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ILLECEBROUS 1

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Me:God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

Thimna:Amen.

I opened my eyes and sighed.

Daniel: Hopefully we're not going to be late.

Me: Hopefully we are late.

Zed:Ah Mom, they might be naming grandmother as the new head pastor.

Me:A woman in charge of all the Eastern branches?Such a dream come true,there must be lack of male pastors.

Thimna: Same as how your boss skips you when there's a promotion, probably understand why you are bitter. Not all women are like you Dolly.

Daniel:Thimna!

Thimna:I could have been studying or out with my friends not this stupid trip to see a family she abandoned. Oh wait she sure loves doing that.

Me:Thimna if you don't zip your mouth,I will hit-

Thimna:08000 55555 Mother.

I sighed, she put her earphones on.

Daniel: She's a nightmare,teenage stage is a nightmare.

Me:She talks to you though.

Daniel:Slow down on the strict part love.

Zed: You are the best Mom don't worry.

I smiled as we got in the car,I dreaded going home but everyone was called back home and I was left with no option

Me:I wouldn't miss my mother's crowning.

Denise: You can do better than that Dolly.

Me: Remember my husband?

Daniel: You are one of sister in-laws right?

Denise: There's only three. This must be Thimna and Zed, they are so beautiful.

Me:This is Aunt Denise,my older brother's wife.

Thimna:We didn't know that you had brothers until few days ago.

Me:Teenagers.

Denise:I am sure Sesethu would make her feel at home,I am getting my groceries.

Me:Who is here?

Denise:Mama isn't here,she went to town.

Me:Oh okay.

We walked in.

Voices>Welcome home!

I jumped,my brothers,their kids wives and some of the church members were there.

Me:Thank you guys.

I greeted everyone.

Smanga: Little sister hello.

Me:Hi big brother.

Vuyo:Hey,hey.

Themba:The little sister,hey,hey. Who knew that you would show up? You?

Voice: Just shine again. Isn't time passed for that?

My only and older sister Nolukhanyo Alanne.

Me:Khanyo.

Nolukhanyo:I thought your body was the only thing coming here.

Luckily my kids were with others to hear this.

Me:Look I am just here-

Nolukhanyo:To watch Mom receive her rightful position, aren't we all?

Me:Then I leave.

Nolukhanyo:The faster

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the better then.

Vuyo: Can't you just get along?

Me:Khanyo has a problem with-

Nolukhanyo: Your entire existence you mean?

She turned and walked away. Welcome home Dolly.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO MOTHIBAKGOMO

I sat on the couch naked,my phone vibrated yet again. I heard him groan from his sleep,he finally raised his head.

Me:Hey there handsome.

He looked at me in confusion.

Me: Archbishop Pele are you alright?

Archbishop: I have an explicit headache, what happened?

I got up.

Archbishop:Why are you naked?! Jesus wear something!

I walked towards him and grabbed his laptop.

Me:Here ,press play be sure your sugar levels aren't too low.

I moved back he pressed play.

Archbishop:I didn't -

Me:Have sex with me and enjoyed it? There's a whole entire video of it.

Archbishop: You made tea-

Me:And?Go on.

Archbishop: What did you put in that tea you crazy woman?

He was about to jump when I took out my gun.

Me:I wouldn't act like Superman if I were you Archbishop,unless you prefer dying.

Archbishop:Are you going to hold me hostage?In my own damn house?

Me:Ah Man of God you are swearing. If you are curious though,I just needed one silver bullet and you were allover me. I do have to say,I understand why your stupid wife is still around.

Archbishop:What do you want you crazy witch?

Me:On Sunday,there will a very lovely speech on how women should be given a chance at being the main pastor of all the Eastern branches,so on and other lovely, believable lies. Then you announce me as that woman.

Archbishop: Woman?! Your husband would have been -

Me: You can put him then. Oh no you can't,he can't move any single muscle at all. I discovered something called video editing,it solely means that I can make the video look like rape. Few bruises here and there,imagine the headlines.

Archbishop:No-

Me:This is a woman's world, you could go to prison for years and your family winds up on the streets. Only because of one tiny thing,I am sure you can see how crazy I can be.

Archbishop: You are going to straight to hell!

Me: With you driving, welcomed by the seven sins ,oh my imagine the hot hug from Lucifer. Rrrrrrrrr.

I got up and dressed.

Me: Don't disappoint me,fake crying is tiring. I made copies,a whole bunch. See you on Sunday tiger.

NOLUKHANYO[ALANNE] NGONDO

Me:Let me guess ,since she's home, she'll take over everything.

Simanga:Why are you so against her?Out of all people you should be happy that she's back.

Me:Back? Everything was fine when she wasn't around.

A knock echoed,Simanga jumped.

Me:Who is it?

Denise:Hey Mom is here. Have you seen Smanga?Themba said he was talking to you.

Me: I am sure he's around the big house somewhere. I'll be down.

I fixed my dress as he fixed his pants.

Smanga:Give her a break.

Me:of course you adore your little sister,brother,it doesn't mean that I should at all.

I opened and walked out of my bedroom. The kids were helping my mother with the plastics.

Me:Good evening.

Mom:Hey baby.

Me:How was your meeting with the Archbishop?

Mom: He just wanted to talk about my readiness.

Me:He wants you to take over.

Mom:Bokamoso is my name darling. Is your husband here yet?

Me: He'll be here tomorrow. Dolly is here.

She looked surprised.

Mom:I am surprised she showed up. Let me go and greet her.
I followed her,Dolly was busy talking to our father but he sat there unmoving.

Mom:If you came home when you were asked, you would have known that he was sick. He can't talk nor move.

Dolly jumped.

Dolly:Ma.

Mom:How long do you plan on staying?

Dolly:Were thinking of staying for the rest of the holiday.

Mom: Just you know,I don't want trouble in my house.

Dolly: It's not like I am going to start-

Mom: I don't want your nonsense here if you desire staying under this roof Dolly. Now why isn't everyone on the dinner table? They are 3 minutes late.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 3

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Ray: Hey honey.

Me: "I am going to be late honey". Where were you?

Ray: I-

Me: Meeting with your other pregnant wife right?

Ray: I thought we agreed on this.

Me: Because I had no choice plus I can't have kids.

A knock echoed.

Me: Come in.

Sesethu walked in.

Sesethu: Good morning rakgadi., Uncle Ray. Uhm Grandma is looking for everyone.

Me: I'll be right there sweetheart.

She walked out.

Me: Get dressed, we're going to a convention.

Ray: You didn't tell me that.

Me: If you had arrived on time you would have known,not when everyone was sleeping. Who was going to tell you?The sleep?

Ray: You have really lost all your respect for me-

Me:Ohh I did the moment I realised how fast you wanted to replace me dear. Chop chop,Mom hates late comers.

I grabbed my hat and walked out of the room. Smanga walked out at the same time,we looked at each other and grinned. Denise stood there watching us but this time it was different,she looked curious. Smanga walked down the stairs as I stood waiting for Ray,Denise walked to me.

Denise: Would you tell me if Smanga was cheating on me?

Me:Where is that coming from?

Denise:Or you would protect him because he's your brother?

Me: I am definitely sure he wouldn't tell me.

Denise:Yet every time he disappears he's been with you, I have come to notice that. I don't know why you would help your brother to cheat on his family.

Me:Well you should start asking yourself not me, you keep saying my brother,my brother yet somehow somewhere you think I owe you loyalty. Honey you married him or me?I owe you nothing,if he's not happy with you anymore then I will

support his decision. Til then don't ever think I am some
skwiza,move slender.

I walked past,at least she thought I was helping him whereas I
wasn't. Everyone sat on their chairs.

Mom:Thimna?

Thimna:Nice to meet you Granny. You do not look a day over
30 though. Are you sure you didn't adopt all these old people
calling you Mom?

Everyone laughed.

Mom:I don't know what to say about that but they are my kids.

Thimna:Highly doubt it.

Mom: You are just like your mother.

Thimna:Why did she leave?

Mom:Why don't you ask her?

Thimna:She refuses to tell me anything including my father.

Vuyo:How old are you?

Thimna:My father must be one of the reasons she left.

Me:He was old,looks like a grandfather right now. You look just
like him.

Silence.

Mom: Let's eat.

Me:Honey find Mzi Mhlekwa, that's your father.

Everyone gasped.

Mom: Nolukhanyo a moment!

Me:If you sleep with married men as a teenager then dear you are just like her.

I got up and walked to my mother,Dolly sat with her eyes looking down.

Me:I am not done yet dear Dolly.

As I turned,a hand connected with my face,I jumped as I looked at my mother.

Mom: You will never do that at my table or I will hit you again.

Me:The truth that your favourite child disappointed you and I must be hit?

Mom:I have a favourite child too?

Me: Everyone knows that Dolly had always been your favourite child, you are not even talking about how she stood in front of our church and called you a witch. How she poisoned me and my baby because I threatened to tell you the truth about the fact she was sleeping with her own principal. That is your little

angel,I lost my baby by the way Dolly. You will find me at church.

I walked out.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I took deep breaths and turned, everyone looked astonished and Dolly looked like she was going to faint.

Me: Finish up so we can leave.

Thimna: You are evil!

She ran out of the house,I sighed.

Me:I expect everyone at church!Smanga push your father.

I was frustrated as I walked to the car.

Elijah: Pastor Mothibakgomo.

Me:Tell your son that I want everyone in church, willing or not.

Elijah:Yes Mme.

Me:Argh.

I got in the car and sat down.

Me:I am not letting these kids get to me ever.

I started the car

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as I was about to drive the passenger door opened and Dolly got in. I drove. There were times, I asked myself how is it possible for my own child to do what she did? Was I suppose to stand by and watch her ruin her life with an older man? Was I suppose to pretend that she wasn't capable of murder? The youngest child, per culture is always the little angel but mine proved otherwise. Dating an older man could have been forgiven but she went and told the whole church that I was a witch, a vile and evil woman. Last straw was when she poisoned Khanyo for telling the truth who was expecting her first child. I lost all the forgiveness I had in my heart, it was true I didn't know my own child as much as I thought. I looked at her as she stared into space, I wanted to hug but as more I looked at her, I remembered everything she's done. It's like it played over and over again.

Me: Running is not going to change anything, pretending that you didn't do what you did isn't going to change anything.

Dolly: Now everyone knows what I did.

Me: How long were you planning to hide the truth Dolly?

Dolly: Til I die.

Me: You are just like your father, always thinking that running away is the solution. You think that you can hurt people and get

away with it, look at him. He thought he could just take everything from and look at where he landed.

I gripped the steering.

Dolly: Mom?

Me: It's so full, I can feel it.

Dolly: Feel what?

I parked the car and grabbed my purse, walked out.

Me: Your duty is to make sure that the kids and your siblings are here.

Dolly: What?!

Me: You heard me. Ohh Sister Lumka!

I followed her.

Sister Lumka: Pastor Bokamoso I almost thought you were going to be late.

Me: Everyone is here?

Sister Lumka: All branches along with their pastors are here, your chair is rea-is that Dolly?

Me: Hopefully you put my chair in the middle?

Sister Lumka: Ohh yes yes.

Me: Archbishop Pele?

Sister Lumka: He'll be right next to you.

Me:Mhm.

I walked past her and walked inside the hall,I greeted few of my church members and walked to my chair. Archbishop Pele shifted uncomfortable as I walked past him and sat on my chair.

Me: Don't be so uncomfortable Archbishop,I won't bite.

DENISE

We sat in the car in silence.

Lihle:Very awkward day.

Anele:Tell me about it.

Lihle:At least now we know why this tension.

Anele:Dolly still looks like a saint besides Khanyo,well Khanyo is a whole angel.

Me:As if.

Anele:What is that suppose to mean?

Me:Our dear sister in-law is covering up for Smanga's dating.

Anele:Or she's the one sleeping with him.

Lihle:Heh?!

Anele: That's why they fought last night, Themba told me exactly what Vuyo and Smanga were talking about.

Me: You are joking right.

Lihle: She's not.

Me: That's impossible, there's no way she's sleeping with my husband.

Lihle: I did tell you stupid woman that she's so dense, she wouldn't believe that.

Me: I am the one who is dense? The hell?

Lihle: Are you trying to tell me that you never noticed that your husband sleeps with his half sister? It's either you are slow or just plain stupid.

Me: You are not calling me stupid.

Lihle: I am calling the wind stupid dear.

Anele: Guys now you know the truth, why are you fighting?

Lihle: She's in a wrong zone, thinks we're making things up.

Me: No, it can't be. Maybe he's just sharing a bed with her not that. It's his sister.

Lihle: The sky is yellow! incest is the name you stu-

Anele:Thembelihle stop it!

Me:No,no,it can't be happening to me.

It all started making sense as I realised that all the signs were there and I didn't know. I sat shaking on the chair.

Me:No marn. It's impossible.

Lihle: They just shared sex girl.

Anele:Lihle slow down.

Lihle:I am not running.

Anele: You are something else uyezwa?

Lihle: Fabulous I know.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 3

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Ray: Hey honey.

Me:"I am going to be late honey". Where were you?

Ray:I-

Me: Meeting with your other pregnant wife right?

Ray:I thought we agreed on this.

Me: Because I had no choice plus I can't have kids.

A knock echoed.

Me:Come in.

Sesethu walked in.

Sesethu:Good morning rakgadi.,Uncle Ray. Uhm Grandma is looking for everyone.

Me: I'll be right there sweetheart.

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Me:Get dressed, we're going to a convention.

Ray: You didn't tell me that.

Me: If you had arrived on time you would have known,not when everyone was sleeping. Who was going to tell you?The sleep?

Ray: You have really lost all your respect for me-

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Lihle:I am not running.

Anele: You are something else uyezwa?

Lihle: Fabulous I know.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 4

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I watched as everyone stepped out of the church, I was uncomfortable and I wanted to leave.

Daniel: Hello love.

I looked at him and sighed.

Me: Look I don't want to fight with you right now.

Daniel: Well I do understand why you didn't want to talk, everyone is not perfect and is bound to make mistakes. I wasn't expecting you to be a little angel but could have told me the truth. Thimna-

Voice: Dolly?

My blood went cold as I turned, there he was still looking fresh as before. He didn't even look that old.

Me: Mr Mhlekwa.

Daniel was stunned.

Mzi: Fancy seeing you here.

Me: This is my husband Daniel.

I could feel sweating as Thimna and the other kids stepped out, everyone seemed to notice or it was my anxiety. I looked at her as she looked at the man, the resemblance was uncanny that was true.

Me: We should get going.

I grabbed Daniel.

Daniel: Well he looks just like her.

Me: I don't care!

Daniel: You might not, Thimna does want to know her father.

Me: He's married!

Daniel: She's his daughter either way!

Me: No, no, she's not going anywhere near him.

Daniel: You had the right ages ago not anymore, Thimna has to know her father with or without your approval. You'll find me in the car.

I sighed.

Thimna: Was that my father?

I jumped and looked at her.

Me: I-yes.

Thimna: He doesn't want to know me, does he?

Me: This is why I didn't want you to know Thimna.

Thimna: Is it because of the affair? Is there something wrong with me?

Me: He's married tha-

She just left me standing and walked to the car. I looked at the cross.

Me: Forgive me father.

I could feel eyes on me, I turned and Mzi stood there with his mouth open.

Me: Oh God, don't do this to me.

I walked to the car and stepped in. This was going to be the longest day.



Unfortunately we were a little too early at home, Thimna locked herself in the room and Zed went to the TV room and my husband didn't want to speak at all. So I decided to walk around my home. It was actually bigger and better than before, there were more trees and flowers unlike before.

Voice: Miss Mothibakgomo.

I continued walking.

Voice: Mrs Mthombeni.

I turned.

Me:Sorry , I am not used in being called Miss Mothibakgomo.

Elijah:It has been a long last time I saw you.

Me: You are still the one taking care of everything in this house.

Elijah:Well working for your mother has its benefits.

Me:How was working with my father?

Elijah: I never really worked for him, even when he took over the church I still took orders from Ma not him.

Me:Why not?

Elijah:Look he was your father,a good one and changed when he took over the church. It's like being a pastor made him turn to something we didn't know,even your mother was surprised.

Me:Did he hurt her?

Elijah:I have to check on the cars,it was nice to see you Dolly.

He turned in a hurry and left me there. Why did he just change the subject when I asked if my father hurt my mother or what? What really happened when I left?

LIHLE MANZIMA

I watched as he continued typing on his laptop.

Me:Denise knows that Smanga is sleeping with Khanyo.

He turned so fast.

Me:Well Themba told the wrong person and I wasn't about to deny the truth.

Vuyo: You could have pretended not to know.

Me: Why would I do that huh?To protect your reckless brother?What is he to me?

Vuyo:Do you know that this will get to my mother?

Me:Hey Anele spilt the beans and I supported the truth.

Vuyo: You could have kept quiet!

Me:I could have but then I didn't,I wasn't planning to. Do you understand that if this comes out,he doesn't stand the chance of taking over the church?

Vuyo: What?!

Me:If he can sleep with his own young sister,who says that he cannot do it to kids?

Vuyo:He wouldn't -

Me:Why would Nolukhanyo agree in sleeping with her own brother if not threatened? What explanation do you have for the future pastor huh?That temptation got to him and he bed his little sister?I wonder how long has he been doing that huh?

Vuyo: I am sure he wouldn't force-

Me: You sound like a rape apologist, my dear husband.

Vuyo: It's not like that, I am sure.

Me: If he was raping your niece would you say that?

He sighed.

Me: This is going to come out one way or the other, if I were you I would not be on the supporting side of your older brother. You stand to be the pastor with him out of the way.

Vuyo: He's my brother.

Me: And I am your wife

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there's an opportunity right here and you are missing it. Man up and take the opportunity, you only have 24 hours before tomorrow. Let me go prepare dinner.

I stepped out of the room and walked to the kitchen.

Denise: Didn't think you were coming down.

Me: I am always helping with cooking, mention a day I didn't come.

Anele: Guys do you have to fight?

Me: Your sister-in-law was hoping that I knew nothing.

Denise:I know exactly what you stand to gain with this.

Anele:Stand to gain? Your husband is out there, fucking his sister and you are worried about the position. Position? Your husband shouldn't be a pastor.

Voice: What's going on here?

Me: Little misunderstanding Mama.

Mama:Why are you three fighting instead of cooking?Or go outside and fight like your husbands?

Me:It wasn't like that Ma.

Mama:We have two guests coming over, don't waste my time.
Lihle follow me.

Anele:Lihle-

I walked out without turning around,my husband was going to sit on that chair one way or the other.

Me:Is everything Ma?

Mama:I want you in charge of making sure that there's enough food tomorrow.

Me:Denise is responsible.

Mama:Denise hasn't come back to me, hasn't got anything,I don't know what is going on with her but she's not doing her part.

Me: Decoration?

Mama: I'll have Lumka figure that out, I can't have starving guests. I hope you won't do the same.

Me: I will do everything, I can.

Mama: Good.

She turned and left.

Me: Well, well look at that.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat looking at the notes.

Me: This is going to be a long day.

I looked at Mandla and sighed.

Me: Is it because I still love you that I am keeping you alive? Well there could have been investigations if I did but anyway, it's not like they would have done anything.

I looked at him.

Me: It was the best decision to make you immobile and unable to speak, you wasted my life.

My phone rang.

Me:Yeah?

Voice:We have a problem.

Me:What problem Archbishop?

Voice:The person who might get the position, just offered the congregation a million rand.

Me:To make him a pastor?Are you fucken serious?

Voice:Yes.

Me: I'll deal with him.

Voice:How?

Me:Yeey don't ask me.

I dropped the call and grabbed my bag. I was about to walk out but turned to look at Mandla.

Me: You know you ungrateful men aren't shit, I'll fix them.

I walked down the stairs.

Vuyo:Are you going somewhere?

Me:Want to come with me?

Vuyo:I didn't mean it like that.

Me:Then don't ask me. Two,I won't be stopping petty fights between your wives like you three. I'll kick you out,I don't have

wrinkles and I am not getting them because of you dearest sons. Now I am going out and will be back before dinner!

I walked out.

Me:Elijah!

Elijah:Ma!

Me:Accompany me, I have a little problem to fix.

We drove to the guest house not far from where I lived.

Elijah:Is there something that you need done?

Me:Oh no, I will fix this this myself. Stay in the car.

I walked to the front gate and headed to the room he was in. I knocked.

Me: It's Pastor Mothibakgomo.

The door opened and Sage stood.

Me: Pastor Sage can I come in?

Sage:I am surprised that you are here in my room.

Me:Which I booked for you.

Sage:Very grateful.

Me: Didn't think that you had millions, would have charged you more.

He looked shocked.

Sage:Who ran to you?Women always want things to go their way. What makes you think that you have a chance to be elected huh?

Me:I don't need chances to come,I make them.

Sage:Who did you sleep with to get this far?

I chuckled.

Me:So according to you dear, we get this far by sleeping with someone? You have no idea.

Sage: Pastor Mothibakgomo just know that you are not sitting on that chair and move on,I would like you to leave.

I took out the gun.

Me:I don't think so.

He jumped.

Me:Now where is the money?

Sage: Right,right here!

Me:Hand it over.

He moved the bag to me.

Sage: Don't hurt me,please.

I pulled the trigger and it hit him on the head.

Me:Oops I was suppose to miss, meh.

I grabbed the bag and walked out. I got in the car.

Me:It must be one million in there,put it in the bank.

Elijah:Yes Mam.

Me:And make sure that the police know that he was planning to bribe the church with the money. Men are stupid.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 5

THIMNA

Sesethu: Or we can go to him?

Me: He doesn't want me.

Sesethu: What if your mother is lying?

Me: She wouldn't.

Sesethu: She did before and she wouldn't exactly not do it again right?

Me: Fine, let's go.

Sesethu: Should be back for dinner or we're screwed. I'm rolling, want some?

Me: Yeah, I need to smoke.

We walked out of our room, my mother was on the passage talking on the phone.

Mom: Girls.

Me: We're just taking a stroll around and we'll be back before you even know it.

Mom: Okay.

We walked out and headed straight to the gate, there was a feeling that I was going to be rejected but here I was testing the theory. We walked down the street after smoking the blunt, it seemed like she knew exactly where she was going. The town was incredible beautiful and I wouldn't want to leave it behind ever.

Sesethu: We're here.

I looked at the house and paused.

Me: Ohh?

Sesethu: You have to find out what he thinks of you.

I opened the gate and walked to the front door. I knocked, a woman opened the door and she gasped.

Me: Thimna Mothibakgomo.

Woman: Ohh come in.

I walked in and followed her to the dining, it was the most weird thing because I realised that I actually looked like his kids. He looked old to father a 16 years old girl, makes me wonder how did my mother sleep with him.

Woman: Your bastard child finally pops, who else? Her mother?!

Mzi: Alizwa you don't have to talk like that in front of a child.

Alizwa: The same child whose teenage mother tormented me? She made sure that I knew where you were and I have to like her?

Me: I didn't -

Alizwa: Get rid of this thing Mzi and it's over.

I stood there in shock as she walked out with her children.

Mzi: You have to leave.

Me: My mother for once was telling the truth, you don't want me at all, so this is why she never wanted to speak.

Mzi: I didn't even know that she was pregnant until I saw a whole child who looks just like me. We were just having fun, I didn't it would go this way.

Me: Having fun with a minor, impregnated her and didn't care?

Mzi: Look child you have to leave.

Me: It's cool, one day you are going to need me and I won't be there to respond. It was nice to see you.

I turned and tears immediately rolled down my face.

Sesethu: How - I am so sorry.

Me: My mother wasn't lying at all, for once.

Sesethu: You are innocent in this.

Me:I am the bastard child of fun going wrong, he's not obligated to want me at all. I have to go back home.

Sesethu:Thimna-

Me: Shouldn't have listened to you either, look at me now!

ANELE MASUKU

Denise just cooked in silence.

Denise:Lihle was suppose to be here helping.

Me: You are mad because with this secret, your husband is not taking the chair.

Denise:If what you are saying is even true,Themba could have heard wrong.

Me:Why would your husband want to hit him if he was wrong?

Denise:They are brother and sister, it's absurd. Lihle is just scoring the chair for her husband.

Me: You are refusing to believe that your husband is just a rapist.

Denise: He's not raping anyone.

Me: What if this is the work of an abuser and victim huh? What explanation can you possibly come up with about this? Brother and sister sharing private parts? On your bed.

Denise: What if-

We heard footsteps and Lihle walked in.

Denise: Where have you been?

Lihle: Taking care of the catering for tomorrow.

Me: Denise?

She sat down.

Denise: I forgot.

Lihle: You forgot that but you have been busy fighting me

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wait protecting your rotten husband for reasons known by you. Why? Because my husband stands to sit on his chair. I will be outside!

My sister in-laws just can't stop fighting each other ever.

Denise: How can I forget?

Me: Well Lihle basically explained why?

Denise: What if this is not true?

Khanyo walked in talking to her phone.

Khanyo: Afternoon ladies.

She continued talking before finally looking at us.

Khanyo: I had to attend to the decoration and stuff, I am back now. Need help?

I looked at Denise, she was seething.

Me: Well we're already done with everything.

Khanyo: Let me set the tables.

She grabbed the plates and walked out.

Me: As if you believed that. Your husband did this to himself and I honestly can't believe that you would let him be a pastor. Acquiring such position with a scandal like this doesn't end well, look at Bab'uMandla, it was scandal after scandal and he wended up in a wheelchair. Smanga isn't immune either.

Voice: What exactly did my father do?

We jumped, Dolly was standing at the door looking at us.

Dolly: I heard from acquiring, don't worry. What exactly did my father do?

Me: What makes you think I am just going to tell you? Why don't you ask him?

Khanyo walked back in, purposely stepping on Dolly.

Khanyo:Askies.

Dolly walked out.

ARCHBISHOP PELE

Me: I am coming!

I opened the door only to be met by two police officers.

Policeman: Archbishop Pele,we apologize for coming in so late.

Me:Uhm what is going on?Please come in.

They stepped,I was confused.

Policeman:Do you know Pastor Sage?

Me:Yes, he's one of the pastors running for the branch. Is everything alright?

Policeman: Unfortunately, we've received a tip that he had been working with a known gang from the western region,money laundering.

Me:Heh?! That's unacceptable considering he offered one million rands for the union.

Policeman:We managed to track him.

Me:He is in one of the BM guests houses in town.

Policeman:He called you.

Me:Yes about the money.

Policeman:An hour later,he was shot dead.

I looked at them in shock.

Me:What do you mean he's dead?

Policeman: He's dead,shot on the head.

Me:That is impossible.

Policeman:We have reason to believe someone found out about the deal,we think he stole the money because there's no other reason.

Me:I am confused.

Policeman:The money is gone.

Me:The gang took it?

Policeman: Didn't he hand it to you?

Me:He was saying that he would as long as we announce him as the pastor.

Policeman:Who else stood to win?

Me: Pastor Bokamoso,but she didn't know that.

Policeman: We'll have to talk to her about that, thank you for your time.

Me: Anything.

They walked out, I took my phone and called her.

Me: I told you what Sage had in mind, an hour later he's dead? What did you do to him?

Bokamoso: What do you think?

Me: I refuse to believe that you are capable of killing someone Mothibakgomo.

Bokamoso: Don't bore me Archbishop, I'll make you funny. Now in peace, I enjoy my night leading to my big announcement. Be in order if you desire to be alive. Nxx.

Me: Oh God!

ILLECEBROUS 6

VUYO

Me: I know that I have called this meeting with a heavy my elders,it is not my intentions to delay today's convention but I couldn't stay any longer.

I looked at Lihle,she rolled her eyes as I looked at the camera again.

Archbishop:We are about to enjoy our breakfast my son,how serious is this?

Me:It couldn't wait but it is about my brother.

Now they looked interested.

Me:I know that I could have shared this with my mother but I couldn't handle to see her heart break like that. After thinking this through,I have realised that a person like Smanga cannot lead the church in anyway possible.

Pastor: Mothibakgomo speak now or forever hold your breath.

Me: He's sleeping with someone outside his marriage, someone that we both know.

They looked surprised.

Me: We, as his siblings have known about this but we didn't know what to do. My fear is that he is not stopping instead he's continuing with this behaviour.

I sighed, this was getting heavy as I spoke.

Me: I know that he will be pissed that I told the truth but I can't let him do this to Denise any longer. A known king slept with someone's wife and he was punished, at the same time I am protecting him from such humiliation, hoping that I could help him stop.

Archbishop: You do know that your mother will have to know why he's not becoming the pastor?

Me: I know what will happen.

Pastor: This leaves the church with no pastor.

Me: Hopefully you will find someone who will fill the position. I apologize for disrupting your breakfast like that.

Archbishop: It takes courage to tell such truth about your own brother, I am proud of you son.

Me: Thank you. Have a lovely day.

I dropped the video call.

Me: This won't end well.

Lihle: That's it huh? Not once did you say something about Khanyo, do you think she's sleeping with him because she wants to? Ask yourself big brother!

Me: Thembelihle please.

Lihle: You will find me downstairs.

She stormed out of the room, Smanga stood there in confusion.

Smanga: What is going on?

I sighed.

Me: The baby thing.

Smanga: She still doesn't want to try?

Me: Yep, let's go downstairs before Mom gets pissed.

Smanga: Denise didn't sleep in the room, I swear she knows much more.

Me: You think she heard?

Smanga: Themba might have told her something, she's acting different.

Me: Can we worry about today going well not this? I am too stressed.

I just betrayed and it was weighing on me,at the same time I had to say something now my worry what if Khanyo was being raped?

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me:Sesethu please help me with the shoes.

Sesethu:Red bottoms granny?

Thimna: I am going to ask this again,are you sure we're your grandkids?

Me:Yep baby.

Elijah:Ma Mothibakgomo you have visitors.

Me:Early in the morning? Bring them in.

Elijah: It's detectives.

Me:Detectives?Hurry,bring them in.

Everyone looked confused,the detective walked in.

Me:Detectives please sit down.

Detective:We are not here for long.

Me:Uhm is something wrong?

Detective:We would like to speak with you in private.

Me: Unfortunately in this house, when you are on the table, you don't leave unless your food is finished. Now please do tell.

Detective: Do you know Pastor Sage?

Me: Yes, he's also running for the Eastern seat along with me.

Detective: How well do you know him?

Me: I only heard about him few backs that he was running for the same position. Is everything alright?

Detective: Have you spoken to him?

Me: Yesterday at the convention, well talking about who we thought would win.

Detective: Do you know where he stayed during this time?

Me: Well in one of my guest houses, not sure which one

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maybe the one in the township. Detective is something wrong?

Detective: He was found shot on the head, dead on the scene and the one million he stole, gone.

Me: What?! Oh God! What do you mean dead? Shot in my guest house? What?!

Detective: Do you know anything?

Me: No. I can't believe this.

Detective:Where were you last night?

Me:On my bed?

Detective:If you remember anything please call us.

He handed me a paper before they left.

Me: What a horrible way to start a day.

My phone rang.

Me: Archbishop Pele.

Voice:Smanga will not take your reigns in the church.

Me:On what ground?

Voice:It has come to us that your son is cheater, committing adultery yet he's about to be a pastor.

Me: What are you talking about?

Voice: Don't tell me that you don't know this?

Me:I don't meddle in my children's lives,how are they suppose to learn?

Voice: Clearly they didn't inherit your vicious ways.

Me:Who is taking the seat?

Voice:Vuyo. It's only reasonable that it stays in the family.

Me:How did you get the information?

Voice: Check your household Bokamoso, there are rotten tomatoes in it.

The line went dead, I rubbed my forehead.

Me: Why do I have to go through this huh?

Khanyo: Everything alright?

Me: I just received a message, Smanga you are not taking the position.

Smanga: What?!

Me: Vuyo is.

Vuyo: What? Why?

Me: Ask Smanga, I am sure he can tell why he is cheating on his wife.

Smanga: I am not cheating on anyone!

Me: You dare raise your voice at me you stupid child! Like father like son, Denise gave you everything you ungrateful piece of shit and you do this?

Denise sniffled.

Me: Wait a minute, why are you sniffling instead of anger?

Denise: I suspected -

Me: You knew the truth and still kept quiet?

Denise:Ma it's not like that.

Me: It's like what?Have another cheating Mothibakgomo pastor lead the church?Is that it?

I watched all of them,I knew that most of them were aware.

Me:Smanga are you telling me that night you were going to beat Themba because he found out?!

Smanga:Mom-

I hit the table.

Me:Yes or no damn you!

Silence.

Me:I shouldn't be angry,deep breaths Bokamoso,deep breaths. You are going to bring the woman whom you were sleeping with or I will find her myself. You have until Friday.

I got up.

Denise:He promised to stop.

Me: Hey,hey,hey,hey!

Denise: It's -

Me:Tlohela ho bua bohlanya!

She shrank.

Me: You will find me at church.

SMANGA

Silence as everyone sat eating, the kids left so did Khanyo and her husband, even Dolly.

Me: Themba-

Themba: Yoh yoh big brother, don't start with me. Not today.

Me: You went and told the congregation about this?

Anele: You are not serious right? You still want to continue fucking your damn sister?!

Me: Who asked you to speak?

Vuyo: Smangaliso!

Me: What?! This one couldn't wait to go and report, fucken wimp.

Themba: You are a rapist and I won't stop until you are in jail.

Me: In jail? Do you have proof that I was sleeping with Khanyo huh? I didn't sleep with Khanyo.

Denise: You are sick do you know that? You are still-

Me: You really think that I would sleep with my own sister? My own blood sister? I never really thought you were that dumb

dear wife, you want me to cheat so bad but you think it's with my sister. Who convinced you that was true?Themba?

Themba: You are one sick manipulative bastard just like your father.

Me: Anele stop your husband or I will kill him with my bare hands.

Anele:I would like to see you try Smanga.

Vuyo:No one is hitting anyone here!Smanga do you really have to do this?

Me:This one went and betrayed me. I am going to settle the score boy.

He chuckled.

Themba: You think we're still kids when you could beat me anytime? You are dumber than your wife then.

Denise: Don't insult me.

Anele: You are dumber because in that empty head you are starting to believe him.

Denise launched herself on Anele,I don't know what really happened or how Lihle got in front of Anele. Lihle threw a fist that sent Denise stumbling backwards.

Vuyo:Molimo ea ratehang letsatsi le se le ka fela. (Dear God can the day end already?)

Denise: You -

Lihle:Been wanting to do for sometime,it sure feels good and I wouldn't mind to do it again. Come on Deni,come back.

Me:Vuyo control your wife.

Lihle:Why don't you try?After all you like them young and fresher than your wife?Come on Sma,control me.

Vuyo:Can we just go to church!Hayi.

ILLECEBROUS 7

PASTOR BOKAMOSO MOTHIBAKGOMO

Me: Today I'd like to talk briefly about "faith." People have faith in many different things; when we get into our car, we have faith that it will start and get us to our destination; we have faith that our doctor knows what he or she is doing; everyone has this mindset of faith of some kind or another. No one can go a day without exercising faith. Faith can also be found in the spiritual realm. Everyone, regardless of background, expresses faith. The distinction between our everyday faiths and our religious faith is the object of that faith. Everyone puts their trust in something or someone.

I took a deep breath.

Me: The Moslem puts his faith in the Koran and in Mohammed. The humanist put his faith in himself, a religious person in his own good works. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Our faith and trust should lie on Jesus Christ. Listen to this, Heb. 11:1-4

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were

framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. 4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.. do you hear that?

Almost everyone was on their feet.

Me: We put faith and trust on things and people that would never be god, we have turned faith to some sort of field game. I have faith that someone, no, no, put your faith in Jesus. I think we have changed the true meaning of faith to cover our own sins. What is faith?!

I wiped my face and looked at my tablet.

Me: Paul says in 2 Tim. 1:12 -- for I know whom *I have believed- so saving faith is not in an object or some self concocted idea, but its in Jesus Christ. Clearly we have misconceptions about faith, we think by being sincere that's it whereas that is not the case at all.

I watched as some prayed, some cried.

Me: I was told not to take that long because isn't about preaching at all, it's about celebrating. Ummm. Faith is a positive reaction to God's will and Word. When a person believes God, he has faith. We don't have to see it to believe it. Faith is simply accepting something because God said so. You

write a test, you don't know what marks you will be getting but you have faith that it will be a passing mark. Today, we have two options for approaching God. The first is that you can approach Him through your works. That is, if you can present perfection in your works, God will accept you—but no one has ever done so. Adam did not succeed, and no one else has since. Abraham, David, and Daniel all failed to do so. They didn't get there by being perfect. As a result, this is not a satisfactory way to approach God, but many people are stumbling along that futile path. Two, faith. Think about that.

Khanyo: Lion of Judah

we worship you.

I walked off stage and to my chair, the Archbishop walked to the stage.

Archbishop: Ah my child, beautiful song but we've received disturbing news. Pastor Sage was found dead last night, I would like you to take this moment and say a short prayer. Pastor Mothibakgomo, lead us.

I silently chuckled.

Me: Close your eyes. May God of our mothers and fathers be with us until judgement, let's not dwell on the fact a very young pastor died last night. He's with his maker, he's not lost, only God knows what happened. Amen.

The archbishop stared at me in shock.

Me:He didn't really think that I was going to be so wise.

Archbishop:Our guests still have long journeys ahead,so let me waste your time. Pastor Mothibakgomo please come.

I walked on stage.

Archbishop:We are proud to announce the first woman pastor to sit on the Eastern Congregation with 27 churches under her,if this is not a milestone for women then you have no idea. She adds an "archbishop" title to her name. Let's clap for her!

He put on my robe.

Archbishop:God knows that you didn't deserve this.

Me: Personal space my friend or I will cut your head off. Now smile nigga.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Uncomfortable? Sitting right next to the woman I terrorized for months was a nightmare,as it was time to eat I was on my feet.

Voice:Dolly!

I turned and there she was.

Me:Mrs Mhlekwa.

Nolitha: What happened to Nolitha dear? That's what you did, isn't it?

Me: That was back in the days Mrs Mhleka.

Nolitha: You are married right? Now I am asking myself how come karma isn't hitting you?

Me: It has hit me a lot of times, you just don't know it yet.

Nolitha: I could care less about you suffering, I need you to keep your daughter away from my family.

Me: She's -

Nolitha: What did she want in my house? Closure?

Me: She came to your house?

Nolitha: I know that if she acts clever, she could lay claim on his pension but thing is, she won't, not with a mother like you.

I looked at her.

Nolitha: I respect Bokamoso so much but you dear, if it were up to me you'd be dead. For your peace keep that bastard away from my family.

Me: Mzi was right about one thing, you are cold as that wrinkled thing between your legs.

She could have slapped me but I moved and she hit the air.

Nolitha: What did you just say?

Me: You are in church, stop embarrassing yourself Nolitha.

Nolitha: You sleep with my husband and create a bastard child, then you dare say that to me?!

Everyone was watching.

Me: My child is entitled to her father's money, if you think you are going to stand in my way of getting it, old woman please women your age are in retirement or laying in graves.

Her kids grabbed her.

Nolitha: You are vile.

Me: Meow then.

Khanyo: You are causing a scene Dolly.

Me: Should be happy, don't touch me.

Khanyo: Again you cause a scene in our mother's biggest moment like you did 17 years ago and she lost her church. What do you want?

Unfortunately I saw my mother way too late standing next to door, her eyes looking down and a hand on the forehead. She looked up and disappeared in the crowd. Not again.

NOLITHA MHLEKWA

I sat watching him eat his food.

Me:Mzi-

Mzi: You just can't let go can you?

Me: Eat your food honey, it's getting cold that is what I wanted to say.

Mzi: I am eating plus I did eat at church.

Me: Mhm.

I ate my food while watching him. Suddenly, he fanned himself.

Me: Everything alright?

Mzi: Nana turn the fan on.

I grabbed the wine bottle as he fanned himself.

Me: Hot like a heater love?

Mzi: I should -

He got up and fell, the kids screamed as I drank from the bottle.

Nana: Mom call the ambulance!

Me: Must be anxiety, all that overthinking wasn't doing well for his poor heart.

Lundi: Mama.

Me:Fine,fine. 911 hello?Oh gosh what am I doing?

I grabbed another bottle of wine and drank.

Me:Is he dead?

Nana:Mom you are drunk?

If you knew darling,if you knew. He's going to meet his ancestors soon and I was going to show that witch hell.

ILLECEBROUS 8

THEMBA MOTHIBAKGOMO

Vuyo sat on the chair as the pastor, telling him what he was suppose to do in the meantime. Despite his bruised ego,Smanga looked happy for him. Vuyo looked miserable as he sat down,my mother was awful quiet too so was Dolly. As always Lihle sat unmoved,as soon as the meeting ended Vuyo was the first to get up,I followed him.

Me:One would swear you are being forced to be a pastor.

Vuyo:Smanga was suppose to be the pastor not me.

Me: Somehow he's not.

Vuyo:I know.

Me:Unless you are the one responsible for the news going to the leadership.

Vuyo:I had no option,Lihle wanted to tell Mom.

Me: You should have let her tell Mom.

Vuyo:Themba do you hear yourself?How?!Khanyo is someone's wife,with this going to Mom she might as well be a divorcee. We don't even know her side,do we?

Me: Her side? Is Smanga that scary? She chose to keep quiet with a mother like ours, that's no excuse. How stupid can she be?

Vuyo: I don't want this to go out of hand and something goes wrong.

Me: I see, even though you are the pastor you are still protecting our paedophile brother and you are a pastor.

Vuyo: Think about the damage it will do.

Me: You are stupid brother.

Vuyo: Or just stay out of it.

Voice: I have a reason to believe that you two know the woman your brother is sleeping with.

We turned and Mom stood.

Vuyo: We never really met her Mom.

Mom: Really?

Vuyo: Yes, right Themba?

Me: You honestly think that I will agree with you? I know her but I will zip my mouth mother, my brothers are good at blaming someone else for their misfortune. Let me go find my wife.

I walked back inside, someone bumped me.

Me:So-

I looked at the guy in awe,he stared and smiled.

Him:Masakhane.

I took his hand and it felt like I have been hit by electricity,he looked at my hand stunned.

Me:Themba.

Anele:Hey honey.

Me:Hi.

Anele:I see you have met my brother.

Me:Brother?

Masakhane:I was not in the country when you two married,well it has been years.

Anele:Well you are here to get to know everyone,mind coming to dinner tonight?

Masakhane: With pleasure.

He then walked away,I watched him and looked at my hand.

Anele: He's gay.

Me:Huh?

Anele: You are watching him, he's gay that is why he is like that.

Me:Ohh.

But I wasn't anywhere close to being gay.

LIHLE MANZIMA

Denise didn't even come to the kitchen to help in cooking,Anele with her bubbly self,she was in the kitchen singing.

Me: Who died and made happy Julie?

Anele:Masakhane is coming over for dinner.

Me:In a pastor's house?With men?

Anele:He knows that they are married.

Me:Yet he's been sleeping with married men?

Anele:Lihle please don't kill my vibe tuu.

Me:I know better than trust half siblings,same guy who didn't show up when he should have. You are so naive,that is your problem not mine. If he hurts you, it's your fault.

Anele: You are so good at ruining moods Lihle yhini?

Me:And I am always right.

We heard footsteps,Dolly walked in.

Dolly:Hey,I am done setting the table. Mom-

Mom walked in looking pissed.

Mom:Ma Mothibakgomo is coming so are her little witches with their filthy hands.

I stifled a laugh.

Mom:Even if you kill them

I wouldn't mind you know.

Dolly:Mom!

Mom:Where is Nolukhanyo and Denise?

Me: Resting.

Mom: Your husbands?

Me:Collecting wood for the braai.

Mom:The girls?

Anele:Sent them to the shops,to buy some dessert.

Mom: And your two sisters are resting?Resting while you three are here working?

She laughed and walked out.

Dolly:Need anything?

Me: You could just sit down and be pretty.

Anele:Lihle be nice.

Me: Nowhere near to being nice, I am Thembelihle after all.

Dolly: You have a problem with me?

Me: With you? You are so unimportant, basically you are like a virus that can't be cured because you refuse to go away.

Anele: Yooh this house is always raining yuu!

Dolly: What is it that I did? We were friends!

Me: Friends? Because of you I was implicated in your scandal and was suspended adding an extra year in high school. You did that. I told you that Mr Mhleka was a no go to area but you went there either way, people kept pointing me as the friend who influenced you.

Dolly: I -

Me: Then you waltz in and pretend that you didn't destroy anyone with your stupid behaviour. Just go back wherever you were the past 17 years, we were fine without you.

I gripped the the pan as the oil started boiling.

Denise: Don't mind Lihle she has a temper, wild one like the unruly she is.

Me: Says you that is acting like she's so mighty and important.

Denise: You are disrespectful Thembelihle.

Me: You think I would respect you?

Denise:I see where Anele got her rotten personality.

I moved to Denise. Me:Say what you have to say right now .

Denise: Protecting your lapdog? Anele: What did you call me?

Dolly:Anele!

I moved,Anele threw the pan with hot oil to Denise,Dolly hit the pan and the oil flew to Denise leg. Pause,silence. Bam Denise let out the loudest scream and pulled the dress off.

Dolly:Call an ambulance!

The thigh looked like it was being skinned, a whole bucket of water fell on Denise. Me:Anele.

Anele:At least she will cool off, it's just oil not the end of the world.

Mom showed up but Dolly held her because of the water on the floor. Mom:Wha-

She looked at Denise confused,then me but didn't see anything then back at Denise.

Mom:Call the damn ambulance!

I grabbed my phone,the only weird part Anele was peeling the potatoes humming.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I kept clapping as I looked at Anele humming in peace.

Me:Are you sure? Lihle: I don't know what I saw, but I saw oil.

Only Themba stayed behind with his wife and us. The kids sat in front of the TV.

Anele: Denise is a bully with a cheating husband,out here calling people dogs.

Themba: You threw hot oil at her Anele,if Dolly didn't hit that pan it could have burnt her face.

Anele:She would see my mark everytime she looked at the mirror.

Themba:Liyana is 4 years old and you want her to have no mother?Denise has every right to lay charges for attempted murder. Anele: I am a lawyer, I know law.

Themba: Why would you do something like this?

Anele:Anger honey, now you are crowding me.

He clicked his tongue. Me:But Anele-

Anele:Yoh yoh please discuss how wrong I was during pillow talk with Smanga.

I swear someone dropped a bombshell on me as I looked at Anele. Anele:You have no words dear?

Me:What did you just say?

Anele: If you think you inherited Smanga's traits in lying, quit lying to yourself. You live in a glass house.

Me: You are saying that I am sleeping with my own brother?

Anele: No, you are playing peek-a-boo with your vagina and his penis.

Lihle: I am enjoy this, it happens at least twice a year.

Me: This is crazy, I am going to talk to my mother about this.

Anele: See how you will explain being Smanga's whore, wait, wat. Is he forcing himself on you? If he is, poor you I'll pray harder that you survive.

Me: We'll see how long you will stay in this house.

Anele: Don't fall down the stairs by mistaking sweet cheeks, a lot of things can happen today. Oh my!

ILLECEBROUS 9

DENISE

I sat there watching the doctor bandage my leg. Smanga stood looking out of the window, Ma helped with holding my leg and Vuyo was outside with Dolly. I couldn't believe that Anele would really throw hot oil at me, if it weren't for Dolly she could have burnt my face.

Dr: Take it easy Mrs Mothibakgomo.

Me: I want to lay charges against the person who threw oil at me.

Smanga turned around in shock.

Dr: I'll create a report.

They walked out.

Smanga: You can't lay charges against Liyana's mother.

Me: She should have thought of that before throwing hot oil at me Smanga.

Smanga: What did you do? Not so long ago you wanted to hit her.

Me: Hit not throw hot oil at her.

Smanga: Did she file a harrassment case against you?

Me:I am laying charges Smanga.

He walked out..

Me:Can you believe him?

Ma:Oh no he's right, you won't be laying charges.

I looked at her stunned.

Me:Did you see what she did?

Ma:She burnt pretty bad,we will solve this as a family unless you consider yourself not part of the family.

Me: That's not true.

Ma:I was raised by the street,but I raised my wealth but there is this habit that seems to poison everyone in my house. They all think they can destroy it whenever they feel like it and I am suppose to nod and mind my business.

Me:She could have hurt me Ma.

Ma:Could have and didn't happen mean the same thing dear. Stay here,think it through if you decide to lay charges then I will know which title is yours. Return home then I know your place as the oldest and first wife of the Mothibakgomos . Choice is yours.

She squeezed my thigh,I winced and she walked out.

Me:She just threatened me?

THEMBA MOTHIBAKGOMO

My wife wasn't one to just blow,it happened once or twice in a while. Everyone in the house knew that and Denise must have been so foolish to anger her,I sat on the patio couch in silence.

Voice: Well dinner?

I looked up and Masakhane walked in.

Me:Some drama.

Masakhane: Anele. She was always bad at controlling her temper.

Me: She's actually good.

Masakhane: That's new,marriage changed her then.

Me:Mhm.

Masakhane:No one offered me any food.

Me:I am sure the workers showed you the kitchen.

Masakhane: I would but then,I didn't want to pry. Please show me,I am starving.

I chuckled as he rolled his eyes.

Me: You are dramatic aren't you?

Masakhane: I am the best you can get after all.

Me:Says you.

Masakhane:Of course,look at me darling.

He twirled, I was surprised to see that his butt was big for a man, actually he was indeed built like a woman.

Masakhane: Like what you see?

I averted my gaze and looked at him.

Me: Your type will like what they see,not me. So do you wear dresses?

He chuckled.

Masakhane:I am just going through hormone change,I am transgender.

Me:Transgender?

Masakhane: Means that I have a vagina, but my body is still adjusting.

Me: You will have breasts?

He laughed.

Masakhane:Yep and probably start dressing like a woman not this,now people look confused,,some think I am a tomboy or just girly.

Me:I thought you were a man trying to be a girl,I was confused.

Masakhane: Understandable.

Me:Quite surprised that you came to a pastor's house.

Masakhane:I couldn't say no to Anele,I felt guilty but your mother is scary. That woman yoh.

Me: She's not actually

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she's kind and wouldn't judge you at all. She always said,"hate the sin but love the sinner."

Masakhane:No wonder Anele couldn't wait to marry into this family.

Me:Yeah.

I dished up for Facebook him.

Me:Here.

I mistakenly touched his hand,he looked at me with his mouth open. I don't know why but I couldn't look away as I stared at him. Slowly,I leaned in.

Masakhane: You are married.

I moved back in embarrassment, someone coughed, we turned and Lihle stood there.

Me: It was-

Lihle: As I expected, thing is Anele didn't grow up here so she doesn't know that you once had a thing for his type.

Masakhane: My type?

Lihle: When a queen talks to you dear boy, you bow. As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, you are going to regret this.

She walked out.

Masakhane: Homophobic if you tell me.



Mom, Dolly, Vuyo and Smanga came back just as the guests arrived.

Nkhono: Hello kids.

Me: Nkhono!

I hugged her.

Nkhono: You are grown, where is that pretty wife of yours?

Anele: Nkhono welcome.

Nkhono: Still beautiful sweetheart.

We all sat down on the chairs, my mother walked in and sat down without greeting anyone. My mother and grandmother have clashed a lot of times.

Nkhono: Daughter in-law.

Ma: Please don't bother me, sit and do what you came here to do.

Nkhono: Still dis-Dolly?

Dolly: Nkhono.

Nkhono: You are here, here?

Dolly: Yes.

Rakgadi: Didn't even call love.

Dolly: I didn't think you would want to see me after everything.

Nkhono: Blood is thicker than water my child. Uhm Bokamoso the man you hired to harm my son, your husband has been released from prison.

Ma: Ohh really? How sad.

Smanga: He tried to kill our father.

Nkhono: Fifteen years has passed and he is eligible to be released.

Me:He almost murdered our father.

Nkhono:Could have went there then. Mandla,my son.

Father did talk only when he wanted but after the incident,he never really talked much,the doctors said he was traumatized.

Ma: Let's eat.

UNKNOWN

I zoomed in with the binoculars.

Me:Ah Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo.

Elijah: It's good to see you back sir.

Me: It's good to be alive actually. How long have you been working for the lovely Pastor?

Elijah:20 years.

Me:So you know everything she's done?

Elijah: What she lets me know.

Me:Do you have anything against?

Elijah:I am just a witness, she's peculiar when it comes to staying afloat, you can't just find evidence.

Me: Evidence?

Elijah: She's accurate and it freaks me out. I have known her for 20 years, the woman hardly blinks when killing someone and you would swear she has killed way before.

Me: That's interesting.

Elijah: If I were you sir, I would be very careful of her. She looks harmless but isn't.

Me: I spent 15 years because of her, because of a job she sent me to do. She had me arrested for leaving her husband alive not dead. I want my revenge.

ILLECEBROUS 10

PASTOR MOTHIBAKGOMO

I braided my hair as I sat in front of the mirror, a knock echoed.

Me: Come in.

Elijah walked in.

Me: I need you to find every information on the release of our enemy.

Elijah: He's out already?

Me: Has been fifteen years already.

Elijah: And you don't look a day older.

I turned to look at him.

Me: Is that suppose to impress me?

Elijah: I didn't mean it like that Mam.

Me: Also, I need you to find good cameras, preferably smaller and unrecognisable.

Elijah: How many Mam?

Me: Enough to be everywhere in this house.

Elijah: Is something wrong?

Me: Something is off here,I need to know what exactly is going on with my children before it blows. I can't really ask them,all they do is lie.

Elijah: I'll start right away.

He walked out,I grabbed my phone and dialled the number.

Me:Watch Elijah,watch his every move I am sure he thinks that I don't know the truth. Don't kill him just yet.

Another knock echoed.

Me:Come in.

Nkhono walked in.

Nkhono:I came to check on my son.

Me:He speaks when he feels like it.

Mandla: I'll talk to my mother Bokamoso.

Me:If you want privacy,get out of the room.

Nkhono:This is your husband and that is no way to talk to him.

Me:I will talk to him anyway I please.

Mandla:Ma.

Nkhono:That man is out of prison and is willing to tell the truth of what happened.

Mandla:He tried to kill me, what can he tell me?

Nkhono: Your wife hired him.

I rolled my eyes.

Nkhono:I have proof.

Mandla:Can we talk tomorrow?

Nkhono: You just don't want to believe that this snake is capable of.

Me:Shall I escort you out of my bedroom mother in-law?

Nkhono:Let me go.

I followed her and closed the door.

Me:I couldn't help but hear the word evidence.

Nkhono:He recorded the conversation you two had while he was in prison.

Me:And?

I looked around as we approached the stairs. All the lights were off just as I knew.

Nkhono: Listen to this.

It was indeed me speaking.

Me:Ah the rooms are sound proofed.

Nkhono:And?

Me:Look.

She turned and I pushed her,she screamed as she went flying off the stairs. The phone fell on the top,I deleted the voice recording before throwing it off the stairs and headed to my bedroom. Most people just really need to learn to shut up and mind their business.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Ray left after dinner,I sat on the edge of the bed feeling the misery and anxiety kick in. I knew that Smanga saw Ray leave so which meant he would do something to get to my room. I got up and checked if the door was locked, just as I was about to move back,a knock echoed. I froze,a paper emerged beneath the door. "It's me." I tiptoed and ran to the bathroom, slowly closed it and turned on the water. Anxiety kicked in and I rushed back to the door opening.

Smanga:Took you long enough.

Me:I was about to take a shower, sorry.

Smanga:Denise knows but I will figure something out.

Me:Anele too.

Smanga: Don't worry about them. Why are you still fully dressed if you were going to shower?

A knock echoed.

Dolly: It's Dolly.

Me:Ye-

Smanga: Don't answer.

Me:I didn't know that you were coming,Dolly wanted to talk. If I don't respond, she'll think what they said is true.

Smanga: You seem cold today.

I walked to the door,he looked angry as I opened the door.

Dolly:Smanga? Didn't know that you were here

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I could come another time.

Smanga:We were having a discussion.

Me:It can wait big brother.

Dolly: I won't take long.

Smanga walked out.

Dolly: You were always scared of him, beats me how you two eventually got along,more shoe and lace.

Me: Things happen, please sit and be comfortable.

Then someone was banging the door, I rushed to the door as I could hear shouting.

Mom: What is going on?

I was confused, then I noticed something at the ground floor.

Me: Blood.

Dolly: Nkhono!

It was a crazy commotion, as people called the ambulance and some tried to wake Nkhono up. Tragedy in this house was extreme.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

We fed drama in our table everyday single hour in my home. Nkhono was active, rather surprised that she fell off the stairs well I almost did because I wasn't used in stairs. Ma accompanied Rakgadi to the hospital and we sat on the couches until in the morning. A knock echoed and we all jumped.

Me: Come in.

Nolitha walked in dressed in black.

Lihle: Who died?

Nolitha: Considering there's a child that belonged to my husband,I thought she would want to know that he has passed away during a heart failure.

Me: What?!

Nolitha: It's been nearly 48 hours,I already checked his will and that bastard is nowhere close to get a single cent.

Me: You are crazy,my child is entitled to something.

Anele:Even the court will agree to that.

Nolitha:I have brought this to make sure that you two stay away from the funeral and everything.

Me: What is this?

She handed me the envelope,I looked inside.

Me: You are bribing me? I chuckled.

Me:Do you know the funniest thing?Is you thinking that you can bribe me to keep my daughter from her blood.

Nolitha: You think the Mhlekwa family will accept her? You think that they will acknowledge a bastard child? Do the Mthombenis acknowledge her?Of course they don't,save yourself the embarrassment. She walked out.

Lihle: I wouldn't stop, the guy was an entire principal and had businesses,Thimna deserves something.

Anele: From who? He's dead, his wife isn't obliged to give her anything.

Lihle: Dolly is obliged to have something for her child, even if it means going to court. Thimna is innocent and won't be taking from Nolitha's things but his.

Me: I don't want anymore drama.

Anele: You slept with him knowing very well that he was married, what were you thinking? That you won't be pregnant? Suddenly Nolitha has to think about a child she never asked for.

Lihle: It's a cruel world, men have children everywhere and they pop up any given chance.

Anele: Weird how he dies after realising he has a daughter with another woman. Me: Weird.

Lihle: What do you think Khanyo?

Khanyo: Weird.

Lihle: Your husband mos has just impregnated another woman and is planning to marry her, how do you feel as the main chick?

Me: What?! Lihle: Ohhh you didn't know? Now you do, so Khanyos? Khanyo got up and walked away.

Lihle: It's not like he is stopping.

Me: Heh?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 11

ANELE MASUKU

Liyana:Then Mommy she was roar!

Me:More like meow baby.

I laughed.

Liyana:I am a big cat right mommy?

Me:I thought I was the big cat baby.

Liyana:Better luck next time.

I laughed,Denise walked in.

Lihle:The Burning woman.

Ma walked in.

Mom: Thembelihle repeat what you said.

Silence.

Mom:One thing I said to all of you is that you are damn equal.
Equal!Why are you fighting huh?Answer me.

Me:Ma-

Mom: For a lawyer you are stupid,why on earth would you
throw oil when you could lose your dream job,what you

worked hard for, went to school for yet one simple sentence you throw it all away. Liyana has to know that there are other ways to get results. Sesethu and her siblings are suppose to be fine with you after this? You threw hot oil at their mother.

Me: I didn't think it through.

Mom: Think it through or you just did because you can? And you Lihle busy cheering on bullshit while you refuse to give your husband a child.

Silence.

Mom: Denise who gave you a right to bully your sisters? Your husband is cheating, no energy to hit him but you do have the one to bully others. Let this be the last time I hear you fight in my house on December, I really don't think you will be so happy to see my true self. Is this high school? Acting like some sort of bad bitches.

She was about to leave but turned.

Mom: Dolly! Khanyo!

They walked in.

Mom: I have 5 daughters in this house, you cook and the housekeepers clean, if you think you can't do that get out. Bloody little brats.

She walked out.

Lihle:Yooh.

I honestly felt bad.

Me:Denise,look how I acted was uncalled but I didn't like what you called me. It wasn't the first time.

Denise:I am really sorry too.

Dolly:I am sorry for not helping around.

Khanyo:I am not sorry for not wanting to be in the same space with people that think,I am willingly sleeping -

Vuyo walked in,the message was sent that was for sure,even Denise looked petrified.

Vuyo:I am interrupting something right?

Khanyo:I was leaving.

Dolly looked at us confused.

Vuyo:Lihle please help me with something.

It was me and Denise.

Denise:Do you think he's been forcing her?Or she's just turning things so we would think she's telling the truth.

Me:Each day I am starting to believe that minding your business is rather healthy. I should check on Liyana.

MANDLA MOTHIBAKGOMO

Nkazimulo: Brother, I came as fast as I could.

Me: I don't know what happened exactly, Mom fell off the stairs.

Nkazimulo: Is she doing alright?

Me: Broke few bones otherwise she's going to be alright.

Nkazimulo: She's getting old that is why. You talk fine.

Me: Speech therapy over the years has been helping.

Nkazimulo: Awu a whole man attending white people stuff?

I chuckled.

Me: My wife insisted that I do.

Nkazimulo: Didn't get a chance to even congratulate her.

Me: Mhm.

Nkazimulo: That guy has been released.

Me: Yeah and according to Mom, he's changing his story, talk about telling the real truth about what really happened.

Nkazimulo: And?

Me: Apparently, well according to him, Bokamoso hired him.

Nkazimulo: Bokamoso was pissed about everything, if she really did I wouldn't be surprised.

Me:What?!

Nkazimulo: Just because you are sitting on the wheelchair, doesn't mean I shouldn't tell you the truth. Heck you did this to yourself and you are paying for it.

Me: Bokamoso has been asking for a divorce for years

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so I just talked sometimes,my doctor is sticking to me struggling to talk.

Nkazimulo:Why not sign the divorce?

Me: Everything you see is hers.

Nkazimulo: You share 50/50 in the divorce settlement.

Me:We signed a prenuptial,we divorce I am left with nothing.

Nkazimulo: Throughout these years you have nothing on your name? You blew it, didn't you?

Me:I wasn't thinking.

Nkazimulo:I wouldn't be surprised if she poisons you after she finds out that you are acting like you are struggling to talk so she can continue feeling bad for you.

Me:I have no choice.

Nkazimulo: You had every choice when you slept with those women, does she know about the kids?

Me: It never got to that, I had my accident before anything else could happen.

Nkazimulo: You and mother are birds of the same flock. All these years, you are still deceitful.

Voice: Must be nice.

I jumped, Bokamoso stood not far from where we were.

Me: My-my beautiful wife.

She didn't look bothered.

Bokamoso: You must exercise your voice husband so we can talk.

Me: Yeah.

Bokamoso: Is she awake?

Nkazimulo: Not yet.

Bokamoso: Your sister?

Nkazimulo: You must have passed her on your way in.

Bokamoso: Let me see the old woman.

She walked in the room.

Me:That was close.

Nkazimulo:Secrets eventually come out,or those illegitimate children will show up thinking that they can claim something.

SMANGA

Me:Ready?

It was already dark as we stood in the verandah.

Thobeka:Yes.

I opened the door and let her in, everyone sat at the table in silence eating.

Me:Good evening everyone.

I pulled the chair for Thobeka and she sat down.

Me:Uhm Mama,this is the woman I almost slept with. I never really explained the details to my siblings, they were astonished to hear that I was tempted. Themba misinterpreted that.

Thobeka:Well,I could have tried but he was so sure that he was not going to do anything to hurt his wife.

Me:I am sure Themba but you heard everything wrong and overreacted, it's understandable.

Themba: Don't tell me that you believe him.

Mom:Were you the one cheating Themba?

Themba: He's lying!

Mom:Raise your voice at me again and I will throw this plate at you.

Me:I am sorry Denise that things came out like this,I didn't cheat on you. I always go to Khanyo because she understood that I was feeling guilty,to a point she got irritated that she had to lie to you. I am sorry for inconvenience this caused and brought to this family.

Dad: It's a good thing that you are owning up to your mistakes.

Mom:Or you will be owning up to them in a coffin on your way to hell.

Everyone looked at my mother.

Mom:Dish up for her and eat.

Me:Will do that.



I put the dishes in the dishwasher,Mom walked in.

Mom:That was an outstanding performance you pulled son.

Me:Wha-

She was already out of the kitchen,Vuyo walked in.

Vuyo:Was that another woman?

Me:If you think that I would really sleep with Khanyo then you should really check yourself. I said that trying to cover for this,yes I shouldn't have used Khanyo's name,tainting but Thobeka's name is Khanyo. When you are assumed it was our sister,I didn't want to explain too much so I just went with the flow. I apologize.

Vuyo:I just need to sleep and figure this out.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 12

PASTOR MOTHIBAKGOMO [FEW DAYS LATER]

Me: You are not going anywhere near that funeral service.

Dolly:But Ma-

Me:What?! Aren't you tired of embarrassing me Dolly?

Dolly:Thimna can't go there alone.

Me: She's coming with me.

Thimna:Thanks grandmother but I think I won't go to to the funeral,I mean he didn't want -

Me: You don't hold grudges against dead people Thimna, you just don't ever.

Thimna:I am sorry granny.

Me:Go get ready,we leave in an hour and make sure that you look so pretty like your grandmother.

She walked out.

Dolly:Will you ever forgive me for what I did Ma?

Me:Did you ever apologised?

Dolly:I want to but I am scared Mama,I don't know what to say or don't say at all.

Me:Then you don't want to apologize.

I looked through my jewellery,my engagement and wedding rings laid there. I looked at them and sighed.

Me:As your mother I am suppose to understand that you were going through a stage,by hurting me in the process and almost murdering your own sister in the process. That pain is something I couldn't even forget at all,I tried then your father blamed me.

Dolly:I am so sorry.

Me:He was hiding the despicable things he was doing with half of the church women,he was fucking everything with a skirt and blamed it on my fallout with our daughter. According to him,I didn't do what a mother should. I didn't even bother looking for the reason I was miserable in my marriage.

Dolly:I don't know what to say.

Me: People wronged me in so many ways but always knew how to turn things against me. Your grandmother got sick and her children didn't have the money to pay for all those bills,I did. Today she spits yo my face and call me a witch. You,I gave you everything I never had,a platform to talk to me if something ever bothered you but you were do ungrateful. I give you a

hand to use,yet you bite it. I am asking myself who else is taking advantage of my kindness?

She didn't respond.

Me: Nolukhanyo is going through something,has been for years but problem is that I haven't gotten what exactly. I know exactly what it is, just don't who is making her feel that way because everyone in this house is my family. I am asking myself why can't I see what is going on in my house?Maybe I do, just can't believe that someone would do something like this.

Dolly: You lost me for a second Mama.

Me:I have to wash.

I got up and walked to the bedroom. Sometimes I think I give people in my house too much confidence to a point I wouldn't notice if they are conspiring against me. I taught my children to be on each other's side,not once do I think I'll have to be wary of them. There was a time once years back, when I realised that something about Khanyo wasn't right. I tried to ask but she refused,got married young but still I couldn't shake that she was being sexually abused by someone in the family just couldn't point out who. Now,I saw something. A knock echoed. I stepped out of the shower and turned the water off,grabbed my towel.

Me:I am coming.

I walked in the bathroom,Nkazimulo stood there.

Me:Mandla went to check on your mother.

Nkazimulo:I was hoping to talk to you.

Me:I just need to get dressed first.

I walked in the closet and grabbed my gown.

Me:What is it?

Nkazimulo:Mandla is lying to you.

Me: About?

Nkazimulo:He can talk, he's just acting like he's not so you don't leave him. He won't gain anything and you are rich.

Me:Why are you telling me this?

Nkazimulo: You are so kind to people that don't deserve it.

Me:I am suppose to believe you right?Did your mother put you through this?

Nkazimulo:Talk to his doctor.

Me:Why?

Nkazimulo:He has two kids,both teenagers Bokamoso.

Me:Ohh really?

Nkazimulo:He has you wrapped around his lies.

Me: Get out!

He walked out, I grinned.

Me: I know, I am just creating a perfect coffin for him.

My phone rang.

Me: Yeah?

Voice: Elijah is meeting with him, you weren't lying. What should I do?

Me: Nothing. Do nothing to my dear loyal worker, I need you to put the cameras first thing tomorrow. The family won't be here for an hour, leave no spot unturned. I need to know what is going in this house before Christmas.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I stood in the balcony watching as they left.

Daniel: You are not thinking of following them.

Me: No, Mom is capable of taking care of Thimna. In fact she is rather good with her.

Daniel: Yeah.

Me: Look I am really sorry -

Daniel: You did say that you have quite the history here

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I just didn't expect such Dolly. I wasn't suppose to act like that knowing that it is your past.

Me: Yeah.

I looked again and blinked.

Me:Now this Christmas is about to get deadly.

Daniel: What do you mean?

Me:My mother's family is here,with them around things went south. Especially with my father's family here.

Daniel:Does this house ever have peace?

Me: It will have peace when we all leave.

Daniel:I thought everyone lives here.

Me:On holiday it's tradition for everyone to be here, they have their rooms but don't really live here. Smanga lives in Varlia,Themba in Red,Vuyo in Trenius,Khanyo in Varlia too. Yooh this is going to be the worst Christmas.

Daniel: Aren't you a tad bit dramatic?

Me:We have been here for a week, two people are dead,not saying that they were killed by the family, there's never peace ever. Plus my mother comes from a very rich family.

I walked out of the room and hurriedly walked down the stairs.

Lihle: Tell me I did not see Ma's family outside.

Anele: Quite surprised that they came.

Me: Scared that they came actually, this is going to be the longest Christmas on earth.

Denise: Your grandmother with her red bottoms.

The door was opened and they walked in.

Me: Nana.

She looked at me confused, my paternal grandmother was an older version of my mother just more evil. The woman still wore expensive high heels, luckily my mother was the only girl out of four children.

Nana: Which child are you? Are you another daughter in-law? New one? Who divorced who? Khanyos, hello dear.

She brushed past me and hugged my sister.

Me: Yeah.

Uncle Mario, Uncle Mohale and Uncle Bryson walked in.

Me: Hi.

Mario: Dolly.

Me: Good to see you. Where are the wives?

Mario: Still nowhere close in being married.

Mohale: You are enjoying your youth right?

Mario: Of course.

I think my uncles shared the same gene with my mother that refused to let them age, I mean you would swear that we were siblings but we weren't close. My was the last born.

Bryson: We left the wives home, we only here for Christmas then we leave.

Nana: You are the child that had my daughter crying for months aren't you?

Me: Yes Nana.

Nana: With a poor father like yours, it's understandable. Good to see you child.

Then she walked away, wait till my father's siblings along with Nkhono get here. World war III 2.0

THIMNA

"Ya itshepelang Modimo

Ya itshepelang Modimo

Le bo tshephehi ba ona

A ka tla dula ka kgotso
hara tshiu tsa mefuta
Mookamedi ya renang
O tseba se re se hlokang.
Di thusa'ng dipelaelo
Le ona masisapelo
Na moabi wa bophelo
H'a bo dise ka lerato?
Mookamedi ya renang
O tseba se re se hlokang."

I would have been so sad if the man at least loved me for a bit,instead he sent his wife to do the talking. I watched her as they called everyone to come and see the body for the last time. I took my bottle and sipped from the brandy. I looked at my grandmother,she beckoned that I came closer,I leaned over to her.

Granny:Make her regret it.

I grinned when I realised that she knew what I was doing,I got up almost falling and followed the family. People could see the resemblance as I walked, Nolitha looked at me shocked but composed herself. I grabbed the microphone from the MC.

Me:My name is Thimna and this my father,his wife came to my home to say that I shouldn't be anywhere here but here I am. A lousy R10000 she gave us,I go to a private school and that is just my term allowance. This man didn't even do right by me,yet he knew I existed.

I spat on his dead face, everyone gasped.

Me:He doesn't deserve no damn peace ever.

I may have leaned too hard on the coffin,the stand gave out and it fell along with coffin. I widened my eyes as the dead body leaped out of the coffin, I looked up and my grandmother was heading to the door. I didn't think twice,I dropped the microphone on the floor and ran. It might have went a little overboard. We got in the car.

Granny: You do harbour your mother's rebellious ways.

Me:That went wrong.

Granny:That should send the message to Nolitha,she can't be punishing you for things that you didn't do.

Me: What kind of pastor are you?

Granny:One in a million.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 13

LIHLE MANZIMA I

"I figured it out

I figured it out from black and white

Seconds and hours

Maybe they had to take some time

I know how it goes

I know how it goes from wrong and right

Silence and sound

Did they ever hold each other tight like us?

Did they ever fight like us?

You and I, we don't wanna be like them

We can make it 'til the end

Nothing can come between you and I

Not even the Gods above

Can separate the two of us

No, nothing can come between you and I

Oh, you and I"

Voice: You still like the song.

I turned and Mario was standing at the door.

Me: I could never really stop liking it.

Mario: Still no child?

Me: We're just enjoying our marriage.

Mario: Six years later? Or you just never told him the truth.

Me: What truth?

Mario: That you removed your womb.

Me: I told him that but he thinks God just goes around offering miracles.

Mario: You forgot that I know you Lihle. My nephew does not have the slightest idea that you removed your womb and was selfish enough to marry him.

Me: People who decide to threaten tend to have a short lifespan.

He chuckled.

Mario: Ah you sound like Bokamoso, thing is with her, she really does kill you.

I looked at him confused.

Mario: You don't think we just became rich by studying do you?

I frowned.

Mario: If I were I would think twice before threatening me again or I won't be so charming. Vuyo will eventually find out before this holiday ends, that's my promise. Nice dress by the way.

He turned and walked out.

Anele: We are suppose to be going, why are you still standing there?

Me: Coming.

I felt powerless as I grabbed my purse. I walked out following Anele, Ma was still sitting on the couch.

Me: Aren't you coming Ma?

Ma: I am.

I walked to the car, Vuyo was already waiting, Mario and Bryson sat in the back.

Me: Sorry for making you wait.

Vuyo: Hi baby.

He kissed my cheek.

Bryson: He's bragging.

Mario: Wouldn't brag about a woman.

Vuyo: That's why you are not married Uncle Mario.

Mario: Or the woman who I wanted to marry saw someone else she believed that was better than me.

I clenched my fists.

Bryson: Ah brother let go.

Mario: I have to see her in this god forsaken town. How?

Vuyo: Who is she?

Mario: You don't want to know.

Vuyo: I do.

Mario: Literally speaking, you don't want to know, trust me.

I sat there not daring to say a word.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me: There, here, I mean everywhere just don't make it obvious or reachable.

They nodded.

Elijah: I will stay.

Me: No you are not going to stay here, you are coming with me.

I didn't want him to know that I was going to track the cars and watch the housekeepers too. Or know where the cameras were.

Elijah:Do you trust these people with your house?

I took out my gun.

Me:Good people,I am a pastor but I will use this if anything goes missing in this house. Don't test me okay?

Elijah:I didn't mean it like that.

Me:Okay. Let's go.

.....

I sat in silence as everyone ordered.

Nana:Why are you not eating Bokamoso?

Me:I will order when I am hungry. Excuse me.

I got up and walked to the bathroom. I leaned on the sink and closed my eyes. I felt overwhelmed, emotionally and spiritually disturbed. I took deep breaths,my mother walked in,I pretended to be washing my hands.

Nana:I know the woman I gave birth to.

Me:I am struggling with a lot of things Ma,I just realised that Mandla isn't willing to let me go ever. Can you believe that all these years he's been pretending to be unable to talk?

Nana: You are lying!

Me: Someone Ma is and has been raping Khanyo

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I don't know who just yet. I am trying to understand where I went wrong with everything.

Nana: You married Mandla.

Me: Greatest mistake but everything is on me to take care. It is undeniable overwhelming, I have churches to run yet I can't run my own household.

Nana: That's not all, is it?

I shook my head.

Me: Nothing serious.

Nana: But it's the trigger of all these emotions.

Me: Ma, I am fine. I am Bokamoso, nothing will ever stand in my way that I can't fix.

I stood straight and walked out of the bathroom. Nkhono was already sitting on a chair when I walked back, right next to mine.

Me: Good to see that you are alive.

She jumped a little.

Me: Mhm.

Nkhono: Good to be alive.

Me: Very, you could die in this life.

Nkhono: Yeah.

Everyone settled in.

Me: Please do order your food.

Elijah walked to me, I got up and walked to him.

Me: What?!

Elijah: He's here.

Me: What? Where?

Elijah: Outside and wants to talk to you.

I stepped out of the restaurant and followed Elijah. Simoné walked out of the car and opened the door.

Me: Now why would I walk in the car of the same person that tried to kill my husband?

Simoné: You are indeed the most dangerous Pastor.

Me: I am good at preaching the word of God after all.

Simoné: You know, I was refused the chance to give my evidence to the court, I wonder what the world has to say.

Me: About?

Simoné: You planning the murder of your husband.

Me: I planned it? Ooh how did I do that?

Simoné: Remember that phone we specifically used for us to contact each other? Still have it, I recorded everything.

Me: Why are you telling me these things? Did my mother-in-law do that?

Simoné: I underestimated you.

I grinned.

Me: My food is getting cold, I really should get going.

Simoné: I would like to worry about the transfer and pictures if I were you.

I paused but composed myself.

Me: Will do that.

ANELE MASUKU

I don't know what was going on but something was off about the conversation between Themba and Masakhane, I was starting to see things as Lihle said. I was worried or maybe I was feeling insecure.

Lihle: No you are not.

Me:Huh?

Lihle: You think that you are being insecure.

Me: I said that out loud?

Lihle:Did your husband tell you about his time being tempted by the devil?

Me:Huh?

Lihle:He was dating gays,his father had him repent.

Me:Had him repent?

Lihle: Forced him to repent.

Me: What are you talking about?

Lihle:Ask him before he sleeps with your half brother.

I could feel my temperature drop as I looked at them.

Me:That would be his funeral if he dares.

Lihle: Ma would bury you alive if you hurt her son.

Me:Then he better not cheat on me.

.....

We returned home, surprisingly we all got along for the day.

There was no drama or anything at all. I walked to the kids' room and put Liyana down. I walked to the dining room.

Ma: Thank you all for coming to the outing, first 16 of December without anyone on each other's throat.

Last year, Lihle and Denise took down an entire table fighting. It was the most traumatic event, don't want to know what happened a year before that.

Ma: Those invited, I suggest that they leave.

I walked to Masakhane.

Me: It was good seeing you brother.

Masakhane: Themba invited me to stay for the rest of Christmas. Me: He did?

Masakhane: Yes, I just have to get my things. Let me get going.

I walked to Themba. Me: We need to talk.

We walked out of the dining room.

Me: When were you going to tell me that you told me my brother to stay for Christmas? Themba: I forgo-

Me: To tell your wife that her brother will be staying here?

Themba: Wha-

Me: Whatever you are doing, if it's going to hurt my feelings, I am going to kill you with my bare hands Themba. Don't fuck with me.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 14

LIHLE MANZIMA

My heels hit the floor,echoing louder than I would have thought,it was a little irritating even for me.

Nurse:Dr M.

Me:Really?

Nurse: Both your surnames do start with M,makes things easy for everyone.

Me:Are the results in?

Nurse: You are on leave aren't you?

Me:I tried but this time of the year is a little tricky,accidents everywhere and the hospital needs everyone. Only for few days then I go back to Eastern Sata.

Nurse:How is the family?

Me: You don't want to know.

I was called yesterday to return to work for few days,due to the high rate of accidents and I was more than happy to leave the house. Mario was watching every move,I had to leave and Christmas was a week away.

Nurse: The results came Dr, I am afraid the husband of the patient is fertile but the wife has no womb.

Me: Let me see.

I took the paper and read through it, I knew what to expect. I had to do tests to satisfy Vuyo even though I knew that I didn't have any womb.

Me: Where is Dr Eric?

Nurse: Uhm in his office.

Me: I'll contact the patients.

I walked to his office and ripped the paper. I knocked at the door.

Voice: Come in.

I stepped in.

Eric: I heard that you were here since last night, hardly saw you anyway.

Me: The accident rate just last night was crazy, I just came out of surgery as we speak.

Eric: Christmas is a nightmare. Did you get the results?

Me: It's not like I didn't know what was coming.

Eric: Why don't you tell him?

Me: You should see his family and tell me how?

Eric: But you have to tell him someday.

Me: I think we should go ahead with the surrogacy.

Eric: Without your husband?

Me: Yes, his sperm is already in the lab and before you say something else, I am obliged to make decisions as his wife. Go ahead with the insemination.

Eric: What are you going to do?

Me: Won't be hard to get a fake stomach and carry for 9 months.

Eric: Lihle-

Me: Do it.

I got up and walked out. I should tell Vuyo but I didn't know how, I mean he made me believe that he didn't want any kids, suddenly that changes and I have to accept that. My phone rang.

Me: Hi.

Voice: Hello baby.

Me: Big sis.

Voice: I am checking up on you.

Me:I am alright, you good?

Voice:Yeah,yeah. Why is it so quiet?

Me:I am headed to my office.

Voice:I thought you were on leave.

Me: Until everyone decided to get drunk and cause accidents.

Voice:I was hoping to see you this year.

Me: You know the damn tradition.

Voice: Have you talked to Mom?Her and Dad were here few days ago,kind of showed up unexpectedly .

Me:Why? It's a good thing, they don't know where I live.

Voice: Lihle-

Me:If it's a relationship they want, they should bring Loni and Odwa back.

Voice: They can't -

Me:Deny that they were the most shittiest parents you could have on earth?Look V, you are very forgiving,I am not.

Voice: You don't want have kids because of how we grew up, it's affecting your mentality.

Me:I have to go.

Voice: Thembelihle you need to see someone.

Me: I have not killed a child at all.

Voice: Tha-

I dropped the call and walked to my office.

THEMBA MOTHIBAKGOMO

Masakhane: Hopefully I didn't cause any problems, Anele looked like she didn't know that I was staying.

Me: I forgot to tell her and she's mad.

Masakhane: The fire cracker, Dad's favourite child of all time.

Me: I thought they didn't like each other.

Masakhane: I am the bastard child, the mistake our father had with my mother. It turned worse when I came out of the closet. Only Anele and her mother accepted, my father can't even stand my presence.

Me: I understand what you mean, Dad forced me to change.

Masakhane : You were gay?

Me: Yep.

Masakhane: Your mother?

Me:Our biological mother died when I was a barely 2 months old, about a year or two,Dad met Mama. From the day of she met us

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she offered to take us while Dad worked. Guess that's why they fell in love, Mama used to say that she saw something in me, something that didn't make me man. Never really understood until I realised that I was gay.

Masakhane:I had no idea.

Me: Even Anele doesn't know that. When my father found out it was right after he was ordained as the pastor, threatened to cut me off when Mom stood up for me,he reminded her that she was nothing to me. Each and every day he would blame her for my coming out of the closet,I had to make a choice to save my mother.

Masakhane:I guess my father has accepted, he's never gotten that far to change me.

Me:That would explain why I am attracted to you.

Masakhane:What?

He blushed.

Me:I just have this feeling.

Masakhane: You are married to my sister.

Me: I can't help it either way.

I stepped closer to him, I touched his face, he stared at me. I could feel my heart beat harder and faster as I brushed his face.

Me: You are beautiful.

Footsteps echoed, I moved back and Vuyo walked out.

Vuyo: I thought you escaped the drama inside.

Me: What drama?

Vuyo: The usual between the two old women, sons trying to intervene, grandchildren watching in humour and great-grandchildren running. It's nerve racking.

Me: This family is never going to have peace and quiet.

Vuyo: Tell me about it.

Me: Where is Lihle?

Vuyo: Back to work, she'll be back before Christmas. I keep forgetting that I married a doctor.

Me: Mhm.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I had to go along with the flow,I had to force myself moan as he enjoyed himself. He groaned and released inside, I pretended to squirt just like I have been doing for the past 20 years.

Smanga: You keep getting better at this.

Me:Duhh.

I had no option at all,one time I tried to escape this and I winded up in a hospital gangraped. Smanga was a drug dealer, something he made clear that no one knew even Denise. He made sure that I knew that all these years, threatened to kill everyone and leave me alive instead.

Smanga:I should go before everyone notices that I am missing.

Me:So fast?

Smanga:I could stay but not today.

Me:Let me shower then.

He got dressed and walked out,I could feel the emotions hit me so hard everywhere. I walked to the shower and turned the water on. I got in and sat down and cried. I couldn't even scrub him off. There were many times my mother asked me if I was alright,to a point she asked who was raping me. I was so scared when she asked that,Smanga was going to kill her if he knew so I said no. Each day I would catch her watching me,I couldn't even blame her when I wanted to so bad. A knock echoed.

Me:Who-

I heard the door open,I got up and turned the water and walked out. My mother was sitting on my bed already.

Me:Mom?

Mom: It's chaos downstairs,the grannies are fighting each other already.

Me: Physically?

Mom:Words,I just pretended that I was getting water and ran.

Me: You are suppose to be stopping them.

Mom:I have been married for thirty something years,yet they still strangling each other. No need to stop it.

Me: I was showering.

Mom:I won't stay long,sit here.

Me:Ohh okay.

Mom:There only thing that you don't know about your mother is that I am capable of murdering someone and get away with it.

Me:Ma!

Mom:I am giving you one last option to tell me the truth, just like I have been all these years.

Me:Truth about what?

Mom:Who the fuck is raping you? Everyone is here,point them out. Is it your father? He's pretended to be sick after all.

Me:No.

Mom:One of your uncles?

Me:I am not being raped.

Mom:I gave you a chance,I will do it myself and a dead body will show up.

She got up and walked out.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 15

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

"I overcame, hallelujah

He won the victory, hallelujah

He said it's finished and oh ohhh

My story is written and oh ohhh

I overcame, hallelujah

I overcame, hallelujah

Hallelujah he's alive

And because he lives I live

Hallelujah Jesus lives

And my future is alive in him

I overcame, hallelujah

He won the victory, hallelujah

He said it's finished and oh ohhh

My story is written and oh ohhh

I overcame, hallelujah"

I walked up to the stage.

Me: Beloved, apparently as the Eastern region pastor well Archbishop, I preach in all 20 churches under me. This is my second and I am yet to reach 20, someone should have mentioned this in the criteria. I am out here thinking, nah how about we redo this again.

Everyone laughed.

Me: Beloved, we're few days away from Christmas. Choice Assorted is waiting patiently under the cupboard, the jelly boxes under the door. In my house, I stopped hiding things because my children and their little demons have discovered my spots.

I chuckled.

Me: This is the last church for this holiday, then we meet next year but convention is in Trenius this year. I would be joining but due to personal reasons, I won't be able to come. Thimna please read 1 John 5:4-5.

I waited.

Thimna: 1 John 5:4-5 "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Me: Sesethu please read Matthew 8:23-27.

Sesethu:Matthew 8:23–27: And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

Me:I chose these two parts for a reason,one problem we have is fear. Fear turns to so many things,to a point you let it be a shell of every excuse you make. Do you have little faith to fear this much?Why are you scared to walk in the dark huh?The overcoming of fear—that is what we are proclaiming here. The Bible, the gospel, Christ, the church, the faith—all are one great battle cry against fear in the lives of human beings. Fear is, somehow or other, the archenemy itself. It crouches in people’s hearts. It hollows out their insides, until their resistance and strength are spent and they suddenly break down. Fear secretly gnaws and eats away at all the ties that bind a person to God and to others, and when in a time of need that person reaches for those ties and clings to them, they break and the individual sinks back into himself or herself, helpless and despairing while hell rejoices.

I paused.

Me: I say if you have little faith in God, you will be scared to take that one shot that could free you from poverty,,chains,pain all because of fear. "Fear not for I am your God." Why are you scared to have faith ?Why are you scared of the destiny created for you?Take a leap of faith and God will lead to greener pastures,fear nothing,fear no one,fear no obstacle. Have faith. What are you scared of that God can't overcome?What is it?

I took my tablet.

Me:This December was all about faith,we are closing it with this. Why are you scared when He says that he is your God,fear nothing. Sarah had a child because she had faith,David put down Goliath because of faith. Do you think he would have done that if he was scared?No. So why are you not overcoming fear?Why don't you have faith in the man that created me and you in his image?

I walked off the stage as everyone clapped.



Thimna:Why so much money granny?

Sesethu: They give pastors loads of money.

Me: You two are problematic.

Thimna: You are one rich pastor.

Sesethu: Have you seen her mother?

Me: I just have money.

Thimna: Yeah right, that doesn't explain why you are rich.

Me: Keep quiet.

I chuckled.

Sesethu: Only pastor with guards.

Me: Just security in case demons roam earth.

They laughed.

Me: On a serious note, if you ever use those drugs again I'll throw you in a rehab for two years and see how you survive.

Silence.

Me: I know everything in my house, now if I ever find out that you are smoking or using again, I will lock you in rehab myself. Thimna, your mother was trouble but she didn't use drugs, as for you Sesethu your parents are fighting each other not you. Your future is literally in your hands, if you think it's wasted, I'd suggest you commit suicide and make sure that you die. If you dare make it out alive I'll shoot you myself. Hear that?

They nodded.

Me::Say it!

Them:Yes Granny.

Liyana yawned from the chair and opened her eyes.

Me:Hello Princess.

Liyana:Grandma!

Thimna:So excited.

Me: She's crazy. We are not home yet,go back to sleep.

DENISE

He walked in.

Me: Almost cheated yet you are still missing again.

He walked to the closet.

Me:Are you going to respond?

Smanga: You start to annoy me. What happened to giving you space?

Me: That's all you have to say?

He looked at me.

Smanga:Is this the part you thought I will beg you? Quit joking Denise.

I gaped looking at him,I walked over and slapped him across the face. He looked at me stunned.

Me:I want a divorce.

He grabbed me so hard and banged my head on the wall, repeatedly until I could see stars.

Smanga:Ever threaten me again, I'll kill you. The fuck is wrong with you?

He threw me on the floor.

Smanga: Don't test me Denise.

Me: You hit me Smangaliso?

Smanga: Slapping someone is nerve wrecking! You know that, you know that but you chose to hit me. Because you are a woman I must not be angry?

Me:Sma-

Smanga:I shouldn't have lost my temper like that I am really sorry,I should really leave. I am really sorry,I am just not doi-

A knock echoed,he walked to the door and walked out of the room. Dolly stood there,he just walked past her.

Dolly: Hopefully I didn't come in the wrong time.

Me:No,no.

Yet my head was rotating,I must have slapped him so much that he got so angry.

Dolly:Right?

Me: About?

Dolly: Should I come another time Denise?

Me: Just painful headache nothing much. What were you saying?

Dolly:I want to buy gifts for everyone but you are the one who knows them.

Me:I had a list.

I moved only to fall,Dolly screamed as I fell to consciousness.

NKAZIMULO MOTHIBAKGOMO

Me:Mohale.

He turned and looked at me.

Mohale: Nkazimulo.

Me:I hope you don't have a problem,I just need to talk to you.

Mohale:: About?

Me:As a big brother I a m sure that you want to protect your only sister.

He squinted his eyes looking at me in confusion.

Mohale:I don't think I am going to like where is this headed at all.

Me:Mandla can talk,has been like that for years and can walk.

Mohale: What do you mean?

Me: He's acting sick so that Bokamoso doesn't continue with the divorce.

Mohale: Fucken hell.

Me:He impregnated two women and has teenage children out there.

Mohale:Why are you telling me?

Me: He's trying to find a way to get some of her wealth in his name.

Mohale: That's impossible .

Me: She's been paying fake doctors thousands of money to treat him,he has it. He's going to figure out where she keeps her money and steal it.

Mohale:Why are you selling your brother ?

Me: Would you have preferred that I pretend like I do not know? Then when you find out,,you paint me as a horrible person. Bokamoso is a nice woman to be treated like this,she raised Smanga,Themba and Vuyo when she could have thrown them. She sent them to schools none of us could afford,a pure soul used like this is worth protecting even if I have to betray my own brother.

Mohale:Who else have you told about this?

Me: Bokamoso and she doesn't believe a word that came out of my mouth.

Mohale:Tell no one, I'll deal with it.

Me: Sure.

Mohale:I am indebted to you.

You are Mohale,instead I just smiled and walked back to the house.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 16

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Lihle: Did you hit your head?

Denise: I fell but I did not think it was serious.

Lihle: Must have been a pretty bad fall.

Me: You scared me.

Denise: I am fine.

Me: Let me get you something to drink.

I walked out of the room and Smanga stood there.

Me: She's fine.

He sighed, he hugged me and Khanyo stood frozen.

Me: Ohh you brought the juice for Denise.

I let Smanga go, Khanyo dropped the glass on the floor.

Me: Nolukhanyo!

She snapped and started picking up pieces from the floor.

Me: Stop it!

She was shaking, Smanga stood there frozen.

Khanyo: I'll get a broom.

She looked up at Smanga. Was that fear I saw? I looked at him, he looked untethered before walking inside the room. Khanyo came back with bloody hands.

Me: I need to check your hands.

Khanyo: Promise me one thing.

Me: You are scaring me.

Khanyo: Be very wary of Smanga.

Me: Our brother?

Khanyo: Promise me!

Me: I promise.

Khanyo: One day you will know why, be very scared if he ever becomes a little too closer. I guess it's because you were always following Ma to be around for him.

Me: What are you talking about?

Khanyo: Don't tell him but be very worried.

She left me stunned, I just stood there in confusion. Why was she scared of our own brother? I walked to my room in confusion. I grabbed my phone and dialled the number.

Me: Joseline hey?

Joseline: Boss lady, who fell and made you call me few days before Christmas?

Me: Something weird happened and I feel like I won't find out.

Joseline: As a fellow journalist, I thought we don't test our skills on our families.

Me: The way she trembled seeing him hug me, I can't put anything past our family. Especially about Smanga, there was just something off with him. Can you believe that his wife had a concussion right after he walked out? She said she fell, yet he looked very angry.

Joseline: You think he's abusing them? Like hitting them?

Me: Well things is my father wasn't a friendly man before he met our mother.

Joseline: That might be history repeating itself. Names.

Me: Smangaliso Mothibakgomo and Nolukhanyo Ngondo nee Mothibakgomo. Look closer on him.

Joseline: I'll call you when I find something.

Me: Thank.

Daniel walked in.

Daniel: Working on holiday?

yours,whom, unfortunate had well have to call son. I could recommend my dermatologist but you wouldn't afford him.

Nkhono:I am not sur-

Mom:Can lunch be over already?There are children here?

Nana:Ohh baby I am never going to pretend that I like my in-laws that were forced on me.

Lihle: Savagery with the Mothibakgomos would be the best name ever.

Nana: Considering you are not one, you shouldn't come up with that nonsense, you are filling Nkhono with money making ideas.

Did I mention that my mother's mother was savage?She never backed down ever.

Mom:Mama please,yoh.

Lihle:I have good news.

Everyone looked at her.

Lihle:Well after sometime,I have decided to share this today not Christmas. I am pregnant.

Silence.

Vuyo:What are you talking? Something is growing inside?

Sesethu:Wow Uncle Vuyo, you are slower than me in Math.

Denise:Sesethu!

Everyone laughed. Vuyo hugged Lihle.

MOHALE

Me:I figured that you would be here.

Mario:I am enjoying the breeze.

Me:Every time your nephew shows love to his wife, you gag and step out.

Mario:Not true.

Bryson:Oh he's mopping?

Me: You bet.

Bryson:She didn't love you to stick around, clearly that is her soulmate isn't it?

Mario:She can't be pregnant

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she removed her womb.

Me:There are ways to get pregnant plus God has a plan,made he made something for her.

Mario:I know that she has no womb.

Bryson: What if they are doing surrogacy?

Mario:She never wanted kids.

Me:With you not him brother.

Mario:I can't just undo my feelings for her,I can't.

Bryson:She doesn't love you anymore,six years and you can't let go.

Mario: Someone I see all the time?

Me: Despite that, there's something interesting I just heard.

They looked at me.

Me:Mandla can talk and walk, planning to rob Bokamoso.

They laughed.

Bryson: Steal? You are joking? Bokamoso isn't someone you steal from,I mean Mohale as the big brother you know that pretty well.

Me:Yes,I know she broke my finger for stealing from her. Difference is simple, she loves him too much to even believe that he would.

Mario:Sounds like a script from soap opera. Where did you get this?

Me: Nkazimulo.

Bryson: Why would he tell you?

Me: He feels like Bokamoso is being taken advantage of and can't stay quiet.

Mario: That's off don't you think? Why would he tell on his brother if he's not planning to gain something?

Me: A brownie? I'll just talk to Bokamoso before anything else. Mario don't make Lihle uncomfortable and she miscarriages.

Mario: Thanks big bro.

Me: You are welcomed.

I chuckled as I headed to Bokamoso's office, she was sitting on the chair with her head between her legs.

Me: Crying?

She laughed.

Bokamoso: Just headache, thank you.

I sat on the couch.

Me: Your office is beautiful.

Bokamoso: I try. Want some whisky?

Me: Ah Pastor?

Bokamoso:I need to unwind,demons can be exhausting.

We laughed.

Me:I am worried about you though,I know that you have always refused to say what is going on with you ever.

Bokamoso:What happened?As far as I am concerned nothing is wrong with me.

Me:Did Nkazimulo talk to you?

Bokamoso:Why would my husband try to scam me?

Me: You are divorcing him aren't you?

Bokamoso:I am?Where did you get that?

Me:He said -

Bokamoso: You out of all people believed him?

Her phone vibrated.

Bokamoso: That's my cue, I'll see you later.

She grabbed her phone and walked out of the office.

Me:He lied to me?

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I fixed my pants before stepping out of the car.

Elijah: Should I come with you?

Me:No.

Elijah:I still believe this is a horrible idea Mam.

Me: That's for me to find out,stay in the damn car Elijah.

I walked to the gate and walked inside the building. There were guards as I walked to the elevator,I stepped in and someone followed.

Man:15th floor?

I did not respond,he just pressed either way.

Man: I'll have to search you.

Me:Do I look Supergirl?Kill someone and disappear?

He didn't say anything. I don't even know why I agreed to do this with Simoné. I stepped out of the elevator and walked to the office.

Simoné: Didn't think that you would show up.

Me:I just have to see for myself this evidence you apparently have on me.

Simoné:Then try to kill me?

Me: What if that was my plan all along?

Voice:Feisty.

I turned and a man walked in.

Me: Let me guess this is your shoulder to cry on?

Simoné: This is my father.

Me: You never mentioned that your father is a hood rat, could have brought rat poison.

The man turned so fast, I jumped and grabbed Simoné, pinned the gun on his head.

Me: I am going out of this building alive..

Man: We were going to negotiate with you.

Me: Make it snappy, my fingers want to pull the trigger.

Man: We give you the proof that shows what you did.

I let Simoné go and chuckled.

Me: That's it?

I fixed my jacket.

Man: You do something.

Me: Wait, wait you think you can blackmail me? Me?

I took out my phone.

Me: Done? Good. You might want to check your cameras.

He walked to his laptop.

Man:The fuck did you do?I am going to -

Me:No,no,I wouldn't do that if I were you.

He paused.

Me:I want you to try and come for me from hereon,I will kill everything you have. May God let your guards rest in peace. Who am I kidding? They are going to hell and you will follow if you ever step on my toes ever again.

Simoné:This is not over Bokamoso.

Me: Except for you.

I pulled the trigger,he fell.

Me:Now Daddy dearest, don't ever come playing with me again. Toodles,love yah.

I turned and walked out of the office,bodies laid on the passage.

Me:Good floor rug ruined,nxx.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 17

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I felt a hand on me,I jumped.

Mario:I have been calling you sometime Khanyo.

Me:I am in a deep conversation with me Uncle Mario.

Mario: I thought your husband would be here.

Me:He was here,he left few days ago to attend to his pregnant fiancée.

Mario: He's getting married?

Me:I can't really conceive Uncle Mario,not after Dolly poisoned me.

Mario:Anger leads to many things,not that I am excusing what Dolly did Khanyo. Sometimes we do a lot of things in anger, doesn't excuse the consequences but they happen.

Me: Can't just forget,I thought I was going to die, what killed me most was knowing why. All because I didn't approve of her sleeping with an old man and reported that. She wanted to silence me forever Uncle Mario.

Mario:That is dark. Do you know why Mohale has 4 fingers?

I looked at my uncle.

Me:No.

Mario:He stole from your mother and she wanted to break his fingers.

I cringed.

Mario:Anger,she had anger that she betrayed her trust and did something she still regrets to this day. So what I am saying, you need to talk to your only and little sister or might be too late. Say whatever you think of her,let everything you felt out and don't leave anything. Bitterness will always make you a bad person and you love, can't do that. You are too beautiful to get wrinkles.

Me:Thank you so much Uncle Mario.

Mario: There's something else.

My heart stopped.

Mario: You are sweating Khanyo.

Me: It's hot here.

Mario:The aircon is on.

Me: Continue I'll be fine.

Mario:How well do you know Lihle?

Me:I don't get along with any of my sister inlaws,Anele would know. Why ask?

Mario:Never really met her family.

Me:I don't know about that, they never came to the wedding only her sister did. Then that was it.

Mario:I am just curious, nothing much. I'll leave you here.

He walked out of the sitting room, closing the door behind him. I continued looking outside the window,I heard the door opened.

Me:Ah Uncle Mario enjoying staying with me much?

Smanga:I do.

My heart leapt out of my chest.

Me:He-he wa-as just here,he-he said that he wa-s coming back.

He sat across me.

Smanga:Will wait for him to come back.

Me: I'll jus-st get him now.

I was about to give up.

Smanga: Sit!

I jumped, almost tripping but I did not.

Smanga:What was that with Dolly?Are you trying to make me look bad Nolukhanyo?

Me:No,no,I just thought you had replaced me with her.

Tears were involuntarily slipping.

Smanga:Wipe those crocodile tears.

I quickly wiped my face so fast.

Me:I am telling the truth,I wouldn't betray you now.

Smanga:Good,I won't hesitate to chop her head off if you tried me. Can't be filling a journalist with ideas because darling if anything smells fishy, I'll start off with her.

Me:I wouldn't do anything,I promise.

Smanga:Good girl.

He got up and walked to me. His hand squeezed my breast.

Smanga:Smile.

I forced a smile,he let me go and walked out. I did not even know that I wasn't breathing until my chest burnt. I let out a huge breath,my hands were shaking. I heard the door open,I jumped pulling the table cloth. I covered my eyes as everything fell on the floor.

Anele:Khanyo!

Me: You scared me.

I was breathing so hard as I looked at the dishes shattered lying on the floor.

Me: Oh God!

People walked in confusion.

Mom: What happened?

Anele: It was my fault, I wanted to scare her and she jumped pulling the cloth and everything fell. I had no idea she'd be that scared.

Smanga stood at the door grinning. My mother, surprisingly just stared at the mess and looked at me.

Me: I will order new ones, I promise.

She looked at me, something was different about the way she was looking.

Mom: Get someone to clean this and tell Elijah to get the list of the things broken here.

With that she walked out without saying another word. I stood frozen as everyone grabbed something to pick up the pieces.

Anele: Come this way, I'll get you something to drink.

Me: I need to help.

Dolly:Go with her,we got this.

Anele just took my hand and led me to the kitchen.

Anele:Here.

Me:Thanks.

Anele:I didn't scare you Khanyo, you were already shaking when I walked in.

Me:Just stressing.

Anele:Right after Smanga?

Me: What are you talking about?

Anele:I am lawyer, something happened in there and he must have scared you so much that you brought an entire table.

Me:Smanga didn't scare me if that's what you assuming.

Anele:What did he tell you?

Me:Are you this nosey?

Anele:One thing about my husband,he wouldn't make up something. He did fight with Smanga for sleeping with you,my question is. Is it consented?

Me:Are you sick?Why would I sleep with my brother?

Anele: Wouldn't be the first one, probably not the last. Incest is a word after all.

Me:I am going to my room.

Anele: I'll assume on purpose.

Me:I don't care.

I walked out.

THEMBA

Masakhane:Come on, look at your daughter she's cute.

Me:She is.

Anele walked in.

Anele:So you two are just here while everything is in pieces?

Me:What is in pieces?

Anele: You would have known if you weren't so busy getting along with my brother.

Masakhane: I'll just leave.

Anele: Before you go

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I need to understand something. Why do you think it's okay to chill in my bedroom? Can't you do it somewhere else?

Masakhane:I didn't mean offend you.

Anele:Offend me? You think I am offended that my husband would rather spend time with my brother more than he does with his family?I am quite bored that's all,not offended not in this lifetime sweetie.

He walked out.

Me:Did you have to be so mean?

Anele: Weren't you the one complaining about Lihle spending too much in our bedroom?Now it's you,I am suppose to zip my mouth?

Me: He's your brother.

Anele: You are right, he's my brother and your brothers don't even spend 2 minutes in this bedroom.

Me:I get it,I am sorry.

She chuckled.

Anele: Where there is smoke, there's fire.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Anele:Google it baby. Liyana is still sleeping?

Me: What was that suppose to mean Anele?

Anele walked to the door. I stood there,was she noticing the developing feelings I had for her brother?Was it that obvious?



My mother wasn't in the table, like sometimes and we were eating.

Denise: So Lihle how far long are you?

Lihle: A month.

Nana: I bet the child will be as beautiful as you.

Lihle: Thank you.

My mother finally walked in and sat down.

Nkhono: Thought you weren't coming down Bokamoso.

She didn't respond as she dished up for herself. Everyone seemed to realise that as we all looked at her.

Nana: Bokamoso?

Mom: Mhm?

Nana: Are you alright?

Mom: I am hungry, I'll respond when I am full.

Dad: I have good news to share with the family too.

I widened my eyes in shock.

Rakgadi: You just spoke the longest line ever.

Dad: I am actually getting better than before sister.

Granny jumped in excitement and hugged him. I could not believe that he was actually talking after so many years.

DETECTIVE RORISANG PINA

Me:And?

Orlando:Only person is missing. Pablo Simoné.

Me:The drug dealer? What was he doing in Eastern Sata?

Orlando:Well to get his son,who was released a week ago.

Me:Who?

Orlando:Him. Pablo Simoné Junior.

I looked at the dead body on the floor.

Me:Why was he arrested?

Orlando: Apparently he ran Pastor Mandla Mothibakgomo down about 15 years to 16 ago,he thought he had killed him according to his statement. Forensic report said that the pastor was stabbed a couple of times and left for dead, unfortunately for Simoné JR,the pastor made it, recognising him. Then Simoné realised that he was facing a lot years in prison,he started talking.

Me: Someone sent him?

Orlando: According to him, Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo sent him.

Me: The new archbishop?

Orlando: Yes, but if he continued he was going to spend more years in prison, his lawyers got him to plead guilty and managed to get him 15 years. Few days ago, he promised to give the evidence to prove that Pastor BM hired him to kill her husband.

Me: Once dealt with a pastor who was secretly running a cult.

Orlando: I feel like people would do anything to drag a woman down, I mean the woman is maneuvering men's world and none of us are happy.

Me: But it does not mean she wouldn't be angry enough to order a hit on her own husband.

Orlando: You think she also killed all these guards?

Me: Now this is a little off, can't really understand how so many people died. It's like they knew. Why let his father live? Something went wrong here, I'd really love to talk to Pastor Bokamoso.

.....

Me: She is very rich for a pastor.

Orlando: That's what happens when your mother is the richest woman in this country.

I stepped out of the car, a man walked to us.

Man: This way.

I followed him as we were led inside, the family was pretty much huge as everyone sat around the table.

Man: Mam, you have visitors.

I swear I didn't really expect her to look this young, she looked up in confusion.

Bokamoso: Please sit.

Me: I am afraid this won't take long. I am Detective Rorisang Pina, this is my partner Detective Orlando Hale.

Bokamoso: Is everything alright?

Me: Considering that your husband can't talk or walk, we can talk to you as his wife and we would like to talk to everyone else.

Bokamoso: Talk about?

Me: Pablo Simoné Junior.

Bokamoso: He was released, wasn't he?

Me: Yes, he was murdered too.

Everyone gasped.

Bokamoso:How awful, after serving his time and he's murdered just like that? Don't people know forgiveness is important?

Me: Have you forgiven him?

Bokamoso:Did I hate him to begin with?I was angry that he did that to my husband but I couldn't really change what had happened,I learnt to accept things as they are.

Me:Well, he's dead after being released from attempting to kill your husband Mam.

Bokamoso:You think I might have been so angry to hunt him after? What do you think I am?An avenging angel?

I have dealt with manipulative criminals but this was a different breed,the woman didn't show one single emotion, everything she said sounded comical. I couldn't read a thing from her face.

Me:Where were you between between 12 and 3 yesterday?

Bokamoso:At night?Dreaming Detective.

Me:In the afternoon.

Bokamoso:Sesethu get my diary,my memory is short.

Me: We'll have to check everyone's alibi.

Anele:No.

I turned to the voice.

Me: Advocate Masuku.

Anele:As long as you don't have any warranty to question this family or want alibis, it's time for you to leave. You will call my office with a warranty and book.

Me: I'll do that. My apologies.

Bokamoso:My daughter in law's kicked in otherwise I didn't think you needed that,do that and you will have everything.

We walked out.

Me: You forgot to mention Anele.

Orlando:I didn't know. Me: She'll chew me alive.

Orlando:See?

Me: Let's say it's not any of them but did you see what I saw?

Orlando:See what?

Me:I read expressions as my job,that woman was emotionless,I didn't catch even one single body language. She didn't give a damn at all. Orlando: What is that suppose to do with the case?

Me:I don't know who to warn,but that is the most lethal trait to have and I have a feeling that she knows something.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 18

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat on the chair, looking at the decoration ideas for Christmas in three days. The door opened and the detective walked in.

Detective: Detective Rorisang Pina.

Me: Pastor Bokamoso.

Detective: Your alibi checks out, well everyone is each other's alibi.

Me: Mhm.

Detective: Yet one person had a lot to say about you.

Me: Let me guess my mother-in-law. She did tell you that I pushed her off the stairs? Sounds bizarre.

Detective: Why would she blame you?

Me: I don't know, you will have to ask her not me. I don't know.

Detective: She must hate you so bad to blame you for attempted murder.

Me: I wouldn't know, I don't care.

Detective: Would you have been angry enough to kill the man who almost murdered your husband and blamed you for it?

Me:He wouldn't be the first man to blame me for something dear,I am not surprised.

Detective: Before he was stabbed to near death, your husband had quite the adventurous life.

Me: You mean the cheating scandals? Sleeping with women in the church and outside,oh he did.

She looked at me stunned.

Detective:You lost your church position and he took over.

Me:Well I asked him to. After all I wasn't about to let my church be auctioned.

Detective: Wouldn't you want your husband dead after what he did to you?

Me:Our marriage was already suffering,we made peace to do what satisfied us and I didn't care.

She sighed.

Detective:I am struggling to know what you are saying.

Me: Your problem is simple.

I smiled.

Me: You are not the first detective to say that,I am unreadable, apparently I lack normal human expressions. Or I am just too good at faking it.

Detective: The man who was fighting with your position was found dead few hours before the election.

Me: Apparently he stole money from a loan shark.

Detective: Somehow all the people that get in your way, wind up dead or barely alive.

Me: Only Pastor Sage was standing in my way Detective.

Detective: I pulled up reports from years ago. Do you know a Lana Dray?

Me: Yes, she has stroke, basically trapped in her body.

Detective: According to the sources, she went to the newspapers right after you were ordained saying that you were a demon. A couple of days later, she was shot on the back of her head leading to a stroke.

Me: Poor thing, that was awful even for her.

Detective: There's a trail.

Me: Of course there is when you want it to be there. You can't really think that I am interested in murdering people who don't like me, I got hundreds of people who hate me yet they search me everyday.

My phone vibrated.

Me: Unfortunately I still have to do Christmas shopping, if you are done I am leaving.

I got up and grabbed my purse.

Detective: If you remember anything -

Me: I won't remember a thing, don't give me your card, I'll throw it in the bin as I walk out. Lovely meeting you.

I walked out, I wasn't surprised that she thought she could make me drop an emotion and start investigating me even more.

Elijah: This detective has a reputation.

Me: Ohh?

Elijah: She's good at her job.

Voice: Did you see what I meant?

I looked at Nkazimulo.

Me: Are you following me?

Nkazimulo: Mandla just miraculously spoke, that's no coincidence at all.

I looked at him.

Me: It's what then.

Nkazimulo: It's the truth I told you about which you are refusing to believe.

Me: You are not going to tell me what should I believe, not now or any other day or I will tell Mandla you are feeding my brothers lies.

Nkazimulo: What is it you see in him?

Me: That I don't see in you? Hilarious, look at you, now look at me

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the combos don't communicate at all.

I walked to the car.

VUYO

Detective: Tell me what you think happened to Simoné.

Me: I have no idea actually, we heard the news from Nkhono, we didn't know he was out.

Detective: When was this?

Me: Just few days ago, I think the night she fell.

Detective: Why is your grandmother the only person pointing fingers at your mother?

Me: She loved my biological more than Ma.

Detective: Wait you have another mother?

Me:Yes,me,Smanga and Themba. Our mother was sick when Father met Bokamoso,she took us while he looked after our mother. Of course the family wasn't happy especially granny,she took us to very expensive schools. Nkhono did not like her from.

Detective: Enough to blame her for a lot of things?

Me:It always has been like that, something goes wrong around us or her, she'd make sure everyone knows about that. It got tiring because she was always blaming her for everything. My father cheating on her,it was Ma's fault.

Detective:Thank you for your time.

I got up.

Detective:Wait what do you know about Smanga's job?

Me: He's into construction and stuff.

Detective:He is?

Me:I don't really ask my brothers everything unless they share it with me.

Detective:Mhm.

I walked out and Lihle was already waiting.

Me: Hopefully you are alright.

Lihle: I am pregnant not broken,geez.

Me:I am just -

Lihle:Being extra, nothing is wrong. Let's go.

Me:Mood swings already?

She smacked my head as we walked to the car.

Me: Violence.

Voice:Lihle!

We paused,a man and woman walked to us.

Lihle: Let's go.

Man:Lihle please.

Me:Li-

Lihle:I am not staying here to listen to this, you will find me in the car.

With that said,she walked in the car,I followed her and got in.

Me: And then?

Lihle:Just take me home!

Me: You need to calm down.

Lihle:Just drive the damn car Vuyolwethu!

.....

Lihle just went to the bedroom.

Mario:That is definitely not good.

Me:Very bad temper and mood swings. I did not even say much and she's pissed off.

Mario: Pregnancy neh? You are going to be a father my boy.

Me: I think I am dreaming.

Mario:Pinch yourself.

Mom:Mario can we talk?

Mario: Congratulations.

I stood there not knowing if I should follow my beloved wife and suffer her wrath or just wait till she calms down. I chose to watch TV.

NANA(BOKAMOSO'S MOTHER)

I stepped in the room and found him sitting on the chair.

Me:I am hoping there's a reason I was called here.

Ty: You know Madam,I never really understood anything about you. Only looked for your husband for a short period of time while you knew where he was.

Me:Where is he?

Ty:Dead and buried, you knew that?

Me: It's not everyday you marry a billionaire and he vows to leave you high and dry along with your kids. All I had to do is tell his enemies how to find him.

Ty: You are dangerous.

Me: I supported him and all he wanted to do is leave me dry, so I did him a favour.

Ty: Someone is looking for him too.

Me: Who?

Ty: People actually, your sons are curious as to what really happened to him. They are tracking his steps before he died, which drove them here. They want to know what was their father doing with a divorce lawyer?

Me: I hope you didn't tell them anything.

Ty: I just denied anything to do with him but the divorce is in the system, they just have to look harder and they will know that he was divorcing you and taking full custody of them.

Me: I did not sign any divorce papers so I know absolutely nothing.

Ty: Soon you will have to answer as to why you didn't tell them the truth.

Me: That's for me to worry about, you just do your damn business and leave mine alone.

I stepped out of the office.

Me: Mohale is his father's child after all.

Bokamoso: I looked for you. Me: For?

Bokamoso: Well if you had your phone, you would have known right? Me: Okay I apologize.

Bokamoso: I want to know everything and you are going to tell me. Me: Tell you what?

Bokamoso: Was Father divorcing you?

Me: I don't know about that.

Bokamoso: Yet you went to see the same lawyer who denied ever talking to him, right after my brothers talked to him.

Me: Are you having me followed?

Bokamoso: His law firm is in town and your car has your name. Was he divorcing you? Me: Yes.

Bokamoso: I always believed that you knew more than you let on. Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Bokamoso: Figure it out Mother.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 19

NKAZIMULO

Mandla: You should have seen how happy she was to know that we can talk properly now.

Me:How do you plan on going with this?

Mandla: She's my wife,I know her soft spots, just maybe we are being given another chance at life.

Me:Mhm.

Mandla: You don't have faith on this?

Me:Secrets always show up in the end brother and I don't want to be caught up in that.

Mandla: Don't worry so much.

Me: You are telling me not to worry, when anything could blow on your face and I would be mentioned.

Mandla: You worry too much that's your problem.

Me:Or I am being realistic.

Voice:Excuse me.

I looked at the child.

Me:Come in.

Girl:Hi, I am Masimile. I was sent here to look for Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo.

Mandla:Can you come tomorrow? She'll be back a bit later.

Girl:Okay.

The girl walked out.

Me:Why didn't you ask why?

Mandla: It's not like I am going to help her anyway.

Me:I am asking.

I followed the girl.

Me:Young girl wait.

I jogged to her.

Me:Why are you looking for my brother's wife?

Girl:My mother would have a heart attack if she knew that I was here.

Me:What do you mean?

Girl: As a woman why doesn't she want my father to acknowledge me?I mean yeah I am a bastard but do I have to suffer?

Me:Who is your father?

Girl:Mandla Mothibakgomo.

Me:Heh? You didn't even recognise your own father in there yet you recognise Bokamoso.

Girl:I had no idea.

Me: Just like she doesn't know that you exist.

Girl:Mom said -

Me:Has your mother ever met the wife of the man she was sleeping with?

Girl:She said she did not want me anywhere near her family.

Me:Yet Bokamoso is raising kids that belong to your father without judging how they came.

Girl:I did not know.

Me: Tomorrow is Christmas,dinner will be at 6. Why don't you and your mother come over?So you can explain everything yourself.

Girl: I'll try.

Me:Or come here yourself.

Girl:Thank you.

She left,I grinned. I walked back inside.

Mandla: What did she say?

Me:She couldn't tell me anything, just said that she needs counseling with the Pastor herself.

Mandla:Mhm.

Soon,brother.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Me:Where is the damn phone?

It was ringing but I couldn't locate it.

Daniel:Right here.

Me:Thank you.

I took it.

Me:Dolly Mthombeni speaking.

Joseline:I haven't done much but something is really wrong,please get your laptop.

My heart jumped as I grabbed my laptop and opened it.

Joseline:Check the pictures I sent you.

Me:Is it bad?

Joseline: Your brother with drug lords this country can't even touch, weird part Khanyo is on his side like a dog on a leash.

Me: What do you mean?

Joseline: The pictures date back to your sister still a teenager, your brother has been grooming her for sometime. I don't know what exactly, I couldn't find any other reports because they are sealed by the government.

I looked at the pictures.

Me: The figurative meaning behind the dog on a leash might be literally.

Joseline: Your brother is rich Dolly, has dangerous people working with him and I would hate you to risk your life.

Me: Khanyo has suffered so much in my hands, she could have pretended that everything was fine but she risked it all and warned me. If he has been grooming her, I want to know for what? To sell drugs?

Joseline: What does Khanyo do again?

Me: Physiotherapist.

Joseline: She must have been clever.

Me: All Mom's IQ went to her.

Joseline: What is your mother besides being a pastor?

Me: Funny

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none of us know yet we live in a mansion. She chose not to tell us but I have a feeling, it's mindblowing.

Joseline: I'll check more information.

Me: Thank you Jo.

Joseline: Anything sister boss.

I dropped the call.

Daniel: That doesn't look brotherly to me.

Me: I want to think he was forcing her for drugs but at the same time I can't shake the feeling I am wrong. Her actions just make her look like a rape victim. What if he was using her to settle deals with these criminals? What if he's been prostituting her?

Daniel: If he groomed her, there's no way she's going to tell the truth.

Me: I just -

Daniel: She won't just trust you to be on her side.

Me: But I want to help her. I should talk to my mother.

I heard the car pull in.

Daniel: Do that.

I took my laptop and walked down the stairs.

Mom: That's new, you are here to welcome me back.

Me:Yeep. Where are the kids?

Mom: Getting everything out of the car.

Me:Can we talk for a second?

We walked to her office,I closed the door.

Me: Look Mom,I am hoping that you don't tell anyone about this including Smanga and Khanyo.

Mom: What is it?

I handed her the laptop.

Me:Scroll down.

She looked at the pictures in confusion.

Mom: What is this?

Me:Those are world most wanted criminals and Smanga is doing business with them.

The door opened,she closed the laptop.

Mario:B-oh I didn't know that you are not alone.

Mom: What is it?

Mario:The lawyer called.

Mom:And?

Mario:He has a lot to say.

Mom:Wait here, I'll be back.

They walked out,I sighed and sat down. My mother's office was actually bigger than I remember. Pictures were hanging on the wall,I was quite surprised to see mine too even though I have not been home for 17 years. I pulled the drawer only to freeze,a gun sat on top of the papers,I closed it and got up.

SMANGA

Gideon:Very good quality.

Me:I guaranteed that of course.

Gideon: Here's your money.

Me: Good doing business with you.

He nodded,I walked to my car as my phone rang.

Me:Tony didn't I say call me after two hours?

Tony:Ah boss this could not wait.

Me: What is going on?

Tony:A journalist managed to get her hands on some pictures of you.

Me:I didn't know that a journalist was interested in me.

Tony:I didn't know either until now,she just requested to see some sealed documents.

Me: Impossible.

Tony:With a tangible reason the Varlia DP will have to disclose that.

Me:Who is this journalist?

Tony:A Joseline Hawthorne.

Me:Call Dale and tell him to deal with her as soon as possible,I don't want problems. Tony make sure that whoever received those photos doesn't have them.

Tony:Sure thing boss.

I dropped the call,my phone rang again.

Me:Tony-

Denise:Where are you?

Me:I said that I am getting gifts.

Denise:That was three hours ago.

Me:Well I do not what to buy exactly.

Denise:I knew it.

I chuckled.

Denise: I'll send you the list.

Me: The expensive item must cost R200.

She laughed.

Denise: All I know you will bring all the items.

Me: You think I live in the Reserve bank.

Denise: You are one, just get those things Smanga.

I sighed as she dropped the call.

Me: I'll die poor by these gifts.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 20

SESETHU

Thimna: There's always drama in this house.

Me:Yeah.

Thimna: You seem far. Everything alright?

Me:Ngesi.

Thimna: Your boyfriend?

Me: He's cheating on me with Abe.

Thimna: What are you talking about?

Me:I saw the pictures, he's cheating on me with her. It's some girl from church.

Thimna:: You are letting them do that to you?

Me:Abe smiled at me during church yet she knew she was chowing my man.

Thimna: You should teach her a lesson, conniving little bitch.

Me:I know where she lives, let's scare her.

Thimna:Good.

I grabbed my shoes and we were out of the house.

Thimna:We should threaten to kill her.

Me:I have the better idea.

I rushed back to my grandmother's office and took her gun.

Me:This will just give a heart ache.

Thimna:I almost died looking at that.

Me:The silencer right? Just like in the movies.

Thimna:Where did you get that?

Me: It's Granny's.

I put in my pocket and we walked to Abe's house. We knocked at the door,I was hoping that she was alone. She opened the door,she looked shocked to see me.

Abe:Sesethu.

Me:Are you alone?We need to talk about Ngesi.

Abe:Yeah my parents went shopping. What do you want?

Me:Why are you sleeping with my boyfriend and smiling to my face about it?

Abe: Clearly he wants me not you Sesethu, just because you are a Mothibakgomo doesn't mean things will go your way. You are expired.

Me:I am expired?

I took out the gun, she jumped.

Me: You make noise, I'll shoot you.

Abe: Sesethu are you crazy? I am going to have you arrested.

Me: As if I will be arrested.

She tried to jump for me but I heard something go off. She fell on the floor shaking, Thimna screamed before closing her mouth. It was now I realised that I pressed the trigger.

Me: No, no, no. Abe!

She gagged, I just stood there confused and scared. I turned around and ran, I wasn't thinking about Thimna or anyone. I ran until I reached home, put the gun back and ran to my room. My hands were shaking as I walked up and down, my chest burnt but I wasn't stopping. The door opened and Thimna walked in out of breath.

Thimna: You just left me.

I walked up and down.

Thimna: I called the ambulance.

Me: You left fingerprints?

Thimna: No!

Me: Is she dead?

Thimna:She was breathing slowly. You took a loaded gun to scare someone,are you fucken crazy?!

Me:I didn't know that my grandmother had a loaded gun in her drawer.

Thimna:And ran instead of calling an ambulance.

Me:I would be arrested for attempted murder.

Thimna:She could die!

Me:I panicked and ran,okay?I never shot anyone.

Thimna:Do you think they will know that it was us?

Me:Oh God we are going to prison.

Thimna:I didn't shoot anyone.

Me: Accessory to murder.

Thimna: Let's call the police and explain what happened.

Me: That I shot a girl? You will be pardoned and I will spend the rest of my life in prison.

Thimna: What do we do?

Me: We'll apologize to Abe when she wakes up,make her understand that it was a mistake. Yeah, she'll understand.

Yet I couldn't stop shaking. Oh God what have I done?

THEMBA

Vuyo: Christmas Eve is peaceful.

Mario: I wouldn't bet on that if I were you, there's a scandal brewing.

Me: I agree with you. Where are the women huh?

Vuyo: Out shopping for tomorrow, you'd swear they are spending their own money.

Me: I'll be right back.

I walked to Masakhane's room, haven't seen him all afternoon and I knocked before pushing the door opened.

Me: Masakhane!

His bed was done, the bathroom door opened and he stepped out in a towel.

Masakhane: I fell asleep.

Me: The house is weirdly quiet this afternoon.

Masakhane: No wonder I fell asleep.

Me: I was just checking on you.

Masakhane: Thank you.

Silence, I was watching him and he could see that. I walked to the door with my mind made up, I was going to kiss Masakhane. Crazy? Yet here I was locking the door and turning around.

Masakhane: Wha-t are you doing Themba?

Me: I can't stop thinking about you.

I walked to him, he looked shocked as I grabbed the towel.

Masakhane: We can't-

I kissed him, pulling his face close to mine. I wanted to kiss him for the rest of my life. I blocked out all thoughts about what this was, what it might mean, how much more trouble I could make for myself... And I kissed him until justification seeped through my skin and I became a living rhythm

only thinking about what I intended to do to him... And then we were all swarming around the small railway carriage, all hands and lips and, oh, God, the scent, taste, and feel of him. It was like small alarms going off all around me, bits of me that I'd thought were dead reviving. I dropped the towel on the floor, he was rather hard for someone who was against everything. He took charge so quickly trailed a kiss from my neck, slowly down my chest. My breath hitched as he went down on his knees unbuckled my pants, I could feel my dick sprung the moment he landed his soft lips on the tip. [DON'T

REPORT ME YIKES 😊 REMOVED. FIND IT IN THE HOUSE OF JANGE GROUP]

LIHLE MANZIMA

Pregnant?

Me: This is going to be harder than I thought.

V: Tell him the truth.

Me: How? He never mentioned his change of heart and I have to adjust.

V: But lying isn't exactly ideal.

Me: In the end we get a child with our DNA story solved.

V: You do understand that you are going to have to mother the child? A child you don't want.

Me: What do I say huh? Where do I even begin Veronica?

V: Honesty is painful but it's the best option out there.

Me: You don't understand, I don't have any option. I love Vuyo with my heart, if a child is something he wants then that is what I will give him.

V: At the expenses of your happiness?

Me:I would be so selfish not to give him what he wants the most,he has done so much for me and you V. He could have minded his business but he chose not to.

V:I am grateful but lying-

Me:What matters,he gets to be a father, eventually I have 9 months to learn about loving the child.

V:Hayi cha Lihle, you are walking on thorns, don't know which one might stab you.

The door opened and Vuyo walked in.

Me:I have to go sis.

I dropped the call.

Me: Weren't you chilling with the boys?

Vuyo: It's too quiet.

Me: You like drama? Oh my goodness Pastor M.

Vuyo: It's hilarious okay? This house has no peace ever.

I chuckled.

Vuyo:So dr how is the princess?

Me:What if it's a boy?

Vuyo: I want a child that looks like you not me.

Me:Ehh,I want a boy.

Vuyo: It's going to be a girl.

Me:Yes Daddy,I heard your word of God. Go deeper. Ah.

Vuyo:I went deeper in a hot over and left a bun.

I gaped as I looked at him.

Me:Damn why don't I have anything to say?Oh my goodness
Lihle talk.

He laughed.

Vuyo:I did go deeper and could only save me not my child,at
least she'll grow and save herself.

Me:Corny that's all.

Vuyo: So I was thinking,at least for the next few 2 year we
should have a helper.

Me:Ehh?

Vuyo:I can't have you working in the hospital then coming
home to work too. I just need you to worry about you,me and
your job.

Me:My job comes last?

Vuyo:Duhh!

Me:Did you just roll your eyes at me?

I laughed as he continued,he grinned looking at me.

Vuyo: You know,I always thought that me and you would adopt a child instead of our own.

Drop dead.

Me: You don't want kids?

Vuyo: Don't get me wrong Lihle,I love kids so much but I never wanted you to think that it was that important for me to be a father. I just want you to be happy and sharing you with some stranger is going to be difficult. Damn I sound so possessive. I think I am jealous of a foetus,lol.

I laughed so bad my stomach hurt.

Vuyo: Wouldn't mind asking Mom to raise it.

Me:Vuyolwethu no ways, don't do that.

Vuyo:I am your baby not her.

Did he not pull me to his arms, sniffing. I could feel the emotions build in,he wanted to be a father but didn't want me to feel pressured but there was just no going back. I had to continue because the surrogate was inseminated. Could I tell him the truth?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 20 REMOVED

THEMBA

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Me: I agree with you. Where are the women huh?

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slowly down my chest. My breath hitched as he went down on his knees unbuckled my pants,I could feel my dick sprung the moment he landed his soft lips on the tip.

He just kept in his mouth while massaging my balls.

Masakhane: Like that?

Me: Fuck, yeah.

Then he pushed it all the way in, I could feel something tickle the tip, I held his head and moved him faster. I could feel my dick getting harder at every thrust, he squeezed, rubbing my balls faster. I wanted to take it out but he held it as I released in his mouth, it was a major turn on. He got up from his knees and walked to the bed. I took off my clothes. I crept up to his side, and once there, I ran my hand over the perfect smooth flesh of his butt. I entertained myself for a while by stroking his buttocks, all the while my own cock was getting warmer with delight under the sun and his appealing naked body. I climbed to my knees and leaned over, pressing both my hands against Masakhane's shoulders, near the point where his smooth neck met the bone of his collar. His shoulder muscles were circular firm, and they felt great to the touch. I squeezed them and began to massage his back while straddling him in such a way that my rapidly engorging penis perched upon the gap of his bottom. Extending my fingers and pressing my palms into the flesh and musculature that spread to either side of Masakhane's spine, I worked my way up and down, arousing my cock with a rotating shaft to and from along the crack of Masakhane's firm ass. I slid it in slowly, pushing him to lie on his

side. He gasped as I thrusting slowly, his moans were music to my ears. I didn't want to go rough on him but I was getting a little too excited. I increased my pace so did his moans.

Me:Shh.

I covered his mouth, he grabbed my thigh as I thrusting faster.

[yooh I am done, imagine the rest? 🗄️♀ I cannot go on]

✓ ILLECEBROUS 21

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me:How come Mom didn't tell us what our father was doing?

Mohale:I always had an idea that he was a shitty husband but not to this extent.

Bryson: Let's just drop this.

Me:I suggest that we do. I have to check on Dolly.

I was quite confused by the pictures she showed me, what were Khanyo and Smanga doing with drug lords? I walked to her room.

Me:Dolly?

She walked out of the bedroom.

Me: You couldn't wait?

Dolly:I just had to check on something.

Me:Can I see the photos?

She looked at her laptop.

Dolly: That's weird, they are gone. Let me call Jo.

I waited as she called this Jo.

Dolly: She's not responding.

Me: What were the pictures about?

Dolly: I started investigating after Khanyo said that I should be worried about Smanga.

Me: She's on the pictures with him, meeting drug lords.

Dolly: I don't think she's doing it on her own, I think he's forcing her.

Me: Thinking and thinking? You said that before, you said that you weren't sleeping with an older man, you think he was raping you. Where did believing you get me? Thrown out of my church like gum.

Dolly: You don't understand Ma, this is different.

Me: I am not taking your word without proof, never again. You were a pathological liar once, you might be doing it again.

Dolly: Khanyo -

Me: If something is happening to my daughter, I'll find out as for you stay out of my way. Khanyo clearly hasn't learnt anything from trusting you and I don't make noise when investigating. Now you sound stupid.

I walked out. Now I was rather confused, was she being raped or forced on drugs? I almost pulled my hair as I walked to my

office. I looked at the open drawer and closed, I opened my laptop hoping to check the cameras. My phone rang.

Me: Argh. Pastor Bokamoso speaking.

Voice: It's me.

I got up and closed the door.

Me: What happened to not contacting me?

Voice: I would have waited but something big is happening in the clinic, some men came here looking for the owner.

Me: What do you mean?

Voice: I am saying that someone is sniffing in your clinic Pastor and it's not pretty.

Me: Who is it?

Voice: I think it has to do with the man that died here few days ago.

Me: What the fuck are you talking about?

Voice: I really don't know but something big is happening in the clinic, I think they blame the clinic for this man's death or it's a plot. You know rivals and staff. These people are working hard to let you agree with their deal.

Me: Don't tell me the Coral Cartel is at it again. I will be there as soon as possible.

I locked my laptop,grabbed my keys and bag. I was out of my office.

Vuyo:Ah Mom-

Me:Where is your wife?

Vuyo:Uhm-

Lihle: Right here Ma.

Me: Something is happening at the clinic,get your things.

Vuyo: What clinic?Lihle-

She was already running to her room.

Me: Clinic out of town, I'll take Lihle with me.

Vuyo: I have never heard of this clinic before.

Me:I never told you either.

Lihle:Ready.

Vuyo: When will you be back? It's Christmas tomorrow.

Me: Tomorrow morning.

We walked to the car.

Lihle:Why don't you tell them the truth?

Me:Why can't you tell him the truth about your parents?

Lihle:I can't lie to my husband any longer.

Me: You can and you will.

Lihle: What is happening in the clinic?

Me: Someone might have died there, I need you to make sure that my clinic isn't responsible. Men have this thing of wanting to put pretty women as fronts to their businesses. They want my clinic as a front to a drug-

I paused, the pictures I saw on Dolly's laptop flashed and I remembered seeing him. The man who have been terrorising my clinic and Smanga and Khanyo were with them.

Me: Now that doesn't make sense.

Lihle: What?

Me: I am just thinking out loud.

I dialled on my phone.

Me: Hey, I need a big favour. I need to know something about the man terrorising my clinic, I want to know all the people he has spoken with that I know. Including two of my children.

Something wasn't making sense, I have kept my businesses away from my kids, they didn't know anything except what I chose to share. Now was it a coincidence that the same man took a picture with Khanyo and Smanga?

THIMNA

I woke up sweating,I looked around and grabbed my phone

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it wasn't even an hour since I slept.

Voice:I cannot sleep either.

I screamed, tripping over my shoes and went flying to the floor.

I winced as I fell on my nose.

Sesethu:I am really sorry,I didn't mean to scare you.

Me: It's dark in the room.

I walked to the door and turned the lights on.

Me: What is going on?

She was dripping wet.

Me:Sese?

Sesethu:Huh?Yeah I am going to sleep.

She got up,she looked out of space.

Me: Sesethu.

Sesethu: She's dead Thimna.

Me:I called the ambulance.

Sesethu:They called Uncle Vuyo last night to tell him about these news and she's dead.

Me:I-

Sesethu:I killed someone before Christmas. I want to jump off the nearest cliff.

Me:We can talk to Grandma.

Sesethu:That her gun is about to get linked to a murder of a girl she probably doesn't even know.

Me:We have to talk,Granny is going to get arrested.

Sesethu:There was so much blood and I only panicked.

Me:Sesethu!

Sesethu:Right,let me go.

She walked out,I stood there brushing my hands together. I didn't know what to say at all. I wanted to scream but I had to keep it together but Granny was about to get arrested.

Me:Oh God why?!

I grabbed my gown and walked to my parents' room. I knocked and opened.

Mom: You are still awake?

Me:I need to talk to you.

Mom: Daniel is in the dining room.

Me: So this friend told me that she took a gun to scare some girl to leave her boyfriend, instead the gun went off shooting the girl.

Mom: Happens but court would say bringing a weapon meant that your friend has intentions of harming the girl.

Me: Now the girl is dead.

Mom: Unfortunately taking a life is no mistake Thimna, your friend should just hand herself to the police to make things easier.

Me: She's having a mental breakdown!

Mom: Is this real?

Me: Just some episode I was watching, I wanted to know that.

Mom: Investigation will track the gun.

Me: They can?

Mom: Bullets have serial numbers connecting to the gun and each gun too. Soon they will know who it belongs to.

I walked out more traumatized, I had to find a way somehow.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Denise: The house was undeniable quiet, no Lihle. Just peace.

Anele: Ohh come on drama in this house comes in different forms.

Me: You tell me about it.

Smanga walked in.

Denise: Hey honey.

Smanga: Babe. Khanyos can I steal you for a moment?

I got up and followed him, he turned so fast wrapping his fingers around my neck.

Smanga: Joseline Hawthorne?

Me: Hu-h.

I coughed.

Smanga: Do you know her?

Me: No, I swear.

He let me go, I coughed brushing my neck.

Smanga: A journalist poking in my business.

Me: I did not talk to any journalist.

Smanga: Except the one in our house. Technology is powerful, Joseline, may her soul rest in peace.

I gasped.

Smanga: Was working for Dolly and sent your sister pictures of my deals. Who planted the idea in her head to investigate me?

Me: She must have noticed something.

Smanga: Do you know that Mom refuses to deal with the Coral Cartel? Now they are not happy she keeps refusing, then are trying to take her out of business. As we speak, she's on her way to the clinic and anything can happen. Tragedies happen all the time.

Me: Please don't hurt her.

Smanga: Make sure that Dolly knows that or I will do more than you can imagine Princess.

He left me standing there, I struggled to breathe for sometime. I climbed the stairs and headed to Dolly's room, I pushed the door opened and walked in.

Me: Are you alone?

Dolly: Yeah.

Me: Cannot believe that I trusted you out of all people.

Dolly: I-

Me: Found the pictures now you don't have them and your journalist is dead. If you continue, Mom will return in a casket.

Dolly: What are you saying? Mom -

Me: Stay out of this, the Carol Cartel will kill Mom including Royal and Stripes cartels, they will hurt her.

She paused when she realised what I did.

Me: You want find something start with yourself and don't be checking shareholders of the construction company owned by Smanga.

She took a paper, I turned and walked out. Smanga might have busted this, I trusted Dolly to do better than before. He'd expect her to throw a tantrum but he was going to have a rude awakening.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 22

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Daniel:Dolly!

I opened my eyes and looked at him.

Daniel:Not on holidays Dolly, you slept on chair on Christmas Eve.

Me:I just had to find out everything.

Daniel: You are investigating your brother according to the same sister whom hated you the moment we got here. The same sister who almost died because of you. She's telling you that your brother is a criminal yet she never reported anything. She has nothing to lose and you have two kids. Ask yourself,if she is threatened not to say anything what makes you think Smanga won't do it to you?

Me:I have to do this.

Daniel: You are not thinking straight, she's in a lion den asking a bunny to help get her out and it's not making sense. Smanga knows that you are looking at him.

Me:He-

Daniel: Kill you? Yet you almost murdered your own sister, why wouldn't he?

A knock echoed.

Me: Come in.

Smanga stepped in, my breath hitched.

Smanga: Do you know where is Mom?

Daniel: I'll check on Zed.

Me: Vuyo said she went somewhere, not sure exactly.

Daniel walked out.

Smanga: Why are you investigating me?

Me: I am not investigating anyone.

Smanga: Joseline gave up everything before she died, how your sister told you something what what.

Me: You are something else do you know that?

Smanga: Difference between us, is that I don't leave anyone alive at all. Your problem is that you think you can outsmart everyone like you did before. Your problem is that you think I will hesitate in killing you, that I will cross any boundaries or.

I looked at him.

Denise: It's Christmas tomorrow.

Me: Where are the boys?

Anele: They are playing outside.

Themba: It's Christmas anyway.

A scream echoed so loud, we all jumped and rushed out. The kids were hovering over something.

Me: What?!

Thimna: A snake! It bit Zed.

I grabbed my scarf and tied it around his leg.

Anele: We don't have snakes.

Denise: Only the ones Smanga keep, only Elijah keeps the keys and he's not here.

Me: There are snakes here?

Smanga: Oh yes, it's a collection of poisonous snakes.

Fascinating creatures..

Me: It-

He raised his eyebrows, my heart sank as I realised that it was a warning.

Smanga: The kids wanted to see them, your son pushed the glass tub and it fell. Of course it thought he was fighting.

My heart stopped as he took the snake out of his pocket, it hissed and everyone was calm.

Vuyo: We have to take him to the hospital.

I looked back at Smanga, he smirked as we got in the car.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Lihle: He was going to die.

Me: They really want to pin this on me.

Lihle: The clinic has improved since the last time I saw it.

Me: I'll need you to return home.

Lihle: Ma-

Me: I am not about to be responsible for losing a baby
Thembelihle.

Lihle: These are criminals, you should be calling the cops.

I looked at her.

Me: This doesn't need any cops. Elijah take her home.

Elijah: There's only one car.

Me: Are you going to go against my orders?

Elijah: Let's go Dr.

I dialled the co-ordinates on my phone as I waited ,in few minutes my phone blinked. I walked out of the clinic,a car parked in front of the gate. A woman got out and handed me the keys,I got in the car and drove. I drove back to town,my phone rang.

Me:Yeah.

Voice: Pastor Bokamoso

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I am calling on behalf of the Sandi family.

Me:Abe's parents.

Voice: Unfortunately yesterday it's not good news.

Me: What is going on?

Voice:Abe was shot yesterday, died on her way to the hospital.

Me:Oh God.

Voice:I know it's Christmas tomorrow,the police is still going over the house now-

Me:Their house is unavailable?The guest houses are full. Can you take them to my house in the meantime?I am out of town but will be back.

Voice:May God bless you Pastor.

I sighed as I drove. I headed to the hotel, I parked outside and got in. I got in the elevator and headed to the floor, the guards looked at me as I knocked at the door. I walked in.

Voice: You must be fearless to just step in the room.

I looked at the men sitting on the couches.

Me: Let me guess the cartels my father used to work with are all in the room. Who is who?

Pablo: You murdered my son bitch.

Me: Yet I am still alive, aren't I?

Pablo: Not for long.

Me: What do you want from my clinic?

One of them got up.

Man: Wale. Look your clinic was part of the red market before you took over, you swept everything without alerting anyone.

Me: About my decisions in my clinic?

Wale: Your father signed a deal that would be passed to anyone leading which means that you are bound by the same deal.

Me: I am not going to be some puppet in trafficking human organs in a clinic that is meant to help people.

Wale: Your oldest son doesn't share the same sentiments though Pastor.

Me:What does Smangaliso have to do with this?

Wale: You think your father groomed the young boy to feel at home?

My heart sank as I realised that my father was always adamant about me taking Smanga,Vuyo and Themba. To a point he was willing to pay for their fees, especially Smanga.

Wale: You either continue with the deal or hand the clinic over.

Me:Or what?

Wale:Well you have seen what we are doing with it already,I don't think you want it to go that far.

I stood still trying to understand what they were saying about Smanga. Was that what Dolly trying to show me?What did it have to do with Khanyo?I blew all along she was trying to show me something.

Me:I guess my father forgot to tell you about me,I don't back down that easily.

Wale:God won't be here to help you.

Voice: Gentlemen,no need to threaten the beautiful lady.

They cowardly shifted as they sat down,I didn't bother turning around. The man touched the back of my head,I didn't turn around.

Man:Please sit.

I turned almost collided with the man.

Me: I'd prefer to stand,thank you.

He didn't look old, I was rather surprised that he was white considering all the other men were black. His blonde hair cut on the sides made him look young. He unbuttoned his suit before sitting down.

Man: Hopefully you understand our confusion when you just refused our proposition.

I was trying to point him at the pictures but I didn't remember seeing him.

Me:And you are?

Man:I understand that no one can seem to know me,after all I don't show my face all the time.

Me: Shakespeare was boring, you can either say your name or don't.

He chuckled, getting up and walked to me.

Man: You are one fascinating creature.

Me: That's why Mandla married me.

He was too close, maybe he thought I would move back. I looked at him bored.

Man: Angelo Gouveia.

Me: Italian man in this country? Sounds shady unless you recruit black men so that no one ever suspect that a mafia is involved at all. So these stupid cartels don't even notice that they are being used because there's so much money involved. Some big bad white wolf pops out of nowhere and everyone is stunned.

He grinned and moved closer, he moved the braid from my face.

Angelo: We'll leave your clinic then.

I gaped, they gasped.

Me: I am suppose to believe that?

He walked back to his chair.

Angelo: What did you say your name was again?

Me: I don't remember introducing myself, you did.

He chuckled.

Angelo: You can leave.

Me: Just you know, if anyone fucks up with my clinic again I won't be so kind.

Angelo: That's why we're leaving your clinic.

I looked at him confused, there was no way I was going to trust him. I turned and walked out of the suite.

ANELE MASUKU

Me: Masakhane.

He jumped and looked at me.

Masakhane: Little sister.

Me: I have not seen you the whole day.

Masakhane: I am exhausted, the medication knocks me down like I am nothing.

Me: I was worried that you left without saying anything. Can we talk?

He sat down and I sat next to him.

Me: Look I understand that I may have made it look like I do not want you here. I discovered something that I didn't know about my husband.

Masakhane: Huh?

Me: Well he was gay before he married me, made me think he was inviting you to stay for his personal gain. Then I realise that

I am acting like our father towards which is uncalled for. I am really sorry if I was so paranoid that I forgot you are my brother.

Masakhane: It's fine little sister, it's understandable.

Me: I am glad you understand. Plus I need your help with dessert for tomorrow.

Masakhane: Oh my God! You are blackmailing me.

Me: You know that between the Masuku children you are the chef and I am the taster.

Masakhane: How kind of you! Let me wash my face.

He walked to the bathroom, I got up but I could feel something on my skirt. I looked behind and it was a watch. I removed it.

Me: Huh?

It was Themba's, I knew that because I bought it. I took a deep breath and put it on the bed.

Me: You'll find me in the kitchen n.

I wasn't going to start insinuating things about my husband and brother.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 23

SMANGA

I took off my shoes and walked in.

Ndlovukazi: I almost forgot about you.

Me: You know on holidays, it's quite tricky to even be out of the yard for an hour. My mother demands presence on holidays whether you like it or not.

Ndlovukazi: You let Lawulana feed on a child.

Me: It was an honest mistake.

Ndlovukazi: Don't lie to me!

I looked at her.

Ndlovukazi: You let those kids stumble on your servants without my orders.

Me: I was being threatened.

She looked at me.

Ndlovukazi: You felt threatened by Dolly? You could have just removed her from life.

Me: Killing my sister isn't exactly part of the deal, I am already hurting the other.

Ndlovukazi: You feel bad.

Me: If I had a choice, I wouldn't be here.

Ndlovukazi: Your grandfather believed in you.

Me: Believed in me? He wanted someone else to carry his burden not his kids, he knew that I would pass on my kids not his. He knew that I would have no option but live by your damn rules Ndlovukazi.

Ndlovukazi: Are you going to shed some tears? Should I get a tissue for you? How sad. You are going to give blood to your servants and make sure that it's that child. This is no time for repentance boy.

I looked at her.

Ndlovukazi: Aren't you going to ask me anything?

Me: Who is standing in my way? Is it Khanyo or Dolly?

Ndlovukazi: Only one you refuse to acknowledge.

Me: I am not going to hurt her.

Ndlovukazi: That is your downfall, always has been your grandfather's too.

Me: It doesn't make any difference, I will not spill her blood, today, tomorrow or any other day in my life.

Ndlovukazi: That's why you are here killing innocent children.

Me: Is there anything else you want to share Ndlovukazi?

Ndlovukazi: You be very careful out here Smangaliso, not everyone is less powerful than me some are more than me.

Me: I'd be so glad to finally get rid of you.

I got up and grabbed my shoes, walking out of the hut. I wasn't going to stick around and find out how angry she has gotten. I drove home. My phone rang as I was about to get out of the car.

Me: Wale.

Wale: Your orders have been withdrawn.

Me: Which ones?

Wale: To get partnership with your mother.

Me: Should I ask why?

Wale: The boss wants it that way.

Me: Ohh.

Wale: Continue with the drug.

Me: It's not done yet, I still need lab rats.

Wale: I will have my men deliver some then.

Me: Ohh okay.

Wale: Stay in the clear, the real boss is in town, one mistake on your side, you are as good as dead.

Me: This boss sounds fictional considering I keep failing to understand how cartels share the same boss yet they don't get along.

Wale: With that spirit, finish making that drug and leave questioning authority to me.

I dropped the call and got out of my car. The house was decorated, I grabbed the gift bags and walked inside the house.

Denise: Thought you wouldn't really come back, your Mother asked for you after she arrived.

Me: Where is she?

Denise: In the kitchen helping cook.

I handed the gifts to her before walking to the kitchen, everyone was busy helping.

Me: Smells divine here.

Lihle: Tell me about it, I can't even cook.

Me: Well you are pregnant, aren't you?

Lihle: Pregnant not armless.

Anele: I couldn't even lift a spoon when I was pregnant, you were on my butt everyday.

Mom: In my house, pregnancy means handle with care. Should have told us when the stomach is showing.

Me: You wanted to talk to me.

Mom: Let's go to my office.

Me: Is everything alright?

She didn't respond until we reached her office.

Mom: As the oldest child, I think I should talk to you about something.

I looked at her.

Mom: There are drug dealers threatening to use my clinic for red market, considering that you are a toxicologist I thought I should have your input.

Me: I am advanced in drugs Mom.

Mom: I want you to run the clinic.

Me: Huh?

Mom: Yes, I want you to run the clinic for me.

Me: I won't have much time -

Mom: You will just overlook it that's all, I think these cartels have a problem with me because I am a woman.

Me: I'll try.

Mom: Thank you so much. You can go

Advertisement

I have few calls to make.

I got up.

Mom: Smangaliso?

I turned.

Mom: How did you know that I have a clinic?

Me: Everyone knows that.

Mom: I don't share my business with anyone, the clinic mentions my mother not me.

Me: Maybe I overheard you.

Mom: Big maybe love, unless you are spying on me. You can go.

I swear I was sweating for a moment. It was hard to read my mother, she was good at pretending.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me: Overheard?

I looked at the pictures in awe, he was his father's son after all.

I paged through them until I was done.

Me:I wasn't interested in Smangali-

I looked at the pictures with Khanyo too. Was my daughter being raped or another recruit?I had to watch the cameras before I went to dinner. A knock echoed.

Me:Argh come in.

Mandla pushed his wheelchair in.

Me:Is everything alright?

Mandla:Well I haven't seen you today since you left yesterday.

Me:I had to check on the clinic.

Mandla: Everything alright with it?

Me: It's going to be under a new management within 24 hours.

Mandla: What?!

Me:Smanga already agreed to take over,I am having problems with gangsters that think I should listen to them.

He looked at me stunned or I was just giving Smanga a rope to hang himself.

Me:Did you ever got concerned about Smanga and Dad?

Mandla:I think he was just happy to teach him everything.

Me: That was not the only grandson he had.

Mandla:Is there something happening?

Me:No,hubby, let's join everyone at the table.

I pushed his wheelchair, I was going to watch as soon as I could. My mother sat on the chair in silence, something she'd never do,even Nkhono was sharing the same sentiments.

Vuyo:At least Dolly and Zed came back early.

Me:From?

Nkhono:Are you telling me that you don't know what happened to your grandson?

Me:Ha u tsebe nako ea ho koala, na ha ho joalo?(You just don't know when to shut up,do you?)

Nkhono:Do you hear that Mandla? Your wife is speaking to me like we're friends.

Me: What the fuck happened to Zed?!

Vuyo:He mistakenly broke the glass that had one of Smanga's puppets?

I looked at Smanga,he didn't seem bothered and I watched him. Abe's family walked in.

Me:Come on in.

They smiled as they sat down,a young woman followed after,I thought she must be a cousin or something so I just let her sit down.

Me: I'll be right back.

There was no way it was a coincidence,Zed getting bitten right after those pictures. I walked in my office,the cameras were still rewinding. I tapped in one of them,I paused it in confusion. I squinted my eyes and looked again.

Me: Fucken hell!

I grabbed my glasses,I pressed play,I looked at the video in horror. I snapped the laptop closed and walked out locking my office.

Me:Fuck no.

ANGELO GOUVEIA

Father: You offered the woman freedom?

Me: According to what you heard.

Father: You turned the deal down Angelo, it's not what I heard it's what you did.

Me:Mhm.

Father:What are you still doing in the damn country?After you did such bull?

Me: You keep forgetting that you no longer in control Father.

He sighed.

Father:Make me understand.

Me:I don't have to,I am in charge. I have to go.

Mom:Angelo what is going on?Do you need soldiers?

Me:Mom,I am not in the greatest of all moods today. Please respect that, I'll call you. Merry Christmas.

I dropped the call and looked at the florist.

Me:How many can you get by the end of the day?

Florist:As many you want.

She kept blinking.

Me:Do you have a blinking problem?

She frowned.

Florist:How many you want?

Me:A thousand.

She looked at me stunned.

Me:Can you make it?

Florist:Yes,that would be -

Me: Just send it to this person and charge on this car.

I handed her the card. She took the card.

Florist:Press the pin here.

Me: Make it fast.

Florist.Will do that.

I took my card and walked out of the shop. The guards were standing outside,one opened the car for me. I got in.

Lily:I have the info you asked for Mr Gouveia.

Me:Good. I need you focus on the spouse even more.

Lily:I will do that Sir.

Me: I only want results Lily.

Lily:I know sir.

Me: You have until tomorrow.

Lily:Yes sir.

Me: You are dismissed.

She walked out of the car,I looked at the file. I paged it.

Me: Isn't she perfect?Way too perfect for someone that didn't just back down. Interesting woman.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 23

SMANGA

I took off my shoes and walked in.

Ndlovukazi: I almost forgot about you.

Me: You know on holidays, it's quite tricky to even be out of the yard for an hour. My mother demands presence on holidays whether you like it or not.

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Lily:Yes sir.

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✓ ILLECEBROUS 24

MANDLA

Denise:Sesethu why are you not eating?

Sesethu:I am not feeling good.

She got up.

Thimna: I'll check on her.

They walked out.

Nkazimulo:Wait are you not that girl who came here looking for Pastor Bokamoso?

I looked at the girl.

Bokamoso:I just assumed you are Abe's relative.

Masimile:I am Masimile Brown.

My heart stopped,it was no coincidence.

Me: Shouldn't we check the gifts?

Bokamoso:Who invited you here?

Masimile:I did.

Bokamoso:Is everything alright?

Me:Can we look at the gifts?

Bokamoso:I need to know if she's alright.

Masimile:So my mother lied, you don't know anything about me.

Bokamoso:Who are you?

Masimile: He's my father.

Everyone gasped.

Masimile:My mother said that you didn't want me anywhere-

Bokamoso: He's been in a wheelchair for 15 years and couldn't talk,was I going to prophet your existence?

Me: You must be mistaking me for someone,I am not your father. Bokamoso this is not my child.

Bokamoso: Don't touch me!

She got up in so much anger.

Bokamoso:How many children do you have out there?

Me:I don't -

Bokamoso:How many?!

Me:2.

Bokamoso: Oh God, not this. What is it that I ever did to you huh?

Me: It was just two horrible mistakes.

Bokamoso: I said don't touch me!

She got up and walked out. Silence covered the entire table, I got up from the wheelchair and followed Bokamoso. Everyone looked at me stunned, she was in the bedroom.

Bokamoso: I can't do this anymore. I gave you my everything Mandla, every bit of me and still used me. In my head I wanted to know what exactly did I do to deserve such cruelty. You never really loved me in all these years Mandlakhe.

Me: That's not true.

Bokamoso: I pray for other people and not once for myself.

Then she looked at my legs.

Me: I wanted to surprise me.

Bokamoso: Get out!

Me: We have to talk about this.

Bokamoso: Get out!

I walked out, Mohale stood.

Mohale: I never really liked you.

He threw his fist connecting with my chin, I stumbled backwards.

Mohale: I am going to kill you.

Mario: Brother don't do that, his kids are here and this is their father.

Mohale: Whatever.

He walked in the room.

Mario: Try to avoid him.

I walked back in the sitting room, everyone was in silence.

Lihle: At least Smanga we know it's inherited.

Vuyo: Thembelihle!

Lihle: It's the truth after all.

No one said anything as they all got up and left.

Dolly: It's my fault, isn't it?

I looked at her.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Dolly: You wouldn't have cheated on my mother if I didn't do what I did, you would have been the amazing husband you were. I know that you blamed her everything that happened.

Me: That's not true.

Dolly: Yet it happened. Why Dad? Why cheat on a woman who loved you to the moon and back? The woman who didn't think twice before taking care of your sons. Why?

DETECTIVE RORISANG PINA

Me: This doesn't make sense. She let her killer in the house which means that she knew them.

I stood on the spot.

Me: The call was of someone in shock, which means that it was two young girls.

Orlando: Huh?

Me: The gun was a scare and I am sure none of them knew that it was loaded. But why there was no noise?

Orlando: Silencer.

Me: If it's kids, they stole a gun of someone who is pretty dangerous if you tell me.

Orlando: No one saw anything.

Me: No one would really think two girls are trouble at all. Did ballistic confirm the owner of the gun?

Orlando:Weird part is that,it was reported missing about ten years ago.

Me:Ten years ago?

Orlando: Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo reported the gun missing ten years ago.

Me: What was a pastor doing with a gun?

Orlando:Same thing we're doing with it. The gun eventually was removed from the recordings

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there was a break in the mansion and the gun was one of the stolen things.

Me: Don't you find it odd that Pastor Bokamoso shares no emotions?I mean if you compare the bullets to some cases,I believe that it will come positive.

Orlando:Pablo Simoné was murdered with the same gun,so was Pastor Sage. Actually four people were murdered with the same gun.

Me: It's either our dear pastor still has the gun or someone wants us to focus on her,for whatever reasons. We need to talk to this pastor.

SESETHU

Me: Christmas is ruined.

Thimna: This family is going to live in this house for sometime, we should tell someone about this.

Me: I have to tell Grandma before the cops start coming here.

We sighed before walking down, the sitting room was empty.

Me: Christmas dinner over already?

Thimna: I wonder what went down this time.

We walked to my grandmother's bedroom, she sat on the floor leaning on the bed.

Me: Grandma.

She looked up, her eyes were so red, I was taken back to see that she had been crying. It was unlike her.

Thimna: Are you alright?

Granny: A little crying is sometimes needed here and there. Come, sit.

We sat across her.

Granny: I don't think I like the look on your eyes.

Thimna looked at me.

Me:I made a horrible mistake,I don't know what to tell you.

Granny:Like taking my gun to threaten Abe?

My heart stopped.

Me:I did -did not know-

Granny:It was loaded?

Thimna: You invited the family on purpose.

Granny:On purpose?Their house is on lockdown because you two were so stupid and murdered a child for a boy. Imagine if I shared the same sentiments. Why not kill your little boyfriend huh?

Me:It was an honest mistake.

Granny:Which you will report at the police station, you can't murder someone who did nothing to you and expect no consequences. Make sure that you go and report everything.

Thimna:Granny she's going to spend years in prison.

Granny: You too, you are her accomplice.

Thimna:I am not going to jail.

Me: I'll hand myself over.

Granny:Do that.

I walked out,Thimna followed.

Thimna: Let's think this through, I can't go to prison.

I walked to the cellar and grabbed a bottle of wine.

Thimna: This is no time to get drunk!

I closed the door on her face, I took out every pill I could find. I took a paper and started writing. I walked to my bed, I opened the bottle and drank the pills, I kept taking them until I couldn't lift one single. Closed my eyes.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 25

PASTOR BOKAMOSO MOTHIBAKGOMO

I sat on the floor trying to understand what exactly went wrong between me and Mandla. I couldn't exactly understand why. A knock echoed.

Me: What?!

Elijah: There's a delivery for you.

Me: Why are you still here?

Elijah: I was on my way out.

I got up and walked to the door.

Me: What delivery?

Elijah: Flowers.

Me: Get rid of them.

Elijah: Well they were brought by a van with this card. There's thousand red roses outside.

I looked at the card, I took it and read.

Me: "Give me a chance to give you thousand reasons why you are going to be mine. Signed A.G"

I gaped before laughing. Elijah looked at me in shock.

Elijah: You are laughing.

Me: Whoever is this, I give it to him.

It was rather nice to hear that someone thought there were thousand reasons to be with me.

Me: Go home and I will take care of the roses.

Elijah: Merry Christmas.

He walked out, I took my slippers and walked out. I blinked at the van.

Me: Good gracious.

They offloaded the roses, I looked at them in awe.

Anele: Dad bought you roses.

Me: No he didn't. Someone else I don't know sent these.

Khanyo: Secret admirer.

Me: If I had one, I'd be richer.

We walked back in the house.

Mom: What is happening?

Me: Someone thought sending me thousand roses, I'd melt. Get everyone back here it's still Christmas.

Dolly: Your spirit was brought back by those thousand roses.

Me: It's not everyday someone thinks that I actually do matter.

Silence.

Me: Get the kids back to the table.

Mandla: What is this?

He grabbed the card and read it.

Mandla: Is this why you don't want to hear a word from me?

Me: You need to calm down dear, you have no right to be thinking about another man appreciating your wife.

Mandla: Are you sleeping with him?

I chuckled as I looked at him.

Me: I am nothing like you Mandlakhe, now if you have nothing else to say I'd suggest you keep quiet or I will make you.

Nkhono: She's threatening her own husband, knowing very well that she's cheating on him.

Me: No wonder your husband left you. I'm this close in burying you alive and help look for you, I am sure you know that I am telling the truth.

She didn't respond. A scream echoed.

Me: Wiii here we go again.

Everyone got up and ran upstairs,i just got up and dished up for myself and sat down.

Me:This food is amazing.

I didn't bother to get up at all,I could hear the locomotion, people calling the ambulance. I just continued eating, Nkazimulo sat across me.

Nkazimulo:At least I was right and you and your brothers thought I was lying.

Me:Dish up for yourself brother in-law.

Nkazimulo:Two kids have been sent to the hospital Bokamoso.

I didn't even move.

Me: It's not like I will wake them up and stuff.

Nkazimulo: You are in pain that's why.

I looked at him and rolled my eyes.

Me:I am simple enjoying my food without disruption.

Mandla: Bokamoso why are you still sitting?We have to go.

Me:Is it one of my kids?

Mandla:Sesethu and Zed-

Me:My grandchildren who have parents, I'll pray for them but I am not going anywhere. Don't preach, you flunked that career my dear.



Everyone was in the hospital,only me and Nkazimulo were left behind. I got up from the chair.

Nkazimulo:It is peaceful.

Me:Not yet,it will be if you leave.

Nkazimulo:I have been meaning to talk to you.

He walked to me,I held my gun under the gown.

Me: I'd prefer if you keep your distance.

Nkazimulo:Come on , we're alone.

I took out my gun.

Me: You are alone, I'll shoot you if you come anywhere near me Nkazimulo.

He looked at the gun stunned. I left him there and walked to my office,I locked the door and started watching from the moment the cameras were installed.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I leaned on my car outside.

Voice: This is your fault.

I jumped almost falling down.

Me: Smanga.

Smanga: Zed is dead because of you, could have zipped your mouth but no you went and involved Dolly.

Me: I-

Smanga: I will hurt your little sister if you try me again.

I stood there trembling, I couldn't say anything because I knew that I was responsible.

Smanga: Act smart with your dear husband, not me.

He walked to his car, I got in mine in fear. I sat there contemplating what to do, I wasn't sure about going back inside the hospital. My phone rang.

Me: Hello?

Ray: Hey Khanyo.

Me: What do you want?

Ray: Zandile gave birth today.

I didn't say anything.

Me:Nice.

Ray: I was hoping we get him baptised first week of January.

Me: You are telling me that because?

Ray:I would love it for you to be here.

Me:I am not coming Ray.

Ray:Please Khanyo.

Me:Ray,I want a divorce.

Silence.

Ray:We spoke about this Nolukhanyo.

Me: You spoke,I listened that is all. I'll ask my lawyer to draw them and have them sent you. I don't want anything from you,well prenup was the greatest decision we ever made. We don't even have to fight on whose getting, you keep yours and I keep mine.

Ray:Khanyo can we talk about this when you come back?

Me: We'll not talk about anything

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my marriage was over the moment you decided to bring another woman in our marriage. I don't want to fight with you any longer with,I don't want this marriage.

He dropped the call,I sighed. I drove home,I couldn't stay here any longer knowing that Zed died because of me. I went straight to my room. I looked at the blade marks on my wrists,I always covered them to make sure that no one noticed including my husband. I laid on my bed. I remember when I was doing my first year when Smanga asked me to accompany him somewhere,I agreed because I didn't think I'd be brutalized. I remember begging him to make the men stop as they took their turns in me,I couldn't understand why. That was the start of the relationship,he made sure that I was scared to tell on him. 10 years have passed and I couldn't even say a word to anyone about anything,I thought Dolly would be able to help me but I was wrong. I felt something so cold and rough on my foot,my blood went cold as I realised that Smanga might have gotten in my room. This felt too cold as it went up my leg,I raised my head and didn't see Smanga. Slowly pulled the blanket,my voice died as I looked at the snake. I jumped so bad it went rolling on the floor,I looked again and it was gone. I looked around but saw nothing,I jumped off the bed and ran to the door.

Me:Ma!

Nobody responded,I ran to her room and it was empty. It looked like I was alone,I sat on my parents' bed not thinking about going anywhere near my bedroom.

THEMBA

No one said anything as we stepped out of the cars, two children were dead and none of us could explain anything. Zed died from the snake poison and Sesethu killed herself. We all sat down.

Denise:She is the one who shot Abe.

Me: What?!

Denise:She said so in the suicide note.

Dolly:Were you with her Thimna?

Thimna:Granny said that we had to tell the police what we did,I guess Sesethu couldn't.

Smanga:Ma knew?

Thimna:We told her today.

Dolly: You helped her kill someone Thimna and kept quiet about it!A family has no child because you chose to keep quiet!

Thimna:I am sorry, I was scared of being arrested.

Vuyo: They are kids Dolly, surely you understand that they are bound to make mistakes.

Dolly: You are going to use my past to define her?

Lihle: You almost murdered your own sister, don't act righteous with us my love. Thimna didn't kill anyone, she was there and chose to be loyal to Sesethu something you lack.

Anele: Are we ever going to have a normal Christmas?

Dolly: My son is dead and you are thinking about normality?

Denise: Sesethu is dead too.

Dolly: An apple doesn't fall far from the tree, my son is dead because of Smanga.

Smanga: Should have told him to stay away from my snakes, curiosity killed the cat.

Vuyo: Shut up! Fuck you all! All you ever do in this house is fight all the time, beats me how you get such energy to talk every second. Don't you have anything better to say huh? Children are dead, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. There's no normality here, a ten years old boy is dead Smanga because of those damn pets of yours which you are going to find another place. Sesethu chose to suicide than face consequences, something that almost all of you would have taken.

He sighed.

Vuyo: If you have nothing good to say about the fact, our Christmas is tainted because you are so pathetic, trying to boost your damn egos. Now I completely understand why Mom

didn't even bother to come with. You were sitting on this same table when she found out that my father has two kids out there and never bothered to even tell her. Yet you don't hear her causing drama and throwing tantrums ,she has to deal with all of us,a bunch of egoistic parents. What are you teaching your children exactly?To be bitter like you?Fuck this.

He left the dining room.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 26

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I looked at the bottle that was left, I sighed and looked at those I finished. 6 and I still felt very much aware of everything. Why did I install cameras in my house? I don't think I expected everything I saw in those cameras. Did I refuse to see the truth or was I just blind? Christmas came and left, so did the day of Goodwill. People kept coming to knock in my office but I wasn't interested at all. I looked at the broken laptop on the floor and huffed. I finally got up and walked to the door. I headed straight to my bedroom.

Mandla: B we have been looking for you since last night.

Me: Mhm.

Mandla: Are you drunk?

Me: Nope, I am just tired from sitting besides those empty bottles.

Mandla: You are.

Me: This house is rotten to the core and I have never realised that, until yesterday. It all started with meeting you. Why did I love you?

Mandla:I know that -

Me:I just want to wash and take a bath,is that a crime too?

He moved,I walked in the bathroom. One thing that I had to learn in my marriage was that my tears at some point were invalid,they didn't do anything. I cried begging my dear husband to forgive me from pushing Dolly away but he constantly reminded me that he wouldn't. So I got myself up, realising that I let love make me weak. I wasn't weak,I was vulnerable to a man that I loved. Simple thing,I had someone kill him but unfortunately Pablo Junior messed up. Now I was stuck with a man that couldn't walk nor talk,so I thought.

Mandla was still wrapped up with his conniving ways and he thought I saw nothing at all. I was not going to cry over any man at all. I wiped myself and walked out.

Mandla:Do you think couple's session would help?

Me:Do you think?

Mandla:I am trying here.

Me: I was trying but you kept reminding me why I shouldn't now you want me to meet you halfway?Ahh dear husband,you are fifteen years late and I am not interested.

Mandla:I was angry.

Me:Weird,I never had sons but you never saw me once blame your sons for things they weren't responsible for. I loved them including you, only difference I still love them except you.

Mandla:I know that I did-

Me:Two kids to remind me that my damn husband found another women better. Mandla I have had enough of you!I am tired of you treating me right when you want to and still expect me to give you a damn chance. You shredded my heart,now you see that I don't care suddenly you want to be better. You had time to do that, you failed,I am not going to be my mother and give you million chances just because we brought humans to this world. I am not going to stay in this marriage and act like we're happy.

I got dressed.

Me: I am not going to be that wife again. That phase passed.

I walked out of the room with my heels on my hands. Everyone sat on the couches looking sad.

Khanyo:Mom?

Me:What?!

She frowned,I might have snapped a little too hard. I could feel my body getting hot as I looked at everyone.

Vuyo:Are you alright? Should I make you a cup of coffee?

Me:I have to be somewhere.

Lihle:Are you-

Me:I said I have to be somewhere,I don't need trackers.

Themba:Elijah usually drives you everywhere.

Me: You mind your business then honey.

I turned and walked out of the house.

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I walked down the hill with my heels sinking on the soil. I finally reached the small gravel road,I took out a cloth and wiped the heel. The people around looked at me as my heels clicked on the ground.

Me:Where is she?

The woman pointed to the big hut. I walked straight to the hut,there were people in line.

Me:Is she with someone?

They all shook their heads,I lowered myself and walked in the hut

Voice:I am still getting prepared, you will have to wait outside.

I stood straight,she looked at my feet.

Voice: You don't wear shoes in here .

I stepped on her hand, she shrieked and looked up. Her eyes widened.

Me: Oh good, you still do remember me Ndlovukazi.

DENISE

I sat on the chair looking at her pictures. I looked at the suicide note and read.

Me: "I am deeply sorry for the wrongs I have committed; I do not deserve such a wonderful, loving family. Discard everything that happened to me in my childhood; it doesn't matter to me, and it doesn't affect me nearly as much as what I did as a result of the most loving person I'd ever known in my entire life. I killed Abe, I thought I could only scare her but I knew nothing of a loaded gun. know what I'm about to do is selfish, but believe me, I've tried so many times to make things right, and I hope the person I've hurt forgives me even though I don't deserve it. I am going to die probably see her soul somewhere so I ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness is so hard I tried acting that I am good and everything will be just fine. God

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I'm sorry for the crime I'm about to commit. Granny told me that I should always tell the truth and you wouldn't forsake me, yet here I am. Please forgive me because I believe you are the most merciful and forgiving person I know. God I don't see you as the punisher, but as the most merciful, and you said in your holy book that you are what the believer thinks of you. Please forgive me for taking my own life. As I know you are assisting me, and I know it will get better with your assistance, but I believe that I deserve to die for what I did, and that the death penalty should be carried out to clear my soul, so I am seeking justice on my own because I believe that if I complete my life, I will commit more wrongdoings. Mom and Dad, I know that you would be disappointed with me, I could have told you but all you have been doing lately is fight. I love you always. Thimna you are going to be fine. Love you all."

I wiped my face, I jumped when I realised that Smanga was sitting on the edge of the bed.

Smanga: She used to tell me that she wanted to be just like me. I never took her serious, a girl in construction now my baby girl is gone.

Me: She knew we were fighting Smanga.

Smanga: I am responsible for that Denise, I just want things to be fine. I don't want to turn out like my Father.

I paused.

Me: Does your father hit Mm?

Smanga: He used to hit our mother, my brothers don't really know that, I do.

Me: Why didn't you say so?

Smanga: I just didn't want anyone to pity me for this.

Me: Your father set a bad example on you.

Smanga: I should be trying not to follow the same example.

Me: It's not easy.

Smanga: Let me check on the boys.

Me: Smangaliso running away won't change anything.

Smanga: I know that but either way I am running away.

He got up and walked out. I sighed.

MANDLA

Me: It's like something switched off, I thought maybe it was because I wasn't talking nor walking.

Nkazimulo: You are speaking in riddles.

Me: I never really met the emotionless Bokamoso, when we met she was smiling. Throughout the years, some people would say she's scary and emotionless but I never saw that. In this fifteen years, I watched her stop smiling at all like it was always there waiting for a chance.

Nkazimulo: What did you expect?

Me: I am starting to think that she really tried to have me killed.

He laughed and stopped.

Nkazimulo: Have you killed then get what? The woman kept all your retirement money and used hers to treat you, now you are listening to the same Mom who thought she was marrying because she wanted a toy.

Me: I am not sure you have noticed or what, Bokamoso lacks emotions, she says everything with no emotion involved. Like a robot.

Voice: If I were you, I'd run.

Mario walked in.

Me: Run from my wife?

Mario: Mohale has nine fingers because of your wife. Bokamoso was the toughest out of all of us, she smiled at home. Outside she was a nightmare, on top of that we thought she'd never be in love. She smiled way too much when she met you.

Me:She had a happy childhood, didn't she?

Mario: Bokamoso had an amazing childhood, she is nothing like Mom if you think, she's heartless like my Father. Thing is,well I am sure that you think that is impossible,my father was a sweetheart but he wasn't. Bokamoso and him were the only family members you couldn't read,once you realise that, I'd suggest you run.

Me:I am not going to run from my wife,she needs me.

Mario:She needs you dead.

He walked out.

Nkazimulo: I'll definitely listen to him.

Me:He watches too much crime series.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 27

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Anele: You want me to be your lawyer?

Me:Ray is going to make things difficult for me, he refuses to let me divorce him.

Anele: But you two signed a prenuptial.

Me: That's the thing,he thinks he can trap me in the marriage for his benefits. According to the Ngondo tradition,once you marry, you can't go and he's trying to keep that. He's about to be the first Ngondo to be divorced.

Anele:Still not a reason not to sign the divorce.

Me:Can I take him to court?

Anele: he'll be forced to sign the divorce in front of the judge.

Me:That I can do.

Anele:I have to ask,is there anything that's his on you?

Me:I always had him but something for me in my name,though there's a joint account.

Anele:I need to know everything about it.

I grabbed the paper.

Me:This is everything on it.

Anele: Again are you sure that you want to be divorced?

Me:Yes,I can't pretend that I wasn't replaced.

Anele:I am really sorry for what you are going through.

Me:The house is also in my name including the car he's driving,I want it back.

Anele:What happened to his?

Me:His pregnant fiancée has it.

Anele:Let me get a court order to cease everything in your name.

Me:Thanks again.

Anele:Any-

Smanga walked in,I froze up.

Anele: Don't you know anything called knocking?

She looked at me.

Smanga:I am here to talk to Khanyo.

Anele:I am busy with my client right, when I am done , you can waltz in as you pleases.

Me: It's okay-

Anele:I still need everything,if you choose not to hand it to me right now you will stay married to that bastard. Smangaliso can waltz in his bedroom,this is not his bedroom.

Smanga:One of these days I am going snap-

Anele:I would be very careful about what I say next
Smangaliso,I am not the kind of woman you play with. Now get the fuck out and learn to knock next time.

Smanga:Of course Mrs Mothibakgomo,I wouldn't dream of pissing you off.

He walked out.

Me: You didn't -

Anele:Have to notice that he's raping you,makes me question how long?

Me: That's not true.

Anele:The more you keep denying it,the more it continues, you are never going to be free from him.

I didn't say anything.

Anele: I'll stay till later.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Thimna: Mom?

Me: Hey. Come in.

Thimna: When are you planning to call Bohlale?

Me: Well she's going to be done with whatever before New Year and fly here to Eastern Sata.

Thimna: I can't wait to see her.

My family will probably be angry that I forgot to mention one more child, at the moment everyone wasn't really interested in anything I had to say so I didn't. Bohlale was my and Daniel's first child, a very good hockey player. She had to travel with her school to London to play a tournament, so she didn't come with us.

Me: I can't wait to.

She was fond of Zed and now I had to share the news of his death, it was heartbreaking on its own. I didn't know how I felt at the moment except being responsible for his death. I should have listened to Smanga but not once did I think my dear brother would unleash his rage on my son. I took him for granted and he showed me.

Thimna: We're going to be alright.

Me: How about you?

Thimna:I am fine

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always be fine.

Me:Good.

My phone rang.

Me:Hello.

Voice:Hey Mommy.

Me:Bohlale, hey.

Voice: So it's Eastern Sata International Airport?

Me: Don't tell me.

Voice:I am here! They had to let us at least have some Christmas spirit Mommy.

Me:I am coming!

Voice:Too happy if you tell me.

I dropped the call.

Me: She's here!

Thimna:Too early.

Me: You think?

I grabbed my purse and walked out just as Daniel walked in.

Bohlale: Mommy? What is going on?

Me: I am afraid honey, we won't be seeing Zed anymore.

Bohlale: Huh?

Me: Zed is now in the heavens.

Bohlale: Heavens? What is he doing there?

I parked in front of the house, she jumped out of the car.

Bohlale: Zed where are you?

Me: Bohlale!

Bohlale: I bought you a car dude, come on it's not funny anymore.

Me: Honey he's gone.

Bohlale: You are lying!

She ran around the house.

Thimna: I'll get her.

LIHLE MANZIMA

Voice: I am monitoring the surrogate and she's doing just fine.

Me: Thank you.

Voice: What are you going to do about the growing bump?

Me: Let me worry about me, you make sure that woman carries to full term that's all.

Voice: Roger that.

I dropped the call and continued frying the chips. I heard footsteps and someone walked in, I took out some bacon well since I was pregnant I was very much allowed to eat anything without watching my weight.

Voice: That's lunch alright.

I looked at Mario.

Me: I am starving.

Mario: We just ate.

Me: Not my problem.

He didn't say anything.

Mario: You are one of hell of a character.

Me: Because you believe that I am not pregnant.

Mario: I was there when they removed-

Me: My damaged womb Mario, they had to take it out but somehow God's grace is something.

Mario: The moment you use God's name in vain just know there's no turning back Thembelihle.

Me:Heh marn what do you want from me exactly?Why are you so bothered?

Mario: I wish I can forget you like you did,but that is tricky as I see you every year and I have to start over again.

Me:I wish I can understand what you are going through but I don't.

Mario: That's the reason you are heartless and purposely went for my nephew when you could have went for someone else.

Me: Doesn't it ever occur to you that maybe the universe wasn't bringing me to you but to Vuyo?Does it ever occur to you that I was a lesson not your soulmate?I love Vuyolwethu more than you can ever imagine,yes you might think it's not true yet here I am. Married to him. Having his baby. Why can't you let yourself heal?

He looked at me.

Mario:I can't do that,I tried but I just couldn't do it.

Me:I am afraid that if you continue harassing me, I will tell Vuyolwethu everything and see how you explain that to him. I am tired of you persecuting me every year on something I had no control over.

Mario: I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable.

Me: It's fine. Do you want some?

Mario:Thanks but no,I am trying to keep the body sexy as possible.

Me:Oh wow,way to go Uncle Mario.

He laughed,Vuyo walked in,I sniffed. Mario stopped.

Vuyo:Uhm what is going on?

Mario:I was just laughing -

Me:He called me fat.

Mario:I did?

I winked at him.

Mario:She just winked.

Vuyo:Uncle-

I laughed.

Me:Let me get my food.

How the fuck did my emotions switch like that?I wasn't really pregnant right?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 28

ANELE MASUKU

Themba: What do you think we should do?

Me: Out of everyone, you are overly excited, way too excited
Themba.

Themba: I married you didn't you?

His phone rang, he looked at it and smiled.

Themba: I'll just take this.

I watched him jump off the bed, talking to the phone excitedly.
I looked at the slip lying under his pillow, I took it and was from
today. I grabbed my phone and dialled the store number.

Me: Hey, I am tracking my order, someone made it for me so I
want to know when it will arrive.

Voice: Give me the tracking code.

Me: BFC5269537.

I heard clicking.

Voice: Will be there on the 30th.

Me: Hopefully it is the right order.

Voice:Yes Mam,a Police Watch.

Me: You don't say. Thank you.

I dropped the call,funny he already had a police watch and he was buying another one. He walked back.

Themba:I think God knows me this year,I just got the tender.

Me: What?!

Themba:Yes, yes.

Me:I am so proud of you baby.

Themba:We did it.

Me:Yay.

Themba:Maybe this will lift everyone's moods,let me tell them.

I frowned as he walked out.

Me:God, don't let me kill someone's son.

The door opened.

Me: We're going -

Ma walked in.

Me:Ma!

She sat on the edge of the bed, looking around,I was confused as I looked at her.

Mom:There was a time where Themba was more invested in girl stuff, before Dolly,Themba followed me everywhere. His father hated that,he thought that I was going to turn him to a girl. A girl?Well I had no problem with that, I'd still consider him my child.

She looked at me.

Mom:As he got older,he got invested until his father forced him to change or cut him off. Tried to fight him but despite everything,he still reminded me that I wasn't really their mother.

Me:Why are you telling me this?

Mom:Imagine my shock when he shows up with you and looked so damn happy. Bizarre, out of all people a lawyer. For sometime it looked like it was working and stuff,then your gay brother shows up.

She got up.

Me:And?

Mom:I never liked law,ask yourself love. Your husband just spent thousands on your brother, you either see it or refuse babes. Whatever you do, just leave him alive,maybe his face would be arranged but don't kill him. If he dies,I hope you don't want to find that out dear.

She walked out, leaving feeling I just been put on a microwave.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

She didn't bulge as she looked at my heel on her hand.

Me: You know I think you forgot to mention a little detail.

Ndlovukazi:I told you everything!

Me: Except that Smangaliso was next in line to inherit the damn things. I never really figured it out, you know his obsession with the damn snakes until I saw something. A snake visiting my daughter,the one he's been screwing all these years. You knew that, didn't you?

Ndlovukazi:I-

I pushed harder,she screamed.

Ndlovukazi: I'll tell you everything,please stop.

I moved my foot. There was a time,I realised that my father was rather odd, scandals of him sleeping with young girls who somehow winded up dead. It didn't make any sense at first,then I chose to followed him. It was this same hut,I saw him go in the river and saw the snake too. Unbelievable at first until I had a girl to girl talk with Ndlovukazi.

Me: Everything or your ancestors might whisper a word. Death

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death in your hut. Death.

Ndlovukazi: Your father was going crazy everyday because Lawulana wanted one of his kids,he couldn't because he had to sleep with his own child. Apparently you came with Smanga, Lawulana wanted him.

Me:Did my father rape Smangaliso?

Ndlovukazi:No,no,he still continued with the young girls while grooming Smanga. He wanted Smanga to take over.

Me:Did Smanga know?

Ndlovukazi:For sometime he had no idea until Lawulana turned him to Nolukhanyo, that's when he realised that something was off but your father was already dead. So he came here,I told him that all those times he was brought here,he was being evaluated. Unfortunately he was left with no choice, Lawulana won't really give him an option, when he wants to it will happen.

Me:Sounds like a damn movie.

Ndlovukazi: It's the truth.

Me:Now tell me,where is your snake?

She moved back as I took out my gun.

Ndlovukazi:I told you everything.

Me: Except that you poison people yet you are not using the same method at all.

Ndlovukazi:I am just giving them what they want.

I took out the small bottle from my bag.

Me: Gasoline,burns everything so fast. Did you know?

She got up,I shot her legs,she fell on the floor screaming.

Me:Ask your snake to borrow you some of its ways to move with no legs.

I dropped few drops on her before grabbing one of the burning wood.

Ndlovukazi: I'll take Lawulana back!Please.

I dropped the wood on her,fire flew up.

Me:Mmhm roasted.

She screamed as I threw the fire allover the hut before walking out,the people looked at me in shock.

Me: When I am done, it'll be your turn.

Everyone ran I burnt the hut.

Me: Hopefully they will recognise her in hell.

She finally stopped screamed.

Me:If anyone tries to turn that fire off, I'll kill you.

Her initiates watched in horror,I walked to my car and drove out of the small village. My phone rang.

Me:Yes.

Voice: I found everything Mam on Smangaliso including Nolukhanyo.

Me: Don't worry about that I'll do it myself from hereon. Can you find out who the cartels answer to?Angelo uhm forgot his name, something is off why is a mafia controlling cartels?

Voice: I'll do that.



It was already dark when I got back home, everyone sat at the table eating.

Me:Good evening.

I poured myself juice.

Mandla:I tried to call you Bokamoso.

Me:I know.

I dished up for myself and walked to the door but to pause,I turned.

Me:Who is this one?

Dolly:This is Bohlale,Ma.

Me:My mysterious grandchild,nice to meet you but your hot grandmother is trying not to get grey hair,so she has to work.

Denise:We were waiting to talk to you about the funerals.

Me: Whatever you decided is fine, it's not like I am suppose to be in the funeral. Only the dead are suppose to attend the funeral,well it is their funeral after all.

I turned again but stopped, I couldn't even look at him.

Me: Smangaliso please do give me a report on the clinic.

Smanga:Yes,Mom.

I walked away.

SMANGA

I kept turning and tossing,I couldn't sleep so I just got up. I walked to the old garage where I kept the snakes.

Me: I'd love to get rid of you.

Voice:Why don't you?

I jumped almost knocking one of the cages down.

Me:Ma!

Mom:Why are this here when Zed is dead?

Me:I spent so much money in these Ma,Zed-

Mom:Why don't you try to wake them up?

I looked at her then the snakes,I knocked the cages.

Me: What have you done?

Mom: What you failed to do.

Me:No,no,no they can't die. They are going to make me pay,
Ndlovukazi is going to have a fit.

Mom:Who?!

Me: You should have told me.

Mom: One of them killed my grandson.

Me:One,Ma!

Mom: Tried to interrogate them, they had an attitude so tada.

Me: You could have told me about this.

Mom: Could have but chose not to. Now where do you plan on
getting these again?

Me: I'll talk to the person who gave me these.

Mom: What if she relocated to hell?

Me:She won't go anywhere.

Mom:Let me ask, what did my father do with his spare time with you?

Me: We -we went-

Mom:I should check on the serie.

She left me there,I groaned as I looked at the dead snakes. Lawulana was going to use another form and I was good as dead.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 29

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Funerals were being planned, they were going to be in different days considering both children were from different families. Zed was a Mthombeni more than a Mothibakgomo. All the funeral arrangements were being made at home, it was that time I felt overwhelmed so I decided to take myself out. On top of that Ray finally signed our divorce papers, swearing that he would get me back one way or the other. I sat drinking my cappuccino.

Voice: Is this seat taken?

I looked up at the man, he was undeniable, he grinned showing the two dimples on his well sculptured face.

Me: Uhm no.

He pulled the chair and sat down, his eyes stood out, well he was very black to have green eyes. He pulled the coat off and put it on his chair, I watched him, the waitress walked to him. The poor woman couldn't help but notice his beautiful face.

Man: Ah ntokazi awungizwa? (Ah lady didn't you hear me?)

The waitress staggered realising she didn't pay attention to what he said.

Waitress: What did you say that you want?

Man:Steak? Heineken and some of this.

Waitress:Is that all?

Man:Is there anything else you want my love?

He looked at me,she looked surprised and I was baffled.

Me: Coke?

She nodded before walking away.

Man:Women ought to have shame in undressing a man sitting with another woman.

Me: You must be?

He looked at me and smiled.

Man:Zweli Khumalo.

I continued drinking my cappuccino.

Zweli: And you are?

Me: Nolukhanyo Mothibakgomo.

Zweli: Surname sounds familiar.

Me: Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo?

Zweli:Is she your sister?

Me: She's my mother.

Zweli: Your mother isn't aging, she doesn't look a day over 30.

Me: I hear that a lot.

Zweli: Umuhle uyezwa? (You are beautiful, okay?)

I blinked.

Me: Thank you.

Zweli: So when should we get married?

I laughed so hard, I almost sent my saliva in the wrong pipe. He grinned.

Me: I am married.

Zweli: Yet you used your surname not his, let me guess you are divorcing.

I looked at him.

Zweli: That's the only explanation and you haven't worn your wedding ring for sometime the line is almost faded.

I looked at my hand.

Zweli: I was married too.

Me: He took another wife actually.

Zweli: She's dead.

We literally spoke at the same time.

Me:I am so sorry.

Zweli:I was driving the car and she ended up dying.

Me:I am so sorry.

Zweli:Been 2 years..

Me:He took another wife because I can't have kids.

Zweli:When you love someone, you love them regardless of what they cannot give you. There are hundred ways of having babies out there which includes surrogacy, adoption which I support or just don't have any.

Me: Don't you have kids?

Zweli:One and I was planning on adopting until now.

Me: Until now?

Zweli:I was in the adoption centre before coming here,I just saw you and thought why do it alone?

I chuckled.

Me:Know where the danger is?

Zweli:I come very strong. I believe that get what you want and think about the what ifs later.

Me:Remind me of a brother of mine.

Zweli:I would love to meet him then.

Me: You don't give up do you?

Zweli: Were you planning to reject me?

He looked sad.

Me:I am not falling for that.

He chuckled.

Zweli: You weren't sad about being divorced,which I assume someone else is responsible for your hate for men.

I frowned.

Me:Who sent you?

He looked at me confused.

Zweli:If I offended I apologize.

Me:I have to go.

He sighed as I got up and walked to the till to pay.

Zweli: I wasn't trying to hurt you,I apologize.

Me: It's fine,I have to go anyway.

Zweli:Can I at least get a hug that shows that you are not mad at me?

Me:Oh God

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fine.

He hugged me and moved back.

Zweli: Nice part you'll have to call me.

Me: I don't have your number.

Zweli: Actually you do.

He smirked and walked to the table.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I had to return to Trenius despite everything,Bohlale was still quiet and so was Thimna. I could see the cars outside my house but didn't want to step out of the room and walk out. The door opened opened up and Daniel walked in.

Daniel: My family is here so is yours Dolly.

Me: I am just trying to mind my business here.

Daniel: You do understand that this creates a lot of problems.

I looked at him.

Me: What problems?

Daniel: My family knows that you have no parents, your dowry was paid to you now they just found out that you lied. Your

mother isn't making anything easy either, they want you down there because I can't say anything.

I sighed.

Me:Fine.

I walked out of the room and headed to the dining room,it was so quiet. My mother,Dad,Anele,Lihle,Vuyo and my uncles with my grandmother were the ones who came.

Me: afternoon everyone.

My mother looked at me and shook her head.

Mom:After everything you have done, you choose to mark us dead because you wanted to be the orphan.

Mrs Mthombeni:How did you do-

Me:What I did or didn't do has nothing to do with the fact my Zed is dead.

Mom: That's your best answer right?I am the one you said was dead after what you did to me!I will sleep somewhere and come back when it is the funeral,I can't stand you.

Dad: I'll go with her, don't worry too much about it.

They walked out,I sighed. I really wanted to fix things with my mother but the woman only talked when she wanted.

LIHLE MANZIMA

I woke up sweating.

Vuyo: What's wrong?

Me:I don't know, something is wrong with my stomach.

Vuyo:What?

Me:I am sure I ate something that my body doesn't like anymore.

Vuyo: Like what?

Me:Well I did eat sandwiches and they smelt awful bad .

Vuyo:I made them.

Me:Well, it's possible that I no longer want them anymore.

He chuckled. Something was off.

Me: I'll just go and steal some milk.

I grabbed my phone and walked out of the room,I dialled Veronica's number..

V: You are lucky because I am still awake.

Me: Apparently,I am experiencing the symptoms.

V:Is that possible?

Me:Dude, peanut butter and jam sandwich tasted and smelt horrible.

V: Isn't Vuyo suppose to be feeling the symptoms not you?

Me:I am thinking this is my payment for lying about the pregnancy.

Voice: Interesting.

I almost dropped the phone,I turned and Mohale was sitting on the chair drinking tea.

Me:Uncle Mohale.

Mohale:That is me.

I dropped the call.

Me:I am just here for the milk.

He just nodded and got up,he walked out without saying anything. My phone rang.

Me:Mohale heard me,he knows the truth.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 30

ANGELO GOUVEIA

I looked at the pictures.

Me: Look at her.

Lori: She's hot for a pastor.

Me: Weird Pastor if you tell me.

Lori: What do you want me to do?

Me: Be her friend.

Lori: I don't even like church.

Me: Well you will have to try .

Lori: You do understand that I will be white in a group of black people? That is suspicious on another level.

Me: You deal with charities Lori, I am sure there's something an archbishop wouldn't mind having.

Lori: You like her don't you?

Me: Do what I am asking you to do and leave what I like to me.

Lori: Anger problems big brother. She's married.

Me:That never stopped you from cheating and marrying your side piece.

She looked angry.

Lori:Screw you.

Me: Don't you give out advice you didn't use on yourself either.

Lori: I'll see what I can do brother.

She got up and left. I picked up my phone and dialled the number.

Voice:Hello.

I didn't respond.

Voice: Must be network.

Me:Hi.

Voice:Uhm hello.

Me:I need to talk to you.

Voice : You must be?

Me:Angelo Gouveia.

Voice: Thinking of convincing me to let you deal with my clinic?

Me:Did you get my flowers?

Voice:I did,I really don't understand what they are for. Imagine the look on my husband.

Me: He's shocked because someone is doing something he's not doing mama.

Voice:I don't know if I should be worried or terrified Mr Gouveia.

Me: You do know my surname after all.

Voice:I am very busy right now Mr Gouveia.

I looked at the laptop and grinned.

Me:See you soon Miss Bokamoso.

I dropped the call, luckily for me she was across the streets. I grabbed my suit and walked to the door.

Me:Tell all the guards to stay outside and make sure no cameras around.

I walked out of the hotel and headed to the restaurant across the streets,I walked in and people kept quiet. I saw her sitting next to the window eating her food,she no longer had braids. Her hair was tied to a high ponytail and she wore tracksuit. I walked to her.

Me:Very soon Pastor.

She looked up.

Bokamoso: Let me guess you tracked me and realised that I am not that far.

Me: Yep.

Bokamoso: You definitely need counseling dear.

Me: Ah are you you help me Mama?

She squinted her eyes.

Bokamoso: You sure sound like that dude in Good girls series.

I chuckled.

Me: You are nowhere close to being Elizabeth though, she was easy and you are hardly effected.

Bokamoso: Interesting theory. Maybe I am affected but just good at pretending that I am not.

Me: Let's say mama, I want to take you out somewhere even Italy.

Bokamoso: You think I would say yes?

Me: Why not try?

Bokamoso: I am not your wife nor am I going to cheat on my husband. You must be thinking that I am very easy.

Me: Oh no, don't get me wrong mama..

She huffed.

Bokamoso: Stop calling me that.

Me: If it wasn't affecting you I would but it is.

Bokamoso: I am not going anywhere with you, the faster you get that the quicker.

Me: I should be offended instead I am turned on.

Her face turned pink, she blew air out of her mouth and looked at me stunned.

Bokamoso: I- mhm should get going.

Me: I'll leave.

I got up grabbing her hand on purpose, I leaned towards her face. She looked at me unmoving.

Me: You are beautiful up close.

She didn't bulge at all. I let go and walked out. I looked back and she was looking at me already. I waved.

ANELE MASUKU

Zed's funeral was short and sweet. It didn't take that long and we were on our way home. I wasn't sure about going home since now holidays were coming to an end and I wasn't ready for living with Themba. I didn't even know why he wouldn't just tell me the truth instead of hurting me.

Lihle: You have been awful quiet.

I looked at Vuyo.

Vuyo:Are you alright?

Me: Your brother is cheating on me with my own brother.

Lihle:Heh?!

Me:Even Ma knows about it,I had to hear that from her.

Vuyo:I had no idea.

Me: Just like you had no idea about the Smanga raping Khanyo?

Lihle:Heh?

Me:Do tell Pastor.

Vuyo:I know what Smanga tells me,I don't know anything about Khanyo because she refuses to answer any personal questions.

Lihle:Smanga is raping her?I thought it was just a crazy story to cover for Smanga's infidelities, didn't think it was true. Or did I think Masakhane would sleep with your husband.

Me:I have to tolerate that.

Lihle: Don't tell me you plan on staying with him.

Me:Liyana is only four years, she's not going to understand what exactly happened here come on.

Lihle: Staying in an unhappy marriage for a man who doesn't give a damn about you is just not write.

Me: What do you want me to do?

Lihle: You are not the first divorcee

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you can't make him love you if he doesn't.

Vuyo: He's my brother, this is just not right at all. I think do what is best for you just he's doing.



I walked in my bedroom, he was sitting looking at his phone. He looked up.

Themba: You are back early.

Me: We still have Sethu's funeral to attend.

Themba: I missed you and Liyana has been crying for you.

I didn't respond, I just took off my shoes.

Themba: Are you alright?

Me: I just need to sleep.

Themba: What happened?

Me: I said that I need to sleep!

Themba: Woah..

I got under the blankets.

Themba: I'll just go-

Me: Leave and stop yapping!

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Mandla:I looked for you when I woke up.

I sat on the chair looking at my phone.

Mandla: You can't ignore me forever Bokamoso.

He grabbed the phone,I jumped on him and we went rolling down on the floor. I threw my fist on his face and grabbed my phone.

Me:Dare grab my phone again, I'll kill you with my bare hands.

Everyone looked at me stunned,it was unlikely to see me lose my cool or attack anyone. Yet here I was attacking my own husband. I couldn't deny that Angelo left agitated and unstable. My emotions were out of control and I was going crazy.

Me:Sorry.

I was having a hard controlling my emotions something that I never had a problem doing,I was surprised that Angelo seemed

to annoy me more than anything. He didn't mind talking to himself on my phone,he sent text after text telling me about his day and everything. It was hilarious. A knock echoed,Elijah walked in.

Elijah: Detective Rorisang Pina is here.

Me: What now? Bring them in.

The detective walked in.

Rorisang: Evening everyone.

Me: Detective how can I help you?

Rorisang: The gun that went missing ten years ago has been linked to a couple of homicides including the latest. Abenathi Nkohliso.

Me:Mhm.

Rorisang:Same gun that killed the man who almost murdered your husband,other cases too Pastor Mothibakgomo.

Me:Okay now you have told me this information, what?

Rorisang: Is there anyone who would want to tarnish your name? Pastor Sage died because of the same gun.

Me:I wouldn't know,,I am a Christian I focus on the good side. Who hates me isn't exactly something that I would know.

Rorisang: What do you remember about the day it went missing?

Me: Actually I barely check it but when I did, it wasn't there so I went and reported. Didn't you read the book report or trying to see if I am lying?

Rorisang: That's not what I am trying to do Pastor Bokamoso. We're trying to figure out the motive behind the person killing people using the gun that you lost.

Me: Figure it out then.

Rorisang: Do you know Abenathi?

Me: She's one of the kids that Sesethu was friends with.

Rorisang: Sesethu is your granddaughter right? The one who committed suicide? Did you know that her and Abenathi shared a boyfriend?

I looked at Denise.

Me: Did you know Denise?

Rorisang: We retrieved some of the texts Sesethu has been sending her, threatening to kill her.

I looked at Denise.

Me: Denise would have to answer that after all she has the suicide note.

Rorisang:Where is the suicide note?

Denise:I burnt it.

Rorisang: I'll go and get warranty to check Sesethu's belongings.

She walked out. I looked at Denise.

Me:So there's a motive Sesethu killed that girl and you hid it.

Denise:It-

Me:So where on earth did they get my gun or it never really went missing?Which one of you stole my gun ten years ago?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 31

MANDLA

I looked at the bed, it was made and she was nowhere in the bedroom. I looked again and she was still nowhere.

Me: Bokamoso!

I got dressed and walked out of the bedroom. I looked around as I walked, I heard music playing in the kitchen. I found Bokamoso cooking.

Me: You are cooking?

She looked at me.

Bokamoso: I already sent Thuba to wake everyone up for breakfast.

Me: You are in a good mood today.

I walked to her.

Me: Been a long time since I last saw you this happy.

Bokamoso: It's called making power moves.

She walked around grabbing plates.

Me: I'll take them.

Bokamoso: Thank you.

I took them to the sitting room and put them on the table.

Me: It smells divine here.

Bokamoso: Help take these dishes.

I grabbed them and put them on the table. My phone rang.

Me: Hello.

Voice: You can walk and talk now but suddenly you don't want to talk about our child.

Me: Uhm who is this?

I looked at Bokamoso dishing for everyone.

Voice: She's a around isn't she?

Me: Don't call me again.

I dropped the call and looked at Bokamoso. Everyone walked in and sat down.

Vuyo: So Mom you decided to treat us today?

Lihle: I can imagine living like this everyday.

Anele: Imagine, I'd weight twice my weight.

Me: She's in a good mood.

Yet my dear wife didn't smile even for a second, she just nodded. Her phone vibrated, she looked at it and rolled her eyes. A knock echoed and Elijah walked in followed by a delivery man.

Elijah: You have a parcel.

Bokamoso: Okay?

The delivery man put the box on the table and let her sign. She opened it and gasped, everyone walked over to her and looked at whatever. I got up and walked over. I was stunned, it was a diamond necklace.

Me: Who sent it?

Bokamoso: You don't see a name, now do you?

Yet she held the card on her hand.

Me: You have the card Bokamoso.

Bokamoso: It has no name.

Me: First it was the flowers now this. Who is he?

She chuckled.

Bokamoso: Know what it is funny? Your baby mama just called you not so long ago, here you are demanding answers from me. I asked you thousand times yet not once I heard anything at all.

Another knock echoed, the detective walked in.

Rorisang: Here's the warranty to search the house.

Bokamoso: Go ahead and tell us what you find, the safe is open.

She grinned as she closed the box.

SMANGA

I don't know but something was just off. The police started with Sesethu's room and walked back.

Rorisang: We found the gun that matches the same gun on our description.

Mom: My gun?

Rorisang: Yes, I believe so.

Mom: That's impossible.

Rorisang: We'll run fingerprints and figure out who had it the last time and if it matches the cases.

I looked at the gun.

Rorisang: Mrs Denise Mothibakgomo you will have to piece together the suicide letter.

Denise: What?!

Rorisang: We need to know where she got this gun and how?

Me: She'll do that.

Something obviously was wrong and I wasn't getting any alert at all. They searched the house and left after that.

Mom: So all this time my gun has been in this house for ten years.

Vuyo: Thank God, I don't like guns.

I walked out and dialled Ndlovukazi. It rang.

Voice: Hello.

I looked at the number in confusion.

Me: Can I talk to Ndlovukazi?

Voice: She's dead

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a woman burnt her alive.

Me: What woman?

Voice: Her initiates also disappeared leaving her home in ashes my dear, but there's a new Ndlovukazi.

Me: Something is happening, I really need to talk to you.

Voice: You will have to bring your helpers as proof.

Me: That's the thing, they are dead.

Voice: That is something, meet me at your mother's, wait brother's church in an hour.



I walked in the church, a woman sat alone in the middle looking at the stage. I sat besides her. She looked younger than the Ndlovukazi I knew.

Me: And?

Woman: Ndlovukazi.

Me: Smangaliso.

She didn't take my hand.

Ndlovukazi: Lawulana is here in another form.

Me: Where?

Ndlovukazi: My sister gave you a task to get rid of your mother but you chose not to, now we'll take matters to our hands.

Me: She's a pastor.

Ndlovukazi: Yet here we are in church. Lawulana needs to back off from feeding, from hereon Lawulana will feed by thyself..

Me: I should stop sleeping with Khanyo?

Ndlovukazi: That's the case. Prepare yourself you are going to get arrested.

Me:What?!!

Ndlovukazi:Still unclear but yes.

She got up.

Ndlovukazi:See you around.

She left me sitting there.

THIMNA

Bohlale:I can't believe that he's gone.

Me:I can't believe that two kids are dead.

Bohlale:Sesethu sounded like fun.

My mother walked in.

Mom:Where exactly did Sesethu get the gun to shoot Abe?

Me:She said that it was Granny's.

Mom:Well the gun has been missing for ten years.

Me:I don't know.

Mom:Where was she before she thought about threatening Abe?

Me:We were in her parents' room.

Mom: Wouldn't put it past Smanga.

She walked out.

Bohlale: What was that all about?

Me:I don't know.

I was curious,what if Sesethu really wanted to kill Abenathi and I didn't even know?

Bohlale: You are thinking too much about it.

Me:They are investigating murder Bohlale, when she realised that she had to go to the police,she committed suicide. Isn't that just not right?

Bohlale:She made a mistake and she was nowhere close to handing herself over. I would rather hang myself than go to prison.

Me:And leave me to deal with it.

Bohlale:She didn't shoot you.

Me:I was there,left to remember what happened. She was selfish.

Bohlale: You were there,she was responsible,those are two different things. She was going to live with the fact she murdered someone.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 32

THEMBA

After burying Sesethu, we returned to Blackwell. My wife has been awfully quiet, returned late or worked at home. She'd respond to whatever I ask, other than that she didn't talk. I found her rocking Liyana back and forth.

Me: Is she asleep?

Anele: Oh she is.

Me: Let me put her on the bed.

I took her and walked to her bedroom and put her down. I walked back to dining room.

Me: Can we talk?

She looked at me.

Anele: Yeah?

Me: What's going on?

Anele: What did you do?

My blood ran cold.

Me: What are you talking about?

Anele: You can't be dumb because you think I don't know what you are doing behind my back since Christmas holiday.

Me: What are you talking about?

Anele: Nothing.

She walked out. Did she know? If she did, that would explain why she has been acting so weird. I followed her.

Me: Tell me what I did Anele.

She sighed.

Anele: Liyana and I have decided that we will temporarily stay in Eastern Sata in the meantime.

Me: Woah woah you can't just go to my parents without telling me what really happened.

I didn't expect a flying sculpture towards me, it almost cracked my skull, I stumbled back as I felt warm liquid down my face.

Anele: You cheat on me, not once, not twice and you dare come here to tell me that you want to know why. My brother!

Me: Whatever Masakhane said isn't true, I just told him-

Anele: You think he told me? Your mother told me the truth and I am trying to understand how on earth did you just do that?

Me: Mom? What are you trying to say about my mother?

She grabbed the bat,I moved back holding my head.

Anele: You are going to wish that you never went and cheated on me Themba. You think you can use me then leave me to dry.

Me:Anele please.

Anele:Get out!

I grabbed my car keys and drove out. I headed to Masakhane's apartment with my head still bleeding. I parked outside and opened the gate. I walked to his apartment and found him sitting watching his favourite series.

Masakhane:Oh goodness what happened to you?

Me:She threw a sculpture.

Masakhane:She could have killed you.

Me:She knows.

He paused and looked at me.

Masakhane: You told her?Why would you do that?

Me: Actually she said she that my mother did.

Masakhane:The Pastor told her what? She must be high on something. I think she has been following you actually, there's just no way.

Me: She's going to go home.

Masakhane: I told you what we're doing will have severe consequences Themba.

Me: Nevertheless I love you.

He blushed..

Masakhane: Let me clean that wound.

Me: It stings like hell.

He brought his First Aid Kit. I looked at him.

Me: I know how this came was wrong but I love you so much.

Masakhane: I love you too.

RAY NGONDO

Sihle: This looks good right?

Me: Mhm, I have to go.

Sihle: Again? You have been doing that lately. Are you going see her?

Me: She's not here, she's still at home.

Sihle: You still talk to her?

Me: I went to check the house and she hasn't been home.

Sihle:I am not having this child myself Ray.

Me:I am not carrying the child, it's not like I am the one who has him 24/7,9 months.

Sihle:Screw you!!I didn't ask you to cheat on your wife if you loved her as you say.

Me:I married you because you can be pregnant other than that you are nothing compared to Khanyo.

Sihle: She's not here nursing your selfish ass now is she?

I sighed.

Sihle:If you want her so bad,why did you let her divorce you?

Me:I am sorry for putting my emotions on you.

Sihle: After this petty apology,let me guess you think I'll melt and accept it? You are right about one thing,I am not Khanyo who did everything to please you. Wa nnyela.

She turned and continued fixing the cot

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I walked out. Khanyo blocked me everywhere and eventually changed her number so I wouldn't call her. I drove to her house and I was surprised to see a car parked outside. I got out of mine and a man walked out followed by another.

Me:Hi,,can I help you?

Man:Is your ex wife home?

So she was already telling everyone?

Me: You must be?

Man:The man looking for her.

Me:How do you know my wife?

Man:By asking her to introduce herself to me.

I looked at the man.

Me:Then I don't plan on telling you anything.

Man:She is on her way from home to here,so I thought I would surprise her, didn't think a bitter ex husband would be here.

Me: Khanyo is still my wife.

Man:To you perhaps,now I am around you are not so important anymore Ray.

Me:Ohh she thinks this is a revenge huh?

Man:Look ex husband,move along now.

Me:I will not be threatened by the likes of you -

The guard pulled out a gun.

Man: You will leave.

I turned and walked to my car, Khanyo wouldn't just date. What if she has been cheating on me?

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I looked at the diamond necklace and sighed. My phone vibrated, I looked at it and I could see the number. I just silenced it. The door opened and Thuba walked in.

Thuba:Granny they are arresting Dad!

Me:What?!

I jumped and grinned, I hurriedly walked down the stairs.

Me: What's going on?

Rorisang:We found his fingerprints on the gun too. If the gun has been missing, how did his fresh prints get on the gun?

Smanga:I don't know.

Rorisang: It's either I cuff you or you come willingly.

Smanga:I have my own gun, why would I need that?

Rorisang:Matthew take him to the car.

He walked out, I just watched without showing one single emotion.

Me:Smanga has temper but not enough to kill someone.

Rorisang: Then we'll prove him innocent, in the meantime he has to explain how his prints got on the gun. I'll have a warrant to search his home.

Denise: Smanga wouldn't kill anyone, someone is setting him up.

Rorisang: Who?!

Denise: I don't know.

Rorisang: I'll be back.

Vuyo: Smanga has anger problems but not to a point to kill someone.

Me: Uhm.

Mandla: We need to find him lawyers.

Me: His companies will get one immediately.

Mandla: That is our son out there Bokamoso.

I just looked at him and walked back to my office, I closed the door and turned the cameras. I dialled the number.

Me: Well you did plant the fingerprints well, now you have to make a motive for the murder of the pastor, Pablo, plant something in his house. He has an underground office in the basement, plant everything. And find the judge responsible for looking at his case.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 33

ANELE MASUKU

I picked Liyana up while calling him.

Me:Themba you can't just not sleep home knowing very well that Liyana is used to be taken to school by you.

Again it had went straight to voicemail,I sighed as I put her on her chair. I called again.

Me:Themba this is not like you.

I was getting worried,I knew he was cheating but he never really turned his phone off at all. I drove Liyana to school before heading to his office,it was empty. I walked back to my car.

Me:I really don't want to track him.

I had to,as I expected the phone's last location was in Masakhane's apartment. I bit my lower lip, knowing very well what was happening,he was choosing my brother over me. I called Dad.

Dad:Nel.

Me:Themba has been cheating on me with Masakhane.

Silence.

Dad: Masakhane -

Me: Is sleeping with my husband Dad, after everything. I stood by my brother all these times and all he could do is stab me in the back. What exactly did I do huh?

Dad: Anele are you driving?

It was too late, the car screeched as I tried to press the breaks. The bus came swayed trying to stop, it was now I realised that it was on the wrong lane. I steered and my car took down the wall on the side before it stopped. My head jammed forward, I could feel pain on my neck. I felt dizzy, I could hear a distant voice, I had a crack. Just as I moved, my leaned forward and fell. I couldn't feel any pain as it landed on the ground, I was losing consciousness. Then I just closed my eyes.

MASAKHANE

I felt my head, it sure felt like I had a hangover. I opened my eyes as my phone rang, I grabbed it.

Me: Yeah.

Dad: Now I know why you are going straight to hell!

The line died. I knew that she must have told him after all. I froze as I looked at the blood on my hands and at the edge of

Me:His wife and daughter.

Detective:He is married?

Me:To my sister.

Detective:Did you two have a fight last night?

Me:No

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he had a fight with Anele not me.

Detective:Yet we have blood in your house and you don't remember a thing.

Me:He came here bleeding.

Detective: You didn't call the police.

Me:It was just a wound on the head.

Detective:Or maybe he wanted this to stop. What is your name?

Me: Masakhane Masuku.

Detective: What is his name?

Me:Themba Mothibakgomo.

The other seemed to search in the meantime, they walked away. I couldn't exactly call anyone at all. The detective walked back.

Detective: Mrs Anele Mothibakgomo, your sister was in a car accident this morning. A bus drove in a wrong lane, looks like someone really wanted both wife and husband dead.

Me: Why would I even be here if I killed Themba?

Detective: You tell me. How your house gets so much blood but no body? Maybe you have made sure that there's nothing showing that you are responsible.

Me: I didn't kill anyone.

Detective: Luckily she suffered minor injuries, we will hear her side of the story.

I rubbed my forehead in confusion, I didn't know what to say.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I found a car parked in front of my gate, I parked on the lawn and walked out. Zweli walked out. The guy purposely put his phone in my pocket and called it while I was on my way. I had to give him my address.

Me: That was indeed the smartest move.

Zweli:I did say we'll see each other again,not my fault you didn't believe me.

I opened my purse and handed it to him.

Zweli: Aren't you going offer me anything to drink?

I chuckled.

Me:Move your car so I can park my car.

I walked back to my car. He moved it,so I drove inside and he followed. I led him inside the house.

Me:I haven't been home for nearly a month,I made sure to empty the fridge. The things I bought were for just supper.

Zweli:I am pretty good at cooking,I don't mind helping unless you are scared that I am better.

Me: You are so full of yourself.

Zweli:Show me what you have.

He opened the plastics, taking out everything. I was really surprised to see him going around my kitchen opening all cupboards, turning on the stove. It was quite interesting. My phone rang,I picked it up.

Me:Hello.

Voice: Don't drop the call.

I frowned as I looked at Zweli,he looked at me confused.

Me:What now Ray?

Voice:I come thinking we could talk,all this time you have been cheating on me.

Me: What are you talking about?

Voice:I saw your boyfriend,all this time you know why it was so easy to give up on us.

Me:Heh marn what are you talking about?

Zweli:Where do you keep your spices?

Me:On your left.

Voice: He's in your house.

Me: You are talking about Zweli?

I laughed.

Me:Here I was thinking that it's some guy,all along you are talking about someone who is nowhere close to your league. Not forgetting that we're divorced and you are married. What else?I can file for a protection order against you if you call me again.

I dropped the call,my phone vibrated.

Me:Lihle.

Lihle:Smanga has been arrested.

Me:Heh?!

Lihle:The gun had his prints on it,has been connected to multiple of homicides.

Me: Surprised that Mom hasn't called any of us.

Lihle:Funny Ma hasn't been here the entire day.

Me: You are still Eastern Sata?

Lihle: I have been given extra days,only Vuyo went back home.

Me:Denise?

Lihle:Acting like she didn't marry a gangster.

Me: That's my brother.

I was excited.

Lihle:Yet you don't seem sad about his arrest unlike others.

Vuyo was so worried that he wanted to come as soon as possible.

Me: I am going through the most.

Lihle: I did psychology for a reason Khanyo, you don't have to find excuses for your feelings towards his arrest.

Me:Mhm.

Zweli:So how do you turn on this stove of yours?

Lihle:I don't know Ray but that is not his voice.

Me:How would you know?

Lihle:The dude speaks like a retired bad bitch.

I laughed.

Me: Have a good day Lihle.

I dropped the call.

Me:I forgot to tell you that the plugs have been turned off,
sorry.

I turned them on,I watched him cook.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 34

ANELE MASUKU

I groaned and opened my eyes.

Vuyo:Hey.

Me:Hi.

My body felt so tired.

Me:Fuck I thought I was dying.

Mom:Baby!

They all walked in,she hugged me and Dad stood there.

Dad: You were reckless with your life Anele, you could have left that innocent child alone.

Me:I wasn't thinking straight that's all Dad.

Mom: Could have killed your unborn child.

I frowned.

Mom: You knew that you are pregnant, didn't you?

Me:Yes.

Dad:Anele!

I jumped.

Vuyo: If you don't try to calm down, she's going to panic even more.

They sighed.

Me: What do you mean?

Vuyo: Themba has been reported missing.

I looked at him confused.

Me: I didn't file any missing person's report.

They all looked at each other.

Me: What?!

Vuyo: Yesterday morning, police were called to your brother's house. They found Themba's blood on the bed and floor, his phone turned off and his car gone along with him. Your brother says that he doesn't know what happened.

Me: Wha-

The machine loudly beeped.

Vuyo: Calm down.

I could feel my chest burn. Vuyo walked out and came back with the doctor. They injected something in the IV.

Me: He can't -

true. I didn't even mention anything about my brother, I got so angry and threw the duck sculpture on him. Then I told him to leave.

Detective: Was he bleeding?

Me: He was but it wasn't much.

Detective: Then what?

Me: I calmed and eventually slept. Woke up and he wasn't home. He is the one that takes Liyana to school but he wasn't there yesterday. I called him of course but it went to voicemail, dropped Liyana and went to his office. I got in the car accident when I was heading to my job.

Detective: We have checked the cameras across your house, we know that you didn't leave. What can you tell us about your brother?

Me: I thought I knew him, guess I don't.

Detective: Does your husband have any enemies?

Me: Not that I know of. You do understand that it's impossible for someone to just disappear without a trace?

Detective: Don't put law in this Mrs Mothibakgomo. The only trace is his car and body .

Me:He can't just die without telling me why he cheated on me,he is out there alive. He has to.

I could feel my chest tighten again.

Me:He is alive,yes he has to be.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat chewing gum. I looked at the missed calls and rolled my eyes. The door opened and Detective Rorisang Pina walked in.

Rorisang: Pastor Bokamoso.

Me:Me.

Rorisang: I'll be recording this.

Me:Sure.

Rorisang:Did you ever suspected that someone in your house might have stolen the gun?

Me:At first I did but then I thought about it. What if I had left the safe open because I didn't think it would be stolen?But then I realised that I closed the safe everytime.

Rorisang:Can you tell us about your son?

Me:What do you want to know exactly?

Rorisang:Is he a violent person?

I slipped that I knew,after all I knew exactly what he was capable of. Khanyo's painful cries echoed in my head as I just sat there.

Me:Can we do this another time?

I didn't wait for her to respond,I got up and walked out. I thought about all the time I have nursed Smanga,all along he was raping my daughter,my first child. I couldn't just not say anything but I was defeated for a moment. How long do I have to pretend that what he did,killed every fibre of my life?I couldn't even stand him,the boy I raised, turned on me and continued to smile like nothing happened. I blinked the tears away and shook my head.

Me: Crying isn't going to help me.

As Elijah drove me back home,I thought about it. I dialled the number.

Angelo:This is a surprise.

Me:Is it possible to talk to you?

Angelo:Is everything alright?

Me:Can I talk to you?

Angelo: I'll be in Sata in five hours.

Me:Thank you.

I was treading on a very dangerous road,I knew that Smanga stand to walk out of prison and those cartels were going to make sure that had happened. My phone rang again.

Me:Ah Vuyolwethu what is it?

Vuyo:Hey Mama

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how are you?

Me:The hell do you want?

Vuyo:Mom.

I sighed,this child was the only one still doing good, quite surprising since he was a rebel.

Me:Yes baby.

Vuyo:Are you alright?

Me: Your brother is still in prison,bail hearing Monday.

Vuyo:I heard that but I am asking you.

Me:I am fine so is your wife.

Vuyo: Something happened yesterday and by now I thought you have already seen on the news.

My heart quickly stopped.

Me:What happened?

Vuyo:Anele is pregnant.

Me:I know that.

Vuyo:She was in a car accident yesterday morning.

Me:Oh Jesus!

Vuyo:Then another thing. Themba is missing.

Me: Missing?

I listened to him in confusion.

Me: What do you mean he doesn't know what happened?He can't just have my son's blood in his room and not know what happened. That is absurd and crazy. Impossible.

Vuyo:With no body nor car,or Themba there's nothing.

I rubbed my forehead. I blinked as I realised that Ndlovukazi had said something like this. "Lawulana is going to tear you and your family apart, you have made the greatest mistake if your life." It was not possible that this Lawulana was here.

Vuyo:Ma.

Me:Huh?

Vuyo:Anele went to shock when I told her this. It's one thing after another,yeah he proved to the world that he was cheating on her with Masakhane.

Me: When I get a chance, I'll come by.

Vuyo:I know that you are not alright Ma.

Me: You know that I bounce back, always do I have you on my case everyday.

Vuyo: Just because you are my mother,it doesn't mean that you are always going to be alright. I have to check on you like you do.

I sighed.

Me: Just take care okay?

Vuyo: I love you too.

I chuckled,he dropped the call.

Me: Lawulana is a what exactly?

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I watched the news in shock,I kept blinking thinking I was seeing things but it was true.

Lethu: That was the headline this morning.

Me: That's my brother's wife.

They all looked at me.

Me: Before I was a Mthombeni, I was a Mothibakgomo well the last born.

They looked at me.

Lethu: Somehow the most influential female pastor turned archbishop is your mother?

Me: Yes.

Lethu: You do know that we've been struggling to get her to talk to us and she's your mother?

Me: I suddenly feel bad. Look journalism is easy when it's pointing at someone else, not me looking at my family. Plus my mother would die if she had to talk to journalists, she grew up with them.

They didn't say anything.

Me: Find out everything you need about these accidents, do put a missing person report for Themba. Meeting adjourned.

They all walked out, I dialled Vuyo's number.

Me: Just saw the news.

Vuyo: Called you yesterday.

Me:I thought it was about the funeral.

Vuyo: Because you like holding on to grudges,I see. Come on.

Me:I just need to know if Anele or Liyana are alright.

Vuyo:Anele is still sleeping and pregnant.

Me:Oh God.

Vuyo:Say that again. I don't know which side I am suppose to be in,I had to call Khanyo to take Liyana. The doctor think it's best she stays in the hospital until they are sure. Her stomach was bruised.

Me:Oh God what is happening?

Vuyo:I don't know what to tell you but it is about to get worse. Smanga is in jail and a lot is coming out about him.

Me: I am not surprised.

Vuyo: You and Khanyo share something in common.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Vuyo:Do check on Khanyo.

The line died just as someone knocked.

Me:Come in.

A man walked in.

Man:Good morning,I am Hlomla.

Me:Do we have an appointment?

Hlomla:Yes,we do.

He sat down.

Me:Ohh okay. What can I do for you?

His facial expression changed and he looked at me.

Hlomla: Your mother's mistake was thinking killing Ndlovukazi would make things go away. Does she feel the heat?

Me:What are you on about?

Hlomla: She can't just kill my servants and live happily ever after,this is no Disneyland.

He got up.

Me:What the fuck are you talking about?

Hlomla:Let me guess you really believe that your mother is a flightless angel, don't you?Oh wait you have been 17 years away to know.

He walked out.

Me:Huh?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 35

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Mandla: You are looking beautiful today.

Me: Thank you.

Mandla: Are you going to church?

Me: A meeting actually.

Mandla: Look I have a spoken to a family counselor.

Me: Do you think it will help? Like how?

Mandla: I believe that it would.

Me: I'll think about it, let me get going.

I grabbed my purse.

Mandla: You are driving yourself?

Me: Yes.

I left. I typed the address on the GPS before leaving.

Surprisingly the guy was in one of my guest houses. I didn't even have to show my ID, the guards just led me to his room. I found him sitting looking through some papers.

Me: Didn't think you'd show up.

He looked at me,from my toes to my face.

Angelo:I am glad I did. What did I do to deserve this chance?

Me: I'll let use the clinic.

Angelo:Please sit. I said that I won't do that.

Me:Thing is there's someone I want kept in jail, he's under your payroll.

He looked at me again.

Angelo: That is going to be tricky. Who?

Me:My son.

He gasped and got up.

Angelo:Sma? You want your son kept in prison?

Me:He has given me reasons to keep him in prison.

Angelo: You do understand that your son runs the South African cartel?

Me:What?!

Angelo: Let's say I do help him stay in jail,most cartels have grown fond of him. They would kill every jury or judge or police keeping him in jail. Eventually forcing me to interfere,not forgetting that if they find out,I put my guards and family at risk.

Me: He's been running a cartel under my nose? What if I knew but didn't have any proof?

Angelo: Sma is going to be free, soon you are going to accept that.

Me: Not if I can help it.

Angelo: You are a pastor, stick to that.

I looked at him.

Me: I am no ordinary pastor.

I stood next to him looking at the window.

Me: This is my best guest house, giving you the view of the beach. Looks beautiful at night.

Angelo: Well you can always look at it tonight.

I squinted my eyes.

Me: I came here thinking that keeping Smangaliso in prison was going to be simple and easy. I didn't think he runs a fucken cartel.

Silence, so I turned to look at him and he's watching me.

Me: What?

He takes a step back and slowly looks me up and down. His inspection seems to last for hours, though it must have taken

only seconds. I want to move toward him. But I stay rooted to the spot. He lingers for a moment on my lips before finally lifting his head to meet my eyes, and that is when I move. I moved backwards, something was trapping me, I hit the wall. Maybe it's his smile—it's tender and sweet with just a hint of amusement. Why is he smiling? I don't know but as I turned planning to walk out, he's standing right next to me. He slid his hands into my hair, sending a spark of electricity down my spine. Alarms literally rang as his finger massaged my neck, he tilted my head towards his face.

Angelo: I would kiss you but then you are in a hurry.

He moved back, I got courage to stand straight. I walked to the door.

Angelo: Your purse.

I paused, I heard his footsteps. I didn't turn as he handed me my purse. I swear the two minutes walk felt thousand steps

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I got in my car and sat down.

Me: Fuck!

I couldn't help it. I was drawn in by the force and pressure of the tempest building in those damnable eyes. I had to stay away from him.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Liyana literally had me sleeping on my stomach so she could massage me,the child was a demon. She was hilarious though.

Liyana:Now Rakgadi how do you feel?

Me:So fresh.

Liyana:Told you,I am good.

I chuckled,she was so innocent and had no idea about what was happening around her.

Me: I'll pay you next time.

A knock echoed.

Liyana:I got it.

She ran as I followed. It didn't take long before an ear piercing bounced the walls,I rushed to her and she sat looking at Zweli. He looked at her in worry.

Me: What happened?

I picked her up as she cried.

Zweli:I thought it was you. I might have sounded scary. I am sorry.

Me: It's okay Liyana,this is a friend of mine.

She might have not expected him to do that, she finally went quiet as I walked around with her.

Zweli: She's dozing off.

I walked to my room and put her on the bed.

Me: He didn't mean to scare you. He thought it was me.

Liyana: He's a snake.

Me: Huh?

Liyana: He's a snake Rakgadi, like Uncle Sma's pets.

My blood ran cold.

Me: Just sleep.

Liyana: Granny said if I am scared, pray.

She closed her eyes and fell asleep. I was disturbed, she was a child yet she said something so accurate. Not that I thought Zweli was a snake but I did believe that kids saw things we didn't see. Or she was still petrified about the snake that bit Zed? I closed the door and walked back to the dining room.

Zweli: I really didn't mean to hurt her, I just went booh I think she was startled.

Me: I thought it was my brother, didn't think that it was-

Another knock echoed. I walked to the door and opened it.
Dolly stood there.

Me:Hi.

Dolly:Hi. I was here to check on Liyana.

Me: She's asleep.

Dolly: I'll come by tomorrow.

Me: You can come in.

Dolly: You have a visitor, don't worry I will come tomorrow.

She turned and left,I sighed and walked back inside.

Zweli:What happened?

Me:My sister.

Zweli: You have a sister?I thought you were the only daughter
of the pastor.

Me:Dolly Mthombeni,a well known journalist.

Zweli:Tell me about your family.

Me:Let me start with my dear sister.

MASAKHANE

Policeman: You have a visitor.

My father walked behind him.

Dad:No need to open the cell, I'll just speak from here. Why?

I looked at him.

Dad:Anele is pregnant did you know that?

Me:What?!

Dad:The only thing that stressed her to an accident,is knowing that her husband chose not to come home and sleep with you. Anele stood by you all these years and you go and do this.

He took a breath.

Dad:Did you kill him because he didn't want to continue with the relationship anymore?

Me:I didn't kill him Father.

Dad:Where is he?

Me:I don't know.

Dad:So he just leaves his blood all over your room and disappears?

Me:I don't remember anything.

Dad:I am going to make sure that you rot here even if it's the last thing I do.

Me:I didn't kill him.

Dad: I am suppose to believe you right?I hope you rot here.

He turned and left. I just sat there,I didn't even understand how I could just forget everything simple as that. I heard footsteps again and a detective walked in.

Detective:We tested the skin found in your nails and it matches,Themba Mothibakgomo. Now Mr Masuku it's time to tell us the truth and where to find him,alive or dead.

Me:I don't know how that got to my nails,I didn't kill anyone. I mean we had sex,I did scratch him.

They looked stunned.

Me: Exactly. What I know I didn't kill anyone.

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✓ ILLECEBROUS 36

MANDLA

I drove to the house,I parked outside and walked out. I knocked at the door,the door opened.

Sino:15 years he shows up.

Me: Your daughter came to my house on Christmas day.

Sino:What?!

Me: Saying that you told her that Bokamoso was responsible for me not seeing her.

I pushed her inside and closed the door.

Sino: You are lying.

Me: Masimile is her name.

Sino:She must have found out who you are.

Me: You came to me knowing very well that I was married,now you think you can what? Replace my wife?

Sino:No, that's not true.

Me: Keep your brat far away from my family or it will be the last day you ever see her.

I walked out, my phone rang.

Me:Yeah.

Voice:Who would have known that a ghost like you would eventually get up?

Me:Says the guy calling me through a private number.

Voice:I had to be sure that it was you,after all your wife banished me from the house.

Me:She was just angry.

Voice:We should hang out and catch up.

Me:I just have to get my affairs in order,like my company back after all Themba is missing.

Voice:I heard about that too.

Me:Seems like someone is deliberately working against my family, it's tragedy after tra-

I saw Bokamoso's drove out of the guest house.

Me:Send me your number.

I dropped the call,I looked at the guest house and walked there. I walked to the receptionist.

Me:Hi.

Receptionist:Mr Mothibakgomo? You are walking?

Me: I am, God's grace. Bokamoso said that she was coming here.

Receptionist:She just left,it didn't take that long.

Me:Where did she go?

Receptionist:She just greeted and walked past, don't know where exactly but she didn't stay that long.

I walked out, just as men with guns seemed to gather together. A man stepped out,I moved back and they left. I walked back to the receptionist.

Me: Do you know him?

Receptionist:He looks powerful to me.

Me:He brought men with guns.

Receptionist: Someone else booked for him.

Me:Who?

Receptionist:I am afraid that I cannot share that Sir with Pastor B's approval.

Me:Someone died in this-

Someone coughed,I turned and it was the guy.

Guy:Oh I forgot to sign the cheque for the owner for the splendid guest house with a beautiful view.

Me:I made my mistakes and I am trying to fix them.

Bokamoso:Mandla you do understand my little boy is missing?
You do understand that Themba is probably out there dead?
You want to fix the marriage in which I suffered and you enjoyed?

Me:Bo-

Bokamoso:No man,no. I was so happy when you were stuck on that wheelchair and couldn't talk,now you have to be fine. It's you all over again and I have to deal with that. I loved you 17 years ago

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right now the thought of repulse me so much. You were parading with girls half my age, asking myself if it was because I was a mother and no longer fresh. "Lose some weight Bokamoso" do this Bokamoso,do that and maybe,just maybe he'd realise that I am over here watching you not care. 2 years in misery and someone gunned you down,I was praying for you to die in fact but God and his mysterious ways. Piece of shit.

Silence.

Bokamoso:Right there,I learnt that if I was expecting you to love me,I was going to be miserable. I picked myself up for your sons and daughters,I had to make sure that our kids get

wherever they want. I raised them and I stood by them. I won't get better overnight, no I won't and I don't want to.

She took her plate and left. I sighed, Bokamoso was hurting and it was all my fault.

LIHLE MANZIMA

Me: I think you should come back here Vuyo, your mother broke down.

Vuyo: She broke down?

Me: Tears fell on her face, what your father did to her is far worse than I had imagined.

Vuyo: Did you check on her?

Me: She locked herself in Themba's room, that's another thing killing her. She literally hired detectives to find him.

Vuyo: I'll be home tomorrow morning.

Me: Good.

Vuyo: Is she the only who needs me?

Me: Eh don't include me in your shenanigans.

Vuyo: But I miss you.

Me: Unfortunately for you, I am right here.

Vuyo: Don't you miss me?

I rolled my eyes and smiled.

Me:Nope.

Vuyo:Why are you rolling your eyes at me Manzima?

Me:I am not doing that.

Vuyo: You did and you are going to pay for that.

I clenched my thighs.

Me: I'll report you Vuyolwethu.

He laughed.

Vuyo:I really do miss you.

Me:I miss you too.

Vuyo: I'll see you tomorrow then.

Me: I'd be in the police station waiting to report a GBV case of you my dear.

Vuyo:Ehh this girl, you would have me arrested?

Me: You'd look sexy in those orange jumpsuits.

Vuyo:Thank God I recorded this call.

Me:Baby I miss you mos.

Vuyo:I don't miss you and bye.

Me: Drop it, I dare you.

Vuyo: I love you so much.

Me: It works everytime. Good night.

I sighed as I dropped the call, the house was undeniable big and empty. Denise's kids returned to varsity, she spent most of her time in her bedroom and Ma was always somewhere. I put my phone on the stand and it rang.

Me: Hi.

V: Mom and Dad just called.

Me: Oh God what now?

V: They have set a meeting with your mother and father in-law.

Me: About what?

V: They didn't tell me because they know that I will tell you.

Me: Fuck! Why are they so annoying?

SMANGA

I sat on the chair. The Detective walked in and sat down.

Rorisang: Your mother couldn't even describe you, for a moment I thought it was because she knew what you were capable of.

Me:Mhm.

Rorisang: Your youngest brother is missing.

I looked at her confused.

Me:Themba?

The door opened,a man I didn't know walked in.

Man:I am his lawyer,my client doesn't have to answer anything.
Some other lawyers are outside in case you have questions.

I was confused,the Detective walked out.

Me:My lawyer isn't you.

Man:Hlomla Sturm. I am your lawyer. What have you told
them?

Me: Nothing.

Hlomla: We'll talk where there's no people watching us or being
recorded.

There was something oddly familiar about him.

Hlomla:The new Ndlovukazi sends her regards.

I stopped and looked at him.

Me: Lawulana?

He arched his eyebrow.

Hlomla: Don't worry about that, you will be out tomorrow and won't have to come back.

Me:Okay.

Hlomla: Don't say anything to anyone.

He took his things and walked out. I was shocked that he was actually alive and walking amongst us. I was transported back to my holding cell.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 37

ANELE MASUKU

Dr: You are doing well.

Me: I am.

Dr: Your stomach isn't showing yet you are five months.

Me: Lucky me.

The door opened and Ma Bokamoso walked in.

Me: Ma.

Mom: Oh honey.

She hugged me.

Dr: I'll come and check on you later.

Me: Thank you.

Mom: You look fine.

Me: Been saying that to the doctor but he thinks, I just hate hospitals.

She was literally staring at me.

Me: Everything alright?

Mom: Remember that I told you about Themba cheating with your brother.

Me:I didn't do anything to him,I promise.

She opened her bag.

Mom: You'd be so stupid to do that,Anele not everyone know what extent I will go through to get to the bottom of everything.

She took out a gun,I watched in horror as she put the bullets.

Mom: I am a pastor,I think that is the only reason no one sees what I can do. Let me tell you little details.

She cocked the gun.

Mom:Nkhono went off the stairs,she irritated me and I was tired,well helped off the stairs.

My heart stopped.

Mom: Your father in-law hurt me so bad and still believe that I was going to be just fine. Pablo failed dismally.

She put it on my forehead.

Mom:I was so damn ready to be a widow. I had to get rid of Pablo,not mentioning Pastor Sage,scam. Those are the few people who crossed my wrath. You wouldn't want to do that right?

Me:No.

Mom:Themba should have divorced you Instead of cheating.

Me:I didn't do anything to him,I swear.

Mom:If I find out that you are responsible for this, you, your unborn child and including Liyana will be smiling bright on an obituary. No one is going to fuck with my kids and think they can get away with it. Hopefully you do understand that I will be watching from hereon.

She put her gun back to her bag.

Mom: You are sweating dear.

She walked,I laid there not feeling one single movement and my ears were ringing. Yeah,Ma was scary but she has taken this to another level and I believed everything that came out of her mouth. I just had to find Themba and bring him back home.

.....

The door opened and I jumped,the detectives walked in.

Detective: Afternoon Mrs Mothibakgomo.

Me:Mhm hi.

Detective: Your husband car was found in a nearby garage,parked with keys left with a cashier.

Me:Ohh.

Detective:Do you know this man?

I looked at the man confused.

Me:Yes but I am confused.

They played a video,he took out a huge bin from Themba's car and put it in another.

Detective:How do you know him?

I took my phone and scrolled.

Me: He's my brother's boyfriend.

They looked at each other.

Me: You think Masakhane hired him?

Detective: Your brother is denying any involvement in your husband's disappearance,yet he has been on several calls with him the night before he woke up.

Me:Why would he do this?I mean Themba clearly wanted to stay with him.

Detective:By the looks of it,he might have wanted to break it off.

He handed me the scan.

Me:Where did you get that?

Detective:In his car. We believe that he knew even though you didn't tell him.

I just looked at the scan, I was probably going to raise children without a father. I hated him but now I wasn't sure.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I looked at the envelope and opened it. Pictures of me and Mr Mhleka fell out,there were also intimate pictures and I didn't know existed. I just looked at them in horror,there was no message no note just the pictures. I heard footsteps,quickly grabbed them.

Bohlale:Hi Mom.

Me:Hi baby.

Bohlale: Just going to cook.

She walked to the kitchen,I quickly put them back in the envelope and headed to the bedroom.

Daniel:Hey, forgot to tell you that I am done with the meeting.

Me: I got this.

I handed him the envelope.

Daniel:Woah!

Me:I didn't know those existed at all.

Daniel: You didn't know that there were pictures being taken?

Me:No. This is my first time seeing this.

Daniel:Who would send you this?

Me:I don't know who,maybe Nolitha.

Daniel:Think she might have been taken pictures all this time.

A knock echoed,Thimna walked in.

Thimna:Uhm there's a man at the gate

he said he's here to see you.

Me:Did he say what his name was?

Thimna:Luvo Mhlekwa.

Me:Huh?Coming.

She walked out.

Me:It cannot be just a coincidence.

I walked out,at least the gate was transparent.

Me:Hi.

Luvo: I'm Luvo Mhlekwa.

Me:Okay.

Luvo: We received these few days ago.

Me: Pictures of me and your brother.

Luvo: Now the department has withdrawn the release of his pension because of this, they are accusing him of sleeping with a minor and a student.

Me: Where did you get these?

Luvo: For a journalist, you should really read and watch news. This surfaced the internet this morning, clearly someone is working overtime to destroy my dead brother using you.

Me: I didn't do this if you are wondering.

Luvo: You stand to be compensated, the department is threatening to count every cent for maintenance and damage to you and your baby.

Me: It serves Nolitha after bribing us with a R10000 to keep quiet and demand nothing.

Luvo: Yet it is out there why you left, why you humiliated your mother.

Me: What are you talking about?

Luvo: It's everywhere, videos, the department might be on your side but the world just realised that you are snake.

I turned and walked back.

Luvo: You will see.

I typed on my phone, I completely understand why no one seemingly knew because I had the girls' phones. Then everything popped on my screen, it was indeed trending, videos and texts I didn't know existed.

Daniel: Have you seen this?

Me: Oh God!

I closed my phone in horror.

Me: Everything is out there, I mean everything.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

What Liyana kept replaying in my head as I sat across Zweli.
What if she really saw something evil and I was too blind to see it?

Zweli: You seem far.

Me: Just stressing about everything.

Zweli: It's understandable, your family is huge and crazy.

Me: Say that again.

Zweli: From what you have told me only your mother and Vuyo seem to be angels.

Me:I don't know but it was never easy to read my mother,Vuyo is genuine sweetheart and I would say he takes after her.

Zweli: You said she was hard to read.

Me:The woman can't drop an emotion even if everyone was crying yet she'd show up for you anytime anywhere. She'd move mountains and hold you,yet you won't see her smile. Kids have gotten used to her neutral face. I don't remember the last time I saw her smile or laugh. I think it was before Dad-

My phone rang.

Me:Lihle.

Lihle: Don't turn the TV,just search Dolly Mothibakgomo,yes with her maiden surname.

Me:Why am I searching my sister?

Lihle:I don't know what to tell but everything from Mhlekwa to his house,church thing to her leaving and returning. It is all over the internet and it's trending.

Me:Sweet Jesus!

Lihle:The church video is out there Khanyo,I don't know.

Me:I thought that was gotten rid of.

Didn't my heart jam?

Me: I'll call you right back.

Zweli:Is everything alright?

Me:My sister is trending.

I searched and indeed she was trending.

Me: She is.

Zweli:Yoh that doesn't look so good at all.

Car beeped,I walked to the intercom.

Me:Yes..

Liyana:Granny is here with me Aunty.

I unlocked the gate,I turned and Zweli looked like he has been drained of blood.

Me:Are you alright?

Zweli: Your mother is here.

Me: She's fine, don't worry about it.

Liyana walked in and jumped on me.

Me:Hey beautiful.

Liyana:School was nice.

As forever graceful my mother walks in her high heeled boots clicking on the floor.

Me:Mom.

Mom:Hey baby.

I hugged her.

Liyana:Granny that's him.

We all turned to look at Zweli,he looked so uncomfortable.

Mom:Nice to meet you Zweli..

I looked at my mother.

Me: You know him?

Mom:He knows me very much,still mourning your dead mother?

He didn't respond, honestly he looked terrified of my mother.

Mom:If I were you I'd run and report back to Lawulana.

Did he not rush out of the house?

Me: What just happened?

Mom: You are very stupid and naive,for someone who suffered under her own brother and his witchcraft. You just let a man who shows you his white teeth in. A child sees through the nice coat and you didn't even listen,yet "you wanted so bad to be a mother." What information did you give this man??

Me: Information -

Mom: I'm going to slap your face so hard if you act dumb with me. What did you tell him?

I gaped she stepped closer.

Mom: Everything except what happened to you right?

Me: I just wanted to -

Mom: Stupid child.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 38

ZWELI KHUMALO

I kept looking behind as I drove home, I was shit scared, the woman was indeed dangerous. I finally arrived. My mother's hut was still being made as I walked to the main house. I opened the door without knocking.

Me: Dad!

Hlomla: This side.

I walked to the dining room, he sat with other men and women.

Hlomla: You look like you saw a ghost.

Me: The Pastor, I saw her, I mean she saw me.

Hlomla: Where?

Me: At Nolukhanyo's house.

Hlomla: I told you that child won't change her mind about you.

Me: I thought I would take things to the next level with her.

Hlomla: Did she recognise you?

Me: She literally asked if I am still mourning my mother, the one she killed.

Hlomla:Calm down.

Me:Why don't you just kill her?

Hlomla:Her father once brought her here,well left her in the car. She wondered off,now her third eye was opened.

Me:She didn't see Smanga.

Hlomla:Smanga is not possessed, he's protected by me if he was she would have known ages ago. People like us,she can sense us miles away.

Me: She can see us but doesn't mean anything.

Hlomla: Somehow it also granted her the ability to kill us. That's why she's probably the ruthless pastor you don't want to cross, she doesn't do anything by the Bible. She does everything the way she wants,which makes her problem. Angels can intervene if we try to kill her, she's not really a saint but that Man has his twisted ways.

Me:We can't continue like this forever.

Hlomla: Eventually she'll just back off.

Me:Wait we want her to just back off?All this work to make her back off?Are you serious right now? We've turned her family upside down and you want her to back off. She's going to come for everyone,she should just die.

Hlomla: Did you find out anything?

Me: The woman is like a maze, you know what she allows you to know even to her own children. Well only two kids were always with her. The new pastor and the woman trending right now.

Hlomla: We'll figure something out.

THIMNA

I couldn't understand why everyone was looking at me, they were literally pointing at me then continue saying something.

Siphe: Hey.

Me: Hi.

Siphe: Didn't think you'd come.

Me: Why not?

Siphe: Didn't you see the news?

Me: What news?

She typed on her phone and handed it to me. I read through everything and realised that I was trending basically. I was a proof of statutory rape according to people. I couldn't hear everyone as I looked at them, some were definitely enjoying as I just walked past Sphe and went to class. Everyone just started whispering the moment I walked in, I just stopped and turned

around. I couldn't do it anymore so I just took a taxi and went home.



I was surprised to find my mother's car parked outside. I found her on the phone shouting, I just stood there looking at her.

Me: Mama!

She turned to look at me.

Mom: I'll be right back. Why are you here?

Me: You knew and you didn't bother telling me.

Mom: I'm busy trying to cover this Thimna.

Me: Cover your mistakes huh? What about the result of your consequences?

Mom: I'm trying not to put on the spotlight.

Me: Spotlight? Everyone is looking at me as the result of statutory rape Ma when you willingly slept with the old man.

She slapped me

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I was surprised too.

Mom: If you think you can talk to me like that just because you are angry, I'll slap you so hard Thimna. Each person out here is

bound to make mistakes,that doesn't make them less. Let's start with you since you are so damn perfect. You stole my car and injured a person. Did I stand here and said that you willingly injured that man?Did I?!

I jumped.

Mom:Answer me damnit! You are the same child that failed a grade,did I stand here and ridicule you?Know what I did?I understood that your mistakes are yours not mine so I could only comfort you not make you feel less. Yet now it's me,I must be perfect right?

I didn't respond.

Mom:Here is the money, you are going to return back to school and face the consequences for leaving in the first place. You dare not return, you will walk to school for the rest of the month.

I took the money and walked out, honestly not once did I hear my mother blow. It was the first time as I walked back trying to find a taxi.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I knocked at the door,it was opened and the woman let me in.

Ongezwa: Bokamoso.

I hugged her.

Ongezwa: It's been a long time.

Me: I know, I am in town so I decided to come and see you.

Ongezwa: I heard the news, wanted to call but I was worried that I'd make you feel more sad. Come sit, Baba is surely on his way.

I put my purse on the table and sat down.

Ongezwa: You still love coffee?

Me: Can I ever stop?

Ongezwa: Child you don't age like us.

I chuckled. I sat feeling the comfort of the couch. It didn't take long for her to return with the coffee and biscuits.

Me: You still bake?

Ongezwa: Yes, I should take it easy right?

Me: I am sure Baba told you to slow down, you have helpers for a reason.

Ongezwa: I'd go crazy if I did nothing in this house.

Me: Keep going out like I do.

I heard footsteps, I turned to look at Baba.

Me:Baba.

Baba:Was shocked to find an expensive car outside.

I got up to hug him.

Baba: You are carrying a very heavy weight on your shoulders.

I frowned.

Ongezwa:Ah Baba sit down first.

He sat down.

Ongezwa: I'll make some-

Baba: Just give me few minutes with her.

She got up and left.

Baba:I did tell you that going after a witch brings problems but same time, your children are reaping what they sow.

I looked at him.

Me:I am tired.

Baba:Of constantly having to fight to stay afloat. Nobody asked you to stand afloat.

Me:My kids needed me more than before,I had to keep up
Baba.

Baba: How's that gotten you my child?

Me: In a path that is only destructive.

Baba: You cannot harm other beings and expect no consequences Bokamoso.

Me: This God I preach about stood by and watched my father hurt innocent children and put my son in that.

Baba: What are you talking about?

Me: He put Smangaliso as his heir, that boy has been raping Khanyo under my nose. I don't know what kills me more, knowing that my father willingly did this to Smangaliso or the fact my daughter paid.

Baba: Do you even cry?

Me: Crying is not something that is going to help me.

Baba: I told you from the first day I met you that here you are suppose to cry if it gets too much.

Me: Grandpa you don't understand, I don't have time to cry.

Baba: Bokamoso you are going through a destructive line and you don't want to back down. You are a pastor, preach what you preach to yourself.

Me: After I kill some people.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 39

MASAKHANE

Detective: Do you know him?

Me: Yes.

Detective: He's the one who was driving the car, your boyfriend's car and took out a bin.

Me: Mivuyo? What? Why?

Lawyer: Just because someone you were dating decided to go and kidnap someone doesn't mean anything. What happens if he did this out of jealous? It could explain how he just slept and didn't remember a thing. Now if you have nothing else to say, I'd like to take my client home.

Detective: We'll be back.

I got up, I felt exhausted after spending so much time in prison. As I stepped out, cameras flashed.

Voice: Did you kill your brother in-law?

I just got in the car with my lawyer.

Lawyer: You have to think Masakhane. What happened? What really happened that night?

Me:What if there was something in the food?

Lawyer:We have to find everything.

Me:We have to.

Lawyer:I arranged some apartment that you can stay in, I'd suggest that you don't call anyone and give them your location. Some people would hurt you.

We finally reached the apartment complex.

Me:Thanks.

Lawyer: Here's the key,some of your things are there.

I walked out and headed inside the complex. I looked at the apartment number and walked to the third floor. I was tired and lost,I didn't understand what was going on at all. One moment we were happy,next thing I am covered in blood. I finally found the door,it was already open so I stepped in. Someone sat on the bar stool, waiting.

Me:Hello?

The door was closed,I jumped and turned. A man stood behind me,he just pointed to the lady. I walked slowly to the open plan kitchen. The woman turned slowly.

Me:Ma-Pastor Bokamoso.

She swung at me so fast with a gun and I almost fell.

Bokamoso: You know,I had a bad feeling about you in my house but anyway you came.

Me:I swear I didn't hurt him.

Bokamoso: Your own blood.

She stepped closer,I moved someone pushed me forward and she swung again and I could hear my nose break. I sat on the floor bleeding.

Me:I swear!

Bokamoso: We're going to do this all night, you are going to remember everything that happened the night my son disappeared.

Me:I didn't -

Bokamoso:Get up.

I got up.

Bokamoso: I am going to give you time actually

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you are going to be a detective and find my son. When I come back, doesn't matter when you better know where he is,or oh so God help you my dear.

She walked past purposely stepping on me before walking out of the apartment with the man. I wiped the blood, I knew that I was good as dead if I didn't find Themba.

Me: Themba where are you?

SMANGA

Everyone sat in silence without saying anything.

Dad: You are good?

Me: I am fine.

Lihle: They didn't keep you there long enough.

Me: Aren't you just a ray of sunshine?

Lihle: Quite surprising that you are still alive dear.

Me: I don't have time for this Lihle, I really don't.

Lihle: They fucked you there, can't sit still?

Dad: Thembelihle you ought to respect your brother in-law, that kind of behaviour -

Lihle: You are the last person to tell me about respect when you have none for Ma.

Dad: You dare speak to me like that you stu-

Vuyo walked in and looked at everyone.

Vuyo: This doesn't look so good.

Dad: Talk to your wife, she's ill mannered and disrespectful.

Lihle: Respect is earned old man, you can't demand something you lack for your own self.

Dad: When do you plan on leaving?

Me: Father you need to calm down, she's pregnant.

Dad: She always has been disrespectful acting like a brat in my house.

Lihle: Quick recap, this is not your house yours is out there being rented.

Dad: Vuyolwethu!

Vuyo: I don't even know what is going on so I am listening.

Me: You are not helping Vuyo.

Vuyo: You weren't here when our mother broke down because of him.

Me: What are you talking about?

Lihle: He's forcing her to forgive while he went to see his baby mama.

Me: I'll just go and sleep for the time being.

I got up and Denise followed.

Denise:Are you alright?

Me: I wish Sesethu was here so she could explain where she got that damn gun.

Denise:She said that she took it from your mother.

Me:How?It has been missing for ten years.

Denise:Do you think someone's is trying to frame you?

Me:At this moment, clearly someone wants me in prison.

Denise: What worries me is the fact everything is falling apart and we can only watch.

Me:Have they found anything on Themba?

Denise:Found his car still no body or any proof if he's alive.

Me:That can't be a coinci-

"We told you to kill Bokamoso now we'll make sure she does all of us a favour."

Denise:What?!

Me:I am just trying to understand what is happening to this family.

That I might have been responsible for everything happening.

ANGELO GOUVEIA

Lori: The archbishop is currently unavailable. Her office they'll contact me if she becomes available.

Me: Mhm.

Lori: Her son is missing.

Me: I know.

Lori: I didn't, you forgot to mention that brother.

Me: Chill.

The door opened and Yusuf walked in.

Yusuf: I found him boss.

Lori: Found who?

Me: Thank you Lori, wait for her office to call you. Let's go Yusuf.

He followed as I went to the car.

Leo: You won't believe what happened to him.

Me: What?!

Leo: You'll see for yourself.

I sat in silence and called Bokamoso.

Bokamoso:One would swear that somehow I have your kidneys.

Me: You do have my heart.

Bokamoso:Be careful giving someone your heart isn't right.

Me:What do you suggest I do?

Bokamoso:Tell me what exactly do you want from me?

Me:I harbour nothing but good news for you.

Bokamoso:What?!

Me:I searched for youngest son and I found him.

Silence.

Bokamoso:This is not funny.

Me:I am telling you the truth,I found him. If you think I am lying then meet me at Tia Petra Hospital.

The call ended. I mean it wasn't that hard to find him, you just had to hack all cameras and locate the car he was put.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 40

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

My heart was out of my chest as I stepped out of the car and hurried to the hospital.

Angelo:Slow down.

I turned to look at him.

Me:Where is he?

Angelo:This way.

He led me to the private room,I could feel my knees give out as I looked at Themba. He laid lifeless,pipes covering every inch of his body and I couldn't touch him. I felt light but someone grabbed me,the fear that coursed through my veins had me trembling. I broke down,I couldn't hold it anymore as I just cried. Angelo pulled me to his arms as I cried, I could feel everything,every pain,the fear of losing a child. I didn't know that I needed to see my child suffer just to cry well Baba did say I was going to break down very soon. I cried until I couldn't even hear my own body,I was numb and I couldn't even stand still.

Angelo: You have to rest.

I couldn't stand to see Themba anymore so I just let Angelo drag me to the car. I didn't care if cameras or anyone saw my messed up face of makeup. The only part that was worrying was how I was glued to Angelo, I felt like if I were to let go I'd lose touch with reality or go crazy. I sat leaning on him in the car, I could feel more tears because somehow I felt responsible. Themba made his mistakes but didn't think it would cost him his life. I could feel a headache coming very fast, I felt my chest burn and I could only wince so I just closed my eyes. I could feel my eyes droop, I just let the sleep come.



I could hear my phone ring but I didn't bother opening my eyes. I didn't want to go back to reality. I heard clicking, I turned and Angelo sat on a chair typing on his laptop. He was wearing a vest, funny I expected to see tattoos but he had none. He looked like those guys from teenage crush magazines, I rolled my eyes realising that I was complementing the guy.

Angelo: I can see you from the camera. Why are you rolling your eyes?

I paused, it was then I realised that he was on a meeting and had iPods on. I didn't respond

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I just turned and looked at the other side.

Angelo:I could get you the food but I am kind of busy.

I grabbed my phone and looked past the messages and mixed calls.

Me:I didn't think I'd sleep that much. It's 1 in the morning.

Angelo: African time, Italian it's still early.

I got up only to freeze,I was wearing pyjamas.

Angelo:Had to buy them unfortunately and dress you.

Me: You undressed me?

Angelo:With my eyes closed,I am joking. I had someone do it for me well I thought you were dead but apparently it was exhaustion and stress.

Me:Mhm. How did you find Themba?

He pointed on the laptop, looked around for shoes only to see the sandals he was wearing. I walked to him.

Me:I need the shoes.

He just kicked them off,I wore them and walked out of the room.

LIHLE MANZIMA

Me:Coming!

I hurriedly walked to the door and opened it. Elijah stood there with my parents,I didn't move as I looked at them.

Ma:Hello Lihle.

I couldn't move.

Vuyo:Who is it?

I moved from the door letting them in,their eyes looked around as I stood there astonished. I didn't say anything as I looked at them.

Vuyo:Who-ohh hi.

Mom:Son in-law how lovely to finally meet you.

He let her hug her as he looked at me confused.

Dad: Been trying to contact your parents but it has been a little hard, considering Lihle refused to give us any further information.

Me:Why are you here?

Mom:To talk to you and your in-laws.

Me: About what?

Dad:Where are they?

Vuyo:My mother is out of town in the moment.

Mom:It wouldn't be a problem if we waited for her to return?

Vuyo: You are going to have to ask my father that. I'll go and find him.

Mom:What a lovely home your in-laws have, they must be rich.

Me:We are alone,tell me why you are here?

Dad:To do things right by you Lihle.

Me:Says the people who want money and nothing else from their children.

Mom:We know what we did before and it's inexcusable but we want to make things right Thembelihle.

Vuyo and his father walked in,my parents introduced themselves and he looked stunned.

Mom:We wouldn't mind waiting for your wife to return.

Mandla:Of course you are welcomed here.

I walked to the kitchen feeling overwhelmed.

Vuyo: What are they doing here?

Me:To scam me again.

One thing about my parents they showed up when they needed money and at first I felt for that to a point I was drowning in debts in just few years of being a doctor. The same people that left a gas stove on and cooking with two kids in the house. Our house burnt down and I arrive to find it in ashes.

Vuyo:I won't let that happen again.

Me: I don't know but I want them gone.

Vuyo: You have to explain to my father why you don't want them here. Tell him what really happened.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

I took the turn and immediately the house came in view. I parked outside and stepped out of the car. I knocked.

Voice:Come in!

I opened it and stepped inside. I followed as I remembered until I reached the kitchen.

Nolitha:Who-you.

Me:If I was here to fight I wouldn't have knocked.

Nolitha:What more do you want Dolly huh?

Me: There's no changing what happened Nolitha, nothing at all. The same time I hate to be responsible for you and your children losing your home.

Nolitha: What are you talking about?

Me:The department of education didn't only deduct maintenance from the pension.

She looked at me confused.

Me:They mentioned money for damages, counseling and recovery sessions I never attended. The department total exceeds that pension now they are planning to come for every asset of your husband.

She gasped.

Nolitha: Why?

Me:I didn't know any better,I did what I did under peer pressure of dating older men,impressing my friends and it backfired big time. I left because I knew if I stayed your husband would be suspended for things I did. Look we don't have to like each other at all but fact stands Thimna is much entitled to his things like your children.

Nolitha: What do I do?

Me:I am afraid that you will have to sign the house to Thimna in order to avoid being evicted.

She sighed.

Me: I'll make sure that the money is split between all of you. The only way we can avoid the house being sold is signing to her then when she turns eighteen she can give it back.

I put the envelope on the table.

Nolitha:What is that?

Me:The ten thousand you threw at me few weeks back.

Nolitha: Shouldn't you be gloating and spitting on my face?

Me:Does it change that you will be homeless?Does it change the fact that women blame each other except the man. You persecuted me as if I knew any better,as an elder you were just like your husband who was so damn ready to sleep with an underage girl.

I walked out.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 41

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I continued eating in peace, I heard footsteps and he walked in.

Angelo: I thought you were going to return my sandals.

I looked at him.

Me: Well you forgot sleepers.

Angelo: They are next to the bed.

Me: I must have not seen them then.

He chuckled.

Angelo: You are something you know that?

Me: I'll take that as a complement.

He put my phone on the table.

Angelo: Has been ringing ever since yesterday.

I looked at the missed calls and just swiped.

Angelo: Aren't you going to check on your family?

Me: It's not like they are going to die without me.

He literally stared at me.

Me:What?!

Angelo:Why did you become a pastor?

Me:To preach, isn't that obvious?

Angelo: You do understand that you don't have to push your walls up everytime wants to know something about you?

I looked back at my food.

Angelo: Your walls are so damn high to a point your body, personality has adjusted to showing only the coldest and passive emotions. Heck I don't even know if I am doing anything wrong at all.

I continued eating.

Angelo:My question is simple,I won't ask any as long as you answer honestly.

I looked at him.

Angelo: First and second you met me you brought guards,this time you came alone knowing exactly what I am capable. Why is that? Just tell the truth.

Me:I know that you won't hurt me.

I wanted to pinch myself,I can't believe that my mouth was faster than my own head.

Angelo:Based on your answer why do you think that?

Me:I don't know actually but if you wanted to hurt me, you could have done it from the first day we met.

Angelo:Was mesmerised.

I stared at him.

Angelo: Shakespeare was taken for granted when he told us about Romeo and Juliet,love at first sight. I used to think that a person couldn't fall in love at first sight. But as of right now, I believe it does. How do I explain my way of thinking from the first time I saw you. I literally ordered flowers and wanted to do more,still do. I went my way to talk to you,yeah ignored but somehow I can't give up. I have dated before but not once did I feel like this. Yeah I protected them by hiring guards,yet here I am doing things on my own to keep you safe. It was true. Love is the oddest, most nonsensical thing in the world, as some people like to say. Love is irrational in itself and appears at the most unexpected times.

I was shocked,the same time I wanted to hug him.

Angelo:Stop looking at me like I am crazy, you are making me uncomfortable.

I laughed,he looked at me in shock.

Me:I do laugh.

Angelo: Definitely want to see you smile often, it's contagious.

Me: You are contagious and it's annoying.

Angelo: I am wounded mi amor.

Me: Look I am going through hell as we speak.

Angelo: I am willing to help you, walls this high can't just fall because I confessed my feelings to you. I have to show you how I feel.

My phone rang, I looked at the screen and sighed. I picked it up.

Me: Hey baby.

Vuyo: Mom are you alright?

Me: Vuyolwethu I am fine

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just needed some rest.

Vuyo: Mr and Mrs Manzima are here, been since yesterday.

Me: Wait they are in my house?

Vuyo: They are.

Me: Tell Elijah to keep guards everywhere and watch any movement. Why would allow con artists in my house?

Vuyo: Dad-

Me: Your father would do just about anything to irritate me.
Why the hell would he let people sleep in my house without me knowing?

Vuyo: Been trying to call you since yesterday.

Me: Keep an eye on them.

I dropped the call.

Me: I have to return to Eastern Sata immediately.

Angelo: Why not fly there?

Me: Yeah.

Angelo: In my jet.

Me: How rich are you?

Angelo: Can't be leading mafia and not own a jet, I am a criminal you do know that?

I rolled my eyes.

Me: I heard you. Let's move then.

I got up and he was standing still without moving.

Me: Are you going to move?

Angelo: Move me.

I looked at him and sighed. He was literally grinning,I stepped closer to him and he literally moved forward.

Me: You are lucky I didn't have my gun-

He took my hand.

Angelo:At least there's no ring, hasn't been there for a while.

Me:Out of my way whitey.

He laughed and moved.

ZWELI

My phone rang again. I looked at Khanyo's number,she was really a good person and sweet, definitely thought I could maybe continue with her.

Voice: You are thinking about her, aren't you?

I looked at the new Ndlovukazi.

Me:She was so good to me.

Ndlovukazi: You are nothing like your mother.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Ndlovukazi: When your father chose this path,he chose to make people rich, get rid of their enemies and anything standing in their way.

I looked at her confused.

Ndlovukazi: Became a very powerful sangoma who was helping these people. Getting rid of people meant making them look crazy and homeless. Until he let the darkness take over and he went extreme.

I looked at her in shock.

Me: That's not what you are suppose to say.

Ndlovukazi: You are expecting me to lie to you? Your father was so reckless that a little girl saw what he did, that's on him. He's the one who went and provoked her with your mother on his side.

Me:I don't get it.

Ndlovukazi:The only thing that protected from your father was church,as long as she connected to a holy place she won't be touched by him. Your father again continues using her son,guess she found out and responded.

Footsteps echoed and my father walked in,Ndlovukazi's face changed to cold.

Ndlovukazi: You can go back and see if she believes what her mother told her then take it from there.

Hlomla:Or play the victim.

Ndlovukazi: Exactly.

I looked at her,I didn't know what to think or believe. She was a Ndlovukazi right?

SMANGALISO

My mother walked in and I cringed.

Dad:I have been calling you since last night.

Mom:I had better things to do. I see you are out of jail Smangaliso.

Me:Yes.

She looked at me and moved her eye to my father.

Mom: What is it?

Dad:Where is your car?

Mom: What am I ? Your daughter?

Lihle walked in.

Lihle:Ma,good to see you that you are back.

Mom: I'm good,where are your parents?

Lihle:In the kitchen.

She got up and walked to the kitchen.

I looked at my father,he sighed and rubbed his forehead.

Me: You do know that you spent fifteen years on a wheelchair and she is not used to you asking about her whereabouts?

Dad:Like I want to do things right.

Me:Why did you do the things that you did if you loved her then?

Dad:I was stupid and reckless.

Me: You used to beat my biological mother until she couldn't move Dad, you were sober too when you cheated on the woman that stood by your side. All these times your only excuse is stupidity and recklessness?

Dad:Not you too.

Me: Your children experienced every pain you inflicted on her,I had to wash my mother while you left her die. I was ten years old when she died because of you,do you ever see anything wrong with yourself?

Dad: She's dead,stop bringing her up to guilt trip you.

Me: I am turning out to be just like you after all.

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NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I tried him again,I really wanted to know what exactly happened between him and my mother. A knock echoed,I walked to the door. Ray stood carrying a bunch of flowers,I grabbed the gun on the small table.

Me:I really don't want to have to shoot you.

He looked at the gun in shock.

Ray: You'd shoot me?

Me:How about you step closer and find out?

He looked at me.

Ray:I just want to talk to you.

I looked at him.

Me: We're divorced,we don't share a dog nor a cat. What are we going to talk about?

I heard voices,I pushed the door opened to find his family looking right at me.

Me: What do you want from me?

Mrs Ngondo:Makoti-

Me: Leave or I will start shooting.

They all turned around and left. I was going out of my mind already, didn't even know why I put the gun next to the door. Something was off about me, I felt like I was going crazy. I called my mother even though I remembered what she had said.

Mom: Khanyo.

Me: Why didn't you tell me that you knew?

Mom: Knew what?

Me: What Smangaliso have been doing to me?

Mom: Is it my responsibility to tell you what I know? Is it my responsibility to make you talk?

Me: He promised to kill you Ma.

Mom: Yet I stood there asking you the truth and you hid it. Zed died, that should have been a trigger in the first place. You couldn't trust your own mother, my job is to protect you if I am suppose to die then I would.

Me: I couldn't tell you.

Mom: Smangaliso is going to be around, can't have him arrested nor can I just kill him.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Mom: My father triggered issues that were long reserved in him, he manipulated the pain he was suffering from and turned him to a monster.

Me: You are not justifying what he did, are you?

Mom: Pretending that my father didn't make him a monster isn't right. I let my father mould him into a monster, now I am reaping what I sow.

Me: Why do you always take blame for everything huh? When Dad forced Themba to repent you blamed yourself, he is missing and you blame yourself. Smanga, you blame yourself, my infertility and Dolly, still you point fingers at yourself. Doesn't it get too much huh?

She didn't respond.

Mom: You are not yourself.

Me: I feel like I am zoning in and out of reality lately. Sometimes I feel like I am in someone's body.

Mom: You have to go back to therapy and tell the truth this time.

Me: I went to church everyday of my life, did nothing but praise him yet he turned a blind eye to me. I am so miserable and he didn't care. Ten years Ma, this God wasn't there at all.

Mom: Yet here you are alive wanting to get better. My last sermon was about faith, something that you lack. The moment something goes wrong you blame him, clearly you don't believe and trust in him as you say.

Me: I don't know but I have to go.

Mom: Lawulana hasn't shown himself to you, it's the after effects. Talk to a psychologist.

The line went dead, I sat on the floor. I felt drunk and high at the same time

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I felt so light that my head wasn't even heavy. I was frantically and slow, like everything was in a slow motion. I blinked again, something sat across the room looking at me. It was me just burnt or decaying.

HLALIE SAGE

I pushed the door open.

Bongani: Fancy seeing you here.

Me: I have been busy searching for answers.

Bongani: Found any?

Me: Found something though. The dear Pastor's connection with Angelo Gouveia.

Bongani: You are obsessed with this Pastor.

Me: I know that she killed my husband and is making someone take the blame.

Bongani: How sure are you?

Me: He was on a call with me when she murdered him in cold blood.

He looked at me in shock.

Bongani: Hlalie.

Me: I listened to him take his last breath and she went on and took a place that could have been his.

Bongani: The money?

Me: Those were our savings Bongani, no drug money or whatever. She took that money and still pretends nothing went wrong. I mean he only told the council about the money, one of them told her.

Bongani: Well this is proof enough that she's willing to go to an extent to get someone out of the way.

Me: Yet she hasn't noticed me watching her.

Bongani:I have a bad feeling about this,yes you are a criminal profiler but this Pastor Bokamoso doesn't sound like someone you want to anger Hlalie.

Me: Criminals like her think they got everything covered,I just have to figure out what exactly is her deal with Angelo Gouveia.

I put the pictures on the board.

Me:As my partner -

Bongani:Wait,this guy.

Me: He's Elijah Santo, main security leader.

Bongani:Wait,wait.

He went through the papers.

Bongani:He was the right hand man of Simoné Pablo Junior,look here,he went missing just as Simoné was arrested for Pastor Bokamoso's husband attempted murder. Why would he be working for her?

Me:What if Simone wasn't lying when he said that Bokamoso hired him?

Bongani:I think you should talk to Detective Rorisang Pina immediately.

Me:Oh I will.

MANDLA

I found her sitting and typing on her laptop.

Me:Hi.

Bokamoso: I am preparing for tomorrow,my first day as Archbishop Mothibakgomo.

Me: Have you seen your office?

Bokamoso:My suppose assistant actually sent me pictures and forwarded everything that I have to do when I come back.

Me:It is going to be busy.

Bokamoso:I am asking Vuyolwethu how he thinks he's going to manage being a pastor that doesn't stay here. He has to come home every week.

Me:I managed. Talking about that,the lawyer told me that you have the power of authority over the construction company.

Bokamoso: I'll sign it back you,so you can do something with your except annoying me.

Me:Is this marriage going to work?

Bokamoso:Look I'd prefer that we divorce but now doing that as a woman means being demoted.

My phone rang.

Bokamoso: Take it.

Me:Hello.

Voice:I couldn't believe that you can walk and talk again.

Me:Pam?

Voice:Been ages.

I looked at Bokamoso,she was looking at her laptop. I walked out.

Me: Didn't think that you still had my number.

Voice:Why would delete your number?We share a baby in case you haven't realised,I had to tell her you know.

Me:She must be 20 right?

Voice:Yes.

Me:Where are you now??

Voice:In Varlia so far.

Me: I'll come by this weekend.

Voice:Are you going to tell your wife?

Me: I'll tell her.

Voice: It was good hearing from you.

Me:Thank you.

The call ended,I huffed as I walked back in the bedroom.

Me:We have to talk.

She looked at me.

Me:That was the mother of the first child.

Bokamoso:How old is this child?

Me:20.

Her face went blank in seconds.

Bokamoso:There are three not 2, isn't it?

Me:Yes.

Bokamoso:Go back to work so you can support your kids,I already gave the people in your house the papers, they should be gone in few weeks.

Me: Bokamoso -

Bokamoso:This marriage is over,it was over 17 years ago and I want a divorce.

Me: You'd be damned if you think we are divorcing.

Bokamoso:I like that answer,it proves that you really don't know me at all. Well you are about to find out,sit tight.

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ARCHBISHOP PELE[THE DUDE FROM THE FIRST INSERT]

The council sat comfortable waiting for Bokamoso and she wasn't anywhere.

Bishop Lota:This woman gets a seat and never turns up to acknowledge that position.

Me:A woman that lost both her grandchildren,her son is missing and other son is facing a tribulation.

Archbishop Makinana: Proves why women are emotional not ready to take positions of me. Sage really did us a blow when he associated drug lords,he was going to take that damn chair.

The door opened and Bokamoso walked in wearing jeans and a top,the council looked surprised as she sat down.

Bokamoso:I do apologize for arriving late.

Archbishop Dave: What are you wearing?

Bokamoso:Fabric, can't you see it?

Bishop:An archbishop wearing pants,a woman wearing pants in church.

Bokamoso: This is not church, it's an office. If we were by any chance in church, I would have worn a dress.

Me: The meeting of today has to do with schedules for all provincial regions. Here Archbishop Bokamoso this is your list.

She took it and looked at the list.

Bokamoso: Eastern circuit has 22 churches under it. Why there are 33?

Archbishop Dave: Since you are new, you will have to learn -

Bokamoso: By dropping your workload on me, hoping that I back off?

Archbishop Makinana: You-

Bokamoso: If I were you, I'd watch what I say next.

They gasped, I knew too well she meant it.

Me: Gentlemen we don't have to put churches that are outside the circuit, it could cause inconvenience.

Bishop Lota: You are always standing up for this disrespectful woman.

Bokamoso: I will be attending 22 churches, the rest will stay wishing and hoping for a miracle because I won't show up. Secondly, men and thinking that they are superior, stupid if you tell me. What do you think you are going to do huh?

They looked at her.

Bokamoso: Let me share something with you. You don't try me and think I won't kill you, I will. Now behave if you know what is good for you.

Archbishop: You are a very disrespectful -

Bokamoso: How would your wife feel if she were to find out that you like them young?

Silence.

Bokamoso: Say something! I know things you don't want anyone to know, now if you step on my toes again, I will not keep quiet. Now be good boys and fucken mind your business.

She fixed her top and got up.

Bokamoso: It was lovely to see you alive, maybe next time it would be a funeral we meet at.

She walked out. They whispered in shock, I got up and walked out.

Me: Pa-Archbishop Bokamoso.

She turned and looked at me.

Me: Can't you just calm down?

Bokamoso: You don't tell me shit if you know what would happen if you piss me off.

Me: You can't -

Bokamoso: Archbishop Pele keep your distance or you won't be arch for long.

She left me standing there,I needed to find those pictures.

DETECTIVE RORISANG PINA

Me:Come in.

She sat down.

Orlando:Good to see you Mrs Sage.

Hlalie:Are you still investigating Pastor Bokamoso?

Me:We are investigating her son.

She took out a file and handed it to me.

Hlalie:I should have told you from the first day what I heard in that call.

Orlando: What did you hear?

Hlalie: Pastor Bokamoso killing my husband and took the money we invested.

She took out the cheque.

Hlalie:He didn't steal that money.

Me:And you chose to keep quiet.

Hlalie:I just lost my husband

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I was thinking about my children.

I looked at the pictures.

Me: That's Angelo Gouveia. What is she doing with him?

Hlalie:First time they met it was after her clinic was facing Angelo and the cartels under him. She went there and he dropped the attack on the clinic somehow. Second time was right before her son was arrested,same lawyers that took his case were paid by the cartels. Third time was in a hospital in Red Empire.

Me: Somehow we missed this?

Hlalie:Then I went back to her husband's attack 15 years ago,which I believe Pablo Simoné wasn't lying when he said he was hired by her. Look at the things her husband did before the accident.

Me:We are dealing with a dangerous person,this woman won't even flinch. We have the crimes except the evidence.

Hallie:I am sure there's evidence. Elijah was Pablo's right hand man,we could pressure him.

Me: Would he crack?

Hlalie: There must be a way to find evidence that proves some of these crimes.

Me: Pin her car close to the crime scenes, check her alibi. We have to find everything.

VUYOLWETHU

I put the tablet on the pulpit.

Me: Who knew that I would be standing here today?

They chuckled.

Me: Beloved, I am quite astonished that you think I can preach. What if I just sit down and tell you folklore?

They laughed.

Me: That is more of my thing, my wife sleeps just in seconds the moment I start talking. She hasn't told me that I am boring just yet.

Lihle just shook her head.

Me: My family suffered severe blows throughout Christmas, I kept asking myself why are we falling apart yet my mother is still rigid? Isn't she feeling what we feeling? Her answer was simple, if your faith is unshakeable you will understand. I have

Me: Ohh I remember now. It was back then, didn't think preaching was something that I wanted to do at all.

Sinovuyo: But you are definitely good at it.

Me: Was there something else you needed?

Sinovuyo: I was just checking on you, it's been so long.

Me: You don't have to do, my wife checks on me every second. There she is.

Lihle walked to me.

Lihle: Hopefully didn't take that long.

Me: Apparently she was checking on me.

Lihle: Something wrong with you?

Me: Remember that ex from high school? The one who wanted so bad to marry me because of my parents?

Lihle: Sinovuyo? This is her? I thought this was one of the church's old woman. Nice to meet you.

Sinovuyo looked embarrassed.

Sinovuyo: I should get going. We walked to the car.

Lihle: Exes and thinking that they have a chance.

Me: Tell me about it. I looked at her sitting comfortable.

Me: Thembelihle. Lihle: Doesn't sound good already.

Me: You wouldn't purposely lie to me would you?

She looked at me confused.

Lihle:What is that suppose to mean?

Me: You made huge transactions to a clinic that is involved with surrogacy yet you are pregnant.

Lihle:Just in case something goes wrong.

Me:And you don't think I should know because?

Lihle: Everything all happened unexpectedly.

Me: You decided to that on your own Thembelihle,I remember saying that the thing with children, we'll talk about it when we are ready. You are five steps ahead and I don't hear a word from you. Lihle: Don't you want children?

Me:Which day did you hear me say that I want children?

Lihle:Are we seriously fighting?

Me:Over the fact that the you signed for my sperms to be sent to a surrogacy clinic hoping that I wouldn't find out. Why would you do that?

Lihle: I am not arguing with you at all.

Me:One way or the other you will tell me the truth.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 44

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Thimna:Do we have to go through this?

Me:I don't, you do.

They looked at the results after the judge had it handed to them,the jury didn't respond.

Judge:We have seen proof that this child is Mr Mhleka's. The house is already in her name,every other asset will be sold to cover the money owed to Mrs Mthombeni. Case adjourned.

We all got up and walked out,Nolitha and her kids didn't really look that happy. It was understandable.

Nolitha:Dolly!

Me:Go wait in the car.

She took the car keys and I turned to Nolitha.

Nolitha:I had to ask for DNA just in case.

Me:Oh I understand very clearly.

Nolitha: What is going to happen now?

Me:Out of everything that would be sold, you and your kids get a million.

Nolitha: We stay in the house until she turns 18.

Me: Wait a minute, don't tell me you actually believed that I would be so generous to offer you to stay in my house?

She looked at me in shock.

Nolitha: In your house?

Me: Should have and could have read the papers but you are so damn stupid you didn't. The judge spoke about a house in my name in front of you but darling you thought Mrs Mthombeni is Thimna.

She looked like she was going to pass out.

Me: Having the ruling obvious, you will find your belongings waiting for you outside my house.

Nolitha: You lied to me!

Me: I didn't, you chose to believe that I was capable of being kind to the woman that chose to embarrass and humiliated a teenage me.

Nolitha: You cannot put my children out of their home.

Me: But I just did.

Nolitha: You are one vile child..

Me: You should be proud that I outsmarted your stupid ass when I got the chance. Now my dear, I would use that money very carefully if I want a home.

Nolitha: You will -

Me:Reach karma,I spent 17 years with that bitch,I am sure I can spend a lifetime with her. Now you might want to hurry,looks like it is going to rain. You wouldn't want to sleep on wet beds now would you?

She turned in anger.

Me:By the way I will send some pocket for the moving truck if you cannot afford it. Stupid woman.

.....

Daniel: You tricked her into signing that house to you?

Me:I told her that was the easy way,after all government was planning to cease everything including the furniture. So in order to that I had to get the house.

Daniel:She didn't understand.

Me:She chose to believe her own truth Daniel.

Daniel:Ever since we came back from your home, you have been different..

Me:So you think I should have let it go?Look I would have then I trended. I did my part.

Daniel:I am not saying that,I am saying you could have at least gave them sometime.

Me:The house was on a sale a week ago,its new owners are moving in three days.

Daniel:Dolly!Are you going to give them the money?

Me: They got the insurance money, what am I?Their employer? They will get jobs like normal people.

Daniel::This is not like you.

Me:How would you know that?I am the same who helped you cover murder, don't act like you are holier than thou. Chill there won't be grey hairs if you just do that.

ANGELO GOUVEIA

My phone rang.

Me:Yeah.

Gustus:Can you believe that the police has pictures of you?

Me:: Pictures of me?

Gustus:Of you and Pastor Bokamoso.

Me:Why?

Gustus:They are investigating the pastor.

Me:Well you know what to do.

Gustus: It's a detective that came and said that she heard the pastor kill her husband.

I looked shocked as Bokamoso literally walked in the restaurant.

Me: Interesting, I'll talk you later.

She looked at me and grinned,she walked over and the guards let her in. She sat down.

Me:This is the first time you are happy to see me.

Bokamoso: Just proves that you are not the only one tracking movements.

Me: You are tracking me?

Bokamoso:I just knew that you would be around, you just can't stay away from me.

Me: You give yourself too much credit.

Bokamoso: Actually you are giving me credit every given chance.

Me:The devil never looked so pretty.

She grinned as she sat comfortably on the chair.

Me: You are being investigated.

Bokamoso: Detective Sage? She's been following me around ever since her husband died, probably taking photos of my beautiful self.

I laughed.

Me: You are in a good mood today.

Bokamoso: Let's just say there's a reason to be happy.

She was watching me, this time felt uncomfortable

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it's like she was trying to read something by just looking. It felt like she was staring into my soul.

Waiter: Good afternoon Mam, anything you want to order?

Bokamoso: The usual.

The waiter walked away.

Me: You come here more often.

Her lips twitched.

Bokamoso: My father used to bring us here.

She looked angry as she stared at the table,I grabbed her hand, she flinched so fast and almost pulled her hand. It's like she was battling with herself as she let me hold it. Her own walls were suffocating her and she was battling with them. They were too high to just fall,her eyes were turning glassy and she literally squeezed my fingers. I put another on top of hers,she blinked and looked at my hands holding hers before looking up at me.

Me: You don't have to force yourself to bring those walls,let them fall brick by brick. I think it's obvious that I am not going anywhere, I'll do as you want.

Bokamoso: Why are you being nice to me?I am a monster.

Me:I am much worse than you,the only difference is that you would do everything to keep your family alive and I would do just about anything to kill someone who thinks can be better at my job. I don't know much about love but I am in love with you.

She looked at me and sighed.

Me: Sometimes you just have to let someone help you.

Bokamoso: It's not easy, been doing things by myself for ages not even my husband helped. I am not used on relying on anyone even my own kids or siblings,I want to do things on my own.

Me:Tell me what you want to do.

Bokamoso: Feel.

HLALIE SAGE

Elijah came up in view and scanned me.

Me:Very heavy security for a pastor's house.

Elijah: You do know that you are to protect yourself? We're mortals not gods.

Me:I fail to understand one simple thing though.

Elijah:That would be.

Me: Working for the same family that your boss destroyed.

Elijah: You did your homework,if you know what is good for you Detective Sage, you'll leave that at the gate or Pastor Bokamoso will rip you apart.

Me: Am I being threatened?

Elijah: You are being warned Hlalie Sage. She'll be inside waiting.

I walked to the door and knocked lightly before pushing it open. I knew that it was her,she looked breathtaking for a murderous pastor. She was tilting a painting on the wall,I could feel the reserved anger in me as I looked at her.

Me:Excuse me.

Bokamoso:Yes?

She didn't turn.

Me:I am Detective Hlalie Sage.

Bokamoso:How can I help you?

Me: There's been new developments in a case against your son, Smangaliso.

She turned, Rorisang insisted that I plant a listening device somewhere so we could get a better look at the house. She looked innocent not like the monster she was.

Bokamoso:What developments?

Me:Can we sit down?

We walked to the dining area,she sat down.

Me: He's connected with drug lords that might have been trying to frame him.

Bokamoso:Why would Smangaliso associate himself with drug lords?

She harboured no emotion,just cold face and looked straight into my eyes.

Me:All these cartels are centred to the Italian mafia ran by Angelo Gouvia.

Bokamoso:Gouveia.

Me:Yes him,we did notice that you have been seen-

Bokamoso: You mean stalking me and think I didn't notice?
Hoping to find why am I hanging with him?

Me:Same man that might be trying to put your son in prison.

Bokamoso: What exactly do you want Mrs Sage?

Me:I want you behind the cell for all the crimes you have committed.

Bokamoso:And for blowing your husband's slow brain?

I could feel the anger but I knew she wanted me to do something.

Me:If you think that you are going to get away that easily,then you have no idea what I am capable of.

Bokamoso: You are resilient,I give you that but your emotions will be the end of you. You can't come after me with your emotions and rules limiting your movements.

Me:I will kill you with my bare hands if it comes to it. You think that you are untouchable?

Bokamoso:Are you threatening me?

Me: Just a warning.

She grinned.

Bokamoso: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Me: We are-

Bokamoso: Attempted murder of my husband, bleh and bleh, hoping to get Elijah to explain it to you. Your husband made one mistake, don't follow the same. Now you may leave.

Me: Can I go to the bathroom?

Bokamoso: This door leads you there.

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THEMBA

Me:I can feel them.

The doctor stopped then wrote on his file before looking at my mother.

Dr: He's doing well.

Me: What happened?

Dr: You might not remember everything now but eventually you will.

I nodded,Mom looked at me and huffed.

Mom: You can't play both brother and sister,then expect nothing to go wrong Themba.

Me:I know that Ma.

Mom:I don't care how or what but you are going to keep Masakhane in prison. You'll testify against him.

Me:What?!

Mom: You heard me.

Me:Yet you know who tried to kill me?

Mom: Your children's mother over that guy, to avoid unnecessary dragging of this case you'll testify.

Me: Anele had me tortured for days in there Ma.

Mom: Themba you are going to testify against Masakhane or I will send you back to be tortured again and this time I will make sure that no one finds you.

Me: Why are you taking her side?

Mom: I am done choosing your side, I am done thinking you are nothing like your father. You are just like him, cheating on your wife when you could just break up or divorce her. You will put Masakhane in prison, it's an order Themba.

She walked to the door.

Mom: You watched your father cheat on me and found that wrong, yet because you are doing it, nothing is wrong.

She walked out. At first, I didn't think that Anele was involved until I heard the calls, instructing the guy on what to do to with me. The woman I married wanted me dead with her might because of cheating. I heard the door open and someone walked in.

Man: Is the Pastor here?

I turned to look at the man.

Me:She just left. Who are you?

Man: You don't have to know who I am.

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I could hear hissing as I walked around the house,I swear I was going crazy. I grabbed my gun and car keys, I walked out and headed out. I could hear voices talking to me as I drove to Ray's house,I parked outside before grabbing my gun and walked to the door. I knocked,Ray opened holding his baby in his arms.

Ray:Khanyo,hey. Come in.

I walked in.

Me:Where is your wife?

Ray:Went to get some food.

I took out the gun.

Me:Sit down.

Ray:Woah Nolukhanyo what is wrong with you?

Me:I can't stop hearing everything that happened between you and me Ray, you chose someone else over me. Because I can't keep a pregnancy if I were to save my life. I can't do anything at all can I?

Ray:Put the gun down.

Me:No. She says that I should not let you live at all.

Ray:Nolu-

I pulled the trigger,he fell down with the child. The baby screamed her lungs out as she rolled on the floor,I walked over to her.

Me:I could have been your mother.

I pulled the trigger again,silence filled the house as I walked to the kitchen. I opened the pantry taking out the paraffin

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I poured it everywhere and lit the house, opening the gas before walking out. I got in my car and drove to Eastern Sata.

Voice:We finish everyone that hurt us.

Me:They think they can just carry on with their lives,simple as that.

I laughed.

Voice:We are going to make them pay for everything they have done to us.

I played the radio as I headed home.



I stepped inside.

Lihle: Nolukhanyo?I didn't know that you were coming.

Me:It was a last minute thing. Where's Smanga?

Lihle:In his room, probably thinking about the case.

Me: I'll be back.

I walked to his room,I didn't even knock before opening the door. He looked at me surprised.

Smanga: Nolukhanyo.

Me:Why me?

Smanga:Can we talk later?

I took out the gun.

Me:How about now?

He looked at me and stood up.

Smanga:I did what I did -

Me: You are not sorry and you would never be,are you?

Smanga:Calm down.

Me:No.

It felt like everything was on pause as I emptied the gun on him, it sure was satisfying to shoot him. He fell on the floor, I walked over to him as I loaded the gun. He gagged.

Me: You'd be dead.

I offloaded the gun on his head, the door was pushed open and I threw the gun on the floor before looking at the person. My father along with Lihle, Vuyo and Denise stood there in shock.

Me: Call the police.

Silence, Denise fell on the floor as I sat on the chair.

ANELE MASUKU

I put Liyana on the bed. Just as I was about to walk to my bed, a knock echoed from the front door which meant whoever had the gate keys. I walked to the door and opened.

Me: Ma?

Mom: I got the keys from Themba.

I blinked as she walked to the chair.

Me: You found him?

Mom: Imagine my shock, I wasn't really shocked I knew that it was you just didn't think you thought you could act like a saint.

Me:Ma what are you talking about?

Mom: Apparently a bus driver was paid to drive in the wrong lane,so much money he could start a new life somewhere.

Me:I don't know what you are talking about.

Mom: Your husband is very much alive Anele,he can speak and walk around like a normal person too. Now imagine when he points fingers at you.

Me:He had to pay for what he did to me.

She took out papers and handed them to me.

Me:Wha-wait you want me to sign my rights to Themba?

A gun clicked.

Mom:Or you die and traumatize your child for her entire life. Wait you die with the one inside.

Me: You can't -

She pressed the trigger,the bullet landed on the sculpture.

Mom:I won't miss the second time. I know your signature,I already have papers with it,forge that one and you are dead.

I signed the papers before handing them to her.

Me: What's going to happen?

Mom: Your brother is going to spend years in prison for almost murdering your husband.

Me:What?!

Mom: You chose to try and murder my son,now you will have your brother remind you of that.

Me: You can't do that.

Mom: I can. I will be leaving those guards here in case you try to act clever with me. By the way, signing your rights means this house is no longer yours. I'd find an apartment for myself if I were you.

She got up as her phone rang and left. I groaned.

Me:I should have killed him.

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ANGELO GOUVEIA

Father: What happened to the clinic that was distributing for us?

Me: I had to let it go.

Ross: You forgot to mention this because?

Me: I was occupied to tell you.

Mom: You have been in South Africa for a little too long Angelo. Don't you think you should return?

Me: I still have some businesses to attend.

Silence covered the meeting.

Father: The Russians asked for you.

Me: Why? I thought we don't do business with them.

Mom: Now they want to do business with us.

Me: That's off, even I can see that.

Father: Or they can see that Italians are going up the ladder.

Me:Or they are taking this opportunity to infiltrate. You can't honestly think Russians have good intentions with their biggest competitor, something is just off.

My phone vibrated,I looked at the security calling me and turned it upside down.

Me:Russians don't just make any normal deals at all, there's something that they are after and you'll realise too late.

My phone vibrated again,I turned it around and looked at the screen just as a knock echoed. I was shocked to see Bokamoso's name.

Me:Come in.

The security walked in.

Security:Sir there's a hysterical woman outside,we couldn't get anything out of her. We just let her inside the yard,she hasn't left her car.

I looked at my phone vibrated.

Me: I'll be right back.

I picked it up.

Me:Hello beautiful.

Then I heard,the sobs in the background,my heart stopped as I flung the door wide opened and ran down the stairs to the

front door. I was worried about her mental state, there was one time I saw this woman fall apart and I didn't like it one bit. The driver's was opened and security was trying to talk to her.

Me: You can go back to work.

Her head moved from the steering wheel and looked up. All the walls she has put up were down, she looked so vulnerable I couldn't even recognise her. Eyes red, face wet and looked out of place.

Me: I am here.

I gave her my hand, she didn't hesitate to take it and got out of the car. I lead her inside the house.

Me: Do you want to sleep?

She squeezed my hand so tight, we headed to my bedroom.

Me: Just lie down, I'll just go to check on the meeting.

She didn't let go instead she hugged me as hiccups still hit her.

Me: I'm not going anywhere, I promise.

She did not move, it was actually hilarious, the woman wasn't exactly attached but here she was.

Me: Let's lie down.

We laid on the bed, she just pushed herself on my chest holding my hand like as if she'd let go I'd disappear. I quickly called my mother.

Mom: Where are you?

Me: I have to attend an emergency, please cancel the meeting.

Mom: Is everything alright?

Me: I don't know. Thank you.

I put it down and brushed her back, it didn't take that long to feel her lump down and falling asleep. I was worried something that went wrong.



I couldn't exactly sleep like she did, I just laid watching her breathing heavily because of the blocked nose. She was really beautiful. I blew on her face on purpose

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watched her struggle to breath before her eyes snapped open. Up close they were really dark, she stared at me in annoyance.

Me: Hello beautiful.

She squinted her eyes before closing them, I blew on her face again.

Me: There's no sleeping again.

She brushed her face and looked at me.

Bokamoso: I want to sleep.

Me:After you eat first.

She moved only to realise that she was in my arms,she wasn't close because I was on her face. Her cheeks literally looked darker as she stared at me.

Me:Ohh she's blushing.

Bokamoso:Let go.

Me:Say please.

Bokamoso:Please.

I grinned.

Me:Too easy. How about a kiss?

She struggled but I didn't even move.

Me: It's useless. Amore just a kiss is all it takes to move.

She just laid there and watched me.

Bokamoso:I don't have to -

I kissed her,she froze before she could register I was already rolling off the bed.

Me:Come on let's go and eat.

MANDLA

I called her again but she wasn't picking up any calls. She couldn't even accompany us to the hospital nor to the police station.

Vuyo:Did you get her?

Me: She's not picking up.

Lihle:Her cars do have a tracker.

Me:If you know her laptop's password we could track her.

Voice:Dad!

Dolly walked in.

Dolly: What's going on? Where's Mom?

Me:I don't know.

Dolly: What do you mean Khanyo shot and killed Smanga?

Me:We don't know what really happened.

Lihle:We were there.

Dolly:This is my fault,I should have done something to help her.

Me:Help her?

Lihle:Even doctors can't do anything if the patient is unwilling Dolly. Khanyo refused help no matter how many times we offered it to her.

Me:Help for what?

They looked at me.

Lihle:That bastard Smanga has been raping her for years under your nose and she killed him for herself.

Me:What?!

Lihle:We should find a psychologist who will deem her unstable to be sent to prison.

Me: For murdering her brother?

Dolly:Good riddance to bad rubbish.

I stood there stunned as they walked away,I looked at Elijah standing with the security. I walked to him.

Me:Elijah do you know where my wife is?

Elijah:The boss lady left us both here without saying a word. How would I know?

Me:Each given chance you talk to me however you like.

Elijah:You are not my boss nor do you pay my salary,I will talk to you however I like. Pastor B is safe and secure if that's your

worry, something that you can't provide. Now I have to return to work in peace.

I threw a fist knocking him off his feet but the wall helped him before he could fall.

Me:If you think being close to my suddenly makes you invincible, clearly you have no idea what I will do to you.

He looked at me in shock,the hospital security grabbed him out. I rubbed my knuckle before dialling the number.

Me:Hi. I have a favour to ask. I need you to track my wife for me then follow her after.

DETECTIVE RORISANG PINA

Hlalie:At least her kid inherited something.

Me:This different. Look at the reports made but somehow ignored. 38 times she reported her own but the case never got anywhere.

She took the document.

Hlalie: That's odd.

Me: I'll talk to her. Did you manage to put a device inside?

Hlalie:I did but it hasn't gotten anything at all.

I walked in the interrogation room.

Me:Hi.

She looked up and didn't respond.

Me:Can you tell me your name?

Khanyo: You know exactly what is my name Detective, just ask.

Me:There are 38 reports you have made for years but-

Khanyo:He operates with drug cartels like Mexicans,provides them with trucks,list of places to be used. Human trafficking.

Me: Your mother didn't know that?

Khanyo:Which mother notices that they gave birth to demons when they act like angels around her?She has always realised that something was off but he said he'd kill her if I dared.

Me:Why did you kill him?

Khanyo:His days were numbered, unfortunately his sangoma dropped him like a hot potato. For a moment I thought he'd be so untouchable, unbelievably.

Me:Khanyo do you understand that you are confessing to a murder?Third degree?

Khanyo: I -

A knock echoed,I walked to the door and stepped out.

Hlalie:She didn't kill just her brother yesterday Rorisang.

Me:Who?

Hlalie:Ex husband and his 2 months old baby,then set them on fire.

Me: What?!

I walked back in.

Me:Did your ex husband rape you too?

Khanyo:He took from me.

Me:The baby?

Khanyo:A reminder.

Me:Three charges,manslaughter and you -

The door opened and Anele stepped in.

Anele:My client has nothing to say to you at all. She'll talk to me but right now.

She handed me a paper.

Anele: That's permission to have her evaluated by a psychologist.

Me:Ohh she's very sane.

Anele:I didn't ask you Detective, leave that to a qualified doctor which is not you. Uncuff her.

I did and they walked out.

Hlalie:They are scheming to turn her to a crazy woman.

Me:Why isn't the pastor anywhere?This family is starting unravel in front of our eyes,yet we can't put two and two together at all.

Hlalie:She stands to be removed from the church board of archbishops.

Me:Whoever does that,I wouldn't surprise if they wind up dead. Why there's nothing tangible?

Hlalie:Maybe we are looking at her instead of finding her enemies,I am sure they'd have a lot to say.

It wasn't long before I arrived in Trenius, it was still early as I parked in front of the yard. I walked in the yard and headed to the door, I knocked.

Voice: Come in!

I stepped in and a woman sat down.

Me: Hi Lumka.

She looked at me.

Lumka: I have been waiting for police to find me for years, never thought it would be today.

Me: I heard that you have been saying that.

She got up and walked to the cupboard, removed the amplifier and took out an envelope.

Lumka: I kept that proof.

Me: Proof?

Lumka: Of everything Bokamoso said and did with Pablo Simóne, the man who almost murdered her husband. Recordings, videos and pictures. And the cheque.

Me: You stayed like this?

Lumka: That's the reason she kept me alive, she knew killing me could land her in hell.

Rorisang:Holy shit!That is everything to prove that Bokamoso really wanted her husband dead.

Me:Yep,with her behind prison we can find evidence for other things.

Matthew:One problem, there's no sign of the pastor at all.

Rorisang:We cannot issue a warrant for her arrest,she might slip away. We have to keep quiet. I am already accessing everyone's phones, they have been calling but she hasn't been picking up any call.

Me:She can't slip through our fingers,not again.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I stood watching the sun setting and sighed. My phone vibrated again,I looked at it again and squinted my eyes at the name. I grabbed it.

Me:Yes.

Angelo: You are awake amore?

Me: Been for the last thirty minutes.

Angelo: Have you eaten?

I didn't.

Me:Yes.

Angelo:Yet here I am holding your plate,untouched.

I turned and he was standing right there.

Me:I was going to eat.

Angelo:Were you?

Me:No.

Angelo: You are starving yourself for a reason unbeknownst to me.

I looked at him and sighed.

Me: I am not interested in food.

I turned to look at the sunset. He stood right next to me and looked outside.

Angelo:Was tempted to search but I am letting you tell me.

Me:Khanyo shot her brother,ex husband and his daughter.

Angelo:Heh?

Me:I feel responsible. I brought those kids to my home

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my father targeted Simanga and turned him into something else. I mean my father was being labelled a rapist but all these

charges never went that far, yet I let him mould Smanga. Why didn't I believe those rumours huh?

Angelo: He was your father.

Me: Smangaliso was my son and I remember think it was teenage stage, all along no it wasn't. My father would "talk" to him and he'd be fine. Now I am asking him what did to him. Smanga used to be afraid of the dark, used to want to be with me but then stopped when my father wasn't involved.

I bit my lip.

Me: I saw that he was evolving, cold and distant. Mandla said he was becoming a man. A man? A man who didn't see anything wrong in raping his own sister because my father normalised it to him. My father made him like that and I can't begin to ask myself what he has done to make him like that. My poor baby suffered and I couldn't even protect him from my father.

Angelo: Did you see a sign that your father was a monster?

Me: I should have.

Angelo: Should have but it wasn't going to be easy. Kids are easy to mould, don't blame yourself for things that bring themselves to the light at all.

Me: It's a bloody trail. Nolukhanyo is out there, unlike Smanga she snapped and here I am not knowing what to do at all. All the walls are closing on me.

Angelo: Speaking about walls, you might want to look at this.

I took the envelope in confusion, I rolled my eyes as I saw what inside.

Me: Lumka finally slipped.

Angelo: Actually this comes from the homicide division following a filled BP for your arrest.

Me: Homicide division?

Angelo: From the evidence room.

I looked at him in confusion.

Angelo: That is a copy proving that you tried to have your husband murdered.

I didn't say anything.

Angelo: Very good detectives have this.

Me: Hlaie Sage and Rorisang Pina?

Angelo: You are so chilled.

Me: Eventually everything has to fall.

Angelo: Who could notice that you are murderous?

Me: I -

My phone beeped,I looked at the request.

Me:Yikes.

I chuckled.

Angelo: What?!

Me: Someone trying to track my car. I think I should return to Sata and get arrested.

Angelo: That's not happening.

Me:Wait-

Angelo: It's not happening, that's not a discussion.

I blinked as he walked out.

Me:Ah Lumka,I salute you.

LIHLE MANZIMA

My phone vibrated.

Me:Hello.

Dr:I know that I shouldn't be calling you but the surrogate suffered from miscarriage.

My heart stopped,my ears rung as I listened to him explain what had happened. I knew from right there that my marriage was over.

Vuyo:Lihle.

I turned jumping, dropping my phone on the floor. Luckily the cover made it bounce.

Me: You scared me.

Vuyo: What's going on?

I grabbed my phone and turned the call off. He stared looking at me.

Vuyo:And then?

Me: Just about a patient.

Vuyo:Had you jumping off?

My phone vibrated again.

Vuyo:Pick it up.

Me:Hello?

Dr:The reason I am telling you this is because they e-mailed the sperm donor,which in this case is your husband.

I looked at Vuyo who was staring right at me.

Me:I signed those papers.

Dr:On behalf of you and your husband,which means that they will contact him. I'm afraid Dr Manzima you'll have to talk to your husband now or never.

Me:Thank you.

I dropped the call.

Me: Can I borrow your phone?The head said he sent my email to you when I didn't respond.

Vuyo:My phone is dead,I had Thuba take it with him home.

Me: Can't you log in here?

Vuyo: It's Google protected,it will send to my recovery mail or number to get the code. It's not going to disappear, don't worry.

Me:Mhm.

The way he was looking at me said something else,he stared at me and gave me a slow smile.

Vuyo:Let me check on Dolly.

He turned around and walked to the ward. I groaned,I had to get to his phone before anything else.

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VUYO

The moment I was away from her, I took out my phone and looked at my emails. The message still sprawled, highlighted and I still couldn't get it at all. She knew about it and wanted to remove it. I rubbed my temple as I stood outside the ward, the doctors stood talking to my father and sister. I walked to them just as Dolly dropped on the chair.

Me: What is it?

Dad: He's dead.

Dr: Three of the bullet were straight to the heart. Mrs Denise shouldn't be alerted, she's still unstable.

I took a deep breath as I felt everything rotate, death still knocked the breath out of everyone. Smanga wasn't exactly an angel but death affected the living. I dialled my mother's number, I didn't know what I was going to say to her. The call didn't even ring, it went straight to voicemail.

Lihle: Wha-

She looked at me and widened her eyes as she realised that I had my phone.

Me:Smanga is dead.

Lihle:Heh?!

I tried my mother again as I walked to the exit.

Lihle:Where are you going?

Me:To find my mother!

I got in the car,she jumped in with me.

Me:Where are you going?

Lihle:I am coming with you!

I chuckled as I started the car.

Lihle:I am really sorry.

Me:For which one Thembelihle?

Lihle:Sma-

Me:Shut up!

Lihle: Don't you dare talk to me like that!

Me: You lied to me,all this time I kept asking, assuring you that you didn't have to be a mother. You continued lying to me. I asked if you were ready to be a mother and still you lied.

Lihle:Vuyolwethu slow down.

I pushed the accelerator.

Me:Who asked you to slow down on the lies?Were you going to tell me that you removed your womb?

Lihle:I was going to tell you,just slow down.

Me:How about we follow Smanga?

I locked the door and windows.

Lihle:I couldn't tell you because I was scared.

Me:Of me or disappointing the family huh? Six years of marriage, you couldn't tell me that you don't have a womb,we agreed that when we want kids we'll talk. You went and inseminated another woman with my sperm. With a straight Thembelihle you stood there and said that you were pregnant.

Lihle:I am sorry.

Me: You were planning to delete that message.

Lihle: You are going to get both of us killed.

Me: You are worried about death?

I continued driving until I reached the beach,I parked the car and stepped out.

Lihle: Vuyolwethu.

Me:Our vows were on this beach. The promise was tell each other the truth, you said them so beautifully while keeping secrets from me. How you were fucking Uncle Mario before we

met. I told you nothing but the truth and you couldn't do the same!

Lihle:I know that I can't change -

Me: You knew that you were doing a wrong thing Thembelihle and didn't care.

Lihle:I care,Vuyo-

She was about to touch me,I moved.

Me:Here I was thinking you'd feel guilty and tell me the truth. Do I even know you?

She wiped her eyes,I turned and walked to the water.

Lihle: Vuyolwethu please just hear me out.

Me:No Lihle,no.

Lihle:I just need to tell you the truth.

Me: Because I figured everything out now?6 years of marriage Thembelihle!Not once did I lie to you because your happiness matters to me more than anything. Did you even consider that?Did you?!

Lihle: I was so scared that you wouldn't understand what I was going through.

Me: Going through lies to tell?Get out of my way

Advertisement

here drive yourself back to the house. I don't want to see you anywhere near me.

She took the car keys with tears flowing down her face, I wanted to hold so bad but I stood there as she turned around and headed to the car.

Me: Ma where are you?

UNKNOWN

The car slowed down, I opened the window and the guy handed me the envelope.

Me: Is everything inside?

He nodded.

Me: Let me check first to be sure.

I handed it to Mac.

Me: Check if the information is right and authentic.

He looked through the papers.

Mac: It is boss.

Me: Come closer for your payment.

He stepped closer, I took out my gun and shot him. He fell down, I opened the door and walked to him.

Me: Your mistake was thinking that I would pay you.

I shot him again and walked in the car.

Me: Did he do a great job?

Mac: More than the other investigators. There's a woman.

I looked at him in confusion.

Me: What woman?

Mac: I guess he didn't mention that part.

Me: What would Gouveia be doing with a woman?

Mac: There are a lot of pictures that there's a lot going on.

I took the papers and looked at the pictures.

Me: She looks familiar.

Mac: I'll have someone scan her.

Me: At least we have an address which we can find Gouveia. Find out what is this woman and see what she can do for me.

Mac: Yes Sir.

I looked at the window and sighed.

Me: Yeah Gouveia.

MANDLA

Nkhono: O kae Bokamoso (Where is Bokamoso?)

Me: Ha ke tsebe moo a ileng teng, esale ke mo batla ho tloha maobane. (I don't know where she went, have been looking for her since yesterday.)

She widened her eyes before clearing her throat.

Nkhono: Two days? Not one single response?

Me: She didn't take it well Ma, our daughter shot her ex husband, a baby then her brother. She has been holding this family up.

Nkhono: Jwalo kaha ke boletse, mosadi wa hao o a o qhekella mora. Ha le ntumele jwaloka kamehla. (As I have said, your wife is cheating on you son. You don't believe me as always.)

Me: My son, your grandson is dead and you want to take this as a chance to ridicule his mother?

Nkhono: Bokamoso isn't that boy's mother.

Me: You should be fixing your relationship with your daughters and stop being toxic in my house. If you are that bored Mother, we'll send you to an old age home.

Nkazimulo: Don't you two have little respect for the dead huh?

Me: Tell your mother to stay out of my marriage.

Elijah walked in, he hung the car keys on the wall.

Me: Wait Isn't that the key for the car Bokamoso was driving?

Elijah: It is, she asked me to return it because someone was tracking it.

Me: Where is she?

Elijah: You think you are going to hit it out of me? I get paid by her not you, if she doesn't want to be found then she won't be.

He walked just as the detectives walked in.

Rorisang: Mr Mothi-

Me: Can't we have privacy huh?

Rorisang: We are looking for the Pastor, we need to talk to her.

Me: As you can see she hasn't returned since yesterday morning, Elijah just returned her car.

Rorisang: Can we talk to him?

Me: Arrest him if you have to.

I dialled Bokamoso's number, it went straight to voicemail.

Me: Our son is dead, our daughter is lying in prison and your damn solution is to disappear. What is wrong with you?!

✓ ILLECEBROUS 49

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I watched the guards covering every exit in case I thought I should run, my car was gone already. I stood there feeling overwhelmed, my foes were having a feast on my behalf and I sat here doing nothing. I am sure they were all quite surprised that I wasn't even trying to do damage control. I sat down, the front door opened and Angelo walked in.

Me: You can't keep me here.

Angelo: Until I am sure that you are not going to prison, you are not stepping out of this house.

Me: I can't be imprisoned because of prison Gouveia.

Angelo: Leave us.

They all walked out.

Me: I have to check on my children.

Angelo: You think the detectives aren't tracking them?

Me: Angelo that doesn't matter, if I should be arrested then so be it.

Angelo: You do know that prison is the last place you want to go to? Won't Pablo take that as a chance to kill you?

Me: Maybe this is my last fight.

Angelo: Not if I can help it.

Me: It changes nothing.

He stared at me.

Angelo: When I said that I am here, I meant it.

My heart swelled.

Me: The devil really wants me in hell.

He chuckled as he sat next to me.

Angelo: I am trying here, just need you to slow down.

Me: Fine.

He literally turned my face towards him.

Angelo: Now that's new, you agreed.

Me: Don't make me change my mind.

He kissed my cheek, my jaw, my ear.

Angelo: I want you. Tell me what you feel.

He continued kissing from my cheek to ear then my nose,I was definitely running out of breath. Something about this man had me all wobbly inside,I wanted to touch him.

Angelo:What do you feel?

The kisses were getting intense.

Me:I can't explain it.

I couldn't even hear my own words properly. His fingers rubbed my neck,I leaned towards him.

Me:Where you're touching me...

I couldn't explain it.

Angelo:Mhm amore.

I had to search that amore word.

Me: It's like starting a fire. The flames are there, but I need it to catch.

He chuckled as he brushed his lips on mine,my breath left my lungs as he kissed me. He definitely tasted and smelt like whiskey,the kiss alone wasn't helping me at all. He stopped and grinned.

Angelo:Let's see if I can stoke it.

If I was a yellow bone,I would have been red as blood. He smirked,a cough brought us back to reality. A woman stood there looking at us trying hard not to smile.

Angelo:Lori.

Lori:Big,big brother.

I wanted to hide so I put my face on his back.

Lori: He's going to stoke that fire. Isn't he romantic?

Angelo:Why are you here?

Lori: Parents thought something is wrong,I am sure when they hear that you are busy stoking fires they'll learn to mind their business.

He wrapped his arm around my waist.

Lori:Lori Gouveia. Pastor B.

Me:Hi.

Lori:I can see that I interrupted my brother planning to devour you.

Angelo: Security get her out of my house.

Lori:Fine,fine. I am leaving so I don't get burnt.

I laughed as she walked out.

Angelo: She's a demon.

He got up and locked the door. Maybe it was because I was sitting on the couch but the boner was visible as me and him. I blinked as I realised that I didn't want him to stop, I didn't even realise that he had turned around.

Angelo: Don't watch something that you are not getting anytime soon.

Did I not gasp?

Angelo: Sex before marriage is wrong Pastor.

He took my hand and we walked to the bedroom.

Angelo: I am not about to do anything that you are not comfortable with.

I think I was in a long dream. Was he even real?

ANELE MASUKU

I looked at the psychiatrist.

Dr: She'll have to stay here until I am sure. Something is off about her behaviour, she flinches as soon as I mention the child part.

Me: Until when?

Dr: Court date.

Me:Fine, I'll do that.

Dr:Oh Mr Mothibakgomo please sign here.

Me:Mrs-

Voice:Thank you.

I jumped and turned,there he was looking better than I had imagined.

Me:Themba.

He didn't respond,just signed the papers and looked at me.

Themba:Anele,hi. I'll just go and see Nolukhanyo.

He walked past

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I regained my breath and walked out. What if he chooses to take my kids?I walked to the car blindly and sat down for sometime. As I was about to start the car, something cold sat on the back of my neck.

Voice: Don't make noise,just drive. If you do something.

He handed me a phone,showing Liyana playing outside with her cousins. I drove with the gun on the back of my head.

Voice:Turn left , drive until you reach a warehouse.

I took the turn and drove.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

The house was full,I was mire shocked to see a very much alive Themba. I was more worried about my mother,she was good at holding emotions but somehow she wasn't this time. Her phone went straight to voicemail. My aunts and uncles were in the house,no word could come out. No one knew what to say.

Nana:Where is Moso?

Me:Mom turned her phone off.

Nana:Oh my child.

I thought I didn't care that Smanga was dead until he died, something was just off about everything. I wanted to know why?I mean no one can hurt someone without any reason, somehow I felt like my mother knew that's why she was nowhere to be found. Gasps echoed around as a woman walked in,I knew her,I mean we all knew her as the sister that was never mentioned. Dad and Mom never wanted to talk about her at all,yet here she was in our house. Smanga's twin,Naledi. I didn't remember her that much but she went to varsity and never returned. Mom tried to talk to her but Dad didn't want her to. Yet even though Sesethu died,she didn't show up. She looked exactly like Smanga,she greeted everyone

and sat down. This was going to be explosive alright,I grabbed my phone and called my mother.

Me:Ma Moso, you really have to come home and see the drama brewing in this house. Naledi is here after all these years.

Silence.

Me: Honestly, you are starting to worry me. It's unlike you to just disappear without saying anything, I don't know if you are alright after all you are my mother. I don't know what is going on. Please respond, just a text I won't tell anyone. I love you okay?

I sighed.

Themba:Is Anele here?

Me:She hasn't written nor has Vuyolwethu.

Themba:Must be the traffic.

Me:What happened?

Themba: It's nothing you should worry about little sister,I am fine.

Me:What do we do?Our oldest siblings aren't touching base and Mom is nowhere.

Themba:She must with the guy who helped me.

Me:What guy?

Themba:Some white guy,they seemed to know each other.

Me:Ohh.

Themba:No, don't do that. I didn't mean like with him,with him,I mean he must be a good friend of hers. I mean he did go his way to help me.

Me:Help you from?

Themba: Don't use your journalist traits on me,I am not going to tell you anything because I preferred it that way.

Me:Was it Masakhane?

Themba: Shouldn't you be asking about Nolukhanyo?

Me:I didn't mean to -

He walked away,I sighed. I walked back to everyone and sat down,they were all back to silence. No one said anything like they were thinking of something. This was going to be the longest funeral in history.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 50

UNKNOWN

I sat on the chair waiting for them. He walked in followed by the woman, she looked around confused.

Me: Hopefully your journey here wasn't as bumpy.

She looked at me.

Anele: Who are you and what do you want?

Me: You will have to calm down if you desire walking out of this alive.

She gulped.

Me: Sit down.

She sat down.

Me: I don't think I should tell who I am until I know few things first. I want to know this woman.

I handed her the picture and she took it. She looked at it confused.

Anele: This is my mother in-law.

Me: This guy.

I handed her another picture.

Anele:I have no idea who is this.

Me: Your mother in-law does.

Anele:Then why don't you ask her?

Me:I realised that she's no ordinary pastor at all. I mean how does she make so much money yet nothing links her anywhere?

Anele:Like I said she's my mother in-law,I wouldn't know everything about her.

Me: You are going to find out how she knows Angelo Gouveia.

Anele:Did you say Gouveia?

Me:Rings a bell?

Anele: Italian Mafia to be exact,SAPS has been trying to get a face to the name but he's a hard man to track.

Me:Or maybe he has pastors to protect him. Your dead brother in-law knew him.

Anele: Obviously you know a lot,why don't you ask her?I mean you dragged me all the way here to ask questions like that?

Me: Actually you are going to report to SAPS that the world's most wanted criminal is in the country.

Anele:Why don't you do it yourself?

Me:I would but then you are the one close, when he finds out he won't kill you because of the pastor.

She blinked.

Me:On the other side I still continue working on a deal without being suspected of anything.

Anele: You are -

Me: Now I am sure Mac did show you how easy it is to get to people, imagine you talk and your daughter suddenly disappears.

Anele:Fine, I'll do it.

Me:Good. Mac take her back.

Anele:Been trying to understand your accent, now I know who you are.

Me:I am flattered.

Anele:Eres Valkov.

Me:Nice to meet you too. You can leave.

She got up and walked out,I looked at Mac.

Me:Did they get in the booth safe?

Mac:Safe and planted the tracker.

Me: Tell them not to hurt anyone, that pastor is the key to Angelo Gouveia. Holding her grieving family in hostage is just a cherry on top. We have to know what he's willing to do for her before I make my official moves.

Mac: Yes boss.

Me: Make sure that they have backup in case something goes wrong.

LIHLE MANZIMA

I could hear everyone talking in the dining room as I sat in the cold water. Vuyo was back but didn't even dare talk to me or come anywhere near. I was miserable. I heard the door open, got up from the tub almost falling and grabbed the towel. I walked out of the bathroom, to find him changing clothes.

Me: You are back.

He just continued getting dressed, grabbed his slippers.

Me: Vu-

Vuyo: I'll take Khanyo's room in the meantime Lihle, you don't have to deal with my anger or frustrations.

Me: Look I am really -

Vuyo: I am not interested in an explanation Lihle, do what you want however you like it. No need to explain what you did in expense of me, you chose what suited do it now too.

Me:I was wrong to do what I did Vuyo,I was blinded by desperation that I did things I am not proud of.

Vuyo: What hurts is that I realised the truth but you continued lying because to you it was impossible for me to figure out the truth. Look I am fine with whatever you decided, it's a good thing you chose yourself.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Vuyo: I'm choosing my peace and quiet. I won't go back and forth with you then I say something that I will regret. Yeah this hurt me but I am not about to do the same.

Me: What are you saying?

Vuyo:After the funeral,we should take time away from each other.

Me:Wait you want a divorce? Just like that?

Vuyo:If that's what you want then it's yours.

I died as I looked at him.

Me:No,no

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Vuyolwethu. No! What do you want me to do? Tell the family what I did? Tell me.

Vuyo: What happens when they hate you more than me? Do I want you to be miserable huh? No but if divorce is something that can fix this then so be it.

Everything started spinning as I stood there looking at him.

Me: I am sorry, I am truly sorry but we're not divorcing nor are we separating Vuyolwethu. I did what I did and I am going to fix it.

He just walked to the door. I jumped when I heard a gun go off, he jumped so fast pulling me to the floor. Another went off then silence, I guess my ears were ringing that I didn't hear any screams until a few moments later.

Me: It's in the house.

He got off me, I followed as we walked out. As if on cue two guys were on the passage carrying guns.

Guy: We shoot someone downstairs if you run, get down.

Vuyolwethu took my hand and we walked down the stairs.

Everyone was sat down, kids crying, I was scared. Some guy who sat on a chair finally looked at us.

Man: Call me Mac.

He sounded strange, like a foreigner.

Mac: So here's the deal, one of you is going to call the Pastor while the pretty journalist contacts her company to put her online and tell the world about this hostage situation. Now who is a volunteer?

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Dr: Full name.

Me: Nolukhanyo Ngo-Mothibakgomo.

Dr: What do you do?

Me: Physiotherapist.

Dr: You must be clever.

Me: I just studied Nothing much.

Dr: Have friends?

Me: Yes.

Dr: Can you tell me about them?

Me: She's like me.

She wrote down.

Dr: Second one?

Me:Me.

She continued writing down.

Dr: How did you two meet?

Me:I don't know.

Dr:What happened when you decided to kill your ex husband?

Me:It was long overdue,he put me through hell and he didn't give a damn.

Dr:What did your friend say about that?

Me:She said that we should be avenged.

Dr:The baby?

Me:I wasn't going to let her live.

I blinked in confusion.

Me:She fell,I could have walked away from the baby,but she sounded so loud.

Dr:So somehow you were aware of your own actions?

Me:I guess she gave me the nudge,I knew I needed but it went beyond.

Dr: Talking about your friend, what time do you think she showed herself?

Me:The moment Smanga stopped coming to my bed.

Something clicked,I don't know what was wrong with me but I didn't have any connection with everything around.

Me:Why do I keep seeing things like I was watching?I killed them but the anger isn't anything like me,ever since I have been here,she-

Voice:I am listening.

I jumped and looked around.

Voice: You wanted to kill them,stop pretending that you didn't Nolukhanyo.

Dr:Is she here?

Me:No.

Voice: Should I show her that I am here?

Her voice now didn't sound normal,I blinked and I was hovering over the bleeding doctor with a pen on my hand.

Me:Oh God!

The nurses pulled me away from her,she looked lifeless. I could remember what I did but my brain seemed slow somehow.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 50

UNKNOWN

I sat on the chair waiting for them. He walked in followed by the woman, she looked around confused.

Me: Hopefully your journey here wasn't as bumpy.

She looked at me.

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The nurses pulled me away from her,she looked lifeless. I could remember what I did but my brain seemed slow somehow.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 51

LAWULANA

Me: Seems like everything is going according to plan.

She looked at me.

Her: Yet they think she has multiple personalities. They are not seeing how dangerous she is.

Me: Possess her enough for them to see then.

Her: I did say let's not let her get arrested Lawulana, now we have no control over this situation.

Me: Then make her kill herself.

Her: That's a line I don't think you are willing to cross.

Me: We've crossed so many lines.

Her: Which is not exactly what we agreed on, angels will realise that if they haven't already.

I sighed.

Me: Wha-

I turned.

Her: What?!

Me:Shhh.

She looked at me and moved away from me.

Me: What are you doing?

Her: I have been offered a place in heaven if I do what is right.

Me:What have you done?

Her: You have been doing things not even the devil is allowed to do Lawulana, you crossed the line when you involved a little girl without letting her have a free will. I did what was right for everyone.

Me: You little demon!

I was about to move but something kept me on the same place.

Me:I can't be trapped.

Voice: I created you.

My blood ran cold,I turned to look at the bright light. I could see him there looking down at me.

Me: You don't come collecting down here yourself.

Voice:I gave you a chance to repent and return to hell or heaven but you didn't stop.

I looked at him as angels I could recognise showed up.

Voice: Your time on earth has been erased.

Me:I will repent.

Voice:Take him to purgatory.

Me: I'll return.

Voice:This time kill him.

DENISE

I kept pressing the security code but the gate didn't even dare open.

Me:What the hell? Elijah!

I turned the torch on the waiting room and my soul left me as I looked at the dead body lying on the ground. I dialled Lihle's number.

Lihle:Denise.

Me:Where is everyone?

Lihle:Here inside.

But it was awfully quiet.

Me:The gate isn't opening though.

She was too flat.

Lihle:Like that episode in that series we usually watch.

Me:Can someone open the gate? There's a dead-

Then it clicked.

Me:Lihle, you are being held hostages in the house aren't you?

I ran back to my car and reversed out of the driveway. There was noise and someone else spoke.

Voice:Find your mother in-law.

I dropped the call and drove to the police station. I parked and ran inside the station.

Me: Someone help me,my entire family has been held hostage. Detective Rorisang was about to walk out,she pointed to the TV on the wall. My heart stopped as I realised that they were going live.

Me:Oh God.

Dolly sat in front of everyone.

Dolly:My name is Dolly Mthombeni-Mothibakgomo,daughter of Mandla and Pastor Bokamoso Mothibakgomo. My family has been held hostage unless my mother returns. They said that if you don't find her, they will start shooting the kids one by one until she shows. Please help us.

The video went off and news reporter showed,I couldn't see properly as tears rolled on my face and I could hear a ringing sound.

Rorisang:Do you know why they want your mother in-law?

Me:This is all Smanga's fault,he put his family and our children in danger, he's not here to defend us.

Rorisang: What do you mean?

Me: He's dead to lie his way anyway,he was a distributor.

Rorisang:Distributor?

Me:Drugs,weapons as far as I know.

Rorisang: Somehow you forgot to mention this?

Me: You had him yet you couldn't charge him with anything at all,they could have made sure that I don't see a day after reporting. Simanga is gone now they probably want something he was suppose to deliver.

I rubbed my head.

Me:Ma always did everything for this family yet everything always goes back to her. I wouldn't be surprised that she's stripped off her title after this. Are we ever going to have peace?

Rorisang: We will figure it out. In the meantime do you know where she is?

Me: Day 3 today ever since we last saw her, she turned off her phone. I would do the same too but my children are still too young to lose both parents. I am so tired.

I just wanted to sleep for maybe a week, a month later I was a widow right after losing my daughter. It was a scandal after a scandal in this family, happiness was always short-lived. What didn't help was how I felt.

Me: You are the one involved in Khanyo's case-

Rorisang: You want to know if the accusations she made were true? There's been 38 reports she made but somehow each detective didn't do anything as if they were protecting him.

Me: Themba

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Lihle and Anele weren't lying. He should stay dead!

I just wanted to jump from the nearest mountain. I could feel the chest pains.

Me: What else?

Rorisang: There might be more victims from the human trafficking he was running.

Me:Oh God!Did I even know him?Like know him?

Rorisang:Please stay here while we find a negotiator.

NKAZIMULO

We all sat down on the floor. Silence covered the entire house,there was no call no nothing. Mac walked to Mandla.

Mac:So do you know Angelo Gouveia?

Mandla:No.

Mac:He is fucking your wife.

He handed him the pictures,the pictures looked rather cosy for people that were just friends,if they were friends.

Mandla:I am suppose to believe you because you are holding my children and family hostage with guns?Who doesn't know photoshop?

Mac: Clearly you don't know your own wife. You don't think we are here because of her?We are experimenting to see if Angelo will do something. Let's say he does whatever it takes to make sure all of you are alive,for her. What does that mean?

Silence.

Mac:Three days he has her, you think they don't know each other naked already?

Mandla:And?

He looked at his watch.

Mac:This is a little longer,she hasn't responded,he must be fucking her good.

Mandla launched himself on the guy, they went rolling on the floor. I grabbed the gun and pushed under the couch.

Me:Mandlakhe stop!

I grabbed him off,the guy spat the blood out of his mouth.

Mac:Try it again and the sleeping dies first.

That was definitely weird, they weren't responding to the violence. I mean why wasn't he fighting Mandla? I pulled Mandla back to the floor.

Me: You are going to get everyone killed.

As if on cue Dolly's phone rang,she put it on speaker.

Voice:This is Detective Rorisang Pina,we have the house surrounded.

Mac: It's not like you will make a move,I have this yard surrounded one single dares jump over the fence my men will shoot. Tell those on the back to stop or I won't be responsible.

Silence.

Voice:We realised that now.

Mac:One other movement,I won't hesitate to kill a child with a very bright future. Now the next call,think very clearly about this. The next call,I want to hear the Pastor or I'll kill two if I hear you or anyone else.

Voice:We want to know if the hostages are fine or why.

Mac:Detective Pin or whatever you call yourself do these kids a favour and get their grandmother before you irritate me further.

He dropped the call.

Mac:Hey go live again,I think it's time we show them how serious we are.

Anele screamed as they grabbed a sleeping Liyana,Themba was about to get when a gun slammed against his forehead and he fell on the ground.

Mac:Go live or I will grab another child.

Dolly quickly typed on her laptop.

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DETECTIVE RORISANG PINA

Voice:They are back on!

I rushed to the laptop, everything in me as I looked at the screaming child held by the leg turned upside down.

Denise:Liyana!

Dolly:They say if you pull up any trick again just know who is dying first.

The child kept screaming her lungs out as she hung but the man didn't even let her go.

Dolly:Find my mother, you have until midnight.

The line died again.

Me:Has anyone tracked Pastor Bokamoso's phone?

Hlalie:The location was turned off before it left Sata, it's like she knew what was going on.

Denise: You mean experiencing your daughter shooting your son?Or are you accusing her of something else?

Me:Excuse us.

I pulled Hlalie off.

Me:This doesn't make sense.

Hlalie: She's pulling stunts.

Me:The woman might be emotionless but she'd wouldn't put her own kids through this. The guy sounded Russian.

Hlalie: Russian?That means that they are looking for-

Me:Angelo and somehow they think Bokamoso is the key.

Hlalie:We have to pin the locations I found them in.

Me: I'll head back to the station and check the locations. Just watch everything.

I got back to my car,I quickly took out my phone and called the number as I drove.

Voice:Hello.

Me:Are you next to a TV?

Voice:I slept early. What's up?

Me: Clearly your brother is way too smitten with the Pastor,he doesn't hear any alarms going off.

Voice: What do you mean?

Me:Call him to check the news,do whatever it takes to get him before midnight or an innocent child is about to die. I'll drive to his house in the meantime,after I get to the station.

Voice: What is going on?

Me: Pastor Bokamoso's has been held hostage Lori, unless she returns which might be a trick. I mean what the fuck is going on?

Voice: Why didn't you call him?

Me: Why isn't he watching the damn news? You are awful in-laws, can't breath without you getting on my way of putting away criminals.

Voice: I'll call him now.

I sighed and dropped the call. This was going to be a long night.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat still looking at the news in confusion.

Me: Me? As in me?

I stepped out of the room to find Angelo and Lori talking, they looked like they were in a heated argument.

Me: What is going on?

They jumped and turned to me.

Lori: Tell her.

Me: Did I just see news that my family has been held hostage?

I pinched myself again in confusion and I was definitely alive.

Angelo: They want you in return.

Me: You are not going to try to stop me, are you? They had my granddaughter dangling and screaming, surely you wouldn't dare keep me here.

They looked at each other.

Me: Please don't tell me this is happening because of you!

Angelo: Russians to be exact.

Me: While I am busy having peace with you, your damn enemies are conspiring against me and my family?

Angelo: I didn't think something like this would happen.

I huffed.

Me: Whatever you plan on doing, I am going back to my children and don't stand in my way.

I closed my eyes when I felt a sudden sharp pain on my head.

Angelo: Amore are you alright?

He held my hands, I don't know but fear wasn't something common to me, here it was hitting me everywhere.

Me: I am going back Angelo, I have to do what I do best. Protect my children and family.

Angelo: I know they want something from me.

I grabbed my phone and turned it on. I dialled Dolly's number, first it rang then the news reported being back on. Dolly picked up the phone.

Dolly:Ma.

Me:Hey baby.

Everyone sighed as they realised that it was me, they put the crying on the floor and the guy grabbed the phone.

Guy:Hello Pastor,such lovely family.

Me:I am on my way.

Guy:Put Gouveia on the phone.

Angelo:What do you want?

Guy: We'll negotiate when your pretty girlfriend returns here without you pulling any stunts. She has to lose more than you,I wouldn't blow this. Pastor get going.

The line went dead,I looked at Angelo,he just hugged me before telling his guard to drive me home. I was immediately numb as I sat in the car,it felt like I was in hell all over again. The journey back home sure was too short

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police cars were surrounding my yard as I stepped out of the car. Hlalie walked to me.

Hlalie: After this is over, I am arresting you for attempted murder.

Me: Ohh darling you couldn't find me in three days, what makes you think you can in minutes? Don't flatter yourself.

Cameras flashed as I walked to the gate.

Police: The gate-

I pressed the code to unlock the gate, it opened I stepped and it closed. I walked down to the house. I could see the men all over the yard, I pushed the door opened and stepped in. Everyone sat on the floor. A gun was already pointed my way.

Me: I'm very harmless, no need to put a gun on my face.

I walked to Anele and picked up Liyana.

Me: Don't worry, I promise you are going to be fine.

She leaned on my chest.

Me: You know I really want to return a better person, more human but it's men like you I stopped.

Guy: You are no place to make threats.

Me: I don't do threats at all, I just tell you what I plan on doing. Now I am here, what?

Guy: Don't worry we'll leave as soon as Gouveia hands over a lot of production that supplies Italians. He'll do it for you,after all he's in love with you.

Me:I didn't think that it was obvious.

His phone rang,he spoke in a language I didn't understand. He turned and grinned.

Guy: Your husband didn't want to believe that someone else has taken his place. Gouveia just gave us what we wanted,it was to know you.

I watched them walk out and looked at the hidden cameras, clearly someone forgot to dig a little deep in my closet.

THEMBA

Liyana slept on my arms as everyone sat in silence with police all over the house and yard.

Vuyo:At least this is a good reason to create, Mothibakgomo on Fire reality show cause wow,we are better than Kardashians.

Everyone literally laughed.

Me:I swear to God,well I did see him.

Dolly:I don't who is exactly dysfunctional here,the members or our haters.

Lihle:At this point haters.

Denise:I can't believe we are really joking about this.

You'd swear we were high.

Dad: Bokamoso what have you brought to this family?

Everyone turned to him,Mom looked so untethered.

Me:Dad-

Mom: Your father has a way of blami-

Dad: Blaming you? They used this family to get to your gangster boyfriend.

Mom:At least your ego is big unlike everything else.

We gasped,she didn't just say that right and we got it.

Lihle:Is it safe to say dark?

Mandla:So I am beginning to understand that you have been cheating on me,this is why you have been acting like this. Let's see how the board react to this just like you did to me right.

Mom looked like she was going to blow.

Dad:I didn't think you were this loose.

Mom laughed so bad that my father looked so angry. Mom got up.

Mom: You do bite back,I just thought you were toothless. I want you to go and report to the church board. Actually make me trend,oh baby please do that. See now,well from hereon hell is just opened its gates wide open to pick up a sin.

She laughed.

Mom: I was Bob the Builder, you are going to watch me demolish the building peace by peace. You have three kids throughout our marriage,I kiss a guy you suddenly can't breathe. Actually he puts me first something you only did in the honeymoon phase. Almost everyone here knows a praying woman.I am more illecebrous actually and you are going to find out.

She laughed and walked to her face.

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PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I got up from the chair.

Liyana:Granny,I am coming with. Right?

Everyone turned to look at me.

Mandla:Where are you going?

Me:Come baby, let's go.

I picked her up and grabbed my car keys. The house was tense, you could cut the tension with the scissors. I strapped her on the chair.

Liyana:Granny?

Me:Yes baby?

Liyana:The bad people won't come back right?

Me:Yes, they will never.

Liyana: You are my hero Granny.

I smiled before closing the door and walked to my side.

Mandla: Don't tell me you are taking my grandchild to go and see your boyfriend?

Me: You know, it's quite funny how defensive you are now that is your turn. I'll run you over if you stand in my way.

He raised his hand,I looked at him with my hands clenched.

Me:Try it Mandla.

He moved,I got in my car and drove out. I quickly dialled Elijah's number.

Me: Do you know where Mandla's mother live?Tear the house down,it was built by me with my money. I already have the paperwork to do so.

I turned the call off. I drove in silence,Liyana kept playing on her own on the back. I finally reached Angelo's home,I parked and grabbed Liyana. The guards said nothing, just opened the gate and let me walk in. I stepped in the house,he was sitting on a table with some men and women. I paused and they all turned to look at me. I don't know what is wrong with me,I felt like hugging him,he slowly smiled after blinking.

Angelo:She shows up.

Me: You thought I would disappear that long?

He got up and walked to me. Did he not kiss my forehead?

Angelo:I was having a bad day before you decided to show your beautiful self. Who is this angel?

Liyana:Liyana. Granny, he's white. Look at the hair.

I chuckled.

Angelo: What brings you here?

Me:I was checking up on you plus I need to know how much you lost.

He looked at me and sighed.

Angelo: You don't need to know that amore, I'll worry about it.

Me:I really don't want to have someone hack your electronics,so just tell me how much you have lost in helping me and my family.

Angelo:1.2

Me:1.2 what?

Angelo:1.2 billion.

Me:Jesus of the west!

Angelo:They had me dried.

Me:Who is this Russian?

Angelo: Let's talk in my room.

Gasps echoed,I think we both got carried away and forgot the people behind.

Angelo:Dad take care of everything.

Me:Dad?

He pulled me away before I could register what he said.

Me: Your dad-

Angelo:My parents and brothers are there too.

Me: Yoh.

Angelo:Eres Valkov,is his name.

Me:Mhm. What exactly did you lose?

Angelo: Shipments that I can't get because there was no profit.

Me: Considering that I am responsible for this.

I put Liyana on the floor.

Me: I'll give you the money.

He looked at me confused.

Angelo:No but how?

Me:How what?

Angelo:How do you have 1.2 billion?

Me:Savings. Liyana don't climb that.

Angelo: Bokamoso.

Me:Woah how did you learn to pronounce my name?

Angelo:How did you get that money?

Me:My father was a criminal,all the money he made he hid somewhere and told me about it. That will be more than 1.2 billion.

Angelo:I can't take the money.

Me: Take it as a loan then. I don't even know why I am lending you my money though.

Angelo: Slowly you are admitting the truth that you do love me amore.

Me:Ehh. I have to do some few things in town, I'll see you tomorrow.

Angelo: Aren't you coming back tonight?

Me:No.

Angelo:I haven't seen you in days amore

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it's only fair you sleep here.

Me: Ehh I'll see you tomorrow Angelo. Liyana let's go.

Angelo: I'll come and get you around 7.

Me:Get me where?

Angelo: It's not like your husband can do anything to me, if by half six you are not here I'll come and get you myself.

Me: We'll see.

Just as I turned, he smacked my butt, I turned to look at him. He winked, I rolled my eyes and walked out.

LIHLE MANZIMA

I continued cutting the onion.

Anele: Lihle?

Me: Mhm?

Anele: Are you alright?

Me: I am fine.

Anele: Are you sure?

Me: I said that I am fine!

She frowned.

Me: Sorry just going through something that I don't want to talk about. Can I just go and ta-

Ma walked in with Liyana.

Ma: Go where?

Me: Nothing I'll just continue doing this.

I looked at her.

Ma:Anele leave us.

She walked out of the kitchen.

Ma: What happened?I don't want to ask my son and hear his side.

I looked at her.

Me: Just personal -

Ma:Faking being pregnant isn't that personal when you told us all, you decided to include us so dear it is not that personal anymore.

Me:He told you -

Ma:This is my house,I know what goes without being told Thembelihle. If you want him to listen, don't let him bully you into keeping quiet. What was he expecting huh? You to act immune to his love for kids?

I looked at her.

Ma:I don't condone what you did Thembelihle but this is not worth a divorce,if you cannot talk to him tell me I'll be there.

Me:Why would you help me?

Ma: When I gave my son blessings to marry you, I agreed to be your mother and protect you as my daughter. You make him happy so does he, talk to him if he doesn't let you ask me. I am here to mediate not intervene.

Me: Thank you.

Ma: Do give him a slap if he speaks too much.

I laughed.

Ma: Don't let a man ruin your day, smile and show him flames.

Me: Ah ma.

Ma: But don't do what I plan on doing to Mandla.

Me: Weh Ma!

Ma: Yaas girl!

I laughed as she walked out of the kitchen, I sighed and smiled.

Me: Yaas!

MANDLA

"Ruri le nkgapile pelo (My heart was touched)

Lefatsheng, (le letle) le na (While in this beautiful world)

Ke utloawa bohloko (I am in pain)

Ke seka meokgo (I am in tears)

Ha ke ntse, ke le gopola (As I remember)

Dumelang, ke ya tsamaya (Greetings all, I am going)

Ke ya lefatsheng, le la (To another world)

Jeso wa Mpitsa (Jesus is calling me)

O ntukisetsa sebaka sa ho dula (He is preparing a place for me to rest)

Jeso wa Mpitsa (Jesus is calling me)

O ntukisetsa, sebaka sa ho dula (He has prepared a place for me to rest)"

I sat on the couch as the choir sang, Bokamoso sat in silence on the grass mat looking down. I kept looking at her, hoping to find a reason she'd cheat on me. I got up and walked out. Nkazimulo was sitting outside.

Nkazimulo:This funeral thing isn't exactly my thing.

Me:Do you think she'd cheat on me?

Nkazimulo: Bokamoso?No, she's just bluffing.

Me:That guy-

Nkazimulo:Showed you normal pictures that didn't have any tangible thing. Come on this is -

A car followed by two more parked not far from us.

Me:More people?

Nkazimulo: I don't -

A white guy stepped out of the car and walked to us.

Angelo:Good evening.

He looked at his watch.

Me: It's you.

Angelo: Whatever you heard about me is true.

The guards stood around.

Angelo:So where is your wife?I am looking for her.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 54

ANELE MASUKU

I sat on the edge of the bed in silence, I have been trying my best to avoid Themba so we don't have to talk. As if on cue he walked in the room, I sighed.

Themba: Trying to avoid me isn't going to do anything Anele.

I sat down.

Me: I am not sorry.

Themba: I didn't ask you if you were sorry or anything Anele. As soon as you give birth, I want you out of my house. The kids will stay with me.

Me: I can't -

Themba: You signed your rights in case you forgot. You will just send money as the parent, you will get visitation rights.

Me: All because you are not having me arrested for kidnapping and torturing you.

Themba: Very weird, don't you think? I had my girlfriend when we met yet she didn't think of trying to murder you. Yet because it is you.

Me: You were sleeping with my brother, my own brother. I should have killed you both when I had the chance.

Themba: Here we are discussing you being a temporary mother for the same mentality. Next time think before doing something, you could have gotten away with it but you were too stupid.

He opened the door.

Themba: This is my bedroom, I suggest you find yourself another place to sleep in because I am definitely not interested in arguing with you.

Me: In short words you are kicking me out?

Themba: You tried to kill me so I am supposed to trust you?

Me: The other bedrooms are full.

Themba: As a guest figure it out.

Me: So everyone can see that we're fighting?

Themba: Anele I want you out of my bedroom in my home in which you are a guest in. I don't care if you sleep on the floor or whatever but I need you to get out. Now.

Me: I should just get a blanket.

Themba: Did you bring a blanket with you? Get out.

I stepped out and he locked the room before leaving me standing there. I didn't know what to say, I felt like crying as I just stood there looking so lost.

Lihle: What's up with you standing there like you are lost?

Me: Ahh.

Lihle: What?

Me: He kicked me out of his bedroom.

Lihle: I thought I was the only one with problems in my marriage. What happened?

Me: I had him kidnapped.

She laughed.

Lihle: You thought that was going to end well? Are you that stupid? Were you going to torture him to return to you?

Me: I don't know, I just felt hurt and used.

Lihle: And live with the fact that you are raising his kids? What were you planning to do? Act innocent? For a moment I really thought you were smart about Anele.

Me: I was angry.

Lihle: Your father-in-law has 3 kids out of his marriage and all he got was an accident. Don't you take notes?

My blood ran cold,I was about to respond when I heard locomotion down the stairs.

Lihle:I wonder who is fighting who now?

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

“There’s a land that is fairer than day,

And by faith we can see it afar;

For the Father waits over the way

To prepare us a dwelling place there.”

I sat there trying to think why didn't I see my father for who he was,I mean everything that was there but somehow I gave him the benefit of the doubt which was weird. I kept asking myself why. Then my dear husband's house echoed,I think the choir thought he was just emotional so they sang a little louder. Was he stopping?I got up and walked where he stood.

Me:What on earth are you doing blocking the door?

He turned to look at me,he looked like he was going to blow.

Mandla: Just like that you asked your boyfriend to come here!

Me:My boyfriend?

He launched himself, I moved and pulled my gun. I hit him across the face and he stumbled.

Me: You weren't seriously going to hit me?

Now silence covered the entire house, Vuyo was standing right next to me.

Vuyo: I am not going to stand by and watch you hit my mother like you did before. It's your fault Smanga turned out like that

Advertisement

it's you.

Mandla: Stay out of this boy!

Vuyo: Or?

Mandla spat out the blood and looked at the gun on my hand.

Mandla: Do you know her boyfriend is here in my house?

Themba: As far as I know this is our home built by our mother, you contributed nothing except sleeping with anything that wear skirts.

Dolly: Actually I am disgusted that you are trying to justify your actions of wanting to hit our mother in front of us. Nana was right, Ma deserves more than you.

Mandla: Are you happy with the fact my kids have turned against me?

Me: You made this bed,lie on it.

Mandla: Your church is going to hear about this,I am going to destroy everything you ever built.

I blinked as Angelo walked in. Everyone realised that as they all turned to look at the white man,he had to look so handsome in that suit. I wanted to shout to ask what he was doing there.

Angelo:Good evening, I am here to pay my respects.

Mandla:There you are.

He just walked to me.

Angelo: Aren't you going to show me amore?

I squinted my eyes,I froze as he kissed me on the lips.

Angelo:How about now?

Clearly this guy really knew how to piss off people because here he was. If phones were allowed,I was definitely going to trend.

Me:This way.

He walked where the elders sat,put the money on the saucer.

Me:Thank you.

He still stood still.

Angelo:I did say I came here to pick you up.

My mother was literally giggling, pretending to be talking to my cousins.

Me:I didn't take you seriously Angelo. I thought you were kidding. Come on,I didn't think that you were this serious.

Angelo: I'll stay here until you are ready.

I shook my head.

Me:I can't just leave.

Mom:Honey,we got this just leave.

I looked at my mother and I just didn't want the drama to escalates so I grabbed my purse. He literally walked in front of me like a mad body guard. The moment we were out of the house.

Me: You are crazy!

Angelo: It's your fault,I cannot believe that I waltz in and asked your husband for you. The things we do for love,I can't believe this.

Me: I am definitely not becoming a pastor after this, they are going to strip every title I have.

HLALIE SAGE

Me:What do you mean -

Two men walked in.

Rorisang: Her lawyers say that we got information from someone who had a personal vendetta against her and didn't even bother checking if the info was accurate.

Me: The pictures were accurate!

Man: Not according to us Detective. This proves these are fake.

Me: I'll bring Lumka.

Rorisang: She's dead.

Me: What?!

Rorisang: She committed suicide.

Me: Rori you can't -

She grabbed my hand and pulled me out.

Rorisang: Angelo Gouveia literally went to the minister and reported invasion of privacy, blamed the attack on the pastor on this department. Now I was told that if we continue, we stand to be fired.

Me: They cannot do that.

Rorisang: They just did.

Me: This is impossible, Bokamoso probably had Angelo threaten the minister.

Rorisang:What happens when they go for your kids?

Me:Me and my kids deserve justice.

Rorisang: You won't get it if you are dead or something bad happens to them. Isn't it a warning that they can get to you if they wanted?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 55

VUYO

I wanted to laugh but out of respect for my father I didn't. Lihle stepped in the room, I should be mad at her but I couldn't not after everything that has happened.

Me: Come here.

She paused and looked at me.

Me: Come on.

She sat on my lap, I literally pushed her legs apart.

Lihle: What are you doing?

Me: We are going to talk. I am listening.

I slipped my hand under her top while the other was rubbing her thighs.

Lihle: This is not ta-

Me: I am giving you a chance to explain yourself Lihle. Talk.

She took a deep breath.

Lihle: I shouldn't ha-have lied about everything but I became too desperate.

I drew circles right underneath her bellybutton,she kept stuttering and my other hand massaged her breast. I listened.

Me: Continue my love,I want to hear more how you thought lying to me was right.

She wanted to get.

Me:If you get up, don't continue telling me anything.

She sighed and sat still,she was about to close her legs when I pushed her leg with my foot.

Lihle:Vu-

Me: You were saying something about the surrogate.

I pulled her panty and pushed it until it was on her ankles. She continued talking,I rubbed her coochie. She kept gasping,I just tapped on it as she tried her best to explain. It was rather hilarious, listening to her stumble on everything she was trying to say. The straight talker!!I rubbed her clit as I squeezed her breast,I kissed her neck.

Me:No. Keep talking,I want to hear about my uncle too and everything you have been hiding from me.

Lihle:This is not nice.

Me: Thembelihle you are in no position to tell me what is nice, keep talking.

I slid one finger,her walls clenched. I took it out and pulled her up. I kissed her on the lips.

Me:I just remembered that I had to be somewhere.

Lihle:What?!

Me: You have fingers,do finish what I started.

Lihle: You were doing this on purpose?

I chuckled and kissed her again.

Me: You didn't think that I wasn't going to get back at you for what you did?

Lihle:In other way.

I licked my finger.

Me: Interesting but I have to go, I'll see you later.

Lihle:Vuyolwethu you cannot leave me like this.

Me:I am not leaving baby,I am just going to get few things for the funeral.

I walked to the window and paused.

Me:Look Lihle, you might say that I am soft but I made vows too. I chose to take you as you are along with everything,I don't expect you to lie to me when I just don't want to lose you. I can't hold grudges for long,I was just disappointed that you

didn't tell me what was going on with you. You are my wife, my love for kids doesn't surpass you well including my mother.

I took a deep breath.

Me: Only thing she taught me, she said that when I get married I mustn't expect my wife not to make mistakes but I should understand that each mistake doesn't define anyone. For a moment I wanted to stay angry but I couldn't do it, because she's still alive and would be so disappointed in me. Times like this, I must remember that I chose you to love through thick and thin. I made those vows, I ought to remember them.

I chuckled.

Me: I am not going to continue, you will remember this next time you decide to lie to me.

I walked out of the room, chuckling. Themba bumped to me.

Themba: I was about to walk away thinking twice before knocking at this door.

Me: Nothing much, let's go.

ERES VOLKOV

Mac: We have a problem.

Me: What?!

Mac: Somehow the shipments are returning back to Italy.

Me: What the fuck?!

Mac: Someone made an offer to all these mafias, triple everything Italians did.

Me: Gouveia.

Mac: He lost the shipment which means he couldn't get it back at all even if he had the money

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Someone else is involved.

A knock echoed.

Me: Come in.

A woman stepped in, Mac gasped.

Mac: This is the -

Me: Pastor. Quite surprised that you are here on your own so easily.

Bokamoso: It didn't take that long to find you Eres Volkov.

She sat on the chair.

Bokamoso: Realised that men actually take women weak, interesting.

Me: You must be suicidal to show up here without your Italian boyfriend.

Bokamoso: Well he doesn't even have any idea that I am here or the fact that I had your shipments returned to Italy.

I looked at the woman, it was clear that we missed something.

Me: How did you do that?

Bokamoso: Money is the root of all evil yet it solves problems. When people like you look at me, they see a pastor nothing more but they don't look anywhere else. That's the mistake, I am here faster than anyone else, somehow in that empty head of yours you are asking yourself how.

Me: Are you here to insult me?

Bokamoso: You sent him to harass my family, you started this and didn't care. I go to extreme measures to silence problems and you happen to be one of them. Now, you are going to return to Russia after one thing.

I laughed.

Me: You don't -

She took out a gun and shot Mac.

Bokamoso: I did tell him that I will be back.

She pointed it at me.

Bokamoso: Your guards are dead, you didn't have that much because you thought you were untouchable. Now let's see how fast you can get your gun from the drawer.

She shot my shoulder,I groaned. She grabbed my laptop,a guy walked in and took it.

Me:The Russians won't hesitate to kill every Italian.

Bokamoso:Why? According to the Russians they don't know why you are here,so they will assume you pissed the wrong crown.

She got up.

Bokamoso: I could get you home alive though considering this building is set to explode.

Me: What do you want?

Bokamoso:Kill someone at a funeral in two days. Russians are good shooters after all just impulsive.

Me:How do you know that I will do it.

Bokamoso: You couldn't figure me out but I figured you. I will know then you will return home in a coffin.

She put the picture on the table.

Me: Your husband?

Bokamoso: This is your ticket to life, try and fuck it up, you'll realise that in hell. Every movement you make will be watched, can always test that and find out that I am not lying through a bullet wound on your head.

She walked to the door.

Bokamoso: Don't speak about this, paramedics are on their way..

She left me sitting there.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Naledi: Hey.

I turned to look as I waited in reception.

Me: Hi.

Naledi: The last time I saw you.

Me: I was six, I know. At least we know that you cared about Smanga.

Naledi: I couldn't stay.

Me: Why are you staying now?

Naledi: My twin is dead Dolly.

Me: A serial rapist.

Naledi: Because of your mother's father.

Me: Who did you tell?

Naledi: No, I just left.

Me: You just left? Smanga could have been fine but you chose to leave.

Naledi: He wanted to sleep with me.

I widened my eyes.

Naledi: Your grandfather wanted to have sex with a teenager to feed off something that I didn't know or he was going to hurt everyone so I chose to leave, thinking that you would be safe.

It sounded so true that I was beginning to understand few things.

Me: Did he say something about snakes?

Naledi: He showed me one, Lawulana.

My blood ran cold as I remembered something Smanga said, he had named his pets snakes and one of them was Lawulana.

Me: Ma killed them.

Naledi: Lawulana can't just die.

Me: She killed those snakes.

I rubbed my forehead.

Voice: This way Miss Mothibakgomo. Are you both visiting the patient?

Me: Yes.

We followed the nurse and they led us inside the room. Khanyo was sitting on the chair looking at her fingers.

Me: Khanyo.

She didn't move.

Nurse: We are not sure yet, she's not responding to anything we say. We do suggest that you don't touch her because she attacks. Lastly she can get aggressive out of the blue.

We sat down.

Me: I brought Naledi with.

She looked up, her face was covered in scars, dark circles and her hair was cut short. She looked at Naledi.

Khanyo: When is the funeral?

Me: Saturday. Khanyo we know the truth-

Khanyo: Where is Mom?

Me: She's attending to things the funeral need.

Khanyo: I understand that she doesn't want to see me when she begged me all those years to tell her the truth. How is she going

to look at me knowing that I killed my own brother?A
child?Ray.

Naledi:It wasn't your fault.

She looked at Naledi.

Khanyo:I don't know nor do I want your opinion.

She looked down.

Me:She is Naledi.

She looked up again, looking angry.

Khanyo:Dolly? What are you doing here?I could have been a
mother when you chose to poison me. You useless piece of shit.

She jumped,it was now that there were chains holding her to
the chair.

Khanyo:I should have shot you too!

She started banging the table,we moved.

Nurse:This is what I meant. You have to leave.

I looked at her.

Khanyo:So me and you are very much alike, difference I
succeeded in killing our brother. If I ever see outside
here,better run Dolly!

The words sent a cold chill down my spine.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 56

NALEDI MOTHIBAKGOMO

Me: I blame myself for not coming back home, just maybe he would have been alive.

Those words rang as I walked to sit down on my chair with the family. My father walked up on stage. This was a service that was being done after the coffin was already buried considering how he died. Tradition apparently didn't allow such bodies to stay around people. I looked at everyone, it was now I realised that he was waiting for Ma Bokamoso. She got up so gracefully and poised, sometimes I think my father loved her because of the iron mask. The woman's emotions were so controlled.

Dolly: Sometimes I think she's my sister, can't be that old and look effortlessly beautiful and young.

She walked up to the stage, my father was about to grab her when she flinched. It was so visibly that people whispered. Now I wondered if she suffered the same fate as our biological mother. Like a movie on repeat, my father turned to the mic, one single shot he fell on the floor. Screams echoed, I jumped almost stumbling. I ran towards them as people ran out of the building. He was bleeding on the neck, Ma Bokamoso on her knees pressed on the wound without one single emotion.

Me:Dad!

He gagged.



We sat in the waiting room and Mom sat on the corner alone without saying anything. After hours the doctors finally came back.

Dr:I am afraid Mr Mothibakgomo suffered in a way that could make him immobile.

Ma got up.

Ma: Hopefully you are not lying this time.

Dr:The bullet meant to hit the back of his head,he turned fast and it hit his spine instead, paralysing him from the neck down.

Ma:Another disabled husband again. File all of that, I'll send him to a nursery home.

Me:What?!

Ma: Your father spent the last 16 years pretending to be immobile so I wouldn't divorce him,I am not moved even now. This could be another trick to milk me, you will find me at home.

With that said she left. What was going on with this family?

ANGELO GOUVEIA

Me: What do you mean the shipment is back?

Dad: Rumour has it that your girlfriend is involved.

I looked at Bokamoso sitting and typing.

Me:How?

Dad: That's all I heard.

Me:Ohh.

The call ended,I looked at Bokamoso humming.

Me: Apparently my shipment was returned back.

Bokamoso: That's a good thing.

She continued typing,I watched her maybe I did take her lightly.
She looked up and smiled.

Me:It was you.

Bokamoso:I did say that you don't take me serious, you just think that I am just a Pastor.

Me:Tell me then what are you?

Bokamoso: Dangerous isn't my thing a-

She looked at the screen in confusion.

Bokamoso: That's weird.

Me:What?!

Bokamoso: Mandla has been supporting two of his kids with my money and I didn't even notice this.

I looked at the journal.

Me:With these kind of numbers,I am sure it is bound to happen. Do you have auditors?

Bokamoso:To keep track of money that I am not suppose to have?On top of that my brothers don't know that I inherited this much money and companies to begin with.

Me:The will?

Bokamoso:My father put only the front and legit companies in his will

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told his lawyer not to tell anyone about the illegal ones except me. That clinic is one of those companies.

Me:So you are hiding almost everything from your family?

Bokamoso:They see the money coming in but don't know how, they think the guest houses make so much money.

Me: You are something else,do you know that?

Bokamoso:I know but question is can you keep up?

I laughed.

Me: You can't keep up with me suddenly you think I can't keep up with you? There's still a lot to learn about you.

Bokamoso:I know.

I kissed her cheek.

Me:Each day I am finding out but it doesn't make me love you any less.

Bokamoso: Considering the state Mandla is in,the court will sign on his behalf the divorce.

Me:Whether you stayed married or didn't,I was going to be everywhere.

Her phone rang,she looked at the screen before picking it up.

Bokamoso:Uhm?Ohh,okay. Sure.

Me:What?!

Bokamoso:I am losing my position in the church because I am cheating. We shall see.

Me:What are you going to do?

Bokamoso: What I do best.

My phone rang.

Me:Yeah?

Voice:Hello Angelo,long time no see. She is definitely pretty,
nothing like your exes.

I clenched my fists.

Voice: We'll see.

The call ended..

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

I sat on the bed in silence,the doctors were present so was the
detectives involved.

Dr:We have come to realise that she is suffering from multiple
personalities,one moment she's talking like a normal person
then switches.

Detective:Court won't allow such person to be persecuted.

Dr:Her lawyers will appeal.

I zoned out as they talked,I really didn't care I mean all this
acting was kind of draining. It didn't take long before they all
left. A nurse walked in with a phone.

Nurse: You have a call from your mother.

She was scared to hand it over,I took it.

Me:Mom?

Mom:Oscars have nothing on you girl.

Me:I realised that I wasn't about to go down for something worth those people.

Mom: You murdered a child Nolukhanyo.

Me:I let my anger control,I was only suppose to kill Ray and Smanga.

Mom:I have lost one child,I am not about to lose another.

Me:I meant to kill them,why ask me to act crazy?

Mom:Do you want to spend the rest of your life in prison Khanyo?

Me:Mom I must be punished for what I did.

Mom:Then tell the truth that you meant to kill them and you have been acting sick. What do you think will happen heh?I already have enough problems,I am not about to have you create more for me.

Me:Ma if you look at this in my view,I am pretending again to be innocent.

Mom: Your father might even die without seeing you again.

Me:What are you talking about?

Mom: Things aren't looking good, he's in a coma.

Me: What happened?!

Mom: He was shot at Sma's funeral.

Me: Oh God!

Mom: Now set your priorities straight, go to prison or don't at all.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 57

BOKAMOSO MOTHIBAKGOMO

I watched as he laid on the bed calm from the window before walking in the room.

Me:Hi.

He looked at me.

Mandla:Hi.

I sat on the edge.

Me:Well apparently you can only move your hands and head, then never again.

Mandla:The doctor told me.

I chuckled pinching his feet.

Me: You are officially divorced and ready to be transferred to a nursery.

Mandla: What are you talking about?

Me:The court granted me the divorce my dear husband,now with your disability grant they will keep you there.

Mandla: You can't do that to me.

Me: You can't stand up and fight darling.

Mandla: I am not going.

I grabbed the pillow and took out my gun.

Mandla: Bokamoso what are you doing?

Me: Twice I tried to have you killed but somehow you are a die hard, could have let you live but somehow you saw it fit to hurt me again and again. Right here, right now let's end it.

Mandla: Ma wasn't lying.

Me: She's about to find the main house gone that one, I am sure by now she should know.

Mandla: Why Bokamoso?

Me: I have realised that sometimes I just have to do things by myself. Your arms won't move, I have had you fed morphine.

Mandla: You -

I covered his face and shot on the pillow two times, I moved it and looked at the dead man as the heart monitor went off. I put the pillow under his head and pulled the blanket up before walking out heading to the side with the cameras not working. I got in my car parked outside.

Elijah: Mam.

Me: Let's go to that meeting.

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he's on a man's behind. I did what? Divorced the man that pretended to be on a wheelchair for 15 years,same guy with 3 kids outside our marriage. Now the churches are about to decide your fate but I know one thing Lukhanyo Jilingisi. I'll be sitting on your chair as the new chairman after these churches vote.

I got up.

Me:Ohh by the way, you should thank me for having this conversation put on live TV so the world can see what hypocrisy lies beneath those robes.

My phone ran,I picked it up as I walked out.

Voice:Mama!

Me:Dolly what now?

Voice:Dad is gone Mama, he's gone.

Me: Okay.

I dropped the call.

Me:So he dies because I killed him myself? Technology!

NKHONO

I walked until I reached the river, she sat on the stone humming.

Me: He's dead! My son is dead!

She turned to look at me and sighed.

Maga: I told you that your son is playing in a wrong territory.
Very dangerous a woman scorned.

Me: You think she killed him?

Maga: I don't think, I know that she did. Bokamoso will cross any line to get you out of her way.

Me: She's no god.

Maga: Neither are you.

Me: She is touchable like all of you.

Maga: True but don't underestimate her ability to bounce back.

Me: What should I do?

Maga: What her father's enemies don't know is that she inherited everything he owned.

Me: What exactly?

Maga: She's a billionaire.

Me: You are joking right?

Maga: No.

Me:How do I get her to release that money?

Maga: I am telling you because Everything is going to backfire if you try to contact these people.

She got up and walked to her house,she opened the drawer and handed me the newspaper.

Maga:The names are circled there.

Me:What do you suggest I do?

Maga:Tell them who Bokamoso is, they have no idea who killed their wives or husbands. Bokamoso killed a lot of people to make sure that no one else knew that she had inherited that much. So the people she murdered have complained about not knowing who murdered their loved ones,they thought her father's enemies did yet it was her all along.

Me: I'll gladly let them know the truth.

MASIMTHANDE

I sighed as I sat on the chair,I have been brought back to prison a couple of days ago. I gasped when Themba walked in and sat down. Me: You -You are alive!Oh my goodness!

He chuckled.

Me:This means that you can tell the truth.

Themba: That you had me kidnapped? Me:What the fuck?!

Themba: I should even be here, but I have to tell you that I'll be confessing against you for what happened.

He got up.

Me: You cannot accuse me of something like this and just walk away from me.

Themba: You did what you did knowing that I loved you.

Me: Did Anele force you to do this? Did you ever love me as you said? Is putting me in prison worth it? Tell me Themba!

He sighed.

Themba: I am sorry but you have to pay for what you did.

Then he walked out and the detective walked in.

Detective: Talk to your lawyer, pleading guilty, it reduces your sentence Masimthande. Me: I didn't kidnap him!

Detective: Well he says otherwise.

Me: I am not about to confess something that I didn't do ever. What evidence proves that I kidnapped him? I'll hire my own investigator then.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 58

LIHLE MANZIMA

Vuyo: This house just got a lot complicated.

Me: Well Ma is pissed, thinks your father is faking it again. He can't fake death

Vuyo: We are going through so much and it ain't even on track. How do we even start?

Me: I am so tired of this drama if you tell me. There's definitely no rest.

Naledi stepped in.

Naledi: Ma really signed my father in a hospice.

Vuyo: He deserves much worse than that but I didn't call you for that. I guess whoever tried to kill him finally got to him, he's dead.

Clearly Naledi didn't get along well with her siblings. She looked shocked.

Naledi: Huh?

Vuyo: Good riddance to bad rubbish anyway. You should be proud.

Me: Vuyolwethu.

Vuyo:She shows up out of nowhere and thinks her voice should be heard. Why?The person who wouldn't let that happen can't even stand up, literally and figuratively. That man destroyed everything he touched.

Naledi:I left this family because of things like this.

Me: You left this family because you knew that you were going to be just like that Smangaliso, don't switch your story because you want someone guilty. We have had enough of your twin's narcissism,we won't tolerate more from you.

Ma coughed and she was standing at the door.

Vuyo:Mom?

Mom:Now funeral is over,those that were not here before I want them gone from my house. You'll show up at the memorial or rent a guest house.

Naledi:Oh wow! You are persecuting me from running from your father?

Mom:Strange isn't it?He is dead and this is my house.

Naledi: You did not even see what he was doing.

Mom:Are you sure huh?I mean Ndlovukazi and Lawulana?

Naledi: You knew yet you did nothing?

A slap echoed almost rocking Naledi off her feet.

Mom:I must be looking like a fucken angel to you, fighting with demons while human. Nolukhanyo must have thought there was magic too. Now as for you my dear,the reason you are here is over,well dead.

She stood straight.

Mom:Now I'd like for you to not be in my house when I return or you'll see what extent I'll go to if you try me dear.

She turned and walked away.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me:This is the coffin?

Manager:Yes. It's one of the best we have.Do you want another one for him?

Me:His funeral cover won't cover such.

Manager:Yes but a top up-

Me:I am not going to top up anything for the scumbag. I'd rather use my money for good. I have to say this coffin is horrible and you are bullshitting me with the dramatic unnecessary compliments.

She gasped.

Me:Mandlakhe deserves to be here,at least his bastard kids will visit freely. Aren't you going to get him here?Fit him in?

Manager:How long has he been dead?

Me:10 hours.

Manager:And you are already picking a coffin?

Me:Want to do it for me huh?

The manager walked out of the room.

Me: Hopefully he's going to fit in here.

My phone rang.

Me:Mfuphi.

Voice:Mfuphi? Why are you not cleaning your enemies?

Me:Enemies?

Voice: Your mother in-law was here Bokamoso, asking questions about how I know you.

Me: What are you talking about?

Voice:Look I have made sure that your inheritance isn't known by a lot of people but here we are. She mentioned almost everyone that your father pissed during his reign, clearly your mother in-law isn't planning to contact these people.

Me: Where the hell did she get that?

Voice: Your husband?

Me: And I trusted him! Call Elijah, make sure that if she has spoken to them nothing comes back to me.

Voice: Then what if they already know?

I said nothing.

Me: We will have problems, huge problems I will not be able to fix. My father avoided them, I have kids and grandchildren, I can't afford anyone dying anymore.

Voice: Or you could alert them of what is going on Bokamoso.

Me: I'll figure it out.

Voice: Figure it out? We are talking about the deadliest men on that list Bokamoso, men that have been off radar for years. You know that they control this country.

Me: I heard you the first time, okay? I'll figure it out!

I dropped the call

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somehow I had no plan for this. I have worked so damn hard to avoid any run-in with those people, paid thousands to cover up every cent my father made. I basically spent thousands to cover up every business, connection and companies Dad made, to a point I had reconstruct the will by removing them. It wasn't

easy but I knew that he had entrusted me to do. I married Mandlakhe out of love and he betrayed me, thought being honest was part of our foundation. The manager along with her assistants brought him in the room. I looked at the body and rolled my eyes.

Me: Well what are you waiting for? Put him in the coffin.

They put him inside.

Me: At least this one will suit him forever. We'll take this coffin. This must be heaven.

Manager: Huh?

Me: Hell is hot, isn't it? This place must be heaven then, I think I like Satan more I mean he has Mandla in a coffin. One shot, he is dead, God wouldn't allow that.

I walked out of the room, just as Nkazimulo stepped in the morgue.

Nkazimulo: Bokamoso?

Me: I've already chosen his coffin.

Nkazimulo: Without talking to us?

Me: I was suppose to talk to you about my husband?

Nkazimulo: Yes, so we can agree on the arrangements. Aren't you suppose to be on the mattress like a mourning wife?

Me: Obviously I am not mourning but I will be soon for your mother's death.

Nkazimulo: You wanted my brother dead and this shows that he's divorced which means that you have no right to plan his funeral.

Me: This here shows that his funeral has me on top and I ought to handle funeral arrangements.

He sighed.

Nkazimulo: Can this be his coffin?

Me: Can you pay for it? If not babes, don't waste my time.

I walked past him and to my car.

UNKNOWN

The lights turned on. She froze on her steps and looked at me sitting on the edge of the bed.

Me: Hello Lori.

She looked around and her eyes landed on her sleeping kids.

Me: They are fine for now. Lori: What do you want?

Me: All these years, your brother treated me like shit.

Lori: I will book a therapy session for you,I am not interested in whatever you have to share.

She flinched when she heard the gun click.

Me: Your kids might be interested. Lori: I'll ki-

Me:No,no you are in no position to make demands here dear.

Lori: What do you want?

Me: Your brother destroyed everything I had and thinks that I am just going to stand by and watch?We built this empire together,then he leaves to this country. Falls in love with someone else like I didn't exist. Know what he did when he fell in love? Lori:Broke up with you?

Me:Sends me a lousy million, telling me that I was free from the relationship after everything. I built him,invested in everything he has now and he throws me like I never existed.

Lori:Yeah neh Bob the Builder.

Me: You keep forgetting that I know everything about this empire from A to Z,I can destroy it but I won't.

Lori: You want something in return.

Me: You are going to call him to come here or I will kill these kids,tell him to bring a judge for our wedding.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 59

ANGELO GOUVEIA

Me:What do you mean?

Lori:She means that you two are getting married tonight. If you don't she'll kill my kids.

Me:I am coming.

Just as I dropped the call, Bokamoso's came through.

Me:Hey.

Bokamoso:Hey.

I sighed.

Me:I have a huge problem.

Bokamoso:That is?

Me:Can we talk when you come here so I can explain everything?

Bokamoso: Definitely do not like what you have to say. What's going on?

Me:Lori has been held hostage by someone I dated.

Bokamoso:She wants you back?

Me:She wants us married, problem is that Italians might recognise me as their boss but they also recognise her as the boss lady. She knows the ins and outs of everything.

Bokamoso: You are validating her actions Angelo, you are telling me that your people would choose to kill me for her.

Me:I don't know what you want me to say amore,I don't know what will happen if I try to do something.

Bokamoso:Look Angelo,do whatever you want to do but do remember not to contact me again. I understand that Lori's kids are yours too and you have to protect them. Don't expect me to understand that part of you having to marry this woman. I will not share a man,not again or ever. Do what you must.

The call ended.

Me:Mateo!

He walked in.

Mateo:Boss?

Me:How come no one told me that Delilah is in this country?

Mateo: I don't know about that actually.

Me: What do you mean?

Mateo:Mr Gouveia just said that some men have to clear for someone coming from Italy,I thought it was him not Delilah.

Me: Uhuh she really does know which buttons to press.

I grabbed my gun and drove to Lori's house, I was surprised to see the army that was suppose to be in Italy here covering her entire house. They nodded as I walked past. Delilah sat on the chair with Lori across her.

Delilah: Oh darling it is so good to see you.

Me: Where are the kids?

Delilah: You do what I want, you can see them. I see you didn't bring a judge? Don't worry I expected you not to so I brought one myself.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Delilah: Did you forget that me and you were engaged to be married? Did you forget that you left a fiancée back in Milano? Then I realise what the hell? Oh my word, my dear husband to be has someone else on the side. Heck he's moving mountains for her, something he wouldn't have done for me.

Me: This is revenge.

Delilah: Then you send a lousy million for my part. I am worth more than that but now you see your type.

Me: She's not my type, she's the love of my life.

Delilah: Your love of your wife is about to have me as a sister wife! Sign here!

She threw the paper at me.

Delilah: Sign it or I'll kill them.

I signed the paper and handed it to her.

Delilah: Now dear husband, I'll move in soon.

She walked out.

Lori: I am so sorry, I should have had guards here.

Me: They would have been let in anyway. Dad knew that she was coming here and didn't bother telling me.

Lori: I thought you broke up with her.

Me: I did and I thought she was fine.

Lori: Clearly she's not, I mean you know her. The woman is psychotic Angelo, a serial killer but you went and tested her.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Voice: Hi.

I turned to look at the person, Daniel stood there looking at me.

Me: When did you arrive?

Daniel:Not so long ago.

I hugged him.

Me:Thank you for coming.

Daniel: I had to come and support my wife.

There was noise outside, I could hear my grandmother shouting.

Me:I wonder what now!

I walked to the dining.

Nkhono:She murdered my son in cold blood!

Nana:Ehh not this again.

Nkhono: Just like father like daughter!

Mario: What is it that Bokamoso ever did to you huh?All she did was make sure that your son was happy along with your grandchildren yet every day you did whatever to hurt her.

Nkhono:Bokang, your father was a criminal,raping innocent children and killing them. He made billions from this,I am sure you are asking yourself how he afforded so much yet his will said otherwise. Bokamoso inherited all of that and hid it from you.

My mother walked in,it was pretty obvious that Nkhono was scared of her as she paled but recovered.

Nkhono:I went against this woman

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if I die I think it's pretty obvious who will kill me.

Mom just smiled.

Mom:I really don't want to throw you off the stairs again

Nkhono.

Nkhono:Do you hear that?She just admitted throwing me off the stairs.

Mom: You are going to die a horrible death Nkhono and I will be in your funeral wearing white you old hag.

She walked past her,I followed. She walked in her office.

Me:Ma.

She looked at me.

Mom: What?!

Me:Look I have seen the relationship between you, Nkhono and Dad. It was toxic but I don't blame you.

Mom: You want to know if she's telling the truth?

Me:Ma you have so much money but not once you told us where you work ever. I am curious.

Mom: Everything, Bokamoso this, Bokamoso that. It's so damn easy for you guys to point me out, why not ask for proof huh? I have to fight for everything, fight for my children, my grandchildren, happiness but you know the funny thing?

She sat down.

Mom: Nothing is permanent in my life, I guess God never really liked me at all. Helping people counts as nothing, your father put through me hell. I get a chance at happiness, suddenly it all comes crashing down. Every fucken time I am bring questioned.

Me:Ma.

Mom:Why didn't you even return after all these years?

Me:I wanted-

Mom: You should have stayed missing.

Me: You don't mean that.

Mom:I mean a lot of things Dolly. Get out.

I stood there looking at the shattered woman.

Me:Mama you -

Mom:Get out!

I jumped and walked out, she got up and closed the door. Not long I could hear crashing, I tried to open the door but it was locked.

NKHONO

I sat on the chair waiting with the papers on my hands.

P.A: He'll see you now, this way.

I got up and followed the woman. She opened the doors for me, I walked in to find everyone on the list sitting and waiting. Maga sat on one of the chairs dressed nicely.

Me: Maga?

Maga: Please sit down.

I sat down looking at her in shock.

Maga: I have been trying to figure out where Bokang's money went, I have been fishing hoping that you would bring me proof.

I put the papers on the table.

Me: So you just assumed that Bokamoso was the one in control?

Maga: At first we thought she was just a child, I said all those things not sure until few weeks ago. Bokamoso paid 2 billion rands for 6 shipments, the woman is a pastor for goodness's sake. I dig a little deeper and realise something else, she's undeniable rich but we can't find a trace of the companies her father took nor the bank accounts.

Me: The documents are the names of the companies Bokamoso owns and their net-worth. Mandla kept that information after Bokamoso told him that she didn't want to be out of the prenup.

Voice: There's no clinic nor guest house that make that much money.

I looked at the man.

Maga:She did go to varsity,do you know what she studied?

Me: She's a pathologist,I don't know what that means but she hid that so well. Look I brought these,I need your protection that girl is murderous.

Maga:We have to find what is ours,Bokang screwed us big time but his daughter put a nail on it. Those companies created trillions yet they disappeared into thin air.

Me: Trillions?

Maga:Yes and were taken from us. We'll get them back.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 60

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat on the chair, I looked at the cold coffee and raised my hand for the waiter.

Me: Can you please warm it?

He took it, just as Angelo walked in. I looked at my phone, he walked to my table and sat down.

Angelo: You have been avoiding me for days.

As if on cue a woman sat too.

Angelo: Delilah I need you to sit somewhere else.

Delilah: Why? After all I should meet the woman making my husband think he can just toss me like old socks.

Me: Can I just have my breakfast in peace?

Delilah: So you were angry about your husband cheating on you but somehow when you are doing what the other woman was doing, it's cute?

Me: Last minute marriage already has you acting like a wife?

I chuckled.

Me: Difference is that you are a married woman not a wife dear, something that you won't get or ever do.

Angelo:Can we talk like civilized people?

Me:Civilised people?She thinks she has gotten ridden of me simple as that,I am just rebooting.

Delilah: You really do believe that you are floating? Pastor shouldn't you be preaching to the lost lamb of God?

I looked at her.

Me:I would but then I can feel the demon spirit roaming around,same demon Solomon should have killed in the Bible.

She looked angry.

Me:Now can I talk to the married guy alone?

She looked pissed as she got up and walked to another table.

Angelo:Look I am trying to keep up but that is not the woman I want. I hate that I had choose those kids over you.

I sighed.

Angelo: I still want you Bokamoso,I can't see why I cannot have you. Yeah this is a mess but I am not about to stand by and watch you forget me. I am sorry that I signed that marriage certificate but I did what I thought was right to save those kids.

Me: You didn't say that she was psychotic. What happens when she tries to kill you?

Angelo:She knows that her life will be over in the Italian mafia.

Me:I am tired Angelo,a lot is happening and I am one person. I can't keep up all the time.

My phone rang,I looked at the number and picked it up.

Me:Hello.

Voice: Bokamoso,such beautiful name for a beautiful person except you are not as good as people think.

Me:Who is this?

Voice:Bokang didn't fool us like you did. I mean all these years we were looking for our money, companies and products you had them. We looked at your brothers but nothing came out,it was like they disappeared into thin. Then interesting revelation that you worth more than any of your siblings. You are no billionaire, you are triple that.

Me: Your point?

Voice: Your father killed our loved ones to keep those companies on his hold,stole from us before dying. Now I am asking myself why keep everything?

Me:I don't know what you are talking about.

Voice: You have beautiful kids Bokamoso, don't let them die for a simple thing.

Me: My father only protected himself and his reputation, the last person to try my family ended up being dead. I am not like my Father, I don't keep people who step on my toes. Now if you know what is goo-

Voice: Thimna right? Liyana? Thuba? Shall I continue? They are sitting across me laughing, enjoying what could be probably their last meal. Don't be cocky little girl.

My heart stopped.

Voice: You will handover everything Bokamoso or you will end up with no children or grandchildren.

The line ended, I rubbed my forehead and sighed.

Angelo: What is it?

Me: Problems after problems.

ANELE MASUKU

I picked Liyana up.

Thimna: Time to go home guys.

Just as they walked out someone tapped my back.

Me:Yes.

Man:Tell your mother in-law this little one might die first.

He grinned before walking out leaving me shocked. Everyone got in the SUV,I drove home still thinking about what just happened I was petrified. I kept looking around until I reached home.

Me:Is Ma here?

Lihle: Haven't seen her the whole day.

Me: Someone said that I must tell her that Liyana might die first.

Vuyo:What?!

Me:A man,I don't even know the guy.

Lihle:Do you think that the people that shot Dad are still coming?

Me:I really don't know what is going on but everything is just a mess. People are dying everywhere and we're missing something. I don't get why this family is getting attacked all the time.

Vuyo:I will be back.

He walked out.

Lihle: Vuyolwethu is the only child out of six children who knows exactly what his mother is capable of. Hell he's the one who knows her net-worth.

Me: What are you talking about?

Lihle:Ma Bokamoso has to protect people who are pretending not to see that she's a criminal. We could all work together. We have a lawyer, nurse

journalist, doctor, accountant, industrialist etc. In short she has everything she needs to fight but we're acting like angels.

Me:I-

Lihle:We are all monsters inside,look at you Anele. You planned to murder your own husband and she caught you,yet you don't want to admit that she's a criminal.

Me:Lihle-

Lihle:I almost murdered my own parents, they were going to have me arrested well opened a case. Vuyo talked to his mother and somehow the case is gone like it was never reported yet here I am doubting what she's capable of. She doesn't deny anything but we've put her on a level where we have created our version of her. A nice and Christian mother who is always frowning. This family is falling apart because we are doing nothing to fix everything that is happening at all.

Me:Yeah neh.

Lihle:We have to help her.

VUYO

I sat on the chair,typing on my laptop when my mother walked in.

Me:I have been trying call you for sometime Ma.

Mom: There's something that you and your siblings should know.

Me:There are people coming after you because of Grandpa.
She looked at me.

Me: I have my own information Ma and these people aren't just normal.

I put the newspaper articles on the table.

Me: They went as far as blowing buildings to make sure that the government listens to them. They are protected by the government, that's why grandpa couldn't even kill them.

Mom: Your grandfather took companies and money,I grew up rich because my father stole from these people.

Me:What?!

Mom:He signed each one of them in my name, that's why they couldn't find evidence that he stole from them, they knew but they couldn't kill him without knowing where was everything. Of course I am his only and youngest daughter, they looked past me. Funny everyone working with the same things he stole, they get brutally killed. Look at him,Smanga now it's my turn.

Me:Is there a way?

Mom: Return everything but another hilarious thing,is that there's a clause in my inheritance.

Me:That doesn't sound good.

Mom:If I transfer to someone,the court will have to freeze everything,take them which won't be helping. Once the government notices this,Interpol will scoop in and they won't get anything.

Me:There must be a way.

Mom: There's always a way Vuyolwethu,just don't know it yet but there has to be a way.

Me:It doesn't hurt to ask for help Ma.

Mom: Sometimes I think it's better to keep you like this,a sweetheart Vuyolwethu. This has made me vicious and heartless.

Me: Illecebrous?

She chuckled.

Mom: That damn word seriously?

Me: Just saying.

Mom: I know that you might help me but I don't want any child following in my steps because they are forced to. Look at you being a pastor because there's no other option left.

Me: I know how you can move everything Ma.

She looked at me.

Me: You don't think I followed you as a child and learnt nothing?

Mom: I am not liking this at all.

Me: Even though you won't like it, I'll do it anyway. You do understand that I would do anything for you Mama? You are my mother and I would do anything to make sure that you are fine.

Mom: Let me kiss your cheek.

Me: Oh no ways Mom.

Mom: You will come anyway.

I got up and kissed her cheek.

Me:Very uncomfortable.

Someone laughed. Lihle,Anele, Dolly and Themba were standing at the door.

Dolly:We are here for you Ma.

Mom: Touching. Now let's move and don't touch me.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 61 START OF SEASON FINALE

VUYOLWETHU

I finally found a parking lot. I grabbed my gun and coat before stepping out of the car. I got in the elevator and headed inside the building.

Me:Excuse me.

I smiled at the woman,she looked at me and blushed.

Me: I'm looking for a Mr Brian.

Woman:Do you have an appointment?

Me:I wouldn't be here if I didn't.

She frowned.

Woman:Fourth floor,his assistant will show you the way.

Me:Mhm.

I got in the elevator and rolled my eyes. I finally reached the fourth floor.

Assistant:What is your name sir?

Me: Pastor Mothibakgomo.

She looked at her tablet in confusion.

Assistant:I was expecting the archbishop Mothibakgomo.

Me:When I made the appointment,I didn't mention my mother at all. I said that it was my appointment,if my mother sounds like a man then that explains the error.

Assistant:I apologize Pastor Mothibakgomo,I already told Mr Brian that it was-

Me:This way?

Assistant:Yes,this way.

I walked past her to the room,I didn't knock I just opened the door.

Brian: You don't -

He looked at me stunned.

Me:By the look on your face, you were also expecting my mother.

Brian:Let me guess she sent you yo handle her affairs?

I sat on the chair and took out the paper.

Me:Can I borrow a pen?

He handed me one.

Me: There's ten of you, so I am here to scratch your name off the list.

Brian:By what exactly?

I took the gun out and pointed it at him.

Me: Because my mother is a woman you don't think she'd go against you that's why you are comfortable that she wouldn't dare go against you at all.

Brian: What do you want?

I pulled the trigger shooting him on the head.

Me: Officially off the list.

I scratched his name off and removed the silencer. I got up and walked out of the office with the key locking it as I stepped out.

Me:Mr Brian said he shouldn't be disturbed until I return.

Assistant:Okay Pastor Mothibakgomo.

I walked out and dialled my mother's number.

Me:Well you can scratch Brian's name on the list.

I dropped the call and headed to my car.

DELILAH GOUVEIA

Me:Mhm.

They stood still without saying anything.

Me: You can't just have nothing on this woman.

Juan: She's the same woman that got our shipment returned within 24 hours something none of us could do.

Me:How did she return the money?

Voice: Interesting question actually.

I looked at the woman who just stepped in.

Me:And you must be?

Woman:Like how did I get past security and got here? Don't worry they will wake up soon, they are not dead yet.

Me:Good to know. What are you doing in my house?

Woman: They call me Maga,Musa Maga.

Me:Musa?

Maga:I prefer Maga,I don't know how you will learn to pronounce it but eventually you will get around it.

Me:Okay? You didn't answer my question.

Maga:There was eleven of us who dictated the South African government,well illegally for example my husband is the President of the country.

I looked at her shocked.

Maga:We had companies and bank accounts. Bokang Tsakane was the accountant well responsible for finances and stuff. He took care of the companies along with the finances,he was the brains,knew how to move almost anything and anywhere.

She sat on the chair crossing her legs.

Maga:Then he became too clever,well obviously to other men and I saw right through him. My stupid husband,who is going to get himself murdered thought I was seeing things.

Me:Let me guess you were right.

Maga:Bokang disappears,we try to locate and shadow the companies and accounts. Can you imagine our shock to find not one single trace, like they were never there?

Me:Where are you going with this?

Maga:Years pass by

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a friend of mine confides in me about her daughter in-law who is seemingly dangerous and strangely rich. Of course I didn't bother until she mentions her father, Bokang Tsakane whom from our information didn't have a biological daughter. I check on this girl and she is something alright.

Me:Done with the history lesson?

Maga: Archbishop Bokamoso Mothibakgomo, master at manipulation and oh boy if you think you can just get rid of her, I should prepare an outfit for your funeral dear.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Maga: She's just went after One of the ten left, she'll continue until she realises that the President of the country can't be reached and one person on the list is unavailable.

Me: Why are you here?

Maga: You need to stay alive, you are a good match for Bokamoso.

Me: You are not?

Maga: I am just above her dangerous traits, I am a step ahead and she doesn't know that. For example I let Brian's security know that they are not to scan or search anyone today. I knew that the easiest person to be found on the list is Brian, now he's dead. So you might be her match but you have an obsession with Angelo, she doesn't.

Me: That's no problem.

Maga: It means that you show emotions and she doesn't, now I am going to help you stay alive with few favours here and there.

I just looked at the woman.

MUSA MAGA

I typed on the laptop,my husband walked in.

Gavin: Brian is dead like you said and somehow his security was given instructions to not bother the entire day.

Me:Mhm.

Gavin: Instructions from you!Musa you do understand what you have done?

Me: Actually I told you from the second you thought threatening that girl was the wisest idea ever,but men as usual think they know better.

Gavin: You keep undermini-

Me:Ah Mr President listen to me, they are going to die until those protected by the military are left. That is four of us, eventually she'll get to you and I will be left behind.

Gavin:If you weren't my wife, I'd say you are giving them up on purpose.

Me:I am actually,I just had the defence leak the firewall on the minister of health's whereabouts. Now Bokamoso will think, she's good at this thing but I am helping her.

Gavin:Why would you do that huh?

Me: It feels good letting someone think they are above, floating and clever. She is but not enough.

Gavin:This is crazy-

Me:Even God couldn't defeat Satan, Bokamoso can't defeat everyone. She'll know that,very soon.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 62 SEASON FINALE

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me:Who is next on the list?

Vuyo:Rather odd don't you think?

Me: What?!

Vuyo:His guards literally didn't search at all, just let me walk past.

Dolly:I guess they didn't think he was going to die.

Elijah:I actually ran the entire list,only five names pop out. Out of the five, only the minister of health's whereabouts are shown here.

Me:Now that is definitely weird,the other names?

Elijah:All ministers.

Me:The other four?

Elijah:I ran these names everywhere, they don't exist. Maybe if we had other names I could. This is like a hierarchy.

Anele: Like a hierarchy of criminals and this Maga person is at the top,he must be good.

Me:Why are these names of ministers and mayors of the large cities of this country?

Anele:Well, according to the Interpol the red and black market are ran by the same people running this country but it never had any proof.

Me:Well these people's target is my family,i just have to kill them first before anything happens.

My phone rang.

Me:Who is this now?Hi.

Voice: Delilah Gouveia.

Me:Oh God I have so many problems,I don't need you as another.

Voice: Another is a strong word don't you think?

Me: What do you want again?

Voice:I have very interesting pictures of you shooting your dear husband, covered him with a pillow in the hospital.

Me:I am suppose to believe that?

Voice: Don't worry, you will.

My phone vibrated,I looked at the screen and bit my tongue. I walked out of my office.

Me:He was cocky,way too cocky and I killed him.

Voice:Nc nc nc, aren't you just scary?Look love I have another bunch of you doing a lot,now I could get them to the media but then I realise no can do.

Me:I am suppose to ask what do you want right?Then you blackmail me to doing something for you whenever you feel like it.

Voice: That's the point.

Me:At this point I know that I can't get you because Italians would hunt me down like a dog. Best advice,release the photos and everything you have on me. I'm a master manipulator, the world knows Photoshop. Go ahead make me famous.

I dropped the call and rubbed my head as I could feel the headache,I felt uncomfortable and honestly tired. How long before my body gives up?I was fighting to stay alive everyday, I knew if she were to post those photos I'd be investigated and those photos would be checked. It sure felt like everything was coming down on me,maybe this was my time.

AGENT CAMILLA

Me: She's bold I tell you.

They nodded.

Rorisang: You do see why I am giving the case to you?

Me: She's dating your brother in-law, yes. She's not denying nor accepting anything because she knows how phones work.

Rorisang: I cannot partake from this, I want to keep my head while doing my job.

Me: By involving the CIA?

Rorisang: Well clearly you are capable of getting justice and putting her behind bars.

Me: You can count on that.

Rorisang: Then go ahead do what you have to do.

She walked out.

Jade: The best detective in South Africa couldn't even dare try and put the woman in prison?

Me: Look at this. The men who worked for her father disappeared first then he was gone. Somehow here people believed that Bokamoso's mother was involved yet Bokamoso was the last person to see him. Look at the people she asked to kill her husband, they come out of jail they die. Look at these murders that somehow have her in common. Weird part all these people were shot with a missing gun that belonged to her.

Jade: Something is off here.

Me: About the pastor?

Jade:Where did she keep so much money?

Me:We have to find that out.

Jade:I have a feeling that it is in plain sight.

Me: I'll book our flights to South Africa.

The deputy secretary walked in.

Deputy:Clear instructions are simple,if she doesn't give up everything shoot her. 16 trillion rands are still missing and clearly she's not going to pop and tell anyone where is the money at all or give up the people that worked with her father. Leave no trail.

.....

Jade:Are they going to let us in?

Me:They are preparing for a funeral.

The gate finally opened and we drove to the parking.

Me:Richest pastor if you ask me.

We parked and headed inside. The woman sat on a chair waiting for us in black,she definitely looked like a grieving wife problem is that she wasn't really grieving at all.

Me:Pastor

I mean Archbishop Bokamoso.

She got up to greet us.

Bokamoso:Hello. I definitely have no idea who you are.

Me:Agent Camilla Rodriguez and this is my partner Agent Jade Helm.

Bokamoso:Agents?

Jade:CIA agents to be exact.

We showed her our badges,her upper lip twitched as she looked at the badges.

Bokamoso:I must be a dangerous criminal.

Me: The South African government has been under surveillance for sometime because of misusing money that is suppose to better the country. Everything was alright until the people responsible for all of this went for investments from the US,FBI tried to locate all these investments but-

Bokamoso: It's like they never existed.

Jade: Your father was the brains behind such operations and he died with his secrets,so we thought.

Bokamoso: He's alive?Omg.

I chuckled,the woman definitely was good at keeping her emotions in check.

Me: After some accusations against you especially the relationship between you and a certain Italian surfaced,we decided to take the case from the FBI to check you out. Imagine our shock to realise that you are not just rich, you have income that comes out of nowhere.

Bokamoso:I did study, didn't I?

Jade:Yes you did but somehow you are not working as a pathologist. The clinic or the guest houses aren't paying you well, you are not taking anything from your businesses yet you are the richest person in the world.

Bokamoso: I am?I had no idea at all until now.

Me:We just trying to find the money that belongs to the people of this country and US, clearly your father gave you the ropes because no one would notice.

Bokamoso: I didn't,the things we hear about ourselves from other people are shocking.

Me:We are given permission to take extreme measures to get what we are looking for.

Bokamoso:Do what you must,I will do the same.

Jade:Are you threatening -

Bokamoso: Men and seeing things that are not there, cute but chill my nigga.

Me: We have sent our message, decide what to do with that Archbishop. I am sure you know what the CIA can and will do to get what they want.

Bokamoso: Just like you should know what I will do too, then we understand each other just fine. Now I'd like to continue with my husband's funeral in peace or you want to stay here?

Me: We'll leave.

She looked at us as we walked out.

Jade: That's one cold bitch.

Me: Good thing I parked next to one of her cars.

I dropped the keys on the ground on purpose, bent down and stuck the tracker on the rim of the tyre.

ANELE MASUKU

I looked at the documents again and again.

Lihle: What is it?

Me: I am a lawyer right?

Lihle: Yeah? I am doctor right?

Me:Not funny.

Lihle:What is it?

Me:The medical report on Ma's father, doesn't make sense actually.

Lihle:What do you mean?

Me: Look at it and tell me what you see.

She took the paper.

Lihle:Okay let me just shake my head and look again. It doesn't state that he's dead, just transferred.

Me:But look at this paper showing that he's dead.

Lihle:Wait a minute,this is not possible. It's the exact copy of the original just adjusted.

Me: Someone went to great lengths to make it look like he's dead but he's not. He has had 43 warrants of arrest but none of them went through just like Ma.

Lihle:Hold up.

Me: I am saying that Bokang Tsakane isn't dead but alive.

Voice:What?!

We jumped,Dolly stood there with Vuyo.

Me:Yes,the death certificate is fake.

As if on cue Ma walked in.

Ma:What?!

She looked at the paper Lihle was holding.

Ma: He's dead. Dolly:But-

Ma: That's the reason I have been able to hide almost everything,the CIA agents think he faked his death actually anyone who ever investigated him think he's still alive because of those two papers. They keep digging but somehow they can't seem to find anything, Plus there are no bones just ashes.

Vuyo:I thought he was buried not cremated.

Ma: Another thing my siblings and mother don't know. My father was like Smangaliso, just worse and I had to make sure he was not going to wake up and haunt me for killing him.

We all gasped as we looked at her, fine we knew that she was capable but her own father?

Ma: Just find the rest of the people on the list and stop digging in my closet. She grabbed her bag.

Vuyo:Are you taking security with you?

Ma:I am just going to make the hole your father will be sleeping in is ready for him, for eternity.

✓ ILLECEBROUS 63 SEASON FINALE

MUSA MAGA

I looked at the coffin then Bokamoso. She was so well poised as the funeral started,I walked to her.

Me:Good morning Archbishop Bokamoso.

She turned and looked at me.

Bokamoso:Hello.

Me: I'm a friend of your husband.

Bokamoso:Nice to meet you.

Me:He was a humble soul,sure talked a lot about you.

She looked at me and frowned.

Bokamoso:Mhm I have to check on my kids.

I took her hand.

Me:I really do understand what you are going through,I have been there.

Bokamoso:At this moment it's better I just don't think about it. Death is so mean.

Me: I know,if you need anything please don't hesitate to call.

I handed her the card.

Bokamoso:I will do that,thank you.

She walked to where her family was sitting,I smirked as I looked at my phone and activated the listening device, walked to my chair.



Gavin: You are lucky that no cameras were there to catch the First Lady who was "kidnapped" many years ago roaming around alive.

Me:I love your sense of humour. For a grieving woman, seeing her boyfriend is a must huh.

Gavin:What are you talking about?

Me: Talking about?

I closed my laptop.

Gavin:What was that Musa?

Me: Nothing.

He almost grabbed the laptop,I pushed the table hitting his knees and he fell back on the couch.

Me: You are not seriously going to take my laptop from me,are you?

Gavin: You are getting the same people on our side killed Musa.

Me:Damage control dear. Take it like this my dear husband, actually answer what would happen if somehow none of them pop in the system whereas they are in the system?Shady especially you are dealing with the most manipulative woman here.

Gavin: Your point?

Me:Point is eventually she will get you except me.

Gavin:What is that suppose to mean?

Me:It means exactly what I said dear.

I grabbed my laptop and got up.

Me:Be very ready a huge blast is going to be on every news channel.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

The church choir continued singing as I sat on the mattress,had to admit that they were singing so beautifully almost felt like I was repenting. Literally,I could feel my soul cleansing. I yawned,well that was exhaustion. I just sat on the mattress as everyone got Up to say their last goodbyes to Mandla. I got up

and walked to the open grave. I felt overwhelmed as I stood hovering on his grave.

Me:At first,we were so happy and I would have done anything for you Mandlakhe. Anything,then you started showing me who you really are. A dog who thought I wouldn't snap back,now you are going to hell.

I threw the soil. Fear hit me so fast I almost lost my footing, something was wrong.

Me:Tell Satan,I am serving him souls on a silver platter.

I finally walked away, just as I did the ground shook. Something was definitely wrong,I stood still looking around. It shook for two minutes before stopping. My phone rang making me jump.

Me: Elijah!

Elijah:The-the gone

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the-the Mam,go-gone.

Me: Elijah what are you saying?

Elijah:House is gone.

I could hear noise in the background,I ran to my car in heels. A sinking feeling already told me something was wrong as smoke covered the sky so fast. I could hear someone shouting for me

as I drove out of the cemetery. The more closer I got, the more I realised that it was gone. My house was gone. I drove feeling sweaty. I could feel my heart stop almost driving the car to the gate, I could hear screams as I looked at the fire covering the ground that used to have my house in. I tried to breathe as I looked at the fire but I struggled, I leaned on my car but I still couldn't breathe.

Me: This is not happening.

Elijah: I just returned from picking up the other when it blew.

I sat on the pavement trying to breathe, here I was feeling tears fall down my face as I watched my hours go down in flames. Heck I didn't know what I was going to do. I could see the dead bodies on the ground, some injured and all because of me.

Elijah: Your phone is ringing.

I picked it up.

Voice: Why are you not asking about the pretty lawyer who stayed behind with Liyana and her pregnant self? Pregnant daughter-in-laws don't attend father's funeral.

Me: Who is this? What do you want from me?

Voice: Oh dear I am only starting.

The line went dead as I got up.

Me:Anele! Liyana!

Elijah:She was inside!

The firefighters came in as I looked around,I fell on my knees and cried. I was tired,so tired. I wiped my eyes and got back in my car,I drove.

ANGELO GOUVEIA

You know when you have nothing to tell the person you love?I had no right words to comfort her at all,she was hurting and I had nothing to tell her. She sat on the couch scratching her palms. Me:I am really sorry.

Bokamoso:It makes no difference actually. I did this and look at everything. In a funeral, innocent lives have been lost. Funny I don't know who is this person,heck I don't know which enemy.

Me:Calm down.

Bokamoso:Calm down seriously?Do you see what is happening? They are forcing me towards those companies,soon they are going to destroy everything until I get to that money. Liyana was just 4 years old, Anele was just pregnant God damnit.

Me: We'll figure something out.

Bokamoso: There's no figuring it out Angelo!I fight, they'll still continue because they have nothing to lose ,I do. I keep losing more than them though.

Me:How about this time we plan before doing?

Bokamoso: I don't want to do anything at this moment,I just want to stay as far as I can.

Me: They are going to need you Bokamoso.

Bokamoso:No,they-ahhh!

I ducked as she threw her ringing phone across the room.

Bokamoso:I am not defeated,I am not breaking down. No it cannot be possible.

I looked at her stunned as she kept repeating this. I sighed as I walked out of the room. I dialled the number.

Me:Can you trace a number that contacted Bokamoso-

Voice:I was about to call you to tell you that our Italian cell towers have been hacked but we got them back.

Me:Okay? Voice:For one single call,so we couldn't hear a word.

Me:To Bokamoso? Voice:Yes Sir.

Me:Find everything you can about this.

I dropped the call.

Me: What the fuck are we dealing with then?

✓ ILLECEBROUS 64 SEASON FINALE

AGENT CAMILLA

I looked at the news in confusion.

Jade: We are not responsible for that, are we?

Me: Of course not, our target is the owner of the house not other people.

I looked at the news in shock.

Me: Have you checked the footage?

Jade: Yes and I don't get it. Her father is dead but this says otherwise.

Me: What if it's bogus? What if it was created for anyone to get to it, but still don't get anything?

Jade: Huh?

Me: Like it was purposely put to make anyone investigating curious about what really happened. I mean what if it was put there to make us think that he's not dead and we try to find him?

Jade: Clever move, because we all thought he's somewhere.

Me:I have checked almost everywhere,the Pastor is everywhere, literally and figuratively.

A knock echoed.

Me:Come in.

A woman walked in.

Woman: Hlalie Sage, detective.

Me:How can we help you?

Hlalie:I found out that you are investigating Pastor Bokamoso and I still have this that proves her relationship with the Mexicans,well before she murdered Pablo Simone Junior.

Jade: Keep talking.

Hlalie:And my husband. I do believe that the captain is on the Italian payroll.

Me:Tell us about the relationship with Mexicans.

Hlalie:The reason that Mexicans aren't getting revenge is because that Angelo Gouveia controls all of the cartels. Every cartel is under him and she's his girlfriend.

Me:That is definitely new to us, Mexicans under Italians.

Hlalie:Thing is Russians only want to expand themselves,Italians are make sure that all these cartels get profit in every business plus protection.

Jade: So she might as well be controlling them?

Me: My question is why hasn't she killed you?

Hlalie: What do you mean?

Jade: There's a possibility that she might have murdered her own father and her husband, well she did kill him.

Me: She let you live by mistake or on purpose.

Jade: Call that luck.

Hlalie: I will help you get her. She murdered my husband in cold blood and still dared to smile at me.

Me: Calm down.

Hlalie: Is it bad that I didn't feel any ounce of guilt when I saw that she lost her house?

I looked at Jade.

DELILAH

Me: Put everything on the table.

I could hear footsteps, Angelo emerged dressed in pyjama pants only. He paused and looked at the people walking around the house.

Angelo: What is this?

Me: You are looking like a snack.

Angelo:: What are you doing in my house?

Me:Both our families are going to be here in few hours,we are having brunch for them.

Angelo:In my house?

Me:I am your wife.

Angelo: You know that you are not entitled to anything especially this house?I did myself a favour ages ago,I never bought anything in my name so I can simple tell you one thing. You are not hosting shit in my house and this family is about to find out what you did to be here.

Me:We are married.

Angelo:I wouldn't put it past you blowing up a house with innocent people inside.

Me:Huh? You think that I blew that bitch's house? You take me lightly Angelo.

Angelo:Guards if you let her in my house again, consider yourselves fired,get her out of my house.

Me: You will not toss-

Angelo: Don't bore me with your yapping and threats Delilah. I don't want you and really do check the signature on that paper

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well certificate because it's not mine.

I stood still.

Angelo: Actually let's host the families so they can know that you are crazy, plan your death along the way.

Me: What do you want?

He chuckled.

Angelo: You gone from my sight and to never come anywhere close to me or I will-

I grinned.

Me: You know I knew soon you were going to bounce back love, find a way to get back at me. I am not -

Angelo grabbed me by the neck and squeezed, thr guards stood there looking at us without doing anything. I struggled to breath as he continued squeezing, he let me go as footsteps echoed. I whizzed, I looked up and it was Bokamoso in one of his T-shirts. She looked at me confused on the floor.

Me: Of course she's a here that's why you are treating me like this.

Bokamoso: Well you can't force a man to acknowledge and want you at all. Trust me I know.

Me:What do you know? Your family is in hell but you are here with someone's husband.

Bokamoso: You really don't want to live longer.

She walked to the kitchen.

Angelo:Guards throw her out of my house.

Me: Fine, I'll walk on my own no need to drag me.

THEMBA

I sat on the chair, trying to keep up oor understand what was going on exactly. I kept rubbing my forehead but nothing was disappearing at all. Everything that has happened kept replaying like a broken record. I couldn't describe what I was feeling,two kids and their mother long gone in a snap of time.

Vuyo:Themba?

Me:Yeah,yeah.

Vuyo:Are you alright?

Me:I am fine. Are they gone?Like gone,gone?

Vuyo:Their bodies have been found already,I just didn't want you to see them.

Me:She was due in few weeks, now she's gone with the baby
Vuyo.

Vuyo:I am really sorry.

Me: Someone killed my family and is boasting about it.

Vuyo:Ehh calm down we don't know what happened to here.

Me: Your wife is still alive, don't tell me to calm down
Vuyolwethu.

Vuyo:Let me check on everyone else.

Me:I am sorry, I -

Vuyo: It's fine Themba.

Me: Have you seen Mom?

Vuyo:Nope.

Me:I feel like by helping her, we've made things worse Vuyo. I mean nothing like this happened when she did things on our own,she had control and we ruined it.

He didn't say anything just walked away from me. I closed my eyes for a moment and sighed. I finally looked at the ashes,a house that we we grew up in was gone like it was never there.

Me:What do we do now?

✓ CHAPTER 65 SEASON FINALE

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat on the chair waiting for her to show up, I heard footsteps and she opened the door. Turned the lights on and almost screamed when she realised that I sat on her chair..

Delilah: The fuck is wrong with you? What do you want in my room?

Me: Hello Delilah, it seems like I said Solomon whereas it was Samson. Happens that I forget my Bible sometimes but hey you understood what I said .

Delilah: The hell do you want?

Me: I am a woman scorned Delilah and the last thing you'd want to do is piss me off.

Delilah: Am I suppose to be threatened by you?

Me: Did you know that Italians owe me 2 billions?

Delilah: You chose-

Me: I don't quite remember saying I was investing that money, I said take it as a loan Angelo. Now what would happen if I just change my mind? Or let them choose, a dead Delilah or my 2 billions in 24 hours?

She paused.

Me: Good thing you know how that would end but yet you provoke me. Now I need to know how Italian made bomb ended up taking my entire mansion and ripped it to shreds?

Delilah: That would be impossible.

Me: Right after you threatened me?

Delilah: Are you trying to build a case against me?

Me: You really don't know, do you?

Delilah: Are you trying to make me admit to this rubbish? Too bad I am not going to fall for that.

Me: Are you working alone? Did anyone approach you?

She paused and sat on the other chair, looked at me and grinned.

Delilah: Let me guess you are grasping straws, trying to figure out how this fits too perfectly? You do know that I didn't blow your house but somehow you think I do know who is responsible. Let me guess someone isn't a fan.

She was definitely gloating.

Delilah: Someone has you sitting in the dark, waiting for me to pop and you have no idea who exactly.

Me: Are you going to tell me?

Delilah: You know, I already knew that you would be here but didn't think my bedroom. I was told that you are here, I didn't believe them.

Me: Who?!

Delilah: Unfortunately my dear I am not telling you shit.

I took out my gun.

Delilah: Should I start trembling since you have taken out your gun? Boohoo I am so scared.

Now this was another psychopath I was going to kill.

Me: And now?

Delilah: You know we could have been friends for real?

Me: Tell me what I want to know and I let you live.

Delilah: Has that line really worked for you or?..

She put her purse on the bed.

Me: I really don't want to kill anyone.

Delilah: Go ahead kill me.

Me: Let me think about this. Mhm.

I pulled the trigger hitting her shoulder, she fell on the floor.

Me: Now what is going to happen is simple, your guards are going to make sure that you don't leave your house or get any medical attention. Imagine feeling the pain and horror of a gun wound, yet you can't even do anything about it. Eventually my dear you will talk.

I walked out and called Dolly.

Me:I need you to start from scratch,find everyone who was my father's friends and everyone who was in his funeral. I want everything.

DOLLY MTHOMBENI

Me:Damn that is a list of the people.

Vuyo:Cross reference them with this list.

Me:Weird that includes these four names that are missing.

Themba:Wait,these people here.

He took Anele's laptop bag and took out a USB,he connected to the computer.

Themba:Look at these articles and tell me if you don't see the names in one sentence. Here.

Me: Cabinet members,all of them except this Maga person. Look the President himself.

I went back to my grandpa's funeral video.

Me: The President, Minister in presidency, public protector and the Maga person. Someone has went to great lengths to hide this information.

Lihle: Does not make sense, they exist but when you search their pen names you find nothing. These five were easy to find,

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simple as that.

Vuyo: Like as if someone wanted us to find them, to keep us busy.

Denise: It's the same thing Ma did, made her father look like he's alive not dead but couldn't find him either. So whoever let you find the five is doing it on purpose to make it look like you had it easy.

Vuyo: That would explain why Brian had no guards, they are making these people their escape goats on purpose.

Me: Sounds like we are dealing with someone who is very much aware about our every move. So we are being led by someone, probably one of them?

Themba: Question is which one?? I mean you don't think the President is going to be happy about us snooping in his backyard, especially his criminal activities.

Me:Now I am curious about his wife,she just disappeared and was never found. She disappeared right before grandpa died, clearly he knows what happened to her. Musa Mandleni, wife of Gavin Mandleni. She was-

Vuyo:In the funeral, father's funeral and talked to Mom.

Me:Is she a friend or a foe?Why did she fake her death?

MUSA MAGA

I hummed and looked at the clock.

Me: What is taking them so long?

The door finally opened,he walked in looking like a man in jail.

Me: Masakhane Masuku.

He looked at me and sighed.

Masakhane:I don't want a lawyer.

Me:Yet dear, you are in jail for a crime committed by your own sister.

He looked at me in shock.

Me:Themba had to choose between you and his pregnant wife he didn't love.

Masakhane:No ways.

Me: Now that pregnant wife, along with the kid are gone.

Masakhane: We do have a TV in here, I know.

Me: You are being released today.

He laughed, I just watched him until he frowned.

Masakhane: That is not possible.

Me: Well I pulled few strings and you are being released today, well as in now.

Masakhane: Pastor Bokamoso is-

Me: Going to ask how you got out when she's the one who made Themba choose Anele over you.

Masakhane: There's something you want in return.

Me: Not really, you out there is enough.

Masakhane: Who are you?

Me: Maga. Here are some clothes and there's some money to last you for sometime.

Masakhane: Thank you.

Me: You are welcome.

I walked out and grinned.

Me: He shouldn't be thankful so fast.

I dialled the number.

Me: Keep track of him, make sure that he does confront Themba Mothibakgomo and should be recorded. Mhm good, good.

I got in the car and my phone vibrated.

Me: Delilah.

Delilah: You introduced yourself to me,so you can use me as a cover up.

Me:Is that a question?

Delilah: You knew-

Me:Are your guards still not letting you out? You are going to die a slow painful death,I did tell you that Bokamoso lacks emotions. You should have listened.

Delilah: You used my name to-

Me:I didn't use your name Delilah, you were just stupid to believe that someone would just offer expensive help just like that. What do you think I am?A charity?If I were you, I'd save the little energy to get out of the house and get medical aid or you'll die. Toodles.

I dropped the call.

Me: Some women are easy.

✓ CHAPTER 66 SEASON FINALE

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat on the chair and looked at the time again. I have been waiting for a little too long, I heard footsteps then a gun clicked at the back of my head.

Me: Okay?

I turned with the chair and looked at the man.

Me: Good to know that you are very afraid of me honey.

Nate: Tell me why shouldn't I shoot you here??

Me: You shouldn't be telling me that, you should be shooting me. Right here on the head.

I pointed on my forehead. He moved and closed the curtain.

Nate: Your father messed with the wrong people.

Me: Are you sure that is the reason you just closed the curtain?

Nate: What do you want huh?

Me: Not only you, 5 members too suddenly have no guards nor security. That means someone is pulling strings in the background and want you dead.

Nate: Obviously.

Me:Who?

He chuckled and looked at me.

Nate: You have no idea,do you?

Me:What?

Nate: Don't you find it odd that there's one missing member?

Me:Stop speaking in circles and just walk tell me what you mean.

Nate:I am being watched,listened just like you. The moment I say something,my kids and wife die then me.

Me: Just like me?

Nate: I was already told that you are coming to my office, everyone of us were told that you will show up.

Me:Who told you?

He looked around,he was about to say something when he slumped over. Blood splattered to my face,I closed my eyes for a moment and grabbed a tissue, wiping my face. I looked at the hole on the curtain,got up and opened the curtain.

Me:If you can hear me, we'll meet.

The phone rang,I grabbed it.

Voice:I wouldn't be so sure Bokamoso, you are exactly where I want you to be.

Me:Yet you are hiding in the dark.

Voice: I am not hiding at all, you just cannot find me.

Me:Show yourself.

Voice:I did actually, it's not my fault you couldn't recognise me at all.

Me: You are messi-

Voice:The wrong Pastor? You are so used to people cowering at your name in fear,them making mistakes but now you realise that I harbour none of these traits. Bokamoso you will return everything or you will enjoy it alone. Nice heels.

The call ended,I bit my tongue in anger.

Me:Fuck it.



Vuyo:I think we're dealing with a well connected man.

Me:If the First Lady is still alive, what role does she play in this?

Dolly:We are going round in circles though

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I mean we can't kill these people because it's pretty obvious we are being led.

Me: Whoever is in charge, wants us to kill them ourselves, they know that if they are talk they will know.

Lihle: I hate how we just don't know anything.

Me: I should give them what they want before more people die.

Silence.

DELILAH GOUVEIA

Angelo: Bokamoso is responsible?

Mr Gouveia: At first we thought Delilah was just lying.

Angelo: Why?

Me: Obviously.

Angelo: Did you tell them what you wanted to do to Lori's kids?

Me: I didn't do anything to those kids, trying to get make me look horrible isn't going to work.

Angelo: Of course they will think that you are telling the truth right? What do you want Delilah?

Me: We are married.

Angelo:That marriage certificate doesn't have my signature,I told you that but you just don't want to admit that I already fooled you. You invited these people to this country wanting them on your side,yet they cannot.

Me: I built this.

Angelo : What legal documents prove that you built this? Bokamoso has papers that show we owe her 2 billions. What do you have?A fake marriage certificate? Fake stories? It's not going to change that I don't want you Delilah,not today or tomorrow or the day after.

I looked at him.

Angelo:I am really sorry that you felt like you had to do all this crap, thinking I'd want you. I love Bokamoso, can't explain it actually but I do. I don't want to hurt you Delilah but if you pull another stunt,I will put a bullet between your eyes.

I blinked the tears away,I couldn't believe that this was the same man I fell in love with.

Angelo:One last request, you will return back to Italy and I don't want to ever see you in this country again Delilah. You cannot make me love you, cause I won't. Now this fucken meeting is over,dare bring it up again I won't be so nice again. Lastly I am taking my soldiers back with me, your safety is your problem hereon.

He got up and walked to the door.

Me:The First Lady is the one responsible for the bombing of her house not me, she's not dead.



I packed everything.

Voice:I thought we agreed that we don't mention names.

I jumped and looked at the woman.

Me:I have nothing to lose.

She took out her gun.

Musa: Except that you will be returning in a coffin.

I could hear all the gun shots hit me,she didn't stop until she emptied her gun. I fell on the floor.

Musa: Could have been alive.



THEMBA MOTHIBAKGOMO

Me:Thank you.

I grabbed the paper bag and turned,I almost dropped the plastic to see Masakhane standing right behind me.

Masakhane:Look at that.

Me: You are out of prison?

Masakhane: You were hoping that I rot there for something your wife did.

Me: I don't know what you are talking about.

He chuckled.

Masakhane: You are denying what you did to me?

Me: You want me to admit trying to put you in prison for almost murdering me?

Masakhane: Charges against me have been dropped by the court because they found proof that actually Anele is responsible but she's dead..

Me: That's the first time I am hearing this. I had no idea.

Masakhane: You know I should have known better that family like yours would do just about anything to cover up things like this.

Me: You sound obsessed and triggered. Is it because your family cut you out after finding out what you are? Were you expecting the same because my mother is an archbishop? You were expecting a lot for an in-law, don't you think?

Masakhane: Your mother did warn me of dire consequences, I just thought she was threatening me, you are your father's son. I regret the day I met you.

I bit my tongue.

Masakhane: One day you will pay for what you did to me.

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✓ CHAPTER 67 SEASON FINALE

ANGELO GOUVEIA

She stepped in and just threw herself on me. I have come to understand that Bokamoso only becomes touchy when she's not feeling well.

Me: What's wrong amore?

Bokamoso: I am so tired, I am exhausted and I just want to lie down and don't wake up for sometime.

Me: What happens if I tell you who bombed the house?

She moved and looked at me.

Bokamoso: How do you know it?

Me: Delilah.

Bokamoso: She's good as dead then.

Me: First Lady who seemingly disappeared years ago.

Bokamoso: Heh? She is very much alive though.

Me: She's slippery because I tried to find everything on her but nothing comes out at all. It's like she never existed at all.

Bokamoso:They do have the country's intelligence at their disposal. I mean there's this Maga person missing and I don't know what role this woman plays.

Me:Look at this,I think it's the word you just mentioned.

She read the article.

Bokamoso:Oh my!

Me: What?!

Bokamoso:Maga,Musa Maga is the first lady. Maga is her surname before she married the President.

Me: She's untraceable.

Bokamoso:You think?The woman has me on my toes,that should say something. For once,I literally have no plan,no way forward. She's ten steps forward.

Me:No one is untouchable.

Bokamoso:I should have listened to that too. I think it's best I just give up.

Me: Definitely not you.

Bokamoso:A dead person can be traced to a grave, this one is walking dead and they can only trace you.

Me:Does she have kids?

Bokamoso:Only two,the guy is not in the country but the girl child isn't traceable.

Me:Why doesn't she come for you straight ahead?

Bokamoso:Well she's not scared of me at all,she is just making sure that I know where I stand. It's like she wants me busy not see her approach,I mean she's very much capable of getting all these things instead she keeps me busy..

Me:As if something else is going on.

Bokamoso:This woman though,I don't know but something off about her. All the chances she has to kill me she doesn't,why?The CIA made it clear that they will kill me if they realise that I don't plan on giving them what they are want.

Me:My love, you sure know how to make enemies.

Bokamoso:Ehh the suspended Pastor definitely does.

AGENT CAMILLA

Me:We have a third player in this.

Jade: Obviously.

I looked at the pictures.

Me:Why hasn't Bokamoso tried to withdraw or go to the locations?

Jade:Do you ever think just maybe everything is in plain sight?

Me: We've checked the guest houses and the clinic but nothing shows up.

Jade:I am saying that what if these companies are the shops we see in town

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we just don't know?I mean how come nothing pops up at all? Companies generating millions nowhere to be found?Bank accounts with billions inside without a trace? They are there we just can't notice them at all.

Me: Clearly the pastor isn't available just going to give everything up like that.

A knock echoed.

Me:Come in.

Hlalie walked in.

Me:Oh hey.

Hlalie:I just found something that really disturbing..

Jade:Okay?

Hlalie: Bokamoso killed her father.

Me:Heh?!

Hlalie:At that time as a pathologist she was working with a drug that could stop your heart from functioning. That's how her father died and she's the one who signed him dead an hour before he died.

Me:Damn she's dangerous.

Hlalie: Something else stood out. Even if Bokamoso didn't kill her,Mrs Tsakane planned on gunning him down. Bokang Tsakane was the worst husband,a good father but you get it.

Me:At least we know she inherited their worst traits.

Jade:We have everything else to get her arrested, she has everything else to come out of prison,heck even if we were to take her to the US,she would not even be in a plane.

Hlalie:Or just find this person making her stay on her tippy toes.

Me: Clearly this person knows that we're around and isn't interested in working with us at all. We have to admit, they are good.

MUSA MAGA

The door was pushed open almost ripping it off from the hinges.

Me: What is it?

Gavin and Andreas walked in looking like they were were strangled.

Gavin: What are you doing Musa?

I looked at them and rolled my eyes.

Me:Only God knows what exactly you are talking about.

Andreas: You are getting us killed on purpose to cover for you.

Me:Yep I do.

Gavin:Why get them killed when you are could just end this huh?

Me:End this?Why?I just started this.

Andreas: You are crazy.

Me: You know, it's actually fun watching old men scared of a little girl yet they didn't think twice before angering her.

Gavin: You are crazy!

Me:I am that's alright but then I am safe, can't say the same about you though.

Gavin :I could just kill you.

Me:Done.

They looked at me confused.

Me:Welll,it happens that while Bokamoso is busy with hunting you down I accessed the missing accounts.

Them:What?!

Me: They weren't really missing , they were renamed under her name and you could only find small amounts of money in them. When you dig deeper though, you realise every cent is there. I kept her occupied enough to access the money in them. For a deadly woman she was too blind.

Andreas:How much?

Me:Half of every cent in those accounts.

Gavin:Half?Why not take it all?

Me: I'll give you some so you can disappear.

Andreas: He's the President of the country!

Me:Not for long my dear.

Gavin:Why take half of the money?

Me: You didn't think I was going to leave my only daughter broke?

Gavin: You are think after everything you have to done,this is the time to act like a mother to her?

Me: I don't want to be a mother but I am done unless she thinks otherwise. So dear husband you will step down.

I pressed the button and the soldiers stepped in.

Me:One way or the other,well after you declare a lot of things. I become the new President.

They are looked shocked.

Me:I just needed the money,I asked Bokang to hide them for me and of course show our daughter how to keep them. I knew where everything was but I just couldn't get it without her noticing. So I just had to keep her busy and it worked just fine.

✓ CHAPTER 68 FINALE

NOLUKHANYO NGONDO

Judge: She'll be evaluated, this court doesn't find her guilty.

Gasps echoed in the courtroom.

Sona: She killed my baby girl!

The police led me to my holding cell, I was just going to stay in asylum in short words but it was better than staying in prison for the rest of my life. I found a woman already sitting in the cell, dressed in a red dress.

Me: Who are you?

She looked up and from her phone.

Woman: Agent Camilla Rodriguez.

Me: Is not make sure.

Camilla: What,?

Me: I don't think I know why you are here Agent Camilla.

Camilla: Your brother was-

My mother emerged.

Mom: The law does say you cannot talk to her without a lawyer, plus only doctors are allowed to question her.

The agent said Nothing just got up and left.

Me: Who was that?

Mom: Someone deciding on being curious now.

Me: How's everyone?

She sighed.

Mom: We are all pretending to be fine but Anele's death took us all of our toes.

Me: I wish I was there.

Mom: There's nothing you could have done but I have to know something.

Me: Okay?

Mom: When you worked with Smanga, did you ever come across this woman?

She put the picture on the table.

Me: Maga as in Musa Maga, a living ghost. Didn't talk to her, Smanga just mentioned that she was grandpa's main supplier.

Mom: Supplier?

Me: She's the one that connected him to the cartels, brought tenders to him. One would have sworn that they were dating.

Mom: Mhm.

Me: Is everything alright?

Mom: She did blow my house.

Me: Well that is not what I thought.

Mom got up.

Mom: I'll come to see you tomorrow then.

Me: Okay.

NANA

I sat on the chair writing down everything that I needed. Something caught my interest from the news.

News reporter: President Gavin Mandleni has stepped down after he publicly involved in trying to kill his wife, the First Lady Musa Mandleni. He went as further to appoint her as the temporary first female president of this country.

I gasped, I could see a car from my window pulling inside the yard. I could feel my heart pumping more blood as Musa stepped out of the car and walked to the door. I turned the TV off and walked to the door. I opened it.

Musa:Hello Namuhla.

I looked at her in shock.

Musa:At least I know you were happy that I am dead,
unfortunately I am still alive.

Me: What are you doing here?

Musa:Of course to give you a position in my new cabinet.

Me: You are a temporary President.

Musa:Well,I will be President.

Me:Now it is making sense,this chaos is all about that money
Bokang stole from you and the rest of your friends.

Musa:Stole?

She laughed.

Musa:I told Bokang to steal that money,hide everything in
Bokamoso's name. He was a good hacker so he did a good job,I
had to disappear when they realise that somehow he was the
only one who can access everything. Unfortunately our
daughter chose to kill him

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I mean what was he thinking?

Me:I killed him.

Musa: Could have but Bokamoso did. I mean he was worshipping the wrong god and our God, he's very jealous too jealous.

Me: What do you want Musa?

Musa: To make sure that you die with the secret Namuhla.

Me: It's a little too late to tell Bokamoso that I am not her biological mother. Did you blow her house?

Musa: Yes.

Me: Heh Bokamoso isn't going to stop until you are dead.

Musa: I do have a feeling that she inherited more of me than Bokang. Look I appreciate what you have done-

Me: Don't. That little girl brought hope to me, she was like a little flick of life. She made me realise that I was still the great at motherhood. One look at her eyes, I couldn't abandon her like you did. Don't appreciate me, I don't care what role you played in her life, she's my daughter and she comes first just like all my kids. Coming here, won't make you feel any better at all.

Musa: My offer still stands, Bokamoso will be forced to make a choice. Her children's lives or continue hunting me down.

Me: Till this day I fail to understand what Bokang saw in you. Bokamoso is nothing like you, she would do about anything to protect her family unlike you.

Musa:Ooh I can feel my heart repenting with that sermon.

I shook my head.

Me: I'd like for you to leave my house.

She walked out. I watched her leave before closing the gate.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

Me:Woah.

They sat watching me.

Me:Do explain to me how so much money was withdrawn and none of you noticed?

They looked at each other.

Accountant:The same algorithm that was created to protect these accounts was used.

Me:Same? How?My father never mentioned telling anyone about it. I huffed,my phone rang.

Dolly: We're trending again.

Me: Again? For what now? Kidnapping?

Dolly: Themba for falsely accusing Masakhane for kidnapping him while Anele was responsible. Me: Masakhane?

Dolly: He's been cleared by the Minister of Justice, himself.

Me: Let me guess my name comes up.

Dolly: Well Mom, there's a new word for you. Tyrant.

Me: Yeah neh.

Dolly: Guess who is the temporary president of the country?

Me: Shoot me.

Dolly: Musa Maga-Mandleni. Her husband confirmed that he had tried to kill her now, he realised how wrong he was. Gave up his seat and poof gone, the Hawks are looking for him.

Me: It's a movie with no ending.

Dolly: Yep it is a movie. Have you found anything?

Me: I guess Musa finally took the money and she left some. This woman moves with the wind, like it's nobody's business. She's twenty steps away and sends us to zero. I want to know how she got the money, unless my dear father told her.

Dolly: Anele's family has arrived and think the funeral shouldn't be put to wait because of how she died.

Me: Whatever they want, I am just going to deal with this woman. This time I have to think, have to calculate time.

✓ CHAPTER 69 FINALE

MASAKHANE

Just as I closed the door, a heel blocked it. I opened the door and Lihle walked in.

Me:Lihle.

Lihle:Wine as peace offering,bring some glasses.

I walked to the kitchen confused and brought the glasses. She opened it.

Me:Let me guess they sent you to talk to me about threatening Themba.

Lihle: Actually none of them that I am here.

I looked at her stunned.

Me:By now I have come to realise that the Mothibakgomo family doesn't let each other deal with anything alone.

Lihle:True but I need to tell you everything. Anele was a good lawyer and she would have gotten custody of their kids easily.

Me:So sacrificing -

Lihle:He did what he thought was right,in a mess that he created on his own.

She poured the wine.

Lihle:I am sorry for what he did to you,he was selfish and self centred to do that. I know that apologising won't change anything about what he had done, you have every right to make him pay for what he did.

Me: You are not really asking me to stop with the lawsuit?

Lihle:Nope. I'll support you if it comes down to it.

Me: Pastor Bokamoso will kill you before you even try actually.

She looked at her glass, I just drank the wine.

Me: Rethinking your decision?

She looked at her watch.

Lihle: You should be doing that not me.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

She poured the wine from her glass back to the bottle,I looked at my glass.

Me: What did you do?

Lihle:Arsenic is hard to track,well according to your bank statement you bought it.

I tried to get up only to fall,I felt like my heart was pumping blood in my head. She wiped the bottle,put the small bottle

next to it, grabbed my hand to touch them. My chest burnt as I laid on the floor.

Me: I'll do it.

Lihle: Possible but a secret is better when known by one person.

Me: Help me, you are a doctor.

Lihle: I know.

I could feel the coldness everywhere in my body as whatever ate me alive, I couldn't move. She walked to the door as I spat blood.

Me: He-

My heart stopped, I struggled to breathe in the most painful way. I just closed my eyes.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I looked at the new house.

Me: Just maybe we had to lose that house to gain this one.

Vuyo: True. Quite surprised that you can afford this house.

Me: It happens that I am still rich.

Dolly: And insurance?

Me: Almost everything was covered,so it bought this one considering that one was worth millions.

Denise: I'm interesting in seeing the inside.

Me: It's beautiful,I think.

We walked in,I had to say it was beautiful.

Themba: It's fully furnished.

I looked at the papers.

Me:That is definitely not part of the deal, they told me that it wasn't furnished and I had to do it myself.

Vuyo:Bonus?

Voice:Uhm.

The woman stood leaning on the wall.

Me: You are one daring woman.

Musa: I put in a good word to my personal designer and he did a marvelous job,right?

Me:Is this your payment for blowing my house, killing my-

Musa: Your step daughter and her kids?As far as I know you have two daughters. These two are nowhere your kids, what connected you to them is dead.

Me:I don't know what fucked-

Musa: Sympathy because it's your kids?Nkhono is still reeling knowing that you killed her son,yet you don't want her to do anything about it. Now Someone does the same, you do something? Hypocrisy if you tell me.

Me:I really don't know what you think you know about me,I am going to kill you.

Musa:But you won't my dear. You have killed people

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a lot of people and not once did you feel guilty. Why should I feel guilty for blowing your house?I did ask nicely to give me what I wanted.

I took out my gun,she rolled her eyes.

Musa:Shoot me now.

She looked at me and smirked.

Musa:Even warning shot on my leg would do Bokamoso.

Something was just not right,why ask me to shoot?I looked at the woman confused.

Musa: Your problem Bokamoso you act and think later, you realised too late that you are being led.

Me: What do you want from me?

Musa:Themba has something in his brain so is Nolukhanyo.

I looked at Themba in confusion.

Me: Why should I believe you?

Musa: Thing is Bokamoso, I am untouchable. I don't promise people to kill them with words. You can tell him to go to a doctor, I'll wait. They are going to tell him something is implanted in his brain, removing it kills him and I am responsible for turning it off. Well I die, it turns off and they both die.

Me: You -

Musa: Damage control is what I call it. Now I am going to be the President of this country full time, pissing me off could be a problem for you. Now stop trying to track me down, I did you a favour the CIA agents aren't investigating anymore.

Me: Why? So you can feel better about yourself?

Musa: Remind me when I was your age, refusing to believe that I can be defeated. Darling you can only defeat me if I want. It was nice meeting you.

She grabbed her purse, soldiers emerged inside the house. I chuckled.

Me: You knew that I would die before I even shoot you.

Musa: I am a fucken queen darling.

Then they were gone.

Themba:I don't think I like her at all.

Me:I like her, she's one good old woman. Interesting,I got defeated by an old woman, something Delilah couldn't even do.

They looked at me.

Me:What?

Lihle: You like her?

Me: She's good, what do you want me to say?

Dolly:Hunt her down?

Me:Well some fights aren't worth it,I have lost children because of this. Well she has proven that she's malicious and accepting defeat sometimes.

I turned around fanning non existent tears.

Me:I am tired,I think it's time I focus on myself.

They hugged me,well I should be nominated for Oscars,these kids really think I am giving up. Me?I am just going to give it time and strike unexpectedly. I smirked.

BOKANG TSAKANE

I sat on the bed in silence. The door opened and Musa walked in.

Musa: Beats me how you want to come back from the dead Bokang.

Me: I gave you what you wanted, the algorithm to take what you needed.

Musa: True so now what is your story when you return to your family? Tell them Bokamoso tried to kill you?

Me: She did try to kill me and announced me dead.

Musa: I did you a favour Bokang, kept you alive all these years when I should have killed you. I mean you cannot go and use snakes for power, then expect nothing to go wrong. It expires!

Me: You are suddenly righteous.

Musa: Considering everything that you have done, I am an angel. Raping and torturing young girls so you can feed them to that Lawulana. He's gone.

Me: Ndlovukazi isn't.

Musa: I am done helping you and this time hopefully Bokamoso kills you. Me: Not before I kill her.

Musa: Yeah right, big ups to you.

She walked out.

✓ CHAPTER 70 FINALE

DENISE

I sat on her grave in silence.

Me:I failed you Sesethu. I couldn't even protect you at all.

I finally got up.

Voice:Hello Denise.

I jumped, stumbling towards the grave in shock. I steadied myself and looked around.

Me: You can't be here.

Bokang: Don't worry I had this place checked before anything else.

Me: Aren't you suppose to be playing dead?

Bokang:Yet here you are.

Me: What do you want?

Bokang:I took you from the worst place you could find in this country,cleaned you up and connected you with Smanga. I raised you to be in this family.

I bit my tongue.

Bokang:I gave you a job.

Me:To spy on a murderous pastor!

Bokang:Then you decide to block my calls, suddenly you and Smanga are the power couple. The poor girl has fallen in love with my grandson.

Me: I don't know what you want,I kept your secret that you are alive a secret. I couldn't spy on such good people.

Bokang:And the person that took you and your family?

Me: I'll pay you back.

Bokang:With the same money that was made by my businesses?Are you fucken crazy?

Me:Okay fine, what do you want?

Bokang: Everything on Bokamoso.

Me:Did you not hear me when I said she's murderous?

Bokang:Unless you want them to know the reason you became Smanga's girlfriend turned wife. She doesn't know that yet.

Me: What exactly do you want me to do?

Bokang: There's a safe in the Sata private bank and she has the key to it.

Me:Key where?

Vuyo:Hey.

He continued typing on his laptop.

Me: What's up with the chain?

Vuyo: Mama's,she asked me to take care of it.

Me:Do you ever take it off?I have never seen you without as in like never.

He chuckled.

Vuyo:Well thing is,it's moulded to fit my neck perfectly and can't really take it off.

Me: That's weird.

Vuyo: Yeah not when you don't want to lose what belongs to Mom, it's reasonable.

Me:Tell me that again.

I just had to think about how I was going to get it from his head.

NANA

Mario:It is definitely new that they select a female this time.

Me: What are you talking about?

Mohale: Musa Maga has just become a permanent president of this country.

I spat out the tea I was drinking so fast.

Me: What did you just say?

Botlhale: Doesn't sound right, she was declared missing years ago.

A knock echoed.

Me: Must be Bokamoso coming to visit, she said that she'd be coming.

Mohale got up to open the door, he froze without opening the door.

Me: Who is it?

He stood there and turned to look at us, his face looked drained of all blood. He moved from the door and there he was

I dropped the tea on my thigh and somehow didn't feel the heat. Next thing I couldn't breathe.

Me: I am not seeing this.

Bokang: Hello love.

Me: No, no get out! You are not real. Get out! Get out

Bokang: I'll be back to talk about a lot.

I rubbed my eyes.

Mario: He's not dead? Did he even die Mom or you thought you killed him?

Me: I was-

I had no idea, another knock echoed.

Me: I said go away.

Voice: Mom?

Me: Askies, the door isn't locked.

She walked in and paused.

Bokamoso: Who decided to use the old man's perfume?

Silence.

Bokamoso: What is it?

Me: He was here, he's alive very alive.

Bokamoso: Who?

Botlhale: Father.

Bokamoso: He can't just be alive, no way I made sure that he was dead. Unless the damn chemical just paused his damn heart.

Mario: Wait, wait what are you saying B?

Bokamoso: That I thought I killed him? I assumed he was dead and thought his enemies took his body.

Mohale: Bokamoso!

Me: Can-

Bokamoso: Did you know that your father got all these riches from the devil? Do you know that he raped those kids because of that?

Botlhale: Mom.

I sighed.

Mario: What on earth do we know about our father?

Bokamoso: Passed it on Smanga.

Mohale: Oh God Khanyo.

Mario: Mama speak!

Me: He said that the snake would come for me and you if I didn't keep my mouth shut. He'd rape those girls in this house and I said nothing.

Mohale: You stood by and watched us defend him while you knew what he has done Mother! All this time we are protecting. And you Bokamoso!

Bokamoso: Awe ma! Big brother I owe you no explanation for not telling you. You owe me explanation as in why you couldn't

see that your dearest father is a monster. Let me guess, he's gunning for me yikes we'll meet. I am definitely his match.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I sat on chair. I watched the Archbishop talk to some people before walking to me.

Me: Archbishop Pele.

Pele: Archbishop Bokamoso. What are you doing here?

Me: Be respectful, we are not friends nor do you want me to be your enemy.

Pele gulped.

Pele: Good afternoon Archbishop Bokamoso. How are you?

Me: I'm great thanks and you?

Pele: How can I help you today?

Me: Smile while talking to me Archbishop.

He forced a smile.

Me: Good one grootman. Now suspension is a year blah blah, I realise no marn I can't do that.

I could see the sweat building on his forehead.

Pele: That's not how it works, you have to finish your suspension.

Me: Not if you go and talk to the chairman, make up a story or something but you just have to get me back to my chair by end of this weekend.

Pele: What happens if he doesn't agree?

Me: Well if you are dead, I'll be reinstated. I really don't want to ruin my good Samaritan status by killing you arch man.

I dusted his chest.

Pele: How do I convince -

Me: I really don't know but if you fail, get your things in order because I will kill you. Okay? You are so helpful, I could send those pictures to your wife to motivate you.

Pele: I'll do everything I can.

Me: You are going to make it happen Arch my man. Thanks my nigga.

I walked out of the church and Angelo was waiting outside.

Angelo: So what were you doing in church again?

Me: Oh love if you had followed, you would have seen how I confessed my sins to the pastor. Damn I almost shed a tear, the archbishop sniffled.

I looked at him as he opened the door.

Me: What?!

Angelo:Are you serious?

Me:The archbishop even organised a session just for me,I am a lost sheep.

Angelo:Ehh I don't know what to say actually.

He closed the door before going to his side,I grinned. I had a feeling that my father was showing up because I was suspended from church and he was going to dig up another Lawulana. Without the church,I couldn't exactly fight the devil.

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✓ CHAPTER 71 FINALE

VUYO

Me:Madam.

Mom:What happened?

Me:After all these years of wearing this chain,Denise actually becomes too curious asking if I wear it all the time.

Mom:After all she's been pretending not to know what her husband did yet she was put in that position to know.

Me: What is that suppose to mean?

Mom:Denise came here through my father as his assistant but somehow,it was like she was sent to Smanga. At first I was interested as to what was going on with Smanga and father. I mean I was trying to figure out if he knew what he was doing.

Me:All these years?

Mom:I thought she stopped but I put cameras in the old house and it happens that I heard everything.

Me:Cameras?!

She laughed.

Mom:Yes cameras, that's how I knew everything.

Me:I feel exposed.

Mom:Like how you and your haven't told everyone that you are not pregnant before they plan a surprise baby shower.

Me:Are there cameras here?

Mom:Not yet,I already know who to trust.

Me:I think I should give you back the necklace,I don't know what extent Denise will go to get this necklace.

She took out a small device and clipped the necklace, she then put it around her neck.

Me:Wait a minute,I could take it off?

Mom: Just with this.

Me:Sly if you tell me.

Mom: I am trying to retire in peace,I can't be trying to fight almost all the time.

Me:I want to believe that you are trying to get your life turned around but I am not too sure after this.

Mom:After?

I handed her the letter and she grinned.

Me:What did you do Ma?

Mom: For getting a letter from the chairman of the church?I confessed my sins.

Me: Confessed your sins in a nice or hard way?

Mom:What do you take me for?I am an angel in church Vuyolwethu.

Me:Yoh I agree with you Mom.

Mom:Let me deal with my daughter in-law.

DENISE

Me: It's moulded to fit his neck!

Bokang:Get the damn key!

Me:How?

Bokang:Kill him if you have to.

Me:No ways,I am not killing Vuyo.

Bokang: I'll -

Me:Fine.

I heard footsteps,I turned the phone off and turned to look at the person. Ma Bokamoso walked in talking on her phone,her hand was twirling the same chain and I could see the key

dangling. Vuyo walked in, like ice cold water poured on my head.

Vuyo: Hey.

Me: Hi.

Mom: Denise please drive me to the cemetery.

Me: Ohh okay?

I followed as she walked out.

Mom: Keys.

I took them, surprisingly she sat in the front something she never does. I started the car.

Me: Are we going to see Dad?

Mom: Smanga.

Then she took out her gun and put on the silencer.

Me: Woah.

Mom: I am very nice Denise, I gave you a chance. Now you are going to call him and tell him you have the key. He'll find you at the cemetery next to Smanga's grave, he doesn't show up I'll kill your kids and finish you off after.

I didn't respond, I just called Bokang.

Me: I got the key, meet me at Smanga's grave. In few minutes.

Bokang:Good.

I dropped the call.

Me: He'll kill you.

Mom:Well I was about to kill Smanga,Khanyo beat me to it.

I looked at her stunned.

Mom:I hired someone to kill Mandla,he survived. Second time he winds up in the hospital and I finished him myself. Now what else should I tell you?

I was stunned.

Mom:I plan on killing anyone who thinks they can piss me off. By the way you run after stepping out of this car you are dead,there are guards already.

We stepped in the cemetery and walked to Smanga's grave.

Mom: I'll be back.

She just walked away leaving me standing there,I looked around and saw nothing,I was about to walk away when a shot hit right before my feet. I stood still,Bokang walked to me.

Bokang:I didn't think you would get it so easy.

Me: Just had to give him sleeping pills that is all.

Bokang:Give it to me.

Me:I have to know that you are not going to kill me after I give it to you.

Voice:He won't let you live.

He turned

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pulling his gun and pointed it to Bokamoso. Security guards emerged,he grabbed me and pinned the gun on me.

Bokang: I'll shoot her.

Mom:Go ahead. I thought each person should literally dig their own grave, you shoot her you dig both.

She threw shovels at us.

Mom:Hand over your gun, it's pretty much useless.

Bokang:I should have killed-

I screamed when she shot him on the head.

Mom:Dig.

I took the shovel.

Mom:Smanga's grave.

I looked at the grave in horror,her guards removed the tomb stone.

Mom:Dig.

PASTOR BOKAMOSO

I watched as she dug crying.

Denise:Please Ma.

Me:Help her!

They dug until they reached the coffin.

Me:Push Bokang's body inside.

She did.

Me:Now jump in.

Denise:Mama-

Me:I will shoot you,get in!

She jumped in and laid down.

Me:Close.

They added the soil as she screamed,I should feel bad but here I was not feeling a thing. I watched as they finally covered the grave and her screams no longer came.

Me:Rest easy my love.

They put the tombstone back.

Me:Cement it so now it doesn't move.

I sat on one of the graves as they cemented it. After they were done,we left. I called the number.

Assistant: President Maga's office.

Me:Put her through,tell her it's about Bokang Tsakane.

Silence.

Maga: Bokamoso what do you want?

Me:I could stay away from you,I know that you had those devices planted in Themba and Khanyo's head. Then you decide to send my supposed dead father on my way.

Maga: You mean the guy you tried to murder was sent by me?Are you trying to pick up a fight with me?

Me:Why would I pick fights with old hags?

Maga:Old hags? You should really look at your grandchildren,have them tested to before you cross the line Bokamoso.

Me:For now,for now Maga.

Maga:Not now when I have a video of you burying two civilians,I would thread very careful if I were you. I do get irritated so fast.

Me: You know Mother, you keep threatening me while you worked in the shadows to keep me out of prison.

Silence.

Me:I can't just look and act like you on a coincidence. I know exactly what you are. I am leaving you alone but do not ever threaten me, you won't like what I am capable of.

The line went dead.



I stepped in the church in shorts and top, gasps echoed as I walked to my chair.

Archbishop:Are you trying to get yourself suspended?

Me:As far as I know,I am suspended.

The chairman finally walked to me,in my shock I knew him.

Chairman: Archbishop Bokamoso.

Me: You look awfully familiar.

He chuckled,I looked at him.

Chairman: Bokamoso you look lovely. I have been expecting this outfit.

Me:Uhm who are you?

Chairman:Ash Zarkina.

Me: Oh my it is you. You look lovely.

Chairman: Ahh lovely woman. Been asking myself how long before you snap and threaten the poor bishop to get you back to the church.

Me: I didn't threaten anyone.

Chairman: At first I was confused about this Bokamoso Mothibakgomo, now I realise it's you.

Me: Had no idea the son of the prophetess is running these churches, could have behaved right.

Did he not grin? Ehh I used to like this guy but no, no no Bokamoso.

Chairman: I see trouble still follows you around. You are wearing shorts in church.

Me: I got to show them my beautiful legs and my curves.

He chuckled.

Chairman: You are never going to change, are you?

Me: Why would I?

A woman walked to him and grabbed his hand.

Chairman: This is my fiancée.

Me: You are getting married now? How old are you?

He laughed.

Chairman: This is the second time, my first wife died years back.

Me: Aren't you going to introduce your fiancée?

Leti: Letitia.

Me: Hi.

Chairman: It was good to see you.

Me: Hopefully you won't suspend me again Ash Zarkina.

Chairman: Behave Bokamoso.

I rolled my eyes and watched as they walked to their respective chairs. Why was I grinning?

Me: Kusezobalit.

I walked to my chair.

✓ CHAPTER 72 EPILOGUE

LOVISA MOTHIBAKGOMO[20 YEARS LATE

Me:Phew

I wiped my hands with the wipes and dialled the number

Me:Dr Manzima

Mom:What did you do Lovisa

Me: Nothing Mom,I am just checking on you that's all

Mom: Checking me from where

Me:My house of course Mom. Aren't I allowed to call you

Mom:Lovisa you are your grandmother's child,I know how that brain of yours work, you are covering up for something aren't you

Me:Ehh let me call granny

Mom:What happened

Me:Nothing major Mom,I just wanted to check on you

Mom:Better be true Lovisa,I cannot handle another scandal. The Mothibakgomos and drama in general are best friends

Me: Don't worry, it's nothing major

Mom: Good be here for dinner today just like everyone

Me: Love you Mom: Love you too

I dropped the call and looked at the dead body

Me: Nothing major, just a dead body in my kitchen

I sighed and wiped the gun. I cleaned the house before wrapping the body with a plastic. I sat down trying to think of a story before calling my grandmother

Me: Grandmother Granny: I am on my way to South Africa

Lovisa Me: I know

Granny: So my love why are you calling me

Me: Might have used my shooting range skills on my boyfriend

Granny: He's alive Me: Unfortunately, he's dead

Granny: What happened

Me: He found out about the club and wanted some money from it. Well he found out that isn't exactly just normal club and threatened to tell the church

Granny: I did tell you that church and your business should not be connected, especially your intimate relationships. You stand to run the church, nobody asked to follow your father's steps

Me: It's a family church Granny Granny: Where is the body

Me:In my kitchen Granny: I'll be there,call Emrin

Me: I'll do that

Granny:Next time Lovisa,there must be a line between these things Me:I thought I could manage

Granny: Thoughtist. I'll see you later

The call ended,I should be panicking but here I was sitting here. I don't know what exactly have I gotten myself into but Mom kept saying that I was following in my grandmother's steps. Who knows?

.....**The End**.....

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