’enu zange atshate is’thothotho somfazi. If I was able to raise all five of you with one salary, andizukohlulwa kukukhulisa umzukulwana wam.” *(They don’t know me well. Your father didn’t marry a weakling of a woman. I won’t be defeated by raising my granddaughter)* Haike ithethile icheri kaMakho bethunana. *(Oh well, my father’s girlfriend has spoken good people)* After saying that, she stands up and picks up Wami’s backpack and walks out with her sleeping against her chest. Yho unedrama uMaDlamini! *(Wow, mom is dramatic)* I clap my hands once and look at my brother sitting beside me. He chuckles and shakes his head with a faint smile on his face. Though I’m relieved to see him smile, I know he’s hurting more than he's letting on.

“I’m here mntakamama. Nale izodlula. You need to stay strong for uOwam but always remember that ndikhona should you ever need someone to be strong for you,” I tell him as I wrap my arms around him tighter. (*My brother. This too shall pass... I’m here for you*) “Enkosi sisi,” he says earnestly to me as he lays his head on my lap. (*Thank you my sister*) “So you’ve turned me into an aunt ngenkani?” I ask him teasingly. (*By force*) He chuckles against my chest before saying

### Advertisement

“You’ll love her. She’s just like you.” I smile at that, it’ll be nice having a baby around the house, even though she’ll be staying with my mom, but I know that going forward I’m going to be a frequent visitor now that we have a new addition to our family. “I can’t wait to see her properly. Umam’akho just decided to leave with her without saying a word to us. This, after she almost killed you,” I say laughing lightly. (*Your mother*) “I was certain that ebengazukundibetha the second I walked in through that door with uOwam.” (*She was going to beat me up*) We crack up in laughter. He’s right, umama was probably going to hit him but the way she switched from an angry bear to a loving grandma in split seconds, is mind boggling. “Come, let’s make something to eat before your mother waltzes in here and accuses us of starving her,” I say to him, already getting up to gather the plastics that I’d dropped on the floor. He stands up

and follows behind me. As I place the plastics on the kitchen counter, he helps me unpack and place them in their appropriate places. Mama is very organized and doesn't appreciate things being placed illogically. It's past midday and I think something light would be appropriate. I decide to make use of the vetkoeks that mom had made, and I quickly whip up some mince and stuff it inside the vetkoeks. Now this is a truly 'you're home' type of meal. I serve my brother his plate and place moms in the microwave. She hasn't returned to the kitchen since she walked out with her 'grandbaby' as she calls her. *\*eyeroll\** Anyway, my brother and I do what we do best when we are home, and stuff our faces with food. By the time we're done eating, we're both too full to even move. We sit in silence as we try to locate the energy that we need to get up from these chairs and wash all the dishes that we used to prepare and have this meal. uMaDlamini doesn't play like that, her rule is simple, 'dishes are to be washed immediately after each meal'. My brother and I finally find the strength to get up from our chairs and we drag our feet to the basin, yes basin not sink, kusezilalini apha izitya zihlanjelwa es'tyeni. (*These are the rural areas here and dishes are washed in a basin*) As soon as we're done with the dishes, we lock the kitchen door and take all our belongings and head further into the rest of the house. We're both in desperate need of a nap. Just as we're about to pass mom's room, we see her cuddled up with Owam laying on



top of her bed. I smile at the sight before me and turn to look at my brother who has tears in his eyes. I pull him closer to me and rest my head on his shoulder as we stand in the doorway watching these two, “Kuzolunga mntase. Believe me, kuzolunga.” I chant, as I rub my hand over his forearm. (*All will be well my brother... All will be well*) He nods his head as though assuring himself. We observe the two for a bit before walking away heading towards our designated bedrooms. I make my way inside my bedroom and as soon as I open the door, I throw my purse on the floor and climb on the bed and allow sleep to consume me.

I’m fast asleep when I hear a knock on my door. I flutter my eyes open and inform the person on the other side to enter. Inga’s face appears behind the door with a smile spread across his face, “Wakey, wakey sleepy head. I have a visitor for you.” He walks in with Owam on his chest. I sit up straight and open my arms wide for her. He passes her to me as he sits on the edge of my bed and watches us. I marvel at her beauty. She has big golden-brown eyes that are beautifully adorned with long lashes and perfectly shaped brows. Her orbs complement her milky tawny skin so well. Her nose is perched perfectly above her pouty plump lips. Her plump soft cheeks just make you want to plant kisses on them all day long. Although I can see my brother's features here and there it's clear this one is an identical copy of her mother. I look up to my brother and find

him smiling endearingly at us. “She has your nose,” I say to him. He chuckles while shaking his head in disagreement, “Don't lie. She looks nothing like me, she's her mother's twin.” I nod my head faintly back at him, “She must have been an absolute beauty.” He sighs before he says, “She was.” Wami starts fidgeting and I tear my gaze away from her father and look at her. She's sucking on her fist while wiggling her feet in the air, looking absolutely adorable. I brush my finger against her chubby cheeks and watch as she wraps her tiny hand around my index finger, pulling it towards her mouth. “I think she's hungry,” I say to her father. He gets up from the bed, walks towards us and stretches his arms to take her from me. I wag my head in refusal, “No, I'll walk with you,” I say, holding Owam closer to my chest. He chortles and walks away leaving us behind. “Your dad is so obsessed with you,” I say to her in a whisper while planting a kiss on her plump cheeks. Just as we're about to walk out of my bedroom to the kitchen, my phone chimes under my pillow and I walk back to my bed and search for it until I find it. I unlock it and find a message from Siya informing me that he arrived safely in Port Elizabeth. The way my mid-morning/early afternoon was so dramatic, I didn't even get time to think or miss my man. I text him back and shove the phone back under my pillow. My focus for the next few days is on my brother and niece, I'll handle my tall dark glass of chocolate later. I mean he's had his share now he must allow

others to also have theirs. I walk out of my bedroom and head to the kitchen, and I find Inga shaking Wami's bottle in his hands. "It's almost ready. It just needs to cool off for another five minutes then the princess can have her food," he says walking towards us. He plants a kiss on his daughter's lips, and she smiles widely at her father while clapping her hands cheerfully. "You may think she's excited to see me but she's not. She's excited about her food that's in my hand," I giggle as my brother sulks. He shows me how to hold Wami before I feed her and hands me the bottle once she's well positioned. Wami's eyes bug out as she waits in anticipation for the teat to brush against her lips. I lower the bottle to her lips and watch her latch on it. She grips the top of the bottle and shoves it even further into her mouth and I giggle at Little Miss Diva's antics. She's definitely like me; we both love our food. "See? I told you it was the bottle that she was excited about, not me," my brother says from behind me. I guess he's still sulking that his baby girl loves food more than him. I titter and continue to focus all my attention on my niece. "Uzoba right wethu," I tell him. (*You'll be fine*) I'm still watching this one eat, when my mom walks into the kitchen, "Yey nina!" she yells at us. (*Hey you two*) She grabs the bottle out of Wami's mouth and follows by forcibly snatching her out of my hands. "Ibishushu lebotile nimncancise yona umntan'am?" (*Was the bottle you fed her warm*) Haibo umama! (*Wow*) Of course it was warm! "Ewe

mama,” Inga ressonda, bored. (*Yes mom*) I giggle beneath my breath before mom catches me in the act and leers my way. “Sorry,” I say with my eyes on the floor. Inga chuckles from somewhere in the kitchen before we hear her hum, “Mm.” She continues to say, “In future please don't feed her without me or my knowledge. Andinithembi.” (*I don't trust you two*) “Haibo mama, I raised my daughter for almost three months alone, and she's turned out just fine,” Inga defends himself. (*Wow mom*) He shouldn't have. “Ngelucky. uGogo wakhe ukhona ngoku so wena just focus on your schoolwork and leave uWami to me, understood fano?” she inquires. (*Luckily. Her grandmother is here now... You... Boy*) Inga simply nods his head, defeated. That name again, ‘fano’. I giggle silently. That ladies and gentlemen is Zandile Mcunu, our mother. Pillar of our strength, a woman who'd do anything for her children. Dad really chose well here.

## Chapter 29

“Makuvukwe! Makuvukwe! Kusemini ngoku!” (*Wake up! Wake up! It's noon now*) That, ladies and gentlemen, is the sound of my mother's voice screaming at us. It's not even 06:30 yet, and she's screaming at us to wake up and help her spring clean. In all honesty, no peace resides in this household. I mean if we weren't here, was she even going to spring clean? Also, who was going to help her do so? I aggressively kick my blankets off me and fix my bed. I was hoping for a quiet and relaxed weekend at home after the few days I had in Port Elizabeth but alas. I walk out of my bedroom and head to the kitchen to prepare my bathing water before the day starts. I'm so exhausted it's not even funny. “Pick up your feet wena,” my mom scolds me as I enter the kitchen. (*You*) I'm startled by her voice as I didn't see her by the cabinets; I thought she was still smothering her grandchild. Anyway, I lift my feet up and greet her with a peck on the cheek even though I'm annoyed at her for waking us up this early, “Morning mama.” She offers me her beautiful smile and responds, “Morning Nono, ulele kakuhle?” (*Slept well*) I nod my head and yawn, “Ewe mama, ndilele kakuhle.” (*Yes mom, I slept well*) She continues doing whatever she is busy while I proceed to prepare for the day ahead. A part of me wants to know what she has in store for us but the other part of me would rather not know as knowing can be daunting and discouraging. As I wait for the water to boil I walk to Inga's

room to see Wami before her grandmother snatches her away, again.

I knock once on the door and Inga's voice echoes on the other side, "Come in." I gently push the door open as I don't want to wake Wami up should she be sleeping with her dad. I find both of them cuddled up in bed with Wami resting on her father's chest, her eyes wide open and feasting on her tiny fist. Inga and not feeding the child, ai. "Morning princess," I greet in a chirpy voice. I gently lift her up from her father's chest and start planting kisses on her cheeks. She gives me her gummy smile while touching my face with her drool-filled hand, while the other grabs tightly on my shirt. "So, I'm invisible?" Inga sulks. I roll my eyes at him while shaking my head. He needs to know and understand that from henceforth, he's a nonfactor; Owam is the only individual that we recognise now. He gets off the bed and puts on a vest and starts fixing his bed. "Morning bhut'wam endimthandayo. Has she had her bottle?" I ask him. (*My brother that I love*) "Hayi Suka! All you care about is her, why don't you ask her?" (*Get out of here*) I giggle, "Haibo bhuti subanjalo. You can't possibly be fighting your daughter for our attention." (*Wow brother, don't be like that*) "I'm not fighting her but wena nomama," he continues to mope. (*You and mom*) My brother is hilarious, "Okay ke xa usitsho." (*If you say so*) I walk out of his room with my niece in my hands, leaving her grumpy father behind. I know uMaDlamini will know whether

she's eaten or not, after all she's now the new apple of her eye. We enter the kitchen and mom immediately snatches her from my hands. Yazi umama unomona serious! (*You know, my mother is seriously jealous*) I fold my arms across my chest and huff in annoyance, "Haibo mama umthathela ntoni? I was still holding her!" (*Hey mom, why did you take her from me*) She rolls her eyes at me, "uWami ayingonopopi Nomzamo," she says dismissively. (*She's not a doll*) Like I'd said she's a doll. \*eyeroll\* My mom is so unfair. She blatantly ignores me and shifts her entire focus on her granddaughter; Wami is going to be so spoiled. I make peace with my defeat, though unhappy, I leave the two in peace. I take my bathing water and go get ready for the day. I'm dressed in my lazy outfit; a worn-out t-shirt with leggings. I walk out of my room with the basin I used to bathe to dispose the water that I was bathing in behind the house; it's a rural area thing. Those who know, know. As I walk back to my room with the now empty bathing basin, I bump into Inga who has a smirk plastered all over his face. I wonder undifuna ntoni lo? (*What does this one want from me*) "I see you also lost her to her favorite person. Now tell me, how does it feel?" he cackles. I purposely bump into him and walk away annoyed. "Mxm". He chortles behind me and that vexes me even further. Bloody fool!

I walk inside my room and place the basin behind the door. Just before I exit the room, I remember that I have a man that I

haven't spoken with since the message I sent him last night after he'd told me that he arrived home safely. I elect to give him a call though it's quite early. I close the door with my phone against my ear. He picks up on the third ring, "Ntliziyo yam," he answers in a groggy voice. (*My heart*) I blush profusely and my heart swells. One thing about this man, he has the most beautiful words of endearment for me. I need to pull up my socks and come up with a pet name for him as well. "Good morning baby. Apologies for calling you this early, I didn't mean to wake you up," I sincerely express regret. "No need to apologize, my love. You can call me anytime and I'll always answer," he assures me. I can never fully explain how I feel every time he reaffirms me of how much he values me and how important I am in his life. It just leaves me floating in mushiness. "Why are you up this early?" he questions, interrupting me from my thoughts. "uMaDlamini wants us to spring clean the house and I'm honestly not up for it," I complain. He snickers before he says, "Joys of being at home, right?" I scoff, "No! I need the rest but I guess I can't do that. I was hoping that I could use Owam as a shield but even she has deserted me." Wami is her grandma's child, 100%. "Who's Owami bhabha?" he asks. (*Baby*) Oh shit! I hadn't given him a brief on what I walked into yesterday. I narrate everything that happened yesterday to him, and he's left speechless. "Yho, that's so unfortunate bhabha. How's your brother holding up?"



he asks with worry laced all over his voice. (*Baby*) “He seems to be doing okay but one can never be too sure when it comes to him. He’s not one to express his emotions easily. Imagine losing the love of your life, the mother of your child? It’ll definitely take some time for him to heal,” I answer truthfully. I plan on having a one-on-one conversation with my brother, just to check on how he’s really coping. I didn’t want to do that yesterday as we were all emotionally drained and I didn’t want to exhaust him any further. “You’re right, love. It’ll definitely take time to heal, I mean look at uKhunji,” he sighs. “How’s she doing? I kind of miss cooking for her and utata,” I state jokingly. Instead of answering me he says, “I miss you.” Aw, my big baby bethuna. (*People*) “I miss you too love ingathi we weren’t together just yesterday. Let me leave you before uMaDlamini barges in here and snatches this from me,” I giggle. (*Like*) He titters, “Okay baby. I’ll speak to you soon. I love you themba lam,” he murmurs softly. (*My hope*) “I love you more sthandwa sam. Bye,” I say, cutting the call. (*My love*) I leave my phone on the pedestal and walk out to have breakfast.

We have our breakfast, isdudu with bread and milk. (*Soft porridge*) After we’re done eating, we get on with our chores. I shift all the furniture from its current position and sweep behind and underneath where it's placed. After I’m done sweeping, I mop the entire floor and place the items back in their original positions. I then follow by dusting all the items

and washing any items that are dirty like table runners, cushion covers, ornaments etc. Inga is outside with a shovel cleaning the yard and raking any rubbish that is scattered around the yard. He's also fixing things that are broken around the yard like the gate that's hanging loosely from the pole that is mounted to. He's also placing the fallen rocks from the kraal back in place while checking that all of mom's tools are packed properly in the outside shed. Basically, Inga and I are in a sweatshop where we aren't compensated. You may ask where my mother is during all of this? She's the commander in chief of this house, telling us where we haven't thoroughly cleaned, how we should do things where to place things etc while she sits and takes care of her grandbaby. You would have thought that Inga would get off easy using Wami but even he is suffering like me. uMama is hearing none of his excuses. We both burrow down and get through our chores with one thing in mind... MASIGQIBE! (*Let's finish*)

By late afternoon we're both done with our chores and are dog tired. Mom has prepared lunch for us at least; something simple, pap and wors with tomato gravy. (*Sausage*) Inga and I rush to wash our hands and take a seat at the kitchen table. As tired as I am, my energy levels peak at the sight of the delectable meal in front of me. My mom is an amazing cook, she can turn a simple meal into a mouth-watering one. Mom blesses the food and by the time she's finished saying "amen",

Inga and I are already shoving a fully loaded spoon down our throats. “Anikatshintshi nangoku? Nizotsarhwa niphanga nje,” she says to the both of us. (*You both haven't changed. You'll choke on that food*) We both ignore her and focus on our meal. Silence looms throughout the kitchen with just the cutlery clinking against the plates. “Andiyazi noba nivile na uba utat'omncinci wenu uVus'umzi uswelekile kule mpela veki sidlule kuyo?” she asks, almost stating. (*I don't know if you heard that your uncle passed away this past weekend*) Uncle Vus'umzi is our father's younger brother. He's one of those that rallied with the rest of the family to strip us off our legacy when our father passed on. We honestly don't care much for them. Inga and I both lift our heads up simultaneously and glare at mom. Why is she telling us this when she knows we don't give a damn about those people? I'm still enraged about what they did to us, and I doubt I'll ever be able to forgive them for what they did. Inga lowers his head and shifts his focus back to his meal, I guess he won't be responding to mom's question or statement. I opt to be the bigger person and simply respond with a “mm,” and keep it moving. Mom interprets our demeanor and energy and opts to pursue the topic further. “You have to forgive them bantwana bam, you can't harbor so much resentment in your hearts,” she says, softly. (*My children*) She can't be serious right now. She's saying WE should FORGIVE THEM, yet they have not once come to us to ask for forgiveness

for their cruelty. No umama should forget it. Unotshe! (*Never*) Not in this lifetime at least. “Mama please,” Inga bellows. Mama shakes her head in reproof of Inga’s plea, “No fano. I know they hurt us and took away all that your father had worked for, but we can’t change the past. We, however, have the power to influence and positively impact the future. Don’t do it for you, but for Wami and your future children,” mom says, trying to convince him. (*Boy*) “Wami will have nothing to do with those people! Nothing!” he slams his fist on the table. I jump, startled by his outburst. Inga is not one to vocalize his emotions, so hearing him snap like this is alarming. “Inga -” mom tries to calm him down, but fails. Inga gets up from the table, roughly pushing his chair back and strides out of the kitchen, leaving us both in shock and in silence. Again, umama akana timing. (*Mom has no*)

After his outburst, mom curled up in her cowered and left me alone in the kitchen. I guess this topic is sensitive for all of us, most especially for her. I know she doesn’t want to see us suffer any more than what we already have, however it’s hard to let go when you’ve been hurt, especially by the same people whom you expected refuge from. Yes, hating someone is hard and requires a lot of work because no matter the situation or circumstance, you always go back to that moment when they hurt you and you force yourself to relieve the pain so that you can refuel and revalidate your anger and hatred towards them.

But forgiving is even harder. Anyway... I finish the rest of my meal and pack the dishes in the basin; I'll wash them later, for now I need a quick bath and a nap but first I need to check on my brother. I leave the kitchen with the kettle on, and search for Inga around the yard. I know he won't be inside the house because whenever he's upset, he either takes a walk or sits by the kraal. Inga doesn't like conflict, so he'll avoid being in your presence until he's calmed down. He's been like that since birth. I spot him standing by the kraal with his back toward me. I can see that his mind is miles away because he doesn't even move or flinch when I stand next to him. I intertwine my hand with his. Yes, this is my favorite thing to do now, holding hands. My man taught me that. Okay, focus Nomzamo, focus. Now is definitely not the time to be thinking about uSiyabulela. "Are you okay?" I ask him, as I lean on to him. He tightens his grip on my hand before releasing a deep sigh, "I'll be fine nomdade. It's just -" he trails away. (*My sister*) I nod my head and gently squeeze his hand, "I know mnta'katata, I know." (*My brother*) I can see how triggered he is by this entire situation. You see I was fortunate enough to have experienced dad's love for nine years whereas he wasn't as fortunate. Dad passed away when he was only a year old, so for him he didn't just lose his father, but he also lost all that he could have used or known to remember him by, and that realization and reality just adds more salt to the wound. "I just wish umama would stop trying

to convince us to make peace with abaya because it's never going to happen. If she's made peace with them, then good for her, however she shouldn't expect the same from us. We aren't wired the same and she should acknowledge and respect that," he says, frustrated. *(Those people)* I hear what he's saying and he's honestly speaking the truth but uMaDlamini doesn't see it that way. For her it's all about us living what dad's dream was with his family, united and in peace but unfortunately, they were the ones who destroyed that dream themselves, not us. I refrain from commenting on this topic any further and simply stand beside him and watch our cattle that's mixed with some from the villages in the distance. After a while he snaps out of his trance and shifts to look at me, "Masambe. I miss my daughter. Umama ucinga ndimenze naye lomntana kanti akayazi indlela endam'bilela ngayo," he says walking back towards the house with me giggling behind him. *(Let's go. Mom thinks I made this child with her yet she doesn't know how much I worked to get her)*

We walk inside the house, and we find mom sitting with Wami in the lounge area, playing with her. I repeat, Wami is her grandmother's baby. "Mama, ndicela umntan'am please?" Inga asks mom, already taking Wami from her. *(May I please have my child)* "But I was still playing with her," she sulks. "You've been with her the entire day while I slaved around the yard in the heat. I'm sure a few hours with her father won't hurt," Inga

retorts, nonchalantly. “But... Okay, fine. Just bring her back before 20:00 so I can bathe her and get her ready for bed,” she says defeated. “Fine, although I could do all that myself ma.” My brother should just give up while it’s still early because once he leaves Wami with mom and goes back to varsity, mom will hog this child like she’ll run away. She’ll make sure that Inga is forgotten as soon as he steps out of this compound, and I hope he’s ready for that reality. After the two reach a consensus, Inga walks out with his daughter and I leave to prepare my bathing water before I take my nap, leaving mom alone in the lounge. Shame umama wam. (*My mother*) I hope to feel refreshed when I wake up because I have to wake up and pack my bags as I’m returning to my place tomorrow. How time flies when you’re having fun... well not fun in this instance because I was working but being at home offers me so much tranquility and comfort. I take a quick bath and lotion my body after I’m done. Too lazy to get dressed, I throw myself inside the covers, naked, and rest my body as I wait for darkness to consume me. It’s honestly been a day from hell, and my body needs the rest. I can’t wait to get back to my normal routine. Slowly my eyes start to feel heavy, and my breath slows down and soon I’m swallowed by deep slumber... Tomorrow is another day, I guess.

## Chapter 30

It's Monday morning and my blaring alarm reminds me that it's back to school. I could do with an extra week indoors doing nothing but that's a mere dream. Yesterday I left home late in the afternoon all thanks to Miss Cutie, Wami. I kept saying to mom and Inga, "Haike ndimkile," and give them hugs but when it came to saying goodbye to Wami, I just couldn't. (*Well, I'm leaving*) Her gummy smile and big round eyes would hold me captive. Back to reality, I roll out of bed, removing the t-shirt that I'm wearing and head towards the shower. I set the faucet to the hottest temperature that I can handle; I need the water to loosen the stiffness in my body. I get down in no time and step up to proceed with the rest of my hygiene routine. I get done with applying body lotion and get dressed in a set of black undergarments, nothing sexy just a simple t-shirt bra and thong. Yet again, I didn't prepare any clothes for today so I opt for a quarter sleeved beige maxi dress that's just above the knee and pair it with a pair of nude sandals. I comb my afro out and leave it as is, then I wear a pair of gold stud earrings and I finish my look by applying a bit of perfume, Lancome Idôle. Now I'm ready to face my rascals. I have no appetite this morning, so I opt for an apple instead. I take my belongings and head out of my apartment, locking behind me.



I get to school, and the noise is deafening. Everyone seems reenergized and excited to see each other after the short holiday we had. I on the other hand am exhausted and wishing for the day to come to an end already. The school bell rings and all the learner's line-up and head to their classes. Mr Phakade likes sharing encouraging words with the learners at the beginning of each term which often leaves the students motivated and eager to learn. I spot Thulani making his way into the school premises and giggle a bit. He's late and I know he's going to get an earful from Mr Phakade because he's always late on the first day of each term, something about him forgetting that it's back to work. That's what he says, but you can never be too sure about this one. He lifts his one hand up to Mr Phakade in a "I apologise" type of manner and Mr Phakade simply glares at him. Oh, he's going to have it for real this time around. Ndumi next to me, Nondumiso is her full name and she's our Business Studies educator for learners in grade 10-12, nudges me giggling softly and says "uMr P is livid. Can you see how flared his nose is?" I nearly laugh out loud because Mr Phakade has a huge nose which we often tease him about, behind his back of course, so for her to say it's flared makes her comment even funnier. I place my hand on my mouth to trap the loud laugh that's forcing itself out and shake my head, asking her to stop with her silliness. This one likes getting us into trouble with her jokes that she doesn't laugh too

hard at but leaves you in stitches. You know those people, right? Who makes jokes but can hold in their laughter but always leave you in stitches? Yeah, she's one of those. Anyway, we continue listening to Mr Phakade's speech and soon he's done and the students are dismissed. We all head to our classrooms and get started with the day. Mr Phakade always encourages us to plan and share our module term curriculum plans with him in advance so that we can make sure that we aren't behind schedule and that we discuss and cover all the topics areas that need to be during the term, so I already know what I've prepared for what I'll be teaching my learners. We'll use half of the term to complete the rest of the curriculum and we'll use the rest for revision. The day went along smoothly with a bit of recapping on what we'd covered last term and a generic overview of what the learners should expect this term.

As soon as the bell rings, I start packing my things and I rush to get out of the school premises. My body is drained and is in dire need of proper rest. Though I'd do anything to get to my apartment and sleep, I have to pass by Spar to get my groceries for the month as I'd just bought a few items for when Siya was here to drop me off. My grocery list never changes so I don't even need to make a list of the items that I need to get. I mean how difficult can it be to shop for necessities for one person. I give myself thirty minutes max to do my groceries and head home. I'm busy sifting through the chicken packs, trying to

select the one with the biggest, most equally proportioned braai pack, when I hear a voice I thought I'd never hear again, "Zamo, is that you?" I lift my head up just to confirm that I'm not hearing things, that this person is really here beside me. To my dismay, it really is him, my ex-boyfriend, Luthando. He should have just walked past me; he didn't have to make his presence known. I roll my eyes, before greeting back in a flat tone, "Hi." He chuckles much to my annoyance, "It's been a while. You look good," he says, eyeing me up and down. Yho nkos'yam ndiyalingwa. (*Oh my Lord I'm being tested*) I haven't been back that long and already the devil is sending his agents to target me. I scoff, "Xa besizodibana phi?" I retort. (*When were we going to meet*) He chuckles, vexing me even further. He runs his two fingers, his thumb and index finger over his chin, running his eyes all over me and smirks, "Still feisty I see. This is what I always loved about you." I gag, "What do you want, Luthando?" He takes one step back and leans onto his trolley that's filled with groceries. "I want you Zamo. I want you to be my girlfriend again," he utters. Nkos'enofefe. (*Good Lord*) What have I done to deserve this? I release an exasperated sigh, "If you have nothing better to say, please -" The imbecile interrupts me mid-sentence, "Zamo you know we were good together, great in fact. I'm sure we can -" This time I interrupt him, "Luthando, khawuyeke ukundenza isbhanxa please. Aren't you tired of your scheming and lying ways?" (*Stop making me a*

*fool*) He shakes his head and opens his mouth to say something, but I raise my hand and stop him from going any further, “Luthando please. Please just leave me alone,” I say, despairingly. I don’t wait for him to respond; I simply walk away. I’ll purchase more meat some other time, right now I just need to get away from him and carry on with what’d brought me here in the first place. The Luthando topic will be uncovered and addressed some other time, not now. I’m not emotionally strong to relive what he put me through. Just as I’m about to head to the tills, I decide to buy four bottles of wine, Chocolate Block, just to help me forget about my encounter with the devil's advocate. I head to the tills after I’ve finished with my shopping and head out home.

I get to my apartment and decide to take a quick shower to freshen up before I make supper. I don’t like sleeping all sweaty and stuff after I've had a long day, especially during summer. Also, showering before bed cools my body down somehow. After applying lotion, I get dressed in my ivory satin night dress and slip on my fluffy slippers. I head to the kitchen and start on dinner. Tonight, I’ll be making a cheesy tortellini bake which will go down well with my wine. Preparing the meal is quick and seamless and in no time, I’m indulging while sitting in front of the TV. Staying alone sucks sometimes, I mean for the past week I’ve been surrounded by people and as much as I wanted my own space, my apartment suddenly feels bigger and

lonelier. I decide to give mama a call, I need to see my niece, I'm sure she'll improve my mood. Her phone rings unanswered and I decide to give Inga a call; he's still at home and is only leaving tomorrow. It rings once and he answers, "Nomdade." (*My sister*) His voice sounds low and groggy. "Mntase, uright?" I ask him. (*My brother, are you well*) He chuckles, he knows how much I worry, "ndiright sisi su-worry. I was sleeping when you called." (*I'm well my sister, don't worry*) Oh, that explains the tone. "Oh, I'm sorry for waking you up," clearly, it's becoming my thing now, first Siya now him... Oh well. "I was just checking up on you," I say, relieved. "Suxoka, you're checking up on Wami," he titters. (*Don't lie*) Guilty as charged, "Okay you've got me. Is she close by?" I ask, giggling. "No, she's with her grandmother. After dinner umama ebethe she's going to give her a bath and read her a bedtime story," he says, bored. (*Mom said*) "A bedtime story? What does mom know about bedtime stories? She never did that for us," I ask shocked. "Khona, usithaphi esostory," I continue to bombard my brother. (*Also, where did she get that story*) My brother laughs, a full-blown belly laugh, much to my annoyance, "Calm down sisi, yho. She went to town this morning and came back with a bunch of books esithi she wants her grandbaby to start learning isiNgesi kwaeary. Don't ask me where she got that idea because nam andiyazi." (*Wow... Saying... Learn English quite early... I also don't know*) I clap my hands once, shocked. Who's

this woman and what has she done with my mother? Yes, uMaDlamini loved us, and showed us too

## Advertisement

but she never, and I mean, EVER read bedtime stories for us. She never practiced anything ‘Western’ with us, like reading bedtime stories, tshini! (*Wow*) Thina siqhele intsomi esasizibaliselwa ngumakhulu. (*We’re used to folk tales that our grandmother used to tell us*) “Hayi umamawakho uqatsele. What has gotten into her?” I ask the question more out loud than to Inga. (*No, your mom is overly excited*) “So that’s why she’s not answering her phone because ubusy ngoWami?” (*She’s busy with*) My brother chuckles, “Yep! You’re better ulapho, mna lo ulapha? My daughter has literally forgotten about me,” he mopes. (*You’re there, what about me who’s here*) “Hayi inene andiyazi. Look, please give me a buzz when you get a chance to be with Wami? I miss her,” I plea with my brother. (*I really don’t know*) “I will... Wait, is everything okay?” he asks in a thick voice. “Yes bhuti, everything is okay, don’t worry I’m fine. I just miss you guys, that’s all.” (*Brother*) There’s silence for a while that I almost think that the line has disconnected, “You know you can talk to me about anything right?” he asks, warily. I release a deep sigh, I know how they worry about me, just like I worry about them. Though they’re younger than me, they always want to protect me, and make

sure that I'm okay which is why I'm not telling him about my encounter with Luthando because I know that he'll inform his older brother who will reign terror on Luthando. Trust me, they've done it before, and it was a mess. I just don't have the emotional capacity and strength to go through that again. I just want to have peace and move on from him. "I'm fine, mntase, I promise," I reassure him. (*My brother*) "Okay then, if you say so. Look, let me go and check if Wami is still up, and if she is I'll give you a call back, okay?" I nod my head. "Zamo?" He calls my name. Oh snap, "Yes, I'll wait to hear from you." I hear him huff on the other end of the line, "Sisi, are you sure that you're okay?" he inquires, again. (*Sister*) "Ewe mnta'kamama, everything's okay," I hearten. (*Yes my brother*) He hums and drops the phone. A few minutes later a text comes through from him saying Wami is sleeping, and with her grandma. Sigh. I was really looking forward to seeing her. I snap out of my mood and decide to go to bed. I send Siya a message instead of calling him because I know he'll sense that something is amiss and knowing him, he'll try and get it out of me, and I can't lie to him. That man knows me like the back of his hand.

The week progresses uneventfully, which I'm grateful for and soon it's the weekend. Yesterday I sprung a surprise test on all my biology learners which means I need to dedicate this entire weekend to marking. The purpose of the tests was to determine which subject areas we need to work on, and which

ones have been well anchored for revision purposes. Generally, marking scripts requires a lot from an educator, it requires an educator to make judgments of the answers provided, especially for those ambiguous, non-direct questions. However, it's also an opportunity for the educator to get a better understanding of his or her learners and their interpretation of the work. Anyway, to prepare myself for the weekend, I made sure that I have enough junk food to last me throughout the weekend as I'm not planning on going anywhere besides church on Sunday. Saturday morning, I wake up just after ten and get started with my day. I decide to mark the grade 12 scripts first because they need a fresh mind as they are for my most critical students. The finals start in a month's time, and I need my matriculants to be well prepared by the time they write their final paper. I'm startled by a knock at my door. I wonder who it could be. For one, I don't have friends and secondly, the people who know where I live often call before coming to my place. I stand up from my desk and walk towards the door. I stand by the door, afraid to open because firstly, this is South Africa and secondly, I'm a woman who stays alone. "Who is it?" I say in a deep, manly voice. I giggle at how idiotic I sound right now. "Ndim Zamo," a familiar voice says on the other side of the door. (*It's me*) I know that voice. Hang on! "Luthando?" I ask, shocked. "Yes baby, it's me. Open up," he says like he lives here. Haibo le nja! (*Wow this dog*) How does he know where I



live? How did he even gain access to the complex? “What... What are you doing here? How do you know where I live?” I’m scared now. “I just want to talk, skat,” he says, like he’s not violating my space. (*Love*) Talk? Didn’t I tell esisbhanxa that I don’t want to ever speak to him again. (*This idiot*) I stand behind the door, seething in anger. “Luthando, didn’t I say leave me alone? Which part of what I said did you not hear or understand?” He’s pissing me off right now. I want to open this door and beat the shit out of him for his stalker tendencies but I’m afraid of what will happen should I open this door. “All of it. Ndiyakuthanda mfethu and I want us to fix things,” he says with a some-what sincere tone. Could have fooled me. (*I love you dude*) “Firstly, andingo mfo’wakho. Secondly, how many times must I tell you that I don’t want to talk? There's nothing to talk about.” (*I’m not your dude*) “Zamo please,” he says, rattling my doorknob. Okay, now he’s freaking me out. I run to my desk and take my phone, dialling the guard office, “LUTHANDO, LEAVE ME ALONE! JUST LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE!” I scream. The guards aren’t picking up my call and I’m so frustrated right now. Trust them to be unreliable! All they know is to shower you with endless greetings and stuff their faces with amagwinya ne polony! (*And fat cake*) Bloody fools! He starts banging on my door violently, screaming a bunch of incoherent words, I start wailing. I beg him to stop but he doesn’t seem to hear my pleas over his loud screaming. He continues rattling my

doorknob while hitting the door with what sounds like his fists. Kanene ithini inumber yamapolisa? 911 or 10111? (*Again, what's the police emergency number?*) Shit! Stranded and petrified, I decide to call Thulani. He's the closest male that I have relations with. He picks up on the second ring, "Well look who the cat dragged in?" he mocks me. On a normal day I would engage in meaningless banter but today I need his help. "Pl... Plea... Please help me. There's someone at my door and he refuses to leave," I say in between my sob. I hear shuffling and laboured breathing, "Is your door locked?" he asks me. "Ye... yes," I answer. "Good. I need you to your room and lock the door. I'm on my way! Stay on the line, okay?" Without wasting any further time, I leave the raging bull at my door and run to my bedroom, locking the door behind me. With my back against the door, I slide down and continue to weep with my head in between my knees. I stay on the line for a while before I hear Thulani's breathy voice on the other side of the line, "I'm here! I'm here Zamo." I can't seem to find my voice, so I say nothing. I can hear him running, and his keys jingle. Soon thereafter, I hear multiple voices, speaking/shouting followed by a few grunts and groans. I scream in terror, dropping my phone the process. I cover my ears with my hands and try to shut out the noise. Soon the noise quietens down, but I'm left frozen in my spot. "Zamo? Zamo?" I hear Thulani call out for me on the other side of the line. I pick up my phone and place it

against my ear, “The police have him. You can get out of your room now, you’re safe. Please open up for me, I’m standing in front of your door.” I drop the call and wipe my tears with the back of my hands. I stand up, open my bedroom door, and slowly make way to my front door. “Thu... Thulani?” I call out for him while standing behind the door. “I’m here Zamo, you can open up.” I slowly open the door and peep to see whether it’s truly Thulani speaking. As soon as I see him, I launch myself onto him. He catches me and wraps his arms around me. I start sobbing all over again. “Ssh. You’re safe now,” he whispers against my ear, tightening his hold around me. Why would Luthando do this to me? Why is he so hell bent on taking me back to that place I worked so hard to get out of? Why? Thulani and I are still standing by the passageway, with me still enveloped in his embrace when I hear a voice that I know all too well, “Nomzamo!” Shit!

## Chapter 31

I stand frozen in my position with my eyes tightly shut. Inside I want to pull away from Thulani as the position we're currently standing in right now may seem somewhat to an outsider but for some reason my entire body is numb. Thulani is also not helping the situation because he's now starting to rub circles on my back much to my dismay. I hear Siya breath heavily somewhere close by. I want to look at him, but I'm scared of the reaction I'm going to see on his face. "Nomzamo?" I hear him call out for me again, this time with more assertiveness in his voice. I flinch slightly, don't ask me why my body is reacting this way because Siya's not yelling, and I know he would never lay his hands on me. Thulani tightens his hold on me before whispering, "Are you okay? Who's this guy?" Gosh, if there's a person who can't read a room right now, it has to be Thulani but then again, I can't really blame him after what happened earlier. I hope he's not thinking that I have a lot of psycho men chasing after me because that's not who I am and that's definitely not the reputation I'd like to be associated with. I nod my head against Thulani's chest as an indication that I'm okay and I slowly peel myself away from him. I lower my head as soon as I'm at a distance from Thulani and focus on my feet. "Hi," I greet Siya in a low voice. He says nothing in response. I guess he's not looking for a greeting right now but for an explanation. Shit! As I'm about to lift my head to the direction

that Siya's voice was coming from, Thulani shifts closer to me and places his hand on the small of my back. Jesus what is this one doing now? I know he's being 'protective' as he's still alarmed about what had transpired earlier but Siya won't read the situation as so. Fuck! I gently shove Thulani's arm away from my back and with my heart beating aggressively against my chest, I lift my head up to look at my man. He's standing tall, with both his hands in his sweatpants with a face that's not emitting any emotion. He's not even looking at me but is piercing daggers at Thulani. Though he may be trying to control his anger, I can already tell from his heavy breathing that he's beyond enraged. "Uhm baby," I whisper. Thulani, like a metal struck by lightning, jolts from his current standing position and stands a little bit further away from me. You need to understand something, Siya is taller and much bigger in size than uThulani, whereas Thulani is short and petite. He has the height and body of a soccer midfielder, you know, the Teko Modise, Simphiwe Tshabalala type of body. So, you can understand why he'd jump that far when he hears that this is in actual fact my man. Siya continues to stand where he is without uttering a single word. He's really going to make it hard for me now, isn't he? I've only seen him angry once, when he lashed out at me for wanting to go with Lulu to the naked beach, so I'm not entirely sure how to deal with an enraged Siya. I turn to Thulani and look at him. Shame, the poor guy looks petrified

and ready to bolt out of here; he's even shaking uncontrollably. Hayi uSiya. (*No Siya*) "Thulani, thank you for coming to my aid. I don't know what I would've done without you. I really appreciate it. I think it's best if you leave. I'll speak to you on Monday," I say to him. I hear Siya scoff behind me, and I close my eyes in regret. Hayi nawe Nomzamo with your choice of words 'I don't know what I would've done without you' really? (*Not you*) Siya is literally standing just a few feet away from me, I internally scold myself. I release a deep sigh and open my eyes to look at Thulani who's still standing in his position, unsure of my request, "I'll be fine Thulani, I promise," I reassure him. Gosh this day is really not going the way I had imagined. "Okay, I'll leave. I'll check on you later on, okay?" he says already walking past me, brushing my arm gently. I internally scream at his affection because he's making things unnecessarily awkward for me. I simply nod my head at him and turn to watch him leave. Siya's glare on him as he walks past makes him quicken his pace and soon, he disappears out of both our sights. Now I'm left standing in the passageway with my big grumpy bear who looks like he's ready to pop at any moment. I tear my eyes away from him and start fidgeting with my fingers. I'm honestly nervous, don't ask me why because I didn't do anything wrong, technically, well besides being caught in the arms of another man. But he was comforting me mos? (*Though*) Right? Now I'm not so sure.

I'm startled from my thoughts when he walks past me, entering my apartment and leaves me standing outside. I gather all my strength and follow him in, closing and locking the door behind me. I find him pacing up and down the lounge area, occasionally running his hand over his hair roughly. I watch him from where I'm standing, shit scared to get any closer to him when he's this bewildered. He comes to a halt abruptly and looks at me with bloodshot eyes. I gulp a whole lot of nothing because he looks nothing like himself right now. Both our eyes are trained on each other and the air surrounding us is thick and suffocating. Oh Luthando, see what you've done? "Am I your fool, Nozamo?" He asks me in a tone of voice I wasn't expecting, calm. Like a baby, my eyes well up and my tears start trickling down my face. "Ukhalelani kengoku?" he asks me rather frustratedly. (*Why are you crying now*) Second question and I still can't answer him but continue to cry. He starts shaking his head and continues to pace up and down my lounge, "Nomzamo I asked you a question, ndisibhanxa sakho na?" (*Am I your fool?*) I shake my head 'no' which he doesn't see because he's looking everywhere else but at me as he speaks. "Answer me damn it!" he shouts. I flinch at his raised voice and instinctively wrap my arms around my body tightly. "N... no," I stutter in response as a loud sob escapes my throat. I hate being yelled at which is hypocritical of me considering how often I lose my temper. Remember how I went off at Anga

at the hospital a while back? Exactly. “Then what do you call what I walked into, huh? What do you call it?” he questions, halting in his steps once again. I once again have no words to respond to his blazing question instead I continue to wail. This clearly frustrates him even more because I’m not providing him with any information and I’m sure that’s fueling his raging imagination. “Will you stop crying and explain to me why I walked into your apartment to find you in another man's arms?” he says in a less aggressive tone. “It’s... It’s not like that. He was just comforting me,” I manage to say. “Comforting you?” He asks in repugnance. I nod my head ‘yes’ in response. “Is that not my job as your man, Nomzamo?” he asks, hurt. It is, it truly is but I can’t even answer him as I’m rendered speechless by all the events from this morning that attack me like a broken record. All I want, now that he’s here, is for him to wrap his arms around me and reassure me that everything is going to be okay. “Why was he comforting you?” he asks, a tad calmer. I guess his raging hormones have subsided as he can see that something is definitely going on. I fail to answer him, “Sthandwa sam,” he pleads, as he walks closer to me. (*My love*) He reaches where I’m standing and runs his eyes all over me, as though inspecting if I’m physically harmed or injured. He gently lifts my face up with his index finger so that I can look at him. When my eyes meet his, I can see that the rage they possessed



earlier has now been replaced with worry and sadness. “Thetha nam MaDlamini,” he gently says, pulling me into his embrace

## Advertisement

my safe haven. (*Speak to me*) I release a gut-wrenching sob and wail as though ndingumfelokazi. (*I'm a widow*) “Zamo please. What’s happened themba lam? You’re worrying me,” he continues to implore. (*My hope*) My knees begin to buckle as I relive the trauma of earlier and Siya catches on quickly and hoists me up and heads to my bedroom. He gently places me on top of the covers and walks out of the room. I hear the cupboards open and close in the kitchen and he soon walks back with a glass of water and two Panado pills in his hand. He helps me drink both tablets and places the glass of water on top of my bedside table. He removes his sneakers and tracksuit top and lays with me on the bed. He gently lifts me up and lays me on top of his body. At this point my sobs have simmered down and I’m now just suffering from hiccups. He plants a chaste kiss on my temple as he wraps his arms around me. “Sleep sthandwa sam. We’ll talk about what happened when you wake up, okay?” (*My love*) I simply nod my head against his chest, as I rest one of my hands on his chest. I would’ve thought that sleeping on top of him would be uncomfortable but to my surprise it isn’t. It’s rather consoling and soothing. I settle in and allow my body to relax. “You’ll be here when I wake up?” I

ask him in a whisper. “Ewe sthandwa sam. I’ll be right here when you wake up. Andiyi ndawo, I promise,” he reassures me. (*Yes, my love... I'm not going anywhere*) I nod against his chest again and allow the events of today to disappear. Siya releases a deep sigh before enveloping me even tighter in his embrace.

I wake up just as the sun is setting. Those pills must have really knocked me out though I must say that I feel much better after taking that nap. I sweep my eyes around the room to try and make sense of my surroundings. I’m still in bed laying on top of my man. I wonder how he can sleep comfortably in this position. We all know that sleeping this way is a recipe for disaster, a nightmare to be specific. I lay my chin on his chest and look at him as he breathes softly; he’s so handsome. I doubt I’ll ever get used to how handsome he is. “You’re staring,” he startles me. I giggle softly, “No I wasn’t.” His eyes are still shut closed by the way. He gently rubs his one hand all over my back, tantalising every fibre of my being. I can feel his hard member poking me on my stomach and to be honest with you, I’ve missed it. I know it’s only been a week, but I’ve grown to love it. Shoot me! “Are you feeling better now sthandwa sam?” he asks, fluttering his eyes open. (*My love*) I nod my head against his chest. He just killed my burning desire to have him buried inside of me. *\*eyeroll\** “Now will you tell me what happened that got you so upset?” he asks me while tenderly tilting my face so that I can look at him. As soon as our eyes

meet, he smiles at him so lovingly while his eyes reassure me that I'm in a safe space, that he is that safe space and that I can trust him. I inhale a deep breath and exhale to calm my nerves and start narrating the events of this morning. I'm still not divulging what transpired between me and Luthando in our relationship as I'm still not comfortable with going down that route for now but knowing Siya, he'll want me to talk about it. Throughout the entire time as I narrate the events that occurred this morning, he doesn't move his eyes off me. I finish narrating what happened this morning and I look at him expectantly; he needs to say something. His body is stiff, and I can feel it trembling beneath me. Oh, he's seething with anger right now, but I'm not sure who the anger is directed to. "So, lo umnqundu came here, uninvited and started harassing you?" he seeths. (*This fucker*) I say nothing but continue to look at him, alarmed. "No one! And I mean NO ONE does that to my wife and gets away with it. Who the FUCK does he think he is terrorizing you in your own space, huh? Also, how the fuck did he gain access to your complex?" he asks the same question that's been bothering. "Akandazi kakuhle! Uzo'mkhomba umzi onotywala!" he bellows. (*He doesn't know me well. He'll reap what he's sowed*) "I tried calling the guards, but they didn't pick up the telephone," I say with my tears falling once again. Gosh, since when am I such a cry baby? "It's okay bhabha, don't cry. I'll speak to them later and find out what happened okay? I'm

glad Thulani was here to assist you in your time of need. I don't know what I would've done if something bad had happened to you," he says earnestly. (*Baby*) "Kwa lo Thulani that you wanted to murder?" I tease. (*The same*) He chuckles while shaking his head, "What was I to think when I walked in to find you ujinga on another man?" (*Hanging*) "Hayi baby, I wasn't hanging on him," I defend. (*No*) "Six no nine kum lonto wethu. He was touching what belongs to me qha ke," he deadpans. (*Same thing... That's all*) "A little possessive now aren't we, Sir?" He chortles, "Well that's the truth. You're mine and andifuni niks ngawe." (*I don't want anything to happen to you*) "I know baby. I'm very happy that you're here," I confess. "I wanted to call you when he started going crazy, but I didn't want to worry you ube ukude kunam. You're also dealing with a lot as it is, so I didn't want to add on to your worries..." I continue to say. (*When you were far from me*) "We've spoken about this haven't we? You can call and tell me anything at any time, that's what being in a relationship means. Being there for your partner no matter what, okay?" He says as he plants a wet kiss on my salty lips. "I'm here now, and I'm glad I missed you enough to drive down all the way, otherwise I would've gone crazy knowing that you're going through all of this alone." I chuckle at the first part of his statement. "Thank you for coming, sthandwa sam. I also missed you." (*My love*) It's like he knows when I need him and what to do at all times. I'm one lucky lady. "Masivuke

ngoku bhabha. I'm hungry, I haven't eaten all day," he complains. (*Let's get up now baby*) "What would you like to eat mnt'wam? Yithi ndiku tofoze," I say giggling. (*My person. Let me spoil you*) He chuckles and watches me as I get off him to stand next to his side of the bed. I have my hands on my hips as I smile down at him happily. "Well..." he says, rolling to his side in order to be able to reach and grab my ass, "If you're on the menu, then I'll gladly have you," he murmurs seductively. I gently pat his hand away from my ass and jog out of the room leaving him in stitches behind me. "You can run but you can't hide MaDlamini," I hear him call out behind me. I look back, alarmed. Shit he's running after me.

I squeal, trying to get away from him. He grabs me by my waist, lifts me up and throws me over his shoulder, spanking my ass. I scream. "Put me down baby, put me down," I beg him while hitting him on his shoulder. He ignores me and continues to pinch and smack my butt. "Baby man," I keep yelling out. We're both laughing uncontrollably and I'm sure the entire block is wondering what's going on. Such a 360 moment from this morning if you ask me. One moment I'm terrifyingly screaming at someone to leave me alone the next I'm screaming in glee for this one to put me down. It's a mess really. Anyway, he eventually places me down and snakes his hands around my waist pulling me closer. "You're beautiful, my love," he says, caressing my cheek. I raise my right hand and gently place it on

his cheek and draw him into a deep kiss. I've missed his lips. He cups my ass cheeks, making me feel the bulge in his pants. I moan while he groans against my lips. I take my free hand and gently tug his protruding member. "Mm" he groans. Yazi sizopheka nini silibele zizimanga nje. (*I wonder when we'll cook while we're busy doing nasty things*) I bite his lower lip which he responds to by tightening his grip on my ass. Gosh! Our moment is disturbed by a knock on the door. Fuck! Who could it be so late? I try to pull away from him, but he holds me even tighter, "Ignore them baby." I shake my head in reproof and nudge him to let go of me. He partially releases me from his hold, keeping our hands intertwined and we reluctantly make our way to the door. He spanks my butt as we make our way to the door, "Baby man." I giggle as I open the door but freeze instantly when I see who's on the other side. "Thulani?" Fuck! Here we go again.

## Chapter 32

Hayi inene, uSatana undifuna ndifile namhlanje. (*No really, Satan wants me dead today*) Did I not tell this one that I'll speak to him on Monday? What did he not understand in my statement? I was speaking in a language that he understands, right? Ngoku yintoni le nonsense ayenzayo? (*Now what's this nonsense he is doing*) Some may say I'm being harsh and selfish towards him considering he came to my rescue when I needed him and I'm not. Really. I appreciate his concern and all but even before this incident, I've always been clear about how highly I regard and protect my peace and my home is just that, my peace. I don't appreciate anyone dropping by unannounced so looking at him right now makes me want to slap the shit out of him. Out here looking like ikati engxuzwe emanzini abandayo. (*A cat dipped in cold water*) Bloody fool! Siya is standing behind me, with his arm now wrapped around my waist, *dood still* while taking shallow breaths. (*Dead silent*) This one sees Siya behind me and his eyes almost jump out of their sockets. I guess he wasn't expecting to see Siya here with me, andazi noba ebesithi uzobe ephi, but anyway. (*I don't know where he thought he'd be*) I look at him standing there not uttering a word and if he doesn't say something, he's going to get a *moerse* beating from this one behind me. (*A hell of*) He may be quiet for now, but I know seeing this idiot AGAIN on my doorstep is irking him to the core. "Thulani?" I inquire. He starts

moving his eyes all around my door frame, while occasionally sweeping them behind me to catch a glimpse of Siya but continues to say nothing. “Sure mjita, singakunceda?” Siya asks, irritated. (*Dude, can we help you*) Yho hai uThulani nkos’yam. (*Hey Thulani, my lord*) “Uhm... eish,” he mumbles. (*Eh*) Yebethuna! (*My goodness*) Siya tightens his grip on my waist a little too tight for comfort, causing me to flinch slightly. He sees my reaction and apologises to me followed by a kiss on the back of my head. “Ei, bendisithi mandizo checka uba uright uZamo,” he says, avoiding eye contact with us at all costs. (*I thought I should come check if Zamo is alright*) Here he goes electing himself as my man. Yesu! (*Jesus*) “Thank you for coming to check up on me although there was no need, but as you can see, I’m okay,” I say, almost wanting to shove him away from my doorstep. “Uhm... oh okay. I guess I should... I should get going then,” he says, sounding doubtful. Duh! GO! I mentally scream. “Uhm yeah, I guess so. I’ll see you on Monday, okay?” I respond to him as Siya has now gone mum. I just want this awkward conversation to come to an end already, not for his sake but for mine too. “Sho! Stay safe,” he says, eyeing Siya before walking away from my door. (*Sure*) ‘Stay safe’? Is he really going to say that to Siya? Clearly he has a death wish. The comment leaves me with a bitter taste in my mouth but I choose not to dwell on it. I close my door and rest



my back against my man's chest. I've never had such an eventful Saturday since I moved into this apartment.

We walk back to the kitchen taking simultaneous steps, with his arms still wrapped around my waist. "So, your boyfriend," he mocks. I scoff. Thulani is NOT my boyfriend. Not in a million years. Even before Siya, I never saw him like that. Indoda must be a man, you know? (*A man*) Not too clean or prune but needs to be a little rough around the edges, you know? He must have hands as big as your face, he must have a hairy chest, arms and legs. A man can't be a twig that wears a size 6 shoe! No man! "He's not my boyfriend," I whine. "Then what was he doing here so late?" he asks, letting go of my waist. Suddenly I feel lonely and cold without them around me and a slight pang goes through my heart. I turn around to face him, "Why'd you remove your arms?" I sulk. He stands a short distance away from me and chuckles, "You're not answering my question," he asks me, ignoring mine. "To check on me. That's what he said mos? You also heard him andithi?" (*Right*) He chuckles and shakes his head, "So, nichekana eb'suku nina?" (*You check on each other at night*) Gosh Siya is unbelievable. His jealousy annoys me at times, and this is definitely one of those times. "Baby, I have no control over what he does njena." (*Though*) Yho this man my goodness. (*Wow*) "Nomzamo, lantwana seemed shocked to see me here, why's that?" (*That boy*) Hayi thethelela Mesiya. (*No, defend me Messiah*) How am I

supposed to know why he was shocked. No, Siya's being unreasonable now. "I don't know, baby. I don't." He raises his brow in a questioning manner, shoving both his hands in his sweatpant pockets. "You know what? Let's drop this conversation or else sizo xabana. But let me say this, I don't ever want to see that boy anywhere near you or your apartment again, uyandiva?" (*We'll argue... Do you understand me*) Haibo! (*Wow*) Knowing I can't win this argument, I simply nod my head and leave him standing there. What's the point of engaging further in this conversation because he's not listening to what I'm saying. Siya can be very stubborn and controlling, and I don't like that one bit. I hate feeling caged. "Uyaphi ngoku?" he questions behind me. (*Where are you going now*) I ignore him and proceed to make my way to my bedroom. I need to take a shower before I prepare dinner. "Nomzamo I'm talking to you!" he yells. Hayi uyandiqhela lo. (*No, this one is getting too familiar with me*) "Did you not say that we're done with the conversation, now what more do you want me to say, huh?" I snap, turning to face him. "Nomzamo!... You know what... Never mind." I stare back at him, blank. Why are we fighting again? With tears already at the brim of my waterline I whisper to him, "Baby?" Yho andikhali, andikhali, andikhali! (*The way I cry of late*) He throws a quick glance my way and releases a deep sigh when he sees me emotional. He starts walking towards me and when he finally reaches where I'm

standing, like a moth, I gravitate towards him and wrap my arms around his waist, breathing heavily. I'm ready to cry now. "Sthandwa sam, andifun'uxabana nawe, kodwa I don't want that boy anywhere near you," he says while rubbing my back soothingly. (*My love, I don't want to argue with you, but*) uThulani is no boy, he's in his mid-thirties but I guess Siya doesn't give a rat's ass about his age. His only mandate is that he doesn't want him anywhere near me. Also, this one seems to forget that we are colleagues, so how does he suggest I work around that? Let me ask him. "But we work together," I alert him. "Then he'll see you at school, nakhona from afar," he says sternly. (*Even then*) Wow. I look up at him, shocked by his statement. Surely, he's lost his damn mind. "How's that going to work, kodwa baby?" (*Though*) He humphs, "I don't know and I don't care. All I'm saying is I don't want you anywhere near him. Baby, can't you see lentwana iyakufuna?" (*This boy wants you*) Can somebody tell me where this man gets all these ideas from? Hayi nkos'yam. (*My goodness*) "Baby no! uThulani doesn't see me that way and neither do I. Also, uThulani une cheri," I try to defend. (*He has a girlfriend*) "Like that has ever stopped anyone from pursuing someone else

Advertisement

" he deadpans. Haike, I have no words. (*Well*) I unwrap my arms from his waist and take a step back. "Let me shower love, I'll

come back to prepare something for us,” I say, walking away from him. “It’s fine baby. I’ll whip something for us while you shower. Take your time,” he encourages me. Let me say this again, my man is very thoughtful and that’s one of the qualities that I admire and love about him.

After my shower, I get dressed in a simple satin night dress and wear my puffy night shoes. An appetising aroma hits my nostrils just as I walk out of my bedroom, and I find myself salivating in anticipation. I walk into the kitchen to find Siya topless, stirring one of the pots. His back muscles flex with each movement that he makes. He’s so engrossed in what he’s doing that he can’t even sense that I’m standing behind him, drooling over him. I watch him take a sample to taste from one of his pots but jumps in agony when the hot liquid lands on his bare chest. “Fuck,” he screams. I snap out of my daze and rush toward him to assist. “Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” he continues to yell, roughly wiping the sauce from his chest. “See why it’s not advisable to cook naked?” He throws a glare my way. I guess now is not the time for any of that. I cower away and walk to the fridge to take butter that I’ll apply onto the injured area. “Sorry my love,” I say to him when I hear him hiss as I apply the butter. When done, I turn to his pots to see what he’s prepared but he smacks my hands away from them, “No! Go wait in the lounge.” Yahoo abantu nembiza zabo. (*Wow, people and their pots*) I can’t even have a glass of wine while I wait for him

because I still need to mark my grade 12 biology scripts. Oh, you thought I forgot about that? No! I need to complete marking those scripts before I go to bed tonight. Siya prepared braised beef short ribs in red wine sauce with mashed potatoes and asparagus. “Where did the short ribs come from, love?” I know I didn’t have this in my freezer. He snickers, “I bought them when I came here but they were in the boot the entire time.” Oh. Hayi besendithe nqa. (*No, I was wondering*) “Oh okay. Thank you for dinner, sthandwa sam,” I say as I indulge in the meal. (*My love*) He watches me briefly and smiles. I know what he’s thinking, ‘you and food’. I internally roll my eyes at him. He must leave me alone. Ndiyakuthanda ukutya wethu and I’m unapologetic about it. (*I love food*) We continue eating while conversing here and there in between. Once done with our meal, I take both our dishes and glass to the kitchen and wash them. After I’m done with the dishes, I proceed to my table to start with my marking. Siya, being the considerate man that he is, informs me that he’ll keep me company while I mark which involves him lying on the couch while watching the sports channel. Well, at this point I’ll take whatever version of support I can get. Afterall, beggars can’t be choosers.

By the time I was finished marking, I was beyond tired. Siya had to literally carry me to bed. We’re currently cuddling in bed listening to the birds chirping outside with neither one of us wanting to wake up. He gently massages my scalp while I run

circles over his chest with my index finger. "MaDlamini?" he softly says against my ear. I hum in response as his touch on my scalp soothes me. "Yazi... I'm deeply unsettled by yesterday's events and no, I'm not referring to finding you in the arms of your so-called colleague but I'm referring to how your ex was able to come into the complex unauthorised and cause such havoc," he continues. (*You know*) I raise my head slightly, placing my chin on his chest and face him. His eyes are piercing through me, capturing me and wheeling me inside his soul. Gosh this man is handsome. "I'm not comfortable with you staying here, on your own mnt'wam. The fact that a stranger easily gained access to these premises concerns me. Zamo, this is South Africa and women get killed every day. You cannot stay in a place that puts your safety in jeopardy." (*My love*) I know he's right but there aren't many places where I can stay that are safe and affordable around here. This is eNgcobo after all, not Johannesburg, which has a limited variety. "I know baby, but where will I even begin to look?" I inquire. "I know a few places around here - " I raise my brow at him. How does he know places from here? He chuckles before responding to me, "I've been here a couple of times before so I'm quite familiar with the area," he clarifies. "Mm," I hum. "I can help you look at a few places then you can decide on the one you like the most. Are you okay with that?" he asks me while caressing my cheek gently. "I'm okay with that love. So long as the

apartment is close to my school and not too pricey then..." I shrug. "Money is not an issue," he clears the air. Oops! Okay. I know that's right! 'Money is not an issue'. Music to my ears. "No baby, I don't want you using or spending your money on me," I reprove. "Sizo xabana?" he asks me, annoyed. (*Are we going to argue*) Wee this one and the 'I want to take care of you' nonsense. "Siya -" but the idiot interrupts me. "Let's not argue about this now sthandwa sam singeka boni nendawo," he dismissively says. (*My love we haven't even seen the place yet*) I nod my head in agreement, defeated. "Aren't you supposed to be going back to Port Elizabeth njengokuba ubusy undincedisa ngokhangela indawo yohlala?" I question him. (*While you're busy helping me look for a place to live*) He titters so beautifully which releases the butterflies in my stomach, "I'll be working from here until Wednesday," he responds. Pleasantly surprised, I raise my head up to look at him, with excitement spread all over my face, "Are you serious?" He smiles widely at me, "Yes love. I was going to drive back tomorrow but seeing that we have an apartment to look for, which I need to help you move into, I'll leave on Wednesday sthandwa sam." (*My love*) "You're going to help me move in? Kanti aren't we just looking for now then I'll only move into the new apartment two months from now?" (*Wait*) He looks at me dumbstruck, "No!" Haike ngoku. (*No, I don't know*) "Baby, you know it's not that simple. I'll need to terminate my lease with my current landlord then serve my

two months' notice if I don't want to forfeit my deposit," I try to reason with him. "I know all of that Nomzamo and that doesn't change the fact that you're moving into your new apartment by Wednesday," he deadpans. I guess the man has spoken. "I guess there's nothing more that I can say, right?" He bobs his head in agreement. Mkq. "Okay then. Let me get up, I'm hungry. I need to start marking the rest of the scripts," I say in defeat as I get up from our cuddling position to open the curtains. "I haven't had my breakfast nje baby," he seductively murmurs behind him. (*Though*) I giggle a bit, this one and his high libido. Lord have mercy on me. I turn around and give him a stern look, or so I think, but he simply chuckles at my failed attempt and gets up to stand in front of me. "I know you missed uJola as well," he says, grabbing my waist, pulling it closer to his chest. "Ah!" I cry out when his hard body comes into contact with mine. I gently place my hand on his bare chest and look up at him as he bites his lower lip. I may be playing hard to get right now but I know I want him. He dips his head to be on my level and brushes his warm and luscious lips against mine. I close my eyes and gladly welcome him, allowing ourselves to pour our hearts into the kiss. I raise my free hand and place it on his neck, drawing him nearer to me. He lifts me up and I instinctively wrap my legs around his waist with my core in direct contact with his now rock-hard member and starts walking with me in a direction I'm not too sure of. While



walking, he places his one arm under my ass to secure me in place and uses his free hand to undress me. How this man is able to do all of this with one hand, while walking with me wrapped around his waist is extremely impressive. I feel a cool breeze brush against my skin and goosebumps spread all over my body. Soon I hear the sound of water droplets splashing from somewhere behind me, I guess we're in the shower. He lowers me down gently, tearing himself away from our heated kiss. My eyes flutter open when the cold tiles come into contact with my feet. I look down at his enlarged groin that looks like it's ready to spring free from his briefs. Shame umnt'wam. (*My person*) He gently cups my face so that I can look at him, "Umhle mkam." (*You're beautiful my wife*) I blush profusely at the compliment, "Thank you baby. You're not too bad yourself." He releases a full-blown belly laugh while I stare back at him as he continues laughs uncontrollably. Yhoo umhle lobhuti, even more so when he laughs. (*Wow this man is handsome*) An aggressive knock disturbs our moment. His laughter dies down almost immediately, "Yazi ngubani lo unqonqoza ngathi ulipolisa kwakho ekuseni kangaka?" (*I wonder who's knocking this early on your door as though they are the police*) I shrug my shoulders in response because I also have no idea who it could be. The knocks I've received this past weekend are enough to last me a lifetime. "Let me check who it could be, okay?" he says planting a kiss on my temple. He

leaves me standing by the shower door with the running water. I close the faucet not wanting to waste any more water and I walk back to my bedroom to attend to my chiming phone that's on my bedside table. I unlock it and see a message from an unknown number. I wonder who it could be. I reluctantly open the message and a shriek leaves my mouth as soon as my eyes land on the contents of the message. Siya comes running into the bedroom to see what's happening. "Zamo? What's wrong? Why are you screaming?" Unable to formulate the words, I simply hand over my phone to him. He furrows his brows into a tight bow as he analyses what's before him, "Zamo, what's this? Who sent you this?" he asks enraged. I shrug my shoulders once again. "Who could do such a thing? How...?" he trails off, clearly bewildered and frustrated. He walks to our bedroom window and stands there. You may be asking yourselves what's gotten us so unravelled? Well, the message is not really a message but a picture of Siya and I just a few minutes ago when he was kissing me after he'd undressed me out of my nightdress with the caption "Enjoy it while it lasts," with a stopwatch emoji next to it. I know who sent this. It's him. It's definitely him and I now that he's found me, he'll do whatever it takes to rain terror on me and takeaway all my peace.

## Chapter 33

I don't know whether to cry, laugh in agony or scream to release this pent-up anger and fear inside of me but I know I need to do something. Why couldn't he just leave me alone, huh? I went through so much to get away from him and just as I thought I was succeeding, there he goes, coming back into my life uninvited. The last time I managed to get away was because of my brother's but it seems like the fucker didn't learn his lesson or he simply doesn't care. Luthando is what you call a psychopath; he gets off from hurting people and shows no remorse for his actions. His stalker tendencies are nothing new. You see, he didn't need to be around me to know where I was, with whom, and doing what. All he did was order one of his phonies to follow me around, sometimes discrete and sometimes not, and they would give him feedback on my whereabouts and engagements. This is why I haven't dated in so long. It's because every time I tried getting into a relationship, he would hinder it by sending me or the potential boyfriend threatening messages or he would do something crazy like thrashing the potential boyfriend's house or car. So, in an attempt to not get anyone's child battered or murdered, I opted to stay away from dating and for a while it seemed to have worked until I met Siya. When I was single, he stopped bothering me, but he must have always been watching me from the shadows, monitoring my every movement which makes me

think that me bumping into him on Monday at Spar was not a coincidence but a premeditated encounter. Again, I should be crying or screaming thinking about all of this but because I've experienced his worst, I'm just waiting for him to drive Siya away from me, just like he did those before him. You may ask yourselves then why didn't I get him arrested earlier? What's the point of reporting someone to the same officers that are under his payroll? Why'd you think I didn't entertain Siyabulela much when he questions the eeriness of how someone like him can just gain access to a secured complex without authorization? That's because nothing can stand in Luthando's way. Luthando doesn't require approval for anything that he does; he simply gets on with it, with no regard for the repercussions or consequences of his actions. I thought with how my brothers brutally attacked him the last time that he would leave me alone, but I guess I counted my chicken before they hatched. Oh, well, we're in shit now!

I'm not sure how much time has passed since I received that text but we're still unmoved with Siya still standing by the window while I'm still transfixed in the middle of my bedroom. "Nomzamo, ngubani uLuthando?" he asks me without even throwing a single glance my way. (*Who is*) I know he's not asking this question in a malicious way but more towards understanding who he's dealing with now. I release a shaky breath before looking at him, "We're going to need to sit down

for this one love. How about we take the shower that we were intending on taking before we got disturbed, have our breakfast, then I'll tell you all about him." He shifts from his standing position and walks towards me. As soon as he reaches me, I wrap my arms around his waist, which he reciprocates. I rest my head on his chest and listen to the beat of his heart, which soothes all my worries. Siya gently rests his chin on top of my head making me feel even shorter than I already am. "Baby man," I whine. His chest vibrates against my ear, "Khange ndithi ube yibhaw'shane mna." (*I didn't say be a midget*) Nxa! Idiot. I don't like people who make fun of my height. I playfully punch him on his stomach causing him to groan, "Uxolo sthandwa sam," he repents. (*Sorry my love*) I unwrap my hands from his waist, followed by removing his from mine, "Let's go shower my love." He places my phone on top of the bed and we both walk towards the shower. We quietly manoeuvre through our routine, both of us stuck in our own thoughts, I guess. Knowing that I have to reiterate and relive the trauma that I went through while I was with that man intensified the pit in my stomach which has now taken away all my appetite. After we're done with our routine, we both make our way to the kitchen but I inform Siya that I'll only be having some yogurt and an apple as I'm no longer hungry and surprisingly, he also opts for the same. We walk out of the kitchen after taking our breakfast items and go sit in the lounge. I start

trembling even before I start narrating my story. Siya notices my tremors and takes the spoon from my hand and feeds me, “Yehlisa umoya sthandwa sam,” he comforts me. (*Calm down my love*) I inhale, and exhale sharply then begin to narrate my story with the notorious Luthando Madolo.

“After my dad passed on, my mom couldn’t afford to send us all to the same private school that we attended while my father was still alive, so she was forced to send us to alternative private schools that were just as good as our previous one but less costly. Mpumelelo and I attended Arthur Tsengiwe and lived together while Inga and Anga both stayed in boarding school while attending eMaluti Senior Secondary School. Thandiwe was the only one who was allowed to go to a public school only because she wanted to stay closer to our grandmother. Her and my grandmother were really close, so it was really not a surprise for us when we heard that she was going to attend eGcuwa. Generally, we were all well-disciplined kids and we knew what and what not to do, so even though we didn’t live with umama 24/7 we all still behaved in a manner that would not embarrass or demean our mother, so dating and going to drink in taverns was not a thing that we were interested in. All that we were focused on were our books and herding the cattle that mom had acquired over the years. However, that all changed when I met Luthando in Grade 12 who was visiting his relatives who stayed in eTsomo for the

holidays. Luthando was 23 years old then and was staying in East London where he was helping his father run their family business. Throughout his visit, he would utilise every chance he saw me to pursue me, but I would always decline his advances. At the back of my mind, I knew that nothing could materialise from dating him. For one, he came from a very affluent family, and I didn't want to affiliate myself with him considering how I grew up. Secondly, I didn't know where I was going to study so that made the idea of us dating even more bleak. I mean, how was I to have a relationship with someone I hardly knew, who lived in East London while I lived wherever I was going to go to study? But like the devil that he was or is, he never gave up on me. He would frequently visit my village all under the pretence of wanting to see and spend more time with his cousins, but I knew that was all a lie. He would come with uVatiswa who was his cousin but also my friend to my house and use her to drop off snacks and gifts which he had bought just so it wouldn't be obvious to Mpumelelo that he was the one purchasing these gifts for me. However, my brother was never stupid nor was he ever naive, so he saw right through his scheming ways. Lelo hated him, okay maybe not hate, that's a strong word, but he harboured a strong dislike towards him. At first, I thought he was being his usual overly protective brotherly self, but now that I look back at it, I think I was too oblivious to see what was before me. Anyway

## Advertisement

he continued to pursue me for the rest of the year until I gave in, which happened close to the end of the year after I'd finished writing my final exams. As our relationship blossomed, I continued to voice out my biggest concern, which was distance, but he continuously assured me that we would be fine and that he'd always support my dreams and stupid me, I feel for his lies, hook line and sinker.

Closer to the time when I had to leave for varsity, he became even more frequent with his visits claiming that he was checking up on me or here to see his family, which never bothered me because I also wanted to see more of him too. I left that January and went to study at Rhodes University, and I'd have thought that I would see less of him but that wasn't the case. His visits increased even more and at first, they were cute but then they started to become alarming. Some days he would rock up past midnight and profess that he had missed me so much that he had to drive up and see me. Whenever I'd mentioned anything close to how unusual and unnerving his behaviour was, he'd lash out and start accusing me of seeing myself as a better person now that I'd left the village and studying, or he'd tell me that I should consider myself lucky that I had a man who loved me enough to travel long hours just to see me or he'd simply accuse me of having a potential



boyfriend, shit like that. To diffuse the situation, I'd always drop the topic and apologise and that's how my entire first year was like; him showing up unexpectedly, expecting, no requiring me to drop everything and tend to him, regardless of whether I was studying or not. Things started escalating in my second year as he started making snide remarks of how a man can't live off kisses alone. He gradually started making sexual advances at me which I was not comfortable with because I wasn't sure that I wanted to be with this man anymore, but I just couldn't find the strength to break up with him as he was set off by the smallest of things so I feared what a breakup would make him react. I would use all the tricks in the book to avoid getting intimate with him and for some time those tricks and excuses worked... until they didn't," My voice breaks as my tears start to well in my eyes. This is the part that I was dreading. Siya pulls me toward him and lays me on his chest, "We don't have to do this now my love." I shake my head in reproval, I need to get this out of my system. "No... I... I want to tell you. I need to tell you," I say through my tears. "Are you sure?" he questions. I nod my head as I try to gather myself. I shift away from him as I need to look him in the eyes as I narrate this part of the story, "Yes I'm sure love." We sit in comfortable silence for a while as I try to calm my raging nerves. "The September holidays had just begun, and he had come to fetch him to take me back home, something we had

not spoken nor agreed upon but yet again, I found myself agreeing to it. I mean he was already there, so what was I to do? Anyway, on our way back home he asked that we pass by his place in East London then we can head to Tsomo. He mentioned that he wanted to pick up some of his clothes as he was going to spend the duration of the holidays eTsomo with his family and yet again, I agreed even though I was a bit apprehensive. When we arrived at his apartment, he asked that I accompany him to help him pack and I saw nothing wrong with his request and I followed him into his apartment; a decision I regret till this day. As soon as we entered his bedroom, he pulled me to him and started running his hands all over my body saying that I've been tempting him this entire time and that he could no longer hold himself. I tried shoving him away from me but that seemed to fuel his desire even more. He was nothing like I'd ever seen before. He seemed like a bull with raging hormones that he was unable to tame. I kept asking him to stop touching me instead he carried on fondling me. At the back of my mind, I knew what was going to happen although I tried to convince myself that he wouldn't do that to me but unfortunately for me, my worst fear became a reality. My mind registered what was happening when he threw me on the bed while aggressively ripping off my skirt. The only thing I remember before I blacked out was him breathing heavily on top of me while he removed my underwear. After that my mind

goes completely blank. I remember waking up to a sore body, with dry blood in between my thighs and on the bed cover while he lay beside me, so peaceful like he had not just violated me. I'll never forget what he said when he woke up to me crying beside him." I start chuckling bitterly, "He said that I shouldn't feel bad that I enjoyed it because what we'd just engaged in was what happens between people who are in a relationship. He was so nonchalant with every word he uttered and didn't demonstrate an ounce of remorse. To say I was gutted would be an understatement. The physical pain could never amount to the emotional pain I felt that day. I hated myself for not only allowing him to take me from varsity but for being so easily lured into his apartment. Seeing how insouciant he was about everything, I started believing that I had done that to myself. That I was the one who -" Siya cuts me off, "No! No Nomzamo! No!" he screams at the top of his voice while shaking his head bewildered. He forcefully stands up from the couch and starts pacing up and down the lounge while cursing and mumbling words I can't make out. "No woman, and I mean NO WOMAN deserves what that bastard did to you, do you hear me? I don't ever want to hear you say that ever again!" I hear what he's saying but the guilt refuses to set me free, that's why it's so hard for me to let go of this guilt. You may be asking yourself why I didn't lay a charge? I did, with all the supporting evidence. He was arrested but as soon as his father caught

wind of what happened, my docket went missing and he was released on bail. Case closed. I know they bribed someone to get rid of the docket and the evidence and they succeeded. As a result, no further investigation was done since he was released. I felt so defeated and I eventually allowed myself to wallow in self-hatred, guilt and depression. *\*chuckle\** You know what the shitty part was in all of this? When I returned to varsity the next quarter, he started sending me flowers and gift baskets to my dorm. These were then followed by phone calls from different numbers that he was using that I never responded to. When I would not answer his calls, he would send me messages of how he just wants to talk, how he wants us to work things out, how he forgives me for 'acting out' and opening a case against him blah blah blah. Just imagine! He called raping me 'acting out'. *\*scoff\** When he got no reaction from me, the messages would change to threatening ones where he would say that if he can't have me then no one else can, that we will die together etc. There were also times where he would send random pictures of me with my friends or of me somewhere out in public, clearly watching me. When I say that man has put me through the ringer, please believe me. You may be wondering where my family was during all of this? My family was there, and they were very supportive of me. They were also very much aware of what was happening. My brothers that were fairly young back then could only do so much though they beat him close to

death, they couldn't have done more than that. My mom on the other hand was very worried of course about me being so far away from the rest of the family but I assured her that I was safe and that no man was going to deter me from my goals.

Siya finally manages to calm himself down and gently plops himself next to me on the couch while popping his knuckles. He doesn't draw me into a hug nor does he look at me instead he fixes his eyes on his shoes. He occasionally tightens and releases his jaws while rubbing his temple that has a vein popping, a clear indication of his level of anger. "I'm going to need their names," he says in a low hoarse voice. Names? Whose names? He tilts his head towards my direction and looks at me with a cold and hard face. He sees the confusion plastered all over my face and offers me clarity, "The policemen who handled your case, I'm going to need their names." Yho! (Wow) Okay. I wouldn't forget their names even if I wanted to. They are the reason why the perpetrator is still walking freely amongst our community, and I hope... I cringe at the thought of him doing what he did to me to another woman. Though I'm worried about what Siya will do to these policemen and possibly to Luthando, I don't think I want to prevent him from taking any action. The system failed me and if Siya is here to make sure that justice is served, even if it's by his hand, then I say he must go for it. Siya pulls me towards him and places me gently on top of his chest. "Don't worry baby. I've got you. La

nja izomkhomba umzi onotywala,” he says through gritted teeth. (*That dog will reap what he sowed*) “Nothing will happen to you, I promise,” he says while planting a chaste kiss on my temple. I exhale exasperatedly and cut out the noise. His words offer me so much comfort and solace. I’m so happy that I finally told him this, now I can love him freely with no guilt or shame of my past.

## Chapter 34

Yesterday I ended up giving him the names of the police officers that were handling my case and after that, we didn't touch on the Luthando matter again. Siya however, suggested that I take the next three days off from work to deal with this weekend's events, and also use the time to find accommodation and cater for moving into my new apartment which he is adamant that we'll find within these three days. I spoke with Mr Phakade and luckily, he had heard from Thulani what had happened on Saturday and he had no issues with granting me leave of absence. Yesterday, we also reached out to a few property owners with apartments to let and one of them agreed to meet with us this afternoon, around one o'clock. It's currently Monday morning and I wake up and Siya's side of the bed is empty and cold. I stretch my body releasing the tension in my muscles before checking the time on my phone. It reads 10:26. Jeez, have I been out that long? I start sweeping my eyes around the room in search of Siya but he's nowhere to be seen. I get up from my bed and make my way to the bathroom, hoping that he's there but when I open the door, the bathroom is empty. The smell of his shower gel lingers in the bathroom which means he could have just taken a shower and could perhaps be somewhere around the apartment. I leave the bathroom with its door wide open and head out to search for him in the rest of the apartment. To my

surprise, he's not in the kitchen or in the lounge. I know he said he'll be working this side until Wednesday but the least he could have done was inform me that he's stepping out. Eish. Concerned, I take long strides to my bedroom to take my phone so that I can call him and find out where he is but as I enter the room, I see a sticky note pasted on the mirror of the dressing table. How did I miss that? I guess I was so caught up in looking for this one that I didn't take note of it. Also where did he find one? Oh, he must have taken it from my stationery since he saw me using them this weekend. I head towards the dressing table and pluck the little paper off it, "You were sleeping so peacefully, and I couldn't find it in me to take you up. Stepped out for a bit but I'll be back before you know it. Love umyen'wakho." (*Your husband*) I flip the note over in the hopes that he's mentioned something about where he's stepped out to but to my dismay, that's all there is on it. I release a deflated breath, now what do I do? I don't even know when he left the apartment or where he is. I hope he's not getting into any trouble. He didn't say anything pertaining to our viewing this afternoon on the note, so maybe he'll come back in time to fetch me but if not, I'll just catch a taxi to the potential apartment and hopefully, I'll find him there.

To make time pass by a little bit quicker, I decide to tidy up around the apartment, wash the cups and dishes in the sink, fold some of Siya's clothes that are currently scrunched on top



of the washing basket and tidy up my workstation. I estimate that I should be done with all of this by midday which will give me enough time to get ready and make my way to the apartment viewing in case Siya doesn't arrive on time. I must also not forget to get boxes so that I can start packing my things away today. Adifuni ukwenza izinto ngo rush rush. (*I don't want to do things in a rush*). In all that, I still need to inform my mom and siblings about me relocating to a different apartment. I wonder ndizokuthini. Tsi! (*I wonder what I'm going to tell them. Wow*) I get on with my chores while all these thoughts are running through my mind. For some odd reason I can't seem to shake the feeling that Siya is up to no good with his sudden disappearance. He's never been one to just go MIA without letting me know or giving me a call, you know. Something doesn't add up, umbilini wam awuzinzanga. (*I'm unsettled*) I will myself away from thinking the worst and focus on the task at hand, and in no time the apartment is clean and tidy and it's time for me to get ready. I text the potential landlord that I'm seeing this afternoon and confirm her availability and she confirms that she's still available and that she'll meet me at the location. I take a quick shower and rush through the rest of my routine as I'm not planning on being cute for this viewing. I'm busy rummaging through my wardrobe looking for something to wear when my phone rings, stopping in my tracks. I rush to answer it, hoping that it's Siya but my hopes are let down when

I see who the caller is, it's Thulani. My lord. "Hi Zamo," he greets on the other end of the line. "Hi Thulani, how are you?" I salute back. "I'm... I'm well thank you, how... How are you?" This call is rather awkward with his stammering and shit. "I'm well thank you for asking," I say in response. He says nothing after that, and silence looms from both ends of the phone. "Thulani?" I call out to him. "Uhm, yes. Yes, Zamo I'm here," he responds, stuttering yet again. Yebethuna, kwezekani na apha? (*My goodness, what's happening here*) "Is there something I can help you with, perhaps?" I ask, clearly frustrated and bothered by his call. "No. No, nothing at all. I know that you are on leave for the next three days and thought I'd call you during lunch break time, but I didn't have time to do so as I was on playground duty, but now that I have a free period I thought I should give you a call to check up on you." Yey ininzi lento ithethwa ngulo mfana. (*Hey, this guy is saying a lot of things*) Why's he explaining himself like I'm his girlfriend or something? Hayi, amadoda. (*No, men*) "Oh, thank you for checking up on me Thulani. As I said, I'm okay." He releases a low sigh before saying, "Haike, let me leave you before ndixabane nalo ndoda yakho." (*Oh well... before I argue with that man of yours*). I remove the phone from my ear and look at the screen, verifying that I heard what he just said correctly. 'That man of mine'? Yey oThulani bayadelela. (*Hey, Thulani is disrespectful*) You know what? I've had enough drama this past

weekend to last me a lifetime, so I'll let his stupid remark slide, just for today though, anga cing'fansba. (*He mustn't get too familiar*) I raise the phone back to my ear and thank the idiot for his call and drop it immediately, without even waiting for his response. Yho! (*Wow*) Lento yongabi na mntu wokunceda ihamba sekiyquhelisa ngoThulani ngoku. (*Not having anyone to help you is making people like Thulani to become overly familiar with you, crossing boundaries*)

Anyway, I throw my phone on top of the bed and get back to looking for something to wear. Ah! Leggings and an oversized t-shirt will do. I quickly assemble my outfit together and snap on a bucket hat to hide this pot scourer that's currently on my head. I need to ask uMaria, the lady who does my hair, to come and see me this weekend. Maria has been doing my hair since I moved here. She doesn't tug too hard on it and her work is very beautiful and neat. It's a bonus that her prices are very reasonable. Basically, she's my girl. I just need to remember to buy fibre on Friday otherwise I'll be forced to go to town on Saturday to buy it, whereas I have zero intention of going anywhere this weekend. I pick up my phone from the bed and call Siya but it sends me straight to voicemail. I try again, and I get the same result. Iphi na le ndoda? (*Where is this man*) Unwilling to wait for him any longer, I make my way out of my apartment to catch a taxi. As I'm walking towards the taxi stop, I pass a group of women who are standing in a circle,

conversing over a very intriguing and engaging subject matter as they voice out their opinions with great enthusiasm and I wonder what the latest is. When I eventually reach the taxi stop, I'm huffing and puffing, yet another 'gentle' reminder that I need to do something about my weight. Before we go any further, let's get one thing straight, I'm not self-conscious about my weight but I'm not about to ignore the signs that my body is showing me all in the name of 'I'm happy in my skin'. I'm not one of those ignorant women. Mama didn't raise no fool. I stand at the taxi stop for a few more minutes with other commuters before a Quantum approaches us and picks us up. On the ride to town a particular conversation between two of the commuters in the taxi piques my attention, "Yey, imbi imeko pha ePolice Station," lady one says. (*Well... The situation is dire at the*) The police station? I wonder kubanjwe bani kengoku. (*Who was arrested now*) "Nam ndikhe ndave ndava man uba ingathi ikhona into eyenzekileyo pha but khange ndisive sonke istory," lady two responds. (*I also heard that something happened there but i didn't get the entire story*) Mm I wonder. "Ye mfazi, kuthwa uDetective Xaba noSergeant Meyiwa bafunyenwe ziConstables ebezingena imorning shift kwi entrance yestishi bebotshwe ngentambo inyawo nezandla bebonakala ingathi ngabantu ababethiweyo," lady one continues to inform lady two. (*Woman, apparently Detective Xaba and Sergeant Meyiwa were found by Constables who were*

*starting their morning shift at the entrance of the station with their hands and feet tied with rope and they looked like they had been beaten)* “Hayi,” lady two exclaims. (No) “Ndikuxelela into yangalentsasa kemnake. Ayiphelelanga apho ke ntombi. Kuthiwa bathe bokubuzwa ukuba kwenzeka ntoni kubo, kuthwa khangela baphendule endaweni yoko baske basitsho is’khalo

## Advertisement

” lady one continues to narrate. (*I’m telling you about what happened this morning. That’s not all, girl. It’s said that when they were asked what happened to them, they did not respond instead they started wailing*) Yho, I exclaim inwardly. Now I want to hear more. I wonder kwenzeka ntoni ngenyani. (*I wonder what truly happened*) I stop my wandering mind and continue listening in, “Hayi Mihle, uthini nakum?” (*No Mihle, what are you saying to me*) That sounds like lady two.

Ndiyakuxelela mfazi ndini. Kuthwa bathe besajonge leyo, kwafika igquba lamakhwenkwe ethwele ibhokisi ezele ngamadokethi wamatyala amadala alahlekayo, bayinika uStation Commander. Xa bebuzwa ukuba bayifumene phi le bhokisi, bathi bayifumene ecaleni lwesango lesikolo sabo inephetshana elincanyatheliswe elalibayalela ukuba bayithathe le bhokisi bayise esikhululweni,” lady one, Mihle I presume is her name, continues to narrate. (*As they were looking at that, a bunch of boys arrived carrying a box filled with missing docket*

*from old cases, which they gave to the Station Commander. When asked where they got the box from, they said they found it next to the gate of their school with a note attached to it, instructing them to take the box to the station) “Hayi yi-film. Ndiya qal’uyiva,”* lady two exclaims dramatically. *(No, it's an abomination. I've never heard of such)* How stupid are these two imbeciles to not destroy the docket? I mean everybody knows this; YOU LEAVE NO PAPER TRAIL BEHIND. Like whom doesn't know that? Arg small time chancers. Or maybe I watch too many police dramas, I don't know. *\*shrug\** My mind starts to wonder who could have possibly done this and beaten up those two bastards. It also starts to wonder how they managed to recover those missing dockets? I mean kuseNgcobo apha, dockets go missing all the time and no one cares enough to think, or even attempt to retrieve stolen dockets, so this news is rather surprising. *(This is eNgcobo)*

My mind clicks almost immediately after I internally ask myself these questions. O-H M-Y G-O-D! Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God! I start to panic and my heart pounds aggressively against my chest as I search for my phone inside my purse. He wouldn't have. He couldn't have, I chant inwardly as I try to calm and convince myself down. I saw how enraged he was yesterday, but I assumed he mellowed down after the entire conversation. I find my phone and try his number again, but it sends me straight to voicemail. AGAIN! Jesus! I frustratedly

throw my phone inside my purse and it almost bounces out of it and the gentleman beside me looks at me stunned. "What?" I snap at him. The gentleman shrugs while shaking his head and ignores me. Damnit. I didn't mean to take out my frustrations on him. "I'm sorry," I sheepishly apologise to him. He nods his head in acknowledgement without throwing a glance at me. Great! Now I'm an uncultured swine who goes around snapping at innocent people all because my BOYFRIEND decided to play judge and jury. Damnit Siyabonga, wenzeni? (*What have you done*) I know it's him who did this. I mean, how could the two police officers that I'd mentioned to him get beaten to a pulp a day after I'd told him what had happened? Mh? How's that possible? Or is it a coincidence? Am I reading too much into this? Maybe it's Thulani? But no man, it can't be that twig. Thulani doesn't even look like he knows how to fist fight man, even I'm more capable at knocking someone out than him. So, it has to be this one! Nguye! (*It's him*) I suddenly feel claustrophobic, I need to get out of this taxi! I start fidgeting, much to the annoyance of the gentleman next to me. I'm sure uthi ndinengxaki ezininzi lo bhuti, which I do. (*This man must be assuming that I have a lot of problems*) I fish for my phone again in my purse to check the time and it's just before one and I can't afford to get off this taxi now, here and walk to where I'm going or else I'm going to be late, I guess I have to suck it up and endure this ride until I get to my stop. The way my

thoughts are running through my mind right now, I'm no longer listening to the conversation that the two ladies were having behind me. I'm more concerned and infuriated at the perpetrator that's going to get arrested for assault. Jesus uSiyabonga doesn't think man! He really doesn't! Nxa! The gentleman beside me once again steals a quick glance at me. I must have said that out loud. Yho bhuti ndiya gowa, forgive me! (*Wow brother I'm going through the most*) The taxi approaches my stop and I over-enthusiastically shout, "Shot-left", much to the annoyance of not only the gentleman next to me but to those in the entire taxi, including the driver. "Yey ndik'vile man," the driver snaps at me while looking at me through the rearview mirror. (*Hey, I heard you man*) Yho I need to get off this taxi before I anger and annoy more people. (*Wow*) The taxi pulls over and I rocket out of it and make my way to this apartment that I'm viewing.

As I approach closer to the property, I see this one's Polo parked by the gate of the property I assume I'm going to. He's leaning on the bonnet with his legs crossed, hands inside his sweatpants while his eyes fixated on me. Oh, so he's alive? And he made it? How wonderful! Nxa! The way I'm so infuriated right now, I feel like unleashing World War three on him. I know that he can see how riled up I am while he's standing there, calm as a cucumber. This is what I hate about him, he's always calm. Mna ndizobe ndiku 100 yena abe eku 0. (*I will be*



*on a 100 and he will be on 0)* I need him to match my fire! I take slower strides as I get closer to him as I don't want to be next to him right now. I search for my phone inside my purse again, and text the property owner informing them that I'm outside their property. With nowhere else to walk to, I end up where he's standing. I stand in front of him and assess him from head to toe. I try to catch a glimpse of evidence that would confirm my suspicions that he was involved in the pummeling of those policemen, but his musky and earthy scent still radiates strongly as I stand close to him, with no smell of sweat or blood whatsoever. I doubt he'd smell this fresh if he'd gone on a panelling spree. He actually smells and looks like someone who just took a bath. I wonder *usukaphi lo. (Where this one's from)* I squint my eyes while looking at him. "MaDlamini," he softly calls out to me, staring me dead in the eyes. I chuckle while shaking my head and walk away from him to stand closer to the gate. I'm not doing this with him. I hear his footsteps behind me, but I pay him no mind. The heavy stomping stops behind me and I soon feel his hands caress my arms while his hot breath fans my neck. I sway my body away from him not wanting him to touch or be any closer to me. "Baby," he calls out almost beggingly. "Can we not do this here, please?" I plead with him, stepping even further away from him. I've now literally shoved myself against this person's gate just to get away from him. I'm sure onlookers think that we're a crazy duo.

“Sthandwa sam I’m sorry. I forgot to charge my phone last night, that’s why you couldn’t get hold of me.” (*My love*) This one must think ndiyi takalani yazi. (*I’m a child you know*) Yes, I’m upset that his phone was off but my biggest qualm with him right now is what he could’ve possibly done. I continue to bore holes at this gate and avoid eye contact with him. “Themba lam ndiyaxolisa. I should have made means to get ahold of you, but work was hectic,” he lies to me. (*My hope, I’m sorry*) Yey, after God fear men bantse, niyandiva? (*Hey... My people, do you hear me*) A man will look you in the eye and lie to you, unprovoked ilanga liphumile. (*In broad daylight*) He was at work? I turn to look at him and sweep my eyes all over his torso one more time just to confirm that I’m dealing with the same man before shifting my eyes back to his. “Work you say, huh? Siyabulela, ubuphi?” I ask sternly, with no hesitation. (*Where have you been*) He starts to blink rapidly as though blinded by the sun. You see? Clear indications of a lying man. He’s lying to me. I continue to fix my eyes on him, “Ubuphi?” I repeat my question with more determination. (*Where have you been*) Andisos’bhanxa mna and I refuse to be one! (*I’m not a fool*) Just look at him. He opens and closes his mouth nje ngentlanzi ephum’emanzini but nothing comes out. (*Just like a fish out of water*) My anger hikes and I see red, “Si-” I scream but get interrupted by the gate opening. Great! Just great! Now they decide to open the gate just as I was going to go off at him. I

raise my hands in the air in defeat. Yho akana timing umastandi, tu! (*Wow, the landlord doesn't have timing at all*) I start walking away from him, but he grabs my wrist and pulls me toward him causing my body to crash on his. I exhale loudly before lifting my head up to look at him. I want to cuss him out but I don't want to come across as a problematic tenant to the potential landlord, so I opt for silence though fury is pulsating through my veins. I'm about to demand that he release me from his hold when I spot a blood splatter on the inner part of his sweater. My eyes widen like saucers as I realise what this could mean, "Is... Is that... blood?" I ask him while pointing at it. I'm already wiggling myself out of his hold at this point while he checks the area that I'm pointing to. I hear him cuss under his breath and that just cements my assumptions. I start taking steps away from him, my eyes glistening with tears. Who is this man? He takes a step forward before extending his arms in an attempt to reach me, "Zamo, I can -" but he gets interrupted by a feminine voice behind us, "Molweni." (*Hello*)

## Chapter 35

We both snap our eyes towards the direction of the voice, and we are met by a beautiful chubby lady, who's probably just a few years older than me. She's wearing a flowy quarter sleeve army green knee high maxi dress which she has paired with brown sandals. She has long braids, which she has let loose. She takes graceful steps towards us with a beautiful smile plastered across her face. I quickly wipe away the tear that just slid down my cheek with the back of my hand; I don't want her to see that I'm upset or that we're in the middle of something rather unpleasant. She extends her one hand toward me as soon as she reaches where we're standing, which is still by the gate by the way. "Nomzamo?" she questions. I force a smile and nod my head in response while latching my hand into hers. She lets go of my hand and looks behind me, oh Siya. I turn my head and join her in looking at him. She extends her hand to greet Siya, "Molo bhuti," but the idiot doesn't greet back. (*Hello brother*) He just looks at her stretched out hand, then shifts his eyes to look at her before shoving both his hands inside his sweatpants; I cringe. Hay nkos'yam uSiya is determined to embarrass me. (*No, my lord*) "Okay then," the lady utters awkwardly while retrieving her hand with her smile now gone. Damn it Siya! I thin my eyes at this one, almost threateningly however the idiot simply holds my glare and shrugs his shoulders nonchalantly. Mxm. I tear my eyes away from him

and look at the beautiful lady before me, “Hi sisi, igama lam nguNomzamo and behind me is my partner, Siyabulela,” I say to her as I try to defuse the awkward atmosphere. (*Hi sister, my name is*) The smile that was previously wiped off from her lips resurfaces and she shows her pearly whites that are perfectly aligned and enhance her beauty. Gosh, she’s beautiful. “I’m pleased to meet you Nomzamo. Mna ke ndingu Yoliswa and this is my apartment. I used to stay here before I got married and moved in with my husband. I then rented the unit out to another lady who also recently got married and moved in with her husband,” she says, smiling at me sweetly. (*I am*) “Wow,” I respond to her. She chuckles lightly and starts leading us towards the house, “I know, right? Are you by any chance married?” Though the question is a bit invasive I respond to it nonetheless, “No!” I half yell. She throws a glance to my direction, with a look that emits shock and confusion at how quickly I responded to her question. “Well, this may be your turn considering that everyone who’s stayed in this house has gotten married,” she giggles. I say nothing and continue following behind her.

She unlocks the burglar bar, there after pushing the door open and walks in. I follow suit and walk into a beautiful kitchen that’s painted in matte white with a floor that’s covered in large white and silver marble square shaped tiles that accentuates the dark grey wooden built-in cupboards that have

marble countertops. Opposite the kitchen entrance is a rectangular window just above the double basin sink where you can see some trees and neighbouring houses. On the left-hand side of the sink is a five plate gas stove that's positioned opposite a space which I assume is allocated for a fridge and some other appliance. "Eli likhitshi and it comes standard with the stove however the rest of the appliances you would have to come with. Over there is a space where you can place your fridge, and the washing machine," Yoliswa says while walking past the kitchen. (*This is the kitchen*) I look back to see if this one is walking with us or if he decided to stay behind and to my surprise, he's right on our tails. His eyes sweep across the kitchen area before they meet mine. He stares back at me with so much intensity that I end up cowering away when I can't hold his burning gaze any longer. I shift my focus back to Yoliswa who's now showing us the lounge area, which is also painted in matte white. It's a pretty simple space that can fit a TV stand, an L-shaped couch with a reasonable sized coffee table. I'm thankful that most of my furniture items will be suitable for this space. There's already a central WiFi and DSTV connection installed which will make things even easier for me, thank God. We move from the lounge area and head to the bedroom. The bedroom is rather big. She states that it can fit a double bed, two bedside tables and a bedroom bench. I get excited just thinking of how I could furnish this bedroom; I've

been wanting to refurbish my entire bedroom, but I got demotivated as my current apartment is rather old so new furniture wouldn't do it any justice instead it would look out of place. The bedroom walls are decorated in a light grey paint where one wall occupies the built-in wardrobe that has ample storing and hanging space; a girls dream come true. The bedroom has an en-suite bathroom that comes with a bathtub and a shower with a vanity just opposite the shower that has a basin and a huge round mirror that almost covers the entire portion of the wall above it.

After showing us the entire unit, Yoliswa informs us that she'll wait for us in the lounge area and excuses herself while we continue doing whatever we're doing. I test the lights of the bathroom before walking out to do the same in the other rooms as well. As I do this, Siya follows behind me in utter silence, which I appreciate. "Ibiza malini irent yalendawo?" Siya's voice booms behind me just as we approach Yoliswa. (*How much is the rent for this place*) I can see the shock on this lady's face because since she met us, Siya has not uttered one word to her. "Yi-R3500 nge nyanga which includes amanzi nombane," she responds politely. (*It's R3500 per month which includes water and electricity*) Not bad. "Mm," Siya hums behind me. "Intle yona. Ngoku xa siyifuna, kuzokudingeka ntoni?" he continues. (*It's beautiful. Should we take it, what will you need*) Wonders will never fail me. Now all of a sudden, he's

vested in this. “Okokuqala, who will be staying here?” she asks. (*Firstly*) “Ndim,” I respond. (*Me*) “And I presume ungumphangeli?” she continues to inquire. (*You’re employed*) “Ewe ndinguye.” (*Yes, I am*) She nods her head, “I’m a private owner, therefore eyam iapplication iprocess ilula. All I’ll need is your three month’s bank statement and three month’s payslip including the copy of your ID. I will share with you the contract which we both need to sign then you can resume occupation of indawo. In terms of imali, you’ll be required to pay irent yeR3500, ideposit which is one month’s rent and R1000 for activating your water and electricity account kwamaspala. I also require a R500 deposit for keys which is refundable at the end of your lease,” she informs. (*My application process is simple... The place... Money... Rent... Deposit... At the municipality*) My head is ringing from thinking of all the money that I have to fork out now although I know that it’s standard amounts. I’m not sure about allowing uSiya to pay for indawo that I’ll no longer be occupying for two months all in the name of getting my deposit which isn’t that much even. (*A place*) Imagine spending R6000 on two month’s rent versus forfeiting a R3000 deposit? Rather I lose the deposit and save on one month’s rent. “Intle kona indawo yakho sisi, kakhulu. Umkam uzoyithatha. Bendicela usinike ibanking details zakho sizoyifaka kwangale njika langa imali yakho. We’d like to move in on Wednesday,” he utters, dead serious. (*Your place is very nice my sister, my*



wife will take it. Please give us your banking details, we will deposit your money this afternoon) Nanko ke being his bossy self. (There he goes) \*eyeroll\* When did he hear me say that I'm taking this unit? We haven't even seen other places but here he is, already deciding that this is it. Arg, he frustrates me so much. The shock on Yoliswa's eyes is undeniable. I guess she thought we'd say we'll think about it and get back to her, which is honestly what I was going to say, but here we are, not only taking her unit, but promising to send her the money she wants TODAY. "Uhm, nisure?" she questions. (Are you sure) I turn my entire body to face the person who said all of this, "Are we?" One can't miss the annoyance and sarcasm in my voice, but the idiot is unphased by my antics. "Yes," he responds, taking a moment of silence to stare at me before he continues to say, "Enkosi for ixesha lakho sisi, we'll speak soon. Baby, you'll find me in the car." (Thank you for your time my sister) And with that said

## Advertisement

he walks out without giving either of us a chance to respond. Yho! (Wow) Siya can be rude. I turn my body once again to face Yoliswa, "I'm sorry about that sis'wam he's not usually like this. I'll send you my email address so that you can forward me the contract which I will send back to you signed accompanied by the supporting documents. I suppose your banking details are

mentioned somewhere on the contract, right?" I ask while looking at her for confirmation. (*My sister*) "Ewe sisi, that's correct," she says to me while sweeping her eyes across the lounge. (*Sister*) "I'll get someone to come and clean this place tomorrow so that you find it clean on Wednesday," she continues to say. That's rather considerate of her and to be honest, this place is not even that dirty, but I appreciate the gesture. "Thank you," I say, clasping my hands together in appreciation. "Well then, I'll wait for you to send me your email address. It was truly lovely meeting you Nomzamo, and I hope you'll enjoy your stay here," she says, extending her hand once again for a handshake, which I gladly take and we make our way out. She locks the door and security gate behind her, and we both stroll out of the yard.

As we walk out, I spot a Toyota Hilux parked next to Siya's car with a man I don't know conversing with him. "Oh, that's my husband, thank God he's already here," she squeals excitedly beside me. Oh. Yazi uthetha ntoni na lo? (*I wonder what they're talking about with this one*) We soon reach where they are parked and Yoliswa jumps on her man, enveloping him in a hug, "Missed me?" his deep voice booms. She nods her head against his chest while giggling. He brushes her back gently while chuckling, planting an endearing kiss on the side of her head. Siya and I stand next to each other and watch them smother each other with love and affection. If it was any other day, I'd

probably be doing the same however today it's different. We have a blood spatter issue that I need answers to. I feel Siya's hand brush against mine, but I yank my hand away and walk to my side of the car and get in, shutting the door a little too aggressively than I had intended behind me. I look at him through the windscreen as he hangs his head low before pinching the bridge of his nose. He springs himself forward and walks to the car. He gets in and starts the car immediately after he settles in and drives out. We drive in absolute silence, just the sound of our shallow breaths. I look at the direction which we are heading to, and it seems like we're headed to town; I won't even bother to ask. He parks in front of KFC and kills the engine. He steps out, leaving me inside. Again, I won't even bother. I'm not in the mood to be around him anyway. It takes about 10 minutes before he appears with a KFC paper bag in his one hand. I guess that's lunch. How thoughtful of him. He gets in on his side, places the paper bag behind my seat and shuts the door. He brings the engine to life and drives off. We reach my apartment and as soon as the car comes to a halt, I step off, leaving him behind to collect everything else that's in the car. I open my front door and throw my purse and phone on top of the kitchen counter and walk straight to my bedroom to take off these damn clothes that I'm wearing. I start removing my t-shirt followed by my bra. I hear the front door close and Siya's heavy feet shuffling closer. I continue with removing my

leggings and I'm now only left in my thong. The footsteps continue to draw nearer to the bedroom before they come to a cease. I turn my head towards the door and I see him leaning on the door frame with his legs crossed. His face is hard while he occasionally clenches his jaws. He stares at me with dark and cold eyes, but I don't dare cower away; I'm just as pissed off as he is. He chuckles as he notes my boldness and walks further into my bedroom, his eyes still trained on mine. He locks the door behind me before removing the key from the door and shoving it inside his pocket. I fix my stance and cross my arms across my chest and look at him. He bends down and unties his sneaker laces, removing them. He then stands up and loosens his sweatpants tassel before pulling out his tucked in t-shirt, removing it and tossing it aside. I gulp a whole lot of nothing as I sweep my eyes all over his bare chest. Yummy He lowers his sweatpants combined with his briefs and kicks them off his feet. He stands before me, in all his glory, his melanin glistening against the soft rays of the sun that are penetrating through my window with his member standing firm and tall, pointing north. I clench my thighs together as I watch him walk closer towards me. For some odd reason, his demeanour is causing me to back away from him with every step he takes towards me although a strong part of me wants to launch myself onto him. "Uyaphi?" he questions, in a throaty voice. (*Where are you going*) My voice fails me, and I opt for shaking my head in response. He

continues to take leisured steps towards me while stroking his veiny member. “Nomzamo, uyaphi?” he questions in a rather irate voice. (*Where are you going*) “I... I... I don’t know what you mean,” I stutter. “Nomzamo,” he beckons me. He reaches where I’m standing and starts circling me. I back away from him while he continues to follow me. I somehow manage to get myself trapped between the bed and him, with no way out. He stands before me, and I feel his hot breath fan my face. He inclines towards me, as though he’s going to kiss me, but never does. Instead I fall on my back, with him standing tall in between my thighs, towering over me. He continues to stroke his member, before saying, “You haven't answered me,” in a guttural voice. “Where were you this morning?” I manage to ask breathily. “Wherever I was and whatever I was doing, I was doing all that for you. For you, Nomzamo!” he says, lowering himself on top of me.

He uses one knee to spread my legs open, wider in order to accommodate him. “You’re telling me that you beat up police officers for me? ME?” I yell, flaunting my hands in the air. “Who asked you, huh? Who?” I continue to shout. He stops his movement and glares at me. “What will happen when -” He cuts me off just as I’m about to unleash my wrath on him by lowering himself on me before capturing my lips in his. I welcome him and drink from the well of his warm lips. I feel his one hand trail all over my back, down to my waist, down my

thigh before he starts brushing his finger over my pelvic girdle. My body trembles in response to his touch which always sends heatwaves right through my veins. He continues to trail his finger over my torso before trailing his finger over the fabric of my thong towards my nectar. The friction from his feather touch against the fabric of my thong makes me squirm in excitement. My already damp thong is now dripping wet from all this arousal. I curl my one leg up, placing my foot on the bed and open my legs even wider for him. I can feel him smile against my lips as he continues to trail his finger down my vulva until he reaches my core. He slowly shifts my thong to the side using one of his other free fingers before dipping it in between my folds. I moan, like a woman in labour as the pleasure kicks in. He flicks and twirls his finger so mercilessly on my clit and in between my folds that I feel like I'm losing my mind. As moan escapes my lips, he uses this moment to plunge his tongue inside my mouth, drinking in the whole of me. I submit to his onslaught and start flexing my hips to meet his, as I try to ease the itch and blood that is currently flowing to my core. Just as I'm enjoying the moment, he pulls his finger out of my vulva and pulls away from our kiss. I'm about to protest when I feel his phallus plunge deep inside my core, knocking out all the air in my lungs. "Ah," I scream out in ecstasy. "Uzondazi namhlanje," he says through gritted teeth. (*You will know me today*) He doesn't even give me the time to get used to his girth

instead he starts drilling in and out of me like a madman with his fingernails digging into the skin on my waist. My inner freak starts cheering me on while twerking and doing cartwheels. Yes, Lord.

## Chapter 36

His strokes are long and deep, hitting every corner of my core. My eyes roll to the back of my sockets when he starts pounding on my sensitive spot continuously. He shifts both hands from my waist and uses them to place both my legs over his shoulders and continues to show me no mercy. The angle that I'm currently positioned in has me so exposed that his thrusts now feel like they're about to come out of my esophagus. I don't know whether to gag, scream or cry and how far deep he's gone. My one hand claps on the bed cover while the other claws his back. He groans like a wounded animal when I clench my vaginal walls together, something I know he loves but hates as it quickens his release, but I use it to my advantage. He stops abruptly, grunting, "Don't do that," he warns and continues where he left off. I manage to place both my hands on his chest to try to try and push him back, but he leans all his weight forward, steadying himself in position. "Undifunani Nomzamo?" he asks through gritted teeth while pounding mercilessly into my nectar. (*What do you want from me*) Words fail me as the only thing on my mind is his damn phallus that's too far up my vagina! "Nomzamo," he calls out to me while giving me one hard pound that has his balls slapping against my clit, intensifying the sensation that's already building while leaving me breathless. I arch my back, gasping for air with my toes curled. I dig my nails further into his skin, crying out,



“Aah.” He pulls out his groin that’s now fully coated in my juices and flips me over to be on all fours, chest down ass up. For a minute I stay in my position, fully exposed with juices dripping down the inside of my thighs with no movement nor words being said. I turn my head to look at what he’s doing, and I see him stroking his glistening phallus slowly, while staring at me. The heat inside of me rises while my clit throbs painfully. I move my one hand in between my thighs, reaching for my now swollen throbbing clit. Everything is just wet and slippery as I start moving my fingers in between my folds. I move my fingers in between my folds while occasionally tugging at my labia, arousing myself even more. I dip two fingers into my dripping wet opening, moving in and out while my thumb rubs against my clit. Siya’s eyes have now turned dark with lust. His then steady strokes on his member have now changed into pacier ones. I arch my back forward, lowering it even further down on the bed, spreading my ass cheeks wide open for him as I continue to pleasure myself and that seems to drive him over the edge.

He spanks my ass cheek before forcibly snatching my hand away from my nectar. I yelp in pleasure, gosh that’s sexy. He positions himself again on my opening and in one swift movement plunges, knocking the air out my lungs yet again. I

curve my back up ingathi ndinesi fombo as I feel a spasm building up on my lower back. (*As though I have a hunchback*) Yho, he's in too deep, too deep! (*Wow*) He moves his one hand up my torso before it reaches my breast, cupping it while he places the other on my hip area to make me meet his every thrust. He now has me as putty in his hands, I no longer know where to focus on as every aspect of my body is now in his possession. I grab a nearby pillow and place it over my face before screaming my lungs into it. I don't want my neighbours hearing me crying our moment of passion. "Nomzamo kutheni ungandi vumeli ndibe yindoda yakho?" he asks while pinching my nipple and I flinch in both pain and pleasure as tingles rush through my body. (*Why aren't you allowing me to be your man*) "Uyi... Uyiyo... Uyiyo baby," I manage to say in between thrusts that are intended to weaken me. (*Yo... You are... You are*) He grunts before spanking my ass cheek once again. I feel a sweat bead from his face or chest land on my back and trickle down to my ass crack. Oh, it's that intense, you better believe it. "Xa ndiyiyo, kutheni ungandiyeki ndiku jongelele?" he implores even further. (*If I am, then why won't you let me look after you*) His strokes start tapping against my g-spot intently while he continues to strum over my nipple, pinching it ever so often. I feel the pressure build and I tighten my grip on the pillow, while arching my back even deeper onto the bed. He tears his hand away from my nipple and hip before pulling out. I was so close

to reaching my peak, damn him! “Why did you do that?” I furiously scream at him while punching the pillow with my fists. Fuck man! He offers me no response instead I feel him drills past my opening just as I’m about to continue with my tantrum. “Fuck!” I yelp. “Why’d you like angering me Nomzamo?” his warm breath fans against my ear as he’s now lowered himself on my back. Tingles rush through my entire body as I feel his warm and sweaty skin brush against mine. “Why?” he asks me again. This time, his hand is gently wrapped around my neck as he gently squeezes it. I tilt my head back towards my spine to look at him. Our eyes finally meet, and they’re the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen; hooded and bloodshot draped in nothing but lust. He leans forward to capture my lips in his and as uncomfortable as this position may seem, it is sexy as fuck. I moan into the kiss when I feel another orgasm build up. He lays me further up into the bed, causing me to now lie flat on my stomach with my feet dangling over the edge of the bed as he lays on top of me. The wetness that’s in between my thighs is incomprehensible; everything is just covered in my juices. “I’m... I’m cum -” My legs begin to shake beneath him as the orgasm threatens to ripple through me, “Wait for me my love, wait for me,” he pleads, tightening his grip on my neck while biting my earlobe. My eyes get clouded with darkness as I try to gasp for air, “Si... Siy... Siya,” I call out to him while tapping on his hand that’s choking me. My voice seems to call him back to

his senses and eases his grip while continuing to pound into me. A gush of warm liquid splashes in between our thighs just as I call out his name as darkness consumes me.

I flutter my eyes open, and I'm met by an almost dark room; the sun is already setting. I wonder what time it is. I must have blacked out after that intense session. I try to get up from my sleeping position to go to the bathroom, but my aching and stiff body paralyzes me on the spot. Who this man did a number on me. (*Wow*) I grunt as I try to turn my body to see if Siya is lying beside me and I'm met by his resting body beside me. I look at him as he sleeps beside me with his eyebrows furrowed together. I gently raise my hand up and straighten the crease out with my finger before I hear him say, in a husky voice, "You're awake." I remove my finger from his forehead and respond, "Yes. Hi baby." He snakes his arm over my waist and pulls me closer to him before planting a chaste kiss on my temple. I rest my head on his chest as I lie on my stomach, looking up at him. "You had me worried there for a second," he says while running his finger up and down my spine. "What happened?" I ask him. "I think you blacked out," he says in a low voice, and continues to say, "It must've been from me choking you." My mind trails off to the events of earlier, and my core dampens almost immediately. Everything about it was so erotic and perfect. He releases a heavy breath before flapping his eyelids open, and our eyes meet once again. It's so weird

how his eyes change colour depending on his mood. Take for an instance now, they are a beautiful shade of haze brown meaning he's calm and or happy. When he's horny or angry, they become pitch black. I smile at him, my handsome man, and he returns it. "You're so beautiful, sthandwa sam," he compliments. (*My love*) I flush, like I always do whenever he compliments me, "Thank you bhabha." (*Baby*) His orbs stare deep into the depths of my soul, and I know that he wants us to talk about what transpired today. "Baby, I know you're probably still angry at me for disappearing on you this morning and I also know that you probably have questions pertaining to my whereabouts which I'll gladly answer provided we remain calm, and you don't yell at me or treat me like how you did earlier, like I repulse you," he speaks in a calm manner though I can sense a bit of hurt in his voice.

I peel myself off his chest to sit on my bums, however the discomfort in between my legs causes me to wince a bit as I position myself properly to rest my back on the headboard. I look down at him, "You're right, I'm angered by your disappearance but not because you ought to report to me about where you are all the time, but I found it rather odd that you disappeared on me without a word and then the next thing I hear is that the officers whose names I'd given you yesterday were found beaten up at the police station.. Can you see how I'd assume that your disappearance is linked to this entire

thing?" He releases a deep breath before raising his body to also sit in the same position that I'm in while facing me. He takes both my hands into his and places them on top of his thighs

"I hear and understand how you could have come to that assumption, however sthandwa sam, even if I did what you're assuming I've done, I don't think I wouldn't have been wrong in doing so. MaDlamini what you don't seem to understand is that I'd go to the ends of the world for you. I'd literally destroy anything and burn anyone who'd dare to tamper with your sanity, peace and happiness," he professes while planting a kiss on the palms of both my hands before his gaze shifts back at me. (*My love*) "Baby I know that you love me, and I appreciate the lengths that you're willing to go to to ensure my happiness but what would become of me if you were to be incarcerated, mm? Who would then be responsible for my happiness? Who would you leave me with?" I say teary eyed at the thought of him going to jail. "Baby, I'd never leave you," he tries to reassure me. "You don't know that. How do you know that they won't be able to identify you? What if you left evidence that could implicate you? What then?" I throw all these questions at once to him. "MaDlamini, please trust me. I can't say anything regarding this matter because I don't want to incriminate you in any of it but trust me when I tell you that nothing will happen." He frees one of his hands to use it to wipe away my now

flowing tears. "It pains me to see you cry MaDlamini, but my intentions are never meant to hurt you. My intentions are pure and come from a good place. All I want is what's best for you and I apologise for hurting you in the process." I can see how affected he is by my reaction to how he handled the situation but now that we've spoken about it, I feel so ridiculous for being harsh towards him, placing him on the same platform as those who've hurt me. "I'm sorry for the manner in which I spoke to you in and for not giving you a chance to explain yourself. Although I'm grateful that you took it upon yourself to fight for my honour, please try and refrain from taking part in illegal activities that could get you arrested," I plead with him. He chortles at my request before saying, "I can't promise you anything. It'll depend on the situation. Just so you know, I'm not done with those idiots including uLuthando. Andikayilibali la nja, I'm still thinking of a suitable punishment for him," he says, deep in thought. (*There's still... I haven't forgotten that bastard*) I shrug my shoulders, I guess there's nothing I can do to convince him otherwise pertaining to this situation, so I'll let it go and allow him to do as he deems fit. So long as he stays cautious and out of harm's way, then I'm good.

The stickiness in between my things and all over my skin nudges me to take a shower. "Baby, I'm sticky. I need a shower," I say to Siya as I steady myself getting out of the bed. "Do you need help?" He asks, already scooting over to my side

of the bed. I guess he can see how sore and stiff I am. I manage to place my feet on the ground and drag myself up to stand. As soon as I stand, the room starts to spin, and I feel myself lean backwards, almost falling back onto the bed but luckily Siya manages to catch me just before I land. "Baby what's wrong?" he asks, running his eyes all over me. "I... I feel a bit dizzy. It must be hunger." I say as I try to regain my balance. He nods his head though he doesn't look convinced at what I just said. He wraps my one arm over his shoulder while he takes his other arm and wraps it around my waist to secure me as he helps me walk to the bathroom. With every step I take my legs feel even more wobblier than the previous step. "Zamo hunger can't make you this weak. Kanti, when did you last eat?" he asks, clearly frustrated with me. "I think izolo," I say, also stunned at the realisation that I haven't eaten in so long. (*Yesterday*) "Izolo? Why didn't you eat this morning? Kukhona ukutya mos!" he utters, slightly agitated. (*Yesterday?... There's food though*) He places me on top of the vanity and leaves me to go prepare a bath for us. I wanted to shower but I know this one won't allow me to seeing how weak I am. I watch him zig zag and draw bows all over my bathroom as he pours bath salts and oils into the water and soon the entire bathroom smells like hyssop and rice milk, my favourite. When the water reaches a certain level, he closes the faucet and walks towards me, and helps me walk to the bathtub, helping me to also step in and sit



down before he joins me. I lean back on his chest and release a satisfactory sigh as the warm water detangles the knots in my body. He snakes both arms around my waist before planting a wet kiss on the crook of my neck. “Yoliswa called while you were asleep, she forwarded you your contract, however I asked her to forward it to me as well. I went through it, and it seems pretty standard. All that’s required of you now is to sign it and forward it back to her with the supporting documents. I’ve already paid her and sent her iproof of payment, so no need to worry about that. Uthe we can collect the key kuye from the unit ngomso after five. Lilonke, yonke into yakho is in order and you’ll be moving into your new place on Wednesday. We also shouldn’t forget to submit your notice kwi-landlord yakho,” he says rather excitedly. *(To her... She said... From her... Tomorrow... Everything of yours... To your landlord)*

“Wow, you did all that while I was asleep? Kanti, how long was I out for?” I inquire. *(Wait)*

“For almost four hours, love. Zi-to six ngoku,” he says. *(It’s almost six now)*

What? I rarely sleep that long, especially during the day unless I’m sick or extremely tired. I must have been worn out from all the cleaning I did before I left for the viewing and probably from the sex.

“Yho!” I exclaim. *(Wow)*

“I know, but luckily isekhona la KFC that I bought emini, so there's no need for us to cook sizoty yona then go straight back to bed. Tomorrow, we have to start packing and arrange for ibakkie or a truck to come and help you move ngoLwesithathu.” *(There's that... In the afternoon... We'll eat that... A van... on Wednesday)*

Shu! *(Wow)* He seems to have thought of everything and even figured it all out, doesn't he?

“Ingathi you've got everything figured out and under control, I guess the only thing that's missing are the boxes which we can get from Spar or Boxer.” *(It seems like)*

“Hayi, not those dirty things baby. Surely ikhona indawo ezithengisayo like Built It or something,” he refutes. *(No... There must be a place that sells them like)*

“I don't have -” he cuts me off. “Money, I know. Nam khangendithi zizo thengwa nguwe,” he retorts, after completing my statement for me. *(I didn't say that you'll be buying them)*

I roll my eyes at him in annoyance.

“You're not spending any more money on me,” I deadpan.

“Sizobona. Now come, the water's getting cold, we have to get out before we get sick,” he says nonchalantly. *(We'll see)*

Sizobona nyani. *(We'll see, really)* Nxa! Idiot. He gets out of the bathtub and walks to take two clean towels that are placed on

the rack and wraps one around his waist while he brings the other to me, wrapping me in it. The bath did help as I feel much better, although the light-headedness is still there. He walks me back to the bedroom and places me on top of the bed while helping me moisturise my body after which he dresses me in one of my oversized t-shirts with no underwear on. He asks me to stand for a moment so that he can change the bed cover and sheets that I squirted on earlier. When he's done, he helps me get in between the sheets and covers me with the duvet cover, "Let me go warm up our supper. I think it's best we have our dinner in bed tonight seeing how frail you are, but this is only for tonight, okay?" he says before planting a kiss on my lips. "Okay baby," I say, nodding my head in response. He walks back to the dressing table and drops his towel and starts moisturising his body before wearing a pair of clean briefs and slacks. He puts on his slippers and walks out of the bedroom with a bare chest. I wait for about ten minutes before I see him walk back into the bedroom carrying a tray filled with food. As soon as the aroma of the food hits my nostrils, my stomach turns, and I start to gag. Siya notices and rushes to place the tray on top of his bedside table before coming to pick me up. The bile rises from the pits of my stomach and threatens to spill out just as Siya places me next to the basin of the vanity. The moment my eyes land on the white porcelain, I spew my guts out. Fuck!

## Chapter 37

I have not been feeling well since I threw up last night. I can't really pinpoint what the issue is, though I can tell it's not that serious nor is it that severe but something's off with my chakras. I think I could be experiencing the worst case of a stomach bug or bile since I haven't cleaned my stomach in months, so it could be that. Siya, being the overly dramatic and protective being that he is, wanted to take me to the hospital last night but I managed to convince him that it wasn't that serious, and fortunately he caved. It's currently Tuesday morning and I'm in my apartment packing some of my clothes into bags and suitcases while Siya has gone out to buy boxes for us. I figure that packing the clothes first will be wise as we may still need to use the dishes and utensils throughout the course of the day, so I will pack those last. He refused for me to tag along with him because I'm apparently not fit enough to be outdoors in my condition, *eyintoni nam andiyazi*. (*Which is what, I also don't know*) I found a few bakkies for hire this morning which I intend on reaching out to later on today and hopefully one of them will be able to assist me considering the short notice. (*Vans*) I hear the door creak open, and I already know that Siya is back from getting the boxes for us, "Bhabha," he calls out to me. (*Baby*) "In here," I yell out in response. I hear him shuffle a bit before the door closes. I hear his heavy footsteps approach the bedroom before he walks in carrying a

small pharmacy plastic bag and a Steers paper bag on his other. He stands by the doorway and looks at me with a smile plastered across his face, “Waze wafaneleka mfaz’wam.” (*The look suits you my wife*) This one and his never-ending compliments. If it was any other day, and I was actually dressed to the nines I’d take him seriously, but I’m currently dressed in a worn out maxi dress with a doek covering my hair, nothing pretty about that. (*Scarf*) “Hayi baby udlala ngam,” I respond to his statement while carrying on with what I was doing. (*You’re kidding me*) “Asoze ndikwenze lonto mfazi wam. Sendikubona unxityisiwe njengomfazi woJola,” he says with an even wider smile on his face. (*I would never do that to you, my wife. I can foresee you dressed as Jola wife*) Hayi uSiyabulela. (*Hey*) I just simply giggle at his silliness so early in the morning. Well, it’s not that early, it’s approaching the tenth hour but still, ku-early. (*It’s early*) “I passed by the pharmacy and asked the pharmacist to give you something for the stomach bug and dizziness that you’re experiencing, and he gave me these...” he says, handing over to me the pharmacy plastic bag and continues to say, “He also advised that you take the medication fifteen minutes before you eat, twice a day. He also mentioned that the medication should start working immediately, so hopefully after we eat, you’ll start feeling better.”

I open the plastic bag to take a peek inside it and I see a container with a few white pills and a syrup of some kind.

“Thank you, baby,” I thank my ever-so-considerate man, awarding him with a passionate kiss on his lips. He palms my cheek with his free hand, growling at the fervour of it. I pull away from the kiss and look up to face him, “What was that for?” he asks in a whisper, clearly aroused. Oh, this one nez’ manga... (Sex) Same WhatsApp group. “Firstly, to say good morning. Secondly, to thank you for being a very considerate and loving partner. Ndiyabulela Mkhonde, Dembula, Njilo, Qengeba, Mphankomo and lastly because I love you,” I say to him. I see the sides of his lips curve into the most beautiful smile while his skin gets covered in a tint of crimson. “Are you blushing Mr?” I ask, teasing him. He chortled lightly, shifting his eyes away from me before responding, “Ndimele ndithini xa umfazi wam endithutha kamnandi kangaka? Kuthi mandithumele iinkomo kwaMccunu ndikwenze ube ngowam ngalomzuzu.” (*What should I say when my wife praises me so beautifully? I could send your dowry and make you mine this instant*) I can’t help the smile that graces my face as I hear him speak so eagerly about our future. “Uzonditshata, ungabinaxhala. Lisekhona ixesha for lonto, asingxamanga,” I ease the galloping horse. (*You’ll marry me, don’t worry. There’s still time for that, we’re in no rush*) I know if he could, well if I accepted his proposal, he would send iinkomo ekhaya and wife me this very instant. (*Cows at home*) “I know baby, and I honestly can’t wait till I truly make you mine,” he responds,

planting a kiss on my forehead. "I know baby, I know. Did you manage to find the box's love?" He nods his head before responding, "Yes, I did baby. Ndizi fumene eBrowns & Weirs Cash and Carry. I came up with some of them and placed them in the kitchen, but the rest are still in the car. I'll go fetch them later, after we're done eating." *(I got them from)* Yaz'ba beziyi malini but I won't bother asking. For now, I'll just bask in the joys and benefits of being a kept girlfriend. I'll worry about maintaining my Miss Independent status xa ebuyele eBhayi, okwangoku, YOLO. *(I wonder how much they cost... When he's back in Port Elizabeth, but for now)* "Okay love, let me go get some water from the kitchen ndizosela ipilisi sizotya. Ndilambile namhlanje, straight," I say, as I walk to the kitchen. *(So, I can take my pills so we can eat. I'm hungry)* I hear him titter behind me, "Haike ingathi sewu philile nje? Ndik'wazi unjalo," his voice echoes behind me as he walks to the lounge behind me with the Steers paper bag in his hand. *(Well, it seems like you're well already. This is the you that I know)* Idiot!

I take the pill and wait for the advised time to lapse before I eat and to my luck, I'm able to eat my meal without feeling nauseated or throwing up. Phew! "I was able to find a few vans that I can hire for tomorrow, I just need to call them and find out whether they'd be able to assist me tomorrow or not and if they are, how much their fees are," I inform Siya as we eat. He

looks at me dumbfounded, like I just grew horns or something, “Hayibo bhabha, there’s no need for that mos. I’m taking care of that.” (*No baby... Though*) Wait. I don’t recall him mentioning anything relating to the bakkies or maybe he did, but I forgot? I look back at him with a raised brow, beckoning him to clarify, “Hayibo Nomzamo ndingayindoda enjani if ndingakuyeka uyo hirisha ibakkie ndine truck ezinokuthutha impahla yakho?” (*Hey, what kind of man would I be if I were to allow you to hire a van when I have trucks that can move your things*) Yeah, we definitely didn’t have this conversation because I’d definitely remember him offering to misuse company resources for me. Also, the ego, ‘ndine truck’. (*I have trucks*) *\*eyeroll\** Yazi for someone who’s good at communicating, Siya struggles with speaking to me when we have to make decisions, especially decisions that pertain and impact me, hayi apho uya fail umntu wam, straight! (*You know... There my man fails*) I heave a sigh as I try to calm myself down so that I can articulate myself well to this man, without raising my voice or causing an argument. “Baby, we never spoke about this. You can’t make a decision like that. Baby, using company assets for personal use is very unprofessional and risky. What’ll happen if something happens to that truck, or it breaks down ise busy incedisa mna umove-a kodwa ine delivery for iclient this week? Uzokwenza njani, mm?” I try to reason with him. (*While it’s busy helping me move, it has a scheduled delivery for a client this week. What’ll*



*you do*) He looks at me blankly, “I’m sorry for not speaking to you about this sthandwa sam. Look, I hear you kodwa we’ll not be using a truck that I use for business. Ndine truck endala that I use for any personal or small jobs that I retired from the business, so that’s the truck that we’ll use ngomso, so don’t worry my love all is above board.” (*My love but... I have an old truck... Tomorrow*) I sigh in relief, “Oh that’s better, now I can relax, and save my money. Indoda yam ine truck kaloku,” I tease. (*My man has trucks you know*) He chuckles while shaking his head in disbelief that I just said that, and to be honest, even I can’t believe that those words slipped out of my mouth, “Must be nice ukuba nguwe mos ungatsho nje?” he continues to engage with me in this stupid banter. (*To be you, wouldn’t you say*) I giggle like a stupid teenage girl and throw a chip in my mouth before stuffing the last bit of the burger into my mouth. Siya looks at me while shaking his head in a disapproving manner

“Uzotsarhwa, su’phanga.” (*You’ll choke, don’t stuff your mouth*) I wobble my head side to side as though saying ‘whatever’ which he responds to him laughing.

We both finish eating and I start collecting the containers from the coffee table and walk with them to the kitchen to throw them away while Siya follows behind me with the glasses we used for juice. “Bhabha, I’ll start packing some of the kitchen

items. I'll leave out two of each of the items we may use today and tomorrow morning, vah?" he says placing the glasses inside the sink beside me as I throw the takeaway containers inside the bin. (*Baby... Okay*) Just as I'm about to turn to face him I feel both his arms weave around my waist, followed by his chin resting on the crook of my neck, "Are you feeling any better?" I inhale and exhale sharply as I rest my back against his chest, closing my eyes. "Yes, love. I feel much better. I'm a bit tired but at least I'm no longer feeling nauseous or lightheaded," I confirm the truth. I feel him bob his head against the side of my face, "I'm glad to hear that my love, you really had me worried izolo." (*Yesterday*) I incline my body a little forward, moving away from him, loosening his grip around my waist, although not entirely freeing myself from him and turn to face him. His eyes are running all over my face, studying me in depth now that I'm closer to him, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you like that. To be honest I was also a bit concerned although I assumed it was hunger or bile, so now that I feel better, and taken the medication, I'm sure it's one of the two." I can see he's still not entirely convinced about my 'miraculous' recovery but he chooses not to question or doubt in any further but focus on the fact I'm doing a lot better. "Come, let's start packing. We have quite a bit to go through today. Oh, singalibali ukuyokuthatha is'tshixo kuYoliswa later, neh?" I say while tearing myself away from him, taking steps towards the

bedroom. (*We mustn't forget to go fetch the keys... Okay*) He starts scratching the back of his neck with his one hand, a gesture that indicates that he'd already forgotten about it. So much for "uMr On-Top-Of-Things'. Mkq! "Oh yeah, that. Right. We're still meeting her at your new apartment, right?" he questions. "Yep," I say, popping the 'p'. I leave Siya to tend to the kitchen while I go back to my bedroom to wrap up what I'd started. I hope he knows how to pack fragile items. I-touch yamadoda ighodololo so you can never trust them with handling fragile items like glass, ceramic or porcelain. (*A man's touch is rough*) However, I chose to bestow my faith unto my man, sizozibona phambilie uba izinto zizohamba njani. (*We'll see how things go*)

Like I said before, I don't have too many things, it's that you only realise how much crap you have once you're forced to pack your life into a suitcase or a box. As I move from shelf to shelf, I keep finding items of clothing that I thought I'd lost like bras, underwears, tops... you know? Stuff like that. Yazi bendizokuzifumana nini if I wasn't packing? (*I wonder when I was going to find them*) Anyway, we continue packing until it's time for us to go pick up my apartment keys. I don't even bother with changing into a more decent outfit, I mean what's the point? Ndisezobuya ndisebenze mos plus we won't be long. (*I'll still come back and work*) We head out to the new apartment while singing along to songs playing on the radio.

We soon arrive at my new apartment, and we find her husband's Hilux parked outside. Siya parks the car, killing the engine and we both head out of the car. We meet Yoliswa and her husband outside the premises and they both walk us in to show us which keys are for which doors etc. I'm walking in front with Yoliswa while Siya is walking behind us with Yoli's husband. The men remain outside while Yoli and I, yes that's what I'll call her going forward, walk inside the apartment. She walks me through everything and in no time we're done. We find the duo still standing where we left them and we both go to our partners before sharing our goodbyes, heading our separate ways. "Baby, I'm hungry," I whine. Siya looks at me stunned. There he goes judging me. See, I made a sandwich before we came here but here I am, whining about being hungry that time it hasn't even been an hour since I last ate. "What do you feel like eating sthandwa sam?" he asks. (*My love*) I honestly don't feel like having takeaways again today, a home cooked meal, prepared by him of course, would be great though. "Uhm, a home cooked meal would be nice... prepared by you," I whisper the last bit of my sentence, pouting. "No baby, I'm exhausted. I've been on my feet since eight o'clock this morning and I still have to wait for the driver who's bringing the truck this side, no Zamo baby I can't" he protests. Even though he's right and I understand how exhausted he may be, I sulk with tears threatening to fall. One thing about me of

late, I will Brooke Logan you to hell and back, evah? (*Okay*)  
“Baby no, come one,” he pleads as soon as he peeps and sees my emotional state. “Okay, okay, okay. I’ll cook, just don’t cry, please sthandwa sam, don’t cry.” (*My love*) A broad smile breaks out on my face while my other emotions stabilise almost immediately. The tears? What tears?

We get home and he informs me that he’ll start making dinner while I decide to go take a shower since I’m sweaty and sticky from all the packing. At least tomorrow won’t be so gruesome as I have only a few items left to pack which I can quickly pack in the morning before Siya and his driver start loading my stuff. I forgot to not pack away my nightwear so here I am dressed in one of Siya’s briefs and t-shirt; there was no way in hell that I was going to go digging for it. I was way too exhausted for that. I walked out of my room heading to the kitchen in search of my man. The entire house was filled with a mouth-watering aroma that caused me to salivate. I walked in to find this man of mine standing in front of the stove yet again with no t-shirt on. Clearly, he didn’t learn his lesson from the last incident he had. I stand in the doorway and look at him as he chops whatever he’s chopping with so much focus, “Something smells good in here,” I say loud enough to snap him out of his focus. He shifts his focus from the chopping board towards my direction and places the knife down before wiping his hands, “I’m making Paella love.” A knock comes through the door, and I leave Siya

to attend to it. As soon as I open the door and my eyes land on Thulani, my heart sinks. Nkos'yam what is this idiot doing here? (*My goodness*) And those flowers? I hope he didn't bring those for me because Siya will lose his mind. Think of the devil and he shall appear. He appears from the kitchen just as he puts on his t-shirt, I guess that's what took him so long to come to the door with me. As I look back at him, I can see that his eyes are purely trained on Thulani and not on me. He has this hard and cold face that places such a heavy aura on him and around the room. Thulani's eyes bulge out when he sees Siya approaching. Hayi uyathanda uthatha ichance uThulani yazi. (*Likes taking chances... you know*) It's clear that he doesn't value his life and there's nothing I can do to help him with that. Siya finally reaches where I'm standing and places his one hand on the small of my back before cocking his head to the side as he looks at this one in front of us. In one hand he's carrying a bouquet of red roses while in the other is a gift bag. "Sho mjita," Siya says the first words since I opened this door. (*Sure brother*) I honestly have no words for this fool here. Thulani starts gulping down a whole lot of nothing but says nothing. I can sense Siya's frustrations rise as he taps his finger on my back, "Jonga mfethu, just say what you came here to do. These untimely visits of yours are becoming annoying and quite honestly, disrespectful. So, please say what you came for and leave before you anger me even further." (*Look man*) His voice is

calm though filled with authority, but I can tell that he's livid underneath all this facade. "Eish, hade mjita I mean no disrespect. I was here checking on uZamo," he says fidgeting. (*Apologies my brother*) We all stand by the door in silence for a while before I finally muster up the courage to say something, "Well thank you for coming by Thulani but in future, please call before you rock up to my place unannounced. I also don't appreciate the untimely hours that you visit my home so please be respectful and be mindful of that at all times. We may be colleagues, but I don't appreciate you crossing boundaries like this," I say as calmly as I possibly can. "I'm sorry Zamo, I didn't mean any harm or disrespect by coming here. I was just here to check up on you and drop these off," he says, stretching out his arms to hand me the items in his hands. Siya slaps the items off Thulani's hands and charges toward him with his one hand wrapped around his neck. He pins Thulani against the wall of the passageway before lifting him up, "Uyadedela wena sani," he growls at him. (*You're disrespectful, boy*) Thulani starts gasping for air as he tries to free himself from Siya's hold, but his hold is too tight. I watch, dumbfounded as Thulani's feet dangle in the air, "Siya let him go baby, he's not worth it," I plead with him, but my plea falls on deaf ears. I plead with him again, "Baby please," and this time around he listens to me. He begrudgingly releases Thulani from his grip and like a sack of potatoes, he drops to the ground, gasping for air with his one

hand covering his neck as he tries to soothe the pain of being in Siya's grip. Serves him right! "Voetsek wena nja," Siya bellows, almost kicking him as he lays on the floor. (*Piss of you bastard*) Thulani leaps up from the floor and bolts down the hallway, down the stairs, and finally disappears from our sight! "I'm going to kill that boy. I'm glad you're moving out of here," Siya grunts as he turns to walk back into the apartment, dragging me behind him with his hand firm on my wrist before slamming the door behind us. Yho uyadika uThulani! (*Wow Thulani is annoying*)



## Chapter 38

To say my entire evening was a disaster would be an understatement. We just finished having our supper, which was delicious by the way, but I couldn't even enjoy it to the fullest because of an enraged man. Though he didn't pop off or say much after Thulani left, I know that he's going to teach him a lesson, just like those policemen. I tried making small talk through our dinner but even then, I would only get one-word answers and nothing else or more. I want to lighten his mood but if I'm being honest, Thulani really crossed the line and it's really starting to bother me how out of character he's behaving. He's never frequented my place this often, bearing gifts nogoal, so his behaviour these past few days is rather peculiar and worrisome. (*Even*) I'll set the record straight with him as soon as I get back to work on Thursday. I don't want Siya to assume that I get up to no good when he's away. Anyway, we're currently cuddled up in bed with my head on his chest while he caresses my back gently. His breathing is rather steady, not sporadic, I guess that means he's calmed down, right? Well, at least I hope that he's calmed down. My mind drifts to different places as I think of how chaotic the past two to three months have been, Anga getting hospitalised, Inga losing his girlfriend and being a single parent to Wami, the return of Luthando and now the crazy Thulani. In all that, I'm glad that I found this man here beside me, who's been nothing but supportive and loving

through it all. He tends to be a little bit outrageous sometimes, but there's nothing that I'd change about him. It's the next morning and I'm packing the remaining items into boxes and bags. Siya just stepped out to meet the truck driver downstairs. I move around the apartment sweeping my eyes one last time before we start loading the items on the truck. Siya walks in the kitchen followed by a tall and dark gentleman that I assume is the truck driver, "Baby, this is Themba and he's one of my drivers. Ndoda, ngumkam ke lo, ubambo lwam," he says proudly, drawing me nearer to him with my waist. (*Man this is my wife, my rib*) I bury my face on his chest to hide my crimson face as he envelopes me in a hug. His chest rises and falls against my head, and I know he's laughing at me. I smack him playfully, "Baby man," I whine. I hear our guest chuckle from somewhere behind me and I become even more embarrassed. "I'm sorry my love. Let's start loading the big items Thera sigqibele ngezinto ezinci," he says to our guest, releasing me from his hold. (*Load the smaller things last*) I stand aside and give them space to manoeuvre around.

I'm very excited to be moving into my new place though I'm also a bit sad that I'm leaving this apartment because I really loved this apartment and was already familiar with the area, however I think this change will do me good. I'm also sad that my man is going back to Port Elizabeth today. As much as he's been with me for the past five days, I wish he could extend his

stay a little bit longer although I understand that he has a life to get back to and business to run. I guess I just have to wear my big girl pants and keep it moving. Siya and Themba load my items so quickly into the truck that I'm soon left standing in an empty apartment with nothing but my purse on top of the kitchen counter. I take one final sweep around the place I once called home, reminiscing on all the memories that I've created, with tears in my eyes. "Are you okay, love?" Siya asks me worried when he finds me standing in the middle of the lounge area. Honestly andiyazi nam uba ndikhalela ntoni, but something about seeing this apartment for the last time is making me rather emotional. *(I don't even know why I'm crying)* I nod my head, "Yes love, I'm okay. I'm just taking everything in for the last time." His eyes follow mine while walking towards me and brushes his hands up and down as he pulls me closer to him. I rest my head on his chest, snaking my arms around his waist and bask in the warmth of his skin. "Let's get going, sthandwa sam," he whispers, letting go of me. *(My love)* He takes my hand into his, intertwining our fingers together as we make our way out of the apartment. He locks the door behind us, and we head towards the car, driving off with Themba following closely behind us. As we approach the apartment, I notice two gentlemen and two ladies standing outside the gate. I look at Siya to see if he's seeing what I'm seeing. He sees the look of confusion and inquiry on my face and chuckles, "Relax

baby. I hired them to help us offload and pack your things as you want so we can finish early, uzophumla.” (*So you can rest*) Yho, this man guys. I’m truly blessed. I kiss him on the cheek and smile at him, “Thank you baby.” I press the remote to open the gate and Siya drives in after signalling for our visitors to follow behind us. We step out of the car and head inside the apartment while Siya approaches our helpers and Themba, I guess to inform them of what's expected of them.

Everyone starts moving in and out of the apartment, offloading and packing the items while I direct them on what to do. I honestly feel like a rich and spoiled housewife right now. *\*giggles\** In less than three hours my apartment is a clean, functional space with all my items packed in their places. I gather all our helpers in the lounge so that Siya can compensate them for their assistance. I’m so grateful for everyone’s assistance because they truly made this move seamless and bearable. Siya takes out four stacks of individually rolled notes from the back pocket of his pants and hands them over to each person standing before us. Whatever he’s just given them is definitely more than the hourly rate. Mkq! I wonder uba nike malini (*How much he paid them*) They thank us before making their way out of the apartment, leaving me with Themba and Siya. I decide to prepare something light for lunch for these two before they head out. Siya finds me in the kitchen preparing the ingredients that I will use for our meal,

“Baby, what are you busy with?” he asks while placing both his hands on my waist as he peaks over my shoulder. “Lunch. I’ll be done soon, okay?” He extends his neck over my shoulder even further to see what I’m making. I’m making something simple; beef stir fry with noodles. “Noodles baby?” he inquires with a glint of humour laced in his voice. I tilt my head slightly away from him and look at him, “Yes love. Is there something wrong with them?” I reply with a question. He shakes his head slightly before saying, “No love, nothing’s wrong with them. Sizotyia lento usiphekele yona,” he responds while planting a kiss on my cheek. (*We’ll eat what you’ve cooked for us*) He removes his hands from my waist and makes his way to the cupboard that has glasses and takes three glasses out and rinses them. He takes out juice from the fridge and pours it into all three glasses. He places one glass in front of me before collecting the other two, heading towards the door, “Baby, we’ll be in the lounge, okay?” he informs, already on his way out of the kitchen. I nod my head- and carry-on preparing lunch and soon I’m done and ready to serve them. I serve them and we all sit in the lounge, eating while listening to Themba's crazy childhood stories; he’s actually a very funny guy. As soon as we’re done eating, all I want to do is throw myself on top of my bed and sleep as I’m feeling rather lethargic. Siya collects all the dishes and takes them to the kitchen and dumps them inside the sink. He then leaves Themba and I in the lounge and goes to collect

the rest of his things from the bedroom. Siya ambles back into the lounge with the rest of his things in a bag and I'm overwhelmed with sadness as we all walk out of the apartment heading to his car. I hold my tears back and swallow the hot lump that's in my throat. "Haike, ndiza kuba sendleleni, mkhakhe. Enkosi kakhulu ngelunch, Ndiyathemba ukukuba sizobonana kwakhona," Themba says to me while walking beside Siya and I before he walks past us just as we reach Siya's car. (*Well, I will be on my way, his wife. Thank you very much for lunch. I hope to see you again*) "It was my pleasure bhuti. Please drive safely and I wish you a safe journey back

" I sincerely say. (*My brother*) He bobs his head before looking at Siya, "Mandibeyindlela. Sizodibana endleleni s'khulu," Siya nods his head, and we watch him make his way out of the yard with the truck. (*Let me be the way. We'll meet on the way boss*) As soon as the truck disappears from our eyesight, Siya shifts his gaze back to me, "Let me also follow him, my love." Hearing him say that causes my eyes to water and I tilt my head back to try and stop the tears from falling. He drops the bag on the ground and pulls me into a hug and tries shushing me down as I start sobbing, "Sukhala kaloku MaDlamini, ndizakubona kungekudala." (*Don't cry, I'll see you soon*) He brushes his hand on my back soothingly until I calm down. As soon as my sobbing dies down, he tilts my head with his index finger upwards so I can look at him and he smiles when his eyes land on my face

that's covered in tears. "Umhle noba uyakhala mkam," he says endearingly as he wipes the tears from my face. (*You are beautiful even if you cry my wife*) I giggle with a smile spread across my face.

"Even at my worst you say I'm beautiful."

"That's because you are, themba lam." (*My hope*)

"You're sweet. Thank sthandwa sam. Now get going before I start sobbing again." (*My love*)

He chuckles, picking his bag up from the ground before opening the back passenger door and throws the bag on the backseat before slamming the door shut. He steps in front of me once again, drawing me towards him as he lowers his face towards mine. He brushes his lips against mine and gives me a sultry panty dropping kiss which leaves me soaking wet. I pull out of the kiss feeling a bit woozy, almost falling over as I stagger backward. Siya grabs me, steadying me, "Baby are you u-right?" I shake my head lightly as I try to get rid of the grogginess, "Mm hmm. I was feeling a little light-headed but I'm okay now." Yho, indiphethe inyongo. (*Oh, I have gall*) He stares at me, after analysing me for a bit, clearly unconvinced and says, "You're really starting to worry me now. I thought the medication we got from the pharmacy helped, ngoku kutheni ingathi ubuyela umva unje?" (*Now why does it seem like you're not getting better*) Siya and worrying though. "Baby I'm fine. If this

dizziness persists, I will go and see a doctor, okay?” Still, he seems unfazed. “I promise,” I try to reassure him. He stares blankly at me before nodding his head, “Fine! So long as you keep me updated on how you’re feeling and promise to go consult with a doctor should you continue feeling this way.” Woah ndaze ndazifaka nkos’yam. (*I’ve put myself in my lord*) “I promise.” He pulls me in for a hug one last time before he gets inside the car and honks the horn at me before driving off. I watch him drive away until he fades away from my site. I close the gate and walk back inside my apartment, locking the security gate and the door behind me and head straight for my bed; I need a nap so I can wake up later and prepare for work tomorrow.

I’m woken up by the blaring sound of my alarm and I immediately jump off the bed because that can only mean one thing: it’s the next morning. Damn it! I frantically press the stop button on my phone screen to stop the ringing alarm and once I achieve silencing it, I toss it somewhere on top of the bed. I run off to the bathroom, opening the shower faucet and I tear off the clothes that I’m wearing and throw them in different directions as I brush my teeth. As soon as I’m done brushing my teeth, I walk into the shower and take the shortest shower I’ve ever taken in my entire life, only focusing on the essential areas, umnqamlezo. (*The cross*) In less than ten minutes I’m done showering and I whizz through the rest of my hygiene



process; time is not on my side. My phone chimes from somewhere on top of the messy bed and I frantically search for it, frantically and I eventually find it underneath the duvet cover. “Hello,” I salute breathily, without even looking at the caller ID. “Baby, are you okay?” Siya’s voice echoes through the speaker. “Oh, hi baby. Yes, I’m fine, love.” I plant the phone against my ear, trapping it with my shoulder and walk to my wardrobe to pull out a maxi dress that won’t require any ironing.

“Then why are you breathing so heavily?”

“Ha-ha, that’s because I’m running late and moving quickly around the bedroom. I woke up ten minutes ago and I have to be at school in the next fifteen minutes.”

“I figured that you may have passed out last night when I couldn’t get hold of you.”

“I’m sorry about that sthandwa sam. The intention was not to fall asleep this long. I must have been really tired.” (*My love*)

“I understand my love. No need to apologise. How are you feeling?”

“I think I’m feeling okay, although I can’t be too sure because I literally just woke up.”

“Well at least you’re not saying you're feeling some type of way, so I’ll take that as a good sign. Haike, I was just checking

up on you, love and I wanted to inform you that we arrived safely izolo.” (*Well... Yesterday*)

“Thank you, baby. Look, let me get going or else I’m going to be even more late than I already am, and I don’t want to anger Mr Phakade on my first day back.”

“No problem, sthandwa sam. Ubenemini efana nawe themba lam.” (*Have a day as beautiful as you, my hope*)

“Thank you bhabha, same to you... Well, eyakho ibe handsome nje ngawe,” I giggle. (*Baby... Yours must be... like you*)

“Ewe bhabha, handsome, not beautiful. Okay get going then, we’ll speak sometime during the day. Stay safe. I love you.” (*Baby*)

“I love you too baby.”

I drop the phone and finish dressing up. I have no time to comb this steel wool on my head, so I opt for a headwrap and complete the look with a pair of pumps. I look plain yet gorgeous. They say less is more, right? Anyway, I take my phone and purse and make my way out of the bedroom. I collect the student’s scripts on top of my work desk that’s positioned in a corner in the lounge and head out of my apartment to catch a taxi to school. I thank the transport deities that the taxi stop is literally less than five minutes away from my place. I hail one just as I’m approaching the stop sign

and luckily for me, the driver sees me and stops, and I hop on. The route the taxi takes isn't that long as a result I manage to make it on time at school, with three minutes to spare. I walk straight to my classroom to place my belongings before assembly. The school bell rings and everyone walks to the quad area for assembly. I spot Thulani standing behind the Grade 10's and my blood boils from just looking at him. I tear my eyes away from him before I make eye contact with him, next thing uzomva esithi 'we had a moment.' (*You'll hear him say*) Abantu abaphambanayo abathenjwa, and this one is definitely a nut-job. (*Crazy people aren't to be trusted*)

After assembly, we all head to our designated classrooms to start the first lesson and get started with our day. The first half of the day proceeds smoothly before I'm distracted from my lesson by Mr Phakade who walks into my classroom and asks to see me in his office. He walks out and leaves me to finish up with what I'm doing. I leave my Grade 10's working on an activity that should keep them busy for the next ten minutes or so, which will hopefully buy me enough time until I get back. I take a deep breath while standing outside his door and brush my knuckles against the door, "Come in," I his voice booms on the other end of the door. I lower the door handle, pushing it open. I freeze on the spot when I come across two police officers that are seated across Mr Phakade's office. "Oh, ngena Miss Mcunu," Mr Phakade says to me, beckoning me with his

hand to sit on the adjacent chair to where the officers are seated. (*Come in*) I slowly lower myself on the seat while looking at the two officers wide eyed and a galloping heart. I hope that this is not linked to Siya's incident because if it is, andazi uba ndizothini. (*I don't know what I'm going to do*)

## Chapter 39

Uncomfortable silence descends upon the room. I'm dreading what these officers are here for, I really can't handle anymore drama. I look at them and they seem rather uneasy and tense, however I'm not any better though it seems like they are more restless than I am. At least they came here on their own accord unlike me who was summoned here. I look at Mr Phakade as he shifts uncomfortably in his chair, "Miss Mcunu I called you in here because these two officers before us have requested to speak to you and I thought it would be best that you hold your conversation inside my office, for privacy purposes." I nod my head in understanding, thankful for his consideration. "I will now excuse myself," he says, shooting out of his chair, making his way towards the door. My eyes follow him until he closes the door behind him, and I shift my eyes back to the officers. "Miss Mcunu, I'm Detective Taleni and beside me is my colleague Detective Ndlovu and we're here to speak to you about a case that you opened against Luthando Madolo." My heart starts pounding aggressively against my chest as soon as I hear the mention of his name. "Ma'am please relax," Detective Ndlovu says to me with a worried look on his face and only then do I realise that my body's trembling. "Miss Mcunu, I'm not sure if you are aware that Detective Xaba and Seargent Meyiwa have been arrested. There's evidence against them that indicates that they've been involved in illegal activities that

have impacted the trialling and ruling of cases. The reason we're here is that your case was one of those that they handled, and it's become evident that there was foul play and injustice on your end. Based on these findings, it's become necessary for us to reopen your case and we're here to inform you that we're reopening your case and will be proceeding to investigate," Detective Ndlovu says to me. Tears stream down my face as I think of how I used to think this day would never come. Though the reopening of this case may not reach the desired ruling and outcome, I'm hopeful that justice will prevail. "On behalf of all honourable policemen, we'd like to offer our deepest and sincerest apologies regarding the behaviour and actions of our ex-colleagues. We're highly disappointed in the behaviour and decisions of our ex-colleagues that have now tainted the integrity and ethical stance of the police force. We'll work tirelessly to redeem yours and the community's faith and trust in us once again," he continues. I nod my head as I listen to this man slowly mend my heart with his affirming and consoling words that assure me that I will get my justice. Nothing hurts more than being let down by the people you trust most. The officers inform me that they'll keep in touch and thereafter, they excuse themselves.

They walk out of Mr Phakade's office with me following behind them as I make my way to a quiet room. I need to release this hot lump that's in my throat otherwise I'll go crazy. I find an

empty class and walk in, closing the door behind me and leaning against it. I start taking laboured breaths as I feel a panic attack brewing. I try by all means to control my breathing, but it all seems in vain. I start walking around the empty class, removing the headscarf from my head and throwing it somewhere across the room. I loosen my bra as it also seems to be constricting my breathing. I didn't even hear the door open, and I'm startled by Thulani who seems rather alarmed by the state I'm in. Jesus, I don't want to do this with him and definitely not right now. I just need a moment, why can't he give me that? He walks towards me and envelopes me in a hug, "Shh," he says trying to hush me down. If he wasn't so annoying and bony, I'm sure I'd appreciate this hug but because of the havoc he's caused in my life over the past couple of days, I don't want him anywhere near me. I tear myself away from him and stand a distance away from him. "What happened?" he asks me. I wipe the tears away from my face using the back of my hand and sweep my eyes across the room to try and locate my headscarf. I see it hanging over a chair on the second row and I walk towards it, wrapping it back on my head. I turn to look back at this one who's still standing where I'd left him and wonder how he even found me. "Zamo, are you okay?" I sniff as I try to locate my voice, "Yes, I'm fine." He eyes me from my feet right up to my face with his eyes lingering all over my face. "Don't lie, you're not. I found you sobbing in an empty

classroom with your doek thrown across the room so please, you're anything but fine," he says firmly. (*Headscarf*) Yazi uncining'fan'sba uthetha nabani njalo? (*I wonder who he thinks he's speaking to like that*) "Like I said Thulani, I'm fine, what more do you want me to say?" I snap. "There's no need for you to snap, Zamo. I was just asking because I'm concerned, that's all," he says with a voice laced with hurt. Andikhathali. (*I don't care*) "I appreciate that, but akho need," I deadpan. (*There's no*) "Why can't you just allow me in?" Bathong! (*Wow*) "Allow you in where?" I question with anger brewing inside of me. "Zamo," he calls me softly while taking a step closer to me. I take one back, feeling rather uncomfortable at how close he is to me all of a sudden. "Zamo, why do you refuse to see that I care about you? That I -" I interrupt him mid-sentence, "Thulani! Please don't, just don't!" I yell, already making my way to the door. Just as I'm about to turn, he grabs my wrist and roughly pulls me closer towards him, resulting in my body slamming against his "Thul-" I scream but he covers my mouth with his hand, shutting me up. He wraps his free arm around my waist, pulling me even closer to him making me feel even more uncomfortable. Jehovah please don't let this man do this to me, again. Please. He lowers his head next to my ear before whispering, "Why can't you see that I love you Nomzamo? I've always loved you. If you could just give me a chance, I can love and treat you better than -" I don't let him finish his statement.



I bite the palm of his hand and he cusses, loosen his hold. I run to the door and leave him calling my name behind me while groaning in between.

I bump into Mr Phakade who looks rather shocked to see me in this state. He assesses me and sees how hysterical I am, “Miss Mcunu. Are you okay? What happened?” He asks all these questions at once. Unable to answer him, I start crying uncontrollably, alarming Mr Phakade even further. I shake my head ‘no’ in response and just as he’s about to inquire further about my state, I rush down the school corridors leaving him standing there. I reach my classroom panting with no regard to whether my students are inside or not. I clumsily collect and pack my things inside my bag, I need to get out here. With no patience left in me to pack everything, I take what I’ve managed to pack and walk out of the classroom. Whatever I’ve forgotten, I’ll hopefully find it tomorrow. Again, just as I’m about to exit the school premises, I bump into Mr Phakade who looks like he was in search of me. “Miss Mcunu -” I cut him off, “I... I ha... I have to go, Sir. I’m sorry, but I have to go,” I walk past him, well almost run away from him. I start to jog when it seems like I can’t get away fast enough from this place. I’m frantically looking around me, trying to spot a taxi or car that could drive me home and I spot a Quantum from a distance, heading towards the same direction that I’m heading to. I hail it

down and just as it's about to stop, a cramp pierces through my lower abdomen. "Ah," I scream as I crouch forward

## Advertisement

pressing my abdomen with my hand while grunting in pain. The taxi stops before me and the marshall opens the door, "Sisi, uright?" he asks me. (*Sister are you okay*) I nod my head 'yes' in response as I try getting up from my position. Suddenly my legs feel numb as I walk towards the taxi. They have a tingling sensation, a pin-needle-like tingle. The taxi driver patiently waits for me as I take wobbly steps towards it. The marshall helps me climb inside before closing the door behind me. "Sisi, don't you want us to take you to the hospital?" the marshall inquiries when he sees me grinding my teeth with my eyes closed, as the pain continues to ripple through me. (*Sister*) The other passengers in the taxi mumble in agreement but I however want nothing but my bed, "No, no. I'm fine. Just take me home," I say. They ask for my address, which I gladly provide, and they drive me straight to my house, dropping me outside my gate. I pay for the ride and get off the taxi. With every step that I take, the pain intensifies. As soon as I walk inside my apartment, I throw my bag on top of the kitchen counter before locking the door behind me. I grab a glass of water and pain tablets, swallow them and walk straight to the

bed. I don't even bother with removing the dress I'm wearing; I just throw myself on top of the bed and pass out.

I flutter my eyes open and sweep them across the room before they land on the window. It's dark outside. I wonder what time it is. I'm about to flip my body over to sleep in a different position when I feel moistness in between my thighs. I lower my hand in between my thighs and feel around the wet area. When I retract my hand, I freeze immediately when my eyes land on the blood on my fingers. I toss the duvet aside and my eyes land on a pool of blood on my sheet. A cold shiver runs down my spine. Even during my worst period, I never bleed this much. I try to get up from my sleeping position but a sharp pain in my uterus halts my movement. "Ah," I scream out in agony. Gosh, what's happening to me? I slowly drag my body out of the bed, groaning. I use the walls for support as I wobble towards the kitchen, and I spot my purse on the kitchen counter. I fish for my phone inside it before dialling 10177, requesting for an ambulance. The administrator informs me that she has dispatched one and that it's on its way. I hobble towards my bedroom to change my dress as it's now soaked in blood. I'm beyond petrified, I've never seen so much blood. My period is only meant to start next week so I know this blood can't be it. I reach my bedroom and walk straight to the bathroom, peeling off the dress, throwing it inside the bathtub. I change my underwear as well and wear a clean one that I've

lined with a pad. I wrap my body in a gown and just as I'm about to walk back to the kitchen, I see red lights flickering outside and I know that the ambulance has arrived. I press the remote to open the gate for them as I won't be able to walk to it in this condition. I reach the kitchen and take my phone and wallet from my purse before opening the door and security gate, stepping out. I hand over my keys to one of the paramedics and ask them to lock up after me, I just want to get to the hospital. When we reach the hospital, the paramedics place me on a stretcher and take me inside the ER. A doctor attends to me immediately and I'm also cleaned and changed out of the gown that is already drenched in blood into a lapover gown. The doctor conducts a few tests and draws blood. He informs me that he'll be admitting me overnight for observation while we wait for the test results. When he's done, I'm moved to a ward that's already occupied by one female patient and the nurse informs me that the doctor will see me in the morning.

I hardly slept all night as the pain I was in was beyond unbearable and the nurses refused to administer any pain medication for me as they require a diagnosis before doing so. It's five o'clock in the morning and I'm already wide awake even though I know that the doctor will probably only see me after doing his rounds which is normally after ten. I sit on that bed with a pad filled with blood as I toss and turn waiting for time

to pass. At six, the shifts change, and the day nurses take off from the night staff. A nurse walks in and checks my vitals before providing me with a clean pad for me to change into. I gladly accept it and waddle out of my bed to change. I decide to take a shower and change into clean undergarments before walking back into the ward. To my surprise I find the doctor standing next to my bed with a file, that I presume is mine, in his hand. He smiles when his eyes land on me and I shyly smile back at him as I walk back to my bed. "Miss Mchunu," he greets. "Good morning doc," I say, climbing on top of the bed, groaning. "How's my favourite patient doing this morning?" I'm sure he says that to all his patients. He's quite the looker, I must admit. He's an average, light skinned man who looks like he's in his late thirties. He has a stubble on his chin that suits his chiselled face. "I hardly slept last night, though I feel better now that I've taken a shower," I answer him truthfully. "I'm sorry to hear that, Miss Mchunu. Your results show that your blood pressure is rather high, which is not good for the baby -" I think I've misheard him, "I beg your pardon, doc? Did you say baby?" Surely this man is not speaking about me. "Yes Miss Mchunu, you are indeed pregnant." Shock doesn't begin to define nor describe the state that I'm in right now.

"No. No doc, that can't be. There... There must be a mistake somewhere!" I scream.

“Miss Mcunu please calm down,” the nurse beside him pleads, while thrashing the bed with fists, angrily.

“Miss Mchunu please calm down or else I’ll be forced to sedate you. Please -”

“Doctor I’M NOT PREGNANT! How many times must I tell you that.”

“Miss Mchunu calm dow -”

“No! No! Don’t tell me that bullshit. I can’t be pregnant. I’m on contraceptives.”

“Miss Mcunu it can happen for one to fall pregnant while on contraceptives especially if you’ve been sexually active within seven days of taking antibiotics.”

Oh fuck!

“Oh my God,” I whisper.

“Don’t worry Miss Mcunu, it’s okay to be scared but everything will work out just fine, okay?”

“...”

“I’m going to monitor you for an extra night just so we can try and lower your blood pressure. I’m also going to refer you to a gynaecologist that we have here in the hospital, okay?”

Defeated, with no words left to say, I simply nod my head at him.

“Please try and keep calm or else I won’t discharge you unless I see an improvement in your pressure and trust me you don’t want us to fight about that. Now please have some rest and I’ll come and check on you later on in the day, okay?”

“Yes doc.”

He makes his exit without consulting with my neighbour in the ward, I guess she has a different doctor. My mind goes back to what I’ve just learnt; I’m pregnant? Me, Nomzamo Mcunu, am pregnant. Jesus, what am I going to tell uMaDlamini? Yho nkos’yam. (*My lord*) uSiya yena? (*What about*) What will he think of me? That I’m trapping him with a child? How could I be so reckless? If I really am pregnant that means that I fell pregnant the week I was in Port Elizabeth which was a week after I had the flu. That’s the only time I recall taking antibiotics. Damn it! My mind keeps racing as I lay in bed, and I allow my tears to start flowing down my cheeks. My phone buzzes beneath my pillow, interrupting me in my thoughts. I reach for it and raise it to my eyes, and my heart beats harshly against my chest as I see the caller ID... It’s Siya. I contemplate answering his call but I know that should I not answer it, he’ll continue blowing up my phone and I also don’t want to worry him considering he left me unwell yesterday so I end up

answering his call, “MaDlamini,” he calls out to me. A sob escapes my mouth even before I can recall or suppress it. “Zamo? Baby? What’s wrong?” he asks worriedly. I cover my mouth with my hands to trap the sound that’s coming out of my mouth.

“Zamo, please sthandwa sam. Please talk to me, what’s going on?” (*My love*)

“I’m... I’m... I’m sorry.”

“What are you sorry... - Zamo, what’s going on?”

The answer is on the tip of my lips, but it just can’t seem to slip out. Thoughts ravage my mind as I think of his response to my announcement and panic descends upon me. Suddenly it feels like someone is sitting on top of my chest causing me to take short breaths. I desperately gasp for air, but none seems to fill my lungs. I clutch on my chest as my heart thumps against my chest. “S... Si... Siy...” I try to call out to him just as the phone slips out of my hand. I hear him call out for me from a distance as the machines begin to beep frantically beside me. I see nurses rushing inside my ward, shouting at me or at each other, I’m not sure. They all sound so far. I try to fight the darkness, but it succeeds and consumes me.



## Chapter 40

I'm stuck in a dark room. I can hear voices echoing somewhere close to me. I try to make out who they belong to or at least what they are saying but I fail. A part of me wants to call out to them and ask them to switch on the lights but my voice is trapped deep inside my throat. I try to wiggle my body to show some kind of life to whomever is close by, but I'm stuck in a state of paralysis. Panic seeps through my body as I realise that I have no control over my state of mind nor my physical being. Once again, I find myself gasping for air as I battle with filling my lungs with oxygen. Somewhere in the distance, I hear the machines beeping uncontrollably with voices shouting at the top of their lungs and once again, I'm consumed by darkness.

The beeping sounds of the machines bring me out of whatever oasis I was in and as I flutter my eyes open, I'm blinded by the piercing bright light from the sun's rays, and I immediately close them shut. I groan as the banging headache solidifies itself and makes itself known. I'm so frustrated and scared about what's happening to me, not just about the pregnancy news that I've just received but also about these panic attacks that just won't let me be. I know I'm the one who has control over them but it's not that easy. Seeing that opening my eyes is a mission and a half, I try shifting my body with the aim of pulling the blanket over my head to shield me from the sun's bright rays, but I fail.

My entire left side is stiff and numb, almost like I'm paralysed or like something is sitting on it. I try wiggling my arm and my fingers but all I feel are pins and needles shooting through it. Panicked and scared, my tears start to trickle down my cheeks; what's happening to me? I drag my free arm towards my left with the aim of trying to determine what the cause of my numbness is. My hand lands on something warm and hard, and I immediately retract it back in place. What was that? I sit still, too scared to open my eyes. I wait for whatever is beside me to make itself known while I think of my next move. "Bhabha," a voice I'd know even in my deepest slumber echoes close to me. (*Baby*) As though struck by lightning, I tilt my head to the direction of the voice with my eyes now wide open, ignoring the banging headache and the brutally bright light that's piercing through my eyes and look towards the direction that the voice is coming from. Siya. He's lying next to me in this tiny ass bed, cradling me with one arm while the other is draped over my waist. I run my eyes over his entire body. He's lying on top of the blanket, with his legs crossed, dressed in sweatpants and a t-shirt. I spot his sneakers and hoodie placed neatly next to my bed. How did he find me? Also, when did he get here and how was he even allowed to sleep in here? I shove the questions to the back of my head and snuggle closer to him not believing that he's here with me. Unable to retain my tears, I let them flow like the river of Jordan and wail in relief and in

sorrow. He tightens his hold on me, drawing me closer to him as I continue to bawl and cling onto him.

“Su’khala mkam,” he pleads with me as tears continue to roll down my cheeks. (*Don’t cry my wife*) I will myself to stop crying like a widow and calm down. He grants me all the time I need to settle down while gently rubbing my back, soothingly. After some time, I manage to control my tears with only my sniffles being audible. We lay in that position for some time, with neither of us saying a word. My head is filled with thoughts of what time it is, how a doctor or nurse could walk in this ward and find him lying on my bed and chase him out, while the most dominant thought is how I’m going to inform him of being pregnant. He shifts in his lying position and places me on top of him, looking at me directly in the eyes. Surely, he’s forgotten that this is not his house. He chuckles when he sees how uncomfortable I am with how he’s posed me on top of him, “Don’t worry sthandwa sam, akho mntu ozosiphazamisa.” (*My love, no one will disturb us*) I raise my brow looking at him, then around the ward and only then do I realise that I’m not in the same ward I was in before I blacked out. This ward looks exactly like the previous one except t this one is a private ward. My eyes bulge out of their sockets. How did I end up here? I mean I just fainted, there was no need for them to transfer me into a private ward, I’m not dying nor am I critical... I think. I can’t afford to have a high out of pocket medical bill all because of

privacy and comfort. I hope my medical aid is going to cover this expense.

“When did you get here?” I ask while shifting my head and eyes back to him.

“Namhlanje ek’seni,” he responds while drawing circles on my back; he seems miles away. (*This morning*)

“How did you find me?”

“One of the nurses who was attending to you told me ukuba uphi just before you passed out the first time.” (*Where you were*)

“First time?”

“Ja, ubukhe wangathi uyavuka earlier but then something happened, and you blacked out again.” (*Yes, it seemed like you were waking up*)

“Kanti ubukhona ngelaxesha? I tried waking up, but I couldn’t. All I could hear were voices that I couldn’t make out.” (*Wait, you were there at the time*)

“You scared me bhabha. I thought...” his voice breaks as he speaks. (*Baby*)

I watch him as a tear rolls down his cheek before he wipes it away instantaneously. Unable to

watch him, I lay my head on his chest and focus on the drum of his heart. I can only imagine how scared he must've been, I was too. "I'm sorry sthandwa sam, I just -" We're disturbed by the creaking sound of the door. I try to jump off this one, but he holds me firmly as we both watch as an elderly nurse walks inside my ward. "Oh, sghulane sam, kuhle ukukubona uvukile," the elderly woman says, with a warm smile. (*My patient, it's good to see you awake*) I shove my head against Siya's chest, ashamed that she's finding me in such a compromising position. Siya, like the idiot that he is, chuckles at my misfortune without freeing me from this position. I hear her giggle from somewhere in the ward before Siya says, "Ebelinde mna, ma," with humour laced in his voice. (*She was waiting for me*) The nurse giggles even louder at this one's silliness much to my dismay. This man is hell bent on embarrassing me. Is he not the one who just said I scared him? What happened to the emotional guy that was here just a second ago? "Ndibazi benjalo mntanam," the nurse continues to engage with this one in his stupid banter. (*I know them like that, my child*) Arg! Siya's chest vibrates beneath me while he plants chaste kisses on my shoulder. "I'm going to need some privacy, ndoda. I need to check my patient's vitals," she says to Siya, sounding nearer than before. (*Man*) I raise my torso, ready to slide off this one, and luckily, he releases me. I sit up straight on top of the bed as Siya slides off the bed, wearing his sneakers while sitting on the

chair next to my bed. “Okay ke nono, I’m going to need you to give me your arm so that I can check your blood pressure. After we’re done with that, I’m going to need you to pee in this cup so that I can send your urine sample to the lab for further testing,” the nurse says to me as she sets up her device. I nod my head and catch a glimpse of Siya who’s settled in the chair beside me with no indication of excusing himself whatsoever. I hope this woman doesn’t blurt out that I’m pregnant under the assumption that I’ve already told him, otherwise it could be a disaster. She checks my blood pressure and informs me that it’s still a bit elevated although it’s better than what it was yesterday. She informs me that the doctor may keep me here for another night for observation or he may put on bed rest for a few days based on my pressure levels. I groan upon hearing my options and pray and hope that the doctor opts for the latter. I hate hospitals, they bring back such bad memories but that’s a story for another day. I walk to the bathroom and pee in the cup that she’s given me and walk back to the ward with the cup in my hand. There’s just something disgusting and disturbing about feeling the warmth of your urine in a cup. Like why does it have to be so warm? Also, don’t you just want to hide the cup so that people don’t see it? Okay, maybe it’s just me. Anyway... She reminds me that I have an appointment with the gynae in the afternoon and leaves saying she will come and

check up on me a bit later in the day and hopefully with the results.

As soon as she's out of sight, Siya, who's been silent throughout, removes his sneakers from his feet and jumps back in bed with me. As soon as he climbs on the bed dips... Jesus I hope this bed doesn't break, I don't have money to pay for it and I know FOR A FACT that my medical aid doesn't cover patient negligence. He wiggles his way into position, cramming me on the edge of the bed and rests his head on the pillow, with his arms beneath his head with a smug look on his face. I huff, irritated, "Baby man," I whine. He says nothing although his eyes twinkle with humour. I know what he wants, and because I don't want to fall off this bed, and because I'm already cold as my ass is out in this lapover gown I give in. I lower myself next to me as he removes his hands from beneath his head, opening them for me, enveloping me in a hug or is it a cuddle? It doesn't matter. I rest my head on his chest while preparing for the questions I know he's going to ask.

"MaDlamini."

"Mm."

"Kwenze njani sthandwa sam..." (*What happened my love*)

"Well..." I go silent for a moment, unsure as to whether I should tell him about the situation with Thulani or not because knowing him, I won't even get to the part that says 'I'm

pregnant' before he bolts out of this ward in pursuit of Thulani. I decide to omit the Thulani incident and start from the visit from the police officers. I release a mournful sigh as I try to gather my thoughts.

"Are you dying?" he asks so softly that if he wasn't this close to me, I wouldn't have heard him.

"No baby, no. I'm not dying, why would you think that?"

"Zamo, I know when I left you on Wednesday you weren't feeling well but not to the extent that you needed to be admitted in hospital. Clearly something drastic happened in the last 24 hours for you to be here."

"Well -" I continue to narrate the story of the officers paying me a visit at school, to how I had an almost panic attack because of the news, which is somewhat true guys, don't judge me for omitting Thulani's contribution to the panic attack

Advertisement

then to me leaving school, the cramps *blah blah blah blah blah*.

"I'm sorry you have to relive your past again but I'm happy that those two bastards have been arrested and that your case has been reopened. This is all I wanted for you sthandwa sam, for you to regain your power." (*My love*)

"It scares me though," I confess.



“Why?”

“Because I’m afraid that history will repeat itself. The case may be investigated by different officers, but you know -”

“No, baby, don’t think like that. Have faith in the new investigating officers and in God sthandwa sam. He wouldn’t bring you this far to leave you.” (*My love*)

“Deep down, I want to believe that I really do but fear is crippling me.”

“You don’t have to fear anything baby. I’m here and so is your family. The justice system won’t fail you twice, not ndikhona, best believe that,” he says as a matter of fact. (*With me here*)

“What do you mean by that?”

“Nothing, that’s not important. Now tell me, what did the doctor say?”

I cold sweat runs down my spine as my heart thumps against my chest. This is the question that caused me to black out the last time I thought about his response. Suddenly I feel hot, I start taking laboured breaths as different scenarios play in my head. Siya notices my panic and holds me tighter against his chest. “Calm down Za,” he pleads, soothing me as he gently rubs my back. Za? Mm. I like it, more especially because he’s the one who came up with it. It also has a nice ring to it in fact. “There you go,” he whispers against my ear and only then do I

realise that I've calmed down now. My heart is no longer beating erratically, and my breathing has also steadied, and all thanks to a new nickname. Wow. The other gender ten, uNomzamo, negative one hundred.

"Well as you heard from the nurse my blood pressure is high, I guess because of stress..."

"Mm," he hums.

"That's not all."

"There's more?" he questions with a raised brow.

"Yes. Uhm... I don't know how to tell you this, so I'll just say it, I'm pregnant," I mumble the last part.

"Andivanga baby, uthini?" he pardons. (*I didn't hear you, what did you say*)

"I... I'm pre... pregnant."

"What do you mean, pregnant Nomzamo?" he asks in a low voice. I throw my eyes at him, but he shifts his away from me. Oh God, my worst fear has come to pass. I can tell just by his tone of voice that he's not happy at all.

"I... I mean we... we're having a baby," I whimper.

He gently removes me from his chest and gets off the bed and walks slowly towards the window in absolute silence. I sit up

from my lying position, clutching my gown on the chest area with my hand and tears fall down my cheeks. I look at him with his back turned towards me, hoping that he can turn and face me, but he doesn't. After some time of him standing in that position without saying anything, I decide to call out to him, "Siya." He doesn't respond to me but continues to look ahead through the window. My heart shatters into pieces as his silence and rejection manifests in my heart. I get up from the bed and walk to him, hoping that he doesn't push me away, "Please... Please say something," I beg, while placing my hand on his back as I stand next to him. He slowly turns his head to face me, and I freeze at the sight of tears rolling down his face. He's crying. I raise my hand to his face to wipe away the falling tears, "Baby," I whisper. He holds my wrist just as my hand gets in contact with his cheek, closing his eyes, leaning into my palm. He's so emotional right now and he's honestly worrying me. "Siya, sthandwa sam. Please talk to me," I plead in between sniffles. (*My love*) "We're having a baby," his hoarse voice booms. I smile at him, with a great sense of relief, "Ewe themba lam, we're having a mini me." (*Yes, my hope*) I see a smile spread across his salty lips while his eyes glisten even through the tears. "Yindoda leyo uyithweleyo," he deadpans. (*That's the man you're carrying*) Oh, he's back. I don't really care about the sex of the baby, I just want a healthy baby in the end. I decide to engage with this one on this topic just to ruffle

his feathers a little bit, “No it’s not. Mna ndithwele inkosazana, a mini me who’s going to be as beautiful as me and have many boyfriends,” I tease. (*I’m carrying a princess*) “Over my dead body,” he growls, letting go of my wrist and wiping away his tears aggressively as he walks away. I laugh a full belly laugh, clutching on my stomach, as I watch him fume over a hypothetical situation. One thing about this man is that he’s dramatic. I laugh until my stomach hurts while he sits on the chair, huffing and puffing while throwing daggers at me. We’re disturbed from our moment when a doctor walks in with a nurse wheeling in a machine I don’t know. “Ah, safika kumnandi konwatywe,” he says. (*Great, we’ve arrived while everyone is happy*) I seize my laughter almost immediately and fix my gown to look appropriate. Siya snaps out of his mood and fixes his gaze at this man we both don’t know. He catches us looking at him expectantly and says, “Oh, my apologies for not introducing myself. I’m Doctor Zondo, the gynae you were referred to. Next to me is Nurse Gxowa and we’re here to check on your little one.” Oh, now it makes sense. The nurse leads me to the bed and assists in laying me down. She lifts my gown and places it just above my abdominal area and squeezes a cold substance on my belly, I flinch. “Sorry, I should have warned you that it’s cold.” Siya is already standing guard next to my bed, both eyes bugged out, looking like he’s ready to pounce on these two. He lowers his head to my ear before whispering,

“Bhabha, asinakufumana ugqirha obhinqileyo mhlawumbi?”  
(*Can't we get a female doctor rather*) The nurse beside me must have heard him and she starts giggling uncontrollably. I glare at him, hayi he must never. (*No*) He takes note of my glare and raises his hands in surrender while inclining back to his guard position. “Okay then, let’s have a look at what we have here,” Dr Zondo says, placing an instrument on the lower part of my stomach that’s covered with the gel. “Okay parents, focus on the screen over here,” he says pointing to the black and white screen on the machine he walked in pushing. I quickly look at Siya for assurance before grabbing his hand before turning my eyes back to the screen in front of us. Dr Zondo continues to sweep the instrument across my belly, pressing a bit firmer than before, much to my discomfort. His movement comes to an abrupt halt and before I can even ask why, the room erupts in a loud noise. Oh my god, “That’s your baby’s heartbeat family. Strong and healthy,” Dr Zondo says. Siya tightens his grip on my hand just as I turn my face towards him and see a tear roll down his face. He wipes it away before lowering his head to plant an endearing kiss on my lips. “Enkosi MaDlamini,” he whispers against my lips. (*Thank you*) We’re still caught up in our moment when I hear the heartbeat change to a more erratic one. Both Siya and I take note of this change and pull away from the kiss, jolting our eyes towards the direction of the screen and doctor for answers. “Doc, why does the heartbeat

sound like that?" Siya thankfully asks for the both of us. I'm already in tears, scared that I've harmed our baby with all this stress I've been under. The doctor sweeps the instrument one more time across my belly and smiles when he spots something. Siya and I look at each other, confused at his reaction. Why's this idiot smiling? Can't he hear that something's wrong with the baby's heartbeat? A normal heartbeat doesn't sound like this. "Well mommy, it looks like you're not only carrying one baby, but two," the idiot doctor excitedly says with a grin on his face. Blood drains from my face. Two? I feel Siya's grip loosen on my hand before I hear a thud.

## Chapter 41

I'm lying in my bed waiting for Siya who has been placed in a separate bed beside me after fainting on me. So, he can plant two seeds in me but cannot handle hearing that he's going to be a father of two. I just want to pounce on his bed and strangle him in his sleep. How can he sleep so peacefully while we're faced with such? Not only am I pregnant but pregnant with twins. We don't even have a history of twins ekhaya so it must be from his lineage. (*In my family*) How will I tell uMaDlamini that I'm not only pregnant, but I'm pregnant with twins? Yahoo, she's going to skin me alive. I just know it. I'm going to have to ask my siblings to be present when I drop this bomb on her, yes to shield me from her wrath but also in case she goes into cardiac arrest. I wonder how they'll take my news also. I've never been one to do things in an unorthodox manner, so my pregnancy will definitely come as a shocker to them, though I know they'll be happy for me. Between Inga and I, I think we've achieved shocking mom with our shenanigans. Even though she will be hurt and disappointed in me for falling pregnant before getting married, which is something I would have also preferred, I have no doubt that she will adore my babies and I'm happy that I'm building a family... A family? Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let me rephrase that, I'm happy that I'm having babies with this man lying beside me. I know that he'll love our babies like no one else can, and he'll

probably spoil them rotten. I place my hand on my stomach and gently rub it as my thoughts continue to plague my mind. I'm truly still in shock and in awe that God has blessed Siya and I in such a miraculous way. Being bestowed with the honour of carrying one of God's most wonderful creations is such a blessing. I just need to work tirelessly on controlling my blood pressure because I plan on carrying my blips... My blips. I smile widely at the name. Okay, I'm derailing. Where was I again? Oh, yes, I'm going to do my best to make sure that I carry my blips to full term, or at least as close as I possibly can. I've heard that it's seldom to carry full term when you're having a multiple pregnancy, but I guess that's something I need to add to my list of research topics. Don't look at me like that. I'm a first-time mom and I have no idea what to expect during this journey though I plan on being well informed through each stage of my pregnancy.

I grab my phone on top of the bedside table and start downloading pregnancy related apps while I google questions that are already top of mind as I wait for the apps to finish downloading. I know it's probably dangerous to rely on Dr Google for medical advice, but I can't wait for our next consultation with Dr Zondo to ask him questions or wait for a nurse to provide me with pamphlets on pregnancy. I need some form of information right this second. I hope I don't overdo this because I know how I get when I start researching something. I



become like a dog with a bone and overdo it sometimes. I prefer to be well informed than be ill-informed, so information overload is not an issue on my side. I'm busy browsing through google, trying to find an article that will tell me all about the first trimester. I read that some nausea is expected, fatigue, increased/decrease in appetite, cravings, abdominal cramps, swelling of my legs or feet and so forth. Ingathi kuzobanzima. (*It seems like it's going to be tough*) As I'm reading the rest of this article, I hear Siya groan beside me. Oh, look who's finally decided to join us in the land of the living... uFather of two. He tries getting up to sit up but gets constrained by the drip in his arm. Yeah, they put that on his arm because his blood pressure was low, imagine. His is low while mine is high. Hayi ingathi ubukho bezi twins buzoza neengxaki. (*It seems the birth of these twins is going to come with problems*) "Bhabha," he calls out to me as I look at him blankly. (*Baby*) Indoda efaintayo. (*A man that faints*) Mxm! "How did I end up on this bed?" he asks confused. Hee, hayi inene. (*Wow, no really*) "Awukhumbuli?" I ask him in a flat and bored tone. (*Don't you remember*)

"No. I had this weird dream that we were expecting twins," his says rather distraught.

"It wasn't a dream," I clarify. He snaps his head in my direction so fast with his eyes popped out, "Wha... what do you mean it wasn't a dream?" he asks, breathing heavily while clutching on

his t-shirt. Yho udramatic uSiya bethuna. (*Wow, Siya is dramatic people*) I roll my eyes at him before responding to him, “We are having twins, Dr Zondo confirmed it. We couldn’t even get to the part where he tells me how far along -” His machines start beeping frantically as he gasps for air. Alarmed, I jolt out of my bed towards his, “Siya? Baby? Siya” I call out to him, feeling emotional already. Yho, ingandenzi lonto lendoda. (*Oh, this man mustn’t do that to me*) He shuts his eyes as he tries to take deep breaths. A doctor barges into my ward followed by a nurse, “Get her away from him,” the doctor screams at the nurse who pulls me away from Siya. I can’t exactly leave the ward, it’s mine. I stand by the wall and watch from the side lines, in horror as they work on stabilising him. I wrap my arms around my body, I guess comforting myself. Tears continue to trickle down my cheeks. The machines stop beeping erratically and start stabilising. The doctor turns his head towards me and says, “Don’t worry sisi, uzoba right. He was having a panic attack, but we have sedated him. He should wake up in the next couple of hours.” (*Sister, he’ll be fine*) I sigh in relief, wiping away my tears. “Thank you, doc,” I whisper. “I’ll come check on him before my shift ends,” the doctor says, making his way out followed by the nurse. I release a heavy sigh while walking back to his bed. I gently climb on the bed, snuggling closer to him as he sleeps peacefully.

I must have dozed off because I'm woken up by feather kisses all over my face. I groan in frustration, andithand'uvuswa. (*I don't like being woken up*) "Vuka baby," Siya whispers in my ear, fanning me with his warm breath. (*Wake up*) Chills run down my spine. Surely, I can't be turned on now, at this moment, kulendawo. (*In this place*) Get a grip over yourself Nomzamo! I slowly flutter my eyes open, and they land on this handsome man of mine's face. He's truly something out of a magazine. "Hi," I murmur, smiling at him. He looks at me, clearly better than how he was a few hours ago, with eyes filled with so much love and adoration. "Umhle mkam," he compliments. (*You're beautiful my wife*) I quickly cover my face with my hands as I blush profusely while burying my head on his chest. I always react this way whenever he compliments me. He wraps his arms around me, drawing me closer to him, "Don't hide yourself from me, sthandwa sam." (*My love*) I slowly raise my face to look at him, still shy as hell. He's not only my boyfriend now but also the father to our children... Just imagine that. Just a few months ago I was single with no intentions of getting into any relationship, but I guess God had other plans for me, for us.

"Don't ever scare me like that."

"That's a difficult one to assure but ndizokuzama ngako konke okusemandleni am sthandwa sam." (*I'll try my best my love*)

I nod my head in response, with my eyes fixated on his, God has truly blessed me. “You know -”, our moment is interrupted by Dr Zondo who walks in followed by the elderly nurse from earlier this morning. They both smile at us, especially the nurse, who’s finding us coupled up in one bed yet again. “You two can’t get enough of each other, huh?” she teases. I giggle at her remark as I adjust my body to a seating position. I assume they are here for me.

“Oh, so yinto yabo le?” The doctor asks the nurse. (*This is their thing*)

“Ewe, doc. Nasekuseni ndifike beghonene, belele ebhedini enye,” she responds. (*Even in the morning I found them huddled together, sleeping in the same bed*)

“Haike mos, ithi lento isigulana sam siziva ngcono ngoku kwaye sikulungele ukugoduka,” he says, taking my vitals while scribbling notes on my file. (*I guess my patient is feeling better now and ready to go home*)

My lips spread into a wide smile upon hearing that I may be going home. You may be wondering where Siya is as the doctor and nurse are taking my vitals? He’s right next to me. He just scooted a little bit further away from me but refused to get off the bed. I know he’s a generally clingy lover, but ingathi uworse ngoku. (*He’s worse now*) Anyway, the doctor informs me that he’s happy with my blood pressure levels and will be

discharging me, however he's placing me on bed rest for a week as multiple pregnancies are usually high risk. Gosh, now I have to inform Mr Phakade again that I'm going to be away from my learners for another week. He's definitely not going to be happy that I'm disappearing again while we're preparing for exams but what voice do I have? The duo leaves while I step off the bed to go take a shower using Siya's cosmetics as I don't have any. When I walk back into the ward

I find an Ackermans plastic bag on top of the bed.

"And that?" I ask, cocking my head in the direction of the plastic bag.

"Oh, I stepped out while you were showering and got you something to change into. Remember you don't have clothes here?"

"Yazi, I forgot about that. Thank you sthandwa sam." (*You know... My love*)

"I've also signed you discharge forms, so we're all set," he continues to say, pointing his finger to the papers placed on the bedside table.

"What would I be without you, mara?" I ask humorously as I peck his lips. (*Though*)

I open the plastic bag and inside is a beautiful square neck stereo flower puff sleeve dress that looks like it could fit me,

and I squeal in admiration while jumping up and down. Siya chuckles behind me as he watches me marvel at the dress he bought me. I must admit, he has spectacular taste in clothing. I place the dress aside and rummage through the rest of the plastic bag; I find a pair of white sandals, a thong, and sanitary towels. I guess he thinks that I'm still bleeding, which I am but it's not a heavy flow. Liners would have sufficed but I appreciate the level of consideration nonetheless. "Thank you for everything, sthandwa sam, especially the dress, it's so beautiful." I wrap my arms around him and squeeze him tightly. (*My love*) He chuckles while reciprocating the same action, "It's only a pleasure sthandwa sam. Now come on, get dresses so we can pass by your place and pack a bag for you." (*My love*) "A bag?" I ask, confused.

"Yes, a bag."

"Wait! Why do I need a bag baby?" Am I missing something?

"You're coming with me mos and you'll need clothes to change, won't you? Unless you want to wear mine, I don't mind. I find that -"

"But we never -" he interrupts me.

"Zamo," he huffs. He sounds rather defeated or deflated. "The doctor ordered you to stay in bed for a week and rest. How'd

you plan on doing so kodwa you'll be taking care of yourself uyi-one, huh?" (*But... Alone*)

"Well..."

"No sthandwa sam. Just... Please don't argue with me on this, ndiyakucela." (*My love... I beg you*)

"Okay," I whisper with my head hung low.

I start getting dressed while he walks around the room collecting all our things, which aren't that many fortunately. We both carry on doing what we're doing in absolute silence until we're finished. "Ready?" he asks. I nod my head 'yes' in response. He looks over at me, as I stand on the opposite end of the bed from where he's standing and places my purse and his small travel bag on top of the bed before walking over to me. He stands a foot away from me and gently raises my head to make me look at him square in the eyes before grabbing my hand and linking it with his. "Sundiqumbela phakade lam," he pleads. (*Please don't be angry at me, my forever*) The thing is, I'm not angry at him, I'm just upset that he continues to not consult me when making decisions, especially those that affect me. I stare back at him, withholding my wrath. I must now think before I react to situations. I can't risk losing my babies because of my hot-headedness. He tilts his head back before inclining back into position and releases a deep sigh.

“Baby, I’m not forcing you to come with me. All I want is for you to be cared for while you’re on bed rest, that’s all. I don’t care whether it’s with me or your mother doing so though I would have loved to be the one taking care of you but -”

“I hear you, my love and now that you’ve put it like that, it makes perfect sense.”

“Ngoku uthini?” (*Now what are you saying*)

“Well, I can’t exactly go to my mom because I haven’t told her about the pregnancy yet, I still need to grow a pair of balls before I inform her,” I giggle, while he chuckles.

“Yeah, uzokunyisa shame. I can tell she’s a no-nonsense taker and from what you told me about how she reacted to ulnga bringing u-what’s her name again?” (*You’ll be in shit*)

“Owam baby.”

“Yes, uOwam, I can only imagine what she’s going to do to you,” he chortles.

“Oh, uyandihleka ogqiba ukundimithisa?” I sulk, teasingly. (*You’re laughing at me after you’ve me pregnant*)

“No, baby. I’m not. I’d never,” he tries to convince me though the grin on his face shows his insincerity. I smack his hand away from me when he tries to pull me in for a hug.



“Uxolo, sthandwa sam, andizukuphinda.” (*I’m sorry my love, I won’t do it again*)

“Mm. Anyway, let’s get out of here. I don’t want them to barge in here and say they’ve changed their minds about discharging me.”

I grab my phone on the bedside table, grab my purse from the bed and walk to Siya, who’s now standing at the edge of the bed with his travel bag in one hand and the discharge documents under his armpit. He extends his hand for me to take, and I gladly latch on to it, intertwining our fingers together. We both walk out of the ward with him leading the way and heads toward the where he parked. He drives us to my apartment where I pack a small bag with my essentials while he goes to the kitchen to make himself something to eat. After I’m done packing, I find him in the kitchen swallowing the last bit of whatever that he prepared for himself. “Done?” he asks with a mouth full of food before chugging the rest of the juice. Wow. I nod my head and watch as he gets up and walks to the sink to rinse the plate and glass he used before he beckons with his head that we get going; he’s still chewing the last bit of food. Disgusting!

As we’re driving, I recall that the last time I was in PE, uKhunji was still in the hospital.

“Hee, baby, unjani uKhunji?” (*How is*)

“She’s doing much better, sthandwa sam. They discharged her on Wednesday, and they drove back to East London notata izolo.” (*My love... With dad yesterday*)

“Oh, that’s wonderful news sthandwa sam. I’m so happy to hear that she’s doing much better. I’m sure you’re relieved now that ephumile pha.” (*My love... She’s out of there*)

“Definitely, although I’m a bit sceptical about them releasing her this soon. I don’t think she’s fully recovered yet. Ingathi bamkhuphe early man.” (*It's like they discharged her out early*)

“I hear you sthandwa sam but I doubt they would have discharged her if they weren’t certain about the state of her well-being.” (*My love*)

“You're probably right,” he says, releasing a mournful sigh.

“When is she going back to work?”

“NgoMvulo love.” (*On Monday*)

“Mm.”

We carry on driving while conversing and joking around in between just to keep ourselves awake throughout the rest of the drive.

We arrive in Port Elizabeth just before sunset. We get home, home being his house of course, and Siya asks that I order food for us as he’s in no mood for standing behind the stove. “Uright

uSteers baby?" I call out to him from our bedroom. (*Is Steers okay*) Yes, I'm already cooped up in this bed. The minute we entered this house, he ordered me to bed while he stepped out to do God knows what in the house. "Yes," he replies, sounding closer to our room. I proceed with the order and select burgers and ribs for us; I know we may get hungry later. A few minutes after I'm done placing the order, he steps into our bedroom with a tray in his hands. "What's that?" I say already stretching out my hands to him. "Yes, and no, it's not for you, it's for me," he says already turning his back on me. Tears well up in my eyes, why endivimba? (*Denying me*) He plops himself next to me and my eyes immediately land on the sandwich on his plate. I stretch my hand out to try and snatch half of it but he smacks my hand away, "Ouch!" I whine. "Suka!" (*Go away*) He opens his sandwich I guess to assess its contents and I gag upon seeing what's in that. My stomach turns and I can feel the bile rising. I jolt out of the bed and rush to my porcelain God to praise it and spew out all the contents in my stomach. I hear this one's heavy footsteps behind me before feeling his hand on my back. "Are you okay?" this idiot behind me asks while taking a bite at his revolting sandwich. I nod my head without throwing a glance at him. He hands me a glass of water to rinse my mouth. I stand up after I'm done and walk back to our room. He's already behind me still shoving this vile thing in his mouth. "Can you get away from me with that?" I snap. He cocks

his brow and looks at the piece of bread in his hand, “What’s wrong with what I’m eating?” he sulks. “What do you -” he interrupts me. “Imnadi nje baby. Do you want to take a bite?” he says stretching the hand with the piece of bread to me. (*It’s nice though love*) Its smell hits my nostrils hard which causes me to retch once again. I smack it away with the back of my hand and it flies across the room. “Baby,” this one cries out following it to where it landed. He kneels and picks up the small bit of bread on the floor. Hayi ndiyaqala ukuyibona. (*No, I’ve never seen anything like this*) He raises his body back up and comes back teary eyed. “Uyakhala? Hayi Siyabulela,” I exclaim, defeated. (*You’re crying. No*) He sweeps his eyes between his hand and me, with a look I can’t quite fathom on his face. In a split second, the man breaks down and starts sobbing uncontrollably. Hayini, ncedani. (*No, please*) I clap my hands once and step away from this idiot and sit on the edge of the bed, watching him. Guys, lendoda ikhalela isonka esiqatywe inutella neqanda, with strawberries inside. (*This man is crying for bread spread with Nutella and an egg*) Now tell me how anyone can eat such a revolting thing, let alone CRY OVER IT! Hayi nkos’yam! (*No, my lord*) This cannot be my life.

## Chapter 42

We slept rather late last night as we spoke about everything and anything that we could possibly think of relating to the babies. Now that we've started speaking about how our future is going to look like with the babies in it, I feel calmer and more secured and also excited as well. I'm hoping that we have a boy and a girl so that I can be done with this baking business at first dibs. I'm not planning on having a swollen belly, with swollen feet, a black neck and swollen jugs often. I know that people say that each pregnancy is different, but I don't want to tempt fate, ndiright ngaba. (*I'm okay with these two*) We're still in bed and I just woke up. Siya is lying next to me so peacefully. Shame, umntu wam must be exhausted. (*My love*) Imagine having to drive between iNgcobo neBhayi in a space of two days, twice. (*Port Elizabeth*) Is nie pap 'n vleis nie. (*It's not easy*) I roll on my side to check what the time is on my phone, and it reads 09:25. Great. That's not too late nor is it too early either, meaning we can both laze around in bed for a bit. My bladder is full, and I need to go release it or else I'm going to mess up on this bed. I slowly peel the bed cover from my body and swing my legs to the edge of the bed. Just as I'm about to step off, I feel Siya's hand grab on mine before his groggy voice fills the room, "Uyaphi?" he asks me, with his eyes still closed. (*Where're you going*) "Bathroom sthandwa sam. I'm pressed," I respond, already shuffling the rest of my body up from the bed.

(*My love*) “Mm. Uzukhawuleze ubuye, I miss you,” he whines, releasing my hand from his. (*Come back soon*) I internally roll my eyes at him. He’s been so clingy since he heard that we’re expecting. If it’s not him crying for disgusting sandwich, it’s him wanting to cuddle in this heat. I need to see a gynae who can confirm how far I am because ingathi ezi nyanga zilandelayo zizonzima. (*It seems that the upcoming months will be hard*) Obviously there’s nothing new with his behaviour, I mean I have said it before that he’s an affectionate lover but now, yho he's reached new heights. (*Wow*) I make my way to the bathroom and get on with my business. As soon as I’m done, I quickly freshen up before making my way back to the bedroom. I find him still sleeping, with his body sprawled across the bed. I shake my head as I approach the bed. Yazi ucing’ba ndizolalaphi. (*I wonder where he thinks I’m going to sleep*) I get on the bed, sitting with my back against the headboard while my feet are hanging over the edge of the bed and I nudge him on his shoulder, “Mm,” he groans. Uyadlala ke tana uzovuka. (*He’s kidding, he will wake up*) “Baby, suka man. You’re sleeping on my side of the bed,” I protest. (*Move*) Instead of doing as I’ve requested, he grabs my wrist and drags me towards him and my body crashes against his, alarming me, “Nyukela,” he orders, after letting go of my wrist, placing both his hands on my ass cheeks, squeezing them. (*Climb on*) With my heart thumping against my rib cage, I slowly drag my body upward

and lay prostrate on top of him. I rest my head on the crevice of his neck, inhaling his earthy scent that is now mixed with sweat. He removes his hands from my ass cheeks and wraps his one arm around my waist while with his other hand he caresses my back. There's just something about being this close to him, listening to his heart that always leaves me filled with calmness, love, peace and joy. "Sleep well?" he whispers against my ear. Niyandazi ke, I get turned on by the smallest, most nugatory gestures from this man. (*You guys know me*) "Mm," I hum, afraid that my voice will sell me out. "And my babies?" he asks, brushing the side of my stomach. A broad smile spreads across my face as I raise my head from the crook of his neck to look at him, "They're doing just fine daddy." He closes his eyes as I say this and releases a throaty groan, "Phind'utsho." (*Say it again*) I giggle like a teenage schoolgirl as I feel his growing member twitch against my abdomen, "Daddy," I whisper. He stops brushing my back and lowers both his hands to my ass cheeks, squeezing both tightly. With my eyes now shut, I tug on my lower lip and release a low moan in response. He flexes his hips upward, gyrating and blood rushes to my nether region. I place my hand firmly on his hip to prevent him from torturing me any further. He stops and opens his eyes, just as I open mine and gawks at me, with his eyes now hooded and bloodshot, "I think you should get off me now," he says in a raspy voice. I chortle while nodding my head in agreement and slide off his body,

reclining next to him, with my head on his chest. I snake my arm around his waist and bump into his protruding member on the way; I giggle yet again. "It's not funny," he mutters. "I'm sorry ke sthandwa sam," I humorously say. (*My love*) My stomach growls as we're laying like that, "Yho, abantwana bam balambile, let me go make breakfast for you guys. What do you feel like having?" he asks me, already getting up. (*My children are hungry*) Usandibuzelani xa kanti ngabantwana bakhe abalambileyo, not mna? (*Why's he still asking me whereas his children are hungry, and not me*) Nxa, bloody fool. I flip my body over and face the opposite direction with my back to him and aggressively pull the bed cover over my face and cry, silently. "Bhabha?" he calls out for me with a voice filled with worry. (*Baby*) Hayi, he must leave me alone. (*No*) I wipe my tears with the palm of my hand as the tears continue to roll down my cheeks. I hear some shuffling before his heavy footsteps draw nearer to my side of the bed. The bed dips before I feel his hand on my shoulder, "Sthandwa sam, yintoni ngoku? Ukhalelani?" he asks with a bit of concern and agitation in his voice. (*My love, what now? Why're you crying*) His tone of voice causes me to cry even harder and I start sobbing louder as my body vibrating aggressively beneath this bed cover. He can't be agitated. I hear him release an exasperated sigh next to me. He removes the bed cover from my head and I feel his eyes boring holes on my skin, "MaDlamini, yintoni ngoku



ingxaki sthandwa sam? Besi right ngoku. Ndixelele yintoni le ikukhathazileyo?" (*What's the problem now, my love? We were okay just now. Tell me what's bothering you*) I humph in frustration and open my eyes, glaring at him, "All you care about ngabantwana bakho, you're no longer concerned about me!" I half yell through the tears. (*Are you babies*) I see his eyes open wide with disbelief of what I'm accusing him of. I'm not accusing him of anything, yinyani. (*It's the truth*)

"But -"

"Don't even try to defend yourself. Ndiyakubona uba this is all you've ever wanted, someone to carry your seeds. Well, well done. You've succeeded!" I scream. (*It's evident that*)

"Nomzamo!" he exclaims incredulity.

"No... No... Don't even try to deny it," I whisper, waving my hand in the air dismissively.

Defeated, he scoops me up from my lying position and places me on his lap and rests my head on his shoulder.

"I have no idea where you got that idea from and quite frankly, I'm saddened by what you're accusing me of. Zamo, any of my ex's could've bore me children but God saw it fit that I build my family with you. Now here you are, spewing nonsense kodwa uyayazi indlela endikuthanda ngayo." (*Whereas you know how much I love you*)

“...” I keep quiet.

“Why would you think or even say something like that?”

“Oko sithetha ngabo and I... I’m scared that these babies may replace me, and you’ll end up forgetting about me.” (*We’ve been speaking about them*)

“But how could I ever forget about you when I made our babies with you? Njani ndizokwenza umkam?” (*How when I’m even going to make you my wife*)

“...”

“Jonga sthandwa sam, I know we’re both inexperienced when it comes to this parenting thing, but we’ll be okay, trust me. Besides us being parents, usezoqhubeka ungubhabha wam nam ndisezoqhubeka ndinguSiya wakho. The only difference going forwards is that we’ll now have two human beings who’ll be solely dependent on us, who’ll require us to put them first before anything and everything else, including ourselves. So don’t ever feel like I’d ever replace nor forget you.” (*Look my love... You’ll continue being my baby and I’ll still be your*)

“I hear you,” I say sniffing while wiping snot from my nose with the back of my hand.

“Good. Now that we’ve addressed that part, khawundixelele, kutheni ungakwazi uthetha kakuhle nam xa kukho indo

engakuphathi kakuhle?" *(Please tell me, why can't you talk to me properly when something is bothering you)*

Shit!

"I'm -" he interjects.

"No, suxolisa, phendula umbuzo." *(Don't apologise. Answer the question)*

Jizas, ndizothini? *(Good God what am I going to say)*

"I... I didn't mean to, sthandwa sam." *(My love)*

"Andisos'bhanxa Nomzamo, awuqali ukuyenza lento. I've told you umpteen times to address me properly, without screaming at me, when we're having an argument, but you continue to do so. Kufuneka ndide ndithini ukuze undive?" *(I'm no fool, this is not the first time you're doing this... What do I have to do to get you to hear me)*

I cower away. I have no response really.

"I can't keep asking the same thing from you and you never listen. If we continue this way, our relationship won't work. I hope that this is the last time we're talking about this, uyandiva?" *(Do you hear me)*

I nod my head.

"Andikuva." *(I can't hear you)*

“Yes, I hear you.”

“Good. I’ll blame it on the hormones today but awusoze uphinde uthethe nam ingathi ugxidika emthini.” (*You’ll never talk to me like you’re falling from a tree*)

“I’m sorry for disrespecting you bhabha, I promise to try and always speak to you with respect.” (*Baby*)

“Glad to hear that themba lam. Let me go prepare breakfast like I said I was going to do before someone... Let me drop it. How about you go freshen up while I prepare breakfast?” (*My hope*)

“Good idea, love. I’ll come join you in a bit.”

“No, you will not! Remember you’re on bed rest meaning you’re supposed to stay in bed and the only time you’re supposed to leave the bed is to go to the bathroom, so ndicela singaxabani.” (*Please let's not argue*)

“But -” I sulk.

“No sthandwa sam. Now please do as the doctor ordered.” (*My love*)

I sulk, defeated. How can Dr Zondo expect me to be stuck in a bed for an entire week, mara? (*Though*) Like, what the hell am I supposed to do the entire time? Has he not heard of bed sores? Huh? I get up from this one’s lap and stomp my feet towards

the bathroom, almost slamming the door behind me. “I love you too,” I hear him scream from somewhere behind me. Nxa, idiot!

Instead of taking a shower I decide to take a bath. I'm scared of slipping in the shower especially now that I'm carrying precious cargo. I decide to make a treat out of my 'out-of-bed experience' and pour some bubble bath, bath salts and oils into the bathtub to soak myself. I ease myself into the bathtub, closing my eyes and allow the water to soothe me. It's been a rough couple of days. “Nomzamo, you better not stay in that water for too long, uyandiva?” Siya yells from somewhere in the bedroom. (*Do you hear me*) Hayi inoba uMakhosandile uvuke ekufeni. (*No, maybe dad has risen from the dead*) I roll my eyes before responding to him, “Fine. I'll be out in a minute.” Ignoring me, he walks into the bathroom with a towel hung over his shoulder, “Come,” he says, extending his hand out to me to grab on. Yho uSiyabulela bethuna. (*Wow... People*) I place my hand on his and steadily raise my body before stepping out of the bathtub. Yazi, one would never think that just a few days ago I was the one running around with no care in the world now here I am, moving like a tortious all because of sex... no I mean all because of the consequences of sex. (*You know*) Piece of advice from me, stay away from coitus guys. After I step out of the bathtub, he wraps me in the towel and

walks me out. "The water," I say to him. "Don't worry, I'll take care of it later," he replies, with a rather flat tone. He's really taking this bed rest business seriously, yho. (*Wow*) He unwraps the towel and watches it pool on my feet before I see him gulp down a bunch of nothing as his eyes sweep all over my body. My nipples harden and become erect almost immediately. He tears his eyes away from me I guess fighting the urge to take me, here and now. He runs his thumb over his bottom lips before licking it and my core moistens. With no self-control left, I take a step closer to him and place my hand on his now stiff member; he hisses. "Baby, I don't -" Not willing to hear him say anything further, I slap my lips against his and quench my thirst by drinking from his warm well. He snakes his arms around my waist, drawing me closer to him while I continue running my fingers up and down his length, with a gentle squeeze every now and then. We groan and moan against each other's lips with our hands touching and grabbing at any piece of flesh from the other. It's evident that we may end up taking this all the way if we aren't careful and we can't, not until Dr Zondo gives us the green light. I pull out from the kiss, gasping for air and look at him. "Fuck," he says with his eyes shut with his forehead resting on mine. I palm his face before planting a kiss on his plump lips, "I should get dressed tat'abo," I whisper. (*Their father*) He chuckles, "I love that name, tat'abo," he says it again, slowly, almost like he's savouring it. (*Their father*) He

takes a step back from me before fixing the bulge in his pants. Shame it seems painful and ready to be freed. “Don’t,” he reprimands when he sees the smile plastered on my face. He walks to the dressing table and

takes my body lotion and face cream and walks back to where I’m standing and starts moisturising my body. When he's done, he walks to his wardrobe and picks out an oversized t-shirt with his company logo on it and dresses me.

“Baby you do know I bought clothes with, right?”

“I know, but I want you to wear mine so that I can smell you when you’re not here.”

“Cheesy much?”

“Andikhathali.” (*I don’t care*)

“What about underwear?” “You won’t need it, uzobe usendlini mos.” (*You’ll be inside the house*)

“Okay then.”

He walks to me and places a kiss on my forehead, “Let me go check on our breakfast. I made you oats because I wasn’t sure if you can stomach anything else but if you would like something else, tell me ndingakwenzela.” (*I can make it for you*) I smile adoringly as I look at him. One thing about this man, my man, is that he’ll go above and beyond for me. “Thank you love but

akho need. I think the oats will be fine.” (*There’s no*) He nods his head and makes his way to the bathroom I guess to clean the bathtub while I continue to stand where he left me, by the bed. I look around our bedroom, trying to see what I can do to keep me busy and I spot a few things that will keep me busy for a while. Kodwa kuzofuneka ndizenze zonke ezozinto while he’s busy in the kitchen. (*But I’ll have to do all those things*) After a few minutes he walks out of the bathroom and halts in motion when he sees me still standing in the same spot that he’d left me in. “Uright?” I nod my head. (*Are you okay*)

“Then why’re you still standing there?”

Eish, lona nemibuzo yakhe emininzi. (*This one and his many questions*) “I was waiting for you to tuck me in,” I lie through my teeth.

“Uyatefa yazi,” he says walking to where I’m standing. (*You’re a baby*)

If this one gets a whiff of my plans uzondibophelela kule bed, ndiyamazi. (*He will chain me to this... I know him*) The minute he steps out of this bedroom, I’m going to jump out of this bed and do a bit of tidying up. Uzondi shout(a) sendenzile. (*He’ll yell at me after I’m already done*) He walks me to bed with his one hand on the small of my back and tucks me in before making his way out of our bedroom. Just as he’s about to take the last step out of the bedroom, the doorbell rings and he leaves me



saying he's going to attend to it first before bringing me my breakfast. I nod in agreement. I listen as the front door creaks open before loud laughter fills the entire house; it seems like there's more than one visitor at the door and the voices seem to belong to males. Their rowdiness subsides after some time, although I can still hear them. Seeing that Siya is cooped up with whoever his visitors are, I jump off the bed excitedly and start with my secret chores. I pack his t-shirts and chinos that are on top of the couch in his wardrobe before unpacking my bag. I then place all our cosmetics where they need to be before making the bed. After some time, my stomach growls and reminds me of my hunger. Seeing that this one has completely forgotten about my breakfast, I decide I'm going to head to the kitchen and serve myself otherwise *ndizofa yindlala*. (*I'll die of hunger*) Also, he can't really blame me for being out of bed because it's not me who wants the food, it his children and he did say we need to put the children first, right? I slowly step out of our bedroom, careful not to make any noise as I tippy toe to the kitchen not wanting to get caught by neither him or his guests. Just as I'm about to pass the door leading to the lounge, I hear a voice call out, "Sisi?!" (*Sister*) Damnit. Startled, I snap my head to the direction of the voice and my eyes widen as big as saucers when they land on a face I wasn't expecting, "Anga?" I whisper. *Vuleka mhlaba ndingene* (*Ground open up and swallow me*)

## Chapter 43

Ja, Nomzamo, you've really done it this time. I should have known that I wasn't going to be able to make it past this door without anyone spotting but I still convinced myself that I'm invisible. How long did I honestly think I was going to be able to hide my relationship from him, especially considering that they are friends? The subtle noise that was there before I got busted has now vanished, completely. I haven't swept my eyes across the room to see who else is present because I'm too scared to see another familiar face. He stares at me, blankly, so much so that I start fidgeting as I feel uncomfortable under his gaze. I have not moved from where I was standing since my entire body has now gone numb. "Sisi, ubekwa yintoni apha?" he asks while staring me dead in the eyes. (*Sister, what brings you here*) His voice jolts me from my state of paralysis and only then do I sweep my eyes across the room to try and locate this man of mine so that he can save me from this interrogation. I'm shocked to see Thando and Themba sitting on one of the couches. Kanti uAnga utshomene nabo as well? (*He's friends with them*) "Sisi, ndikubuze umbuzo. Ubekwa yintoni endlini kaSiya?" he asks rather sternly. (*Sister, I asked you a question. What brings you to Siya's house*) With no words to respond to his question, I frantically search for Siya with my eyes, and I spot him standing on the far right-end of the lounge area with whiskey glasses in his hands, smirking at me. Oh, so he has time

to serve his friends alcohol but not save me. Bloody fool. I tear my eyes away from this idiot and turn my gaze back to my brother. “Unjani mntase?” I deflect aimlessly. (*How are you my brother*) He chuckles bitterly at my lousy attempt,

“Ndiyaphila sisi, unjani wena?” (*I’m well my sister, how are you*)

“Nam ndiyaphila. Bendicela uthetha nawe in the kitchen?” (*I’m fine too. May I please talk to you*)

He gets up from the couch and walks towards where I’m standing, but not before he glares at Siya, who holds his glare. “Uhm bhabha,” this idiot of mine calls out to me. (*Baby*) Yho uSiya ne-timing. (*No timing*) My brother halts in his movement and snaps his head towards Siya and asks through gritted teeth, “Bhabha?” (*Baby*) His brows are knitted as his eyes bounce in between Siya and I. Instead of clarifying or fixing the mess he just created, this idiot of mine starts brushing the back of his head with his hand while staring at me with begging eyes to save him. Hayi, angakhe alinge kaloku! (*No, he must never*) “Bra, wabiza usis’wam bhabha? Kanti, what’s going on here?” Anga throws these questions all at once at Siya. (*Bro, did you just call my sister baby? Actually...*)

“Eish Anga mfethu, it’s a bit complicated.” (*My brother*)

“Uncomplicate it for me then.”

“Eish, mna no Zamo are seeing each other.” (*Well, Zamo and I*)

“What do you mean ‘seeing each other’?”

“We’re dating Anga! And we’ve been dating for a while now,” Siya kind of snaps at him.

He gasps and turns his head to look at me with incredulity plastered all over his face. I bow my head in shame. And no, I’m not ashamed of my relationship but rather of getting busted and questioned by my sibling, younger sibling at that, in another man's house and not just any man but his friend. “Sisi, is this true?” and with my head still lowered, I bob my head at him. (*Sister*) I hear footsteps approaching us but too ashamed to lift my head to find out who’s walking towards us, I keep my head buried on my chest. The earthy, musky scent that fills my nostrils confirms that it’s Siya. He snakes his arm around my waist, “Jonga mfethu, I understand that you may be shocked right now, rightfully so, and that you may also have a lot of questions that you’d like to ask usis’wakho nam but I’d suggest that you have this conversation with your sister in private, but after she’s had her breakfast, or kanjani?” (*Look my friend... your sister and I... what do you say*) My heart leaps in joy. Look at him coming through for his girl. I could just kiss him right now. His protectiveness fuels my confidence and I finally muster the courage to raise my head to look at my brother. Anga just stares at me, blankly without responding to Siya’s proposal. “Bhabha, I think it’s best that you go back to bed. I’ll

bring you your breakfast soon, okay?” he whispers against my ear. *(Baby)* I take a quick glance at my brother before replying to Siya, “Okay.” He lowers his hand and sneakily tugs at one of my ass cheeks. Kanene andinxibanga. *(Oh yes, I’m not properly dressed,)* I turn crimson, and cover my face with my hands, mortified at realisation of how inappropriately dressed I am. Siya chuckles next to me, clearly tickled by my misfortune, not paying any attention to my brother who’s still rooted before us. I step away from him and start making my way back to our bedroom. I don’t know when I’ll be having ‘the talk’ with my brother since I’m leaving him behind. The first thing I do when I enter our bedroom is to look for underwear to put on because I’m not about to stay in a house filled with testosterone with no draws on. After I’m done, I climb on the bed and make myself comfortable and wait for Siya to bring me my oats. Ndilambe nyani, ingqina isisu sam sigcwele umoya oshushu. *(I’m really hungry, my stomach is even full of hot air)*

Here I am, sitting on this bed, waiting, like the Queen of Sheba when I hear our bedroom door creak open. I sway my head to its direction and watch as my brother walks in with a tray that has a bowl filled with oats. “Indoda yakho ithe ndikuphathele ukutya,” he says, mockingly. *(Your man told me to bring you food)* I ignore his statement and stretch my hands to reach the tray as I’m already salivating as the milky and buttery aroma hits my nostrils. He lowers himself on the edge of the bed next

to me and watches me as I devour the food that my man prepared for me. He corks his brow while staring at me, “Hayi no, uyatya nomdade,” he remarks. (*No, you can eat my sister*) I raise my eyes and glare at him, “Uzam’uthini?” (*What’re you trying to say*) One thing about these babies, they are turning me into a lioness and right now, I feel like ripping this one's head from his body. He lifts his hands up in surrender while I proceed to shove food down my throat. I scoff and carry-on eating. He watches me eat until I’m done before he removes the tray from my lap and places it on the dressing table. Instead of walking back to the bed, he walks to the couch and sits there, watching me, expectedly. “Ask,” I encourage.

“My friend? Really sisi?” (*Sister*)

“I never planned for it, mntase. Neither of us did. It just kind of happened.” (*My brother*)

“Kind of happened \*scoff\* When did you guys start ‘seeing each other’?” Look at him using Siya’s terminology against me. Yho!

“After you were hospitalised.”

He bobs his head multiple times as though deep in thought.

“So, the times you’d disappear you were with him?”

“Yes, but we weren’t dating ngela xesha and I wasn’t with him like that. He just always seemed to find me.” (*At that time*)

“Mm,” he hums while he strums his fingers against his thigh.

“Look, I’m not going to question your relationship with him, even though it’s weird that you’re dating my friend, but I’ll get used to it. So my friend is tapping -”

“Anga!”

“Sorry. As I was saying, it’s going to take a bit of getting used to but I’m happy that you’ve found someone,” he confesses. I smile at him as he speaks. He knows how hard it’s been for me to get here.

“Are you happy?” he further enquires.

“Ewe bhutana, ndonwabile, more than I’ve been in a while,” I reply truthfully. (*Yes, little brother, I’m happy*)

“Then I’m happy for you and you both have my support.”

“Uhm mntase, there’s something I’d like to tell you.”

“Ndimamele.” (*I’m listening*)

Just as I’m about to confess my biggest secret these rascals decide to make themselves known. Suddenly the delicious food that I’d just devoured churns in my stomach and rises from my throat. I clasp my hands over my mouth and jump out of the bed, rushing to the bathroom. I throw myself at the feet of the porcelain god before spewing out all my beautiful breakfast. I hear Anga yell for Siya behind me while I continue to hurl,

painfully. My head starts feeling fuzzy and my vision blurs. My arms which are anchored on the toilet seat start losing strength and I find myself slowly leaning forward into the bowl. Just as my face is about to plunge into the filthy surface, I feel an arm snake around my chest, pulling me away from the toilet bowl. I have tears gushing down my cheeks from all the hurling I did. “Baby, are you okay?” Siya asks me. Oh, he’s the one who grabbed me. My throat is burning from all the acid reflux and my ribcage is sore, I can’t even utter a single word. “Bring her some milk,” Siya says to someone behind us, it must be Anga. Oh, yhini umntase inoba wothuke. (*Oh, my brother must be shocked*) My body weakens even further as I sit on the floor, butt flat. Even my breathing has weakened. Siya stretches his hand to take a guest towel from the rail and wipes my forehead that’s covered in sweat beads. “Sthandwa sam, are you okay? You’re worrying me,” he asks while patting the towel across my neck. (*My love*) “Mm, it’s just morning sickness tat’abo,” (*Their father*)

“Tat’abo? Zamo? Umithi?” Anga exclaims with his hands on his head. (*Their father... You’re pregnant*) Oh, he’s back.

This is not how I envisioned him finding out about the pregnancy. I was going to tell him myself, peacefully, before his nephew and niece, yes

Advertisement



I'm hoping for a boy and a girl, decided to interrupt my confession. I catch a glimpse of him from the corner of my eyes as he paces up and down outside the bathroom door, mumbling things I can't hear nor understand. "How could you do this mfethu? She's my sister damnit!" he yells at Siya. (*Brother*) This is what I feared, him judging us and being angered by the news of our pregnancy.

"I know bra, but it wasn't intent -"

"Don't tell me that bullshit! Don't! So not only are you two dating but you're also expecting? What kind of fuckery is this huh? No, fuck this man!" He screams at the top of his lungs at this point. I just hope that Themba and Thando have left, otherwise I'll be mortified if they're still here, listening to my brother's rant. Tears start rolling down my cheeks. "Calm down bra, can't you see that you're upsetting her? Just relax, okay? Look, she'll explain later, for now just help me get her back to bed, okay?" (*Brother*)

They both lift me up, walking me back to the bed. Anga releases me and lets Siya lay me in bed while he stands back, observing us. These babies are truly turning my life upside down. My head feels like it's floating on clouds while my body feels numb from the waist down. If I'm weakened by mere morning sickness, how will I survive the rest of this pregnancy? Ndjonge ngoku, ndiyinto nje eliyokoyoko all because of iz'manga. (*Look at me*

*now, all weak and all... sex*) “I’m going to give Dr Zondo a call, maybe he can prescribe something to help with the nausea,” he says already grabbing my phone from the bedside table. Obviously esikorokoro sam asina password so he’s able to search for the doctor’s numbers and takes a step away from Anga and I, giving us room to ‘talk’ should we need to while he speaks to him over the phone. (*My rugged phone doesn’t have a*) From the corner of my eye, I can see Siya pacing up and down with my phone clutched tightly against his ear. Just from his demeanour I can tell that he’s frustrated. Oh, yhini indoda yam madoda. (*Shame my man though*) “Sisi,” Anga whispers while lowering himself next to my side of the bed before placing his hand on mine, squeezing it gently. “Uright, mnta’kamama?” he asks softly while watching me intently. (*Are you okay my sister*) “Mm, I’m okay,” I manage to say. He looks at me clearly, not convinced. “Bhabha,” Siya calls out to me, averting Anga’s attention from me. (*Baby*) I slowly shift my head so that I can look up at him as he stands by the edge of the bed. “uDr Zondo uthe he’ll prescribe something for you that’ll help with the nausea.” (*Said*) I really hope so otherwise it’s going to be a very long couple of months for me. “Thank you, my love.” He releases an exasperated sigh before climbing on top of the bed, crawling on all fours towards me. When he reaches my side, plops himself next to me and plants a gentle kiss on my forehead. Siya, like the big baby that he is, spoons

me. Anga notes the position we're in and stands up while tucking his hands inside his pants, "Ndiyabona ukuba niyandi gxotha ngoku." (*I can see that you're chasing me away now*) Siya and I both chuckle at his disgruntlement. I'm happy to hear him humorously attack us. I guess he's calmed down from his earlier rant. "We're not, you can always join us if you want to," I tease. "Nizondimithisa nam? No thank you. Let me leave you two before I catch whatever it is that's in the air," he says making his way out of our room. (*So that you can impregnate me as well*) I laugh at his silliness and watch him make his exit out of our bedroom. My brother can be dramatic at times. Siya tightens his arms around me, drawing me even closer to him, "How're you feeling, my love?" I shift my eyes and stare up at him, "Your children are trying to kill me," I tease. He chuckles while brushing his hand on my belly. This one is truly embracing his father figure role, straight.

"I'm sorry, sthandwa sam. Ufuna ndithethe nabo?" (*My love. Do you want me to speak to them*)

"I don't think they can hear us, love."

"I'm sure they do. Soze bangalazi ilizwi lika tat'abo," he deadpans. (*They'd never not know their father's voice*)

"Haike, if you insist. Please ask them to take it easy on me."  
(*Well*)

He lifts the t-shirt that I'm wearing up and gently places his ear against my stomach while brushing it softly.

"Uhm... My champs -"

"Yey, who said I'm carrying boys?" I smack this one's head, in a teasing manner. (*Hey*)

"Ouch! She's abusing me," he whines, whispering to his babies. I laugh.

"Let me warn you, she's a strict one, you'll both see for yourselves as soon as you arrive, so start practising now. Listen guys, could you do me a favour and take it easy on your mom for me? I'll owe you one," he speaks softly. I giggle as I watch him connect with his children.

"Oh champs, your mom and I are so happy that you chose us to be your parents. We can't wait to meet you both. A little secret, we're a bit scared, well you mom is, not me."

"Hey!" I defend, smacking the back of his head, again.

"You see, I told you guys. Let me leave you before I get more bruises. I'll speak to you champs later, okay? Now please be good boys for mommy and daddy, okay?"

He plants a kiss on belly while caressing 'his champs' before positioning himself back next to me. Aw, he spoke so beautifully to our blips. I can already tell that he's going to be

an incredible father. “Hayi ke wena nenyembezi sthandwa sam,” he complains. (*No, you and these tears my love*) I didn’t even realise that I was crying. I release a soft chuckle while wiping my tears with the bed cover... Ja shoot me. Whatever. “Sies baby,” he says to me, snatching the cover away from me. Well, it’s a little bit too late for that now. “So sthandwa sam, you know that you have to tell your mom now about the pregnancy since Anga knows now, right? You know we risk him slipping up and mentioning it to her ungekamxeleli.” (*My love... When you haven’t told her*) I release an exasperated sigh, “He won’t slip up. Why can’t we keep this between us for a while longer?” I try to assure and convince him. “Zamo we don’t have any certainty that he won’t slip up, sthandwa sam. It’s better you tell her and not him. I also don’t want our children’s existence to stay hidden, especially from our families, like some dirty secret that we’re ashamed of. If you’re worried that I’ll deny them, I won’t, I’d never.” (*My love*) One thing about this man, once his mind is set on something, there’s nothing I can do to change it. So, noba ndingathini, I know that he’s dead set on informing our parents sooner rather than later. (*No matter what I say*) “Baby ndiyakuva, if your wish is for us to inform our parents, then let’s do so my love, ayonto embi leyo. Kodwa sizoxelela our families only, andithi?” (*I hear you... It’s not a bad thing. But we’ll only inform... right*) He smiles at me, victoriously. Bloody fool. “Yes, baby only our families. Thank

you themba lam. You've no idea how happy it makes me to know that you're willing to allow us to do this even though you would've preferred for us to wait a bit longer. Just so you know u-" (*My hope*) The doorbell interrupts him, and he gets up from the bed saying he's going to attend to it. Hayi kuse Park Station namhlanje kulendlu, akukabethi no twelve kodwa sesinezinye indwendwe. (*This house is Park Station today, it's not even twelve o'clock yet but we already have another guest*) I hear a female voice screaming before hurried footsteps approach our room. Our bedroom door bursts open and there stands a crazed Lulu by the doorway, "Mommy!" she screams at the top of her lungs, waving her arms in the air, with a broad smile on her face. I look at her, stunned. Honestly, the amount of energy this one has is unmatched, ngaske andiphokozele. (*I wish she could give me some*) She squeals in excitement while jumping up and down the same spot that she's standing in. She unexpectedly runs towards our bed and throws herself on it. I yelp. Her brother walks in our room just as she lays herself beside me. He stands by the door and looks at us, or her, I think, before his voice booms in the entire bedroom, "Lulu, yehla ebhedini yethu, please." (*Get off our bed*) Oh he's annoyed. \*giggle\* Lulu sulks while lazily dragging her body off our bed, but not before she plants unexpected kisses on my belly, "Unomona." (*You're jealous*) Here they go again.

## Chapter 44

As I had imagined the few days that Lulu was with us, visiting her brother, were filled with nothing but drama. Apparently, Siya had told her about our blips on the Friday that we drove down to Port Elizabeth. The ever so dramatic Lulu decided to take the first flight out of Johannesburg and come and witness first-hand how being an aunt would be like to her nephews. Yes, she is also of the notion that the twins are boys. I tried to reason with them that I'm having a boy and a girl, but she and Siya were adamant they know what we're expecting. I got tired of the back and forth and decided that we'll all just have to wait until I give birth to see who was right in determining the sexes of the babies. Now, to say the duo babied me throughout the course of that week would be an understatement. It literally felt like I was suffocating. If it wasn't Lulu persisting to watch me as I bathed, it was Siya wanting to walk me to the bathroom. It got to a point where I even felt like they were going to feed me. I had to sit them down and ask them to tone it down a bit because they were really overdoing it with the whole 'bed rest' thing. Of course, they defended themselves by saying that they were just doing what they thought was best, not only for me but for the babies as well. I appreciated their concern and willingness to assist and be there for me but the degree in which they went about it was really too much. I was suffocating. Anyway, they ended up easing up on being all up in

my face all the time though they didn't ease up on the staying in bed instruction. The minute I'd think of stepping out of the room to go rest in another or on the couch, just to see a different space and breathe different air, they'd send me right back to Siya's bed. I begged, sulked, cried, even used my babies as leverage to try and get my way, and get them to allow me to lay on the couch, or on Lulu's bed but they did not budge. To say it was the longest week of my life, would again be an understatement of the year.

I went back home the following Sunday, home being my apartment; Siya drove me back. A few weeks later I summoned all the courage I had and went home to inform MaDlamini of my pregnancy. I obviously had moral support, Anga though I had to beg him to come back home that weekend as I was sure that MaDlamini was going to either disown me, yell at me just like she did with uInga or she was just going to let me be and say nothing and we all know how silent treatment from your parent is the worst type of punishment. The bugger obviously played hard to get at first because he claimed that he was still wrapping his head around my relationship but in the end, he ended up agreeing.

When the day eventually came, my mom saw right through me even before I uttered a single word. I guess it's true what they say about older people being the OG's of seeing pregnant



women. At first, she seemed to not believe it and asked that I confirm her suspicions and to say she was disappointed when I confirmed them as true, would be another euphemism. Her disappointment greatly stemmed from how she'd hoped that I was going to lead my sibling by example; get married then only start building a family. But unfortunately for her, this was the reality of things. Of course, she knew that I wasn't going to struggle with my babies as I'm financially capable, but that was beside the point. Her fear was how difficult it could be for me to get a husband who'd have no nodus in welcoming a child that was not his own into his home, this is if of course my relationship with the baby's father did not pan out. I knew she was right, but I had hope that it would never boil down to that. Marriage was really not a big deal for me so long as Siya continued to love and support me and our babies, then I was content with the state of our relationship. Of course, she asked who the father of my child was. She thought I was having one baby and boy did she not lose her mind when she found out that I was expecting twins? Yho! (Wow) The dramatic Zandile came alive, let me tell you. She said, "Waqonda Nono awuzuvulela amathanga akho endodeni ekwazi ukukumithisa qha kodwa uzovulela indoda ezokukumithisa AMAWELE? Amawele Nomzamo?" (*You thought you'd not only spread your thighs to a man who'd impregnate you, but to a man who'd impregnate you with TWINS? Twins*) She carried on saying how

unfearful I was and when she eventually wrapped her head around me expecting twins, she started bombarding me with questions regarding the twins' father, "Who's he?", "Where does he live?", "What does he do for a living?", "Is he married?", "Does he have other children?", "Does he know about the pregnancy?" Ndithi intloko yam yayishushu. (*My head was spinning*) Throughout the interrogation Anga had kept quiet and detached from the entire thing but this part of the interrogation brought a glimmer to his eyes. I guess he was excited to see MaDlamini's reaction to the realisation of who my baby daddy was. When I eventually spilled the beans about who fathers my children, my ears were left ringing from how loud she screamed. "Nomzamo, I hope awuthethi ngala tshomi kaAnga," was what she said after she recovered from her shock. (*I hope you're not referring to Anga's friend*) Obviously I was, but instead of responding to her question/statement I restored to hanging my head on my shoulders. To say she was gobsmacked at my non-verbal response would yet again be another understatement. She kept murmuring "Nomzamo awuzoyiki izinto," followed by one clap of her hands after uttering these words. (*You're not afraid of things*) Anga was obviously marvelling at my demise but I didn't care, he was not going to catch me wallowing.

My mom, in line with what Siya had said, mentioned that we had to go and report isisu to his family, but she proposed that

we wait until I started showing before we go. (*The pregnancy*) It's now December and I'm three and a half months pregnant and my stomach is showing. Clearly these two will be big headed just like their father. Last week, two of my uncles from my father's side accompanied me to Siya's home, eLady Frere, to report the pregnancy. Throughout the journey I was nervous about the outcome of the meeting, but in the end everything went well. Siya's family, who were more cheerful than disappointed about their son impregnating me, agreed to come and pay intlawulo ekhaya this Saturday, which is tomorrow, and Siya could not be any more elated that this day has finally come. (*Damages at home*) I guess the traditionalist in him will always rejoice when we embrace our culture and traditions. I'm currently packing a weekend bag with a few items of clothing that I'll wear during my stay at home this weekend. Mom reminded me this morning to pack a dress and a doek because I can't be seen by my baby daddy's family in pants or without a head covering. (*Headscarf*) \*eyeroll\* I didn't argue with her because I was not in the mood to deal with a frustrated and stressed out Zandile. This entire week she's been stressing about having her home perfect for the visitors. She hired a few boys around our neighbourhood to come clean around the yard; cut the grass and neatly pack away any misplaced bricks, pieces of wood or zinc that are laying around the yard carelessly. Basically, ziyabuya kwaMccunu! (*It's hectic at the*

*Mcunu household*) I leave my apartment just before noon as I have to pass by Spar to buy a few things that mom said she's short of for tomorrow. I'd already sent her money on Wednesday to buy all the food ingredients that she'd need to feed her guests, as she calls them, but I guess these are the last items that she missed or didn't have time to look for when she came shopping yesterday. I hail a taxi that drops me off at Spar and proceed with my course and as soon as I'm done, I head out to catch a different taxi that'll take me home. I arrive at home just before three in the afternoon and already the yard is buzzing. I walk in, rather confused at all these people, strangers, who are moving in and out of the yard doing God knows what. "Mama kutheni kuphithizela kangaka phandle?" I ask her as I walk inside the kitchen. (*Why's it so crowded outside*) She's currently seated on the kitchen table, feeding Wami who's placed on her lap with a mouth covered in Cerelac. Oh, how I missed my angel.

"Hayibo Nomzamo, ulibele uba kuza abantu ngomso?" she asks, baffled at my question. (*Wow, have you forgotten that there are people coming tomorrow*)

"Mama, I know kuza abantu ngomso but what I don't understand is why there're so many people moving in and out of our yard? Kuzokuhlulwa isisu qha mos, akho need for yonke lento yenzekayo." (*I know that there are people coming*

*tomorrow... They're here to pay for damages only, there's no need for everything that's happening)*

She ignores me and carries on feeding her baby. I guess I'm too narrow minded for her liking. I shake my head in defeat and walk to the kitchen counter and place the plastic bags on top of the counter and walk to my room to drop off my overnight bag and purse. I fish for my phone inside my purse so I can call my man. I haven't spoken to him all day today and I genuinely miss him. "MaDlamini," he answers on the first ring. My stomach gets filled with butterflies instantly.

"Hi baby, uright?" (*Are you well*)

"Ndiright sthandwa sam. Ninjani nina?" (*I'm fine, my love. How are you guys*)

"We're fine tat'abo. Our boys have been well behaved today."  
(*Daddy*)

We still don't know the sex of the babies but sometimes I entertain the idea of carrying boys and humour him.

"That's good to hear sthandwa sam." (*My love*)

"Bendisithi mandiku check-e nje sthandwa sam. Ndiyakukhumbula." (*I thought I'd check up on you, my love. I miss you*)

“Oh MaDlamini, nam ndiyakukhumbula themba lam. Ndizokubo-” suddenly he stops talking. (*I also miss you, my love. I'll se-*)

“Baby?” I call him as I remove the phone from my ear to see if he's still on the line.

“Ja, ja baby ndisekhona. Jonga, uhm... Masithethe later neh, uta'mnci uyandifuna.” (*Yes, yes*

Advertisement

I'm still here. Look... Let's speak... My uncle needs me)

“Uhm, oh okay. I love you.” I confess, with a bit of hesitation and confusion at his behaviour.

“Uthandwa ndim mkam,” he says, already dropping the call. (*I love you, my wife*)

I stand in the middle of my bedroom with the phone in my hand, a little perplexed. He doesn't sound like himself or maybe he's also stressed about everything going well tomorrow. I shrug the thought away and make my way back to the kitchen. As I walk down the passage, I spot two of my aunts, aunt Rose and aunt Ntombi with my sister, Thandiwe and my cousin, Busisiwe seated on the kitchen chairs. A broad smile spreads across my face. Beside my family, my babies and Siya, these are my favourite people. I'm so happy that they are here. I run down the passage and launch myself on them as soon as I reach

them. “Nono you can’t run in the house, man! Ulibele uba umithi?” my mom scolds. (*Have you forgotten that you’re pregnant*) Hayi wethu, she must forgive me. (*Oh well*) I missed my people. Aunt Rose wraps her arms around me, tightly while giggling at my childishness. “Nono, ndakugqibela nini sana lwam?” (*When was the last time I saw you my baby*) I feel other hands wrap around us as I hover over her on the chair that she’s seated on. It must be aunt Ntombi, Siwe and Thandi. We all start giggling. “Niyawaqalile kengoku,” my mom says with a voice filled with envy. (*You have started now*) We all laugh at her because we know how much we annoy her when we’re together. We’re forever giggling and, in each other's space, and she always complains that we don’t have time for her, but she forgets that she also behaves like this when she’s with her brothers. Uyasilibala. (*She forgets about us*) We eventually break the hug and sit in our respective seats. Gosh I’m so happy that they’re here. I know my uncles and their wives from my father’s side will arrive in the morning, which I’m not looking forward to, but I’m glad that my sister, aunts, and cousin are here. We all know how my father’s family is, so them being here is definitely necessary and appreciated.

“Zandi, have you decided uzopheka ntoni for ngomso?” aunt Rose asks my mom. (*What are you going to cook for tomorrow*)

“Ewe. Inyama yegusha, ne-chicken with rice and salads. Nothing too fancy. Abazango lobola mos.” (*Yes. Lamb, chicken. They aren't coming to pay dowry*)

“Ulindele abantu abangaphi?” (*How many people are you expecting*)

“Khangе batsho ke, but ndizopheka ukutya okuninzi just in case baze bebaninzi.” (*They didn't say but I'll prepare more than enough food... they are many of them who come*)

“Uzobe ekhona umntu wakho wena?” aunt Ntombi asks me. (*Will your man be here, you*) Welele.

“Uhm... andiyazi aunty. Khangе atsho” I whisper back, all shy. (*I don't know. He didn't say*) Thandi and Siwe giggle next to me because bayayazi uba ubuza mabom. (*They know that she did that on purpose*) Aunt Ntombi will always put you on the spot.

“Mm. Hayi ke masiqaliseni uku peela iveg, sizicuthele umsebenzi for ngomso.” (*Well, let's start peeling the vegetables so that we reduce the work for tomorrow*) That would be aunt Rose. She doesn't need to say it twice. We all get up from our seats and follow my mom who's leading us to where she placed the food for tomorrow. Even though it's a small family proceeding, my mom still locked everything inside Inga's room. I want to laugh at her craziness, but I know how things disappear in functions, especially with those idiots coming



tomorrow, so her precautionary measures are understandable. My mom and aunt Rose give us each a bag of something to peel and chop; Thandi is tasked with peeling and grating the carrots, while Siwe is tasked with boiling and dicing the beetroot. I'm given a bag of potatoes while aunt Ntombi took the cabbage. It looks like it's going to be a long afternoon and late evening. Mom and aunt Rose are slave drivers, so we all know that we won't sleep until most of the work is done. *Sigh!*

"Makuvukwe makuvukwe, abantu sebezofika," that's aunt Rose yelling at the top of her voice while barging into my bedroom. (*Wake up, wake up, people are about to arrive*) What does she mean that the people are about to come? Kanti, what time is it? (*And*) I search for my phone underneath my pillow and unlock it; the time is four thirteen. Thandi groans beside me while Siwe aggressively shakes her body while kicking the duvet cover away from her body. These two probably have it worse because they were even drinking last night. Last night we, Siwe, Thandi and I, decided to sleep in one room, my bedroom and catch up. We only slept around two in the morning which means we only got two hours of sleep as the time now is just after four. Looking back at it now, we probably shouldn't have. We should have just gone straight to bed. Ai. "Ningaphindi nindenze ndibuyele apha. Ayindim othe lalani late," aunt Rose threatens us, while making her way out of my room, leaving the door wide open. (*Don't make me come back here again. I'm not*

*the one who said stay up*) We all scurry out of the bed; we know better than to mess with this one. "My head," Thandi whines with both her hands placed on either side of her head. "Not so loud," Siwe says, shushing her. I giggle at the two. I'm sure aunt Rose knows that they were drinking last night that's why she's torturing us by forcing us to wake up this early. I'm sure she would've been lenient and granted us a few more minutes of sleep if these two hadn't drunk themselves into a hangover. "Tshotshoni. Serves you right for drinking while you both knew I couldn't," I tease the duo. (*Yes*) They mumble things I can't quite make out under their breaths while making their way out of my bedroom; Siwe is off to prepare bathing water for us while Thandi is off to the bathroom. I'm left to make the bed. I guess my day has officially begun.

We all bathe and get ready for the day ahead. We're all dressed in below the knee dresses with doek's covering our heads. When I go to the kitchen to have breakfast, I see that my uncles from my father's side and their wives have already arrived. I wonder uba bafike nini because it's still way too early for them to be sitting here, laughing like they own this place. (*When did they arrive*) One thing about them is that they love feeling 'important'. I plate my breakfast and walk back to my bedroom. I'm not about to sit with these hypocrites and break bread with them. Never! I know they have to be here as they need to lead the proceedings but if I had a choice, I'd have excluded them.

As I walk into my room, I find Anga seated on my bed, with a cup of coffee in his hand, "Hiding?" I ask him as I lower myself next to him. He nods his head without even looking at me, "I hate them," he confesses. I know the feeling because I hate them too. We both sit in silence, me eating my breakfast while he sips on his coffee. "Inga should arrive pha ngo eight. He took a bus from Jozi last night," Anga speaks. (*Here around*) "He's... He's coming?" I ask, shocked. "Yes, uthe ufuna uzokukuxhasa," he responds while taking yet another sip of his coffee. (*He said he's coming to support you*) Tears well in my eyes while my heart swells in joy. I didn't expect this at all. I nod my head and finish up eating.

We're all seated in the room, and Anga is with us as we wait for the guests to arrive. Soon we hear a car pull up, but I don't even bother going to check if it's them or not, I'm too nervous. My heart is racing while my palms are sweaty as hell. "Relax mntase," Siwe whispers beside me, clasping my hand into hers. (*My sister*) I quickly nod before taking a deep breath and exhaling, slowly as I try to calm my nerves. A few minutes after our guests are outside, Anga is called by one of my uncles and leaves the room. Suddenly I feel hot. I stand up from the bed and start pacing up and down my room. Thandi and Siwe are sitting on the edge of my bed, watching me. I aggressively remove the doek from my head and throw it somewhere across my room. The duo on the bed is still watching me. The door

bursts open and my mom, aunt Rose and aunt Ntombi stand there, with faces that reflect an emotion I can't quite comprehend. I wonder what's going on. "Zamo, ubukhe wathetha notata wabantwana bakho namhlanje?" my mom asks me. (*Have you spoken to the father of your kids today*) I shake my head 'no'. "Why?" I ask her back. "Umalume wakho uthi aba bantu bathi baze ukwakha ubudlelwane nathi," she murmurs. (*Your uncle says that these people say they've come to build a relationship with us*) I hear Thandi gasp. A relationship? "I don't understand mama. What do you mean?" I ask with my brown knitted while moving my eyes in between her, my aunts, my sister and Siwe. "They're here to pay lobola for you, mntanam not just isisu." (*Dowry... My child... Damages*) What?

## Chapter 45

Lobola? (*Dowry*) That's what my mom said right? That this idiotic man of mine isn't here to do as we'd agreed upon but is doing something more, something we had not even discussed or agreed upon. I know he's been referring to me as 'mkam', but he's done so since we met and there was no way that I could have known that he was going to marry me this soon. My mom and aunts continue to stand by the door as they wait for me to respond to what they've just told me. I'm literally going to kill this idiot the moment I land my eyes on him. How could he? I know he loves me and so do I but to go about this kanje? (*Like this*) No man! My feet are literally boring holes on the floor as I pace up and down my bedroom. The heat I felt earlier when his uncles arrived is nothing compared to how I'm feeling right now. "Please unzip me," I say to my sister. I turn my back towards her so that she can lower the zip of this dress. I need to feel free. "Zamo wenzani ngoku?" aunt Ntombi asks. (*What are you doing now*) "I... I can't breathe aunty, I need to get out of this dress," I say to hear with tears leaking from my eyes. I'm literally rip the dress off my body, with no care in the world of how I look like a lunatic at this moment. "Nono awukwazi ukuqhubeka unje. Kufuneka usixelele ukuba sizamkele na iindwendwe zakho okanye sizijike. Ufuna senze njani sana lwam?" my mom says as she walks to where I'm standing before enveloping me into a bear hug. (*You can't carry on like*

*this. You need to tell us whether we should welcome your guests or turn them back. What do you want us to do my baby)* I just start wailing. Yintoni le indenza yona le ndoda nkos'yam? (*What is this man doing to me, my lord*) My mom brushes my back while trying to calm me down, "Nono akwenziwa kanje kaloku. You're going to upset the babies." (*This is not how it's done*) I know she's right; I need to calm down. I've been doing such a great job at managing my stress levels and my babies have been growing so well, but what Siya is doing to me right now is so upsetting. He's making me decide what my love for him means. If I turn his family back, he'll interpret that as though I don't love him, or that I don't want to marry him, of which neither is true but at the same time, I don't like nor appreciate being cornered into doing something that I'm not ready for, especially something this big. I know he's a big advocate of doing things that benefit me, and to the greatest of extents, all he's ever done has always been for my benefit. But this, this is taking it a bit too far.

My mom pulls me to the bed and asks the ladies to excuse us. I sit on top of the bed with nothing on but a bra and thong, and mucus trailing down my nose. The ladies excuse us and leave me with a concerned Zandile. "Baby, I understand that you may be scared right now because this is not what you'd anticipated but baby this man loves you. I understand that he may not have gone about it the right way by communicating this with you

before but baby this is a clear depiction of his love for you and there's nothing more beautiful than a man who wants to rightfully make you his wife. Look, mna ndiyakwazi, unentloko eqinileyo and even if he'd spoken to you about this, you would've still found excuses to reject his proposal. Now I'm not saying accept his proposal if you're not ready to do so but speak to him, hear what he has to say then make your decision, okay?" (*I know you, you're very stubborn*) I nod my head.

"Good. Ndizohamba kengoku ndiyothetha nomalume bakho ndibacele ukuba bakunike umzuzu while you speak to him, okay?" (*I'm going to leave you now and talk to your uncles and ask them to give you a minute*)

"Okay. Enkosi ma," I thank her, throwing my arms around her. (*Thank you*)

"It's my pleasure sthandwa sam. And Nomzamo?" (*My love*)

"Ma?"

"Speak to him, ungashoutisi, ndiyakwazi." (*Don't shout, I know you*)

"I will," I mumble.

She gets up from my bed and passes me my phone that's on the floor with the dress that I was wearing before she walks out. I suck in my breath before dialling his numbers. I really

hope I'll be able to keep my cool. It rings once before he picks up,

"Sthandwa sam," he breathily says. (*My love*) I keep quiet, he needs to lead this conversation.

"Ndiyaxolisa Lusibalikhulu." (*I'm sorry*)

"Ngantoni?" (*For what*)

"Ngongathethi nawe kuqala ndifumane imvume yo'thumela iinkomo kokwenu." (*For not talking to you first and getting your permission for your hand in marriage*)

"Why would you do this though?"

"Ngenxa yokuba ndiyakuthanda Nomzamo, ngaphezu kokuba ucinga kwaye ndifuna uvuka ecaleni kwakho ubom bam bonke de sohlulwe kukufa." (*Because I love you, more than you can ever imagine and I want to wake up next to you for the rest of my life until death do us part*)

"But..." I cry.

"Ndiyayazi ukuba uyoyika sthandwa sam, kodwa ndikhona kwaye ndiyathembisa ukuba ndiza kuhlala ndilapha. Into ekufuneka uyenzile kukuvuma ukuba ngowam, ngonaphakade." (*I know you're scared, my love, but I'm here and I promise I'll always be here. All you have to do is agree to be mine, forever*)

An unexpected sob escapes my lips.



“Ngoku uthini, bambo lwam? Will you marry me?” (*Now what do you say, my love?*)

I nod, forgetting that he can't see me.

“Andikuva MaNdlovu,” he says, chuckling on the other side of the line. (*I can't hear you*)

I giggle while wiping my tears away from my eyes.

“Yes, I'll marry you.” Though I'm petrified of what I'm agreeing to, I know I wouldn't want to walk this path with anyone else but him.

“Oh, waze wandenza umntu, MaDlamini. Ndiyabulela Jama ka Sjadu. Ndiyabulela mkam. Now I can't wait to see you.” (*You've made me a person... Thank you... Thank you my wife*)

“Wait to see me? Yima, ulapha?” (*Wait, you're here*)

“Ewe sthandwa sam, ndisemotweni ngaphandle.” (*Yes, my love, I'm in the car outside*)

I rush towards the window and shift the lace curtain aside so I can have a peek at the cars that are parked outside our yard.

“Which one?”

“Kutheni unganxibanga?” He throws a question back, ignoring mine. (*Why aren't you dressed*)

“Wait, you can see me?”

“Ewe, now tell me why unganxibanga?” (*Yes... why aren't you dressed*)

“Long story, love. Now, tell me, which car are you in?”

“The black BMW.”

“Oh, I can see it. I'll can't wait to see you myen'am.” (*My husband*)

“Phind'utsho,” I hear him say after releasing a low groan. (*Say it again*)

“Myen'wam,” I say with a broad smile on my face. (*My husband*)

“I love you MaDlamini.”

“Uthandwa ndim.” (*I love you*)

I hang up and place my phone against my chest, clasping it tightly in my hand. I snap out of my daze and hurriedly put on my dress and rush out of my bedroom to find my mom. I'm a mess; my hair is not combed, the back of this dress is open but andikhathali. (*I don't care*) I find her in the kitchen sitting with my aunts, sister and cousin whispering, gossiping about me

I guess. “Zamo?” my mom says when she spots me walking inside. “Ma, you can let his uncles in,” I say, while fidgeting with my hands. “Are you sure Nono?” my mother inquires, with a cocked brow. I nod my head, “I'm sure ma.” My aunts get up

from their seats and start ululating while waving their hands in the air, running around the kitchen. Their excitement rubs off on me a bit and I find myself smiling. “Okay, okay. Ma, please go and inform omalume so that they can let my in-laws in,” I interrupt their celebration. (*The uncles*) “Khanimveni ‘my in-laws’ kodwa umntu ebesele ezozichamela not so long ago,” aunt Ntombi mocks me. (*Look at her saying... but she was already close to urinating herself*) Whatever! The point is that’s no longer the situation; right now, the situation is that I’m ready to marry my best friend, the father of my children, so they just need to relax. My mom walks away with a proud smile on her face, I guess to inform my uncles on the new developments while Aunt Ntombi instructs me to go back to my bedroom and stay there until I’m called out. I leave aunt Ntombi with aunt Rose and Siwe as they have to finish off cooking the food we’d prepared last night while Thandi walks back with me to my bedroom to keep me company as per custom.

The minute we close the door behind us, Thandi starts jumping up and down in excitement, “Oh my God I can’t believe that you’re going to be someone’s wife,” she says, panting. I join her in her escapades and scream, careful to not be too loud. “Oh mntase, I’m so happy for you, you deserve this and so much more,” she says to me as she calms down from her high while dragging me toward my bed. (*My sister*) I know what she means

by this, I've really come a long way to get to where I am and I wouldn't be here, and this happy without their support.

"So, tell me, ungumntu onjani?" (*What kind of person is he*)

"Oh mntase, he's such a wonderful man; so loving and understanding. Even when I'm being unnecessarily difficult, and we end up arguing, he's always calm and treats me with tenderness and patience." (*My sister*)

"He sounds like a true gentleman, mntasekhaya. I'm really happy that you've found someone who loves unconditionally. Ngoku wamitha nomitha mntase? Ei wena Zamo" (*My sister... Now you are pregnant, my sister? Hey Zamo*)

"I know and it was so unexpected yazi. But I honestly think that he impregnated me on purpose, ndiyamkrokrela." (*You know... I suspect him*)

"Hayi Zamo you can't be serious," she says laughing. (*No*)

"I'm telling you mntase. just look at how he's gone about this lobola business? Undiqubule. uSiyabulela ngutsotsi I'm telling you." (*My sister... He cornered me. He's a crook*)

Thandi just laughs at me thinking that I've gone mad but akayazi lendoda ndithandana nayo. (*She doesn't know the man I'm in love with*) He's fully capable of doing such. She gets up and stands behind me while I sit on the bed and she fixes the zip of my dress and ties my doek on my head while we both

wait for what's next. We both have never experienced nor been a part of something like this before so we don't know what to expect. A while later my bedroom creaks open and aunt Rose walks in and informs me that the elders are asking for me. She covers my shoulders with a light blanket and tells me to only speak when spoken to and to not look at any of the men in the room in the eyes. She leads me out of my bedroom where I sit on the floor and answer the question that my uncles have for me, "Do you know these people?" Of course, I know these people, well their child at least, but ewe I know them. (Yes) After asking me the question I'm excused and I'm welcomed back into my room by an overly exhilarated Thandi. Ai this one is just like uLulu I swear. She asks me to narrate what went down in the 'other room', which I do but mid-storytelling I'm interrupted by the door bursting open followed by a running Inga who launches himself on me. I laugh happily as I hug him back, tightly. "You're here," I say. "Of course, I am. I wouldn't have missed this for the world," he says, releasing me from his hold, to admire me at arms length. I blush, obviously. My brother has never admired me like this and he's truly putting me on the spot. "Umhle mntakatata," he compliments while twirling me around. (*You look beautiful, my sister*) "Thank you fano," I tease him, fully aware that he despises that name. (*Boy*) He scowls at me, but I know he's just pulling my strings as soon as he laughs. We're all chirpy inside my bedroom as we wait for

the negotiations to conclude when we suddenly hear ululations erupt from somewhere in the house. I guess this is it. This means that I'm traditionally someone's wife. My heart hammers against my chest as the realisation settles. I don't even know what the next step is. I guess this husband of mine... Mm 'husband' of mine; kind of has a nice ring to it. Anyway, Siya will have to educate me on what the next steps will be and what's expected of me.

My bedroom door bursts open, and I internally roll my eyes. My bedroom is honestly becoming OR Tambo International Airport now. Aunt Ntombi barges inside with a wide smile on her face, "They are done my baby. Everything went well, you are now umfazi womntu," she says while walking to my direction to envelope me into a warm hug. (*Someone's wife*) The hug is filled with unspoken words and emotions, and I know as much as she's happy for me, she's also feeling rather emotional as I now belong to someone else. I feel more hands join in on our moment and engulf us in a bear hug. Singing erupts from behind us and we all withdraw from each other and snap our heads to the direction of the voice. My mom dances by the doorway, with a headscarf in her hand, waving it around in a celebratory manner with tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. How she can sing while being so emotional is honestly beyond me. I leave everyone and rush to my mother's side as emotions overwhelm me. Like the loving mother that she's

always been, she stretches her arms out for me and envelopes me in her embrace the moment I crash into her.

“Andisakuvuyeli mntan’am,” she whispers against my ear. (*I’m so happy for you my child*) I know she is, and I know this was her wish from the moment I informed her about my pregnancy so now that her worries have been washed away, I can see how elated she is. “You knew, didn’t you?” I ask while still wrapped in her embrace. She nods her head in agreement with a smile plastered on her face and now it all makes sense. uMaDlamini would’ve never allowed those men to proceed with the negotiations if she wasn’t aware. Even if I’d said I’m ready, she would’ve rather asked that they come back another time until she’s certain that this is truly what I wanted to do.

She takes a step back from me and wipes my tears that have been falling from my eyes from the moment aunt Ntombi barged inside my room. “I know how much you love him, and I can tell that he loves you too, but I had to hide this away from you ngoba ndiyakwazi unjani,” she explains. (*Because I know how you are*) I giggle knowing that she’s absolutely right. If I’d known about Siya’s intentions any earlier, I would’ve said no or I would’ve simply made a run for it. So, I can’t fault her or him for hiding this from me. Now it makes sense why there were people moving up and down our yard izolo. (*Yesterday*) “I hope awusiqumbelanga?” she asks, worriedly. (*You’re not angry*) I shake my head ‘no’, “No mama, andiniqumbelanga. I know

you'd never lead me astray," I confess. (*I'm not angry at you*) "I'm glad to hear that sana lwam," she says, rather relieved. (*My baby*) "Yiza ke nontombi uzobona abantu bakho basemzini," she says softly while fixing my headscarf that's now tilted to the side. (*Come girly so you can see your in-laws*) I start straightening my dress as though ironing out the creases with my hands before I hear laughter erupt behind me. "It's a little bit too late to be nervous now, mntase. Uthathiwe ngoku," Thandi mocks me. (*My sister. You're taken now*) I glare at her and watch as she runs to hide behind Inga who tries to shove her away while laughing at her mischievousness. "Hlukana nomntan'am wena Thandiwe," my mom playfully scolds her. (*Leave me child alone*) I playfully stick out my tongue at her which she returns by scrunching her nose multiple times at me. One thing about my siblings and I is that we're a very playful and childish bunch. My phone vibrates from inside my pocket, and this seems to interrupt the jolly ambiance in the room. I fish it out of my dress pocket and see my husband's name pop up on the screen. I blush. "Must be nice kwa love lives here" aunt Ntombi teases which causes the entire room to erupt into loud laughter. (*At*) Anga walks in just as we're all still laughing, "What's going on? What did I miss?" He directs the questions to nobody in particular. "Hayi sana lwam usisi wakho usemathandweni akasasiboni noba sikhona," my mom replies to him with a little humour laced in her voice. (*Oh, my child,*



*your sister is so in love that she doesn't see us anymore even if we are there)* Anga laughs at his mother's dramatic self because he knows how she is. "Ndimazi enjalo mama," he continues to engage my mother in her banter, "Anyway, omalume bayanicela ukuba nize e lounge," he says walking out. *(I know her like that... The uncles are asking you to come to the lounge)* "Mas'hambeni bethuna," my mom says, already leading the pack out of my room. *(Let's go people)* Aunt Rose quickly throws the same blanket that I had draped over my shoulders earlier over my shoulders again and we make our way out of my bedroom. As we walk inside the lounge, I take a peek at who's there and I spot my husband seated next to one of his uncles looking at me with his lips curved into a beautiful and proud smile on his face. As I'm about to tear my eyes away from him, he winks at me and I blush, hiding my face from him. I hear him and someone else chuckle softly from somewhere in the room. We all get seated on the chairs that are placed against the wall before my eldest uncle starts introducing us to Siya's family. After the introductions my uncle informs us that they will be seated outside and that is where we should serve them their food. The men make their way out of the lounge to go sit under the trees outside while engaging in light conversation leaving us behind.

We all walk to the kitchen and divide our tasks; Siwe is responsible for taking a basin that's filled with water and soap

to our guests for them to wash their hands in while Thandi and I are tasked with serving them their food. I'll give it to my mom, my aunts; the food looks and smells mouth-watering. I first serve his uncles before walking up to him, bending my knees slightly before handing him his plate. "Enkosi mkam," he says, with his pearly whites on full display. (*My wife*) Again, I flush. As I'm about to head back into the house, he grabs my hand, startling me. "Have you eaten?" I shake my head 'no'. "Then we'll eat together," he says, pulling me to sit on his lap. I yelp, "Siya abantu abadala," I remind him. (*The elders*) Has he forgotten where we are? "You're my wife now, so bazo qina," he says, shoving a spoon in my mouth. (*They'll be fine*) Yho this man. (*Wow*) I turn to see if anyone is looking at us and I find all his uncles looking at us with amused faces. Gosh uSiyabulela nkos'yam.

(*My goodness*) We carry on eating while watching our families celebrate our union in the distance; aunt Ntombi, aunt Rose, mom, Thandi and Siwe ululating while dancing with my uncle's wives. Inga and Anga are sitting with our uncles who are laughing and drinking umqombothi while sweeping their eyes across the yard, clearly proud of themselves for the work they've done in joining these two families together.

(*Traditional beer*) We suddenly hear a car approaching at high speed and we all snap our heads to its direction amazed as no

car drives like this here; the roads aren't that proper. Before we can comprehend what's happening, a hail of bullets rains through our yard. BANG! BANG! BANG!

.....**The End**.....

**For daily latest books please visit <https://novelsguru.com/>**

**And also visit my Facebook page, and like and share it**

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3345453369055623>**

Thank you guys for downloading this book from my site please keep visiting <https://novelsguru.com/> for supporting me and also don't forget to share it with your friends.

Dear Friends please download these books direct from <https://novelsguru.com/> bookmark this site for latest African books, and also supporting me Thanks.