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## **Chapter 1**

“I waited so many suns to only to receive the unexpected and time sentiments”

The dogs are lazily barking outside as the moonlight illuminate the room, my door slowly opens when my sister sneaks in and flickers the light on wearing a night gown but her face is painted with soft glam make up and she has slight glisten of pink lip gloss, standing in the middle of the room and mischievously smiling at me. “Rharha what are you up to?” I ask her as she strides to my wardrobe then she glances at me once with a look indicating that I shouldn't be asking any questions.

Oh no, no I am not going to allow her to get us in trouble once again—as always.

“Rharha!” I warn her as she looks through my wardrobe taking out dresses with her feet propelling her towards the bed then she places them there before taking a step back with an

examining look in her face. “What are you doing?” I breathe out and pressing my hands against my hips.

“Looking for what you’re going to wear” her round lips forms a smile, she’s a magnanimous angel with her lushly beautiful face “we are going out” she announces and my eyes almost pop of my head.

“Are you crazy?” I half yell and she quickly covers my mouth with her soft hands that smells like argan oil and she gives me a stern looking face. I attempt biting her palm but my teeth cannot catch her skin in between them since her hands are smooth.

“Do you want everyone to hear you?” she says in a whispery voice “I am going to remove my hand from your mouth and if you dare scream again, I will make sure those chickens chase you around the whole yard tomorrow, are we clear?” I glare at her with her hand still covering my mouth “are we clear?” I nod my head vigorously then she starts to count from three to one before she removes her hand that was covering my mouth and when I don’t scream she takes a sharp intake of breath and wiping imaginary sweat. “There’s something like an event, they’ll be performers so we should go”

“Rharha we are already in trouble what more do you want?” I ask her and watching her as she darts her eyes between the

three dresses she has placed on the bed then she glances at me shrugging her shoulders nonchalantly.

Hmmm, we are here because of her.

Apparently we are now out of hand and we've drowned in the city life and lights that we have forgotten who we are. At the age of twenty four turning one year older soon I have forgotten who I am, can you imagine?

Isn't this how everyone from an affluent background gets punished? Your father aggressively packing your bags as he shouts from the depth of his belly buttons while your mother tries to smooth talk him into not taking a drastic decision about sending you to the rural area.

It hasn't happen to you?

If yes, then you are very luck.

It was in the early hours of the morning when we came back home stumbling everywhere and unable to speak after we sneaked out of the house. It wasn't my plan. We were silently chuckling and giggling while Rharha was shoving everything she came across in a fridge into her mouth. My laughter started off silently, tiny as a quiet bell and then it erupted echoing the whole house as I fell on the ground after my dear, dear sister spilled the milk.

Yes we are sisters, same age, two months apart and different mothers. And if you dare raise this topic to my mother just know your body will be in mortuary with a tag on your feet, your eyes fluttered close for the eternity without an inhalation and exhalation.

The lights flicked on and we became static in that moment like sculptures in an exhibition and not once blinking. “What’s going on here?” my father shouted. We were still in that very same position, pretending to be statues stealing food in a fridge right after the watch blinked three am. “I asked what’s going on?” my father was furious, medusa-like in his anger—menacing rage. It was in that moment when I felt something sting and my skin ripping apart as a sjambok landed on my emollient and in that moment I yelped attempting to run away but he dragged me by arm and brought me back. And the person who came with this plan? Oh well she was dragged as she was sitting and leaning against the kitchen island with her knees on her chest and already hysterically crying and begging for forgiveness.

My mother ran to the room with her silky gown and covering the translucent nude thong and matching corset, standing in between her husband and I. “Baba wakhe stop!” that’s my father’s pet name, his nostril were flaring and if maybe we were light in complexion he would’ve turned reddish. I could literally see smoke coming from his ears.

This was not the first time we were being caught clearly the reason why he has reached his breaking point. “Move!” he warned my mother although the look on his face was full of adoration as he was staring at the love of his life but he wanted his sperms that turned into humans and sneaks out at night and coming home drunk, dead. “I brought you in this world and I will take your life” he pointed at me with his index finger and Rharha was there crying like she was already about to take her last breath. “Baby please move, let me kill them once and for all” Gasp erupted from Rharha and I, she was crying louder than before. Grasping her hair and screaming for Jesus himself to come and save us.

Yes yet she’s still the same one who wants us to sneak out again, brave huh?

The moment the sun risen that day my father flew the door open to our bedroom and asked us to pack our bags. “Nifuna ukuba abafazi?” he asked with a treacherous tone if we wanted to be women. “Huh? Is that what you want?” Ironically since we are women and twenty something—his tall frame was dwarfing everything, looking rather attractive than scary in jeans and white shirt. Oh man, maybe that’s where we got all the looks from with our brother who was shot in our living room and we found him lying in a pool of blood and his eyes wide open after he chose a wrong path to live his life and that’s

where the sneaking and going out to drown our livers started after the traumatic picture we saw. “Is that what you want I am asking man!” his beard with grey strands on his chin was moving and his bald head was starting to sweat. “Nandi!” he called Rharha with her first name and she whipped her head up and wiping the tears at the corners of her eyes. “Is this what you want?” he was heavily breathing.

“No” she hiccupped and swallowing “It will never happen again” she lied.

Here we are again and she’s planning on doing what she promised will never happen again.

“You’re damn right it won’t happen!” he shouted “I am sending you to your grandmother so you can start thinking about what you want!”

“We are starting with work. . .” I attempt on speaking but I received a chilling look clear enough that I should shut up and that’s exactly what I did, he’s the one hiring us anyways.

“You better shut up!” he clicked his tongue and then asked us to pack our bags. Regardless of my mother begging and even giving him that soft look that always makes him run around in riot, shame that day it didn’t work.

At first we thought he was just being dramatic but everything became real as we drove to KwaZulu and all you could see was sugar cane

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cows eating grass, goats crossing the streets and houses made of mud and roundvells. . .well some houses looked decent and beautiful just like my grandmother's house that stands gloriously on top of the hill.

My stomach was twisting and turning driving up the hill after my father was greeting and laughing with everyone we came across and well Rharha was on her phone planning her escape the following the day, ah shame all her plans went down the drain because our father took all our gadgets and life hasn't been the same since we had to lay flat on the floor with our legs spread apart and my grandmother searching for something there before a white dot was placed on my forehead and ululation erupted as we came out of the hut and my sister? After that she received another beating since she came out of the room without a white dot on a her forehead.

From dragging my feet every morning to the kitchen and having cereal to waking up and running away from the chickens in our yard making my way to the river and fetching water not that we don't have a tank, my grandmother enjoys seeing us being domestic.



Yet the same person who got us in trouble wants us to sneak out again?

“I want to go out and have fun, that’s what I want” she says to me and taking my hand forcing me to sit on the edge of the bed and then she takes out a makeup bag “Look we are going to stay there for an hour and come home, just to see how farm pumpkins have fun” it sounds tempting like all her other shenanigans. I have no choice but fluttering my eyes closed and letting her run her hands all over my face and brushes painting me before she forced me into wearing a spaghetti marble silk dress and blue shoes. “Now put on a gown and we are leaving” she announces after spraying some perfume on my neck. I take a quick glimpse in the mirror and I am nowhere looking like how I feel. If ever my father finds out about this he’ll hang us on a door handle.

My heart is pounding against my chest and I can barely breathe as we take one step at the time out of the house and carefully she opens the door, it creaks. When I try running back she pulls me by my hand and we silently walk out and close the door. I finally get to breathe with the night breeze on my nostrils and we take off our gowns hiding them behind the roundvel then we leave—that was easy like all the time when we do this. The problem is coming back.

I look at her as we walk in between trees, its dark and the only sound here is the dogs barking. “How did you know about this event?” I ask her and she looks at me once then ahead carrying a torch in her hand, she hates being interrogated.

“I was invited” she dramatically rolls her eyes “Nothing is going to happen we are going to be at the VIP” she said the same thing last time and I had a sjambok ripping my skin apart.

After what felt like walking for eternity I can hear music inviting us and this is an outdoor event. I can see people standing and engaging in a conversation with marquees everywhere and a stage that has lights flashing.

There’s a guy already waiting for us outside he flashes a smile and put on blue and white bands on our wrists then announces we should follow him. Rharha takes me by hand and we follow right behind him as he greets and talks to everyone until we are at a marquee with white couches and people overly dressed.

They have these kinds of events here?

The music from the artist performing on stage is frying my eardrums as we make ourselves comfortable. “Okay you guys can get yourselves something to drink and eat there. I got everything covered and when you want to go home let me know” that all he says and my cousin is flashing the most beautiful smile from her shelf while he intensely looks at her

then walks away. Maybe he's part of the people organizing this but he's busy walking up and down.

Everyone is trying to speak in loud voice so they can hear you in this ear drum frying music. We have men flashing their smiles and waving at us and women who're not pleased with our presence.

I thought this was intimate but this is full blown festival—I am telling you and people are overly dressed and some in traditional wear. It smells like patriarchy and misogyny.

The music playing here is not the kind of music I'd wake up on a normal day and listen to, in my right state of mind but right now it's actually enjoyable in my ears—maskandi and umbhaqanga.

“Oh sthandwa sami ngicela ukiss, cela ukiss ovutha amalangabi” an artist on stage sings and everyone has lost their marbles, dancing, screaming and singing along—this is actually catchy but what I don't understand is the “mcwaa mcwaa mcwaaa” part but rather than that it's a beautiful song.

The trouble maker is holding her glass in the air and dancing to all the song then she glances towards me and smiles before looking away and continuing sashaying her body.

Everyone is waiting for this special guest who'll be performing. We are drinking and dancing and having fun and completely

forgotten that we had to stay for an hour. Every artist after their performance they come to this marquee.

“I need to go to the bathroom” I announce to my sister who’s on her third bottle of cider and she shows me her thumbs up before I walk away from her and tugging the strands of my shoulder length curly hair weave behind my ear and the aggressive breeze hits my face. Returning back everyone is screaming ebulliently about the special guest that has finally arrived and the light dims. Rharha takes my hand and we squeeze ourselves and swaying to the backstage, we have an access there. I am holding tightly to my bottle and that’s when an acoustic guitar starts to play before the light brightens in the front and he appears wearing high waist jeans and white tank top that clings onto him showing his taunt arms. Oh man there’s something about him wearing iziqhaza earrings and that hairy wrist watches gracing his hands. And also the way his finger nails looks so clean and the veins on his arms. And when he opens his mouth the sound that rolls out steals my body’s equilibrium.

Have you ever heard someone singing in their mother tongue so soulful but also sensual? Damn—his tone sounds satin and velvety and sultry all at once. His lyricism is so powerful but also the sound of his voice makes you forget your morals.

Maybe I am drunk!

Literally everything around me starts to fade and my eyes are fixated on him and his skin that looks like it was drowned in caramel then dipped in milk to make it so flawless and radiant, with his face sculptured with lusciously high cheekbones and beard on his chin and moustache and his hair is bald.

Have you met a man who makes you want to forget about all your morals and spread your legs apart? Well he's not part of those demons who're tempting. No, no, no he's not drop dead gorgeous or maybe I don't find him that way, I'd say he's a man but there's something charming, attractive and sovereign about him.

And when he's done performing he thanks the crowd with an infectious accent waving his hand and somehow our eyes meet and I see his perfectly aligned crispy white teeth or maybe he's not looking at me. "Ngiyabonga" he thanks everyone and waving his hand in the air then he walks pass me and I freeze, he doesn't look towards me or anything as a man in black is protecting him at all costs. Loud whistling and ululating has erupted and some are still singing along to the last song he sang that sounded like new age maskandi.

Who is he? Did he say his name?

"Nomzamo we have to go!" Rharha pulls me by my hand as I wander my eyes around hoping to see something, anything.

Oh there he is!

Standing right next to a car behind the stage and holding a transparent sweating bottle in his hand, talking to someone with his eyes furrowed. I cannot tear away my eyes from him while my hand is being pulled.

He pauses talking and look towards me, watching all my movements while holding tightly to his bottle. I don't know why—I know why, I am drunk. But I actually show him my ravishing smile and he smiles back charmingly and I quickly look away from him.

The same guy from earlier opens the backseat door for me and my eyes move towards the not so gorgeous yet attractive stranger but this time he's nowhere in sight. Oh, oh, oh. I get in the car and the door is shut on my face before the car starts to move and Rharha looks towards me. "You had fun?" she smiles at me, impressed with what she has done.

"Hmmm" I did, I didn't expect that. We are only attending these kind of events in Durban but this one was different. It was rich with culture. There's something beautiful about a man who is deep within his roots—oh I am no longer talking about the event now am I? "I had fun" I say looking outside the window and she chuckles before facing towards what I think is now her new man. "You're a great organizer baby" she says

looking at him with a proud smile and he glances towards her once before changing gears and placing his hand on her knee.

2

“You Misery Of Your Need To Be”

“Nomzamo! Nandipha!” we hear a scream coming from the outside and I want to slit my head into two then grab out my brain and throw it against the wall before poking out my eyeballs and step on them—that was actually dark. But anyways I literally just got home few minutes ago and sleep was starting to dance around my eyes. “Nomzamo man dammeton!” the scream from the outside continues before hands starts banging against the door “Nandipha vukani!” that’s my grandmother shouting and banging on the door. In your family do you also have this demon that always get you in trouble?

And then always get away with it and also they are the first ones to cry once everything gets out of control.

“Ignore her” Rharha mumbles under her breath and covering herself with a duvet but the loud bang on the door doesn’t stop either it sounds much worse because I am drunk from the six pack of Brutal fruit.

“If you don’t open this door and I end up opening it myself you’ll regret the day you were born you little devils!” she shouts once again. That’s my grandmother for you, forever dramatic. I am sure she’s planning on waking up the whole neighbourhood. I have no choice but getting off the bed and dragging my feet towards the door wrenching it open. “What took you so long to open?” she stands with her hair that looks like cotton and wearing a gown “come, come, come you need to drive me somewhere urgently” she drags me by hand and throwing car keys at me.

Again I am suffering!

And the one who came with an idea of sneaking out is peacefully sleeping.

“Nomzamo hurry up people are dying!” she’s already standing by the door and I am only in satin long nightwear following right behind her. My father bought her a car and he said we must be her personal chauffeur. No matter what the time. And yes as we speak the watch just blinked four am and she wants to be taken where people are dying. “Nomzamo hurry man!”

“I want to chang—

I try to speak but that look on her face indicates she doesn’t care whether I am wearing rags or underwear but she wants to be taken where people are dying.



We get in the car and she immediately straps her seat belt while I manoeuvre the car out of the gate and she gives me directions to where we're going. "Oh maNkomo" she keeps saying under her breath and clutching her chest. I don't know if this is her being dramatic or people are really dying. "Nomzamo press that thing and fly man!" she shouts at me and then repeats praying underneath her breath until we are outside the yard where they're people standing outside, some are on their knees screaming from hysterically crying and being held and well some are standing aside in agony.

My grandmother springs out of the car towards their direction and right now I don't know whether to sit here and wait for her so she can tell me what happened or get off the car. Okay I am getting off mainly because I want to know what's happening. As I get off there's black gleaming cars following each other that halt here and everyone rotate their heads. In that moment someone gets off before the other doors to other cars opens.

Oh no!

It's him he's pushing everyone aside aggressively with glossy eyes that are covered with antagonism and anguish walking inside the house where I can hear loud crying coming. Another men close to four who somehow looks like him but some much older than him with unwelcoming faces walks behind him.

After some time there are police and ambulance driving in while I am still standing here like a frozen vegetable because my grandmother has went inside the house.

I have my arms against my chest and my hands are trembling when body bags are being pushed outside and guttural sobs are following right behind it. Oh no, someone really died. I mean people. It's five body bags in actual fact and then in a blink of an eye there's media and cameras flashing everywhere and I immediately get into a car—since he got inside that house he hasn't come out and I am wondering who are those men who looks so much like him.

And what the hell happened?

I am actually traumatized at the sight of those body bags that are being pushed at the back of that car. I am feeling suffocated at this moment sitting here and just watching everything happening. On the other hand I want to sleep. Even in the strangest times sleep will find a way to come knock at you, it doesn't care.

I think I might've fallen asleep because when I flutter my eyes open the morning fog makes everything appear blurry and the drizzle of rain slapping against the window. Did my my grandmother abandon me? There are pretty much still people standing outside and those cars that made a grand entrance, police and more media. And even if I wanted to come out of

this car looking for my grandmother I wouldn't dare demean myself like that.

I am hungry, curious and annoyed!

After hours of falling asleep uncomfortably on these leather seats and waking up to everything still pretty much the same outside I see him walking out of the house wearing what he worn last night at his performance with his phone pressed against his ear and talking to someone about something, shouting and yelling. I can see all of that from here until he glances towards this car and frown. I almost hide but then remembered that he cannot see me.

Whew!

He runs his hands through his head and abusing the muscles around his jawline before he seethes on the call then shoved back his phone on his pocket and return inside the house.

Another man comes out an older version of him with bald head and beard with grey strands in a grey suit. All immaculate and prime, well he's pretty much doing the same thing talking over the phone — it's so strange how they have similar facial expressions.

A knock comes from my window and my heart almost leaps out my mouth, swallowing the mountain expanding on my throat and pulling down the window. To meet a man with a

moustache and also uncombed hair with all the muscles around his face marbled. This is creepy. They all pretty much look the same. I am thinking they're brothers or something. "Sawubona" he greets me with an unwelcoming look in his face and all I can do is shaking my head. "I came to check who is in this car"

"I am waiting for my grandmother"

"And who is your grandmother?"

"MaMbatha" I can hardly breathe.

Attentively he looks at me then shakes his head as if he approves me being here. "And why are you not coming inside? You've been in the car all this time?"

"Yebo" I quickly respond to the second question "I am wearing pyjamas" I can see he wants to lean closer so he can see the evident that I am really wearing pyjamas. And by just observing him I can tell he has serious trust issues.

"Go home" he instructs with a stern tone that indicates whether I like it or not I should go and he doesn't give a damn about what I am going to say after that.

"My grandmother—

"Go home" he repeats once again and this time seething with features drawn hard and in sharp lines "maMbatha" I want to dramatically roll my eyes at him for calling me with my clan

names. Arg no man. “Hamba” he says once again but when he sees me not moving he cannot believe my stubbornness and he shakes his head.

“I need to know my grandmother will be safe”

“What makes you think she won’t be safe?”

I look at him and blink “I just want to know” my voice is laced with tender.

“Oh” that’s all he says “someone will bring her home she’s helping around here, you can leave now ntombazane” I start the engine and he steps back watching me driving off until he disappears on my sight as the car takes a corner driving back home.

I still wonder what happened!

I find my uncle sitting on a chair outside veranda and crushing cannabis and cigarettes in between his ear. “Heh Zamo, where are coming from wearing KK’s suit?” not this man calling my pyjamas a suit.

“I went to kwaNkomo with gogo”

“Eish!” he winces “I heard what happened, very tragic man” And how come he knows when I don’t but was there? And all I saw was just body bags “their son was a hitman so they came looking for him and shot the whole family. One by one

Nomzamo, bullet after bullet, bha bha bha!” he says speaking in slow motion and narrating like he was just there and saw everything “and Ziyanda was getting married next weekend, haibo angiyazi lento” he says he cannot believe this and shaking his head “she was marrying to the most respected family here Zamo, imagine that, she was marrying to royalty and I was invited mshana, this is tragic” he wet the white paper with his saliva and I am just listening to him narrating everything - this one is a story teller I am telling you.

“Hmmm” I murmur

“They said gunmen just got there and asked no question and bullets were flying in the air while the cats and dogs were running all over the yard. The whole family was killed because of one person; please don’t be a hitman Nomzamo yeses!” I cannot believe this man, haibo.

I erupt with laughter and shaking my head “bye bye malume”

“Bye bye KK” even his laughter in a slow motion I am telling you, he sounds like how a turtle would’ve sound like if it had to laugh.

All of this because of my silk pyjamas?

I find the dearest sister of mines pretty much still in my room with her one leg up high and the other thrown on the underside and I have nowhere to sleep in my own room, I shake

my head and walking out of the room to my grandmother's room. Hopefully she'll have mercy on me after I had to drive her all the way there in the early hours of the morning.

I get in on the bed and it has softer pillows than mines before I cover myself with a duvet and staring at the ceiling.

I remember that day vividly coming back from school and meeting my brother's cold and lifeless body on the floor and his blood was turning rather black in colour—I don't know why, maybe because the body was there for too long. I ran towards him after my back pack landed on the floor and my hands shivering to kneel in front of him and placing his head on my lap, I remember screaming "Mziwenkosi!" I screamed shaking his body and touching him everywhere hoping to hear a pulse

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kissing him on the forehead and on the cheek "Mziwenkosi, please wake up, please wake up!" I screamed again and again until my vision became blurry and then dark. It felt as though everything around me was static. The sounds were fading. The movements were immobile. Everything just literally went dark and Rharha walked into the tragic accident. I remember hearing her crying and throwing up at the same time until my parents walked on to find their daughter holding their son's lifeless

body and my mother's hysteria still plays in my head as though this happened just moments ago when it been seven years already.

Maybe if the entire family was home that day we would've had our body bags being pushed out of the house like what I've seen today. Or maybe they wouldn't have killed my brother, he was into drug business but he didn't deserve to die like a stray dog. He was never one but he adored me. Every day he'd walk into my room and just be an irksome before he hands me a gift or flowers after we've had great gales of laughter or talk about soccer match, I hate soccer but he always forced me into it. Ha ha he really thought I was a brother than a sister to him huh? That's the relationship we had. I know he wanted to protect me from the world but who protected him from the real world? All I know is he got into this business world because he wanted to make money and prove to my father he can be something whether with or without him but him trying to prove himself, he lost his life in the mist, his precious life. Leaving my father drowning with guilt and regrets about how he could've been a better father. He blamed himself, he still does because maybe if he wasn't so hard on him then he would've been alive, maybe if he never planned how he wanted our lives to be like then we would be talking a different story about Mziwenkosi.



I wouldn't have worn a black dress with puffy sleeves and sat on a front row at the chapel with his gleaming timber coffin with fresh flowers that my mother chosen. They're so many "maybes" and "could've" that run through my mind but none of them can bring my brother back.

"Nomzamo! Zamo!" someone wakes me up and I wake up gulping for air with drop of tears at the corners of my eyes "Oh nana you were just having a bad dream" that's my grandmother holding me against her and I grip into her dress that she left wearing this morning "It's okay nana" she says stroking my hair. I look around and taking in my surroundings and I am pretty much still in her room and the rain outside is slapping against the window. "I'm going to make you tea okay" she says and I nod my head as her lips spreads into a warm smile then she walks out of the room leaving me to sit up straight and inhaling and exhaling sharply while leaning my head on the head board. I look at her as walk back holding an elegant black cup in her hand then she hand it to me. "Here we go have this, your mother buys me all these teas with different flavours" she smiles "This one tastes like cranberry"

I smile back at her and taking a first sip and it tastes delightful, my mother buys all these expensive teas and we have different

boxes of them in our cupboard. “Thank you” I breathe out  
“when did you come back?”

“Just minutes ago and thank you for driving me there” she pats my leg under the cover “and you’ll have to drive me back again in an hour” Oh I should’ve know all this tea making was a bribe. “And both you and Nandipha are coming with me, to help around there” Help with what now?

And after she has said that she smiles and walks out of the room. This old woman. I have no choice but getting off after having tea and making the bed then dragging my feet to the kitchen where I find my dearest cousin sulking and packing some cakes in different baskets. We communicate with our eyes and she’s not pleased about us having to “help around” wherever we’re going.

“Nomzamo go shower man!” my grandmother shouts and I dramatically roll my eyes at her before disappearing to the bathroom and taking a shower and striding to my room, lathering my skin with a moisturizer when Rharha walks into the room, she doesn’t bother knocking but she comes in here pacing up and down.

“Okay do you know how we’re going to be helping around and where we’re going? I seriously need to smoke” she raps on and pausing pacing then she restarts again “when are we going back home?” I shrug my shoulders at her before my feet propels me

to my wardrobe and looking for something to wear until I find a knitted collar brown dress with a slit and I don it before pairing it up with sneakers and brown and black coat. I have taken off my weave and I'm only left with freshly done cornrows before I wear earrings to at least appear decent. I am still listening to my cousin complaining and coming up with new plans on how she's going to escape. "Are you even listening to me Nomzamo?"

I shake my head in disagreement and she grunts "I am saying when we get wherever we're going once ugogo is not paying attention we can escape and come back" she tells me and I twist my lips into a scowl and walking out of the room. This time I'm not going to be part of her shenanigans and not ever again for that matter. Last night we escaped and who was woken up in the early hours of the morning? Me. I had to drive my grandmother and saw a traumatic picture that triggered a memory I placed somewhere safe in my mind. And where she was? I'm not going to escape with her.

We get in the car and shutting all doors before I start the engine and manoeuvring the car out of the gate and driving through the muddy road and heavy rain. "Ziyanda was your age" my grandmother starts to talk after we've had ghostly silence in this car. "A year ago she was just working at the palace and somehow the prince fell in love with her and they've

been together since and now they were going to marry, then this happened”

“The prince is now single?” Rharha ask from the backseat causing me to frown and wondering what goes through her mind? No really does she even have a mind to think? Does she listen to herself when she speaks? What the hell actually?

My grandmother glances at her at the backseat and shaking her head before she laughs softly “You want the prince now Nandipha?” she asks her.

“What? No, no, no I was just asking gogo” she says then avert her eyes towards me on a rear view and mumbling her questions about what she has done? Now she can see that I’m deranged.

“Hmm he’s very hard to impress, you know he was not with anyone before Ziyanda maybe he might’ve been in relationships but they were not serious” my grandmother steals glances towards my cousin before their chat and laughter fills up the car while I continue being motionless, drumming my fingers on the steering wheel. “Nomzamo are you okay?” my grandmother asks me, as we drive through the gate and I thought maybe this time they won’t be any cars but now it looks like a whole car dealership. There’s no one outside though, surely because of the aggressive and wet weather.

“I’m okay” I smile at her taking out the key from the ignition and attentively she looks at me before we drag out our umbrellas and coming out of the car, we have to use the back door to the kitchen and upon getting there we find other two women whom are hands on in the kitchen and busying themselves in this sombre atmosphere and their shoulders are draped with scarfs and their heads too.

“MaMbatha you’re back” one says after she has swirl around and she seems relief seeing my grandmother here.

“Yes I came back with my granddaughters so they can help wherever they can” she says and holding this woman’s hand. We haven’t been introduced and it doesn’t seem like we will be because we have been asked to place the basket of freshly baked cakes on the table and start with the chopping. I grab a knife and vegetables and start chopping then they leave the room leaving me behind with Rharha.

“Nomzamo” she calls for me and I ignore her but she’s persistent and I have no any other choice but whipping my head up and facing towards her “Did I do something?” she asks me and searching for my eyes.

“No”

“Try again. I know you more than anyone and I can clearly see that something is not right”

“I am busy chopping vegetables”

“And I am chopping them too yet I am still talking to you so please tell me what’s wrong so I can apologize”

“Nothing” I continue chopping and she comes and stand right next to me, not saying anything just rubbing her shoulders against mine, what an irk. I catch a glimpse at her and she has a stupid smile on her face as she bats her eye lashes “Rharha you always get us in trouble and get away with things. We are here because of you and instead of at least trying to be on your best behaviour you’re making the matter worse. Last night we sneaked out and you got to sleep while I had to drive my grandmother in the early hours of the morning. I am the one who had to see five body bags that reminded me of that day Mziwenkosi was all also in that very same bag and where were you? Peacefully sleeping in my bed and snoring so whatever shenanigans you’re planning now or in future I won’t part take to any of them because I have to suffer consequences and not you but me”

“I didn’t drag you last night though to come with me” This is unbelievable, I cannot believe her. Didn’t she threaten me with chickens? And I had no choice but coming along with her. “I understand where you’re coming from and—

“You’re not sorry”

“I am Nomzamo”

“No you’re not Rharha but you’re apologizing because you just want us to move along from this then in five minutes you’ll come up with another sneaking out plan so keep it to yourself. Do you really want us to be here longer? Because I don’t want to be here anymore. I want to go home and the only way for us to go back is if we are on our best behaviour so please just try for once in your life to do something right”

“I’m going out for a smoke” she announces and then walks out of the kitchen and leaving me fighting with this cabbage here and mumbling under my breath.

Did she say she didn’t drag me? I seriously cannot believe her, I cannot.

“You don’t have to chop it if you don’t want to” a masculine voice reverberates behind me and I turn instantly almost crawling out of my skin with a knife gripped in my hand and pointing it directly at—what? It’s him. My eyes are out of their own volition and my palms are sweating causing water beads to form on my forehead. Well at least I can still normally breathe and my tongue is producing enough saliva in my mouth but I am trembling literally just staring at him. His maleness is searing through me “If you’re planning on stabbing me make sure it goes straight to the heart” What the actual fuck? I blink

at him and he keeps his face marbled and honed. He's actually serious about what he just said.

What on earth? We stare at each other's eyes and my breathing accelerates as I keep swallowing again and again but he just stands there watching me with a knife in my hand and his hands inside his pocket. I breathe out and place the knife on the table and his lips spread into an unexpected smile "Oh so you're not stabbing me?"

"I wasn't. . .I wasn't planning on doing so"

"You're not a murder?"

Excuse me?

I study his face and this time he has taken off his earrings but he's still wearing the same outfit from yesterday looking worn out and all the vibrant colors that were painted on his face has been drained out as he stands with so much hegemony.

"No"

"Not capable of murder?"

"Everyone is capable of murder"

"How so?"



“Depends on a situation and time and place. I could’ve stabbed you now because you scared me and you would’ve died and that would’ve turned me into a murder”

“And what would you do if anyone murders someone who means everything to you?” I try reading his face but he stays inscrutable.

“I don’t know”

“You don’t know?” he crease his eyebrow “I walk to your house and kill your boyfriend what would you do?”

“Boy—boyfriend?” I stutter. Do I have one? Oh yes but we haven’t spoken since I came here.

“Let’s say your mother”

Tears prickle at the corner of my eyes and every muscle in my body quiver and I am suddenly suffocating. If I had the power what I would’ve done to those people who brutally murdered my brother? For my heart to be at ease? For him to get the justice he deserve? What I would’ve done?

“I’d kill you” I seethe.

He attentively looks into my eyes that are shimmering with tears, he invades my privacy in my mind as he enters my head with just one look and attempting to open doors to see what’s in there. “You wouldn’t” that’s all he says and then turn on his

heels and walk out of the room. I wouldn't what? Kill him?  
What makes him think I wouldn't kill him after he has killed my  
mother? Of course I'd—I wouldn't.

3

*“I pity you. Isn’t there anything? What touches you? What warms you? Every man has a dream. What do you dream about? What do you need?*

*You don’t need anything do you?*

*When you go to your grave they won’t be anybody to pull a grass up over your head*

*Nobody to mourn you,*

*Nobody will give a damn*

*You’re all alone”*

I felt the need to wake up along with my grandmother this morning as she was humming along to the gospel song that was already bouncing at every corners of this house—ah shame she doesn’t really care if you’re still dreaming and in your nirvana but the moment she’s awake the radio system will fry your eardrums.

I watched her as she ironed her favourite black three piece while the dramatic hat with fake pearls and feathers was already placed on her couch. “Gogo can I come with you to the funeral?” I don’t know where those words came from. But after few minutes they echoed in our living room I had a revelation

that they rolled out of my tongue so smoothly and she whipped her head up with a smile, a sweet smile that always makes me wonder how many heads she turned when she was younger with those beautiful thin lips and hair floating all over her face, she's still fresh though.

We park into the full car parking outside a chapel with a vintage architecture and my grandmother unfastens her seatbelt before she glances towards me once "you look beautiful Nomzamo" she smiles once and then fixes her hat that's covering almost her face. I wonder where she got this one from and after that she grabs her small black and silver purse and wrenching the car door open before I catch a quick glimpse of myself in the mirror.

I do look beautiful don't I?

And for some bizarre reasons that was my aim. Looking like perfection and I kept searching and searching for the perfect black dress in my wardrobe until my feet propelled me into my sister's room and looking for a dress.

Well I have been told that I am simple but I didn't want to be "just a girl next door"—not today. I found this dress with bare neckline that shows how my body is sculptured and I took time to paint my toes before I wore the sandal heel shoes. All of these efforts of looking prepossessing and enchanting for a funeral? Yes, yes and yes. I heard the royal family will be

gracing us with their presence and maybe that's the reason I wanted to dress to impress? I don't really know.

I get off the car and taking my grandmother's hand and I can see people looking rather sophisticated walking towards the same direction before we all walk into the room that's filled with sombreness and glum. We have to stand on our feet as airy harmonies erupts and men walk into the room clad in all black with their heads hanging and their hands carrying gleaming coffins and I try to suppress that one memory that I didn't mean to trigger, my hands clutch my chest before inhaling deeply for air and opening my eyes and seeing a pictures of this beautiful family at the front with candles alight and fresh flowers.

My sudden prostration leaves me suffocating and with clammy hands. Is the familiar crestfallen song or the hysteria crying that I could relate to? I don't know but I stumble towards my seat and sit down trying to calm myself taking one deep breath in and then out with my head hanging low and as I pick my head up my eyes meet with a picture of a beautiful face that should be broadcasted on our television and she looked undeniably gorgeous and her natural hair was silk and touching her shoulders, surely because she was using chemicals for it. I've never seen something so pure in my life even from the way she's smiling. It makes me want to run my fingertips on that

picture and hold it against my chest as she shows white stones and her skin radiant and by just looking at her I feel tranquil—sadly we are laying her to rest, it would've been a pleasure meeting and putting a voice into that serene face.

The service continues and it's so beautiful. Oh Oh Oh. There he is walking to the stage and clad in all black and those pointy boots that has a block heel, he has a unique sense of style and he owns it. My eyes are fixated on him as he stands behind a microphone and he opens and closes his mouth with no words coming out. Isn't it strange? That most people who stood behind that podium were being pat on the shoulder and some wrapped around warm arms as consolation but no one is doing that with him. Why? Why are they not comforting him because he needs that, the physical touch that will assure him everything is going to be okay. That touch that makes you believe that everything is going to be okay even though at the back of your mind you know. . .you know very well that nothing is going to be okay. I cannot tear my gaze away still. Okay but he's at the front. My own heart bleeds for him as he steps away from the microphone and repeatedly shaking his head before he bends and touching his knees and crying. Yet no one is consoling him? What on earth? They're just watching with melancholy masks. After a moment of listening to him silently crying he picks his head up and wiping his tears roughly while he snuffles then steps back to the microphone and he speaks.

They were going to get married on this very same day. Today women should be ululating and he should be standing at that front watching her as she walks down the aisle with that ravishing smile she has on that picture in a frame. Today it should've been their new beginnings but here he is. . .saying his last goodbye. He had to cancel the honeymoon trip and everything else related to their wedding and instead of seeing her in a beautiful white dress; he's seeing her white coffin.

He blames himself that if maybe he didn't go perform that very same night she would've been alive—the same night I set my eyes on him for the very first time.

As he speaks he's utterly broken each word that rolls out of his mouth elicit tears to prick at the corners of my eyes. Again we stand on our feet as they walk out with the gleaming coffins and he's holding onto her once upon lover whom he lost tragically's coffin. One step at the time, they're following each other's rhythms until they disappear outside and then everyone follows. The entire chapel is filled with hysterically cries and gut wrenching sobs.

I see him standing from the distance and alone. A very demonic voice whispers in my ear that I should stride towards him but I ignore it. It keeps echoing in my head but I stubbornly plant my feet here. "Nomzamo!" my grandmother interrupts the feminine voice inside my head. I am not losing my mind if that's

what you're thinking. No. No. I am perfectly fine. "I am going to the cemetery with MaKubheka you can go home" she announces and I flash a smile towards her and nodding "Or you can wait for me KwaNkomo go have something to eat and help around" Help around again? I have been doing that the entire week. My grandmother made me run around like a headless chicken as I was chopping and serving cakes and tea.

"No I am fine. I'll go home"

"Okay then nana, drive safety" I guess she meant safely didn't she? But then again I show her all my teeth as she walks away leaving me behind stealing glances towards him and then our eyes meet. I quickly look away and start walking towards my car and as I open the door someone closes it behind me with an impeccable scent. I see his shadow on a car window before turning around facing towards him with red iris and his face hard honed then he steps back leaving a distance between us.

"Excuse me?" I crease my eyebrow. He didn't just close my door then took a step back to study my face. Why he keeps invading my privacy with those eyes. "Can I help you?"

"Whatever that you want to say. I am waiting" Me? Wanting to say something. Oh no no. I have nothing to say.

"There's nothing I want to say"

"Are you sure?"



“Yes” I respond boldly and he darts his eyes between mine and turn on his heels to walk away. “I wouldn’t have killed you” I shout behind him and he pauses to face towards me once again, bewildered “If you killed my mother. I wouldn’t have killed you” I tell him but he remains motionless and shoving his hands inside his pockets.

“I know”

“But you didn’t ask why”

“Do I have to ask?”

“Yes” I respond.

“Why Nomzamo?” He. . .he knows my name. But how? Who told him? What’s his name? They called him by his surname when he was being called to the podium.

“Because. . .” I pause “because my mother is the most peaceful person and that’s not what she would’ve wanted me to do. I know she wouldn’t have wanted me to live with that picture of murdering someone regardless of the fact that it would’ve gave me satisfaction but it wouldn’t have brought her back but instead I’d live with the fact that I killed someone and only a memory of her” I tell him and he listens carefully and when I am done talking he nods his head and attempts to walk away “that’s what she would’ve wanted you do Mthabela” I say behind him “To let go”

He turns abruptly and before I can catch a breather his gaze is scathing through me while I am pressed against the car. “You don’t know anything about her Nomzamo!” he seethes through gritted teeth “Don’t dare uyezwa!” his anger is menacing and I hang my head low to avoid the rapid fire eye contact.

“I’m sorry” I breathe. What am I apologizing for? “I was being sympathetic but clearly you don’t deserve that so get away from me Mthabela” How dare he pins me with his eyes and body? How dare he speak to me with a venomous tone? How dare, he dares me? “Move!” I hellishly look at him and as my hands were about to touch him so I could push him, he quickly steps back without uttering another word then he’s gone. Leaving me clicking my tongue and aggressively getting in the car and driving off as though the demons were chasing after me.

Nxargha!

Driving back home I am welcomed by a red gleaming car outside—this is my father. What happened? Why is he here?

I walk inside the house and he’s comfortably sitting on a couch with jug of juice on the table and cakes. The moment he sees me his cheeks spreads into an unexpected smile. Today he doesn’t want to kill me eh? Today we are smiling at each other I guess. We have completely forgotten that I had to nurse my

wounds after he ripped my skin with a sjambok, we are throwing the back of our brains

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hmm.

“Rharha wants to kill me with this juice” he says with a slight chuckle and I have no choice but to grin at him “You look beautiful Rochelle” I hate that name. He normally, uses it to tease me. I don’t know out of all names that could rhythm with Rharha, why did he choose Rochelle?

“Ngiyabonga” I thank him in a monotone not knowing where this conversation is going and then he breathes out and that’s a clear indication for me to take a seat because we are about to have a conversation right now. When my lungs are still pumping from anger of showing someone sympathy and having him throwing it at my face. But was that solitude or was I telling him how to grieve the death of his fiancée? Or was I making that situation about me at that moment? My mother is not dead and why was I comparing them, he was right I know nothing about her. “Where is mama?” I ask him.

He smiles softly “surely impatiently waiting for me to come back home” That sounds very believable because this is what she always does, waiting for her man after she has heated

herself up in a kitchen and suffocating with different spices cooking for him—she’s a housewife.

“And Rharha?”

“Already packing all her bags”

“Oh” that’s all I manage to say.

“I am here to fetch both of you”

“Why?” I ask him with a frown.

“Your mother wants you home”

“And what about you?”

“I was angry Nomzamo and I had every reason to be as your father. What was I supposed to do when my daughters were coming home drunk every weekend?” He darts his eyes between mine and expecting maybe a response from me but I don’t utter any vowel from my mouth. I just sit here with my hands clasped on my thighs. “And I think it’s time you start working” I see mirth in his eyes. I should be thrilled that he’s still giving me this opportunity to work for him. . .with him. You must be thinking I am an intellectual who used to pass high school with colourful colors or is it flying colors? Whatever it is. But I am nothing close to that not even one step closer. Actually I am smart but I hate books. I remember when my matric results came out and I searched and searched for my name

while everyone at home was eyeballing me and my hands were quivering. I glanced at them and continued looking knowing very well my name wasn't there and a lump start to expand in my throat and tears drowned my very own eyeballs so powerfully and I ran into my room and sat in the corner hearing my father shouting in the other room and my mother pacifying him as always. I sat in my room crying until my tears dried up my face and what was a guttural sound became laughter. Yes I cried until I laughed at myself.

"You're not saying anything why?" my father asks me after he has been the one doing the talking.

"I don't want to say anything that might cause an argument between us baba" I respond to him and he nods his head "I don't want to fight you at least not today"

"What's on your mind?"

"My mind?" I pause and wandering in my mind and in my introspection I can only see him and his proximity that made me want to gulp for air in my lungs. And those beautiful eyes they're so different. . .almost catlike but I haven't got a chance to look into his eyes for too long, to at least see what colour are his irises. I can still hear the venom of his voice as he was spitting echoing in my head. I can still see the shape of his lips and how flawless is his skin and he looks like he swims in caramel. But how dare he? How dare he speak to me like that.

That's all he has been doing from the moment he walked into that kitchen as I was chopping cabbage he has been—sigh—on my mind.

“It's nothing baba” I chuckle softly. “I should go and pack my clothes” I perk up from the couch and attempting to walk away when his voice reverberates.

“I love you Zamo” he says and I pause walking and gasping. “I may have failed to show that to you and your sister. And also your brother but I do. I love you so much”

I smile at him “I know” that all that manages to come out of my mouth since those words caught me off guard then my feet propel me to my room to find my sister blooming with elation and sitting on my bed surely impatiently waiting for me with a brand new phone in her hand, an expensive one with that eaten apple.

“We are going home” she announces filled with euphoria “Dad bought us new phones and I wonder what else he's going to buy for us. Do you think if I sulk until we get home we can maybe blackmail him into getting a flat in Davenport or Musgrave?” she taps her hands against her creamy thighs “Or maybe get a car if not that” she shrugs nonchalantly “By the way there's an eve. . .” before she can even finish saying whatever that she wants to say I raise my hand at her and she paused talking and blink.

“I’m not coming with you to any event” I open my wardrobe taking off my suitcases and starting to pack my bags after taking off these high heel shoes and my feet celebrates.

“But dad agreed into it. We are adults Nomzamo. We are grown and we should be living our best lives, come on we are going out” now she’s telling me and not asking which means there’s no discussion or whatsoever “and you looked really beautiful today” she smiles and wiggling her eyebrows. I shake my head and continuing to pack my bags as she sends voice notes to the whole nation about her come back and making phone calls.

After hours of packing and listening to the roguish sister of mine babbling about all her plans for tonight. My grandmother gets home when it’s already getting darker, her son wanted to see her before we could leave and now they’re having a conversation about the cows, goats and farm and the funeral. It won’t end.

We will surely leave here tomorrow.

I am interrupted by a knock as I am making my grandmother a cup of tea and when I open the door I see a young boy standing on my door step and he looks rather adorable clad in a white shirt that’s no longer tucked in and black pants. “Sawubona” he greets with a cute tone and his hair is shaven into a fade

haircut. I am sure he must around ten or nine years old. “I was sent here to look for aunt Nomzamo” For me? That’s me.

“Who is looking for me?” I ask him and he shrugs his shoulders and then walks away grinning and covering his mouth with his hands. I watch him as he disappears through the gate. Who is looking for me?

I announce to everyone that someone is here to look for me and my grandmother just smirks before she allows me that I should go. Does she know who might be looking for me? Yes? No? Maybe? I walk out of the gate and down our small hill to see a car with bright lights. Oh. I keep taking step forward until I see a human frame in the dark but can hardly see the face until I am standing in front of him—what is he doing here?

His ankles are crossed and his hands are shoved inside his pants but he remains with a marble face as I stand right in front of him and I tug the strands of my fake hair behind my ears since I have taken off the head wrap I was wearing. “What are you doing here?” that should’ve came as a powerful tone, almost like a roar but it came out raspy then I swallow once again, swallowing the liquidity inside my mouth.

“I don’t know” he responds simply.

What the fuck?

What the actual fuck?



I gaze at him as he takes off his hands from his pockets and running them through his bald head.

“You don’t know?” I jeer.

“Yes”

“You got into your car and drove here then sent that kid to come look for me yet you don’t know why you’re here?”

“That’s exactly what I said Nomzamo”

“You are crazy Mthabela” I chuckle underneath my breath sardonically “you are out of your mind” I repeat drawling this time but immediately pause seeing the grave expression on his face.

“Maybe I am crazy”

“Not maybe. You are crazy”

“Fine I get it Nomzamo. I am crazy and thank you”

“Great”

“Delightful” he mocks and then takes out a key from his pocket, opening the door to his car “I should go” he says to me. Oh My—he’s really risible isn’t he? He came all the way to what? Fight with me again.

“What did you want to say?” I speak out after fluttering my eyes closed and taking a deep breather and he turns around to

me, shutting his door and our eyes meets. His are bright under the dark but I cannot see their colour, they're glossy too. "I'm sure you wanted to say something so what's that you wanted to say?"

"Nothing"

Is he demented?

"I'm sorry" Again I am apologizing for absolutely no reason. No damn reason at all and I am here being sincere. "I shouldn't have told you what to do or how to grieve that was. . .wrong and I am sorry. If your heart is longing for revenge then I don't know do it but I hope you don't"

"You hope?" he creases his eyebrows.

"Yes" I stand by my word. What's wrong him? Doesn't he show emotions? And reactions? Maybe facial expressions? Is he even human? I want to know if he's deranged or what? Why is he remaining motionless like that. "And I also hope you're not crazy" I continue saying thinking I might get some sort of facial expression from him but nothing. Oh Jesus Christ he's a robot. What if he's a robot?

I mean I've once heard people saying Mandela went to jail and came back as robot maybe he's one too.

"I hope too" that's all I am going to get from him? And again he opens his door and get in, leaving me static here with my hands

holding into the either sides of my dress and listening to his car as he starts the engine then manoeuvres the car on the dusty road leaving me arguing with my own thoughts.

He's crazy, I am telling you.

4

*“The wind brings me to my knees*

*And the skies ask for praises*

*And in exchange I get mazes and phases and a soul that’s  
vacate”*

When the staccato vibration and twinkling of my alarm echoes in my room I’m already sitting up straight on my bed leaning my head on the headboard and staring at the black and white picture hanging on the wall with my nose covered in cream and holding a cup cake in my hand showing the white stones behind my pulvinate lips—I have heart shaped lips. Look at him. In that picture he is kissing me on the cheek and swallowing back his laughter.

I remember that day so well. It was my birthday and he walked into my room with a vanilla cupcake that only had one candle and his singing that made my ears bleed echoed my entire room, he was such a horrible singer and couldn’t get one note right. That was the last time I got to wake up to him singing exactly as the watch blinked twelve am. And after that he was gone it was never the same again. Everything never felt the same and even my mother never smiled the same nor laughed as she used too.

But surprisingly I haven't been sitting here immobilized and motionless because I am drowning in indescribable agony about my brother's death nor am I am despondent but I am thinking about him—robot. What kind of a human is he? Why is he strange? And why those strange characteristics about him are attractive for some strange, strange reasons? I find a man with deep serious issues attracting.

It's only been once that he was close to me, so, so close that the only thing I got to inhale was his delicate cologne but even that was the case he made sure there was no physical contact or whatsoever between us. When I tried to touch him he just stepped back quickly and walked away, that literally ended that heated argument, were we arguing though?

Hmm. . .I need to breathe.

I glance towards a picture of my brother hanging on the wall again and laughter erupts out of my mouth as I get off the bed. Ah reminiscing about him never ever brought melancholy to wash over me but it brings euphoria, all the time. He was truly the light that brought joy and laughter.

After washing my face and my teeth, I stride to the dining room to find everyone gathered around the table with scrumptious prepared breakfast and my father is already don in his suit and his blazer hanging on a chair right behind him and Rharha is

formally dress and looking sophisticated today. It's actually her first day at work, makes sense.

"Good morning" I greet them and pulling out the chair and making myself comfortable. One glance at my father I already know that he is unimpressed about the fact that I am not ready for work this morning and surely the news I am going to put on these white plate will cause a brawl and I might be sent back to my grandmother.

My grandmother—I miss her already and by now she'll be demanding that I make her toast with avocado because she has to eat healthy and right after that she'll want a cup of tea with ginger biscuits. I am going to miss my uncle who always sat on a wooden bench and rolling his cannabis and laughing at the chickens running around the yard as the dog chases them, he'd laugh until he chokes on his own saliva and hit his chest.

"Nomzamo" my mother smiles warmly and looking towards my father to pacify him. "Are you not going to work?" she asks after clearing her throat and taking a bite from her croissant.

"No" I announce and pouring myself a glass of juice from a jug and in that moment the bacon that was in my father's hand falls back to his plate and he grabs a serviette and wiping his mouth. What is going to follow right after that is how ungrateful I am, trust me and wait for it. "Baba I really appreciate the opportunity. . ."

“You don’t” he pesters before all the vowel to finish up my sentence could crawl out of my mouth and his eyes are like fire inferno as he balls his fists on the table “you don’t appreciate anything that I do for you Nomzamo. You don’t appreciate anything”

“That’s not true” I try to stay calm and eating from a bowl of fruit salad and ignoring his wrath that just erupted from nowhere. “I don’t want to be under your shadow so I am going to look for a job myself” I glance up at him once before swallowing what’s inside my mouth.

“Where are you going to find a job Nomzamo? Who is going to hire you? I gave you an opportunity because I know you’re smart. . .”

“And that’s why someone will hire me”

“Without matriculant? Without a degree you think you’re going to get a decent job Nomzamo for just being what? Smart?” He seethes and bangs on the table. I hear a gasp from my mother and that forces me to look towards her. I see that one look I should’ve avoided. I don’t know if that’s disappointment but she once had that look when she walked into my room after we searched and searched for my name on different papers. I remember those glossy eyes after they exchanged cross words with my father. All she did was standing in the middle of my room clad in red leather pants and sheer shirt with high heel

shoes. Yes she wears sophisticatedly to just stay indoors. I've never glorified the life of being a house wife. I don't ever wish to be like her, she always preaches independence to me but. . .she never practices what she preaches. "This is how your brother. . ." Oh he shouldn't dare.

Saying that word "dare" reminds me of him. For some unorthodox reasons an image of him just played at the back of my mind as he held his guitar closely to him and his fingers playing the strings succulently and his lips shaping every word that came out sultry off his mouth. That song was so powerful even the harmonies there were just something spiritual about him.

The way he pronounced my name was infectious. Oh he's most definitely "umkhaya" but somehow a modernized one—there has been renovations there.

"Mziwenkosi has nothing to do with this so please don't mention him" I interject and he seems taken aback as I gaze back at him, not so scared of how powerful he looks on that chair and flaring his nostrils. "He died trying to prove he was good enough for you and I am doing the same"

"He died because he was selling drugs and that has nothing to do with me" he spits back and I twist my lips into a scowl and taking one more sip from the glass.



“And if that what consoles you every night then okay baba. But deep down you know very well that all he ever wanted from you was to accept him and love him, I guess we will never be good enough for you huh?” I sardonically smile at him “I have to go and look for a job” I pull out the chair and perking up the table attempting to walk away.

“If you don’t get a job don’t bother coming back into my house Nomzamo!” I hear the venomous tone says behind forcing me to turn around and to meet my father watching me with a sphinx like facial expression.

“Can I leave with her?” That’s Rharha. I did mention that she doesn’t think. Ever. I am sure she processes her words after she has spat them. “I mean since. . .”

“Shut up Nandipha!” My father yells and she swallows her saliva and throwing a sausage inside her mouth before she shrugs nonchalantly. Well this one is the beauty with brains, she might not ever process what she says but she passed with distinctions and has a degree, a proudest moment for my father.

“Qondisani that’s harsh” my mother can finally speak now and she glances me—it’s that look to calm me down and let her intervene so she could conciliate her husband. “You cannot kick Nomzamo just because she doesn’t want to work for you”

“What else am I supposed to do?”

“Let her do what she wants and if you don’t want her returning back into this house then I am also leaving. You want her to be depended on you? This is the only child that I have now Qondisani. My son died after we had such conversation. You will let Nomzamo do what she wants and you won’t bully her. Nandipha do you want to work for your father?” I’ve never seen my mother like this, she’s on the roll and she looks more like beautiful angry medusa with those glossy painted lips.

“The payment is good ma but. . .” what can you really expect from her “I don’t want to be an accountant. I never wanted to be one” What? That’s a revelation “I want to organize events”

“That’s ridiculous Nandipha. I didn’t send you to school for you to throw ama-party for a living” My father is slowly losing his marbles, worse because this time he doesn’t have his wife by his side.

“If you want to be an event organizer then be one don’t live your life according to how your father wants you to live it” after my mother spat those words she gets up from the chair and walking out. Leaving deafening silence behind and my father repeatedly abusing the muscles around his jawline then he also follows right behind her.

I briskly walk back to my room with a towel wrapped around my head and another one covering my nakedness after taking a shower to find my mother with her legs crossed sitting on the edge of the bed patiently waiting for me and when I appear behind the door she smiles, warmly. "I made your bed and opened the windows" she announces maybe as a way to start a conversation between us. "I thought we should go out today and maybe do some shopping" she plays with her manicure and stares at the diamond around her finger and she twinkles

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blooming with pretty colors as I gaze at her and grabbing a moisturizer to lather my skin.

I take a sit on a chair and turning to her "how about tomorrow because today I am going to look for a job?" I suggest with our eyes connected and all emotions mirroring each other. At this moment she seems to be trying so hard to read me just like him. How come he doesn't show facial reactions by the way? I've seen him smiling once or twice, it was a second but it felt as though it was for eternity and his teeth are literally the same size.

I was still talking about my mother.

"I don't mind driving you and when you're done then we can have lunch" I cannot really run away from this now can I? "I

have something you might like to wear” In this house I am the only one who is not as stylish so it seems because my mother is the most stylish person I know, as though she’s a model of a high end gloss magazine and she does it effortlessly. Then her face is always painted to match whatever colour fabric she’s wearing, she’s just gorgeous.

I am clad in wide leg pants that belong to my mother with a grunge belt and a black and white one arm corset. Who is going to hire me when I look like this? I can hardly breathe in this thing that holds my stomach so tightly and I doubt I will be able to even eat since we are going out for lunch but I look unrecognizable. Okay not really but I am exaggerating, the colors painted on my face just enhanced my beauty.

We have been moving from one location to another and the reality is the real world is not as how I thought it was going to be—it’s not kind hearted. It made me realize that I have been protected under my parents’ wings and I don’t know how harsh the world is. Even the words that are being spat on your face are savage for absolutely no reason. People will make you feel as tiny as a bug for being unemployed and looking for a job as though they’ve never been there. Oh it’s worse when you’re what the standard of the society describe as beautiful. You receive devilry looks from women and they make you feel like an ignoramus for absolutely no reason.

I have been feeling a lump expanding on my throat as the day continues. I have been sagging like a deflated balloon as people behind their computers glances at me once before announcing “we are not hiring” and then continue finessing their keyboards.

“Nomzamo!” I hear a voice screaming behind me as I walk out of the building and I turn around to see a voluptuous woman walking towards me, she’s wearing a floral wrapped up dress and wedges on her feet with her fringe wig showing the beauty of her face and she smiles taking steps towards me before taking a deep breather “I have been running behind you” she gulps for air before standing in front me as I stare perplexed—who is she? “My name is Khensani. You dropped this” she says handing me my identification smart card. “The moment I saw your name and surname I thought it was Nomzamo Mbatha from Isibaya until I saw the beautiful face at the bottom” she chuckles eliciting a smile on my face.

“Thank you so much” I show gratitude as I take my smart card from her and she attentively looks at me searching for my eyes.

“Bad day?” she winces at me and tugging her hair behind her ears. I nod vigorously with a grin on my face.

“Looking for a job. I didn’t know it was going to be this hard” I confess and shaking my head holding my smart on my hand and once again she shows me her teeth.

“I know how hard that can be. It’s very stressful” she says and taking a sharp intake of breather “Take this please do call me when you get time. I am in need of a personal assistance. Well mine recently dropped me like a hot potato. I’m a CEO of a radio station”

“I have time now so can I call you?” I jokingly ask her as she hands me her business card and we both flare up with laughter “Thank you so much”

“Do you think you can come in tomorrow?”

“For an interview?” My heart is going to leap out of my mouth.

“No, no. I guess we met for a reason Nomzamo. You’re going to start working”

“Tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow” she repeats after me “But when you get there then we can have discussion regards to payment and other formalities and maybe you might want to look into things. But I’d love to work with you” she shows me her gigantic smile.

I want to stand on my head and my feet dancing in the sky at this moment as I shake her hands before she bids her farewell and promising to see me tomorrow morning. I got a job. That was—God listen sometimes doesn’t he? I thought all along he was ignoring my prayers.

Returning back to the car my mother is still patiently waiting for me. I don't want to tell her that I got a job right on the spot. I know she'll plague me with questions until I feel as though I am going to be sold to a higher bid, she'll look into things and start creating scenarios in her head, she has been doing that whole day.

"How did it go?" she asks with a high pitch voice and reversing her car backwards out of the underground parking lot before she glances at herself in the mirror to see if her lipstick is not smudged.

"I have an interview tomorrow!" I announce. Oh I cannot keep my mouth shut. The news are brewing inside me as traditional beer and they will explode like fireworks. This. . .this is everything to me. Even being a cleaner at this point would've meant so much. As long as I don't have to go bow to my father's knees.

"That's great Rochelle" she drums her fingers on a steering wheel "This calls for a celebration. Lunch?" I rapidly nod my head with a smile and staring outside the window to see the city alive. With people walking up and down, some sitting outside restaurants and having meals, holding hands and laughing. It's a beautiful day.

Upon arriving at the restaurant my mother chooses to settle down in outdoor chairs, we make ourselves comfortable on

wooden chairs with bare table that has plants in a short glass vase and she clasps her hands on the table. Now that we are sitting opposite each other like this, the atmosphere is slowly becoming uncomfortable and suffocating for the both of us. There's so much to be said but we always prefer to leave it unsaid. "I enjoyed driving you around today and seeing your enthusiasm" my mother says unexpectedly and leaning backwards on her chair, looking rather relaxed and oozing confident and femaleness.

"Me too" I smile at her "mama why you don't ever find a job? I mean you're an intelligent woman and you have your degree. Why. . .why are you depended on ubaba. Is this something you love?"

"Yes" she responds simply "I am not a housewife because your father wants me to be one but it was my choice. Just like how you made a choice not to work for him. I made mine that I am going to take care of my family" and then she pauses "when you were still my little princess you were so attached to me, you were always close to me and you had what they call separating anxiety. I remember your first day at school. First day into the real world without me, I could hear your cries echoing in my head at work and I couldn't bare it. I walked out of my office and got into my car driving to your school. I found you there isolating yourself and still crying. The moment you



set my eyes on me you came alight. Your face brighten. I never wanted to hear you crying like that, ever again. I never wanted you to ever fear that I will leave your side. Then you kept growing and growing. It was as though the more you grow the more you slip away from me. I was losing you” she smiles sadly and lean forward “Before I know it you were grown not so depended on me and my princess was gone. That’s all I ever wanted for you. Not to ever depend on anyone even emotionally”

“You’ve never lost me”

“That’s what you think Nomzamo but the truth is you judge me for being a housewife. You judge me for submitting to my husband and that’s okay. One of the reasons I decided to be a housewife was because you needed me more than my job ever needed me. I had to be there for you. I am happy more than anything in this world. I don’t ever regret my choices. I wake up every morning with a gigantic smile on my face seeing my husband lying right next to me. It warms me preparing breakfast for everyone so we could sit on the table. Regardless of the arguments we are always having in that table but all of that. . .I am happy” she gazes at me with a genuine smile and bright eyes before she waves her hand calling a waiter leaving me here and my thoughts wandering.

“I’m sorry” I apologize. I have been doing a lot of apology lately. I should just have these two words inked on my forehead. I reach out for her hand and rubbing her knuckles and she placed hers on top of mine “You’ve never lost me ma. I am still here. I am still your daughter. I still love you” I remind her and she takes my hand and kisses it gently. We are holding back our acidic salty water that wants to spill out of our eyes, we are in public. Even our tones are kept hush.

After a moment we have our food on the table and our conversation is flowing. This is the first time—I don’t know in how many years I am actually having a conversation so smooth that keeps going on and on with my mother. I’ve always demoralized her in my mind. Pathetic huh? But this woman is actually intelligent much more than I thought. . .beyond my imagination. It brings her into a different light. Oh no she’s not depending on her husband because she’s narrow minded but it’s genuinely something that makes her happy, she could be anything, more successful than him for that matter. Her decision was not a sacrifice it was something that she really wanted to do.

6

*“Hand me a shovel*

*I don’t know want to wait until the end*

*I don’t even struggle*

*I won’t even struggle*

*Stop wasting my time”*

It’s been three months already and at some point I thought that being a personal assistance is like crystalline water at lake surrounded by greenery gigantic trees. But it hasn’t been easy especially adjusting to this new environment and having to wake up in the early hours of the morning and sometimes come home late. And sometimes I am too late that I end up not gathering at the table with everyone as usual. A lot a things has changed more especially with the relationship that I have with my mother who took me out for a makeover upon finding out I secured myself a job, she had a proud smile on her face with her eyes shimmering with tears before she wrapped me around in her arms and then took me out for shopping. Every day before going to work they invade my room with Rharha to style me and I am always wearing high heel shoes and coming home unable to walk—I miss wearing one of my summer dresses and sandals, walking around with those thick cornrows. Maybe I

should do that today since I am not going to work. I can only hope that I won't get an urgent call that I must come to work because I am needed for something. And well Rharha was just as joyous about me getting this job but also disappointed that I won't be kicked out since her plan was coming along with me, ha ha ha, and she is still working for my father so that she can invest in her business.

I am meeting with my friends today—tada!—I actually have friends but I have been avoiding them and ignoring them since I was unemployed. It becomes desolating when you see your friends working and buying cars, getting married, having children and successful while your life feels stuck.

Even going out sometimes feel like a drag.

I move swiftly through the traffic and glancing towards my sister as the robot turns red and she's taking pictures for her social media accounts, she keeps flicking her hair while she sings along to the song the she turns the camera towards me, I wink at the camera before our adorable giggles erupts then she pauses what she's doing looking down at her phone.

“Do you think Manthe is going to be there?” she asks me while she finesses her phone screen then after few seconds she looks up at me “And those cornrows actually look nice on you, you look beautiful with those earrings” What is this? A compliment from her? Okay. I glance at myself in the rear mirror to see my

reflection with a naked face with gigantic earrings hanging on my ears and my natural hair is braided into cornrows that are beaded at the bottom. “Anyways, Manthe do you think she’s coming?”

I shrug nonchalantly and changing gears then she twists her lips into a scowl “I hope she’s not coming, she’s annoying” she says and shaking her head. “Do you think it’s going be fun though?” And how am I supposed to know that? Am I not driving there with her, clueless as she is. When I shrug my shoulders once again she dramatically rolls her eyes and taking yet another video until we are parked outside where I see different kind of gleaming cars, we are here for a baby shower.

We get out of the car and Rharha pinches me as we are striding towards the door. “Karabo’s boyfriend is he rich? Does he have rich friends? Look at these cars” she gasps and clenching her chest before she gazes towards the different shape and colors of cars. “I might get a husband” she pushes her breath out and tugging her hair behind her ears.

Isn’t she gorgeous? Most definitely.

“And what happened to that guy from the event?” you cannot keep up with her love life; she’s in and out of relationships. One day she’s one step closer to commitment and the following day she’s planning her wedding and then it all ends into thin air.

“Things of the past” she chuckles underneath her breath and wrapping her hand around my waist “You look really beautiful today” she compliments once again. It’s a genuine one. I look down at the white polka dot mini dress and sandals that I am wearing and smiling at her after saying my thank you.

The moment we walk through the door we are welcomed by cheerful laughter and my dearly friend with her swollen stomach who screams when she sets my eyes on us. “Omg Nomzamo! Rharha!” she walks towards us and wrapping us up in her arms, her stomach pretty much keeps the distance between us. We have music throbbing in every corners of this house as she takes our hands and leading us outside where it’s beautiful decorated in blue and white, everyone is gathered here with alcohol and the smell of braai meat dances around my nostrils.

“Guys these are my friends Nomzamo and Nandipha” Karabo introduces us to a group of men whom are standing together while one of them is busy with the meat. “This is my boyfriend Nqubeko” she grins cutely with her hands touching her stomach and her man step forward and shaking our hands before he continues with the meat. He’s one of those man with a haircut that looks rough and uncombed, tall and he is good looking honestly no wonder they’ve been having unprotected sex with my friend. It’s basically just two beautiful people

together. “And then that’s Hassan and he’s Manthe’s man”  
What? She’s dating an Arabic man now? That’s. . .and he’s  
absolutely captivating, so effortlessly “Then this is Sakhile” he  
points the one with a short cut that has a curve line at the front  
and dark brown bugged eyes that are fixated on my sister.

After the greeting and introduction there’s already laughter  
being shared. “Rharha and Nomzamo come with me to the  
kitchen” Karabo says and getting up while holding onto to her  
gigantic stomach.

Oh why we came here if we were still going to the kitchen?

We follow right behind her to the kitchen where all our high  
school friends are gathered and including the one my sister was  
hoping wouldn’t be around. We share hugs and kisses and  
laughter as we catch up and congratulating the pregnant one.

“Nomzamo how you’ve been I haven’t seen you around?”

Manthe asks me taking a sip from her glass of champagne—  
she’s the only one drinking it here. Well she’s the most  
successful one and makes sure she brags about it. Not that I  
have problem with it

she must shine huh? Of course I do have a problem do you  
think it’s enjoyable hearing someone going on and on about  
their achievements.

“I’ve been good. It’s good seeing you”

I smile at her and she nods her head smiling back at me with her lips painted with matte nude colour.

“By the way guys before you came back Bontle was telling us about her new man” Karabo says seeing that the atmosphere was becoming rather thorny and uneasy for everyone and already Rharha has left the room and returning back to the garden.

I look towards Bontle with her dreadlocks and looking absolutely gorgeous well this right here is my. . .was my. . .she’s my best friend and already she’s batting her fake eye lashes and blooming with pretty colors on her face at the mention of this man. I gaze towards her grinning as though I can feel exactly what she’s feeling—the bugs insides her stomach that are covered with glitter. “You have a new man?” I smile at her and she nods her head rapidly trying to swallow back her smile “What? When did this happen?” I ask her.

“It’s been two weeks but we are taking it one step at a time. He’s complicated. I don’t know if it’s a relationship but we do have a sex . . .a lot of sex but there’s just something about him” she explains as though there’s something bothering her about this man. What is it? Is the intimacy boring? Doesn’t she love him?



“What? He has small penis?” Karabo asks her and Bontle gasps dramatically before we erupt with laughter in the kitchen that echoes.

“Oh no, no that. I cannot explain. But he’s coming today. I’m sure you guys can be the judges and maybe interrogate whether he loves me because I feel I am catching feelings and with him it’s just sex”

“I don’t think he would’ve come here if it was just sex. You are just overthinking” Manthe says in her soft tone before she brings her glass close to her lips in impeccable mannerism and places her glass on a kitchen island before her cheeks spread into a smile.

We return back to the garden and already my sister is chatting up the storm with that stranger who is good looking with perfect teeth.

I have forgotten about him even the thought of him or the picture of his face doesn’t dance at every corner of my brain. I cannot see his hands with veins and clean nails in my dreams nor do I hear that infectious voice that rolls smoothly out of his tongue. Oh My—I am talking about him. That means I am thinking about him don’t I? I take a gulp from a bottle of cider to smoothen out my throat since it has become dry. The thought of him. Just the thought of him makes me my body feels as though it’s drowning in rapid fire but at the same time I

am drowning in an ocean. But also at the same time that man in risible, I am telling you.

“Nomzamo!” someone interrupts my thoughts and I almost jump off this chair whipping my head up to meet with Bontle who’s standing in front of me “I am going outside to fetch him” she wiggles her eyebrows at me and I show her my thumbs before she dances happily and disappears inside the house and I direct my eyes towards everyone engaging in a conversation and tapping my hands against my thighs to the rhythm of the music.

Our eyes are fixated towards the entryway—not the men though—impatiently waiting for my friend to walk through that door with her man, we are all exuberance for her. I take a sip from my bottle once again but I almost choke and spill my drink all over the place seeing them walking together side by side. They’re not holding hands, I don’t see any affection but Bontle is beaming with a smile as they’re exchanging words while they take steps closer towards us. My blood has stopped flowing through my veins and my eyes are bouncing on this green grass after they crawled out their own socket seeing him.

Isn’t he supposed to be grieving the death of his woman that he confessed he loved more than anything in this world? Shouldn’t he be stuck in his house mourning and crying until mucus comes out of his nose? Is my friend a rebound? Why are they

together? Where did they meet? How they meet?—my brain jumps from corner to another corner with these questions and I feel I am going to start bleeding from my nose to my ears.

Jesus Christ he's the one having sex with my friend? A lot of sex?

Bontle smiles at me and I don't know whether to smile back or hit myself with this bottle in my hand for this strange unnamed emotion that I am feeling. "Everyone this is Muzi. . ." That's his name? That name blends perfectly with that face. Our eyes meet and I feel my oxygen pausing on my throat and I can no longer inhale. I cannot read his face either, he remains motionless even through this introduction. Or is because we are gazing at each other?

My breath hitches as I blink at him and he blinks back and today I get to look into those eyes that have all different shades of brown and they're glossy, they're shimmering in fact and so, so captivating. I keep blinking and still not inhaling and exhaling looking at his beautifully sculptured face with high cheekbones. "Nomzamo" I am interrupted when I hear someone saying my name and gasping for air into my lungs since I wasn't receiving enough oxygen.

"Hmm" I murmur and moving my eyes towards my friend. Oh she wasn't calling me but she was introducing me. Rharha has already mentioned that we have once met him blah blah and I

would've loved if someone can give me a chainsaw so I could just cut off her mouth and step on it.

Out of all chairs he chooses to come and sit right next to me? What the fuck is wrong with him? We haven't seen each other nor spoke since that day he came looking for me for absolutely no reason.

The electric charge zapping beneath my skin under the gentle pressure from his proximity, firing into my blood stream and pulsing around my body, heating everything in its path. I focus ahead and gazing towards Karabo whom is dancing with her man.

"You look beautiful" I close my eyes and my chest pumps up and down like someone is controlling it with a remote. I need to breathe. I want to breathe. I have to breathe. I cannot find words instead my voice seems to be lodged on my throat feeling his breath fanning against my skin "That hair suits you" he continues saying and I glance towards him. To think of it when he was being introduced he didn't dare showing those white stones but he remained. . .not so lucid.

I take a sip from a bottle once again "Thank you" I swallow the liquid inside my mouth ". . .Muzi" I emphasis his name and this time. This time I get to hear a sound I never thought will ever come out of his mouth, he chuckles and those well aligned precious teeth appears.

“I’m not crazy” he says so unexpectedly and I glance at him once again then frown looking ahead. “Don’t be afraid to look at me Nomzamo” What does he want from me?

“I’d really appreciate it if you can leave me alone” I inhale deeply. Oh damn this bottle is already finished. I need something to soothe my throat. I need to do something with myself, I don’t know—anything. I look at him again as he open his mouth to say something I speak out first. “I am going to get a drink” I announce to everyone “Anyone wants something to drink?” They all make requests. How am I supposed to carry all of that from the fridge and coming back here? What the hell?

I perk up from the chair with my feet propelling me inside the house and before I could open the fridge I feel someone’s presence and I turn around.

No ways!

There he is leaning against the cabinet with his arms against his chest and those iziqhaza earrings he’s wearing makes him. . .they make him nothing. I am not going to throw any compliments because he’s dating my friend and they are happy together from what she said. “I expected you to be grieving your fiancée but it’s surprising that you’ve already moved on” I find myself bluntly saying and clasping my hands on the counter.

“And what makes you think that I am not grieving?” Being the centre of his attention makes me further uncomfortable. Again he’s invading my private space with those eyes.

“You wouldn’t be here if that was the case”

“We have an understanding with your friend and she knows I cannot give her more than what we have. We just have a sexual relationship” Is he seriously kidding me? Not when my friend is head over heels for him and surely already planning their wedding together.

“Are you hearing yourself Mthabela? I mean Muzi. Whatever you are. Are you hearing yourself? Do you think she would’ve called you here if that was a case? If she had an understanding that this is just a sexual relationship?”

“I can’t stay away from you” What? I gaze at him with a perplexed look “Just minutes ago you asked me to leave you alone and I am saying I can’t Nomzamo” This bloody robot!

“I cannot believe you tried to convince me that you are not crazy. You. . .you are crazy” I chuckle sardonically and this honestly feels like deja vu. His scent is swirling through my chest as he takes steps toward me. At each step, my heart also moves until it’s strangling me and if I dare open my mouth it will leap out.

“What should I do?” he stands in front me and this time he’s close enough for me to touch him, close, so close that the only thing I can take into my system is him. “About what?” I ask breathless. What am I doing? What is this?

“Nomzamo”

“Muzi” I respond back and gulping for air “Stay away from me and do what’s right with my friend” I seethe and attempting to turn away from him and unexpectedly I am pinned against the fridge.

His mouth hastily imprisoned mine and I gladly receive the joy of his hot tongue on my lips as he delves in deeper. When I am about to touch him, he quickly grabs my hands and pin them on top of my head.

Wave after wave of pure ecstasy soar through me, arousing something so strange within me that I cannot explain and my body and soul sinks into the kiss while my heart pounds at an abnormally high-speed. He weaves his hand into my hair, pushing me further into him as my mouth eagerly accepts. Then he pulls away from me and he scans his heated eyes sensually over mine causing my body to tremble. “We shouldn’t. . .we shouldn’t be doing this” I breathe out and he takes a step back from me taking a sharp intake of breath as though he’s struggling with his own thoughts then walks out of the room.

What have I done?—What have I fucking done?

The guilt starts to wash over me as I stand here still feeling the movement and the softness of his lips against mine. My hands touch my lips and I flutter my eyes closed. Trying to catch in enough breath and in that moment Bontle walks in beaming with a smile. “What did he say?” she stands in the middle of the kitchen. I look at her and feeling a need to confess what I have done but subconscious slaps me so hard against my cheek that I lost my memory and completely forgotten about what happened for two seconds.

“Who? Who said what?” I stutter. I cannot look into her eyes. I busy myself by opening the fridge and taking out the drinks and the memory of him pinning me against this same electronic thing dances around my mind and the bottle that was in my hand falls on the floor. “I am fine. I am okay” I am not. I am coming with a most contagious disease and I am feeling hot everywhere. Is it a disease or guilt. What have I done? I shouldn't have done that.

“Leave that. What did he say? About us? When he came out of here he seemed all over the place as though you put him in a hot seat with the interrogation I knew you'd do that for me” she smiles and I keep swallowing and swallowing my saliva. Again and again. Trying to connect words inside my head to



create a sentence. I didn't put him in any hot seat but instead his hot tongue was invading my mouth.

"He said. . ." He said this is nothing but a sexual relationship and you understand that but that was before I felt his tongue down my throat and I've never felt something so magical in my life and beautiful. "Well ahem. . .he said he's still taking things one step at time and getting to know you. I think he's scared to admit that he loves you" I lie through my teeth and my stomach swims in acid seeing her acknowledging my lies with a grin and leaning against the counter. "He's very. . .good looking"

"Right? He's so beautiful. Did he tell you why he doesn't want us to kiss? Or you guys didn't get to the deep parts?"

What? They never kissed. Is this even a relationship "I know, I know it sounds very odd" Indeed that's bizarre.

"You guys never kissed?" That came out louder than it should've sounded and she gives me a warning look "You guys never kissed?" this time my voice is quite. Too quite as she nods her head. "And when you. . .do it don't you kiss?"

We kissed just few seconds—I mean minutes ago.

Now the air is being deprived into my lungs.

"No. And I can't touch him. We just do it and I respect that because" she pauses and takes a deep breath "I love him

Nomzamo. I know it's been just few weeks but I am falling for him"

What have I done?

6

*"I am not a victim I did somethings that I regret"*

I gasp!

I wake up with my breath shallow and water beads dancing on my forehead and feeling something creamy and wet in between my legs and I want to touch and feel and maybe taste but it feel forbidden, my mind screams otherwise. The moment he appeared in my dream, it was so vivid.

I could lucidly see the high planes of his cheekbones and his square jaw appeared stark as he sensually looked into my eyes and my hands were pinned against my the wall while his fingertips were exploring me—I could hardly provide my lungs with enough oxygen.

I get off the bed and my feet propelling me to the kitchen where I flicker the light on and clasping my hands on a kitchen counter.

How can I dream about him?

Why did I dream about him?

And also what if I am losing my mind, that could explain this wanton behaviour.

“Nomzamo!” I hear a voice behind me and swiftly turning around an image of him just abruptly flashes through my mind - for only a second- I have to flutter my eyes closed for a moment and clutching my chest only to meet my sister when I open them again who’s gazing at me bewildered and searching through my eyes “Are you okay?” she asks me and I nod my head vigorously, I have to avoid speaking before I say something I am not supposed to.

I grab the milk out from the fridge placing it on the counter before switching on the stove. I am avoiding making any eye contact with her because it feels she will see a visual image through my eyes, she’ll see me kissing. . .but I didn’t kiss him. Well if you think about it he’s the one who captured my mouth and I accepted his hot tongue into mine and at his lips’ touch I blossomed like a flower and the incarnation was complete and I exploded with strange; unnamed and elemental emotion. I wasn’t supposed to feel that and I wasn’t supposed to lie to my friend that he feels something for her knowing very well that it’s just sexual relationship to him.

What kind of a man is he? Instead of grieving the death of his woman he’s fucking another one. And why am I still finding him attractive knowing what colour is he? Black that’s him, he’s the colour black.

“Can I also have some warm milk and stop mumbling under your breath you look like a psychopath that escaped from a mental institution” Rharha says and shaking her head before she pulls out a high chair making herself comfortable and balancing her face with her arms that are on the clasped on an island. “Did you see Bontle and her new man?” she asks me and my hands literally start to tremble holding a pot in my hand and placing it on the heating stove.

“What? What about them?” I open the cap of milk before pouring it on the pot. I have to avoid looking into her eyes and say less.

Okay that’s noted.

No eye contact and less speaking.

“Bontle has been going on and on about how much she loves this guy. Blah blah blah but he was not showing any affection or whatsoever. Did you see them holding hands?” Actually no, “Did you see them maybe stealing kisses here and there?” Apparently they don’t kiss “Did you see them being all over each other? Being all touchy?” Well she’s not allowed to touch him for some bizarre reasons but she’s falling for him “Okay our friend is either she’s stupid or desperate but it’s clear that they’re just fucking and nothing more” she says and then shrugs her shoulders.

I clear my throat and practicing something that would rather sound truthful and believe able in my head. "I think he loves her" my subconscious glares at me with her eyes out of their own accord. When did I become a fabulist? "And maybe they have different ways to show each other and that's okay"

"Nomzamo are you stupid?" she blanches and tugging her head in "Did you see Karabo and her man? Did you see Manthe and her man?" I nod my head in agreement "Now compare them to what you saw with Bontle and Muzi. Do you think there's a love there? That man is just using her as a rebound after he lost a woman he loved, don't be a Bontle wena" those last five words struck me like a cold knife in my back and the coldness spreads through my body.

And also "don't be a Bontle wena" in what way? As in I shouldn't be stupid or. . .nothing. Absolutely nothing.

I grab cups and pouring us warm milk before giving one to her. I take one long gulp and melting away the lump wanting to expand around my chest. "When you went inside the house, he followed you and you two were gone for too long happened?" she scrutinize me with her protruding eyes.

Does she know something?

I take another gulp from a cup and it doesn't smoothen my throat enough "he followed me? I didn't see that. . ." I stutter

and she tugs her head in and placing her cup on the table “I mean he did walk pass the kitchen but I didn’t really see him”

“You didn’t really see him but you saw him walking pass the kitchen?” Isn’t that what I said? Then why is she asking further questions? Did she see something and if yes she must start judging me now or forever hold her peace. “How did you see him walking pass when you didn’t really see him?”

I take yet another sip on from the cup and I feel that the more and more I swallow the liquidity in my mouth it turns into something that sits on my chest and expands suffocating me or is it the self-condemnation? I don’t know really know. “I don’t understand this interrogation and secondly how did you see all of this?”

“You might think I am not paying attention but my I am always fully conscious of everything around me and I saw that when he came back he wasn’t himself and he kept gazing at you in a way that he wasn’t looking at his so called girlfriend” And that? What does that got to do with me? Did I point a gun on his forehead and ask him to fucking kiss me. . .I mean to gaze at me as she says? None of this is my fault. Maybe seeing him in my dreams is wrong but rather than that I didn’t do anything literally but I cannot stop crucifying myself.

“I don’t know” I say breathless “and I am going back to bed” I announce and she takes another sip while she looks at me

behind the cup and taking mine to the sink. I get to see her voluptuous body in silk short pyjamas before I walk out of the room and dragging my feet until I close the door into my bedroom leaning against it. Inhalation and exhalation has become such a laboured thing for me.

What should I do?

That day sun was going down as I stood outside the gate and impatiently waiting for my brother to fetch me from school when she came and stood next to me with thick dreadlocks and her school uniform was short that I could see the almond flawless thighs, her white crispy knee socks made her look like an anime as she showed me her teeth and gazing at me with monolid eyes. “Are you waiting for your parents?” she asked me in a sweet tone and taking off her bag to put it in the bench behind the both of us “I kind of need a lift because it seems no one is here to fetch me” she says with a chuckle and I caught another glimpse towards her oval shaped face and chortling with her.

“My brother is coming to fetch me” I pause to look at her, matriculant would stay behind for extra classes and we would leave early evening—this was a way for me to stay away from home as possible from all the arguments that were happening by staying extra hours. “We can take you home” I say kindly.

“Bontle” she extends her hand to me.



“Nomzamo”

“Mbatha?”

“That’s actually my surname” I smile.

“What no ways? That’s really crazy and you’re also beautiful. Nice to meet you” Right after this day after every extra class she’d wait for my brother with me and we will drive her home and that was just the beginning of our friendship.

We were inseparable and wherever she was you’d find me, just like saliva and the tongue.

I shouldn’t be at war with my thoughts like this or even questioning whether I should tell her about this or not, the moment it happened I should’ve told her.

I hear the birds starting to chirp outside and the cold breeze of the morning makes me pull up my duvet and cover myself. I haven’t slept since I was awoken by that ungodly dream. I tip my head back and reach deep in my soul for a semblance of normalcy. Reaching deep into my memory for some images of his face other than the way he sensually gazed at me after our tongues were duel and that memory is indelibly etch there, seeing his face and those earrings makes him look perfect, attractive, free, enthral. Again my fingers are trailing the counters of my lips at the thought of him and my medulla

oblongata has neglected to fire any synapses to make me breath.

Oh Nomzamo what have you done?

My phone starts to vibrate from the table it's a notification followed by my piqued and alarm—Bontle's name flashes on my screen. Does she know already? What will I say to her if she knows about this?

I almost jump off the bed and trepidation waving its hand at me so I could feel it, demanding my attention until my screen unlocks.

“We are planning on meeting again today and if you are not working please do come and tell Rharha, I cannot wait to see you and I love you” I read the message and I didn't know I was holding my breath until I sigh in relief and sagging like a deflated balloon.

Well since I am not working again today but going there tomorrow if I don't meet with them that will be questionable and if I do meet with them then my guilt will choke me at the sight of my friend

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what is this a sticky situation?

Is this what they call a sticky situation?

After a combat with my subconsciousness that has been whispering that I am not to blame and my mind that makes sure that I feel like I am immodest I decided that I am going to meet up with them and Rharha is not coming, she said she has a date.

I take deep breather and getting into an elevator to the second floor where they're restaurants and I am glad I do not appear like how I feel in this black short shirt dress and matching sandals with a sling bag hanging over my shoulders. I do not have to wander my eyes around upon seeing them around the table, they chose the outdoor table.

The moment I take a sit on the table and greeting everyone with exuberance in our voices I see him approaching towards us—what is he doing here? I am screaming internally in my mind. I catch a glimpse towards my friend who's sparkling with a smile. "I had to beg him to come here, he didn't want to" she whispers with a grin before she stands on her feet and greeting him. I expect them to maybe kiss on the cheek or the lips.

Anything to prove that Rharha was wrong but nothing. I hang my head low and tapping my feet under the table as he takes a sit opposite me and our eyes meets and my breath becomes short and shallow, I don't know whether to close my eyes to avoid seeing his face or get up from the table and walk away.

I quickly tear my gaze away from him but my traitorous eyes avert themselves towards him once again to those glossy eyes fixated on nothing but me, he's searing through me and this time I gulp and gulp for air.

"Can we order?"

I quickly say after gaining my ability to speak once again.

I quickly grab the menu from the table and going through it. I can hear voices exchanging words at the background but I can't hear what they're saying. Everything around me is slowly fading including movements that were slow motion at first. I steal a look towards him and this time he's facing down the menu and the sunlight is dancing over his skin and even his scent taunts me with each breeze that blows or is it maybe how those veins appears on his hands and how clean and delicate are his nails? Each inhalation of breath causes a riot to my senses and our eyes connects anew and this time he places his menu on the table and lean backwards to just look at me.

The waiter comes and takes our orders and this time I am going to avoid looking at him or even studying his face or maybe how those cheekbones makes his masculinity appears potentate. All the air feels like it doesn't exist.

Manthe clears her throat and taking a sip from her glass before she tugs her hair behind her ears and she looks absolutely

gorgeous and sophisticating. “Ahem so Muzi what exactly is that you do? I’ve seen somewhere that you make music and also a businessman” And throughout the interrogation they’ve started I keep my gaze intermittently fastened on my phone in my hands.

“I no longer make music” I hear him saying in a quiet and erotic tone that makes me forget why I was going through my phone and look up at him “And I’d appreciate it if you don’t ask me reasons why” there is something about the way his tone was so raw the look just beneath the surface behind his eyes, trying not to read too much into his statement. But I want to know why, he has a gift.

“I totally understand and your family. . .” They did call him here so they could hover him with questions about what he does and his family so they could see if he’s good enough for our friend. What in the world is this? “You’re from royalty?”

“It seems you’ve done enough research about me and I am guessing you just want confirmation to whatever picture you’ve painted in your mind about me right?” I watch the movement of his lips and how his eyebrows furrow with his index finger rubbing the contours of his lips. The same way I’ve been rubbing mine at the thought of him. A rush of a wicked thought makes my body tightens in places that are too inappropriate and I grab the glass of white wine the waiter has poured for me

minutes ago needing something to wet my throat and I can barely breathe with his voice sounding the way it does. “This interrogation won’t give you all the answers you’re looking for about me. You will never figure me out. And asking about my family doesn’t mean you’ll get to know me either and the internet will give you the information that I want you to know but that doesn’t mean you know me” he shrugs nonchalantly and leaning backwards once again.

“Does that mean you want everyone to know about your fiancée?” Manthe crease her eyebrows and I see him stiffen and the muscles in his jaw pulse.

My nails dig into my palms—I want to scream and tell her that the media invaded his privacy. Who would want the world to know about how their partner tragically died? But instead I oppress the words that want to come out of my mouth because that’s not my place.

“Can we talk about something else?” Karabo has always been the one to calm down the storm, she’s going to be a wonderful mother. “I’m sorry about that” she says with a apologetic tone and he acknowledges it with a nod. “But I do have one question for you though” she smiles sweetly to make her way through him. “Do you like my friend?” after that question she glances towards Bontle who’s covered in crimson and batting her eyelashes.

“Which one?” he responds.

What the fuck?

I almost choke on the translucent liquid that had wet my lips and I shove my eyes back into their sockets as they attempt to crawl out and my breathing hitches. My brain is squeezing its self attempting to explode and I feel as though I am thrown under the scorching sun.

“Which other friend of mine are you with?” I hear laughter erupting on the table. Oh so they think that was funny? Ha ha ha that was actually really. . .comical. Let me breathe. “Do you like her?”

The gaze that he gives me could be mistaken for outright lust as he leans forward and his eyes on me but he keeps averting them towards the people on the table whom are impatiently waiting for his response and I glance towards my best friend who’s holding onto to her breath, the emotions that are laced on her face are mirroring mines. What is she fearing? What am I fearing? I am afraid to hear what’s going to come out of his mouth. Is it raw honest? Or will I find out that he uttered nothing but lies on my face.

“Like her I don’t know” Oh my. I see my dearly friend’s face fall into the ground and all the colors melts away. “But I am drawn to her in a way I cannot explain. It’s strange and unnamed

emotions that make me lose control in a sense. I love control but with her. . . I haven't felt this way for any woman beside my fiancée. It's a powerful pull and I just wish she could be around me. For no reason just be in my presence and I could just look into her eyes and wander around her thoughts. And to answer your question I don't really know whether I like her but I know I feel something for her and I know I shouldn't and I am not supposed to feel that way" All this time as he speaks his eyes are on me, his melodic voice pour over every inch of my skin and it felt like a sensual vibration that terminate between my legs. But I come back into my senses.

I feel something watery pricking at the corners of my eyes and watching my friend blooming anew with something flowery dancing around her face. Just great Nomzamo, I really took his word when he said this was nothing but a sexual relationship yet this is how he feels about her? I should've known. I even dreamt about him? Dreamt about a man that's drawn into my best friend.

They seem satisfied with his response since they have grins and beaming with smiles on the table before they're clicking glasses—I don't know what are we toasting to but I have to pick and choose a perfect plastic smile from my shelf and wear it and appear pleased as well by his response.



Our food is placed on the table the aroma dances around nostrils but I don't have appetite. I cannot eat. My stomach is swimming in so many emotions that stays indescribable for now. "I have to go" I make an announcement and they all eyeball me on the table. I shouldn't be here anyways. They're all here with their men and I am here with my guilt patting my shoulder and shaking her head with disgust on her face. "Ahem. I have to go finish up some work" I continue fabricating.

"No please don't go" Bontle adorably bats her eyelashes towards me and pouting her lush lips and I smile sweetly at her and perking up from my chair grabbing my sling bag and I glance at him with excruciating look and that sent yet another wave through me I am fighting myself to tear away the gaze from his face but I can't instead I want to see something. I am hoping to see some sense of apology and sincerity in his eyes. "Let me walk you to the car parking" Bontle also gets up from the chair and I get to see her in those tobacco high waist pants and matching crop top with heels. I bid my farewell to everyone as Bontle takes my hand and we walk together as she leans on my shoulder. "I don't think he was talking about me" she says unexpectedly and I cannot ignore the melancholy in her tone as we walk at the mall with people walking up and down. It's a busy day. "Muzi. When Karabo asked if he liked me. His response. It wasn't about me" she starts venting to her best

friend that kissed her man and yet she never had that privilege—is it a privilege?

“Ah come on you’re just overthinking” I look at her with an assuring look on my face “Just live in the moment and stop overthinking things”

“How can I Nomzamo when he’s not even showing me that he actually feels that way. There’s. . .no chemistry, nothing and yet I am head over heels over this man. I am stupid right?” That’s what Rharha said. “We don’t touch. We don’t kiss. We don’t talk. We just fuck”

“What do you like about him?” I ask her and she pauses walking and take a deep breath then she shakes her head before we continue walking.

“He’s a fantasy”

“You like him because he’s a fantasy?”

“Maybe” she shrugs nonchalantly “and you should see him in his element Nomzamo. Oh my my he’s a very spiritual human, very. I love that about him. That’s his so in tune with who he is and where he comes from. You saw how he put Manthe in his place when she was starting the interrogation? That. . .thats what I love. His rawness”

“Quite understandable why you like him” I chuckle underneath my breath and swallowing this lump expanding on my throat

“Go with a flow don’t over think” I repeat once again because I don’t really know what to say to her at this moment. Then she smiles at me as we continue walking and getting into an elevator.

I have been driving around the city as my mind scatters everywhere and my thoughts wandering in all different directions. I keep hitting my head against the steering wheel when the robot has turned red and grip it tightly when it has turned green manoeuvring the car on the road and by the time I am driving back home the shadows have fallen and the sky has turned ebony with the stars twinkling and there’s hardly people on the roads. My mind has unwind. The warm breeze escaping through the windows hit my face just like his hand around my wrist, it’s warm—comprehensive, gentle. I have decided to format any memory of him in my mind but as I am about to drive through the gate I see a toy looking car parked as I flash my lights the door open and he comes out.

I wrench my door open and panic claims my reality slowly reentered my mind. I thought I have forgotten about him. The memories of him are supposed to be flushed. . .but I am liquefied standing in front of him with his hands in pockets.

“Since you are so drawn into her then why you’ve never kissed her Muzi? Why you’ve never let her touch you?” Those are the

words that roll out my mouth and he remains still and his eyes glued on me.

He closes his eyes and let out a long breath, "I am not drawn into her. And you wouldn't understand the kissing part"

"Then why did you kiss me?"

He pulls in a deep inhale that hisses through his teeth and the sound makes me crazy and increases my tempo and I see passion spreading through his face. "Again you wouldn't understand"

"What is this Muzi? Using me and my friend to forget about the loss of the woman you loved? You're doing this to feed your own empty soul? Why are you doing this?"

"This is what she would've wanted me to do" the gentle tone of his voice runs all through me like pristine rain-forest water. The bass line in it was so low and I swear I felt it through my skin, "I am not feeding my empty soul because I am not empty but full in a way you can never imagine Nomzamo" his gaze is too serious and too intense "she would've wanted me to move on and not grieve her. Is that going to awake her from the death? Will it bring her back?"

"No" I murmur "But that doesn't make what you're doing right"

"What's not right is that I didn't act to what I was feeling towards you the moment I felt it. That's not what's right and

the relationship that I had with your friend was nothing but for pleasure for me and she knew that from start. I am not going to apologize for kissing you because I am not sorry but I am going to apologize for the misunderstanding when I was telling your friends how I feel about you” I need my pulse check or an ambulance.

“When you were telling my friends how you feel about Bontle not me”

“I wasn’t talking about her”

“You are going to stay away from me and you are going to forget that we’ve had this conversation and lastly you are going to forget about that kiss. . .” my breath still hadn’t evened out and the struggle is in my eyes. I am sure he can see it and my voice is becoming shaky “And you are going to help me to stop dreaming about you do you hear me Mthabela?”

“I’m afraid that’s impossible Nomzamo” he watches me as huge tears quickly well up in my eyes and the fall. I turn away and wiping my face, seeming chagrined by the naked emotions and guilt. “Nomzamo”

“Leave!” I seethe.

“You dream about me?” Is he stupid? Didn’t I say he must leave? What is wrong with him.

“Leave Muzi Mthabela, I want you to leave”

7

“I got it now, I figured you out

You got my attention baby

And now I know how

Because the moon don't shine like that on its own.

Breeze, I'll take you there in your zone. You got tonight to act like you don't

Just so know you

I'm on to you”

My skin looks like dark porcelain, flawless and glowing like it has inner lights on its own that sets my upturned eyes. I don't know the colour of my eyes but they always appear dark brown to me. I am clad in a green coat knee length dress with open toe tie leg spool heeled sandals and today is a new day and I have completely forgotten and formatted everything that was freshly stored into my brain, it's no longer there, no matter how much you dig for it but you won't be able to find it because it has been erased.

I walk through the glass building that fascinates me always as I set my eyes on it every morning—who came up with this design

and what was going through their minds when they thought about this architecture. These are the questions that always spiral in my mind always. I even wonder about what was going through his mind when his delicate fingers came in contact with that guitar. What inspired those words that rolled out his mouth so sultry, smoothly and spiritually at the same time as he created that song he performed the moment he managed to grip my attention with both hands. Did he feel something shooting through his bloodstream and taking complete control over his body as he sang that day? And why he doesn't want to make music anymore because he has such a powerful voice, it's so powerful that it makes you travel into spiritual realm and you feel like going down on your knees and starts praying.

I stood backstage and watching his eyes closed and the candles light that were surrounding him illuminated his face, those legs lashes were resting at the bottom of his eyes like half moon—crescent and he sang about God and how we are the mirror of what he is, us, his creations.

I've never seen so much passion in someone's face and emotions before. He knows what he was singing and he felt what he was singing about.

Is he really erased?

Why do I keep doing this to myself?

“Nomzamo!” I whip my head up from my desk as I was finessing my desktop and Khensani is standing by the door, blooming as the first flower in spring then she waves her hand before she disappears inside again. I perk up my chair with my feet propelling me to her office and I find her leaning against her table with her hands shoved inside her black pants “Please come in and close the door behind you” she announces.

Am I getting fired?

Not when I recently just got this job three months ago. My father would have a celebration and invite the whole nation because ever since I got this job we have been distant than we were before, it’s always his way or highway.

“I have good and bad news so which one do you want to hear first?” she asks me and striding towards her chair and making herself comfortable leaning forward and clasping her hands on the table.

“I don’t like the sound of this” I chuckle nervously and rubbing my hands against the fabric that is covering my nakedness. “But I’d love to hear the good news first” I think I’d be able to handle the unpleasant deliverance right after that.

When she sees the trepidation dancing on my face she smiles warmly, “you honestly need to calm down it’s not that deep” she dramatically roll her eyes and then lean backwards and



drumming her fingers on the table “Okay. Remember when I told you that our radio station was struggling and since that was the case some people were going to lose their jobs. . .” Including me by the way. Does that means I am about to lose my job? Oh no. After nodding my head with hesitation she opens her mouth to continue talking “Well that won’t be happening because someone has bought this company and with the knowledge that he has and also just about the music industry it seems he’s going to be taking this place into higher heights which is quiet exciting” I am not losing my job that’s great. That’s a relief. Now I can finally inhale and exhale normally.

“That’s sounds wonderful” I say after few seconds of stuttering and finding the right words that could roll out of my tongue. I am scuba diving in elation because I still have the word employed next to my name more than anything else. “This is great” I sound diplomatic.

“I know right but I more happy because I am returning on air these walls were not my favourite place” What does that mean? I celebrated way too early. “And those are the bad news I will no longer be your boss since I am going back to being a radio presenter but we’ll have a new. . .” before she can finish off her sentence we hear a knock coming from the door and she gets up from the chair and chiming ebulliently “That should

be your new boss. Trust me he's great and you'll enjoy looking at his face every day" she winks at me. Oh she's suddenly being too affable, I grin at her before looking ahead and tapping my fingers against my thighs so that tranquillity can find its way through my bloodstream. I hear the door opening. "Mr Mthabela please come in" This time my eyes are not out of their own volition but instead my face falls off from my neck and my body continues to sit on the same position and static, every muscle draw up tight and straight before getting up and swirling around after letting out a weary breath to meet with him already standing behind me and for a fraction of a second I stare at him and immediately grapple within my head that I have to pull it together and wear a demoniacal look on my face.

It's either the universe is against me or my parents needs to slaughter a cow for me this coming weekend. Wasn't it enough that they have been moaning and groaning each other's names with my friend. Wasn't it enough that this man appears in my dreams and now. . .now he's going to be my boss?

Are you kidding me?

What exactly is that I am doing wrong for such punishment?

I cannot look at his body, I am not doing that regardless of that fact that what he's wearing cannot hide how much of a pure cinderblock he is. I am going to remain professional and comprehend the fact that a six-foot-five as mellow caramel and

milk perfection boss of mine who has slept with my best friend then confessed he's drawn into me is standing right in front of me. I have to breathe. I have to breathe. I don't know if my lungs are being deprived of oxygen because of anger dancing through my muscles and veins.

"Mr Mthabela this is Nomzamo Mbatha. I have told you that she was going to be your personal assistance" Khensani's lower jaw practically hits the floor by just looking up at him. Oh my. I know exactly how she feels. Trust me when I say his looks are not exaggerative but he's respectfully just gorgeous—he's a man.

He's gazing at me warily and dressed in washed denim jeans and white round neck tee with those block heel boots that he loves these one are snake skinned and he has some accessories; how can I forget how much he makes iziqhaza earrings looks attractive on him. I've never found men who wear earrings enticing but it's how he wears them, it's the sovereignty that oozes through him.

I thought I'll be able to hide my shock but instead I am in awe seeing him here and complete dumbfounded speechless is genetic. As though last night we were not standing just like this with tears in my eyes and he remained motionless. This bloody robotic thing that came to ruin my life.

“Nice meeting you Nomzamo” he says my name the way I’ve always wanted to hear it; deep, low and sexy. And today I get to see his lips etching into a smile. My subconscious screams—he smiled, he smiled—and suddenly I am feeling a strain looking at him. Where is my anger? Seeing him smiling changed everything as he’s amplified with charisma. This man is actually gorgeous, he should show those white stones more often.

I guess we are not shaking hands?

“Like wise Mr Mthabela” my voice sounded rather silky than what I had expected it to be causing me to clear my throat and pulling down my coat.

“Mr Mthabela. . .” Khensani.

“Do you mind if I have a talk with MaMbatha? I want to get to know to my personal assistance if you don’t mind then we can talk after about business?” Immediately he interjected before she could finish her sentence and she darts eyes on me then him. I breath has been closed up in a jar.

“No problem at all” she has a sly smile on her face before she stands few more second but when he looks towards her intently she clears her throat and then walk out closing the door behind. He turns on his heels and locking the door.

I am not going to speak first actually I am preparing words that would be like a tornado and turn this place upside down the moment I open my mouth.

I fold my arms over my chest and trying to be tranquil as possible yet the flaring of my nostrils makes my anger lucid and I cannot conceal it. "Are you going to say it's coincidence?" my voice is hostile.

"It wasn't" I need a glass of water with a lot of ice because I am suddenly feeling hot. It's the low tone of his voice that reverberate through me as though it's were ripples sent across water. My skin is on fire, small tingles nagging at my breasts and every inch of my feeling

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the touch of coolness around me and yearning for the heat of his hands at the same time for some reasons. "I made it clear it was impossible to stay away from you Nomzamo" How many time do I have to say that this man has lost his marbles? He doesn't have brain. He doesn't it use to think. "And since I cannot have you because you feel your friend deserve me more than you do than I'd rather be in a same space as you as much as I can" It's the slightest hint of his Adam's apple bobbing in his throat that finally clues me in.

“That’s not true” my voice is lodged on my throat and my breath hitches.

“Which part is not true?”

“I’d like to end this conversation”

“Are you telling me you’re not feeling this? The powerful connection between us? The need to touch yourself at a thought of me? Why do you think you’ve been dreaming about me?” His voice sounds velvety “A thought of you makes me hard Nomzamo. I want you in every possible way I can have you. I don’t know where the fuck is that coming from but I want you. All of you”

“That won’t be possible” I imitate his words and I get to see his set of stones ones again and this time he strides towards me and standing right in front of me. I cannot breathe—I flutter my eyes closed.

“I can still make a decision of not working here but after this conversation I am deciding otherwise. I want to see you squirming and rushing to the bathroom to feel the creaminess in between your legs whenever a thought of me flashes through your mind and hopefully one day I am going to fuck you in this office with your permission Nomzamo”

“Oh so that’s what you want? You want to fuck me?” Where is my voice? I remember I had one few minutes ago.

“I want so much more than fucking you but I won’t lie and say I don’t want to” his voice is like unrefined honey and my body responds in a way I couldn’t imagine. It makes me willingly take a step closer to him and tilt my head to find his mouth, needing the warm nourishment it offers. I watch him close his eyes slowly as my own eyelids eclipse the room around us and immediately I am pinned against the door with my hand once again on top of my hand. The tears. . .they spill from my eyes as his tongue find mines, salty waters mingling. Thoughts of tomorrow fly out of the room. The thought of my best friend, and taking fear with it as I moan inside his mouth. One long, gentle, probing kiss, no sound but his breath, my breath, in this office. It echoes in my mind his voice, his words, his proximity and his body against mines; tall, hard and not moving, as though waiting, almost afraid. My choice. My decision. His patience unparalleled. His gentle caress unravelling my sanity and all stress with it, yet adding new layers to release that tension, peeling away pressures, concurrently building blood volume between my thighs, swelling me and wetting me and spilling me until almost I cry out in pain than guilt.

I break the kiss and needing to fill my lungs up with air, needing to move against him. “This was the last time we are kissing and last time we have this conversation about any of this. We will talk about work and nothing else but work”

“I am leaving her”

“Who?”

I know who.

And why he never says her name? He always refers her as “your friend” or “her”.

“Your friend”

“Bontle”

“Yes”

“Why? For what? For what reason?”

“For Nomzamo Mbatha”

I knew he was crazy but I didn’t know he actually needs to be taken to a mental institution.

“You are crazy!” I huff and running my hands through my hair

“You are fucking crazy”

“Who to blame nana?”

Is that me? Nana? Am I nana?

“You can’t leave her”

We stand silently without any movement and me just gulping and gulping for air when his mouth finds mines and gently probing, beginning to extract all the fury, all the tension and



every bit of overthink that has levied against me at every thought of how wrong this is. What began as tender slowly turns more aggressive and then feral. Time and distance collapse on itself again I have to pull away from him.

“I can’t do this” I breathe out and unlocking the door, running out.

8

Do you ever really need my love?

See you everywhere but you keep changing like a weather”

I’ve never felt a tenth of the desire that I am experiencing with any man than him. I don’t know what kind of occultism he has been using but whatever it is it’s so powerful that my feet want me to return back into that office for some eccentric reasons that remains indescribable.

I stare at my reflection in the mirror and I cannot recognize her—I don’t know this wanton who just waved her hand with a roguish smirk and whispering in my ear something way out of my moral compass.

I wash my face surely for the third time and the makeup that was on my face has faded, I remain denude before putting on some lipstick to appear adequate. “You are beautiful. You don’t have feelings for him. You are going to forget about him. You are going to do this job” I point at myself in the mirror and then inhale sharply before walking out of this toilet that smells like vacuum and returning back to my desk.

I am not even going to bother returning back to this office and luckily his door is closed. As I make myself comfortable on the chair, lithe as a predator Khensani comes and lean on my desk.

“Baby where were you?” I’ve never seen someone so rapturous about being demoted. “Let’s go, we are having something small as my farewell celebration” she takes my hand and I cannot really fight with her “What do you think of a new boss?” she glances at me looking like a delinquent adolescent who’s about to break the rules then she smirks at me.

Nothing, I don’t ever think about him. Why is she asking me that question? Am I supposed to have some recollection of images in my mind of him? No. “Isn’t he just fine? I mean I expected him to show up with a suit and tie since it’s his first day at work but oh damn” she says in a raspy tone and I catch my breath stuck on my throat and swallowing the denim that will need more than just saliva to be smoothen.

“Well. . .I think he’s just a human” I shrug my shoulders nonchalantly but it registers in my mind that my response sounded rather idiotic. He’s just a human? What is that even supposed to mean? When my friend said he’s a perfect illusion she was not being a fabulist.

“Just human?” she chuckles and shaking her head “That man is not just human honey. Not just human but much more than that” has the words roll out of her mouth I can feel myself turning ghastly green but I manage to conceal this distasteful emotion with a smile.

And walking through the boardroom people are already having celebration and already drinking the translucent liquid of champagne and eating sushi when Khensani walks through the door the clapping of hands erupts and the smile that I had on my face disappears when he walks through the door and his aura demands attention to him—I can see everyone moving their eyes towards him and their voices become quiet, too inaudible and his face remains motionless. I wasn't planning on drinking any of this, I see Khensani walking towards him and showing all her thirty two teeth creating a conversation and in his hands he already has the sushi listening carefully to what is being said to him and dipping it into the wasabi before bringing it close to his mouth. I watch the movements of his hand succulently and his mouth as he starts to chew gently then he looks towards me and when he catches me looking, he then begins to suck every digit of his fingers in his mouth. My breath becomes short and shallow and then he winks with one finger still lodged into his mouth. This quickly drives me to frenzied arousal and my heart swells with lust but also suffering from all these emotions I have been trying to lock up in a dark room and right after that I watch him grabbing a glass of champagne and bringing it closely to his mouth and taking a sip, I don't know how the sight of him makes drinking champagne erotic and when my breath hitches I decide to look away from them.

I wish I did not wear this coat dress because I am suddenly feeling a slight layer of perspiration beginning to add to my skin. And if my eyes dare to look. . .these two traitorous eyeballs are already at him again and I am watching his hand holding onto the glass—the same hand that was gripping my wrists and new heat spreads up my arms to my throat and cheeks as he taps one of his fingers at the side of the glass and my stomach is doing somersaults. The heat has spread between my thighs to implode there and my pulse is beating into my throat.

“Nomzamo!” Khensani waves her hand towards me and I am glad that she dragged me from this erotic illusions but I am not pleased that she’s calling me over there. I place my glass on the table and striding towards them. “Mr Mthabela is about to leave but before he does can you please give him that red file, it’s on your desk honey” she pats my shoulder and then look up at him “I promise all the information that you just asked, that file will help you and if ever you are bewildered than Nomzamo here could help you, actually she has helped quite a lot with figuring things about, she’s a gem” Now I am on the limelight. I have no choice but forcing a smile to crawl out of my mouth and following him behind after he has walked out. I take few steps to pass him and unexpectedly he grabs me by my hand at an empty corridor.

“Not here” I say breathless.

“It could be anywhere nana” he says with a quiet

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serious undertone in his voice and he breathes out hotly against me.

I stop breathing gazing up at him and I almost close my eyes but I cannot. “Please. . .let me go” I say this breathlessly and I am so sure that my voice is also a columnist as well. He takes a step backwards and inhaling deeply before wincing then he swallows the liquidity into his mouth and we continue walking side by side with my knees feeling like gelatine. “Why you don’t want to be touched?” I ask him unexpectedly making sure that I avoid looking into his face, I know for sure that he’ll remain impassive there’s nothing much to read there or see but those planes of cheekbones and luminous skin.

“Do you want to touch me?” he glances down at me. Mercurial to a fault his eyes are twinkling with a hint of mischief, his mouth curve with all the lascivious intent in the world. Any traces of solemnity banished to a compartment in his mind that he rarely put on show.

“No” I protest and the grin that was on his face becomes laughter, that was such a beautiful octave sound coming from his mouth and it actually elicited my own. “Ha ha ha Mr

Mthabela” I say sardonically at his tease and he continues to chuckle.

“I prefer not talking about it”

“You have a very mystery character. Don’t you want people to know you? The real you because I feel there’s so much more under those layers”

“What is your second name?”

“I prefer not saying it” I jeer and he creases his eyebrow with humour dancing in those eyes before he grins again.

“I expected you to say your second name is people but since that’s not the case then I don’t want people to know me”

I tug my head in as we arrive at my desk and I lean against it looking at him “You have sense of humour Mthabela?”

“If you continue calling me like that I’ll have no choice but dragging you into my office and locking my door. I don’t know what will happen after that” he scans his heated eyes sensually over mine causing me to tremble upon not seeing any sense of humour in his eyes but he remains. . .palpable and for the first I get to read his face and the sensuality that’s wheezing in between us, our breathes colliding and becoming one.

“You wouldn’t” I broadly say and turning around looking for a file on my desk until I find it turning around to find him standing

on a very same position with the same look on his face. Oh my, he's a dangerous creature isn't he? He has managed to unravel me with just a simple kiss or his seductive, dark gaze.

"Dare me"

"What?" I gasp.

"I am saying dare me that I wouldn't drag you into my office right now and have my fingers inside you" I stare at the magnificent piece of milk chocolate that has me salivating and I quiver with my heavy eyelids wanting to shut "Don't close your eyes to imagine what I could do to you because your imagination won't do any justice Nomzamo" the velvety of his tone shoots through my bloodstream.

"Here's your file" I extend my hand and giving him the file and he looks down on it then whips his hand up to glance at my face. I deserve a round of applause for my braveness because I was four five seconds into giving into this temptation. "I guess that was just it Mr Mthabela" I could see he is internally groaning but he remains with the same emotion and his maleness searing through me.

"Thank you Miss Mbatha" his voice penetrates my sub consciousness as it reverberates in me, low and dangerous, sexy as a sin. It washes over me like rich vanilla ice cream coated in melted dark chocolate, vibrating down my taut spinal



cord. And he turns and walks away from me leaving me taking a sit on my chair to gain enough strength.

God, his voice is the first weapon in his considerable arsenal of attraction.

I couldn't wait to get home and upon arriving there my parents are not around. I am so thankful because I am not in a mood to tell anyone about my day at work.

I walk into my sister's room to find her naked and lathering her skin with a lotion and she eyeballs me sizing me up and down. "How does he look like?" she randomly asks me and upon seeing the perplexed look on my face, she chuckles "I mean Lucifer. You look like he chased you all the way here"

"Where are you going?"

"Out and about" she says and wearing a lace red thong and matching bralette before her eyes are fixated on me "Do you want to come with us?"

"I want to come with you and you can choose what you want me to wear" I am going to go out and I will look dazzling and stunning. Then I am going to gulp down as much alcohol as I can in my system.

Rharha pauses what she's doing and she folds her arms against her cheeks tugging her head in. "Don't bullshit me because if you do then I am going to investigate this myself what's wrong?" What's wrong? Everything is wrong. Every single thing. Instead of responding to her I start to pace up and down the room throwing my bags on her bed and taking off my shoes. Breathing in and out. In and out but still I am feeling so suffocated.

"I never wanted to kiss him but he just kissed me and I couldn't stop him. It felt wrong but right at the same time that I couldn't just stop him. Well I couldn't exactly push him because he gripped my hands on top of my head. The kiss. . ." I pause thinking about it as Rharha furrows her eyebrows looking at me and listening then she takes a sit on the edge of the bed crossing her legs. "It was so good. I've never felt anything like that. I've never felt anything like this for anyone in my life. Not Loyiso. . ." that's my boyfriend by the way. But I think we have broken up. I haven't spoken to him since I had to pack my bags and go to my grandmother's house. I found his endless messages though and message saying that we are done. Arg we actually broke up didn't we? But I am not heart broken. Why am I not broken? I should be right?

"Loyiso is married" Rharha announces.

"What?" I gasp at her "When? How did this happen?"

“That doesn’t matter because you don’t really care about that. Get to the point you kiss him and then what happened? Who did you kiss?”

“At first when it happened it was a mistake and then today again at work we. . .I don’t know what got into me but I just kissed him and he dominated me and next thing. . .I don’t know how to explain this situation. Loyiso that son of a bitch, he got married?” I cannot believe he did that to me. I am going to call him and give him my piece of mind. Actually tomorrow first thing when I get to work I’ll go to his office and tell him where to get off. He dared me? Me?—I am no longer talking about my so called married boyfriend now huh?

“Leave Loyiso and focus! Focus here. You kissed him and then what happened? Are you working with this guy?”

“Yes and then he tells me that he doesn’t love her but the relationship was just. . .for sexual pleasure. It’s just a lot because now I am stuck in between”

“Love who?”

“This. . .” I cannot tell her “person”

“Nomzamo!” she yells and I pause pacing up and down. I pause rapping on and breathing out “Who did you kiss?”

I look at her with my chest heaving up and down, the guilt wanders around my eyes. "I can't tell you Rharha" I say in a lower tone.

"I won't judge you and you know that. I am your sister till the end. Is it your boss?"

"Yes" I breathe.

"You're bad bitch!" she claps once "What? I knew you had it in you. We should go out and get drunk. I cannot believe this"

"And he happens to be with our. . .friend"

"Who is that?" she frowns.

"Muzi"

9

“Life is beautiful and messy and never goes according to plan.  
And the truth is, I have no idea what it has in store for me.

But I do know that, love, real love, is choosing each other  
through all of it.

Every single day.

Beginning and middle and end”

I stand in the middle of the room with my arms hanging on the  
either sides as though I am the clay that’s still needing to dry up  
to become a sculpture titled “renegade, goddess” somewhere  
in an art gallery where people would eyeball me and shake  
their heads with a look of repugnance painted on their faces.

I gaze at my sister as I inhale and exhale deeply that even my  
chest starts to feel painful and a lump starts expanding on my  
chest. I am primed to be outstretched in a cross with nails  
pierced through my palms and succumbing to torment as she  
crucify me. I await for her loathing words and my tears starts to  
drown my eyeballs, I can feel them melt at the powerful acidic  
salty liquid. And this time I breathe in slowly feeling everything  
around me starting to move in slow motion, even the way my  
lashes brushes against the bottom of my eyes but she remains  
not showing any emotion.

My pulse accelerates and it's beats rapidly on my throat as the visual images of my dearly friend's almond eyes and her gorgeous face while her dreadlocks falls over her shoulders like waterfalls appears at the back of my mind.

I breathe and breathe—how will I stare into those eyes and tell her that I feel something so strange and indescribable for him, the man she's fascinated with. How can I? Or how will I? Tell her that from the time I saw him standing on that stage his mouth movements and how his fingers were moving against the strings of the guitar I felt something foreign yet beautiful shooting through my bloodstream. Hmm, the sweat that was shimmering on his forehead caused my very own water beads on an aisle between my breasts. I couldn't get a grip of myself. I wanted to scream and cheer the sultry sound of his voice but my own voice was lodged on my throat and my eyes were studying his features that are drawn in hard, sharp lines and look wonderfully sculptured. That when I saw him standing from the distance holding onto a bottle of water just seeing those veins on his hands, hairy wrist bands and delicate nails as his fingers kept tapping on the sides of the bottle my breath became short and shallow, it was stuck on my throat. My body heat was as though I was under the scorching sun of summer, I smiled at him in a way I've never done before at a stranger, that. . .that was my best smile in my shelf and for only special occasions.

How will I? Or how can I? Tell her that when he stood opposite me in the kitchen and asking me to stab him I felt what is between my legs humming a sexual mantra at the sound of his baritone voice. Oh my. Oh my—the sound of his tone is erotic and exotic but also velvety. That is his powerful weapon before anything. How can I? Tell my dearly friend that when I saw him standing behind a podium looking so vulnerable with tears dancing in those beautiful glossy eyes I wanted to perk up from my chair and hold him into my arms and squeeze the pain he was feeling away. When no one was comforting him instead they wore melancholy masks on their faces and staring at him with sorrow I just. . . I just I wanted him in my arms and it shattered me hearing that he doesn't want to be touched. I want to touch him. I want to trail my fingers around his body and exhale his earthy scent that always smells so exotic against my nostrils. I want to sniff him as though his neck as an aisle of coke.

My subconscious is nervous, anxiously biting her nails and still waiting for my sister who's unresponsive. Then finally the look I have expected from her face doesn't appear, the detestation is not there instead her lips curves slowly as though she's a woman unwrapping a mystery gift then a clapping of hands erupts filling every corner of this room—my stomach that was tightening starts to relaxes including my muscles watching the mirth shining in her eyes and her lush face blooming with colors

I cannot yet describe. “I knew it. I knew it. Hawe mah I knew it” she keeps saying with exuberance in her tone and snapping her fingers this time “How much do you think I should charge for my services?” I gaze back at her flapping my eyelashes and perplexed. Did she hear what I just told her? Is she deaf? Please don’t tell me she has gone deaf or she just suffered from amnesia. Amnesia? Arg she cannot be suffering from memory loss. “I am a psychic. I just knew this” she keeps saying this over and over again. Any judgements? Anything that could at least make me feel bad about any of this. “Wait when did this happen?” she grins idiotically. I had to be given an imbecile as a sister “Was it before finding out he’s with Bontle or after? I mean the kissing, when exactly did it happen?”

“The first time it happened at the baby sho—I cannot even finish my sentence because she just dramatically gasped clutching her chest and the she erupts with laughter until she turns into a tiny insect and she falls back on the mattress, making a squeaking sound. “Rharha!” I warn her. Can she be serious?

After a moment she catches her breath and looks up at me pressing her lips together to suppress her laughter “At the baby shower while Bontle was there? When you and him disappeared? You guys kissed? Leaving Bontle thinking you’re interrogating him about their relationship?” These questions,



they make guilt appear from nowhere, the way she keeps plaguing me with them, after nodding vigorously she snorts “Nomzamo!” she says my name in a slow motion then she chuckles “Is this you huh?” her laughter comes from the throat.

“Rharha!” I warn again and this time she raises her hand at me showing me her palms as she continues laughing “This is not funny” I glare at her and taking a deep breath “This is wrong. It shouldn’t have happened” I grunt.

“Do you really and genuinely feel that it shouldn’t have happened? Why are you saying it shouldn’t have happened before we go anywhere with this conversation? Because from what I saw Muzi is so into you. I saw it Nomzamo. You cannot even sleep these days thinking about him. This man makes you drink warm milk in the early hours of the morning”

“I do sleep and I don’t think about him” That sounded pretty much convincing. I don’t think about him—I mean psh. . .me? Why should I even think about him? “This shouldn’t have happened because Bontle is my best friend. It was a mistake. The second time it happened. . .”

“What? There’s a second time?” she pesters and laughs once again and throwing herself back on the bed. I should’ve found someone so much better to vent to. Maybe a therapist? Or my mother. “Where did the second time happen?”

“Today”

“Today? Nomzamo bad bitch Mbatha” she gasps and looks at me with a roguish look “Did it feel wrong when you did it for the second time?” No. I mean yes. I don’t know. “And be honest with me and yourself. Did it feel wrong?” I bat my eyelashes at her and thinking of my response as she creases her eyebrows and clasping her hands on her thighs “Hmm there you have it” she points at me with an index finger “I asked why do you feel it shouldn’t have happened and you didn’t answer me”

Why it shouldn’t have happened? Because—Let me think. It shouldn’t have happened and that ends there.

“Because. . .Bontle is my best friend” finally I answer. After finding the right words that would make me feel even more regretful. “It shouldn’t have happened” I repeat my words once again feeling regretful and taking a sharp intake of breath still standing on my feet since they’re stubbornly planted here.

“Why do you consider her your best friend?” Suddenly her tone is serious and her expression mirrors the sound of her voice before she gets up from the bed, putting on her leather pants, gracing us with her long legs then she stands in the middle of the room like a super model with just pants and bralette to gaze at me “I want to know why she’s your best friend? You’re my best friend because I know you’ll be by my side even

through my darkest times. I know you'll be there for me, holding my hand and comforting me. What makes her your best friend?"

"What makes her my best friend?" I think and think for all the reasons and finally my feet strides towards the bed and I take a sit on the edge of the bed clasping my hands to the side.

"Because I love her, she's beautiful inside and out"

"That doesn't answer my question" And then she takes a deep breath "do you want to know why I am asking this question?" I nod my head in agreement. For some reasons, for some unexplainable reasons I feel a tidal wave of emotions approaching and attempting to bring me into my knees, alongside a guttural sob. "You are always there for these people you're considering your friends and best friends but they're never there for you, literally. They want you in their space to feel better about themselves. Where was your best friend when our brother died? Who was comforting you from all your friends? No one literally. No one comforted you. In fact you were the strongest one amongst us in this house. When everyone was hysterically crying and mourning about the death of our brother you're the one who called mom and dad including me into the study room to ask what was the next step, you were numb. I've only seen you crying once! Once Nomzamo when you found his body and that was it. Even

ubaba wasn't as strong you are. You planned the funeral. You chose the coffin. You chose the flowers. You were there for everyone emotionally and where were your friends? Since she's your best friend shouldn't she been there for you? They came here on Saturday and then left right after the funeral. Who was holding you throughout the funeral? Where was your best friend?" I don't know. I don't know how to answer her as she gazes at me with an indescribable emotion "When you failed at school you didn't fail because you're stupid. You're not. You're the most smartest and intelligent person I know. You are the one always coming up with solutions for dad's business, why do think he wants you under his wing so bad? But going back to my question where were your friends when that happened? When you failed? Your best friend? Where was she?" she creases her eyebrow "you failed because you spent your nights helping me study but you've never studied for your own work again I am saying you're always there for people but no one is ever there for you, the way you're selfless I want to kick your vagina sometimes. I am not saying I am condoning whatever that's happening with you and this guy, maybe I am but my point here is why are you considering Bontle as your best friend and that's all" she pauses for a moment "And this time for once choose you, obviously you're going to lose something but this time choose yourself because you matter. If Muzi is what you want and worth losing your "best friend" then go for that, I can

be your best friend till the end of time” Lose friendship? I don’t know—this is such a stinky situation. I let her words sink into my brain slowly like powerful poison and before I know it my face is wet with tears then she opens her arms, I get up from the bed and throwing myself into her embrace

she kisses the top of my head and chuckles underneath her breath “bad bitches don’t cry”

“I am not a bad bitch” I chuckle in between my tears.

“Whatever. We should go, get ready and also your “best friend” is coming” she emphasized on those two words and I quickly pull away from the hug to look at her and she shrugs nonchalantly “I didn’t know you were drowning in her man’s mouth when I invited her beside it’s not your place to tell her but Muzi. We go there, you act normal, you’ll look stunning and you’ll keep your mouth shut!”

“Are you out of your mind?” I almost yell and she dramatically roll her eyes, “I am not coming”

“You are coming and that’s final. You need this so we should go”

The whole way as I maneuvered the car on the road while the rap music was throbbing on the sound system with both my hands holding onto the steering wheel my mind was shattered like a once upon time beautiful vase and so are my thoughts.

My sister's words as she stood in the middle of her feminine room in only pants and bralette looking like a supermodel keeps echoing in my head. My brain is constantly distracted as he vividly just flashes in my mind—how am I supposed to think?

As we park on the side of the road, the streets are already buzzing from different places with different music, I can hear the jubilation screams and loud voices as friends are seeing each other after a long time. I take a deep breath. I've been so drowned in my thoughts that my mood has become totally sombre. The guilt. The guilt has become very new friend.

“Remember act normal. Don't do anything stupid. If you say something stupid I am going to punch you so you can faint. Just act like you're not guilty” Rharha says as we walk through the entrance of this place we are going to. It's called Amsterdam, around Florida road.

“I am guilty though”

“I said act like you're not. Drink as much as you can. We will deal with this tomorrow, together” she glances at me once and then look ahead as we keep wandering our eyes around until we find them gathered on the table outdoor on wooden benches, under the gazebo—or is this an umbrella? This place is very artsy with walls painted and draped with twinkle lights and the moment she sets my eyes on me she perks up screaming and opening her arms after flicking her dreadlocks.

I welcome her warmly. You're guilty. I am not guilty. I keep fighting with these thoughts at the same time in my head as we embrace each other screaming. "I thought you weren't coming. You look great!" she grins after pulling away from the hug and her lips has ring piercing and well Rharha already has settled on the chair and opening the bottle of cider and taking sips. I glance at her once and she gives me a warning look.

I am thankful upon not seeing him here!

"You look. . ." the moment I open my mouth the guilt just chokes me. I struggle to utter words "you look amazing baby" I compliment her and she flicks her dreadlocks with her tongue out holding onto the flattering remark with both hands. Then she takes my hand so we can sit right next to each other which is opposite Rharha and Manthe.

"Nomzamo hey" Manthe greets me and today she's drinking from a glass of white wine with a slice lemon then she flicks her hair showing those crispy white teeth. I greet her back and before they place different short glasses of shots and I am the first one to gulp down one after another.

"Nomzamo!" Bontle calls me as I am on my second shot and groaning as it burns my throat and traveling through my brain. Before I could respond to her I am already taking two more shots. I finally look towards her and taking a sip from a glass of white wine. Yes I am mixing alcohol.

“Hmmm” I murmur.

“I saw on the news that my man bought the company where you’re working. Is it true? Have you seen him?” Oh yes and he happened to be my boss who wants to fuck me in his office and I kissed him today, why you’re asking?—my subconscious screams in my head and taking another shot.

“Why your man hasn’t told you about it?” Rharha is the one who asks her the question. I gulp down the glass of wine at once before refilling. That’s what I am going to do tonight. I’ll keep drinking.

Did she say her man? Ha ha ha. I didn’t mean to laugh like that. That was absolutely wrong. What’s wrong with me? Let me call the waiter and get another shots—sounds perfect doesn’t it.

“Well we haven’t spoken in a while since he’s busy. I mean he’s an amazing entrepreneur and doing great things” she responds confidently and placing her bottle on the table. I glance at her and flash a plastic smile before taking yet another gulp from this glass. “Are you trying to get drunk today? I hope you’re not expecting me to speak to your boss on your behalf” she chuckles. That’s funny. Very very comical. “I am joking baby” she leans closer and kisses my cheek.

“Are you sure that this guy is head over heels with you as you are Bontle? Because I’d hate to see you hurt?” Manthe has a



questionable look on her face before hides behind the glass “It seems to me you are more into him than he’s into you”

“We are taking things one step at a time” Bontle shrugs and bringing her glass into her lips before she takes a sip.

“Hehake Jordan Sparks” Rharha sardonically laughs. Wait did she call her Jordan Sparks because she has a song called one step at a time? “Are you sure you guys are taking it one step at a time or you’re ignoring red flags?”

“I feel like she’s ignoring red flags” Manthe agrees and tugging her hair behind her ears “and you will honestly get hurt. This guy recently lost his fiancé, are you sure he wants more from you. He probably just gave you good dick and you’re already thinking about marriage when he’s not there, you will get hurt” I am leaving this table. I have to go.

“I am going to get more shots” I attempt on getting up from the table but Manthe holds me back.

“Let’s finish this bottle first together and then we can get shots. I also want to be as drunk” she says. But I want to get them now. I want to get drunk now. I want to avoid this conversation in fact. I cannot bear listening to this. It shouldn’t hurt right? But why does it hurt? Oh my. I sink back into my seat and continue taking sips from my glass.

“Nomzamo that day when you spoke to him what exactly did he say? I want his exact words because I want to be sure that I am not blind and they’re no red flags” Bontle looks at me. Wait what day? Oh. Oh. What were my lies again? The first time I lied to her what did I say? Arg the alcohol is already shooting through my system and pumping through my bloodstream.

“That day he ahem. . .” I clear my throat.

“Oh shit this is my favorite song. Let’s dance!” Rharha screams and getting on her feet disturbing me before I could speak. That’s more like she saved me. I am the first one to stand following the rhythm of the song I have never heard before.

I look towards my dearly sister who has grabbed all the attention from men on her as she moves sensually, she sashays hips side by side and touching her body erotically before her buttocks starts bouncing up and down, dropping it down to the floor and slapping her thighs moving her hips like a snake then she gets up, she takes my hand and we dance together with my hands waving in the air, grinning with rapture. I have forgotten about him—he’s long gone from my brain. Yes, I have to be intoxicated all the time. Manthe is dancing with us while Bontle is taking videos.

When the song ends Rharha takes my hand and we walk through the crowd with our feet propelling us to the bar as she orders the shots—six each. “Here take this and remember what

I said?" she asks me handing the first shot and I keep nodding my head repeatedly before gulping down the liquid and it burns my throat then five more follows. I blink three times and gathering my strength before we return back to our table with more alcohol.

We are sharing gales of laughter on the table and dancing along to the rhythm of the song. "I think Muzi doesn't like me. I've been trying to believe that he does. But then again from the start the relationship was just about sex, he did say we're just fucking. I was hoping that he falls for me you know" Bontle leans closer and whispering in my ear before she looks into my face with a sombre expression then she smiles and look away taking a sip from her glass, dancing to the rhythm of the music with her shoulders "But it's all good really" she leans once again, trying to be louder than the music playing "I love you friend" she wraps her hands around my shoulders. And for a minute I just go numb and my brain is now paralyzed. I don't know what to say to her. I don't know what to do—I just don't know. "Let's get drunk!" she screams and drumming her hands on the table.

I am stuck in catastrophe situation and turbulence thoughts and for some reasons I want to scream into her eardrums that she should stop talking about him because the mention of his name makes me rather think about him in a profane way. In a

way that would. . .a way I cannot imagine what it would do to our friendship. The “I love you” she just screamed at me will change but it will become rather venomous words that I can never prepare myself to hear. I want to forget about him but I cannot. Oh God knows how much I try formatting every single memory of him stuck in my head and as the intoxicating liquid touches my lips I hold onto to my breathe, the warmth of it reminds me of his lips moving against mines like bossanova in tropical beaches, his breath feels like the night breeze and then his voice is like pearls in a glass of water.

I have been drinking and dancing and Rharha has been making sure that she locked up my voice somewhere in a safe place so I don't end up talking. My excuse is so perfect why I am so intoxicated. My boyfriend just got married. That piece of shit. I need to give him my piece of mind soon.

I am catching my breath from dancing when someone's phone pings with notification and Bontle yanks out her phone before she whips her head up. “I have to go” she announces with a smirk “I think he wants to fuck tonight. He just sent a message saying he wants to talk. Or should I call him here? No. Let me just leave. We will talk soon guys” she perks up from her seat and grinning—she is as intoxicated then she kisses my cheeks “I love you and stop drinking so much. I will call you to check if you arrive home safely if I even get time to be on my phone”

she hugs and kisses everyone before she leaves dancing until she disappears.

Rharha glances at me and I grab out my phone. "I am coming" I announce. Oh well Manthe is endlessly talking and not paying attention. I walk outside and the humid breeze dances around my face. I am so drunk. I return back to the bar and getting myself a bottle of water before making my way outside yet again and going through my contact list—I don't have his number. Ha ha ha. The joke is on me. I am the clown basically here.

They're going to what? Fuck? Why am I even bothered because I am the one who basically asked him to forget about everything that happened. Mxm, I don't even care if they do whatever they'll do. They can do it until Jesus comes back for all I care. Wait my phone is ringing and immediately Khensani picks up her phone, "Nomzamo" she moans in her sleep.

"Oh I am sorry. Are you sleeping?"

"Hmmm but I am up what's wrong?"

"Uhm. I need Mr Mthabela's number do you have it? I want to talk to him about our morning meeting tomorrow" I hope she doesn't ask me any questions. Do we have a morning meeting tomorrow? I don't remember seeing that on my schedule.

“I will send it to you now. Let me go back to sleep. Bye, see you tomorrow honey” Thank God, she didn’t plague with questions that I couldn’t answer. After that she hangs up a call and I impatiently wait for her to send the number and pacing up and down the street. It’s buzzing today. Surprising since it’s a Monday. Do these people have the same problems as me?

I have the number!

I look at the ten digits staring back at me not knowing whether to call him or not—too late it’s already ringing and I can feel the tiny drums against my chest. “Muzi Mthabela hello” Oh Jesus Of Nazareth. What have I did? I mean what have done? My voice is lodged on my throat hearing that he sounds even more exotic over the phone. Is it the alcohol? Is this how he answers his phone with his voice oozing sex and so sensual. “Sawubona” he greets yet again.

“Muzi” I was supposed to greet but I don’t or was that a way to greet? Why these tears are threatening my eyes? Why am I sitting on pavement, butt flat. “Mthabela are you going to—He interjects before I could ask. I want to know if they’ll be groaning and moaning each other’s name. I want to hear it from him so I can hate him. I want to hate him.

“Nomzamo” I shouldn’t have called him. This was my biggest mistake. I shouldn’t have. Why he calls me like that? Why the sound of my name sounds like that when it rolls out of his

tongue? Is it legal being such perfection? What are his imperfection. “Where are you?”

“That has nothing to do with you Muzi”

“Nomzamo I asked where are you?” His voice is colder and scolding.

“Are you—are you going to fuck her?” I cannot keep the dryness out of my voice. These bloody traitors tears. Now I am crying and choking in between my words.

“Nana”

“Hmm”

“Where are you?”

“Answer my question”

“I am many things but I am not a liar”

“Really? Because she just left here coming to you and she sounded so sure that you guys were going to fuck. Which is which? What is what? Where is Where Mthabela?”

“Are you drunk?” What that got to do with anything. He must answer the damn question. “At least tell me you’re safe”

“Answer my question!” I seethe.

“Nomzamo didn’t I tell you I am ending things with her? And she’s not coming to me but we are going to meet and talk. I

have never taken her to my house” Isn’t he random? How he can go from talking with an exotic tone and showing such tender and care but also sound erotic too when he speaks sternly and with a thick tone. This is the devil. If you’re wondering who is the devil, there he is talking to me right now. “I asked to talk to her because I am ending things. It’s my fault we had a misunderstanding and I shouldn’t have dragged this the moment I found out she felt the way she feels and also your friend but it was the only way at this point I could see you because you want me to stay away from you. I haven’t touched her or even fucked her ever since I kissed you Nomzamo”

“Why are you doing this to me?”

“What have I done? Where are you Nomzamo?” Mxm he just wants to know where I am. “Are you safe?” he sounds concerned.

“I am safe”

“Go home”

“I’m not going anywhere”

“Nomzamo”

“Muzi”

“I don’t want to find out myself where are you because if that happens I’ll come there and get you. Trust me we are both not



ready for what I will do to you so please go home” he commands.

“It’s not enough that you’re controlling my thoughts now you want to control me?”

“Go home Nomzamo!” Okay but I don’t want to end this call.

“Why you don’t want to be touched?”

“Go home!”

“Are you a robot?” Finally I ask him and then there’s silence for a moment. Is he laughing? I think so. “You’re weird” I tell him honestly. “You’re very strange, I don’t know. But. . .I cannot stop thinking about you”

“I cannot stop thinking about you”

“Make me”

“Make you what?”

“Stop thinking about you”

“I am not planning on doing that anytime soon. Now go home and we will talk tomorrow when I see you’re sober. I’ll call you in next few minutes to check whether you are safe”

“Did you like it when I kissed you?” Haibo Nomzamo—my subconscious exclaims and with her eyes wide opened.

“Ngiyakuthanda ukuk’qhabula, yebo. Did you?” He enjoys having his tongue inside my mouth that was his confession.

I snap my eyes close and think of the way he kisses me and how it feels, as he lean in and looks into my eyes before his lips fall into mines. Violently yet passionately gripping my wrists and pinning them so that I won’t be able to touch him. I think of the dominance he demands in every way and in everything that he do. I think of all the foreign feelings that fills my soul. As if the kiss was meant to be mines. I think of how he grabs my waist and his fingers stroking me there and kisses me passionately, it makes me feel I don’t know. . .it makes me feel as if his lips belongs to mine and mine to his and completely venerable. I feel as if my body will explode with the feeling of euphoria and erotica, the feeling of being rarely safe in his hold. As somehow he’s meant for me. Crazy isn’t?

Do you think my parents will agree to slaughtering a cow and goat for me?

I breathe “Hmmm” I murmur unable to voice out words.

“Great because I am planning on doing more than just that now go home and I will call you”

When this call ends I start floating in agitation anew. Is she going to find out about all of this? What if she does?

What will I say to her? What if they actually do it? All night? Oh my does he say her name as erotically as he says mines?

Cry Nomzamo, cry!

It feels as though someone slit my head into two and placed my phone inside my brain so my alarm could echo, the sound is pique forcing me to flutter my eyes open as it keeps vibrating continuously. I force one eye open and the sun blinds me forcing me to quickly close it again. But then I have to soldier on once again and flutter the my eyes open all at once covering my face from the sun rays escaping through the windows.

I grab my phone and seeing countless notifications. When did I get home? And how did I get home?

I freeze for a moment seeing a message coming from her— Bontle. Is this going to happen to me all the time? I take deep breathes, opening the message.

“Can we meet today? I want to talk to you” my eyes keep reading the same message over and over again.

Does she know? Did he tell her? Did I say anything last night?

10

“Sometimes in life we find someone who fits with us so perfectly and everything about it just feels like too good to be true.

And we feel the happiest because everything is so perfect with them and they are so perfect for us that we give up thinking that we would ever need anyone else other than that particular person.

But then we fuck up. We fuck up and we make mistakes and we ruin it.

We ruin our only chance of being happy, the chance of finding our soulmate and we consciously or unconsciously just fuck up the most perfect and beautiful thing that is so rare to find.

And the hardest part?

Once it's gone, it's gone and that's it.

We can't correct it or rectify anything, all we can do is to watch our perfect thing to walk away from us and that's it.

We just end up being a broken piece of that perfect thing and that hurts”

I tap my fingers against the table. One tap. Two tap. Three tap. And then I pause and inhaling deeply trying to get as enough breath into my lungs—it feels as though I am coming under the

water. “Nomzamo!” My mother’s voice penetrates my thoughts. How am I going to defend myself in this situation? What to say to justify what has happened for that matter? Absolutely nothing. I am going to lose someone who’s been my friend over years over what? I cannot even describe what I feel about this man for fuck sake. I have to look deep into those eyes behind the curtain of fake lashes and tell her that I am feeling unnamed, strange emotions about a man she has been continuously saying she’s seeing walking down the aisle in a wedding gown with. Well those were not her words. But still. How do I tell her I would love to feel his fingers right next to my hymen or maybe hear the tearing sound with my eyes fluttered closed and my hands held on top of my head and his face nuzzled on my neck and sucking on my sensitive spot, licking and biting succulently. Do I have to sincerely look in her pristine face and apologize knowing that if I could be given a remote or anything to turn back the time. . . I wouldn’t change nothing. I wouldn’t stop him as his tongue invaded my mouth. I wouldn’t stop him from pinning me at the empty corridor at work. Nothing would be changed, absolutely nothing. “Nomzamo!” Again she calls me and I almost crawl out of my skin and looking towards her as she darts her eyes on my face searching for something. “What’s wrong? Are you okay?” she asks me and I pick a teaspoon from the table then put it back taking a fork and putting it back too grabbing a tablespoon. “Nomzamo!”

this time she calls me with a scolding tone and I stop. My hands are trembling. This plate is not placed correctly. Let me fix it. “If you don’t stop that nonsense now Nomzamo we are going to have a problem” I pause and then look at her, swallowing my saliva.

My father is rubbing his hands at the contours of his lips and his eyes are like two slits on his face as he attentively looks at me. “What’s wrong Rochelle?” I can hear the fret laced in his voice.

I open my mouth to utter words but nothing comes out. I clear my throat. “There’s nothing wrong. Why something should be wrong? There’s nothing wrong” I grab a croissant and placing it on my plate before pouring a glass of juice “Absolutely nothing” I take a sip and then lean back on the table and start to tap my fingers again, afloat with agitation.

They both eyeball me and then look at each other communicating with their eyes and body language. They’re in sync. Look at them and that passion in their eyes. They’ve been in love until one day my father went out of the province and had a taste of a forbidden fruit and he planted a seed then came back two months later, I was also conceived. And my mother and Rharha’s mother actually have a relationship. I know how that sounds unbelievable. I mean which woman in their right minds would befriend another woman that her man cheated with?

Is this like deja vu? Ironic? What's is this? Would she want to remain my friend who she screams at showing her teeth the moment she seems me walking through the door? Will things change? What will change? What will happen if I for once be selfish and choose me—what I want.

What do I even want?

They're surely thinking I am losing my marbles don't they? Well let me leave this table because I have work to attend and I have responded to that message that made me swallow rocks and sand this morning and I came up with a wonderful excuse about why we cannot meet up to talk because I have to go to work—tada, wasn't the a wonderful way to runaway from my problems? Absolutely.

“Ma” I call her after clearing my throat and she looks at me attentively trying to read my thoughts but she cannot. No one can gain that access excluding him. I don't know how he manages to get in here, and open doors and see all my private thoughts.

Should I ask my mother this? Oh no it will cause an unnecessary conflict on this table.

“I am listening Nomzamo” she says after few minutes of me completely going silent and staring at the half eaten croissant in my ocean blue plate.

In that message she didn't sound like someone who was typing aggressively or maybe someone who is drowning in treachery and agony—what if they actually had sex last night? What if she got there and just. . .or maybe he just. . .Why does it matter if they did? Isn't that what I wanted. It doesn't seem like it since I went through so much trouble needing to call him and crying and him demanding that I should go home. That bloody robot today when I get to work I am going straight to his office and tell him that he had no right to tell me that I should go home. Nxargha. Bloody robotic thing.

“Nomzamo!”

Oh back to my mother.

“I have decided I am going back to school” I make an announcement on the table. After the conversation that I had with my sister who is not on this table but surely still sleeping and nursing her hangover I made this decision. I am not an ignoramus and I am going to start believing that. “I am going to re-write my matric online and when I pass then I'll get my MA in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture” I have always wanted to study this—culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. And some aspects of human behaviour and



social practice. When my mother was a lecturer she used to teach this course.

“You’re going to do that while you’re still working as personal assistance?” My father chews on his toast and my mother glares at him diabolically “I mean this is a huge step Nomzamo. I don’t want you to fail” I pay no attention to him, already my mind is not here but traveling. What will happen when I get to work? That phone call Jesus Christ do I just lose my marbles sometimes? I should’ve just continued gulping down alcohol and now he knows that I think he’s a robot and that I loved the taste of his lips against mine.

What else did I say?

“Either you choose school and leave your job or just stop wasting your time and money” My father is still talking. I didn’t hear the rest of what he said because everything faded. That’s what the thought of him does to me, blur everything and demands all attention.

“I won’t need your money” This is about money to him? This man. I flash a smile to conceal my disappointment. I cannot believe I had expectations from him. What was I even thinking? “I should go to work” I perk up from my chair.

“I will help you with registration and if you need any help I am here always. You can use my car again today to work” my

mother looks up at me. I am already standing on my feet and she has a sweet smile blooming on her face “I am proud of you Zamo” she smiles.

I return back to my seat “Ma” I call her once again and she stares back at me indicating that I should say whatever that I want to say to her. “How easy was it for you to. . .” I pause. I shouldn’t be asking this. These are different situations. “Was it that easy for you to form a relationship with Rharha’s mother after she slept with dad?” I finally ask her that surely felt like a tornado blowing her face but she remains calm and with ladylike mannerism.

“Nomzamo!” My father seethes.

“Baby please leave us” she sweetly says to her husband and placing her hand on top of his. I hang my head low avoiding looking into his eyes and they kiss before he gets up from the chair grabbing his jacket and walking out of the room after hearing the door closing my mother’s eyes are engrossed in me “Where is that coming?” she grabs a cup of latte and taking a sip gazing at me.

“I just want to know” I hide my eyes away from him “How did you forgive him?”

Again she takes another sip and holding her cup in impeccable mannerism “I don’t know” she shrugs her shoulders “I don’t

really know how I was able to forgive him but I know that finding out about it hurt me more than anything but I couldn't walk away. I couldn't hate her either because she didn't know. Why must a fight a woman instead of my man? I didn't fight your father. I never fought him so why should I fight her?" In this case she didn't know about my mother but I know. I know how she feels about him. I am going to burn in fire inferno of hell and the demons will be cheering in jubilation.

"Do you love him?"

"No. But I am in love with him. Now that's a heart Nomzamo you cannot choose who to love and who not to love. No matter what your subconscious and brain could be screaming but once your heart has made up that decision for you, you lose all control"

"I have to go to work"

I get up from the chair.

"I don't know what's going on but listen to your heart, it knows what it wants" she says and I glance at her, she smiles before she brings her cup into her lips. I walk out. Listen to my heart? That's a most stupid organ.

"Nomzamo" The receptionist meets me half way the moment she sees me walking in and I offer her a feeble smile but she seems vexed and in perpetual blues. "The boss has been biting

our heads off looking for you. You're late by. . ." she looks at the watch on her wrists and then she blinks up at me "By fifteen minutes. Take this and good luck" I grab two doodle cups from her and a box of doughnuts thanking her and she winks at me shaking her head as I disappear down the hallway to his office.

I take a deep breath instead of my knuckles knocking against the door I slightly open after saying a silent prayer underneath my breath but I pause hearing singing coming from the inside. I open the door slight enough for me to hear. "Oh Lalela Zulu. Oh Lalela bantu bengiphethe ngezwe lethu" then there's a pause with a slight clapping of hands and his voice is somewhat ethereal and he insists on transporting you somewhere otherworldly "Siyazizwa izizwe zivungama, zivungama ngawe njenge zinyoni zisho amahloko hloko ayicekezala insimu ka Dingana noSenzangakhona

ayiqhendile mamu sizwa ngomnyaza ka Ndabuko. Oh Lalela Zulu" I have my eyes involuntary closed listening to him and his voice is such a spiritual experience. He sounds as though he's divided into God, gods, ancestors and higher power all in a human form as he sings. After that there's silence. I am still mesmerized by the sound of his sultry and smooth tone. That was beautiful. He demands attention even when he sings?— what a man.

After the eerie silence coming from the inside my knuckles knocks once against the door before walking in to find him leaning against the table so, so sovereign and his hands clasped on the sides with his ankles crossed and his head hanging low but upon hearing my movements, he perks it up “Mr Mthabela” I call out for him and his eyes darkens. I can see the muscles around his jawline being abused and his hazel rapid fire gaze does not leave mines. I don’t tear my own from him as well. Holy Jesus this is turning me on especially since there’s powerful scent of burning incense wheezing in the air. There it is in a metallic plate burning.

I stand here in the middle of the gold and beige shade luxury office and now it looks immaculate and ultra clean compare to just days ago where there were a pile of papers and files everywhere on the table. Khensani was always all over the place. Everything is now neatly placed—it’s actually freakishly clean here.

The main colour is white and sophisticating minimalism style that brings light and relax inhabitant and then the finish is dominated by gray and gold mosaic that makes it somehow become warm and soft.

I stand here and watch him struggling with taking of his tie—yes today he’s clad in a black suit and looking like a true temptation that he already is and charming. I don’t know what

makes him look attractive just seeing him scrambling that tie and after taking it off he shoves it in his pocket and unbutton the last two buttons of his shirt and continues standing in that very same position. “I tried calling you last night and you didn’t take my calls why?” He takes a step towards me wearing his sexy predatory look but then pauses halfway with his face darkening momentarily “Why you didn’t take my calls?” my breath become deep and hypnotic. His scent wafts up to me, pulling me into his spell.

“I brought you coffee and doughnuts” I attempt on changing this topic and redirecting this conversation.

Then he walks pass me leaving me remaining standing in this very same position with doodle cups and box. I hear a door locking before feeling his movements until he’s standing right in front of me with his jaw clenched with tension, his eyes frosty. “I don’t drink coffee and I don’t eat doughnuts. Where were you?”

“Surprising that you think I answer to you” My breath stalls for a moment. “I was out” I seethe and looking straight into those eyes as they bore dreams at me. My breathing is accelerating at every moment because of his proximity. “I was out trying to forget about you” My honesty is like unrefined honey and blinking up at him and he looks at me as if my response was like a punch on a throat then he smirks—he’s been doing a lot of

that lately hmm. But this particular smirk is sensual. “I heard you singing” Once again I try redirecting the conversation too scared of what will come out of my mouth. I might end up telling him things I am not supposed to. I don’t think when I am around him remember?

“I know that’s why I stopped. That was a private conversation” My dry mouth pools with saliva tasting metallic and his gaze doesn’t leave mine. I press my legs together and his eyes travel down looking at me seeing me struggling before he looks up at me again, without saying anything. The amount of power he has over me is shocking. Even my father doesn’t make me feel like this—well he’s not supposed to make me feel like this. “Were you able to?” he creases his eyebrows. He’s so close, very close.

“What?” I am breathlessly “Please step away Muzi. I cannot breathe with you. . .so close to me” I hang my head low afraid to look into his eyes. But I cannot keep them away either. I find him still looking at me and I exhale in a rush

my heartbeat not quite steady and I am evolving into an exquisite bliss upon meeting these wide glossy eyes and my eyes are now on his round lips, they’re enticing.

I press my legs together and my breathing ragged. The heat from our bodies mixes in with the tension of the standoff, electrifying the air. He watches the rise and fall of my breast

and the perk of my nipples under this silk olive ruched slip dress. I exhale a breath that I unknowingly held and swallow. My mouth dripping, but my throat is dry. “I asked you a question Nomzamo” My body. My body ignite with rapid fire. If he doesn’t touch me even if it doesn’t last that long I am going to faint. I’ve never longed to be touched in my life.

The coffee and doughnuts in my hands are going to fall at how my hands are trembling. As if he could read my mind he takes the doodle cups and a box, one of his fingers touches me swiftly and that was sizzling. I gasp for air and snapping my eyes closed with my knees gelatine like. “Were you able to?” Again he asks. I can’t see him but I can hear his movement and the sound of the cups dropping in the bin. Did he throw away the coffee and doughnuts? This man.

I open my eyes and he looks down at me as though gazing into my soul. “Able to what?”

“Forget about me”

“No” I whisper boldly and meeting his gaze.

Nomzamo—that’s my inner goddess, the one that was given the name of being a bad bitch, she scolds at me wearing red lingerie that shows her perking nipples. And I cannot ignite the disapproval look on her face and a scowl.



When he takes another step forward I internally cry out and sensation sweeps through my body, spikes, and tightens all the muscles around my groin. “How loud do you scream?” his voice is filled with wonder.

“Scream?” I frown at him and upon seeing the perplex dancing on my face and the innocence he smirks lasciviously at me and then lean closer so close that his warm breath is like breeze on my face. Everything south of my navel contracts. This is becoming unbearable. “Scream in what way?”

“Do you touch yourself Nomzamo?”

“Touch—touch myself?” I blink up at him.

“Yes. Do you?” I look at him, naivety. Touch myself? In what way. When I moisturizer my body I do touch myself. Why should I scream? Am I supposed to scream. I don’t know why I am feeling abashed about not touching myself. But my grandmother said it’s forbidden when you touch that. . .private place. Apparently you could go blind and Rharha laughed at her face when she said that before she grinned and taking a sip from a glass of juice.

I breathe. And breathe. Looking at him and swallowing my saliva. Now it makes sense. Touch myself sensually. Oh Jesus.

“Nana”

“Hmm” I murmur softly.

“Do you?”

Waves of lust wash through me and he groans underneath his breath when we hear a knock coming through the door it's like a superhero saving me from this intensity but his eyes stay fiercely locked on mine. “What?” he growls and I drop my eyes to my feet that are painted with white gel that was highly recommended by my sister because it makes your feet appear beguiling.

“Mr Mthabela we are about to go on air and you're doing an interview with us this morning I don't know if you remember” the voice says from the outside and he responds back announcing that he's coming then we hear the footsteps fading.

His nose runs the length of mine until a small gasp escapes me. His mouth consumes my air and excitement. As he takes me.

His thumbs press against my jaw and his fingers curl around my face, forcing me to open for him—I itch to touch him. When I submit to his demand he groans. My body is soft and pliant but in control. As every thrust of our tongue searches for more, his hips grind against mine and my hands are locked around his.

Ripping his mouth away from mine, my breasts heave as I attempt to calm myself down. His fingers feather down my spine and I shiver with goosebumps rising over my silky skin.

“We should go” As I am still catching my breath he’s already wearing his blazer back and his tie hanging from his pocket, he gazes down at me,

his lips curled in an arrogant, I-so-own-you smile. I pretend to be unaffected. Especially since he’s showing me those set of white stones that makes him gorgeous.

That was a second. . .third—I mean forth time we actually kissed and my lips are still twitching with euphoria as I am sitting distance from him with my hands clasped on my thighs and he looks utterly sensual and compelling sprawled in a leather chair as Khensani puts on her headsets and simultaneously fixes her microphone, she seems pretty agitated yet beautiful in her pink dress that’s matching her bunny ears hairband looking like a hibiscus—she has a very interesting personality and living in her own cartoon world.

I find his eyes fixated on me and I gaze back and appreciating the beauty of his flexing biceps that sends tingle racing through me before quickly looking at the watch on top of the booth that has turned red and eight am and neon light right next to it turns on saying on air.

“Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen you’re listening to Spillin’ The Coffee our breakfast show with Khensani on 98.7FM

your favorite radio station on the rocks of Umhlanga. And Oh man it feels good to be back” she says with elation in her tone, she has a husky voice “Today we are joined by Mr Mthabela, a prominent businessman and also an amazing artist. Mr Mthabela it feels good to have you here, how are you?” Khensani says out of impulse.

“When you call me like that you make me it takes away who I am, ngathi ngiyikhehla. Please call me Muzi” There’s humour in his tone and his lips curls into a smirk but his eyes are fixated on me. The sound of his baritone voice reverberates and I can only imagine how many women are fascinated and day dreaming about him. Him, whispering in their ears erotically. Do they touch themselves and scream? My subconscious revisits that freshly stored memory. Touch myself? How do I even begin doing that. It sounds strange and. . .I cannot imagine myself doing it.

“Well you’re my boss and I don’t want to lose my job” Khensani jokes and chuckles erupts in the booth as she relaxes on her chair and showing her wonderful teeth “Tell me when did you realize that you have a gift which is singing? Did you wake up one morning and decided you want to sing? How did it happen?” I’ve always wanted to know this. I wait for his

response patiently and ready to carefully listen to what he has to say.

“I realized when I was given this body by my ancestors”

“Can you elaborate that for me?”

“Before you come into this world you are given this body by your ancestors. Which means that you are your ancestors. We carry them inside us. They live in our DNA, our blood and bones. Whatever gifts that they had they give us. Their traumas reside in us as well. If you look deeply into the palm of your hand you see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of these people of what they were. The gifts they carried, since they can longer use them they give them to you, my grandfather gave me a voice to heal”

“Would you say you have passion for music since you were given this gift to heal?”

“No. I don’t have passion for music and I am being honest because most people are always expecting me to say this is something that I love. But truthfully I have no passion for it or whatsoever but since this is how I heal people then I have to use this gift. And this is how I can also communicate with my ancestors” Listening to him speaking with so much confident make me see him on a different light with how much he’s so knowledgeable about his history. He’s not afraid to be himself in a room full of people. This is him. And no one can take that away from him and there’s something so attractive about how much of a traditionalist he is.

“Do you consider yourself a spiritual person?”

He winces and trails his index finger on the contours of his lips then he glances at me with his eyes full of adoration and lust—it’s a strange combination of emotions but it makes sense. “I don’t know” he pauses “Okay let me just say I am spiritual because I am in that journey. Mostly just knowing how to be in tune with my ancestors without being afraid and myself. I guess I am spiritual”

“I think you’re very spiritual and enlightened human. Should we expect new music from you?”

“Sadly I won’t be making music anymore or performing for that matter” What? He was serious.

“What why?”

“I prefer not answering that question”

“I’m so heartbroken” Khensani says “I am about to let you go I want to know why you decided to be hands on with this business unlike the rest of the businesses that you have? Is it because radio and music works together? Or is the fact that you still want to be connected to music regardless of you not making it anymore?”

“No” And then his eyes casts towards me “I am here to get what seems to belong to me” Every word makes me light headed and tantalize and I am vaguely aware what is he talking about. Well maybe. Or I could be reading too much into things. I mean I tend to overly think things these days.

“I know this might be a sensitive topic for you but you recently lost your fiancée. How is that been for you? Healing?”

“She made it so easy for me to heal and also my grieving process. At first it didn’t make sense to me but now it does”  
That’s a very confusing answer. I am left bewildered.

How did she make it easy for him?

“Before I can let you go what song would you like to request?”

“A song by Urban Village called Ubaba”

“Ladies and Gentlemen this is Ubaba by Urban Village and Muzi Mthabela thank you for joining us today and hopeful you reconsider your decision about making music” And by the time their slots ends my mind is scattered in south, east and west directions, just thinking. One I am thinking about the fact that I was asked if I touch myself and if I scream. And secondly I am thinking about that response—what seems to belong to him? The company? What is it? And thirdly I am thinking about my dearly friend who has been calling me endlessly since I sent her message that I cannot see her today. As we speak my phone is vibrating and her name flashes on my screen.



I excuse myself and he glances at me yet still talking to someone. I take a deep breath before pressing my phone against my ear after sliding my fingers to the green button. “Bontle. Heyyyy” That excitement sounded like silicon breasts didn’t it—fake. “How are you, are you okay?” I try navigating whether she knows or not.

“I’m good baby. Can I bring you lunch tomorrow at work since you said you are busy? I need someone to talk to” Bring me lunch at work where a man she ended things off just last night works? Hmm.

“What’s wrong?” I pretend that I don’t know. Well I should get an award for being an amazing actress right? Or maybe do auditions? Or maybe—Honestly I blabbing because of my agitation.

I hear her taking a sharp intake of breath “He ended things last night and. . .He never had feelings for me and I kind of knew but just ignored it” she pauses “Anyways leave the sad stuff. Lunch?” Oh my the guilt that I thought has long evaporated appears from nowhere.

“Ahem yeah sure. I guess tomorrow then” I find myself saying. I already regret those words hearing her blowing kisses over the phone and announcing she cannot wait to see me before she

ends the call. Turning around he's standing behind me. There's so much I want to talk to him about. Especially after that interview. I want to peel layers into him. But then again. . .sigh. I stare and my lungs exhale hot breath.

"Can we talk?" I mutter dryly and he doesn't say any word but just walk pass me and I guess I should follow right behind him.

“I just love how sometimes in life you could be currently going through the storms and the universe decides to bless you with someone who shows you a different kind of love.

Someone who is patient enough to help heal your scars.

Even if things were to end, you will be eternally grateful for that experience because for the first time, you know something that genuine, actually does exist”

We get to the office I decide to close the door behind then he leans against his table the same way I found him earlier on clasping his hands and remaining impassive. “That was a great interview” I don’t know where to even begin with this conversation. “Last night did you. . .”

“I didn’t sleep with her”

How did he know that is what I wanted to ask? Is he a Rharha too? Well she thinks she’s a physic now. “Well she tried but I didn’t do anything to her besides having the conversation about why it had to end” Why it had to end? What is that supposed to mean? Does she know? “And no I didn’t tell her anything because I know that would’ve made you uncomfortable and I am trying to win you so I am not trying to jeopardize this” What am I? A grand prize? An airtime that you win after playing some game on your phone?

“How was she?” I am worried about her more than anything. I want to know if she was hurt. Or did she just. . .I don’t know.

I have been questioning myself about why I consider her my best friend and yet I still don’t have answers to this. Instead I just think about what that physic I call a sister said to me.

Choosing myself? I’ve never done that.

“I don’t want to talk about her with you Nomzamo. It ended. And that’s just it” he says his voice expressionless “But I want to know how are you? How do you feel?”

“Your interview was amazing”

“You’re not going to do that with me. How do you feel?”

“It doesn’t matter” I shrug nonchalantly.

“It matters to me. How you feel matters to me. What you think matters to me so what is what? Where is where? And which is which?” He actually has a sense of humour, doesn’t he? I want to laugh remembering how intoxicated I was having that conversation with him. I try hard to stifle the giggle that threatens to bubble up. His face softens as I struggle to keep a straight face, and I see a trace of a smile kiss his beautifully sculptured lips. “Do we have a chance to explore what’s this between us? Or you feel I don’t deserve you? If you do feel that way I wouldn’t blame you because you’re absolutely perfect”

“I am not perfect Mthabela”

“That’s what you think. How do you feel?”

I look his way and our eyes lock. And in that brief moment, I’m paralyzed, staring at the impossibly handsome man who gazes at me with some unfathomable emotion. His gaze hot, burning into me, and we’re lost for a moment staring at each other. How does he think that I am perfect when he looks like he’s the one invented that word, perfection. Me? Perfect. Deep down inside me sweet joy slowly unfurls like a morning glory in the early dawn.

“When I—When I. . I” I clear my throat stuttering “When I touch myself. What is going to happen? Will I feel something? Wouldn’t I go blind?”

He narrows his eyebrows “You’ve never touched yourself before?”

And why in the Garden Of Eden does he look thunderbolt?

I was as pink as a hibiscus and fiddling with my fingers as his lips formed words that were laced with amazement and bolt from blue upon my confession—was that even a confession that I’ve never touched myself? And it made me feel inexperienced hearing the sound of his voice as he kept repeatedly asking me that question and I ran out of that office as though I was being

chased by demons wanting to drag me to hell and never looked back. I need to get a white face paint and red nose.

The entire house is filled with deafening silence and all the lights are off as I walk through my room. I went to check if everyone was sleeping because I don't want any disturbance of footsteps or the sound of anyone's voice walking past the passage to disturb me or scare me.

I cannot believe I am even considering doing this.

The sound of his ethereal voice that sounds like crystalline water filled with diamonds at a beautiful lake starts playing from my speaker in my room. The only thing illuminating this dark room are the scented candles as I slowly sink on the edge of the bed feeling the sound of his voice igniting beautiful sensations that travels and shoot through my bloodstream. I comfortably lay down on the bed as a thought of him comes like tidal wave at every corner of my brain. I can see him so vividly and that's how powerful is my imagination.

I breathe. I breathe. And I breathe.

As his sensual harmonies that sounds exotic yet spiritual churns my guts and the sheer feel of my fabric that I am wearing rubs against me I imagine it as his touch and my breath hitches feeling my mouth not producing enough saliva, causing me to swallow and swallow.

My hands traverse the contours of my body and I tightly close my eyes, my chest rises and falls and my breathing is ragged as I cup my breast and pinch my nipples. Ah—I wasn't expecting that kind of feeling. It's foreign. It's new. I stop for a moment catching as much breath into my lungs before moving my hand slowly over my stomach, I am quivering. I lift up my night wear and coming in contact with the warmth of my inner thighs and the featherlike touch of my fingers I feel as if I am going to crawl out of my own skin. My swollen berry is now chanting sexually and the sound of his voice as he sings automatically becomes erotic.

My fingers feather up to the grape fruit in between my thighs and I shiver with goosebumps rising over my silky skin.

The palms of my hands graze the hem of my panties and hooking my thumbs in. I tug them down and they pool at my feet, my hands follow the same path back up around my stomach to my breasts and my thumbs lightly brushing over my pert nipples. Jesus Christ. Am I supposed to feel like this? This way? As if I am suffocating from something indescribable.

My head drops back against my pillows and my thumbs and forefingers roll my hardened nipples. And a sound comes out of my mouth it blends so perfectly with the sound of his harmonies. I apply more pressure and yet again a foreign sound comes out of my mouth. It's low and husky and sweet but

exotic. My head falls back feeling something about to engulf me.

My fingers dive into my soaked grape fruit and I pump in and out while rolling my nipples and my mouth hangs open.

“Hmmm” that’s the sound that escapes my mouth and all I can see at the back of my mind is him touching me like this yet with my hands in bondage. I can see him looking down at me with my mouth slightly open and he finds the sound that keeps coming out of my mouth sexy as a sin. I strum my own grape fruit and playing with myself like a puppet and I groan and increasing the breath. “Oh my God” I say raspy and with quick, small circles over my swollen bud and I gasp with my other hand now gripping at the duvets underneath me and my back automatically arching up from the bed and tears prickling at the corners of my eyes from this feelings engulfing me. I feel something coming. I cannot explain what it is but my body it too hot to touch and I shatter. Waves of lust wash through me and my fingers glide in and out of my soak grape fruit—she’s full of juice.

I’m trembling.

My fingers massage my grape fruit coaxing another orgasm from me. My lungs exhale a hot breath that’s so shallow and then I gasp as my muscles tighten around me, so close. Each swipe of my fingers makes me moan. I am wet and my hand



drip with my arousal. I inhale and my body hums from my moans and I keep moving on a much faster and faster pace until my body relaxes and what feels like waterfalls oozes in between my thighs and before the last contraction of my orgasm, I hear his voice echoing in my head “how loud do you scream?” And that’s when a guttural sensual sound comes out of my mouth and tears touches the corners of my eyes from the euphoric feeling and my body starts to tremble with blood pumping faster. I gasp and snap my eyes open trying to catch my breath and my body relaxes before powerful sleep attacks me.

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At the table this morning I couldn’t look at anyone in the eyes. I felt as though they could see right through my eyes that I did something ungodly ghastly. I kept my eyes fixated on a bowl full of fruit in my head I was still trying to understand what’s that I felt that made my breath ragged and blood rush through my body in a way it has never before. And why my thighs were trembling with so much ecstasy until tears drowned my very own eyeballs. I wanted to stop circling and inserting my fingers inside me because it felt—unholy but euphoric and amazing. Why a sin always taste and look enthrall and enchanting?

Honestly when satan made or created a sin he knew exactly what he was doing I am telling you.

The amount of power and dominance this man has over me is really starting to get into me. The way the sound of his voice just controlled me and the movements of my body scares me. I want to know how he composes his music because what I was listening to took me into a sensual realm that I never thought existed before. I can safely say that he's a genius; his music can take you into different journeys depending on how you receive and interpret it. It's either spiritual or sensual. Or both.

Today I have been avoiding seeing him. Everything that has to be reported to him I just call him and let him know. I don't know how many times he has called me into that office without me going there. I cannot go into that room. Not after what I did because I feel as though he'll see right through me. I don't know how he can read me so easily as though I am his favourite book.

My knuckle touches the door, knocking. All my attempts of avoiding him have been thrown in a bin alongside the pile of papers since he just asked for a file. After the baritone of his voice echoes from the inside. I swallow hard, my mouth is dry. My heartbeat has accelerated, and my cheeks are heating up again. They've been blooming a rosy hue every time I think about last night—when I touched myself and screamed.

“I brought in the file you asked for”

“Close the door behind you” He places his elbows on the arms of the chair and steeples his fingers in front of his mouth. His mouth is very. . .distracting. I swallow. I didn’t come here for any of this but to leave a file. I turn and closing the door before striding towards him and placing the file on the wooden table, “Sawubona” He greets me and remaining lithe on his chair. “You’ve been avoiding me” my eyes are everywhere in his palatial, swanky, sterile office, feeling uncomfortable under his penetrating gaze.

“Why did I feel like that?” I ask him unexpectedly. He tilts his head to one side, intrigued, a hint of a smile playing on his lips.

“Like what?”

“Like my heart was going to come out of my mouth and I couldn’t breathe. I felt something building inside me. I don’t know how to explain it but—” I pause. I wasn’t supposed to tell him this didn’t I? Arg I should leave right now. His gaze is intense, all humour gone, and strange muscles deep in my belly clench suddenly. I tear my eyes away from his scrutiny and I look down “. . .It was ecstatic but at the same time I felt like I was going to die but that feeling was blissful. I screamed, loudly” I breathe out, “Why did I feel like that?”

“It was an orgasm. You were traveling in a world full of pleasure and bliss. It’s how you supposed to feel. This feeling is like levitating off the ground floating in the air. What you felt cannot be put into words

nor has there has been any part of speech or figure of speech invented to describe it. It’s like an aphrodisiac, mixed with a Pandora’s box effect, fireworks glowing inside you” It was the closest to how I feel when he kisses me. It’s like opening up my soul, tasting, feeling and seeing every colour of the rainbow in their own sensual way, almost like catching a smile in a bottle, its softness, it’s sweetness. Like breathing in his cool inhalation of oxygen to warm the soul. Like nothing in the world exist but me and him. It was the closest to that just more intense. “And that’s how you make me feel Nomzamo now you see when I say I cannot explain how I feel for you?”

“I was listening to your music” I confess. I don’t want to tell him that he makes me feel like that too. “When I was—

“Giving yourself pleasure?” he creases his eyebrow and I nod my head rapidly.

“You controlled me. You were not there but you did” Again. I shouldn’t have been given a mouth because I don’t know how to use it. What’s this? Why am I telling him this? “How do you compose your music” he gets up from the chair and stride

towards me and I still and his intense gaze boring into me.

“What’s your inspiration?”

“Sound” he says quietly “It’s all around us and in everything”

“I know but your music is different” I say meaning every word  
“you can actually play several instruments and it’s like your songs are built and not designed with the instrument in mind and. . .you don’t sound alone. There’s too much spirit into your music but also sensuality and it heals in every way. Even the lyrics. It’s so deep to me. How can you come into conclusion to just stop making music?” His eyes have nearly slid shut and he seems to be taking shallow inhaler through his nose, as though he can barely breathe “I didn’t feel that amount of pleasure just alone. . .but it was your voice” I pause “But you don’t have to answer me I totally understand that this is something you don’t want to talk about. . .your music I mean”

“I’m not answering because I can’t” he says quietly.

“I’m sorry” I whisper.

“You don’t get it” he says in a thick shallow “I didn’t think you’d receive my work like that and just really feel it and what was in it” he pauses and let out a breath “I never had my work deconstructed my like that” My innocent banter flatters him. I can see he’s aroused and could barely stand so he strides to lean against the table. He cannot even play it off. It’s all in the

way his chest raises and fall in stuttered breaths and he looks absolutely beautiful in those jeans and tabi loafers. His eyes sought the sliding glass door as though trying to fight internal battle with his lips parted and he's breathing through his mouth.

"How do you compose?" he closes his eyes and wipe both palms on his face.

"I'll have to show you" I freeze "It's not sexual but sensuous, come here" I walk to him and he step away from the table and then turns me around facing towards the door and extend his arms out to the sides "Follow me. Extend your arms to take in the energy and spread your legs in a solid stance to ground it. I'm going to show you something metaphysical and very deep" he looks at me "Trust me" I breathe out "Now close your eyes" I do as he asks and I can feel the body heat from him to mines and he slowly rotated his palms upward to graze mines. "Just remain still and you should begin to feel electricity almost like static charge between your palm"

I wait and I am rewarded with the sensation "Hmm" I can feel it.

"Good" he murmurs. "Now let me guide one of your palm to your solar plexus and the other to your lower belly. Just breathe in and draw in the air to your diaphragm" I am feeling tingly and light headed and so aroused that pulling in air is now

a challenge. His broad palms cover mine and almost fusing them and adding layer of heat that I never knew touch could generate. He remains immobile and calmly taking in and realizing air into his body and his pelvis only not so far away from my back side, so close that a very deep breath would make me brush against him. It almost hurt to stand this close and still in such an intimate embrace with him almost like necromancy. Fascination congeals with want and, oddly also feels very comforting and natural position for us. This doesn't make sense. I mean I don't know him that much. It's been just days. But it feels like forever standing here like this. For once I block all thoughts. I can feel my heartbeat pulsing between my legs and the urge to lean back and hold his hips almost makes me fall my hands into a fist. But I don't. I keep breathing deeply and more deeply with more force from each other.

"Take it slowly through your nose and let it out through your mouth" he whispers standing as still as stone behind me.

"It's hard to. . ." I say breathlessly

"I know" he concedes "We are going to move in a minute until the energy find you but trust me. Okay nana" I keep my eyes shut and focus on everything and nothing, searching for release. I can hear the sound of the beeping cars outside. The screeching of wheels. The laughter coming from outside and voices. The air conditioning in the background. The slight

footsteps and the clock. His breath, slow, steady and deep. Mines. "What do you hear?"

"Everything" I gasp "My skin is burning" he nods and pulls me into a real hug from behind and rest his chin on my shoulder.

"Even mine" He rubs the back of my hands, allowing his fingers to splay against my stomach, beyond it. My breath hitches. "I'm composing now so keep breathing"

"I can't" I admit and I feel him stop breathing. I really cannot breathe.

"Nana" he whispers through his teeth "You have to or I won't be able to" I slid my palms from beneath his and then cover them so they are against my belly covered in a sheer maroon dress. I have to feel his touch. I need it like the breath I can barely draw in. Immediate heat shakes me. The noise he release within his chest makes me lean back on him and it rips a gasp past my vocal cords. I can feel something hard pushing against my backside and almost parting the halves of it through my dress and the sensation sends shivers through me that connect to the shudder that runs through him and back to me again.

"Fuck" he whispers so unravelled and harshly, kissing my shoulder, neck and a cheek in a quick, frantic pattern as his hands play over the surface of my torso. Swallowing in a wash



of heat. I reach back and hold his hips against mine. I am holding him. Touching him. Making the seal between our bodies impossible to break. I am touching him. The sound of his breathing is my undoing and it makes me move and creating more sound. I dig my nails into the flesh beneath us. His hands part in a smooth hot sweep, up and down my torso, burning my stomach until they reach my breast and makes the ache that has been there for too long worsen. My response is an immediate arch. I cannot censor the sound that escapes my lips—it's like the one from last night but more exotic. Parts of my anatomy are groped. Half craze, I writhe beneath his palms and my skin soaking up the sensation he wrought and inhibit peeling away with each gentle deliver brush of my skin against skin. Each facet of his organ I can feel sliding between my buttocks in long, determined strokes and the ridge of the head making me die where I stand, shaft pulsing. His face hot against the side of my mine and his fingers rolling against the hardened pebbles of my breast, my legs part and my legs widening without my consent. He send long graceful fingers to the edge of my dress to pet away the fire. The sound is smooth. He plays with tender authority and my ear a place for a cappella vocals. "Nomzamo" then I remember that this wasn't supposed to happen about two seconds before I convulsed in a stuttering wail. My voice rent the office and bounce off at every furniture. He hugs me hard until I stop quaking and then turns me around

to have him, kissing me hard and breaking away for air and my eyes are brimming with tears of want. I find his mouth. Do I touch him now? No, no. My tongue slide against his in a fervent dance, his lips warm and moist and perfect against mine. I swallow his moan and take it into my lungs and breathe it out with a gasp. “Ngiqoma Nomzamo” he says in between the kiss “Nana” He shudders, a hard torrid shivers. his hand on my hair and one gripping my hand. The unchanged rhythm making my head roll back and my eyes roll in ecstasy beneath my lids— then it’s all over with his sudden, aching and agonized gasp. He asked me to what? Be his. Oh my. There’s complete silence. The sound return. His breathing and mine, impossible to separate. Damp foreheads touch. A salty emulsion of life covered my hands and splatter in my stomach.

“Mr Mthabela sorry sir I told her that. . .” He whips his head up while I turn around mine to see my best friend standing by the door frozen and the take way in her hand lands on the floor while the receptionist is gaping.

Tada!

I am going to lose my friend and my job.

“Time stand still

While we stand here, don't want to fight you. I need you as the same as you need me, I want trust too, I want just too.

I want us too. I want love too. I want this too”

It's not my friend that I am afraid to come face to face with and maybe spit words in each other's faces that could be so venomous and treacherous, and we could never recover from that. It's not the humiliation that I have to come face to face with like a devil with two horns and a tongue that's split into two. But it's what I feel for this man. The intensity. Oh man he was right when he said no words can describe these emotion but I swear combining the word nirvana and erotic, maybe exotic to create a new vocabulary maybe it might be something closest to what he makes me feel. We've never shared that much of words but even if it's just two vowels being exchanged from the both of us they're still powerful. It's the magic in our fingertips. It's the way he can easily read my mind by looking deeply into my eyes and find what he's searching for—that's what wrap me around with a blanket of terror stricken.

I stand here immobile as a statue and all my senses are just paralyzed and I have fresh tears shimmering in my eyes, not

because of what is happening right now, they're not tears of remorsefulness but the amount of intensity my body was experiencing and those words that were sweet calls to me on some deep elemental level as if he's seeking absolution; his words are my manna from heaven. Tears prick my eyes once more at how breathlessly as he was before he uttered them, asking me to be his.

I gaze back at my friend who looks utterly broken and her lower lip with a ring piercing quivering before a guttural sound escapes her mouth. In that moment this man who has made me feel something alien and took me into my own utopia comes and stand in front of him—shielding me.

“Nomzamo can we talk?” I hear my friend's voice saying and my heart is wrapped around with guilt and duplicity. I look at her as she conceals the agony she's afloat with behind those almond eyes and that beautiful face she's masking all her emotions, she's suppressing all her screams. I know her. I know her too well. Even though her intentions appear to be confident and relaxed. I know in her head she has stabbed my vagina and choked me to death. I bet she wants to rip apart her reality. This reality of what she saw. But she would show too much, she doesn't want to appear as weak not in front of this man, not in front of that receptionist who's still gaping and fixing her glasses.

Muzi turns to gaze down at me with an apologetic look laced on his beautiful face and he looks at me without any regrets of being caught in that position and it's mirroring mine. I don't really know what to feel about this situation at hand and he places both his hands on my face. I want to push him away since my dear friend is witnessing this—this undeniable. . . I don't know chemistry maybe? But we are somehow so in sync mentally and spiritually and physically, strange enough. I look up at him and one drop of tear escapes the bottom of my eye, he quickly swipes it with his thumb. I swallow back words since my ability to speak is no longer working and he doesn't want me to leave. We have a conversation with our eyes and I assure him that I am going to be okay. Not that I believe my own words. Am I really going to be okay? What's going to happen when we do talk? I have so many questions jumping up and down in my head like a toddler that's sugar high.

“Nomzamo how can you do this to me!” I hear her venomous tone seething as I hold onto his hand with my nails digging into his palms—I am like a man in an army carrying a shield and an arrow well he's the shield. “Nomzamo!” I hear my friend screaming with a pained voice in her tone. Raw, bitter, humiliating betrayal lances through her and scalding, angry tears ooze down her cheeks. Her high pitch screams causes a scene and abruptly Muzi pulls her into the office and closes the door behind.

The knife twists slowly and painfully deep in my heart, lacerating me. They're so many ways she would've found out but not like this at my workplace. Especially with the rules that we have. I cannot be doing this with him—Oh my God, I am really going to lose my job.

Through my tears, his prostrate figure blurs and shimmers as he's standing from the distance yet his eyes are fixated on me maybe trying to navigate where my start of mind is at this moment. "Nomzamo why? Why are you doing this?" she screams loud enough for the walls of Jericho to come trembling and fall yet once again. Her tone reverberates through her chest. "I trusted you" she seethe.

"The person who's at fault here is me and not Nomzamo so all that anger you can direct it to me and not her, she had nothing to do with any of this" he comes into my defence with his hands thrust inside his pants and his face remains impassive. I want to read him. Will I ever be able to see his facial expression that could tell me exactly where is his state of mind? No, yes. "And I am sorry for hurting you in any way" That's very. . .Unexpected from him to apologize. I watch my friend who can hardly stand looking at him through pool of tears with her hands shaking to the sides. "Trust me Nomzamo never wanted to hurt you. As much I burn for her and cannot control what I feel I had to hold back because all she ever wanted was not

hurting you, she was crucifying herself for even feeling the way that she feels, she wanted to make sacrifices for you.

Regardless of me knocking in all her doors and windows trying to make my way inside her heart but then she locked for you, she closed all her openings. I've been meaning to tell you but she didn't want me to instead she begged me to love you. But I couldn't bring myself into doing that knowing what my heart wanted"

"You. . ." Words cannot come out of her mouth. It's the amount of hurt that she's experiencing and she rapidly keeps blinking and her lashes sweeping at the bottom of her eyes followed by tears "You bitch!" she points toward me with her index finger. "You're fucking bitch wena!" she speaks with rapid fire.

Mad, doesn't even begin to cover what I see on his face. Raging mad, furious, pushed into violence and I feel the constriction in my heart, and the exasperation courses through me anew. "You are not going to call her names in my presence. Even if not in my presence. You won't dare calling her names because then we are going to have a problem" I see the muscles around his jawline tightening "I hope we clear. Mind your tone when speaking to her because I just told you she had nothing to do with this" he growls.

"Can we talk privately?" Finally I manage to speak through the storms of being a wanton and someone so trusted. I look at her

behind the shattering glasses in my eyes “I’d love to talk to you alone, at the restaurant across the street”

I walk pass him towards my friend who gazes at him with a bittersweet expression on her face before her feet propels her out of the door with the sound of her shoes clicking against the floor matching the sound of my beating heart against my chest. Some people were already standing outside the door and listening to how this unfolds.

Strange isn’t it?

That once upon a time we used to share gales of laughter and I’d stare at her listening to the sound of her sweet voice and laughter that sounded like she swallowed helium. Oh my—my friend whom I’d bunk school with and we would come to my parent’s house and dance to our favourite songs after stealing my father’s brandy and we’ll get intoxicated. All this nostalgia doesn’t bring any smile on my face instead tears are just drowning my very own eyeballs mirroring the glossy almonds that belongs to her. I have waited and waited for her high pitch voice to roar and her anger menacing while she points her index finger at me. Normally we’d be sitting at the restaurant with our face covered with flowery hues and radiant smiles but instead we are sitting opposite each other and both of our emotions in a jar—so that we don’t appear like how we feel into a public space. “I don’t know what hurts me more seeing



him looking at you in a way that I always hoped he'd look at me one day or just finding him with my friend in that position. In my head replacing you and putting myself there" From the distance you could be deceived about how normal we appear to be. I watch the rise and fall of her chest before she hangs her head low, the droplets of rain coming from the cloud on her face touches the table cloth and my own threaten to touch the tip of my lips. I cannot utter words with the pink elephant with long lashes and wearing a long tulle dress sits comfortably on my chest "Are you going to say something Nomzamo?" she looks up at me and the curtains of fakes lashes are like leaves in the morning with tiny drops of rain. "I don't know anything. You watched me and listened to me talking about this man yet you were what stabbing me behind my back?" My inner goddess appears in her lace underwear and high heel shoes. Stabbing you in the back? Shut up—she hisses and fixing her thong that's irritating between her buttocks.

"I didn't plan for any of this to happen. And for so many times I asked him to stay away from me regardless of how I knew what I felt for him but I was willing to sacrifice that for you. Because you're my friend and I care about you and I never wanted to see you hurt" I manage to say with my voice lodged on my throat. And her lips spread into a pained smile. That should be tears falling down her face but she replaced them with a smile. It's surprising how both of us haven't caused the scene yet the

atmosphere between us is suffocating and I wish I could faint to my oblivion right now.

With too much agitation that I am drowning in I tap my fingers on my thighs under the table. “Was he talking about you at the restaurant? When I thought he was talking about me?” Pretty much yes. But then again I cannot find the right words to form a perfect sentence and answer these questions. “Oh my Gosh he was talking about you wasn’t he? I ignored the way he was looking at you. From that day at the baby shower. . .I just” I look at her swallowing the words that surely tastes like a battery radio against her tongue and her breathing becomes shallow and short “And you knew about it?” Again I remain motionless and this time my tears touches the back of my hands seeing hers filled up to the brim. “Maybe it wouldn’t hurt as much if I didn’t find you with him like that and just heard it from someone. . .” she wipes her tears and once again concealing that pain with a smile pretending to be going through a menu. “But that picture will remain in my mind forever. I loved him Nomzamo. Well I love him, couldn’t you consider all these feelings that I have for him before doing all of this?” What is all of this? Am I the one who forced him to feel the way he feels for me? Did I order these feelings online? “After hearing him speaking the way that he did and protecting you and defending you. . .why he couldn’t do that with me? Is something wrong with me?”

“I’m sorry” I apologize with a trembling tone and reaching out to touch her hand but she pulls back and my affliction churns my guts. My breathing slows down, my heart rate is barely back to normal, and I resume talking. “I am sorry” I repeat once again. Subconsciously thinking she might’ve not heard my first apology and sincerity is dancing in my arms.

“What are you sorry for?”

“I’m sorry for hurting you”

“Is that it you’re just sorry for hurting me?” Now she can longer hold back her tears and she wipes them at the corner of her eyes and inhales sharply “What are you sorry for Nomzamo?”

“I am not sorry for feeling the way that I feel for him because I cannot control it and maybe if I could. . .maybe if I could just format every memory of him then I would. But I burn—I burn for him and I cannot even come to understand what’s that I feel for him. I am not sorry for that. I cannot apologize about how he feels for me either because I didn’t put a gun on his head and asked him to feel this way. But from the bottom of my heart I am sorry that I have hurt you” I am a ball of emotions after uttering those words before hanging my head to hide away from her. To hide away my tears from her. I cannot look at the melancholy of bitter sadness that dances into her eyes after I uttered those words.

“When did this happened? When exactly did it start?”

“When I was away and you didn’t even know I was gone” Oh I shouldn’t have said that. “And then three months later we met at the baby shower and we kissed” Another part that I should’ve edited out.

“Kissed?” she gasps and swallows on her saliva, breathing harshly. “I cannot believe this” she leans backwards on her chair with her hands trembling “You kissed him when I was there? Right under my nose?”

“No” I say boldly “I am not the one who kissed him but he kissed me. And I asked him to stay away from me and be with you”

“Are you choosing him over our friendship? Are you going to ruin what we have for so many years for him?” One you cannot address the fact that I was away. For five blown months. You never bothered finding out about it and yet I have to choose? Why must I choose? I don’t want to choose.

I look up at her and perplexed, genuinely “What is that we had?” Maybe getting an answer for this question I also might understand why do I consider her my best friend. I don’t know maybe somehow my memory will be refreshed and I’ll be reminded what makes me cherish this friendship so much.

I hear a wince coming from her mouth, as if I touched the most painful part of her wound “Are you choosing him? Do you love him?”

“Love? That’s a very strong word” Maybe I do but then again we both cannot describe that we fell for each other. “I am choosing myself and what makes me feel happy” I cannot believe that came out of my mouth. My tongue was like twinkle, twinkle little stars. And my subconscious claps her hands together.

“And what’s that makes you happy?” she darts her eyes between mine “You’re choosing him?” I remain static and unable to utter words. I see her face falls and she gasps once again painfully. “Wow” she covers her mouth with her hand so that the guttural sob doesn’t escape her lips. “You are choosing the man you knew I love?” I watch my friend perk from the chair and grabbing her bag “I want you to remember this day when someone else hurts you the way that you did with me. And this. It won’t end well Nomzamo. Don’t think you’ll have your fairy-tale story while I shed tears. You’re snake and I was taught to fear God but was never taught to fear women like you” Her words are like a punch in my solar plexus before she clicks her tongue.

Arg—sssssss bitch—my subconscious cannot contain her fury as she hiss at her.

My subconscious is furious, medusa-like in her anger, hair flying, her hands clenched around her face and she wishes she could drag her with her dreadlocks and punch her into her face until she can no longer breathe. But I compose myself and remain on this chair with my tears laced with anger prickling at the corners of my eyes. I watch her as she disappears at the glass door at the restaurant sashaying her body.

The pain that I am feeling is so new reminding me of the agony that I have been in for the past days with all my attempts to oppress these undefined emotions because I didn't want to hurt her and now she stood there and called me a snake?—a snake. My anger erupts and threatening to come out in a most violent way with my hands starting to tremble. Does she know this snake could've hurt her beyond words could describe? I could've shoved my tongue down his throat in that kitchen until she walked into the room. The moment I found him outside my gate waiting for me with a grave expression I would've climbed onto him and completely shoved back the memory of her at the back of my brain. I could've announced on that table about our kissing knowing very well she has never drank from his lips. I could've done so much, so much and today I am the snake?

Oh my, this anger with a mixture of affliction is driving the knives into my fresh wound of my soul. I am mourning the death of my friendship and it's unbearable. My face fell as she

uttered those words. My face fell in agony mirroring hers—the heartbreak on her face was palpable. Seeing what I was feeling reflecting on her face makes me wince as if she slapped me on the face. I don't know what I should feel at this moment. All my emotions are moving east, south, west because of these catastrophic thoughts that are raging through my mind. I am in turmoil. I cannot describe this. I don't regret any of this either which makes me wonder since when I have turned so callous. I feel emotionally depleted, bone tired, weary. I close my eyes for a short while

shake my head, and resigned to what's to come.

Pain, agony laced with enormous guilt goes through me. I don the seamless racer tank and seamless cycle shorts before shoving earphones into my ears and instantly a hip hop song starts throbbing into my eardrums, this was my brother's favourite song.

A song by the Pivot Gang called No Vest, at the sound of the upbeat my legs lift up from the ground and the heels of my feet touches my buttocks and I start to run. The more and more my feet propel me forward my tears shimmers in my eyes and lungs start to pump.

I hate him!

I hate him so much and I don't ever want to set my eyes on him again. And if he dares come anywhere near me I am going to scream bloody murder. How dare he? How dare he walks into my life and control my mind, my thoughts and my body. It wasn't supposed to turn out this bitter and now everything has drastically spiral out of control because. . .because of him.

Do I really hate him though?

That doesn't matter.

I cannot stop running. I don't want to stop either even though I am now breathing like a bulldog that needs an inhaler. Gulping and gulping for air. But I don't stop. I am not going to stop until I become completely numb. I am not going to stop until my lungs are deprived from oxygen and I stop breathing into my stupefaction. My feet continues to touch my buttocks and my legs are growing more and more gelatine. The sun is now disappearing in the sky and the darkness approaches. I do not stop running. The song keeps playing and playing in my ears as though it's a coach screaming that I should keep going and don't stop. I continue jogging until sweat starts shimmering in my arms and my face. My knees are not as gelatine as would be if he was here in my presence.

I run and run until a guttural sound escapes my lips and I explode into a loud cry and tears blurs my vision. I do not stop running. The trees are now standing still and no longer dancing.



The birds have ran away from the darkness that's approaching but the streetlights illuminates the dark empty streets.

I force myself into running but my knees stubbornly refuses as they can no longer take it. I keep forcing myself until they tremble and I have no choice but taking a sit on the side of the road and lump that was expanding on my throat erupts like a volcano and I wail like a widow. I remain sitting here and ignoring all the hoots from people asking if I was okay—Ah that question. Would you be okay if your friend caught you in action with a man she confidently claimed to love? A man you feels something so powerful for you? Would you be okay with being called a green mamba? Okay she wasn't specific with what kind of a snake I am. Would you be okay knowing that your friendship ended with such bitter words that taste metallic against the tastebuds? Will you be okay with knowing the next day you are going to come face to face with humiliation at your workplace since people were whispering in each other's ears and pointing at us with their eyes as we walked out of the office. I am sure the receptionist spread the news much faster than the newspaper would.

I rub my cheeks with both my palms and begin to step my feet on the road and scream. It's a primal scream sound like that craze of a warrior ready to fight with bow and arrow raised. My

voice exploding with sudden fury and hot tears of frustration forms in my eyes.

Either my mind has turned into mango chutney or accidentally I might've lost it somewhere as I was running or it came out of my mouth. All I am quite sure of as I stand before the formidable shower and I don't know how to work with the danger contraption. I am no longer drowning in grief of losing my friend or maybe I have completely numbed that feeling. But my mind keeps traveling to what happened in that office before the door flew open and I had to face tragedy.

After full five minutes of fighting with fails and brass levers and getting surprise burst of pulsing sprays of either freezing or steaming hot water, I finally find the right temperature before peeling off the fabrics that are damped with my sweat. I step into the spray of water and gasp for air at how good it feels. How good his hands felt traveling through my body. His warm breath against my burning skin. Pummelled by a thousand beads of water indifferent beats per second, I lean into the spray of water and my hair get wet. I think about how he has complimented the cornrows on my hair and he lost his mind, running his delicate fingers through my hair, touching me and I squeeze my eyes more tightly shut and pumping the shower gel from the brass tack into my hand. I lather my hair and body. It's situational. I feel some tiny insects crawling into my skin and

forming sensation that I cannot describe. I am ardent and breathless. I soap my body harder and watching the spray of water hit my leg and stomach and chest. The water hit every part of me just like his hand had—comprehensive, gently and different strokes and rhythm for the different textures of my skin. His probes against my soft flesh were gentle. The touch exacted pleasure, sharing my body heat in delicious increments with tender hangs concerned about me. That lust and mixture in his waited until my body language said it was all right for him to proceed with his necromancy. He's a man who listens very hard and acutely to everything around us, heard my breaths and measured the tempos by that. I gasp. Placing my one hand against the tile to hold myself up straight in the spray. Rivulets of water streamed over my breasts making them ache for his touch there again. Every other part of me has returned into life as I clutch the sweet memory within the secret compartment of my heart removing the nightmare I have faced. The way his hand slid down my belly and slip beneath my dress—just that thought makes me swell and moist again. I need to get out of this shower because everything resembles his touch and reminds me of his caress.

I get off the shower that lit my skin on fire and put on a towel on my head and returning back to my bedroom. Taking a sit in front of the mirror and drying my hair, before braiding it once again into cornrows after moisturizing it.

I don a cotton underwear and start to pace up and down my room not knowing what to do with myself before grabbing a robe and putting some shoes walking out—I need to see him. I need to tell him that I hate him and he ruined everything. I need to roar on his face about how much it has hurt me sitting with my friend on that table pretending that I was remorseful when the truth is I am not.

“Nomzamo!” my mother calls out for me as I grab the car keys and she narrows her eyes eyeballing me. “Where are you going wearing a robe” she asks me. I am wearing a robe? I look down at myself seeing the floral sheer robe that I am wearing and you can literally see what I am wearing from beneath. My mind has been fried wasn’t it? I cannot think straight. “And an underwear?” she creases her eyebrow.

“I have to go”

“Looking like that. Where are you going?”

“I cannot explain ma”

“Haibo Nomzamo” she says with a warning tone and pressing her hands against her hips “You cannot explain you want to leave the house at eight in the night wearing a robe?”

“I want to talk to him”

“Who is him?”

These questions won't end—someone shoot me when she sees the tears of frustration crawling from my eyes she takes a deep breath “Your father shouldn't know about this and go change”

“I don't have time”

“Nomzamo!”

“If I don't leave now then I won't leave. I need to tell him I hate him. . .I don't know if I really hate him but I have to talk to him”

“Do you hate him yes or no?”

“I don't know”

“Rochelle!”

“Ma”

“Go!”

I mumble my thanks and walking out, sliding behind the wheel and pushing the key inside the ignition. I drag out my phone calling Khensani and her voice is laced with wave of panic as she wants to know if I am okay. Again it's this question. Now I am guessing I am the most famous person at that tall glass building with a beautiful architecture. At least she cannot see my face so I manage concealing my emotions with a fake smile on my voice as though she can see me before asking for an address of that man I was claiming to hate just few seconds. . .I mean minutes ago. I want to look into those eyes with all

shades of brown and glossy and lethally hiss how much I hate him. That's what I am going to do.

At first Khensani is hesitating with giving me the address but I beg her until she promises to send it at the end of this call and pleads that I should be safe and take care of myself. Be safe? I am not safe around that man I am going to, he's the most dangerous creature—I do feel safe in his arms though, I cannot describe it. Basically I cannot designate anything.

I breathe outside the gate as the security plagues me with questions after questions causing my very own vexations to accelerate and tapping my fingers against the steering wheel before he calls his boss about the unexpected visitor. . .that's me. After being on a phone with “yes boss and no boss and I understand boss” response he shows me his amiable smile and the gate automatically opens.

This is magnificent the outdoor lookout isn't high but white plaster dream seats a small party in a wooden enclave providing a perfect view to watch trimmed hedges, birds and bees pass by. The lawn and tall green trees gives a serene atmosphere. And getting off the car I lose all my speaking capacity coming into my own consciousness about what I am wearing. What happens to my brain sometimes? Do I even have one? No really do I think?

Before I can knock the door wrenches open and he appears wearing only pants and magnificently naked at the bottom with his chest hard sculptured and each rib delineated by muscles and my feminine flesh clenches, chill bumps spread throughout my body causing me to be primitive and restless.

I screw my face up as my faculties attempt to absorb all these foreign feelings. I note somewhere in my brain that I am here to let him now that I don't ever want to see him again. He is without a doubt the most beautiful man on the planet, too beautiful for the little people below and I am completely distracted. "Is this what you wanted Mthabela?" These are the first words that rolls out of my mouth and his eyes travel around my breasts and my nipples perk at him causing my breath to become short and shallow. My body braces itself in a heady mix of wild anticipation and arousal.

I walk through the door after he held the door open wide and beckons me inside. I stand in the middle of this house without paying attention to how it looks like. After he has shut the door he turns to me and remaining unreadable. "Is this what you wanted? To make sure I keep losing? Losing myself to you? Losing my friend? Losing my job? Is this what you wanted?"

He gazes down at me as if he's trying to see into my soul, his eyes darkening. "Those were not my intentions. I could never put in agony of losing knowing very how that feels Nonzamo.

What was I supposed to do? Pretend that I am not feeling the way that I feel for you? I have lost so much in my life and this time I am trying to win. I am trying to win you”

“I didn’t ask you to feel like that for me!” I seethe and take a deep breath “she called me a snake”

“Oh well you’re beautiful one”

“You’re not funny Mthabela” I glare at him and he has a slow, sexy smile spreads across his beautiful face, and I’m rendered speechless as my insides melt and tightening my inner muscles in giddy anticipation. “I don’t want to feel this way for you. . .okay I am lying. Why I don’t regret at any of this. Why do I feel this way about you? My body burns when you’re around. I can hardly breathe. Even now I am having a hard time breathing. I cannot really think. You have an amazing body by the way” I clear my throat. Someone should slap my mouth “I left the house in my underwear because of you. What have you done to me? Every single thing resemble you” I gulp for air this time “I hate you” that came out as a rasp than a tone that’s laced with hatred I claim to feel towards him. “Not really hate you. . .Mthabela what should I do with what I feel for you” Wonderful Nomzamo were you not saying you hate him?

“Nana”



“I hate you” I say it way too calmly and my voice building in volume and momentum as I speak.

He take steps towards wearing his predatory look and his touch makes me unbundle my arms “Nomzamo ngiqoma” Before I can open my mouth with my breathing erratic his mouth finds mine and gently probing, beginning to extract all the fury, all the tensions and time and distance collapse in on itself.

His hands are caressing my skin untying the sheer robe and physical contact causes a pool of tears to form in my eyes and my breathing is erratic. His eyes are on my face and not my body watching me taking in deep breathes through my mouth and not my nose. Seeing the glossiness of my eyes.

He is the most sensual man I’ve ever met. I’ve never felt a tenth of desire I am experiencing at every stroke of his hand and I hear a groan reverberates as my robe falls off me in waves and pool at my feet and he whistled between his teeth. The lace of my underwear appears like art on my body and I blink up at him and swallow. He nuzzles on my neck forcing me to tilt my head to the side and feeling him against my overheated skin makes me squirm, writhe and yearn for him at the feel of his tongue there and he takes my earlobe into his teeth making tremble and escalating to a height of force that I never witnessed before. I fight the shudder that tears through me and a loud moan escapes between our kiss.

His lips explore my neck, circling around my ear and down to my collarbone and more sensual moans erupt from me as I yearn for him. "Muzi. . ." That comes out breathlessly and he stops and looks into my face with our eyes fused and not breaking the spell.

"Do you want me to stop?"

"No" I say quickly "Don't stop" He picks me up abruptly striding towards the couch and placing me there before he gets in between my thighs and looking down at me making tears slide from the corners of my eyes and his hands float against my chest as though trying to wipe away all these emotions I have been feeling and his mouth is soft, quick, wet brush of tender tribute to the rapidly beating heart encased with it. He raises his hand to my face and then his mouth moves down my chin, the column of my throat, my sternum, searing me with his lips and all the way down to my stomach. When he finds my belly button my back arches against the couch and blows life into it with a hot stream of air and his hands traces over my hips and his tongue reverses me, it sends a cool waft of air over my burning skin and I hold onto his head needing something to hold on.

He has taken me into a place my so deep that my body is no longer my own and my mind is gone.

He possessed my lips in a powerful, raging kiss claiming the breath from my windpipes. I can feel the fervour of his heartbeat and his hands slid down my back and clasps my buttocks bringing much closer to something hard in between his legs and I gasp as he pins my hands the couch and keenly aware of the pleasurable ways to caress and tease ever millimetre of my skin while eliciting sounds and words from me that I cannot comprehend. "Muzi" I want to tell him. Tell him I've never been touched like this before. Tell him I've felt like this before. I moan as I feel the effect in my groin.

"Nana" he's gazing at me with adoring eyes and before I can open my mouth to say anything he pesters "I know and I am not going to do anything to you"

"You're already doing something to me" I almost sob as he starts to move up and down in between my legs. His groin meeting my mound that's covered with just a cotton underwear with lace and I cannot even say a word and my body is jerking with his rhythm and friction of his pants and my underwear. My hands is bondage on top of my head and his kiss crushing air from my lungs and his thrusts determined making me arch towards him "Mthabela"

"I need to breathe"

"Ngiqoma Nomzamo" I flutter my eyes closed and tears touches the corners of my eyes as those words spill out of his

mouth from nowhere and his name embedded in my wails. His body is still moving. Up and down. The groin wants to escape his pyjama pants erupting more emotions from me as I quake “When you were touching yourself what did you think about?” All I see is his desire in his eyes, his adoration even, and something else, the depth of his need.

“You”

“Me doing what?”

“Touching me” My voice is unreliable and my chest is too filled up. I am sure he can hear my storm coming in distance and lightening opening my chest. My thick breathing fans his face low, rumbling thunder of pleasure. He hasn’t stopped his necromancy and looking deep into my eyes.

“Do you want me to touch you? Touch you there?” I nod rapidly and I feel one of his fingers slides inside me “Did it feel like this?” I nod my head again and he circles it deliciously slowly. Oh, it feels good. I moan. His breathing halts and I hear him gasp as he repeats the motion. I feel his delicate fingers moving up and down my slick slits. The feel of his fingers inside me. . . stretching . . . filling me—I moan softly—it’s divine. I’m cocooned by him, as he loves me with his fingers slowly moving in and out, savouring me and my breathing accelerates as his steady rhythm pushes me higher and higher. He’s kissing my mouth, my chin, my jaw, then nibbling my ear. I can hear his

staccato breaths with each gentle thrust of his body dry humping me. My body starts to quiver. I remember this feeling. It's like when I was touching myself but much better. This feeling that I now know so well. I am close. "Don't hold back nana let go for me" That's all it takes before feeling the waterfalls wetting my panties and his fingers yet inside me then he pulls them out and licks them.

"I'm yours" I say breathlessly and coming back from a wonderful sensation. He stares down at me with adoring wonder, and I am sure I mirror his expression.

"Touch me" he murmurs and kisses me passionately with fervent ardour. I kiss him back, dizzy with the delicious feeling and then he let go of my hands that were locked up to look down at me with his eyes darting between mines "Touch me Nomzamo"

"But. . ."

"Touch me"

"Where?"

"Anywhere you want" his breath is ragged "Nana touch me" I reach out and touch the either sides of his face, his skin feels silky against my hands. He takes a sharp breath and screws his eyes closed before tears spill from his eyes.

13

“Her touch remains the  
Most soothing sensation  
Whatever they do  
Don’t let go of my heart  
I want to stay  
Longer with you  
Beauty like the love  
I feel radiating within you  
More than a lover  
A friend through  
Thick n’ thin  
If nobody got you  
I got you”

He’s completely immobilized, rigid with tension, except for his eyes that are following the trail of my fingers as they move from his face to his neck in featherlike touch then he gazes at me those shimmering eyes are heated and his lashes

attempting on concealing the agony behind them like the curtains in theatre. He's tantalizing close and I hold onto my erratic breath darting my eyes between his moving my fingertips to his shoulders and he shivers with goosebumps rising over his silky skin consuming the magic my fingertips are planting in his arms all the way down to his chest and his eyes are now scorching, and they have unshed crystals wanting to shatter in them. Reaching up, I caress his cheek and running my fingers down his chin and his eyes are now dark, sensual. I continue with my fingers moving slightly and teasingly across his skin. He has a beautiful profile. It's a sensual response to my touch. He keeps watching me intently as my fingers keep floating delicately on his skin, first to one nipple and then the other. They pucker beneath my caress. I lean forward to plant a kiss on his chest and he inhales sharply and his eyes gleam wildly then shut his face tightening as if in pain before closes his eyes. "Please look at me" My voice comes out trembling and greedily gulping for air feeling suffocation sneaking into my throat. "Please" They flutter opened. Oh what a beauty. He doesn't say a word. At least not with his voice. Every sharp breath, every sigh, is an entire conversation. I am panting and eager, aroused by the potent combination of his captivating beauty, his raw sexuality.

He leans down and starts praising my skin with his mouth and hands as he moves down my body. He sucks gently at my

nipples covered in my cotton bralette while his fingers traced patterns on my hips and thighs. I try to be a captain of my very own breath to be in control and I gasp a little louder than before and he pauses and blow stream air over my skin and I wait, my muscles tense for the next place his mouth would land.

His lips skid over my ribs and the curve of my belly to the small hollow of my navel. One of my hand soothes and caress his back. He has such an attractive back with all the small muscles clearly defined and against my hands coming in contact with him he groans and his lips finds my hipbone and his teeth press my skin there and my hands dig on his shoulder blades. His muffle noise reminds me to loosen them. I cry out when he moves in between my legs and his mouth drifting over the inside of my thighs before he looks at me motionless and flutters his eyes closed yet again and the apple stuck on his throat moves up and down before he abruptly just gets up from the couch running his palms over his face and disappears somewhere across the house.

Did I do something wrong?

Your thighs surely taste like an egg and potato salad—my subconscious shrugs her shoulders nonchalantly with a scowl on her lips before she grimace.



I sit up straight on the couch in perpetual blues with my hands clasping the other side of the couch. Did I do something wrong? I don't remember saying anything. Or maybe the sound that came out of my mouth was not attractive? Are my thighs not meaty enough?—I mean growing up I was body shamed about my weight. I find it very hypocritical how people don't defend underweight people when they're being bullied. We tend to have this mentality that our lives are just a jazzy song on a sunny morning. It shouldn't be a double standard. When overweight are being pushed in a dark corner of self loathing the defend forces are quick to stand and when mosquitoes—that's what I was called, do you think it's cute being called by that disgusting insect that sucks on people's blood? Or being called a needle? Anyways when "we" are facing this kind of bullying and people tend to drag their feet with defending us. Let me not to be an activists of all rights when I have a man who just walked out of me.

I saw an emotion I never thought I'll ever get to explore from him. Vulnerability. Although he was trying to be in tune with the maleness and sovereign alter ego in him but it ran away to sit somewhere in the corner and I was introduced to someone who can feel, someone soft and someone not too afraid to show these emotions that the toxic masculinity screams they make a man weak.

I wander my eyes around the house and it's incredibly beautiful with rugged wooden pillars and beams dominate the house that's alive with beautiful imperfections around the bark. The tree trunk structures build a sense of walking through the forest itself. A monochrome rug plants freshness in the room that offsets the natural composition. The modernity is carried through in tidy contemporary seating and stylish throw cushions.

Then the modern bench seat divides the lounge area from the kitchen diner. The cushions are a tonal addition that link the piece with the darker natural wood components.

Chocolate brown kitchen bar stools contrast richly with the light kitchen island. Three unique kitchen pendant lights add a sculptural element to the room, chic yet organic in silhouette.

A striking fireplace opens its fiery mouth beside a mesmerising mountain view. The tree trunk support columns are like a living piece of the house, growing around the open plan.

My stomach is simmering with bewilderment and vexation at this moment as every second waltz. I get up and dragging my robe on the floor and covering myself when he appears with his face impassive and he stands distance away watching me tightening my robe around my waist. "The more I think about it, the more it makes me realize that this is the very first time I get to experience something like this with anyone" he utters those

words that kidnap and throw me in a room painted with confusion. I plant my feet with my hands quivering at my attempts to tighten my robe “Leave it open. I’ve already seen you”

“That’s what you wanted didn’t you? To see me? And then what walk out of the room and leave me alone here confused? And questioning myself about what I’ve done wrong? Is that what you wanted? Repeatedly asking me to be yours under your spell to do this to me?” I hiss lethally at him as the light shimmers over his skin and nakedness at the bottom. His pajama pants are hanging off his hips – in that way that makes every little cell in my body stand up and take notice. He’s bare-chested, and I drink him in like I’m crazed with thirst and he’s clear cool mountain spring water. He gazes at me impassively, then smirks

“When I saw you for the first time you were standing backstage and I was just turning around to get a bottle of water during my performance. I don’t know if you noticed but I kept stealing glancing towards your direction and you were standing there just looking at me with fascination on your face that I couldn’t describe. Then I saw you the second time in the kitchen and fighting with the cabba. . .” I remember as he swiftly turned to grab a bottle of water as he handed off his acoustic guitar and his bass guitar was brought into his arms. The lights dimmed

and I remember his gaze fixated ahead of. . .wait it was on me wasn't it? What kind of a numbskull am I by the way? I froze as he adjusted his microphone and the candlelight made the crowd erupt again. Every lyric resonated through me like it was welded to my pulse. My eyes were closed near faint as his deep, exotic voice filtered mines through every cell of me. When the last beautiful melody rippled down the strings from his graceful hands, only then I took a breather and opened my eyes. And that was before he performed a groovy song.

"I wasn't fighting with the cabbage" I protest and his lips etch to a smile just watching me with my hands gripping into the bottom of my robe gazing back at him. Seeing him smiling paints me with kaleidoscope hues, colors only he can paint—he's such a celestial being. "Don't say I was fighting with it"

"You were murdering that cabbage Nomzamo"

"Ha ha ha you are very funny" I sardonically say and the sound of my sweet giggles wheezes in the air. "And then what happened after that?"

"I wasn't supposed to feel that way I felt the moment you turned around with a knife in your hand, more especially since I had to grieve and mourn. But I couldn't bring myself into thinking about her death or mainly focus on that pain of loss as it unexpectedly came knocking to my door. I was in so much agony. Moreover because all these unnamed emotions were

forbidden but I thought of you. Every minute. I'd watch you from the distance serving people and hoping you'd come near me. But you never did. I'll hold onto to my breath thinking you'll at least just walk pass but you never did. This make think that even if it was under different circumstances and she was still alive I might've or I would've left her for you" He suddenly seems distant, his tone far too controlled and then groan in tormented voice "What you make me feel, Nana" his tone brings extraordinary sensations through me, "No woman ever touched me well excluding my sister in law" I blanch at the realization

shock and revulsion coursing through me. They were going to get married without her having to touch him and she was okay with that? I mean my parents are so annoyingly all over each other and that's the picture I've always had in my mind. Just not the husband as my father though but being in love—being in love with someone who'll never get enough of me even in those days where I feel as though I am not enough and worthy of love but they'll choose me not as an option but as a better choice.

"Did you love her? I mean why would you feel the way you felt for me while she was just hours dead when you loved her?"

"She loved me in a way I found acceptable" What the hell does that mean? Does that mean he didn't love her? "And he

respected all my boundaries. I loved her, she loved me for who I am not how I am expected to be”

“Acceptable?” I whisper.

“Yes.” He stares intently at me. “She distracted me from the destructive path I found myself following. It’s very hard to grow up in a perfect family when you’re not perfect”

My mouth dries as I digest his words. He gazes at me, his expression unfathomable. How frustrating. Inside, I’m reeling “I think you perfect Mthabela. You may not be perfect for anyone else maybe. . .But to me you’re perfect” I watch him and the melancholy of bitter sadness appears in his eyes like a ghost and it smirks and wave its hand towards me with freshly done manicure “Why you don’t want to be touched?” I want to know what makes him hate being touched so much. How can he even hate something so magical?

“I prefer not answering that question”

“I’m your girlfriend I deserve to know” Oh my—I really sensually moaned that I now belong to him. As in I am his and he’s mine. Mine. Through snakes in the plane and train, that was supposed to be funny. Anyways I have a boyfriend standing distance away from me with his face softening slowly and showing his white teeth. His smile is the most genuine feature

he repossesses. "I'm your girlfriend right? I mean I wouldn't want. . ."

"You are mine Nomzamo" I pause as I was rapping on and his words are my tranquillity to my eternally turbulent mind "Now come here" he says with sudden authority and command in his tone.

I walk up to him in his slow steps and bravely reach up, my hands caging his face, and pulling him down to my lips.

My lips mould into his full of need and desire and I start kissing him passionately despite his hesitation. My tongue forces its way into his mouth, and I'm lost. His tongue meets mines, caressing it in gentle but sensual strokes, reacquainting itself with my mouth. "I want to know everything about you even the darkest parts you're always concealing. I want to know all of you. I want all of you. . .please" I touch his face and he leans into my palms and nuzzle in it. Every muscle in his body seems to tighten and he takes a sharp intake of spasmodic breath.

He wraps himself around me and places his head on my chest. We are a

tangle back on the couch and I stroke his back with one hand and run the fingers of my other hand through his head. He sighs and relaxes in my arms. "I need to know"

“Before our ancestors give us this body from twelve previous generations, you need a total of four thousand ancestors and over. Think for a moment. How many struggles? How many battles? How many difficulties? How much sadness? How much happiness? How many love stories? How many expressions of hope for the future for they’ve undergone for us to exist in this moment” Perplexing lances through as I listen to him talking “Remember they live inside us and their trauma reside us as well. Ancestral lineage healing holds a potential to repair this long held trauma and allow the gifts and blessings of these ancestors to flow freely all along lineage. We have do this healing work not only for them but for the next generation. In my family my great great father was full of loathing and all he ever wanted was dominance, power and control. And he’s the most powerful ancestor that I am pretty much in tune with. All his traumas resides me. All the anger he had it’s with me because we somehow had a same childhood. Our stories are almost the same. We grew up having to be perfect because we are coming from royalty. And we were made to believe that we were nothing since we were so imperfect and that’s why he became the man he was back then. . .and then my grandfather he’s also a dominating ancestor as well. His traumas are residing through me. He was also made to feel worthless. He wanted dominance and control and so do I. Now can you imagine walking around with three powerful souls and all of



them angered? Mine demanding control. And theirs angry and needing dominance. My traumas and theirs. Sometimes we carry this burden that are not ours, and we are not fully aware of it. You could have this anger inside you that you don't understand where is it coming from. You could be sad even on your brightest days. Sometimes it's literally not you but them. That's why from time to time I talk to them, calm them down. My great grandfather was Nazareth singing those song they'd sing at church for him calms him, burning an incense. Most people say I'm non-affectionate and that's because I am fighting different battles mentally and I don't have time to feel anything else. I don't feel worthy to be touched mainly because I was told I was not worthy of anything by my father. Not love. Not someone like you. Nothing"

"When I touched you what happened, what you felt?"

"The same feeling you felt when my fingers were deep inside you" I gaze at him, my breathing still erratic, and involuntarily I squeeze my thighs together, trying to find some relief and he smirks and his eyes darkens.

"I am being serious" I say breathlessly.

"So am I" I glance down assessing his apprehensive expression.

"I don't want you to pity me Nomzamo. I'm okay with the way I am"

“You’re okay with carrying anger inside you? Are you saying you’re okay with that Mthabela? I am not okay with that for you”

“Don’t over think this Nana”

“How enrage were they?”

“Bloody murder”

“Do you also want control and dominance in what way?”

“In every way you can think of” What way is that? I mean the only way I can think of is having full control at work with people respecting you and bowing to you—does he want this also like ahem. . .you know?

“Whoever said that you do not deserve they were out of their damn minds!” I do not move. I am stone. I do not speak. I am invisible. I don’t dare breathe because it will be fire. My voice explode with sudden fury. Hot tears form in my eyes. How dare they make him feel like that—those. . .I cannot call them names. Sigh. Look what they’ve done to him. “You’re worthy of me. You’re worthy of love. Everything and I swear on Lord Jesus I am going to show you how deserving you are” he kisses me again, lovingly. As my hand moves over him, around him, stroking him, squeezing him tightly, he puts his arms around me, his right hand flat against the middle of my back and his fingers spread.

“And what are you worth of?” That question brings discomfort around my chest and I rapidly blink at him “Nana, what do you think you’re worth of?”

“Of you”

14

“If you want to feel love or to give love

There shouldn't be any expectations

There's no formula to love someone

For you to love someone you need to love yourself first

In this world that we live in

There are two main motivating forces

love or feeling and you cannot explain love”

I wake up to a sweltering kiss on my collarbone and my neck it feels featherlike causing my lashes to sweep through the bottom of my eyes, batting them few times before I am met with a lascivious and charming smile—I still cannot believe that this man I thought was maybe a robot can actually smile, showing those perfect shaped white stones. “You're beautiful when you're sleep” We actually fell asleep on this couch that has seen far too much. “You have to go sleep in bed before you break your neck” But I didn't break any of my bones with you sleeping on top of me and your head on my chest listening to the sound of our beating hearts colliding. My body coursed with elation and passion seeing him and all those muscles

around his face serene and his breath felt like that morning summer breeze.

“What’s the time?”

“Ahem It’s four in the morning and I have to do some work stuff which is why I am saying you should go back to bed” Remembering about work. . .I wonder what they’ll be saying about me since I am not planning on doing a walk of shame. “What are you thinking about?” His gaze is searching, drilling into mine reading my mind.

I blink at him “Well. . .I quit” I make an announcement that I should be making at the office with an aggressive tone but here I am with my legs wrapped around my boss’s waist and his fingers trailing in between my cornrows and his touch sultry. And then he pauses and gazes at me before a sound I am still yet unfamiliar with rolls out of his mouth—laughter. I watch him laughing so care-freely and beautifully throwing his head back. Oh so I am funny to him? The fact that I am losing my job is actually a joke. “What’s funny Muzi?”

“Hawu” he catches his breath with his laughter still yet echoing. I could literally listen to the sound of his mellow laughter for hours and hours. “Why are you quitting your job? And why now?”

“People at work. . .”

“I don’t care what people have to say and you shouldn’t either”

“I’m sure you know we cannot be together and this is against the rules. I don’t want to cause drama for you because of this. I know for a fact everyone has a lot to say” The humour that was in his eyes has vanished and solemnness appears with his gaze burning through me.

“You cannot lose your job because of me. I came there for you. I bought that company for you. I have other businesses Nomzamo I don’t need a radio station. I am the one who’s going to leave but not you” And then he pauses “Why you wanted this job? From the first place why you wanted this job?” It’s the powerfulness in his voice that makes me look away from his face. And when I look back at him his brow creases impatiently waiting for my response, his eyes are getting colder. Hmmm he’s quite different from the man who was just erupting like lava laughing and letting out the most pure and enchanting sound from that holy mouth. He’s that man who showed up at my grandmother’s house to see me for absolutely no reason now, marbles face “Nomzamo answer me” I stare at him, distress and vacillation lacing every fibre of my being, reflecting through my gaze.

“I wanted to prove to my father that I am not failure and that I am going to be successful without him. I wanted this job so that I can fund myself since I want to go back to school and also get

my masters but since I was working then I planned I'll study part-time and online"

"And why your father thinks you're failure?"

"Well he kind of planned how he wanted our lives to be like as we were growing up and our career choices so when I failed my matric that's when the arguments started to erupt and also I wasn't showing that much interest in the family business. And since then we haven't had a relationship. I want to rewrite then get my MA"

His intense stare turn broody as he looks down at me with mixture combination of emotions—I watch him flaring his nostrils and his eyes glistening with deep affection "I am going to take care of your school funds leave that to me. Everything to make sure that you success in getting this MA. I am going to help you in anywhere that I can. Nana you're not a failure. Let's get that one out of the way. And since you're quitting this job you are going to focus Nomzamo and make yourself proud because you are not doing this for anyone but yourself" My lips part open like the deep inhalation is not enough to provide my lungs for enough air. And his fingers are tracing the bare flash of my skin. I don't know what to focus on. That fact that his soft and airy words caressed me and cherished me. The knowledge of this make me look at him behind my eyes that are red

rimmed “And don’t fight me about taking care of your funds. I want to do it”

“I can take care of myself”

“I didn’t say you cannot take care of yourself I am simply just saying I’m going to take care of your school funds since I am the one who made you want to quit your job”

“And I am saying—

Before I can finish protesting stubbornly he takes my mouth into his and cover it with mines, effectively quieting me down. His lips are gentle at first solicitous even. I slightly part mines and closing my eyes. Soon enough his face is on my hand and pulling him closer to me making what’s hard behind those pants dig into my belly and curling my one leg further behind him and my nipples perk up. I slept wearing a bra, this bravery. His body is eliciting a response out of me with brutality intense and cover it with mine, effectively quieting me down.

My kiss becomes demanding, assaulting even he thrust his tongue almost forcefully into my mouth matching and exceeding my fervour, I gasps. My right hand lowers, my nails scrape his back. A whimper mixed with a pleasure escapes my lips and pass into him. Our need for each other is intoxicating, desperate. His tongue moves in mines with deeper and skilful flicks. My tongue matches the movements of his tongue. “Do



you want to take a shower before you can take your nap while I work?” Oh yes. . . I am feeling creamy in between my legs reminded of our wanton behaviour. All I can do is nodding my head. I guess this necromancy kiss was a sign that there was no discussion or whatsoever about our conversation. I am not letting this one go though.

Tell him you always win and he should ask your best friend how you won what she thought was her man—before my subconscious can even finish her sentence as she takes off her thong and bralette that falls on the floor I diabolically glance at her then she succumbs waving her hands in the air and putting on a shower cap before getting in a shower.

I don't get time to recover or respond back to him as he lifts us both from the couch and I am over his shoulder, caveman style. We taking slow steps in the hallway and taking deep breaths, the deafening silence is looming in this house—you can literally hear the tiny drums against my chest as though a rock band is performing while I am in this arms. The weather beaten wood and handmade Macramé set a boho vibe in the bedroom is breathtakingly beautiful. Sculptural bedroom pendant lights hang heavily at each side of the bed. There's a natural rug encircles the bed area, and the circle theme is continued into the rustic ensuite bathroom by an illuminated vanity mirror and

the glow from around its edge highlights the imperfection in the concrete wall, building texture and depth.

I cannot stand on my own as he put me down on my feet and my knees are vibrating like empty vessels. I gaze deeper into the fire, the flames still licking and curling around each other in his eyes abruptly turning me around and my mind is on fire as his hands comes in contact with my overheat skin and he savoured the slow strokes down my shoulders and arm unclamping my bra, I can feel the trembling of his fingers and finally it falls onto the ground like a leaf falling off the tree. My nipples grazes and as I lift up my hand to cover them, he takes them to his hands and turning me around so that I face him and again he captures my lips deepening the kiss and his hands on my cornrows and his tongue twining mines. And both our nakedness, my breasts against his satin skin, tear a moan out my mouth and that gives him license to touch my back and waist, hips and behind sultry. His body sliding against me is like waterfalls and goosebumps forms on my skin as he kneels in front of me as if he's worshipping me and I tremble with my buttocks now engulfed in his hands and he leans closer gently kissing my hip bone causing me to gasp and my inner thighs. "Ah" I gasp with my hands on his head as he pulls down my cotton panties gently until they pool on my feet and he's in contact with my waxed grape fruit. He gazes at her with rapid fire and swallowing his saliva looking up at me.

“Muhle untombazana” he says that my grape fruit is beautiful—wait did he just call my grape fruit ntombazana? I want to laugh but I cannot. Not now. I feel the gentleness of his lips there then he gets up standing in front of me and his gaze slowly assessed my body. His hands slide the cotton of his pyjama pants from his hips, freed him creating a pool of cloth at his feet and my gaze is unwavering his body. Whoa. . .that’s a dick.

It’s dangling in between his legs.

Dick! Dick! Dick!—my subconscious screams running around the room and hitting herself on the walls, shocked, surprised and all these emotions combined before she takes gulps for breath into her lungs and wiping the droplets of beads on her forehead. I mean it’s not humongous or gigantic nor does it touches his knees like everyone exaggerate this male organ. But it’s there and curved, resting on his stomach and bleeding with veins. . .it’s an actual penis.

“That’s a very. . .Hmm” I sharply intake breath and he smirks at me before he smirks and shaking his head. Oh my, he has a wonderful sculptured body. He slowly walk me into the shower backwards as we kiss and the cascading water washes us with renewed passion. My hands are on the side of his face and I pull him to me, working hard to merge our bodies. And he turns me around putting my hands on the slippery wall.

Using his feet, he spread my legs, squeezing some shower gel into his palm and lathers it. He start with my shoulders, and knead my muscles with his soapy hands. He run his hands up and down on my sides in circles, and cup my breasts. Kneading my aching mounds, he pulls and elongate my nipples between his thumb and forefinger, teasing and pinching them.

His right hand goes lower on my chest, traveling down to my belly, over my pubic bone and then to the folds of my sex making me gasp. He merges his body with mines from behind, his male organ lying heavy on my lower back digging in. His fingers tease and run over my slit, feeling the creamy sleekness, inviting him in. When he dip one finger, I gasps and gyrates my hips, desperately trying to get some friction. “Nana” I cannot respond. I moan begging for more. Arching my back and my breasts are thrust in his hands aching for his touch, and desperate for attention. All of this is different. . .and good and delighting. He turns me again and wash my sides and buttocks. Kneeling as if I am his god on earth and washing my legs reverently and leans kissing me from my toes all the way to my thighs—featherlike and succulently kisses. My hand reaches down and caresses his head. Slowly he rise to his feet as the water washes of the gel from my body and he just stands watching the waterfalls fall down on me as if I am a fountain in a most beautiful palace used as decoration.

I watch him squeezing the gel into his hands and rubbing his hands together before he kneads his chiselled body every single muscle his hands soothes. I greedily takes gulps and gulps of breathes through my mouth and not my nose, feasting him with my own eyes. I cannot touch him, I want to trail my hands the way he's doing on his body. But he doesn't want me. This is torture. I can see his lips forming a roguish smirk as my chest rises up and down. I feel as though my very own vagina will fall out of me from the amount of throbbing. It's humming a sexual mantra and finally when he's done he turns off the water grabbing a towel and patting himself dry before he grabs another one taking my hand and he pats me, so gently, so sensual, so succulently. Each and every water bead that was on my body disappears before I follow right behind him again he's the one who lathers the masculine smelling lotion on my body from my toe as he sucks them into his mouth all the way to my face when he kisses the crown on my head. And then he lowers me on the bed causing me to bounce twice and I look up at him—Oh my I am losing my virginity now am I not? All these years of keeping it because I wanted someone who'll have me in a room illuminated by candlelight and rose pedals and my finger glistening with a diamond ring but here I am now our motion is steady, continuous ebb and flow of natural rhythm, my thighs part on their own, thick and fleshy, wet like the ocean and demanding that he enters to cool off

under the heat. My mouth plunders by his tongue, my sea inviting him, calling him a quiet siren's whisper. There is no tomorrow as his fingers enters into the deep ocean, eliciting my cry of pleasure and I see him shuddering and my hands race down his back and finds the valley in it then flow over his buttocks and my legs locking him in. He pushes up to taste my mouth and free my breasts witnessing the expression of sheer ecstasy on my face.

My legs are now wide apart and when he grasp one of my feet, he graze his teeth on my pad sole and the feeling is exquisite "Aaah" I groan writhing beneath him and he smirks at me effectively and his lips move their way up from my ankles to the backs of my knees and taking his index finger and middle finger to apply gentle pressure between the two tendons. I am going to explode—I am going to explode from something so powerful. I watch him kneel and kiss, suck until he reaches my abdomen.

He leans into the tendons where my legs join my abdomen and with the heel of his hand, he apply pressure, and then dip his nose into my sex inhaling me deeply. Without even touching me at the apex of my thighs yet, I am completely aroused and desirous for him. His fingers locate a spot below my navel and directly above my bladder and press it gently with three fingers as his tongue swiped the length of my slit. A sharp, involuntary

moan rises from my lips. “Muzi!” The folds of my sex bloom open for him. I’ve never felt anything like this. I am wet and creamy and aroused.

His lips cover over my clit and he sucks hard, his tongue is teasing over the tip of it relentlessly, setting fire on every nerve ending of my body. I gaze down at him seeing the most artsy picture that will forever be captured in my mind as the orange hue of the sun rising up in the early hours of the morning shimmers on the valley of his back and the muscles there so detailed and when he opens his eyes, he sees my dilated pupils and my irises darken with abandon desire.

I try reaching for his head but he pushes my leg down making me helpless against his ministrations.

“Muzi—

I cannot finish my begging because his tongue dips into my sex and tasting all my ungodly desires for him. He swirls it inside me and thrusting home hard with his tongue in deep and shallow thrusts and I am forced to absorb pleasure I’ve never felt before. I want to close my legs but I can’t so I endure the intensity orgasm with his name garbled on my lips.

Without giving me a chance for my rolls of orgasms to subside he crawls back and taking me into a fast frantic kiss pelted on my face, my neck and his burning hands covers my breasts and

then even hotter kiss pulls both my nipples into his mouth, tongue suckling the ache until my hands are against the duvet and his mouth retreat, his sweat streaked cheek suddenly finding my belly again and his hands under my hips, holding my bottom tight, kneading the flesh and putting on new tears in my eyes.

I watch him intently after he has got up and looking for something around the room and my eyes simply following every movement while he tears every dress drawer leaving them hanging open and when he finally finds what he's looking for—a box. He glances towards me and smiles before he sits on the edge of the bed, breathing like he's coming under the water with his hands shaking, opening the foil like he was about to disable an explosive and I watch him. No words. He's taking in air through his mouth, blowing it out through his mouth like a race horse, almost snorting

I feel him plunge himself one swift push and plunge into the depth of my sex and I quickly snap out of my euphoria with burning pain and he immediately pause moving and he looks down at me with perplexity and petrified “Nana” he gaze at me “You were virgin?” What the fuck? Last night when I was stuttering what did he think I wanted to say?



I . . I. . I love sex maybe? Is that what he thought or maybe I . I. . I have sex for a living? What exactly did he actually think I wanted to say to him?

I nod my head as a response. My voice is lodged on my throat and he rests his forehead against mine with his manhood sheathed inside me “I’m so sorry” he apologizes giving me sweet whisper soft kisses on my lips “I thought you were like. . . I don’t know inexperience but not a virgin. I’ve never met a virgin before. I’ve never dated any virgin in my life” This robot. What must I do if he has never met a virgin before? I cannot believe him. He said that softly as he begins to shift as if to pull out of me “Nana I’m sorry. Do you want me to stop?”

“No. Don’t please” I say grasping his buttocks to keep him in place before he looks at me and we both erupt with slight chuckle at how petrified he looks and how much I need this. “Don’t stop”

“Are you sure?”

“Hmmm. It’s painful but I’m sure”

“I’m going to make sweet loving to you” he’s trembling, literally “Ngiyabonga” he thanks me and only insert the crown rubbing it gently and his erection is hot, and trembling, aching to reach the depths of my sex and I groan as he dominates me. The pain of my hymen breaking has lessened but the feeling isn’t

pleasurable at this. I wait for that moment where pain turns into pleasure as everyone says but it's not coming. My teeth dig into his shoulder blades. I pull away concentrating on the feeling of his chest and the feel of his tender loving kisses against my throat and the fact that he's inside me trying his best to be tender ignites sparks of pleasure to my core. My legs just naturally follow the curve of his buttocks and find the niche to lock around the perfect dip in his spine and that's when he release a gasp he's been holding, it becomes a deep, thunderous moan combined movement. His hands hold mine against the pillow looking deep into my eyes—our eyes locked and the sun rays shimmering on his face, the sound of the singing birds collides with the sound leaving our lips. I clench my jaw so tight that I almost chop my tooth and I don't care. He thrusts me halfway up the mattress and expression so intense that the muscles in his jaw pulse and I touch his face and he leans into my palms. Every muscle on his body seems to tighten, strain against my skin, becoming one interlocking band steel beneath flesh, bringing the sensation within me to a single throbbing point that his thrust repeatedly strokes and he stops breathing. He pushes deeper with the rhythm of the song. My inner muscles clench, and hug his phallus for more, making our intimacy intensely passionate love making. It's a fraction of a second because I stop breathing too and the seizure that follows slam my body as his convulsed making me weep and it

feels so exquisite and full of euphoria and my head remain on his chest, listening to his heart thud and his fingers tremble as they trail down my spine.

I open my eyes slowly batting my lashes and I am met with him on the bed wearing glasses and his laptop on his lap when he feels my movements he glances at me and a smile etch on his face before he takes off his glasses and placing the laptop on the side table and he gets in between my thighs and kissing my forehead again and again “Are you okay? Is ntombazana still sore?” After we were intimate he took me in his arms to a bathtub with bathing salts before he took the sheets with the evidence of our love making and he bathed me with a sponge, so gently before he also got in the bathtub right behind me and trailing patterns on my back and kissing me—he said he wished he would’ve made it more special. It was special for me but also I know that my father will cause havoc when he finds about this. I remember with Rharha.

I smile, “I’m okay”

“Nana you have to eat”

“I’m hungry” I tell him. I am sure my parents have lost their minds since I left home in the middle of the night and already it’s the late afternoon. I glance outside and seeing picture perfect bathed in red with orange and red light.

He makes me hop on his back causing me to erupt with laughter as his feet propel us to the kitchen and he places me on the high stool and start busying himself around the kitchen then he gazes at me “Are you sure you’re okay? I mean not sore. I can massage you” the concern is laced in his voice.

“Massage me?” I crease my eyebrows.

He smirks “I have magical hands”

“Sure you do Mthabela” I laugh

Our laughter is interrupted by a loud knock that made me crawl out of my skin—it’s a loud bang before a roar tone comes from the outside demanding that the door opens and I see Muzi’s face changed with animosity and he abuses his jaw before he strides towards the door wrenching the door open, I am standing behind him when two police officers gaze at him. “Mr Mthabela you are under arrested for kidnapping Miss Mbatha. . .” before he can even finish I have already screamed “What the fuck?” And furrowing my eyebrows in that moment my mother gets off the car and running towards me and she sweeps me off with a hug crying. My father is a raging bull that just punched Muzi before the police cuff his hands. I don’t have a chance to say a word as my mother is tightening her arms around me and thanking God that I am safe.

What in the Garden Of Eden is this?

“Ma!” I push her “I was not kidnapped” she’s not listening and Muzi is being dragged by the police and they shove him at the back of the van. No one is listening to me and Muzi is bleeding from his nose. He remains motionless and too relaxed for my liking—he’s being accused of kidnapping me? Who even came up with that?

He just broke my virginity that’s all.

15

“Could I love the lips that awaken my womb to house your seed”

With a sister that’s famously known on social media in a blink of an eye my pictures written with bold fonts at the bottom that I am missing were already trending, some sharing with candles right next to my name—I am left in perpetual blues and turbulence thoughts because we have women in this country who’re really missing and needing this attention and their pictures spread out throughout social media, not me. When I wasn’t answering my phone which I left in the car the whole night after I left, my mother automatically assumed something might’ve happened to me which is quite understandable where her terror was coming from with what’s happening in our country but this. . .this is dramatic.

As I attempt walking towards the van my father drags me by my hand “Nomzamo!” he says with a warning tone, I look at him menacing and yank him from me striding barefooted and only wearing the man in a van’s shirt. There he is the van and calm as a cucumber with that mercurial gaze he worn as he rhythmically moved in between my thighs and holding my hands but his face remains marbled with all sharp lines honed and his facial expression is enough to send my heart racing, and

completely forget that he's being arrested. No one wants to hear me out—not a single person.

“Mthabela”

“Nana I am going to take care of this, calm down” I notice his effort for a calm facade is only for my benefit “I am going to take care of it. Go home” now he's commanding, that was an order than anything else and I look at him with my chest heaving up and down to squeeze the denim that has been knitted on my throat making it hard for me to swallow and my tears approaching my eyes with slow steps as though they're on a runaway show and as they shimmer in my eyes, his jaw is tight; his lips are thinned into a grim line “Nomzamo I'll be out in less than an hour. Go home” My chest is heaving up and down in rapid succession. A string of emotions outplay on his gaze. I chew the corners of my lips as the police officer pushes me aside and closes the van behind before he slide behind the wheel and they drive off, and my father is the one going to the police station to clear the misunderstanding while my mother and I drive back home.

Upon getting home our yard is surrounded by cars, we have my uncles and relatives I never knew existed in this house and the room is painted with trepidation. The moment we walked through the door everyone stand on their feet as they sharply intake their breathes and sagging like deflated balloons—what

comes after that is the shouting and roaring after my father announced I was with a man over the phone call. “Nomzamo do you know we have been looking everywhere for you?” That’s my uncle flaring his nostrils with his hands against his hips, not the weed smoking one. I’m sure that one doesn’t care a damn about me missing and surely laughing with chickens. “We didn’t sleep looking for you”

“Leave her alone, she’s home and she’s safe. Zamo go to your room” That’s my mother being my defences force in this room with lethal emotions hanging thick—I don’t know how many times my father has threatened to kill me. I am quite sure if it was for him I would be hanging from a door handle with a wet tissue. He had a chance to slap me though leaving the marks of his fingers on my cheek right after the police van disappeared.

“Hhayi Zukiswa you were the one who called us here. Where was she? Where were you wena?” My uncle seethes and his pot belly bouncing up and down.

“Nomzamo go to your room. Just go” my mother says with a monotone and red rimmed eyes with her luscious lips now swollen from the salty beads that were falling down her face.

I walk into my room about to slam the door with my tears threatening to erupt in my eyes like the screams of women wearing green and white church uniform singing Hosanna when Rharha walks into the room “You are wearing his shirt?” she



gapes and closing the door while I take a sit on the edge of the bed and gazing back at her “You did it didn’t you?” she searches for my eyes. “Nomzamo you had sex? Ha ha ha wait is he still with your bosom friend? Your best friend hmm?” she asks that sardonically and standing in the middle of the room.

“No”

“No?” that response seems to enliven her and animation bounces in her eyes “Are you saying they’re not together?” Oh yes I’ll have to answer all these inventible questions. I cannot dive into dismay with her in my space. “What happened?”

“Bontle caught us at—

I cannot finish my sentence because her laughter is echoing in these walls and she’s clapping her hands together and choking.

“Nandipha!”

“Wait, she caught you doing what? Were you guys having sex and she walked on you?” she says with a twinge of happiness.

“What no!” I gasp at her. That thought alone is just. .  
.unpleasant and I don’t even want to drive my imagination there.

But what if she really did?—my subconscious smirks and pulling up her thigh high stockings with lace and flapping her lashes at me.

“Oh that’s sad, it would’ve been better if she caught you doing it you know. But anyways what were you doing?” she’s mental. What kind of a lunatic is this? “Okay and then what happened after that?”

“We are dating” That all it takes for a loud scream full of merriment to erupt and clapping of hands, she hops on me on the bed, gracing my face with kisses and then she cups my jawline in her hands with her eyes full of mirth and flashing her teeth.

“You are dating Muzi Mthabela officially?” now she’s catching her breath and she’s still on top me making freshly stored memory to hum in my mind. “How did he ask you out?”

“That doesn’t matter Rharha. As we speak he’s arrested for kidnapping me. What were you thinking posting that?”

“Well I didn’t know where were you and you didn’t say anything to me either” she shrugs nonchalantly and sleeping aside me balancing her body with her elbow intently gazing at me. “Do you think one of his brothers can take me as his second wife? Maybe Mongameli so I can be a queen?” I look at furrowing my eyes. Does she really use her brains or maybe they were deep fried “Okay not him his wife looks crazy like she’ll stab me in my buttocks” I shake my head not saying a word because my mind is spiralling out of control with how is he doing right now. The thought of him behind bars is making

my intestines swim in a powerful acid; they melt and start to leak out.

“Bontle called me a green mamba” I tell her and she tugs here head in and the anger is growing and growing on her face after I’ve planted it and then she gets up “And then she said karma will come and bite me” And that facial expression I have expected from her appears dishevelled and hostile before she furrows her eyebrows.

“A green mamba those were her words? Bontle called you a green mamba?” Well she wasn’t really specific about the kind of snake that I am so I automatically assumed it might’ve been that type or maybe a cobra “Tomorrow I’m going to drag her. How dare she? If you’re snake then what the fuck is she? Nxarga”

“Not a green mamba but a snake”

“Hhayi even if that’s the case!”

The door slightly opens and my mother stands by the entryway with chagrin on her face and sombreness “Nomzamo I am sure you’d want to change. We have visitors coming so both of you should help me in the kitchen” I cannot look at her in the eye. What if she can see right through me? That my hymen has been broken? I saw the blood spread on the sheets, an evidence of

what has happened—our intense love making filled with passion.

Right after she has said those words she holds the door knob turning on her heels to walk out but she pauses and face towards me. “I’m not going to apologize to you Nomzamo. I’m your mother. What did you expect me to do? When you left at night as though you’ve lost your mind going to this guy to tell him you hate him? Next thing you’re not taking my calls. No messages, nothing. Women are reported missing, dead and kidnapped every day what did you want me to do? I was worried sick about you”

I hang my head low “I’m sorry ma”

“Hawu mama she’s sorry” Rharha says with an accent of some series she has been watching and batting her eye lashes before tugging behind the blonde wig she has on that looks almost like it’s wet.

My mother just glared at us with demoniacal eye contact shaking her head and walking out of the room, closing the door behind. “At least I am not the only disappointment in this house now huh? Anyways how was it? Did you cry? Pain and pleasure?” I cannot believe her. There’s possibility that my father could ship us back to the rural to our grandmother and she wants to joyous about not being the only disappointment—I am not a disappointment to begin with.

“It was painful. Like someone was shoving scissors, knives and swords inside my vagina but he was gentle. . .I mean it was really painful but. . .he was succulent and smooth as though as I was a feather”

“Hehake feather!” she claps her together “But I am glad that he makes you feel special and that way. I can see it in your eyes that you love him. I saw that in his eyes. What you both have is beautiful but could be dangerous because both of you could hurt each other as much as you love each other” What’s that supposed to mean? I don’t think we’ve agreed that this is love—I mean is it love? And by the way how does love feels like? “Now change and let me wear one of your dresses, wena feather” she chuckles with mockery. I guess my new name is feather? Not green mamba or cobra but an actual feather.

After changing into a dress I try calling him once again repeatedly and it takes me straight to voicemail I have no choice but leaving him a message before walking out with Rharha who wants to know all the possibilities of being a second wife.

Getting into the kitchen my mother is murdering the full chicken on a chopping board before she throws it in an oven with vegetables and opening the lids to her pots and the aroma hanging thick into the room, grunting and mumbling. “Ma” I call her out wanting to apologize to her once again. Maybe I was

wrong for leaving in the middle of the night and not answering my calls. “Ma I’m sorry” I apologize once again with a placid tone.

“Ma she’s sorry” Rharha is actually annoying. This girl is really irksome. This one is really pique and I am going to use every vocabulary to explain how irritating she is. Can’t she see I’m trying to pacify my mother here and she wants to add gasoline into this fire inferno? Jesus. “It might’ve slipped my mind mama but Nomzamo called me to tell me she was—

“Nandipha shut up please, both of you just keep quiet because I don’t want to hear a word coming from you. A single word” My mother hisses and continues with stirring her pots and at this point I don’t really know what are we doing in this kitchen. Instead we have our heads and shoulders hanging low, fiddling with our fingers in uncanny atmosphere and watching all her movements as she moves around the kitchen “Nomzamo did you sleep with this boy?” finally she explodes and clasping her hands in the kitchen counter looking straight into my eyes and I gasp dramatically pretending as though I don’t even know what sleeping with a man feels like—I want her to correct her sentence because she’s not a boy but a man. “And you better tell me now Nomzamo because your father is on his way with your grandmother and your man’s family is coming here as well” Oh she just called him a man, she reads my mind. “Now

tell me did you or did you not sleep with him?” she slaps her hand against the kitchen counter and I blink rapidly feeling my tears prickling at the corners of my eyes and blurring my vision “No no don’t dare cry Nomzamo don’t you dare. I am tired of you and your sister standing right next to you. I am tired of defending both of you because at some point I thought you were acting like this because of your brother’s death but it’s beyond that. Both of you are disrespectful. Beyond disrespectful. Leaving the house to go get drunk and when you come back I’m the one who must pacify your father. You left here in the middle of the night in your underwear. Rharha came back in the early hours of the morning. All three of us in this kitchen sabafazi manje? Is that it Nomzamo? Nandipha?” she flares her nostrils like a raging bull and you could see through that lucid facial expression that she has reached her breaking point. “I’m talking!” she seethes and we both almost crawl out of our skin.

“We are sorry ma” Rharha apologizes.

“What are you sorry for?”

We are interrupted by the sound of cars and doors

my mother glares at us taking off her apron to reveal the emerald silk dress that she’s wearing showing her voluptuous sculptured body “take care of my pots” she smoulders walking out of the room with her high heel shoes clicking against the

marble floor leaving deafening silence, Rharha and I eyeball each other before shrugging our shoulders and taking care of the pots stirring and not exchanging any words because of the intensity when my mother walks back with a smile that quickly disappears when her eyes meet with ours we step away and she opens the fridge taking a jug with liquid filled with delicious looking fruit placing it on a tray. “Take the glasses Nomzamo. Nandipha take a tray” she instructs. I open the cabinets to take off the glasses and one of them slips through my hands and falls “Wathatha wonke uwalahle edongeni Nomzamo, vula nalapho uwashaye phansi (take all the glasses and throw them against the wall and even on the floor if you like)” she shouts and I am not understanding where is this hostility is coming from. Is it because I was kidnapped? Well but I wasn’t though.

Rharha glances towards me pressing her lips into a thin line and holding back her laughter as I clean up the mess they’ve made on the floor before placing the glasses on the table. “Take this to the living room, both of you” we are given a tray of snacks and we make our way to the living room that’s surprisingly full with men who looks exactly like Muzi. This is still so weird—I swear they’re just one person with different hairstyles and shades. And well some appears more attractive. I cannot see him anywhere in this room. I hope he’s still not in jail because I am going to lose my marbles. Even my grandmother is here when she sees me I see a smile appearing on her face.



“Nomzamo go to your bedroom and your grandmother is coming” My father says the moment I place the tray on the table and I am glad because everything would’ve shattered on this floor. Everything is spiralling out of control and a tornado of emotions comes crashing. I am so dead. I am going to die, die. I remember what happened with Rharha. Her then man’s family had to pay for endless fines and she was just one step away from marriage but my father discovered he was already married, of which my sister was not aware of by the way. I feel a throbbing and aggressive headache instantly.

The brother who found me in a car on that tragic day just glanced towards me with a smile, he looks more amicable today. I cannot smile back at him all my muscles are tightened and glued together. “Nomzamo!” I blink at my father and then my feet pick themselves up from the floor and propelling me to my bedroom and I cannot sit nor stand, I want to fly.

I pick my phone up and calling his number and this time it rings and rings and rings then finally I hear his voice coming alive in my ear as he says, “Nana” in a smoothest tone that invites my tears to come raining as a heavy storm. “Nana, what’s wrong?” I hear his voice laced with concerned. But I don’t answer instead I just choke in between my words. This is all of his fault. None of this would’ve happened. “Nomzamo” he’s getting

impatient now with my nonsense and crying. “Thingolwami lwenkosazana” he calls me his rainbow. “Please talk to me”

“Why you didn’t kick me out? That night when I came to you why you didn’t ask me to leave Muzi?” I should be asking something much better than this. “You should’ve asked me to leave”

“But I didn’t want you to leave” He says and then breathes “Are you okay?”

“Where are you?”

“I’m outside”

“Outside where Mthabela”

“Outside your gate and please don’t come out Nomzamo”

“I want to see you” Now I don’t care whether my grandmother is coming into this room to do a virgin testing. I want to see him. I need to see him. “Mthabela”

“Nana”

“I want to see you”

“No” What the fuck? “Don’t come out” Nxarga. He’s out of his mind. I hang up the call and when I am about to walk out of the room my grandmother walks in followed by my mother and

they're laughing at something before my mother walks out leaving me with my grandmother alone.

"Gogo can I go talk to him first?" One more minutes without seeing this man and finding out that he's okay I am going to have a seizure and they'll do this virgin testing at the hospital?—what if I actually faint now before she can do it. Let me faint. Okay well I cannot go unconscious now because I have to see Muzi but when I come back I am surely going to faint.

"Should I even bother doing this Zamo?" she smirks at me with her hands against her gigantic breasts. What's that supposed to mean? She's doubting that I am a virgin? Not that I am one. I mean I broke it this morning so I am sure they cannot foresee that now can they? "Tell me now nono before we waste each other's time"

"I have to talk to him" I plead with my tone and my voice  
"Please gogo. When I come back you can do this testing but I want to see him. I want to know if he's okay"

"I knew it. I saw it from the time we were helping there with funeral preparations. I saw it from the distance mntanami" she smirks as though something delicious is tickling her and moving throughout her veins "Go but make sure no one sees you and I am giving you ten minutes Nomzamo—

I don't even let her finish because I am already outside the door, sneaking out to the kitchen and I am glad not to find anyone here.

Walking out of the gate I cannot see which car belongs to his because they're cars everywhere until one door at a matte black car opens and his tall frame appears "I said don't come out Nomzamo" Look at that smile, he cannot hide the ebullient that I went against him. I run towards him and throwing myself in his arms and he welcomes me into a warm embrace kissing the top of my head repeatedly while I squeeze him so tightly and taking all of him in. His scent and his touch. I pull away and standing on my tiptoes so I could touch his face and darting my eyes between his eyes "Why you don't listen?"

"I had to see you"

"Are you okay?" he whispers as his lower lip covers mine. My arms wrap around his neck. I part my lips slightly, sighing, in response to his gentle touch; our breaths mingle, the effect of it overtakes me. My instant arousal causes my rapid breathing. The gentle kiss molding our lips to each other is soon accompanied by his tongue thrusting rhythmically into my mouth. I kiss him lasciviously, desperately before he pulls away and looking into my face, trailing his fingers into my cheeks.

"I'm not okay" I say breathlessly.

“Talk to me”

“My grandmother is here and she’s going to do the virgin testing. . .your family is here too and I don’t know what’s going”

“We just want to clear the misunderstanding about you being kidnapped and that’s all. You said your grandmother is what now?”

“I’m going to faint Mthabela. The moment I walk back into that room I am going to faint and you better call an ambulance that will take me before they can see that I am faking it. . .Omg I should’ve said you must stop. You should’ve stopped. Why we didn’t stopped? It was really good though so we couldn’t really stop—My dad is going to make you pay and force you to marry me. And. . .he is definitely going to kill me. Why you didn’t stop?”

“You were too warm for me to stop”

“Mthabela!” I playfully slap his chest “This is serious. I don’t want to get married now. I mean I still want to know you. All of you. I want to know each and every scar on your body. I want to look at you sleeping. I want to know you when you mad, raging like a bull. I want to know what makes you angry and what makes you happy. We cannot get married now. Do you want to marry me? I am sure you don’t want to marry me.

What am I going to do? What I should do? I know for a fact that my father—

Before I can withdraw my mind from its far places, his arms are around me again, as sure and hard as on the dark road and I feel again the rush of helplessness, the sinking yielding, the surging tide of warmth that leaves my limp. And the quiet face that belongs to him is blurred and drowned to nothingness. He bends back my head across his arm and kisses me, softly at first, and then with a swift gradation of intensity that makes me cling to him as the only solid thing in a dizzy swaying world. His insistent mouth is parting my shaking lips, sending wild tremors along my nerves, evoking from my sensations. And before a swimming giddiness spins me round and round, I am kissing him back.

“I’m going to marry you”

“I don’t want to get married now”

“I know and I’m not saying I’ll marry you now. Relax. I have this under control” he says against my lips and gently his fingers are against the contours of my lips “And you don’t have to faint”

“I’m scared” I confess.

“No need to be. Go into that room and tell your grandmother the truth”

“The truth? Are you crazy. I’ll have to lie”

“What do you have to lie about?”

“That I’m a virgin”

“Are you?” he creases his eyebrow.

“This is funny to you Muzi?”

He gives me a boyish grin “You’re beautiful when you’re panicking but right now I want to you to take a deep breather and calm down. I’m sure they already know the truth. I’m going to take care of everything”

“Fine” I say.

“Good now go”

“Should I just go there and tell her the truth or after she has looked in between my legs and searched for whatever?”

He laughs sonorously “Nana”

“Hmm”

“Just go there but don’t faint”

“I’m really scared”

“Don’t be” my face is in his hand and I lean against his palms

“we are in this together. Go back inside and do what I’ve asked you to do”

I even said “don’t stop please” look at me now.

16

“Never underestimate the intimacy that comes from understanding someone.

A person who can understand you,  
can truly consider you.

They’ve learned your unique language  
so that they can speak directly to you  
so you aren’t always translating for them -

love is understanding

How can you love a person

If you aren’t trying to know  
who they really are?”

Returning back to my room I have made a cross against my chest mumbling a prayer after inhaling sharply before I slightly open the door, my grandmother is on the bedroom couch with a ceramic white cup and a saucer drinking her flavoured tea and making that exasperating click sound after every sip as she drinks from the saucer. “Nomzamo you are back close the door behind and sleep on the bed” we are not going to negotiate? Or maybe go through a counselling about this whole process—like how they do in clinics when you’re about to test for something.



“Why are you still standing there, your father is waiting for me” she announces with a roguish smirk and placing her cup aside while I pull down my panties with trembling hands. Should I faint? I don’t know it sounds like a perfect escape goat. I blink swiftly at her and clearing my throat. The truth strangles me and I am choking on my saliva “Do you want to tell me something Nomzamo?” I shake my head in disagreement and striding towards the bed. I lay down on my bed facing the ceiling and the lights blind me. I breathe slowly in and harshly out. “Vula ntombi” she instructs that I should spread my legs wide apart and tiny drums thud against my chest. My anxiety is like a hummingbird. Heart beating rapidly, wings frantically flapping to maintain its position in space.

I spread my legs apart as I keep on gulping and gulping for air while silently praying in my head that she’ll magically just see something and mistake it with my hymen, she leans closer and when her head is about to disappear there and I immediately close my shivering legs. “Nomzamo what’s wrong?” she looks up at me and I balance myself on my elbows and looking down at her with water beads shimmering on my forehead and chewing my lower lip. “Don’t just sit there and look at me Nomzamo, talk” now her face changes.

I get off the bed to sit on my buttocks and hanging my head low while fiddling with my fingers and she’s standing in the middle

on the room with her hands against her hips—she’s finding jubilation in this doesn’t she? “Mthabela said I should tell you the truth. I mean Muzi. . .Muzi Mthabela actually. He said I should tell you the truth” I murmur and then pause waiting for some sort of facial expression. I don’t know maybe a frown or a scowl but she remains impassive “It happened today” I cannot believe this family, couldn’t they just find out maybe three months down the line.

“What happened today Nomzamo?”

“We. . .we. . .It didn’t happen like” What am I even saying? It didn’t happen like what honestly? “He ate from the kraal” I bluntly say and avoid making eye contact with her, my eyes are everywhere but not her face and she’s still standing there with her hands on her hips.

“I already knew Nomzamo but I wanted you to tell me. The moment you walked out of this room, I knew it. Do you know what you gave him? You gave him a gift that he could never give you back. Blood was spilled and you two are bind forever. Do you understand how deep is intimacy?” I nod my head in agreement as she speaks in her elderly tone that trembles and then she takes a sharp intake of breath “Do you love him?” Why everyone keeps bringing that powerful word up? “Oh Nomzamo you don’t have to answer me” she blooms with a beautiful ravishing smile and her wrinkled cheeks touches her

eyes “Let me go then” she walks out of the room and leaving me wondering how am I going to die. And how is Mthabela going to handle this. Why do I keep calling him by his surname? Maybe because it uniquely just suits him. It belongs to him; It was made from him, Muzi Mthabela.

Everyone knows that I’m not a virgin now. People from church, my aunt who bakes dry and salty scones, my uncle who laughs with chickens after he has smoked cannabis—It has been broadcasted everywhere that I no longer have an hymen and now everyone knows I’m having sex. I’ve only had sex, once, once already its everyone’s business.

We are following culture because my father is such a traditionalist whom doesn’t want to renovate and be more modernize in this day and age as speak we are on the road in the early hours of the morning with aggressive breeze and the sun has not yet appeared to grace the crispy blue sky nor has the chickens have started to crow but already we are here at the Mthabela family and they’re fully aware that we are coming. Instead of going to KwaHlabisa we are at his elderly brother’s house since he’s the father figure to Muzi after their father passed on.

As we drive through the gate, the house has a pool that mimics the shape of the exterior. It’s long-line horizontal abode

protects from the elements with glass and metal coverings, while a luxurious strip of blue runs its length. Two levels of patios are furnished with different types of modern outdoor chairs to delineate the specific functions of each area.

My mother seems impressed as she's wearing sophisticated and elegantly while we get off the car alongside my grandmother and my aunt whom arrived in the middle of the night last after she was called because only women who have to come with me to report what we've done. It sounds like we stole a cow in my father's kraal and ate it alone, they're making us sound greedy basically.

My grandmother is the one that rings the doorbell twice after she has glanced at me and a beautiful woman appears wearing a head wrap around her head but the blonde wig is showing, her denuded face is mesmerizing and captivating as she shows us her perfect teeth, I am sure she has her own personal dentist and I get a waft of her scent as I size her up from the high heel shoes that shows her beautifully painted toenails all the way to her off shoulder puffy sleeves dress "Please come in" she warmly welcomes us inside the house and taking a step aside when our eyes meet she winks at me—I am sure she's already aware that I am the one who's virginity has been taken here then she laces her hands around my waist with a radiant smile "No wonder he went to jail for you. You are so beautiful" she

says and my mother glance us, well we are not on speaking terms after she discovered this. “Please come this way” We are taken into the living room and I cannot help but wandering my eyes, mind blown and captivated at the luxe of this home.

A magnificent dual aspect modern fireplace lays a mirrored volume across the width of the large living room, lightly dividing the space between a television lounge and a conversational sitting room. Strings of illumination loop into the centre of the living room, and across to a mezzanine landing to artfully connect the two.

Over by the television, there’s a designer table lamp that washes a bright glow over the rugged texture of a tremendous rock face feature wall. A unique floor lamp springs tall from between two modern lounge chairs with a warming cappuccino colour way.

Massive windows blows open the side of the luxurious living room, creating an immersive connection with the garden.

The L-shaped couch forms a cosy sofa bed at one end, where an adjoined side table offers a handy surface for a laptop.

The double height living room feels like an outdoor space under views of the sky and changing weather. A large modern coffee table complements the elongated line of the contemporary sofa, and exaggerates the generous proportions of the room.

Wooden ceiling panels promote a cosy feeling in the vast room. Recessed track lights settle into the smooth plane, drawing evenly spread light around the entire room layout. A custom television stand is pieced along the sustained length of the spectacular rock wall.

The rock is applied in vertical tiles and columns to instil the sharp edge of modernity. Majestic bonsai trees appear more ancient than the modern home allows, and grow a feeling of wise and noble calm—they actually have a tree inside the house, a whole tree.

And more tall floor lamps border the sitting room on the other side of the open flame. A round shape theme curves a swivel armchair and modern side tables. A light creamy rug unfurls to define the area, and to bring out the fireplace's light marble hearth.

The staircase design unfolds beneath a glorious skylight. Floor-to-ceiling steel rods have been installed to draw due attention to the fabulous height of the room, and to distribute natural light throughout.

From the side view, the angular steps of the staircase appear suspended in midair, with the steel rods pouring like thundering tropical rain onto the bonsai garden.

Uplights raise golden highlights under outreached branches and moss blanketed rocks. Linear chandeliers hang tripled across a twelve place dining set in the luxury dining.

I'm not the only one extremely mind blown even my aunt is planning on stealing vases and whispering into my ear and painfully pinching me while she slightly screams underneath her breath and then we make ourselves comfortable on the couch before and three men walks into the room, one of them has bald head with a beard on his chin with gray strands screams power, money and sovereignty—his aura just demands respect just like that man who's the reason we are here today, he's introduced as Menzi. I instantly hang my hand low and gripping onto my dress in my own corner of trepidation as he takes a sit on the couch after he has respectfully greeted my grandmother and calling her with her clan names and then my mother and aunt who is showing all her teeth even the missing one at the bottom.

My grandmother clasps her hands on her thighs as they speak in lower tones and reporting that my mother's cow has been stolen from the kraal. Ah ah ah that's basically my hymen right? And they're saying it belonged to my mother. Right after that the accuser is being called into the room and he walks in looking breathtakingly beautiful wearing washed up denim pants and a tank top that looks like his second skin with

iziqhaza earrings hanging from his ears, the authority in his body language and dominating aura cannot be missed. And he goes to sit on the couch opposite me I risk a peek at him knowing very well how my body will react the moment our eyes lock but I still glance at him. My thoughts flash through my brain and I remember it's only been hours since it happened as the morning sun glow shimmered on his face looking like it was meant to be there, the colors in his eyes were enlivened as he grasped my hands on his and boring dreams that were filled with pink roses, my very own utopia while he looked into my own glossy eyes as tears were dancing there from the amount of pain I couldn't describe—It felt good at some point but it was too much too bare at the same time as he moves slowly with succulent rhythm as though he had the watch at the palm of his hand, controlling the time. I remember the harmony that escaped his mouth and blended with my own as though we were singing a duet. I'd say "Hmmm" and he's respond with "Aah" as if those were the lyrics to our love making song.

Our eyes meet and I breathe and blink looking at him as he gives me a secret smile and my heart rate is through the roof I feel like I've run an uphill race. I want to lean over and grasp my knees, my mother glance towards me to find me painted with pretty colors then she looks towards the man who has painted these colors on my face.



And he's then asked if he really stolen a cow from my mother's kraal and has any idea about this of which he confidently admits leaning forward and balancing his elbows on his knees looking towards his brother who then smirks and glances towards me before they seek for an apology and asking what's needed—that was just it, they're coming this weekend with my mother's cow and a goat to cleanse our surname and the muscles around my mother's face are seemingly relaxed now as she shows her teeth after we are asked to stay and have breakfast with them.

We are leaded to a live edge wood dining table that brings the nature element to this space, stretching beautiful wood grain through its centre. Taupe dining chairs complement the table with natural timber legs. At the back of the room, a luxe marble kitchen arrangement is extended with a natural wood dining island.

One of the marble walls holds a secret. The elegantly veined white panels slide back to reveal a nook of state of the art kitchen appliances.

The square shaped kitchen island accommodates a sociable six kitchen bar stools. An impressive modern chandelier adds a unique focal point.

We gather around the table and my aunt already has something on her plate and pouring herself a glass of juice. And

well I have been introduced to Zobuhle and Bumluko whom are Menzi's wives and they then announce that some of the family members who had wish to come couldn't make it since everything happened in such haste.

"Can I speak to Nomzamo privately?" Oh no why would he want to drag all the attention to me when I've had been on the limelight already? As his voice baritone echoes on the table the sound of clicking forks and spoons and plates immediately pauses and everyone eyeballs us. My grandmother is the first one who shows me her teeth before Zobuhle who just poked her husband and grinning like an adolescent who's seeing her best friend making out with a famous boy in school. "If you don't mind MamMbatha" he says referring to my mother who's covered in a rosy hue. At how the words rolled out of his tongue smoothly as he called her with her husband's surname? Or what? But she has a jaw dragging itself on this table. I know I am not the one who was left hypnotized by this man, why do they think we are even here for a stolen cow heh?

"I don't mind at all" Is this my mother?

I perk up from the trying to ignore the eyes that are like flash lights as his feet propel him towards me and he takes the bowl of oat and fruit that I was eating alongside side the glass of juice leading the way, I am following right behind him as we walk into the a small lounge has been situated between the

kitchen and the formal dining room. A chic settee and a set of round nesting coffee tables add metallic notes to the neutral decor with earthy brown accents and wooden elements are employed to build warmth in each area of the spacious home. Brown accent chairs are mirrored by colour matched accent cushions over on the couch.

Metal rod chair frames hark back to the towering steel balustrades of the staircase design. Eye catching sculpture and wall art bring in culture and fluid form. The glass coffee table set is kept simple with decorative glass vessels.

He manoeuvres me into taking a sit on the couch then he comes and sit next to me placing the glass of juice on the table but he has the bowl in his hand, his body facing towards me. "What do you want to talk about Mthabela?" I ask him clasping my hands on my thighs and looking at him.

"I want you to eat. You were not eating"

"I was eating" I protest and he creases his eyebrow after looking down at my bowl "I was scared but I was going to eat" I tell him and he scoops some oat and looking at me with a disapproval look before shaking his head.

"Nana open your mouth" he says with a serious and determined tone. When I frown at him he shoots back with a marble face, I have no choice but opening my mouth and he

feeds me waiting for me to swallow looking at the movement of my lips as though he wishes he could explore my mouth to see the way the oat sits on my tongue, how my my teeth process it and how it smoothly moves down my throat to my stomach. Again he feeds me another spoon. There is total comfortable silence between us and sexual tension. "I'm not perfect Nomzamo" he says so randomly and worse part he's gazing into my eyes watching me to swallow. This man. What if I actually choked because I was caught out of guard and then died?

"I never said you were" I open my mouth once again. Having him feeding me like this brings delicious tremors in all the forbidden places. I pause to look at him to search where was that coming from but he remains just impassive. "I don't have any expectations from you" I tell him honestly "But I do want to know something" And his frown is giving me a go ahead that I should ask him whatever is that on my mind. "When we spoke the other day about why you don't like physical touch. . .you said something that left me in a very confused space and I have been trying to make sense out of it"

"I am listening"

He stops feeding me, staring as if I'm a complete conundrum as I clear my throat "you said you hate physical touch because it's something that's connected to your ancestors and also you

mentioned you're fighting with your demons and seeking dominance and power. I want to know the anger residing inside you, is it only because of your ancestors that are dominating you?"

"Open your mouth" Oh he's not answering me. I hesitate first and opening my mouth in slow motion before a spoon disappears, I chew and swallow. I can hear the laughter coming from the other side, I wish I was them. The atmosphere is suddenly too intense here and the physical touch as his hands touched me is depriving air into my lungs. Whatever he's hiding from me wants to come out in an explosion. "That was not even half of it Nomzamo"

"I'm your girlfriend"

"You're my woman"

"Whatever I am to you but the fact is I am yours now and I deserve to know everything about you. Do you want to hide from me until when?"

He looks at me with incredulity and frowns. "What do you want to know?"

"The truth and this time don't hide behind the ancestors so I can get off your back. It sounds believable yes. I believe you. But that wasn't the reason you don't want to be touched.

There's not the reason and there's more to this than what you're telling me"

"I am protecting you"

"From what Mthabela?" I ask him "What are you protesting me from? So it's true when I say you were hiding behind your ancestors but there's a real truth to this?"

"Nomzamo!"

"Tell me now Muzi. You better tell me" I look straight into his eyes regardless of the fire burning in his. I ignore all the passion and adoration there but demanding the truth "Please tell me the truth Mthabela" I look at him "What you said about your ancestors dominating was nothing but a lie wasn't it Mthabela? You used all that knowledge that you have about spirituality to blind me didn't you?"

"Maybe"

"Maybe?" I gasp. I cannot believe him. I cannot believe this man sitting in front of me and gazing into my eyes looking at the perplexity dancing on my face "Maybe what? Maybe what exactly I want to know. What's the truth and what's the lie? Do you even feel all these things you said you're feel for me or you were also feeding me some lies to sleep with me"

"Don't dare question or doubt how I feel about you Nomzamo"

“It has been three days, literally three days. Or is it two? I don’t care but it been just few days of me agreeing to be with you and already you’re lying to me Mthabela?”

“You’re fragile Nomzamo, I’m protecting you”

“Who’s protecting you?” I don’t get a response. I get up to stand by the glass window and facing towards him flaring my nostrils and the sun is now gently dancing in the sky

“Mthabela”

“Thingo lwami”

“Who is protecting you? While you’re busy protecting everyone who’s protecting you?”

“I have so many layers of protection”

“I disagree”

He perks up from the couch and I stop breathing since his mission is clear on his face and not a slightest hint of smile. He turns me around facing outside and casually he slips behind me and he doesn’t say a word, his hand communicate all as they slid down my hips and adjust my dress around to hide both of us and I gasp after he has unzipped his pants “Muzi” I breathlessly.

“Don’t move Nomzamo. If anyone walks into this room they’ll see what’s happening or anyone outside so stand still” I almost

close my eyes and pray out loud. We are here because of this. Us. Doing this. I want to stop him yet the feel of him moving ever slightly with natural rhythm is maddening. After few minutes, the urge to move against him for a deeper thrust is too much. I push against him hard with a gasp “Nana, no” he whispers, dropping one firm hand against my hip “You will make this obvious”

“I’m going to faint” I murmur, leaning my head back against his shoulder.

“Good. I have the ambulance’s number on speed dial since you’re quite a fainter” What the actual hell? What? I haven’t fainted, I just happen to want to faint—ah. He’s moving in slow agony. And then he slowly pulls out and enters me with a hard slide.

And without a preamble, he plunges into me in one swift move, so deep. The feeling is overwhelming, intoxicating, and complete heaven. I groan feeling absolutely full and he places his hand over my mouth. “Nana” he calls me.

“Hmmm” I murmur.

“Keep it low” I close my eyes and savour the feeling. He slowly pull back, and first painfully slow and then he ease back into me feeling every muscle inside my sex. “Fuck!” He hisses through his teeth. Then pull back and plunge into me again and I bite his



palms in between my teeth, making sure a sound doesn't come out of my mouth.

Holding my buttocks he pulls me back to him as he plunge into me, reaching deeper and farther inside me. I am lost and have completely forgotten about my aunt who's eating croissants, muffins and fruit salad. My mother who's ravishingly smiling and everyone else on that table. I've forgotten about the conversation we were having. He keeps moving hard, pushing and my hands are holding onto the glass window as he carry us both to the precipice fast, hard and explosively. He pounds into me, with my dress now all the way up, no care in the world that someone might walk into this room. He's drawing excited moans from me that I cannot let out. He plunges into me again and again. Until the familiar feeling engulfs me, my walls tighten and that's like an encouragement for him to go deeper. He thrusts deep and pull my buttocks back to him again. He swivel his hips once more, gyrating, finding that perfect angle and he holds my buttocks and angulate rubbing that spot with the tip of my dick stimulating his crown and my secret senses, pulling back just the right amount, providing shallow plunges. A deep moan escapes my lips and tears of frustration that I cannot scream as much as I want prickles at the corners of my eyes. He pulls back and thrusts forward again tougher and deeper. "I want to scream" I say with his hands still on my mouth. And that's it.

The orgasm spread through my body, passing into him and he quickly ease out of me, I wince bereft. He's gritting his teeth as though a painful wave just ran through him and his body goes rigid and rolling his head back before he grabs the tissues that were on sitting next to sculptures wiping himself and he takes my hand making me sit on the couch and wiping me all the up and down while looking into my eyes. He throws it in a small bin in this room and he pulls me into his arms nuzzling on my neck and hold him tight as though I can squeeze out all of that he's hiding from me. "Are you guys ok—

Zobuhle pauses and we turn towards her. This room smells like a mixture of me and him. I look at her wondering if she knows what has happened. "Oh ahem. Nomzamo your mother said I should let you know that you'll be leaving in few minutes honey" she looks at us in disbelief. I don't know why. But it hits me that it's because I am in Muzi's arms then a smile shines on her face "I should leave" she says and then walk out.

"Does she know?" I eyeball him.

He laughs "No, she doesn't know and don't start panicking Nomzamo" "What if she heard us?"

"She didn't hear us" "Muzi" "Nana"

"I care about you"

"I know" he kisses me long and hard.

17

“Aching, longing, yearning  
for a brush past, a touch  
of surface - much more  
than a waterproof  
a soft container”

“What’s on your mind you are very quiet” Rharha turns to me as we walk from one corridor to another at the store as she grabs fabrics that would look nice on her—I think olive green actually looks nice on her, she holds out a dress on my face before she places it against her chest to see whether it makes her attractive and captivating has she wants before she swiftly turns around and putting back the dress “Nomzamo!” she calls me once again. Oh I wasn’t paying attention that she now has pale pink high waist pants and a matching knitted turtle neck crop top, she chews the corner of her lips waiting for my opinion “What do you think about this one?”

I shrug nonchalantly “I don’t know, do you like it?” I give her a response absent minded and she frowns at me putting back the pants and the top again “What wrong I thought that was cute?”

“And why you didn’t say that from the beginning? What’s going on? You have absolutely nothing to worry about, your man is coming this weekend to pay what he needs to pay and ubaba seems to have tone down being overly dramatic. If I knew you had to break up your virginity for him to be like this I would’ve searched and found Muzi long time ago” she says in a high pitch tone and moving through one corridor to another then she turns to me again and this time tugging in her hair behind her ears and I wear a plastic smile on my face so that she doesn’t plague me with questions “Nomzamo what wrong?”

“I don’t know” I take a deep breath with my hands hanging on the side of my body and eyes looking around the store that looks almost half empty and it smells like sweet cologne and ironed fabrics “I mean. . .I think he’s hiding from me” Finally what has been uncomfortably sitting on my chest and ruffling up my feathers mistakenly jump out my mouth.

“What do you mean by that?” she furrows her eyebrows and taking my hand leading us to the fitting room and she is carrying a basket with clothes in her hands until we are standing in a long queue, she faces towards me and impatiently waiting for me to answer “In what way?” this time she pesters.

“I mean there’s a part of him that he doesn’t want me to know because I am fragile and he’s protecting me”

“Are you not fragile? Didn’t you say you’re feather just days ago? Are feathers not fragile?” I cannot believe that we are made out of a same sperm. It’s so unbelievable sometimes. When she’s met with my diabolical gaze she grins and leaning on my shoulder then pull away “But what if he’s really protecting you from something very dark? Obviously there are more sides to him that you are yet to peel off but don’t rush to get to that part, the relationship is still new and blooming”

We manoeuvre forward as a woman with blonde hair disappears into the fitting room and taking another deep breath I ask her “Have you ever met someone who doesn’t want to be touched? I mean physically?”

“I’ve heard about them and saw one in a movie. It could be various of reasons honestly. Either they’re scared of loving and being loved. Or they’re suffering from hapephobia which is a fear of being touched or they’re simply just sadists whom wants dominance and prefers being in total control and they feel touch makes them lose control. Remember there’s magic in fingertips. You could fall in love by touch and eye contact so most of them don’t make eye contact and they don’t want to be touched”

“And how do you know about these things?”

“Oh I watch porn, it has different kinds of categories, you should check it out” Just when I was about to applaud her for

making so much sense for once in her life and then this. . .this comes out of her mouth. Finally we are next in line and they give her the tags while I stand outside the door and gazing at myself in the mirror with my afro that has been tied into neat pom-poms and I'm don into a short pink floral sweetheart dress with puffy sleeves that matches my eyeshadow.

"Also sadists, do they prefer not being touched?"

"Yes and they find joy in violence and seeing someone else in pain they've caused them" she shouts behind the door and I look around to see if anyone can hear this conversation before gasping and clutching my chest. Does he—Omg I doubt he's like that. "It's more like sex therapy to them" she continues saying before she appears wearing an animal print short dress twirling around for me to see her "What do you think?"

"Try something else" There's too much going with that dress, her face falls as she disappears behind the door yet again "Is this like that guy from that movie? I forget what's called by he was technically having satanic sex. That was very demonic and I have no words to describe that" I shake my head and the thought of him being into that—I don't want to think about it. My brain is too painful for me too think because of how my scalp has been pulled while I was tying up these pom-pom. But this one thought I want to push back at the back of my brain

remains standing in front of me rigid and motionless waiting to run around at every corners of my brain.

I hear Rharha's laughter echoing behind the door and then she peeks through, sonorously cackling like a tranquilizer with no side effects until she chokes "Demonic sex? Even on porn I've never seen such a thing" she catches her breath and then disappears once again leaving me pacing up and down deciding whether to call him or not. But what am I going to say to him? "By the way after this we are going to Bontle. I want her to tell me who's a green mamba" When she says that I immediately forget all about that satanic sex where someone has their hands cuffed and mouth gagged. I cannot believe that people actually do that. Why would you find joy in that? I didn't even enjoy watching that movie although my body could disagree with me since I felt something crawling and humming in between my thighs—isn't that abuse? Okay they made an agreement but still. And that male character was. . .Okay no he's nothing close to Mthabela, nothing. I've watched two movies and one of them when I'm comparing him to Muzi somehow it just makes sense. Omg what will I do if he's really a sadist? And prefers having sex in that manner? I would die honestly.

"Well she didn't say I was a green mamba" I shout back to her and swallowing the bitterness of these thoughts running

through my mind already, they dance, they sing and paint. “I just assumed that she might’ve want to call me a green mamba”

“Not even snake on the aeroplane or maybe snake on the train you assumed you were a green mamba” But those are movie titles and not types of snakes. “Oh maybe an anaconda you assumed you were a green mamba haiké” she doesn’t sound impressed by my choice of snake. And once again she appears this time wearing nude pants and one arm top “What do you think?” she plunges.

“I think you really look beautiful” I drag my very own jawline on the floor seeing how enthral she is and then she smiles and wink at me “Anyways sadists. Do they change maybe? As in don’t find joy in hurting other people?”

“In most movies I’ve watched they do change after they’ve found true love, clear indication that love really do exists but. . .when both parts really wants to make it work and so sync, and doing it for the right reasons. I am still doing my own auditions for true love and some people are lucky enough to meet their soul mates at one go” I look at her not believing that this is coming from her mouth “Anyways what’s all these questions?” Well I am still trying to make out in my head that why this man who had sex with me while my mother and grandmother were in the other room doesn’t want to be touched. He was



thrusting deeper and deeper, purposeful with his hands that rather smelt fruity sealed my mouth and then he then made an animalistic sound as though he was feeling waves of afflicting running through him and some transparent liquid came out of his maleness organ and filled the tissue in his hand while he was catching as enough breath into his lungs calming down and coming back from the exotic utopia he has escaped too, we both escaped too.

I try to think of something that could conceal that I am actually talking about someone who turned out to be my boyfriend—I cannot call him that because he said I am his woman and it only makes sense if I call him my man. I have a man. The one I once said was not gorgeous but attractive, surely I was drunk. A man who might have dark desires. “I was watching this movie. About this lecture who ended up dating his student” I shout and she comes up now wearing her asymmetric top and jeans. “Are you done?” I ask and she nods taking her basket and we make our way to the counter standing in line.

“Nomzamo!” I hear someone calling out for my name at the store causing me to abruptly turn around and disgust is painted on my face as I see him striding towards me showing his smile. Oh he’s still as good looking as I can remember with that short hair that makes his diamond shaped face appears beautifully and ears like a bat with his skin so enchanting. I remember how

we'd do face masks together every weekends as we stand in front of the mirror with our matching tooth brushes and singing to our favourite songs, dancing with our shoulders. "I saw you from the distance, Rharha hey" he greets my sister with a hand that has a gold wedding band and this when I feel the hurt I cannot describe where is it coming from. I feel my insides trembling with affliction as we gaze at each other when Rharha steps forward to fight him I block her with my hands, I don't want drama not at the store. "You look beautiful" he says looking at me we are almost the same height. I watch him clearing his throat remembering that how it was like two years ago as we met at a store like this, isn't this deja vu? And that day he wanted to ask me something so stupid and we ended up sonorously laughing at the store as I threw my head back while he intently looked at me with a smile on his face. "I heard you were missing. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine"

"I tried calling you to explain everything but you were unreachable"

"This is not the kind of conversation I'd love to have here with you Loyiso" I respond back and blinking at him, my eyes avert themselves to the wedding band in his hand and I take shallow breathes.

“Do you mind if we go somewhere and like talk about it and I can answer all your questions”

“The answer is no, now walk away Loyiso and stay away from my sister because there’s nothing there to explain” Rharha hisses behind me and pointing at him with her index finger before she clicks her tongue “Walk away. There’s no words that could describe what you’ve done now keep walking”

Loyiso steals a glance at me with sincerity in his eyes and very apologetic and when he opens his mouth to say something Rharha screams “Haaaaaamba!” she tells him to walk away and he moves away slowly step by step and stealing looks at me. I sharply inhale turning to my deranged sister who keeps clicking her tongue and shaking her head “Nxxh what is there to explain? Tell me what exactly is there to be explained” I love how she’s always my shield in my battles. “Does he know you’re dating a prince? A whole fucking beautiful prince for that matter? Let me go and tell him” I pull her back my her hand as she attempts to walk to him now all eyes are on us, we have grabbed enough attention. “I am so mad Solela” And that should be my third name, also right there in my identity card. My mother gave it to me, I prefer it than Rochelle. “What does he want to explain? That he’s married? What’s there to explain?”

“Next customer please” A soft tone says and we take a step forward there and placing the basket of clothes. The cashier is

watching us with a slight smile on her face surely has been listening to our conversation. I have no words. They won't come out of my mouth at this moment because I have so much running through my mind. I'm thinking about the possibility of my man being somehow a sadist or maybe he has haphophobia and I am now thinking about my ex-boyfriend whom I just bumped into and indeed married. "Enjoy your day, thank you" the cashier says in a sweetest tone and I help Rharha with her bags as we walk out of the store, I still haven't uttered a word and she's now babbling on and on, none stop until we get to the car parking and I open the car boot putting all the the shopping bags in and sliding behind the wheel reversing out, yet still listening to my sister going on and on about how enraged she is, her anger is menacing and I think she has completely forgotten then that she wanted to beat up someone.

I glance at her changing gears as we move swiftly through the late afternoon traffic with people coming back from work making me miss being a personal assistance at some point well I just miss the working environment and mostly Khensani, I should call her one of these days and maybe befriend her since it seems I no longer have friends. Now that I think about it none of them called me to find out if I was okay since I was apparently missing nor did they share those posts and my

pictures. I dearly miss them but I guess sometimes some people are there to stay and teach you a life lesson and then walk out after they've done their part. "What's it about the shopping by the way you've been making me run around the stores" I say to Rharha leaning back as she opens a packet of jelly beans, it seems we are going to be on the road longer than anticipated.

"I'm going on a date" she says and throwing the sweet inside her mouth and handing me a packet when she sees me tugging my head in she frowns—just last week she was on a date. "I met someone" she informs me blooming with colors.

"What happened to that guy from the baby shower?"

"I don't know, we were not compatible. Not all of us just breathe and then a prince get charmed sweetheart. We need to date Adam, David, Goliath before Jesus" And how did this turn biblical. I erupt with laughter and shaking my head before swiftly moving on the road once again.

When we get home the crispy blue sky has turned ebony with a crescent gracing it with it's presence as we park at the garage and Rharha is the first one to get off groaning from exhaustion. I mean the entire day we have been walking from one store to another, since she got paid she also took me out for manicure and pedicure—retail therapy, she said.

Before we can even go inside the house she's already taking off her high heel shoes and grabbing the bags out of the boot and striding inside the house while I follow right behind. "Oh you guys are back. Nomzamo I need to talk to you" my mother says glimpsing at us as we walk through the door, comfortably sitting on the couch.

"Can I go change first ma?"

"No, no come here now. Nandipha you too" we eyeball each other with my sister before our feet drag us into the living room and making ourselves comfortable on the couch distance away from her, she has a cup of tea in her hand with a book, she takes off her reading glasses and placing her cup aside. "Your father and I had conversation last night that we might've been too hard on both of you. You are not teenagers anymore so all of this was expected but we've just never prepared ourselves for it because to us you are just our little princesses no matter how grown you are. So if maybe you want to go out and not coming back the least you can do is telling us about it rather than leaving us worried the entire night. We know you want to have fun. We know you are dating and mostly we now know that you're sexually active" she says in a sweetest tone "And the drift between both of you and your father has to end. I know he's not a perfect human but he loves both of you very much"

This conversation would've been much better if we had it maybe tomorrow when my mind is not crowded with so many things at once. Meeting up with my once upon a time boyfriend. Secondly I haven't spoken with Muzi since this day started, he only called in the morning to let me know he was going to have a hectic day at work—thinking about it I don't even know what are other businesses was he talking about. But my body is overwhelmed with too much emotions and I cannot miss the distinct crescendo of wanting to be in his arms and listening to his baritone reverberating, I miss him so much, just the sound of him voice at this point is all that I need and longing for. The turbulence thoughts about why he doesn't want to be touched are placid, I don't care about all of that but I need him here with me.

“We understand that ma but we cannot try to work on our relationship when he doesn't want to meet us half way and respect our choices. We love him too, but sometimes it's more preferable loving him from the distance to avoid hurting each other” Rharha says and leaning back on the couch breathing out.

“I totally understand that and I'll have a conversation with him” my mother shows her teeth, a radiant smile “Did you buy me anything?” she grins and Rharha takes out a shopping bag giving it to her, she rejoice and thank her before I get up

making my way to my room leaving them chatting up the storm.

After taking off my clothes and only in my underwear the need to be touched by him throbs in every part of my body and my mind screams for him in every way. I need to compose myself. I cannot let him control my thoughts even when he's not at my presence. I look for something to wear and finding navy round neck tee with matching bagging sweatpants and donning them before returning to the living room, making myself comfortable on the couch and focusing on a television screen while listening to my mother and sister talking. But my mind drifts away, thinking about how his hands engulfed my hips with my hands pressed against the window, as he agony moved slowly behind me and a knot is being dangerously tied at each flash back, my swollen berry is ululating and my slits feels slippery as I squirm on the couch.

I decide to send him a text message and telling him how is he controlling my mind and how the thought of him deprive oxygen into my lungs and makes me think about all the ungodly things he has done to me, the rhythm of his hips, the warmth of his breath on my skin, the scorching kisses. I tell him how much I miss him and right after sending that message I regret how much I was truthful with each vowel that I typed and I immediately throw my phone on the table ignoring the two



eyeballs gazing at me. In that moment my phone starts to vibrate causing me to almost crawl out of my skin and shave my afro since I've untied the pom-poms. I lean closer taking a quick glance seeing his name flashing on the screen and I whip my head up to look at my sister and my mother who are looking back at me. "Yey wena your boyfriend is calling" my mother says with a smirk and I am frozen. Does she know the risky text that I just sent? If she knew that smirk on her face would disappear and she'll dig a hole for me to bury myself. The phone stops ringing for few seconds and then he calls again and again, none stop. "Nomzamo answer your phone" my mother says.

"My phone?"

"Your ringing phone, can't you hear it's annoyingly ringing" Before I can open my mouth Rharha grabs my phone answering it for me before she hands it to me with a daring look. I want to throw her across the room. I take the phone from her getting up from the couch and making my way to the kitchen where I place the gadget against my ear and breathing first.

"Nana" His baritone voice says into my ears and all the electric waves I have been feeling starts to travel anew throughout my body, traveling in too much haste.

"I miss you" These are the first words that come out of my mouth and fluttering my eyes closed. "The whole day. I've been

missing you. I still miss you. I have been thinking about you. I really miss you” I cannot stop talking as the words just involuntarily comes out of my mouth, pushing through my throat again and again.

“I miss you too and I got your message. I had to walk out of the meeting to call you”

“You got it?” I pretend as though I am not aware that he obviously got it. “You shouldn’t have walked out of the meeting. Are you okay? Have you eaten?”

I can hear a smile in his voice “I haven’t eaten but I would’ve loved to eat you” I almost choke on my very own saliva. Rapidly blinking and clutching my chest. “Have you eaten?”

“I couldn’t eat”

“And why is that?” he is not impressed to hear that from me. “Nomzamo why you haven’t eaten?”

“I was thinking about you and. . .When I think about you nothing matters Mthabela”

“That’s very flattering to hear that I have that amount of power over you but you’ll have to eat. We don’t want you fainting” his tone is gently mocking and I chuckle slightly.

“Your sense of humour is very dry”

“I also want you in my arms” he says referring to the text message. “I always want you next to me”

“Me too” I say with my tone raspy “You have to go back to your meeting. I’ll call you later”

“Are you chasing me away Thingo lwami?”

“No. I want you to finish up so I can have all your attention”

“I can cancel this meeting. You always have my attention”

“Go back to your meeting” I grin.

“Okay then” he sulks “I will call you later but before I go please tell me how wet is ntombazana?” his voice is soft and low, reawakening my body. “You can find out”

“Now you’re giving me every reason to cancel this meeting”

“I’m going to hang up”

“Fine then. Let me go and I will call you later” he says after taking a sharp intake of breath and hanging up the call.

Returning into the living room my mother takes a sip from her cup and hiding behind it “If ever you decide to leave in the middle of the night to tell Muzi that you hate him make sure you let me know that you’re not coming because we don’t want what happened to happen again” she says and then takes another sip from the cup and Rharha laughs loudly “Even you

when you want to come back in the morning then tell me we don't want surprises" my mother is really on the roll today isn't she? I just chuckle and look towards the television screen and avoiding making eye contact with her.

We had dinner in sitting room today just here and watching television sharing gales of laughter and my father is not yet back home but our bonding session is interrupted by my phone yet again ringing. "Heh today she's most definitely going to tell him that she hates him" my mother disses once again as I grab my phone and really it's him calling me. I quickly get off the couch and this time making my way to my room to answer the phone call. I cannot be leaning on cabinets again.

I close my door behind "You are done with your meeting?"

"I'm outside" What the fuck? "You said if I want to know how wet is ntombazana I should come and feel it myself. Nana I'm outside" "Mthabela are you crazy?"

"I don't know how many times you've asked me that before but today. I think I can confidently answer that question and say I am crazy about you Nomzamo"

"I'm coming" I immediately hang up and putting on my slides striding out of the room to the living room and it seems my mother was already waiting for me. "Ma" I call her and standing in the middle of the room, chewing the corners of my lips.

“If you are not coming back just let me know Nomzamo or tell your sister” Oh she doesn’t want me to explain? Or maybe hear my lies? I mean hear anything from me, she doesn’t want to hear it? Wonderful then let me just leave and come back after ten years how about that? Well I cannot leave for too long otherwise what happened before will happen again.

He’s really here—Jesus Christ he’s really out of his mind. I walk to him and he’s standing there looking as beautiful as ever with the streetlight on top of his head shimmering on top of his head.

I found myself getting turned on from watching him drive. He handles the luxury vehicle the way he handles everything—confidently, aggressively, and with skilful control. He drives fast but not recklessly, weaving easily over the curves and straightaways with his hand intertwined with mines. “You did your nails?” Oh he’s paying attention to that. He looks at my hand examining it as he changes gears. This is the first time I am seeing him driving. I mean in a car he’s driving. Is it the first? But I am filled with euphoria. After nodding my head at him, he quickly glances at me yet again “I love them. They look nice on your hands” he compliments.

“Thank you”

“I cannot wait to feel them on my back” he smirks towards me and glances at me yet again. And his words leaves me tantalize.

“you give me life, you give me light”

A brief kiss makes my subconscious returns and I open my eyes gazing up to him with a smile etching on his face. “I didn’t mean to wake you up” his tone drawls and already he smells intoxicating and wearing a black collared shirt before he strokes my cheeks “Good morning thingo lwami” the sound of his voice makes me melt like butter that was left in a scorching sun before he leans closer and kissing my forehead seeing that I am still asleep.

“Are you leaving already?” my breath smells like rotten apples yet his is a mixture of peaches and cream making me wants to thrust my tongue into his mouth to explore the taste.

He smiles salaciously, and his eyes darken with love and desire brimming right under the surface. His lips reach down at me and kiss me slowly. Tasting me, and savouring me—he’s so brave for eating all the rotten apples inside my mouth.

He kisses the contours of my lips and my jaw, my cheeks and the corners of my eyes as if he cannot get enough of me. “I have two early morning meetings then later I’ll be back home. Do you have something in my mind you want to do while I am away?” he asks me and kissing my sharp nose. “You’re

beautiful” Oh so early in the morning and already he’s selling me dreams, wonderful.

“I don’t want you to go” I say to him flapping my eyelashes and sulking like an adolescent whose gadgets were taken away and was told they’re grounded for the eternity.

“I don’t want to go”

Great then don’t go!

“Then don’t go”

“That sounds tempting but I can leave you with something that will make you think about me the whole day while I am not home”

“And what’s that?”

“I’ll have to show you” his glossy eyes that are beautifully hazel brown almost look dark as they arrest me, hold me in presence with no way to escape.

“And you’re still waiting?”

His head dips down to my neck; his lips get to work sucking and kissing, and nipping, and lightly biting, trailing up and down my neck, my chin, caressing my lips, nose, and back to my lips again. “Do you want me to continue?” I nod my head in agreement rapidly and the sound of his voice reawakening my body. Soon a pulsating fills my core.

His lips cover mine in a possessive way, demanding passage, demanding reciprocation. His tongue darts into my mouth possessing and exploring, claiming me anew as his hands are trailing, and wanting to possess all of my body peeking off the body that is covering my nakedness. Oh no I am not sleeping naked because we were intimate no, in fact last night we were just wrapped around in each other's arms and that was it. That's what we both wanted.

He trail my sides, trailing up to my breasts and his mouth travels to my sternum and his lips travel over the soft curve of my breast slowly nipping and sucking. My breathing becomes faster. My body becomes tenses. He controls my body and every sensation that I get. "Baby" Those words coming out of my mouth are mould as though they were created just for him and I can tell he loved the sound of that as he reaches the peak of my perky breast.

"Nana"

"Don't go"

"I have to go but I'm going to make you feel good before I leave okay" I am breathless as he consumes my nipple in his touch, his touch manipulated and fellates my nipple while his thumb and index fingers captures the one, rubbing and elongating it expertly. "Do you want me to make you feel good?"



“Hmmm” I murmur

“Say it”

“Please make me feel good” I say it with a mischievous smile dancing at the corners of my lips and his lips clamp together over my nipples, sucking and pulling it. He makes me sleep vertically on the bed and my legs almost hanging from the bed. My eyelashes flutter, wanting to seek even deeper into the sensation and our breathing synchronized, matching and competing through desire.

He moves his hand down to my navel, and lower to my sex, caressing, and his fingers enter into me; the sensation is overwhelming, making me groan. His fingers move in circular motion inside me and my pelvis meets up with his hand, his palm flush against my sex, his fingers are knuckle deep. I want him so bad.

He pulls out and slips two of his fingers inside my mouth while gazing deeply into my eyes, making me tremble like chicken feet thrown in a deep freezer, do they tremble? Then he returns his fingers and plagues them inside my sex, gathering the wetness between my folds and presses my clit causing me to gasp and close my eyes. “Muzi” his fingers gently move up and down my slit, scissoring me. “It feels good” He is not taking his eyes away from me

taking me higher and higher with my body floating into galaxies. His breathing coming faster too as he spreads my wetness and with every thrust he twists his fingers making my mind run a riot.

“Do you like it?” He thrusts with much deeper strokes “Nana”

“Hmm”

“Do you like it?”

“Hmmm”

“Tell me how much you like it?”

A moan slips out of my lips like a harmony of a beautiful opera song and gulping for air. Again and again. He thrusts deeper. Faster. Harder. “I love it. All of it” My inner walls start to hum and they begin to spasm and clench around his fingers. My hands are digging deeper into the sheets and I arch my back as every part of my body start to chant, pleasure taking over me and ripping me apart. I cry out, calling Jesus who’s surely looking down at me with an unimpressed look but his son’s fingers pumping me faster inviting more groans, grunts, cries and moans. The sound of my juices echoes in my ears. I start to shake uncontrollably until he stops and watch my body jerks with a capitulate smirk plastered on his face, pressing my thighs with the digits of his fingers hard milking each and every orgasm out of me. And he returns his fingers inside me once

again succulently moving this time and I cannot find my voice, I cannot fight off this feeling either and all I can do is cry. Then he stops when he's done with his necromancy but his fingers remains inside me. My body hums and my breathing is raspy and slowly my senses returns.

"Are you okay?" he kisses my forehead, as if he's marking his territory.

"Hmmm"

"Can't talk?" he smirks.

"Hmmm"

"I'm going to miss you so I'll keep smelling my fingers and think about you"

"I feel sorry for whoever will handshake you"

"I don't do handshake" he sucks his fingers "Take care of yourself while I'm away. And I'll call every five minutes to make sure you're okay. Please don't leave"

"I won't leave. But I might go to the salon and braid my hair"

"I'll have someone taking you there"

"Okay now please go"

"Fine" He doesn't want to leave as much as I don't want him to. He leans over my grape fruit—ntombazana and kisses her

gently before he gets up to kiss my forehead once again. I smile at him.

“Enjoy your day at work”

“How? When I left my woman at home? In bed naked with ntombazana that wet? How can I even enjoy?” he complains grabbing his bags and shaking his head. This time he kisses my lips. “I don’t want to go”

“Go Mthabela” I chuckle and finally he succumbs walking out of the door and I hear his footsteps fading but after few minute he walks through the door. “I thought you’ve left” I laugh.

“I forgot to tell you that you’re beautiful”

“You’ve already said it”

“But I didn’t say it before I left. You are beautiful”

“Thank you and you are also beautiful” now he’s standing by the door and if I could I’d drag him back to this bed. “You don’t want to leave?” I laugh.

“You’re making it hard for me to leave”

“Just leave so you can come back”

“I can cancel these meetings”

“No. You have to go”

“You are beautiful”

“You’ve already said it”

“I am leaving”

“Bye”

“I am really leaving Nomzamo”

“Have a nice day Muzi Mthabela” Instead of him walking out, he walks through the door and grasp my chin and holding me in place and cover my lips with his, kissing me deep and hard; in an all-consuming kiss. “I’m going to miss you”

“I’m going to miss you” I whisper breathlessly as his fingers trails the contours of my lips and he flutters his eyes close before he gazes at me once again with inferno and leaves. I really didn’t want him to go but he has to leave.

Right after he left a powerful sleep drag my eyes lashes and sweep them at the bottom of my eyes like closing curtains.

I fell asleep and I wake up when I hear the sound of the chirping birds against the window and the sun rays blinding me. I can still smell his intoxicating cologne dancing around the room inviting a smile on my face and I get off the bed making it first, this house is freakishly clean they’re no socks all over the room even the clothes I was wearing last night were neatly folded and placed on the bedroom couch.

When I am done taking a shower his scent is emanated on me making me feel his presence in room and behind me as I comb my hair untangling it wearing only his sweatpants and my guava breasts denuded.

I clean the entire house with music softly playing and my breasts hanging from the outside. Yes me—I am cleaning and even planning on scrubbing these walls too and paint them once again.

After what felt like an eternity I am satisfied with cleaning the house that was already sparkling clean returning back to the bedroom when my phone starts to ring from the side table and I quickly get it seeing his name flashing on the screen.

“Nana” his tone drawls and a smile jumps off my mouth and pretty colors blooms on my face “I cannot really talk right now because I am about to go to my second meeting. I tried calling I guess you were sleeping, are you still okay?”

“I’m fine Mthabela. Are you okay?”

“Not really”

“What’s wrong?”

“I miss you. Are you still going to do your hair?”

“Hmmm and you don’t have to send someone to take me. I’ll go by myself”

“Fine then, check your messages after this call and you’ll find car keys in the second drawer by your side of the bed. I cannot wait to see your new hair. Take care of yourself and I have to go”

“Try not to miss me”

“I am already failing”

I smile “Bye Mthabela”

“Bye thingo lwami”

Right after the call a message comes through—a bank notification to be specific leaving me with my eyes out of their own volition and calling him back on his phone and it takes me straight to voicemail. You seriously got to be kidding me. I decide to call Rharha and she answers instantly. “Where are you? Muzi sent me money. Like a huge amount of money for me to do my hair and I could buy myself a house and car and a piece of land with this money. Okay not really but it’s too much”

“How much Nomzamo? How much is that money?”

“It’s a huge amount just know that”

“When a man sends you money then you spend it green mamba. You don’t call your sister panicking. Just go do you hair, do some shopping and buy nice underwear. Don’t be one

of those women who pretend as though they don't love money please, don't stress me. I have a date" What the fuck? Did she just called me a green mamba? A whole green mamba? It was okay when I was calling myself like that not when someone starts using that name.

"What am I supposed to do with all of this money Rharha?"

"How about you send it all of it to me and I will show you what to do? Actually I am cancelling this date and we are going out. How about that? I will teach you what to do with money, I will be waiting for you" I should've known calling this one was pretty much a bad idea because instantly she ends the call. I look at the bank notification once again and putting on his white collared shirt. I have never heard of anyone wearing sweatpants and shirt—a weird combination of fabric.

I wrench the drawer open where I find all the car keys on top of a brown envelope. What do they say again?

They say mind your own business and stay the fuck away from that envelope, don't invade people's privacy, my subconsciousness seethes. But that's not what I wanted to say. Actually I wanted to say curiosity killed a cat but because someone who lives in my head decided to be a medusa and flaring her nostrils is now making me feel bad:



What if in this envelope I find out about why he doesn't want to be touched? Or anything that could actually help me understand him better? Anything.

Nomzamo Rochelle Solela Mbatha, stay away from that envelope!—my subconscious gives me a disapproval look and I intake a sharp breath before grabbing the car keys and closing the drawer and walking out of the room to the garage.

My dearly sister who called me a green mamba just a couple of minutes ago or maybe those minutes have turned into an hour. Well my point is she is here and she really cancelled her meeting and we as speak we just came out of the salon and I have braided my hair into knee length braids, Rharha has been walking from one store to another bubbling up like an adolescent. “I need to tell you something” I say to her as we settle down on the chairs opposite each other at the restaurant and already she's going through the menu “and please don't judge me”

“What is that?”

“Remember when we went to Muzi's family? About him taking my virginity?”

“Hmmm and they're coming this weekend to make the payment. I know that”

“Fine something happened”

“What is that?” she frowns.

“We were having breakfast and he asked to talk to me in private so we went to the other room. We were talking and next thing we had sex, in a room that was just close to where everyone was having breakfast. Anyone could have walked in”

“You had sex with mama and gogo under the roof?” she gasps and clapping once “Nomzamo bad bitch Mbatha. You take the crown. The crown belongs to you” she grins and wiggling her eyebrows “And you used condom right?” When she sees the look on my face she frowns “Nomzamo domkop Mbatha!” Hawu. Now I am stupid? Wasn’t she applauding me for my wanton behaviour and suddenly I am an imbecile? “Get up! We are going to the doctor now. And you are going to get a ten year injection if they have that. I don’t want to be an aunt. Do you want to be a mother?” when I shake my head in disagreement she diabolically look at me “If you’re not a feather, you are a green mamba and if not that you are you are just plain stupid. Asambe”

“Let me call him”

“You better call him and tell him to come here so I can smack both of you to your senses”

We are at the waiting room and I am trying to knock on every door of tranquillity but they’re not opening. My agitation is on

my throat and choking me. I am tapping my fingers against my thighs when I see him from the distance walking towards us with my sister who has been pacing up and down—when I called him he just heard me saying that I am going to the doctor and I couldn't finish the rest of my sentence as he asked all the details and location, announcing he's cancelling his meeting. After telling him why I am here he endlessly apologized for being irresponsible.

I stand on my feet as his frame comes closer and closer and the moment he gets to me he wraps me around his arms kissing the top of my head while my hands circle his waist. "Nana, I am sorry" Again he's apologizing and cupping my jawline making me look up at him "But I actually did pull out so there's no way you are pregnant"

"Your pull out game better be on steroids because I don't want to be an aunt" What is a pull out? Or pulling out? Does that protect you from pregnancy? Why it must be on steroids. "I'm just saying" Rharha says after Muzi glanced at her.

"You have nothing to worry about" Muzi responds to her with a respective tone before he looks towards me yet again "You look beautiful" he smiles looking at my freshly braided twist. In that moment a doctor calls my name "I am coming with you" Muzi says gently.

"I will wait here" Rharha announces.

We take a sit opposite the female doctor with gray strands starting to appear on her hair and she has an amiable smile on her face. “Before anything I want to know when you take the injection, can I have children in future?” I ask glancing towards Muzi who just became rigid on that chair as a sculpture with his face grave.

“Once you’re ready to have children you can stop your injection and usually after three months that’s when you can conceive”

“And when we don’t want children?” That question comes out of his mouth. My scalp prickles as adrenaline shoots with fury. I don’t understand that question and how is it relevant. I want children in future. Maybe two of them if not three.

“Well if you don’t want children then it’s possible that she can close up her womb so that she doesn’t have children in future”

“You don’t want children?” I glance at him and my voice was supposed to come out sternly than this but it sounded raspy instead, and low. Instead of getting a response from him that facial expression from him is enough that he is not answering this question, not here, not now and not ever. “We can proceed” I turn to the woman who has kept a smile on her face throughout. We have done so many urine and blood tests. And I was given an emergency pill since I had unprotected sex most recently. I am then asked when was the last time I woke up in a pool of blood—my period before I injected on my buttocks with

him holding my hand and I can hardly look into his eyes feeling something wanting to expand on my throat. I am given my next date which is after three months. After that he's the one asking all inevitable questions. I am nauseous and feeling dizzy as I was told I will feel. I want to lay down and mostly I want all these questions put to rest in my head.

His hand is around my waist as we get up bidding our farewell and walking out when Rharha gets up instantly. "Let's go home"

I say to her and walking pass Muzi who grabs me by my hand gently with a look I don't want to see in his eyes, it's hypnotizing and very intoxicating. "Mthabela" I breathe.

"Can we talk?"

"Not here" slowly he let go of my hand. I look at him once and walk away with Rharha following right behind me.

"Nomzamo!" she shouts.

"Not here and not now Rharha"

"Are you pregnant?"

"No"

"Thank God then what wrong?"

"Nothing"

“Talk to me”

“Nothing”

Rharha is the first one to get in the car upon seeing Muzi walking towards us cool as cucumber, confidently and demanding all attention to only himself until he’s standing right in front of me with his expression wary as of a predator.

“Nomzamo” those are the first words that comes out of his mouth and my name still sound as beautiful when he says it, like it belongs there, as though if my name was a fabric it would’ve been satin or velvety.

“Do you want to have children?”

“No” That felt like he slapped me right through my face and I have no balance.

“I’m not saying I want them now Mthabela obviously we cannot have them now but in future. In years to come, do you still want children?” my voice is soft velvet.

“No” his response still remains.

“Ever?”

“Ever”

“And what about me since I want them Mthabela? I should sacrifice that for you because I want family. I want to be a mother one day. I should make that sacrifice of not having

children for you?” finally the dam breaking and tears start rolling silently on their own volition.

“Nomzamo—

“I want to know”

“I don’t want children and I’m not willing to change my mind about that”

“Why?”

“Not everything deserves to be answered Nomzamo. Just as much as I don’t want to be touched, I also don’t want children”

“You’re the most delusional human I’ve ever met and all you care about is you Muzi. Not people around you. Not people who cares about you but yourself. The fact that I fucking love you does that matter to you?” Whoa, wait. I say those three words. The most powerful words I haven’t been understanding whether is what I feel towards him or not. I bluntly said that. “I love you” Arg I just said them again and he just gazes at me opening and closing his mouth without any word coming out of his mouth. “Take your keys” I throw them at him and knocking on Rharha’s window to come out “Let’s go we will request an Uber” I turn to him “I was joking I don’t love you” I pause and he blinks “Well fine I do love you but I have made many sacrifices in my life to accommodate everyone and this time I am not willing to do that. I want children and if I cannot have

them with you then I will have them with someone else and also get helped Muzi with all those demons you are battling with get help because I won't let you drag me into that darkness you've made yourself comfortable in"



19

“A man coming into my life and I have to compromise?

For what? For what reason?

To compromise?

A relationship is a relationship that as to be earned not to be compromise for”

From what I heard we shouldn't be preparing something to eat for these people whom are coming here, I strongly believe they should suffer from hunger—I don't even know if they're coming actually since my virgin breaker who calls my female organ “ntombazana” hasn't called me since that day. I had hopes that maybe as I walked away from him he was going to shout right behind me beseeching that I should stop so we can talk and also a part of me wanted to turn around, facing towards him to he could see the agony that was painted on my face. I wanted to run back into the warmth of his arms and wrap him around me so that all these emotions that I feel towards him could consume him, the seed of my love could grow and bloom beautifully into a flower. I just wanted to hear the sound of his voice whispering against my ear velvety and his long delicate fingers wipe away the salty tears that kept crawling out of my eyes. . .I wanted him to know he's worth more than what he

thinks or even believe but I couldn't I had to pull up my red stockings with lace at the top and stand firmly with my words that I spat with an inharmonious tone on this face that remained unemotional makes me wonder if he feels—does that man really feels something? Or any kind of emotions, I have been convincing myself these days that he's robotic.

I switch on my phone and my screen comes to life as messages resonates and I hope that his name could appear somewhere in my notification, my heart wilts when I see a name that doesn't belong to him. It makes me stay afloat in my very own agitation that chokes me because at this moment I am not sure whether to announce to mother who's forcing us to chop the vegetables as we speak and the aroma is hanging thick in the room while my grandmother is asking me to make her a soup and garlic bread, should I announce that these people might not be coming?

My mother has asked me to call my friends here today because this is a women feast, it's a ceremony that's specifically being handled by women and well—tada, I don't have friends, they insulted me just days ago about being a renegade and instead I called that anime character to come here, Khensani and I am not really sure whether she is coming or not actually I don't know how this day is going to turn out but if the Mthabela

family doesn't show up, I am running to his house and I am asking for my virginity back in a gold plate.

“Nomzamo what time did they say they're coming?” my mother asks me taking a tray of chocolate cakes from the oven and she presses them with her fingers, the smell dances around the room. How am I supposed to know? They're days where I wanted to call him and just listen to him deeply inhaling and exhaling against my ear and they're days where I dream about him so vividly as though I'd open my eyes to see him peacefully sleeping with all the muscles around his face tranquil. That's the only time I've seen him serene, with his eyelashes resting like a crescent at the bottom of his eyes and his mouth slightly open while his chest heaves up and down, on his collarbone he has a line art tattoo that looks sharp towards the end like a spear. “Awww these are the best muffins I've ever baked, mama taste this” my mother says handing my grandmother a chocolate muffin she has baked in that moment Rharha walks into the room with my newly found friend and she looks absolutely gorgeous in her dress that shows her breasts and her back with a nervous smile on her face as my mother and grandmother eyeball her from head to toe.

“Sanibona” she greets respectfully and already my grandmother is sizing her up from head to toe with an approval

look and a ravishing and warm smile—well at least someone is here.

If they're not showing up to pay for my hymen that I heard breaking has the sun started to bounce in the early hours of the morning then we might as well eat all these chocolate muffins and drink all the wine my mother has bought including champagne, in her imagination I might be getting married because she has decorated the backyard when she knows very well that these people are here to pay the fine and leave but I guess she's planning of celebrating my broken hymen huh?

“Nomzamo what time are you people coming again?” that's my mother asking me I don't know for how many times, I check the time on my phone it just blinked nine am—It's still early right? They can still come maybe next year or the following year after that and those muffins will still be freshly baked and tasting as scrumptious, we shouldn't be fret. Rharha who is fully aware of what has been happening, she glances at me from the distance with a questioning glare and I quickly look away from her. . . I don't know why she's creasing her eyebrow at me. What am I supposed to say? That this relationship has ended before it even begun because we seem to want different things. I want to have children and I stand by that and remain unshakable. “Solela call your man and ask him how far are they” my mother

really doesn't want to see me happy. Like any other citizen in this country she doesn't want to see me happy.

I intake a sharp breath and taking my phone from the counter about to leave the room when we hear cars from the outside. "They are here!" my aunt sounds elated than I am walking into the kitchen. I didn't know I was holding in my breath until now as I start to sag slowly but surely as a deflating balloon with my urethra that's suddenly so full and my urine forcefully comes like a tidal wave including the tears in my eyes for some bizarre reasons, I feel a need to release the rain in every part of me that could.

I excuse myself briskly walking to the bathroom and closing the door behind and taking a seat inhaling and exhaling deeply through my nose and my mouth continuously saying a mantra in my head—I cannot put words into it but I am chanting with tears that have warmed up my cheeks when the door slowly opens and it's my sister. "No matter what Nomzamo I know he would've come" that's what she says standing by the door watching my lace underwear pooling on my feet with a tissue in my hand ready to wipe my ntomba. . .I mean grapefruit. I glance at her once and pushing back my braids that are falling down my face getting up to wash my hands. "You love him don't you?" Didn't she hear me saying that to him and changing my mind in a nanosecond because I felt I wasn't supposed to

say it? Because I felt I was giving in too much then I was supposed to. I don't want to talk about him after today we are no longer connected maybe by souls and spirits but rather than that it all ends. "Okay fine I am going to marry one of his brothers and be a second wife then I'll set both of you up because I know what I saw Nomzamo. The moment he walked into that waiting room and held your face, the way he complimented you with your new hair. I've never had a man doing that for me. Out of all the satan toe nails I've dated none of them ever looked at me the way he looks at you"

"And that was before he said he doesn't want children"

"Nomzamo you are three minutes into this relationship and already you are bothering yourself about people you don't even know? Do you know those children? Have you seen them?" What's the use of having this conversation with her? And how am I even supposed to answer these questions. I just shake my head and washing my hands in the sink after blinking at myself in the mirror then turn to her. "And your new friend

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I really like her for you"

"But you're my best friend"

"I know you. Forever and always"

"Forever and always, now come"

My mother walks into the kitchen and she cannot wipe off her smile. “Nomzamo please bring the jug of juice” she winks at me with her thumbs up and then disappears.

What was that about by the way?

I get up from the chair I was sitting on and putting on the freshly made juice that she made with different kinds of fruits placing it on a tray and glasses making my way to the living room to meet an elderly woman wearing a black and white umbhanco with white dots on her face that etch into a smile the moment I appear with a tray in my hand and she’s with other elderly women. I kneel down placing a tray of juice on the table after respectfully greeting them then disappearing returning back to the kitchen. “Rharha” I call her and she glances at me “Ahem can you please check outside the gate for me to see if there’s anyone?” I wring my hands in agitation needing to know if he’s outside maybe in high hopes that I could appear as much as I am a longing to see him “Ngiyakucela” this time I plead and she nods her head and getting up using the back door as she walks out.

I am left behind with Khensani who surely has questions she’d like to throw at my face about how, where and when did this relationship happened. “Aww thank you so much for coming” I finally get the chance to and she opens her arms for me,

wrapping me around warmly and smiling sweetly. “It means so much to me”

“Oh no, no no problem honey. We are friends now and no need to thank me” I’m grateful as she pulls away from our embrace as my sister returns from the outside and instantly my face falls without having to hear the disappointing words coming from her mouth, I already know that he’s not here. I mean he would’ve called if he was here right? What was I thinking by the way?

Did you think he’d come here after you said you were joking when you said you love me? Make me numb Nelson—my subconscious shakes her head with a disapproval look under the cascading water and tears shimmering in her eyes.

Again my mother appears and this time she has a gigantic smile on her face “Nomzamo woza” once again she’s here for me. What am I serving this time? I have been serving everything to this family. It could be chocolate muffins and juice or just my vagina, I have such a giving hand. “Your in laws are following culture and not staying so they won’t be eating but they want to see you before they leave” she says to me at the hallway with exuberance laced in her tone and her eyes drowning in mirth when she looks at me “I am so proud of you Nomzamo” And why is that? I am not getting married but they’re paying for the fact that I served their son myself on a silver platter or she’s



proud that I am now sexually active and even injected to prevent myself from having children? What's that she's proud of exactly. "Mthabela family wants you to have umemulo they're paying for everything"

"But I am no longer a virgin mama" Already I am receiving devilry glares from her end as we approach the living room and the elderly woman wearing a beaded head wrap on her head with white dots on her face yet again smile at me as if she's seeing the most mesmerizingly beautiful and enchanting goddess clad in a long sheer mermaid dress with her hair falling down like waterfalls—I cannot miss that adoration and motherly love bouncing up and down in her eyes as she cups my face looking into my eyes reading me as though she can see everything nakedly into my eyes and her very own tears shimmers mirroring my own, like we are both drowning in same agony or maybe we are. A mother who hasn't touched her son for many, many years but learned to love him from the distance. I wish I can tell her how silk his skin felt on mines and how he tenses and goes rigid when I touched him. I wish I can tell her that the first time my fingertips ran through his body emotional tears appeared behind the closed eyelashes that belong to him. And I wish I could tell her that he fights and talks in his sleep begging his father to wake up but instantly become serene when I wrap my arms around him and gently kissing his

forehead. I wish, I can only wish as her palms against my face invites tears to touch the tip of my mouth.

“When can we talk?” she asks me with a trembling tone that’s laced with melancholy of sadness “I want to talk to you maMbatha” the warmth her voice carries wraps me around.

“We are going to give you privacy Ndlunkulu” my grandmother says.

“Oh no, no you don’t have to. We are still yet going to talk to MaMbatha but not today, not now especially after this beautiful day. Can you meet me soon Nana?” It’s only the last word that makes me choke in between my words as I agree into meeting her soon. Nana—Oh you should him when he calls me like that. “MaMbatha come here” she pulls me into her and I nuzzle on her neck as she pat my back gentle “Aww mntanami. Aww mntanami” that’s all she says as she continues to pat me as though she knows the amount of affliction her son has thrown me into. As I wait hoping to get a message from him with an explanation or a call, just anything from him but nothing. Then she pulls away from me and wipes the tears from my face “Okay maybe we do need privacy” she glances towards everyone in the room eyeballing us and they perk up, my mother has concern dancing on her face and not pleased about the fact that she has to leave me crying like this. “I was with him, he’s just like you maybe much worse. And one thing about

my son is that he's just like his father. . .he's very stubborn and then sometimes act when it's already too late. I found him utterly broken and he asked me to look into your eyes and I will find out what I am looking for when I asked him what happened" I want to know if he's okay. But I won't ask. I'm not going to ask her, not when he stood there and said nothing to me. "Please meet me on Tuesday sthandwa sami, can you do that for me? Just you and me so we can talk" I rapidly nod my head in agreement. Words are like denim on my throat as I want to know whether he's okay or not. Is he eating? I want to know because I want him to starve and die. . not really die. "Now wipe these tears, you are so beautiful thingo lwakhe" she calls me his rainbow.

"Thank you mama" I smile at her as her soft wrinkled fingers wipes my tears "Is he okay?" What do you want to call me? A feather or a domkop at this moment?

"Are you okay?" she asks me darting her eyes between mine "Hmmm exactly thingo lwakhe. How you feel is exactly how he feels" she pushes my hair backwards "But we cannot talk all about it now but next time we see each other"

"Yebo mama"

"And take care of yourself"

Anyways the Mthabela family have left and my mother instantly called her husband to tell him that they paid a full amount, I don't know how much was it honestly but she has been going on and on about them. I on the other hand have been here fighting with my brain and my heart whether to call him or not. . .I am calling him. My phone doesn't even ring once because he immediately answers my call and my speech has gone temporarily paralyzed. Why am I calling him? Maybe to tell him that me and his mother were crying and eating our own snorts? Or maybe that everything went well and everyone is celebrating that he broke my virginity? Or that I haven't been okay since that day? What was the reason for this call.

"Nomzamo" he says, his voice cool.

"Hi"

He inhales softly. "Hi" he says and now his voice is lower and I feel something painful and heart wrenching shifting inside me "Are you okay? Is everything okay?" Instantly I am enliven hearing him saying more than just two vowels, hearing the sound of his voice, listening to his sharp inhalation.

"I'm okay but. . .I wanted to talk to you" I pause. I want to know if you're okay and I wanted to hear the sound of your voice resonating my body. "About school are you still going to take care of my funds?"

Hhayike Nomzamo—my subconscious claps once before she opens a coffin getting in and closing it behind fluttering her eyes closed.

“I made a promise and I keep my promises”

“I thought you’ll never hurt me Mthabela” I pause listening to him breathing once again “Why? Why you couldn’t stop me the other day?”

“I wanted to”

“But you didn’t”

“And that’s because I cannot give you what you want Nomzamo”

I pause and then breathe “Goodnight Mthabela”

“Nana” I also hear a pause from him, “Goodnight”

20

“One mistake we always do is that we think we have time.

We keep running away from our emotions thinking we got time, we think we still have time to feel these emotions someday.

We think we still have enough time to invest ourselves into these emotions later.

But it's never enough, is it?

We bottle up our feelings and our thoughts waiting for the right time to arrive.

We don't tell the people we love, “I love you” enough because we think we always have a tomorrow to say that but we don't always have it, do we?

So many things remain untold because we wait for the right time.

Right time when everything would be perfect, there would be no complications and we could easily say whatever we kept locked in our hearts for days but the time is never right, is it?

We just keep thinking that we have time, the right time will arrive, there is always a tomorrow with someone but there isn't

Life is so unpredictable and it could drastically snatch your tomorrow with someone you love anytime and there's nothing you would be able to do about it.

So seize the moment. Live in the moment.

Because timing won't ever be perfect but it can be magical when you live it to the fullest”

The death of my brother left us covering ourselves with a fabric of melancholy of bitter sadness and indescribable agony—we took a tour of unconditional desolation and mournfulness. But my mother. . .a woman who sat in an empty room that had sombreness wheezing in the air and a picture of her son there in corner with a broad smile that danced on his face, a smile he had in the morning as we sat in the dining room having breakfast while he sat next to me to take what was on my plate and quickly shove it in his mouth then winked at me as I sulk like an adolescent, he then graced my precious face with a kiss and showed those triangle front teeth and a dimple dancing on his cheeks. I remember he was not his usual self. . .it was as though he could feel death coming to knock on his door unexpectedly and left us in gut wrenching pain and unrelenting tears but it left my mother facile and pointing fingers at her husband. I could hear their fights every night before a guttural cry would erupt as she screamed that he should bring back her

son, that he should format the memory of her son laying there in a pool of blood with his eyes and mouth opened. One morning she asked that we move from home, and we bought a new house because every day she was haunted by the little babies, she calls memories whenever she goes to the living room to see the same spot where she found her son. It wasn't just that bullet that went through his skull and shattered his brain that only killed him but that cotton green hue t-shirt that I bought for him was drenched in blood around his stomach, whomever was killing him wanted to make sure that he took his last breath there and then, and until today we don't know who walked into our house and snatched what was so precious to us. We don't know the reasons either but we assumed it had to do with the drugs he was selling. I taught myself to be a good guest and grieve was hosting me in a room that was painted with aloof and furniture made of nothing but glum.

And this pain that I am feeling is just as similar as that time I was mourning the death of what I always called my sweetheart with my phone still against my ear even though there's just ear splitting silence now. I cannot hear him breathing any longer or the sound of his voice. I sit here not knowing whether to wear an all black outfit since I am afloat with my own grief or maybe go out and drink myself to complete numbness. Who said we should fall in love? I mean who thought it was okay that you should meet a man or a woman and then feel this celestial



magic exploding inside you when you're around them and these kaleidoscopic colors that blooms within you at their presence. Was it before or after God actually turned water into wine—I really want to know because. . .Jesus Christ what is wrong with me? I'm going to go out and look mesmerizingly enchanting and fascinating. That money that he sent to me? I'm going to drink the rest of it and I'll be dancing with a bottle of cider on top of my head while changing facial expressions, that's what I'm going to do. I'm not going to cry over a man.

Well you are crying right now Nomzamo, are you not?—my subconscious glance towards me while she brushes her eyelids putting on her eyeshadow and preparing herself for the night with a dress made of diamonds placed on the bed and she's ready to wear it. I'm going out alone. I don't want anyone to tell me that I've already consumed enough alcohol as though I am using their lungs, these are mine,

I glance at myself in the mirror swathe in a black short dress that is technically just covering my breast and what is in between legs but rather than that I am gracing everyone with my silky denuded skin and my braids tied in a ponytail. Hmm. I grab my small purse after swiftly turning around in the mirror and making my way out. "Nomzamo where are you going?" my mother asks me as meet at the hallway while I am on my phone requesting for a cab, I am planning on coming back in this

house crawling with my speech temporarily paralyzed. “Are you not feeling cold? You are not wearing anything. What happened to the rest of this dress? Around your stomach it looks like someone cut it off. Nomzamo” and then she pause with a smile that etches on her face. For what reason? “You look beautiful and please do tell me once you arrive and safe okay” Oh she’s probably thinking I am going to that man who just pretty much made it clear that we cannot be together because he cannot give me what I want. And me? How many sacrifices I’ve made here? Is she thinking I am going to celebrate that he has taken my virginity. That I always give and give but everyone always take everything away from me? What is that smile on her face, it should be replaced with her eyes shimmering with something watery that I am standing here with no friends because I chose love. Love? He he he I hate that word or anything related to it for that matter. “You can take my car” she laces her hand against my cheek.

“No mama I’ll be fine” this time her ravishing smile widens surely assuming that he’s already outside impatiently waiting for me.

In novice the ear splitting music would’ve made me turn around and return back home but I walk through the door after my bag has been searched already I see everyone dancing along to the sound of the groovy instrumentals, losing themselves to the

music as intoxication has took control over them. I briskly walk into the bar, leaning against the counter “Excuse me?” I call out and the bartender turns to me with an amiable smile

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asking how can he help me. “I’d like to have tequilas and a bottle of wine please” I request before he asks for my preferences then he turns around pouring the liquid I have asked for in small short glasses while I make myself comfortable on a bar stool and placing my purse on a counter. I wander my eyes around to see a woman sashaying her hips left and right on top of her man giving him an erotic dance before she nuzzles on her neck and he bites her earlobe as they both chuckle. I am sure when the night ends he’ll tell her that he cannot give her what she wants and that right there everyone is—men, you guessed right. “Hmmm” I grunt after taking one shot of tequila followed by another one, in a nanosecond I’ve taken all six of them and already holding a glass of dry red wine with the music streaming into my ears demanding that I dance, demanding that I continue taking sip after sip and run into the dance floor. “Another shots please!” I request once again to the bartender and he smiles before he pretty much follows my instruction without any questions or whatsoever. I have taken twelve shots already and the bottle of wine is almost finished “Do you have

cigarettes?” When you’re intoxicated why do you feel a need to inhale nicotine?

After he has shook his head I grab my purse and making my way to the dance floor with my hands in the air waving them along to the sound of the music when I meet a beaut with short curly fringe weave wearing a nude sheer off shoulder dress and she takes my hand dancing with me “You are so beautiful” she screams into my ear and flicking my braids.

“Oh no you are so beautiful” And she really is with wonderfully sculptured full lips and upturned eyes, a soft glam make up painted on her face and a lip gloss painted on her lips “Do you have cigarettes?” I ask her—she’s looks maybe three years younger than me or maybe we almost look the same age because I am always mistaken as a twenty one year old.

“My brother might have it. Who you’re here with and where can I find you?”

“I’m here alone”

“Even better come join us to our table. I’m Cataleya by the way” she says as we push through the crowd making our way to our table I guess. Who knew? That I can easily just make friends? This is me. . .I hope I don’t fall in love with her boyfriend, I seem to have strong feelings over men whom belong to my friends, she must be careful of me ha ha ha.

That was not funny Nomzamo

— my subconscious glare at me with a disapproval look clearly disappointed then she continues dancing to the music.

“I’m Nomzamo” I smile.

“Mbatha?”

“Literally”

“What get out!” she chuckles and as we continue to walk through the crowded place until we are at the rooftop with the night breeze dancing through my skin, here it’s not that crowded as inside.

Upon arriving at her table I am not surprised to meet her friends who’re surely almost in their twenty somethings but not there yet with alcohol all over. “This is Nomzamo” she introduces me to everyone on the table. My eyes are met with. . .Isn’t it strange that somehow this young man reminds me of him or maybe I am thinking about him and I am drunk so I see him in everyone. “Ahem Nomzamo this is my sister Nomahlubi and that’s my brother. What should I call you huh? Are you Wanele? Or Mafu?” she teases him and his face and I cannot amiss how charming, attractive and young he is. How many names does he have? “Well that’s my brother” she introduces and he reveals the dental jewelry he has on his teeth and I have only seen these on television, they look expensive even the way

he's dressing up and sense of style is like those hip hop rappers, I can easily identify him as a fashionista and something closed to A\$AP ROCKY maybe.

"Nice to meet you" I smile at him extending my hand for a handshake. I get to study the flying birds tattoo on his wrists and swords on his hands then dots on his fingers. I hate how much he's reminding me of the same person I'm trying to forget well some features.

I make myself comfortable next to my newly found friend after she has asked if anyone has cigarettes on the table and everyone says no on the table and it seems the universe is against me.

But well we have more alcohol right?

I have been downing each and everything that has a percentage on this table now sitting next to Mafu who's treating me more like his elderly sister than someone who he can actually bed tonight and we've been sharing gales and gales of laughter, his voice is not baritone but deep in a very sensual way. "Do you want to dance?" I whisper in his ear and he looks at me attentively as though he's reading my face first before he gets up from the chair and taking my hand. There's an open space in front of this table and his hands are against my hips in a most sexual way while we move to the rhythm of the music and mine around his neck. I stare at him. Why the fuck does he remind

me of him? This is more like a younger version of him. What if this is his long lost son or maybe he threw away his son and that's why he doesn't want children? Well it cannot be because this gentleman right here is actually twenty from what I've found out. I am a cougar now, that's what I am.

I turn around with my buttocks pressing against his groin and his sister is taking a video laughing at our exotic dance until the song ends and he turns me around pulling me even closer into him making me swallow my saliva with his eyes darting between mine. . .I want this—I mean I don't want this. I look at down at his lips wondering how they must be tasting. What I was hoping he would do, he doesn't instead he removes his hands from my hips leaving me standing with a whiff of his cologne and I return back to mine.

Cataleya's phone starts to endlessly ring and she looks at her siblings before she perk up from where she's sitting and answering the phone call. "I hope that's not ma" What's her name again? Nomahlubi.

A moment after she has answered her call she briskly walk towards us as though she just saw two ghosts having sex. "Ahem sis' Nomzamo. . .this is for you" the other two is eyeballing me because how she's suddenly so respectful towards me when we were just best friends hours ago. I am bewildered as she hands me her phone. Maybe my mother

posted my pictures again that I am missing didn't she? I look at her clearing my throat while pressing her phone against my ear ready to feel my mother's wrath.

"Nomzamo"

What the fuck? That's his voice. I pause to look at the screen to make sure this not my phone before pressing it back to my ear "Nomzamo" Again I hear the sound of his acidic tone seethe through my ear.

"Mthabela" I breathe and quickly perking up from this wooden chair to stand distance away from—I look at them and then the phone. "Are you stalking me?"

"You were doing pornography with my nephew Nomzamo" I am literally frozen and immobile; I've lost my speech and all other senses that I have at this moment. What pornography is he talking about and what nephew. "I am coming!"

"Where are you coming Muzi?"

"Weh Nomzamo!" that sounded like a warning than anything else making me choke on the denim that has been knitted on my throat and the alcohol I have been consuming is slowly fading from my system. Are you saying I almost slept with his nephew? He he he.

This is not funny—I don't even know why my subconscious is always standing on this man's corner honestly.



“I don’t want to see you Muzi” All the tequilas and wine and champagne that I have been drinking and shoving down my throat start to speak and inviting my tears into my eyes. “I don’t want to see you” I repeat once again and fighting with the acidic water that wants to drown my eyeballs. “I’m going to find a man, get married and have children yezwa Muzi”

“Well too bad you are going to see me and there’s no man you’re marrying here”

“What do you want from me? What more do you want to take from me Mthabela? You took my friends away from me. You took my job away from me. You took my virginity from me. You took my heart. Now you’re taking away the fun that I’m having? You just keep taking and taking from me but you have nothing to give” I pause “I don’t want to see you Mthabela. I don’t want to see you because the moment I do I’m going to forget all about how much you hurt me when you just watched me walk away and how much you hurt me when we spoke two hours ago and I’ll throw myself in your arms because that all I’ve been wanting to do”

Tell him you love him—my subconscious blinks at me and taking one last shot of tequila before she falls from the chair.

“Why are you hurting me like this Muzi?” I hiccup.

“Nana—

“Don’t call me that. Don’t you dare”

“I’m coming and we are going to have this conversation when I see you” Right after that he hangs up the call. I don’t know whether to return back to that table or what. Anyways I do handing back Cataleya her phone who’s suddenly timid around me all of them in fact and not so care free as they were. I am sure they know their uncle is coming to fetch us now.

“He won’t do anything to you” I say to them and drinking from the bottle of champagne that was on the table and all they do is nod their heads.

After few minutes one of them announces that he’s outside and they get up all at once taking their bags. I remain here they eyeball me like I have lost my marbles before I get up and Mafu is holding me since I am now stumbling every way. “I wasn’t gonna sleep with you yezwa” I tell him and he glances at me chuckling underneath his breath and nods “You weren’t going to sleep with me right?”

Another chuckle erupts from him, it’s such a beautiful sound showing those dental jewelry on his teeth, “Chabo sis’ Nomzamo” I’ve gained respect from them in a nanosecond already. From doing pornography with me now I am his elderly sister?

He's standing outside the car frowning and flaring his nostrils but the moment he seems me being held he takes a step closer and take me in his arms, I look up at him and his features drawn in hard, sharp lines. "Do you know how much I hate you Mthabela?" I hiccup at him and he looks at me and he does that one thing I was hoping he wouldn't do, smiles. Now I know what they mean when they took about someone who was sent by satan to tempt you. Wave of lust surged through me. "I wasn't doing pornography" I don't know why I am even explaining myself.

"Really?" he creases his eyebrow as he fastens my seatbelt and he gives me a small smile and I shake my head at him. "We will talk about that not now"

We drive in deafening silence with my head against the window and his leather jacket draped around my shoulders, his cologne suffocating time. I can feel his eyes constantly boring at me at every second until we drive through the gate to his house and the kids. . .they're not my friends anymore. They get off the car first and we sit here in total tranquillity until he decides to get off the car and striding to my side to take me, the moment we walk through the door I feel an urge to spew all my intestines as though they're just noodles briskly walking to the bathroom and he follows behind me quickly holding my hair as I bend over the toilet seat grasping on the either sides, some liquidity

comes out followed by a gut wrenching sob with my eyes teary. "What did you drink?" he asks his voice low and husky as he brushes my back.

I drank everything.

I don't respond but continue to throw up until there's nothing left in my stomach wiping my mouth and he helps me get up standing aside as I rinse my mouth and turn around to look at him; my face pained, already overwhelmed with what has been happening. "I don't ever want to hurt you Nomzamo"

"But you did"

"And that's because—

"I don't believe you'll ever want to hurt me. But I believe that you always see worse in yourself and I believe you think you're not worthy of the love I have for you. You're not worthy of me. You're so afraid of losing me one day that you rather push me away" I pause "Mthabela look at me in the eyes and tell me you don't feel the love the I feel you. Look at me and tell me now and I'm going to walk away from you and I promise not to ever look back. I promise to completely forget about you and I'll find someone who'll love me maybe not as much as you do but he'll love me"

"What do you want Nomzamo?"

"You. All of you Muzi"

“All of me?”

“Yes and I want children. . .three of them in years to come and you are going to give them to me Mthabela if you want to be with me. If you want me as much as I want you. You’ll show me all your scars”

“Three?”

“Three or maybe four. . .or five, I’m not sure I think I want seven”

“Seven” I think he’s trying to let that sink into his brain before he looks at me with pained eyes that are shimmering with tears and he greedily gulps for air and he keeps clenching and unclenching the muscles on his jawline and then he takes a deep breath “Nana. . .” he then pauses “Okay” but he hangs his head low at that response as if he doesn’t want to see my face.

“Okay?” I crease my eyebrow.

“If having seven kids is what you want then I’m going to give them to you thingo lwami”

“Tantric sex means the weaving and expansion of energy. It’s a slow form of sex that’s said to increase intimacy and create mind body connection that can lead into powerful orgasm”

The moment the curtain around my eyes open I find him on the bedroom couch with his legs crossed and index finger trailing the contours of his lips and his eyes fixated on nothing but me and even when he sees me reawakened after the entire night of running to the bathroom to throw up and making a promise to myself that I won’t ever drink alcohol again—and well his eyes are sharpened with his nostrils flaring and mine are suffocated by the smell of an incense as a clear indication that it was being burnt, he was praying. “Mthabela” A yawn threatens to escape my mouth but I swallow it back and it chokes me to death. . .I’m not dead. “Were you watching me sleeping?” I ask him narrowing my eyebrows and his face remains solemnly. “Okay how long you’ve been watching me sleeping?” Because clearly he was watching me, I wonder how I look like.

Normally you sleep with your mouth slightly opened and you swallow nothing inside your mouth. . .and well some days you drool or you keep your eyes opened with a slight snore. Basically you’re not a pretty picture when you’re sleeping—my

subconscious glances at me and then shrugs her shoulders nonchalantly before she grabs her toothbrush and toothpaste.

I look at him as he breathe out as if to expel toxic air out of his body and remaining static on that same position as though he's just a cover page of a magazine than just a human who was watching me sleeping "I haven't slept a wink Nomzamo" Oh I am not his rainbow this morning? And what happened to Nana? Those are my names. . .not that name. I don't know who's that person. Who is Nomzamo? "You're beautiful when you're sleeping" I glance towards my subconscious with my hands against my chest and animus smirk, creasing my eyebrow at her. Hmmm. Me? Not a pretty picture when sleeping, ha ha.

"And why you haven't slept?" I probe him and he perks up the couch, standing in the middle of the room and I get to appreciate the beauty of his thighs covered behind the blue jeans that he's wearing, they're not thunder thighs like those gym freaks but they're firm and perfect including that tank top that captivatingly holds him like his second skin and iziphandla on his wrist. I am dragging my wet vagina back to my body as he comes back to bed and he spoon me and tighten his hold on me, nuzzling on my neck, sniffing his own scent emanated on me and rhythmically stroking my hair in deafening silence.

"Mthabela" I call him in a velvet tone turning to meet with

those glossy pair of eyes with all shades of brown and they bore dreams at me.

I glance towards the clock on the side table and it just blinked nine am and he hasn't slept? Hah.

"Nana"

"Why you haven't slept?"

One of his hand moves against his jawline and then he returns it back to trailing his fingers on my shoulder and leaning closer to gently kiss me there evoking every sensation and my solar plexus blooms like the first flowers of summer. "Because I wanted to watch you sleeping" sweet wetness and trembling fire elicit from me. "I missed you thingo lwami. I was scared that I might've lost you because. . ." I hear another sharp intake of breath coming from him "Nana I missed you"

"I thought you were going to call me Mthabela or even knocking at my door like you've lost your marbles and you didn't"

"You don't know how many times I parked outside your gate in my car, just standing there until the light in your room switched off" What? He'd stand outside my gate and not even bother calling me or saying anything? What if my neighbours thought he was a stalker. . .technically he was. "I'm sorry for hurting you" slightly he sucks on my earlobe, knowing it has a hotline to



my libido and causing that foreign sound I cannot make just randomly like any other sound but my body needs to be set afire for it to escape my mouth the perky mounds against my chest heavens up and down as my eyes gyrate with the same cadence as his, our breathes synchronized “We have to talk Nomzamo” solemn is lanced in his tone.

“I know” my mouth is producing too much saliva against my tongue “And there’s a lot to talk about Mthabela but not now” Not this morning when my head feels I have a thousands of warriors stick fighting in my head groaning and grunting. “Is that okay with you if we talk later?” Instead of responding with words he nods his head for me and his face etch into a smile “I have to get up” I try escaping his arms but he tighten his hold around me like I said I am going to run away from him forever and never return back. “Mthabela!”

“Nana” A curve slowly starts to form in his eyes and forming his simper of superiority “I also want you to do pornography with me” Can someone tell me why this man calls erotic dancing pornography? As he ever watch those explicit videos in his life?

My subconscious pulls down her glasses and pushing her enormous hat that covers her face from her head to eyeball me. You have watched those videos?—she wakes up every morning to attack me.

“Then you must get me drunk Mthabela. You must get me tequilas and a bottle of wine and also champagne right after that I’ll do pornography with you” I say to him and the sound of his sonorous laughter fills the entire room with his broad shoulders moving up and down. I just realized that I can make him cry, smile and laugh. I have never seen him laughing in this mannerism with anyone. Or maybe he does I just haven’t seen him but it’s such a beautiful sound and after catching his breath he shakes his head. “You think I’m funny don’t you?”

“You are very funny” I thought he was going to be like those men in films where he’ll deny that I am funny and say something smooth that would make me feel like my intestines are made of marshmallows but instead he makes it pretty clear that I am comical. “And that’s why I love you”

He loves us! He loves us Nomzamo! He just said he loves us. Okay maybe you’re actually beautiful when you’re sleeping—that’s my subconscious yet again paralyzed on the spot and in total incredulity about the confession that this man has just made. I mean I have said it twice that I love him and he always never. . .I mean he just said it now.

“Who? Who? Who do you love?” I stutter and blinking rapidly with my chest heaving and a frown plastered on my face.

“That woman behind you” What the fuck? There’s someone here in this room? I turn to look behind me with my nostrils

flaring and rage starting to menace through me only to meet with my reflection in the mirror and just denuded at the top the two buttons that I call breasts perking and the sun rays escaping through the window enhancing my silk skin. “Beautiful isn’t she?”

“Who?”

You’re seriously stupid—my subconscious shakes her head and clapping once in disappointment.

“The woman I am in love with. Don’t you see her?” Again I look at my own reflection in the mirror and blinking rapidly as if someone else will magically just appear “Look at her wearing a beige thong and her skin so beautiful and radiant with her breasts blinking at me and her braids falling gracefully to her waist and those toned legs. . .I’ve met and fell in love with a goddess” Oh me, he’s talking about me. I turn to him and playfully punching his shoulder causing him to wince and chuckle “Nomzamo you really thought there was a woman behind you?”

“No” I protest “And even if there was a woman I wouldn’t do anything” I’d grate him not the woman. . .specifically him.

“Ngiyakholwa thingo lwami (I believe you my rainbow)”

I was sad finding out that my newly founded friends whom I was apparently doing pornography with left in the early hours

of the morning while I was surely sleeping and on his way back he bought me some clothes and then he came that's when he sat on the bedroom couch with his legs crossed and his index finger trailing at the contours of his lips while he watched me sleeping with turbulence thoughts raging through every corner of his mind. I am yet about to peel off some layers into him and I made it clear to him that all my questions will be answered and none of them will be left hanging and nothing will be left unsaid.

“Nana” I hear his voice echoing and his footsteps at the hallway as he approached the bedroom while I apply an emollient on my hands and then he appears standing on an entryway. I swirl around in an ocean blue dress that snugly fit my tiny waist and I wish I was fully figured with gigantic perfect breast by the way. My dress has a bare neck line and an open back. I face towards him and he stands there blinking at me—what's wrong and what happened? “Thingo lwami lwenkosazana” Oh my the velveteen sound of his voice makes me think of all the ungodly things he do to me and filling me with celestial magic. “I came here to tell you that my brothers are coming for lunch. . .you're beautiful” Just leave the compliment out. Who is coming? Brothers? That means I have men that weirdly look like him to impress with my cooking skills? Ah ah ah.

“Your brothers?”

“Hmmm. Mongameli is here since my mother is this side so they’re coming here for lunch. Is it okay if they come here at your house?”

“Which house? My house? I have house? I don’t have a house Mthabela. Did you tell your brothers that I have a house?” My eyes are out of their own volition. This man doesn’t cease to amaze me. Ever, I am telling you and if he doesn’t want children then he’s lying to his brothers about me having a house.

“This is your house”

“Your house?”

“It’s yours Nomzamo”

“Muzi Mthabela please don’t come close” An involuntarily breath whistles through my teeth. Not when he has that look on his face—I know it very well. I feel the heat rising between my own thighs as he stands there looking at me from my white painted toes as though he wants to wrap them around with the warmth of his mouth and slippery tongue then he trails it up to my leg and my thighs until he finally reaches my open mouth that has been composing a crescendo soprano melody. My breath hitches as he takes one step and pause fully aware of the amphetamine feeling he elicit from me. Another step towards me, I gasp and he pause still just distance apart and I am standing here rigid. “We have to go buy grocery so we can

prepare for. . ." I don't get to finish my sentence because he has already taken two steps this time and maybe three more steps his proximity will make me reach my climax.

"Muziwenkosi Mthabela"

"Nomzamo Mbatha" his gaze is full of carnal intent, his eyes dark, heated. "I want you" I blink at him. My speech is temporarily paralyzed including my senses. One step yet again and this time I close my eyes to avoid the sorcery in his eyes. I breathe and breathe imagining him rather taking the last two steps and before I know it I can feel rather than see his tall frame standing in front of me. I take short and shallow breathes. "Where you do you want me to touch you?"

"Everywhere" everything here has sensuality enticing effect on me. Even the sound of the chirping birds outside. His erratic breath and my yoni pulses feel like I am an inferno seeking water, to save the city from burning. Oh my he's the fire that's burning me.

"I want you to show me" I still keep my eyes closed and one of my hand trails through my left breast first holding the perky flesh mound into my hand and instantly when my nipple feels the exotic touch it stands for attention in between my thumb and index finger, involuntarily a moan escapes my lips. Another hand touches my left breast and I throw my head back, my two grapes are in my hands and he has an easy access to my neck. .

.another hotline to my libido and the moment his tongue touches there my mind runs a riot and I let go of what was in my hands to hold onto to his head rather and instead of him to continue with his necromancy he pulls away, stepping aside and gaze at me. “Where else do you want me to touch you?” my own saliva smoothens my throat not even once removing my eyes from him with his suddenly turning dark from lust. And this time both my hands hold onto my perfectly shaped dainty buttocks and digging my own fingers into my flesh and whimpering. Now his hands are on top of mine and I look up at him heavily breathing and slowly removing my hands as he grabs onto me so gently yet violently almost lifting me up with just my buttocks and his fingers so close, really close to the shimmering pearl in between my legs. I can feel his big yet soft hands lifting my dress up to he can be contact with my skin then he caresses my buttocks with his hands and then spank them making me whimper and leaning my head against his chest. “Where else do you want me to touch you?” I get enough courage to look into his eyes with mine glossy from the tears of lust and sexual frustration. I take his hand still holding eye contact with him and placing it against my temple and slowly inhaling in with my chest rising and gently exhaling with my chest falling—following the rhythm of my new tempo. I attempt to close my eyes “Don’t close them, let the energy consume you thingo” his voice comes out as a whisper this time

he slowly takes off my dress and the scorching feel of his long delicate fingers makes me quiver within my solar plexus. The softness of the fabric that was covering my body invites divine sensations within me as it rubs against my skin while he takes peels my dress off and it pools to my feet after it fell like waterfalls in a greenery lake. "Nana keep your eyes on me" he continues with his necromancy this time trailing his fingers up and down my pelvis bone, stroking me gently up and down. I am filled with energy, more vital, more alive and more radiant. And then he spreads my legs apart and his fingers start to dance on my inner thighs then he pauses "Don't close your eyes, keep breathing" I continue to breath and allow the power of his sensual sorcery to take over me with conscious touch and when he's about to reach the entrance of my grapefruit flooding with it's sweet juices, a guttural moan escape my mouth involuntarily already she's humming and chanting instead of touching me there he doesn't but his hands moves to massage my breasts with my nipples in between his thumb and index finger this time. My body starts to jerk from the amount of pleasure I am getting from just his magical fingertips. I am feeling the weaving and expansion of energy and I am possessed by the tantric energy.

Again he caresses my buttocks with his hands and without preamble he strokes my sex and dip his fingers into me between the folds of my sex "Jesus Christ. . .Yes" I cry out. My



eyes still on his and warm tears glistening with cosmic love falling down my cheeks. He insert one finger into me and with shallow plagues, stimulating me and making me moan lifting me up and gently placing me on the bed—my eyes on his, his on mines.

He touches me with reverence, fingertips resting at the sides of my waist, drawing them up in a delicate caress and lifting the glorious weight of my braids and his hands caresses my face, tracing feathery arch of my brows and the perfect line of my lips while I cup the angle of his jaw

drawing a line down the muscular column of his throat and flattening my palm against his chest trailing my fingers on his tattoo drawn on his collarbone. After he has peeled off his clothes while I watched every movement of his fingers as he unbuttoned his only button and unzipping his jeans. . .every sound increases my arousal and my swollen pomegranate is humming wanting to be worshipped with a tongue.

He draws away to kneel in between me like I'm the god he worships and opening my legs to him to share a piece of myself with him and he parts my cleft with his tongue and seeking for the pearl hidden in my folds and my back arches to me with my hands on top of his head like I am blessing him for the power in his tongue. "Mthabela. . .Hmmm" I try to breathe but I can't as tears touches the corners of my eyes and I draw him into me.

He holds himself above me, the tip of his phallus poised at my entrance and gazing at me like I am the most beautiful piece of art he has ever set his eyes on. "I love you" I whisper as he enters me in one fluid surge, sheathing himself to the hilt and pause like those were the words he wanted to hear.

"Say it again, please" he pleads after pulling out to rub himself up and down on my slick and wet valley "Nana" Oh my his thrusts are slow. In and out. In and out. "Thingo lwami"

"Hmmm"

"Say it again"

"I love you"

He smiles, a sweet beam "I love you too" A soft, whispering drumbeat enter the song of my moan as he thrusts, my body rising to receive him.

Still kneeling, hands clasped tight together, I find myself weeping at the beauty our love making. Like we are birds, who mate on the wing. It is a ritual, and no mere spectacle; I can taste the worship and desire of it, flooding my mouth like honey. He surge against me like waves breaking, and I meet him like the rising tide. Our pace increase and the music rise to a crescendo, until I gasp, hands clenching against the working muscles of his back, my legs wrapped around him. He arches back then and holds hard. He holds my waist to follow my

rhythm at my own pace and banging in and out of me in circular motion. I am moaning under his mercy and giving myself to him—telling him that I belong to him, all of me. My toes curl inward and I scream through my orgasm. He stops and watches me go through the wave still inside me and smiles before flipping me over.

“Fuck, I need more you” I hear a groan after he coats my buttocks with his jizz and his palm gently presses the middle of my back to lay me down on my chest and he inches my knees apart further. Kneeling behind me in my intoxicating scent of arousal.

His tongue licks from my clit up to my opening where the sun doesn't shine and then back to my grapefruit and sucking me into his mouth, cleaning my juices from just moments ago.

His fingers massage my pearl, coaxing another orgasm from me I feel his lungs exhale a hot breath as a blow over my jelly bean and I gasp as my muscles tighten around me, so close and my buttocks rear back to him and seeking more. He takes me on a fast pace with each pass and I inhale and my body hums from my moans and he keeps going until my body relaxes and my waterfalls drip.

Before the last contraction of my orgasm, with one hard thrust our bodies are joined as one again and phallus squeezes inside

me. His fingers dig into my hips and he thrusts with all his power.

The feeling is overwhelming, intoxicating, and complete heaven.

Then he pull back again and plunge into me hard. He pounds into me, his balls slapping over my jelly bean and pleasuring me at the same time, drawing euphoric moans from me and he plunged into me again and again and finally I tighten around him yet again. As he plunges I feel a need to rhythmically move my hips along with his circular motions.

A deep moan escapes my lips at that one shallow plunge and my sex tightens harder and faster and he pulls back and thrusts forward again rougher and deeper.

“Hmmm” I moan.

“Ahhh” he harmonies.

The only sound we have in the room is song of our moans, curses, the wet sliding of his phallus inside my cream, and the rhythmic slap of his balls pleasuring my jellybean.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” I groan as I come beneath him. As the orgasm spread through my body, passing into him.

“Fuck!” he moans with his entire body now rigid while I cry against the pillow at how powerful this feels and him letting out

the last animalistic groan and then slowly ease out of me making me wince then he kisses me from my shoulders, moving down my spine and then my buttocks, disappearing to the bathroom and coming back with a towel and making me outstretched on the bed and wiping me clean then he kisses ntonbazana looking up at me with a smile and disappearing once again walking around the room with so much confidence and his phallus dangling in between his legs before he comes back and hover on top of me, wiping the tears in my eyes and wrapping his hands around my waist while mine lock around his back listening to the sound of our own heart hearts in total silence and body our bodies still trembling, facing the soft aftermath of desire.

“You’re unique

I don’t want to be unique. Unique means being different

I think it means singular and extraordinary”

I am still ultra-aware of my energy with his head on my chest and our heart beats moving in one tempo to create one harmony, his finger pads drumming gently against my skin as we are still flowing not only physically but at this moment spiritually as well and our ecstasy is still laced on our breaths. I am exchanging my own with his and he’s doing the same. I trail my own fingers down his back with a perfect arch and watching the serenity on his face with the curtains of his lashes hiding his eyes, deeply he inhales and slowly he exhales.

“My father and I never really had a relationship. I knew he was my father and we were living under the same roof at some point but I was one of his disappointments. I was different from my brothers, whom were so enthusiastic with impressing him and showing him that they can be perfect. . .they were perfect thingo lwami exactly what he wanted his sons to be like excluding me and then Mongameli at some point” I hear his voice reverberating and resonating as he opens his chest for me to see what’s inside succulently his fingers still moving against

my skin and the pain is denuded in his tone. "When my grandfather died, he blamed me for it. I was disowned" his tone is now becoming raspy as each vowel sounds bitter against his tongue. "They found him in my arms after he has taken his last breath and how my grandfather died is how he died" I can hear the agony searing through him. "I only got to be my father's son the day he tapped his fingers and listening to me singing and right after that he murmured his apology for how he treated me because he couldn't understand me and how I turned up to be. For making me believe that I was not worthy of anything. I was nothing worthy of love. I was not worthy of being touched. I was just useless and trust me he was right. I tend to lose the people who are really close to me in my arms. That night when I found out what happened I ran into her house. . ." I want to tell him that I saw him pushing through the crowd and making his way inside the house "I found her there in a pool of blood, bleeding from her mouth yet still breathing and she smiled the moment I held her in my arms, I begged her to stay alive but she said she didn't belong to me for her to stay. I didn't understand then but I do now. Right after those words she stopped breathing. I've been scared of having people being in my arms because I'm scared of losing. I don't want to lose anymore. I don't want to lose you"

"Is this why you don't want to be touched?"

“Beside the fact that I am not deserving of it and the love that comes with it. I’m not worthy of it yes but I fear that everything I touched just vanishes” Then I hear another intake of sharp breath “I’ve been seeking guidance and understanding with why I’ve had people dying in my arms and I am still trying to make sense of it”

“Do you still fear being touched? Or do you still don’t want to be touched”

“Yes. I feel as though no one understands me. I can be very violent and I tend to take that out sexually to also avoid the darkness I am in. I avoid them dealing with stuff. I cannot explain to anyone about my dreams and the voices in my head. Sometimes I see visions, and dream like I’m watching a film happening in front of me. I am fighting wars I had nothing to do with. I wasn’t even given this body as yet when they happened. I relate to the exact same pain what the next person is feeling. Maybe that’s why I love you. . .maybe that’s why I am in love with you Nomzamo Mbatha because you’re avoiding the pain that has been sitting on your chest for so many years and you don’t want to release it. There’s more you are hiding behind those eyes” And this time when he says that he’s looking down at me with his eyes moving with mines at the same tempo. Uninvited tears just touches the corners of my eyes. They’re not from pleasure this time. . .but they’re raw and glistening



with melancholy. I'm wondering how he has been able to see beyond my soul after I've managed to wear this mask he has been constantly complimenting. "I don't know what's between us but I know that what you're feeling. I can feel it. Why you're in pain thingo lwami?"

Is he spiritually reclined? I look everywhere for the right words to conceal the misery that could roll out of my tongue but instead—a guttural sob escapes my lips and his hands engulfs my face kissing my left eye and then right. I then flutter my eyes to meet his face once again. "Your father did you forgive him?" I ask perfectly trying to avoid his question and throwing another one at his face "Did you forgive him?" I ask again.

"Nana—

"I want to know" After he treated him the way that he did for so many years was he able to forgive him? How? How do I forgive my own when I feel all the reasons point at him about my brother's death? That my brother would've been alive if he never paved the way of how our lives should be.

"I had to forgive him not that I wanted to but because I wanted to avoid inflicting pain into my mother"

"Mthabela you would rather endure unpleasant situations and people just to protect the ones you love. Remember I asked you. Who is protecting you? Who protected you?"

“And I told you I can protect myself”

“I don’t think you were protecting yourself or protecting yourself for that matter. Instead of protecting yourself you’re growing distant from the society and this avoidance didn’t teach you how to deal with real life. . .Just left you helpless, rudderless, fearful. Using violence through intimacy was just your coping mechanism to avoid” and his gaze is searing through me as I speak with my tone coming out rather whispery than how it normally sounds. Both of us. Our voices are quiet, too quiet that if you are eavesdropping you won’t be able to hear a word.

“Who is protecting you Nomzamo?” Now suddenly I don’t know how to use words and I don’t even know how to speak. All my senses are not working but the clouds plastered on my face haven’t stopped the turbulence storm either as the rain keeps flowing through the valley of my cheeks and again his delicate fingers are wiping my tears. Oh I wish I can remove that facial expression on his eyes. . .and I know behind those eyes he also wants to chase off the glum I’ve found comfort in. “Let me protect you” he says through the deafening silence “Let me be the one who protects you Nomzamo and I will lay my life in your feet doing so”

“You are deserving of being touched and being loved. Don’t be scared to receive the love and let it overflows Mthabela. The

anger you have towards your father is burdening you and not him. Let it go”

“When are you letting go of the anger burdening you?” he furrows his eyebrows at me and keeping his lips into a thin line. And I can see all the sharp lines in features and the tiny plump behind his throat moving gently up and down. “Promise me that we are going to be okay? Together we are going to be okay spiritually, emotionally and physically. We are going to go through this together” Now one strand of my braids is around his finger and he has an optimistic beautiful smile on his face “Nana” that means I should now respond to him.

“I promise” words that are coated with honey and sprinkles of an oath rolls out of my tongue. “I promise” this time I mean it than just saying it. The gentle kiss molding our lips to each other is soon accompanied by his tongue thrusting rhythmically into my warm inviting mouth.

“We are not done with this conversation but right now we have to go buy grocery as you asked because my brothers are coming”

I am reminded that I’ll be surrounded by men who I have to impress with my cooking skills and I don’t even know what to cook. What should I cook anyways? I mean I do help my mother with chopping vegetables here and there sometimes because she prefers being the only one who uses the kitchen. And what

happens if I cook something easy and quick like baked beans and rice? And maybe chutney—But I know these men will be demanding for meat as we speak the trolley that this one who was making me make promises has a lot of meat than anything else. I don't even know what I am going to cook but I am just enjoying this. Having him walking beside me and pushing a trolley in his hand as we walk from one corridor to another and me on the other hand looking like I know what I am doing whereas I am drowning in perplexity with the ingredients of what I want to prepare for tonight. . .I did some search online and none of those recipes suggested curry powder but they were telling me about rosemary and parsley not forgetting basils. "Mthabela I am going to cook biryani. Your brothers eat biryani don't they?" I turn to him as we are slowly walking through the corridor with spices. I found out that they eat meat but not pork, they're carnivores. I think he's the one blooming with rapture more than I am because he has been beaming every time when I glance towards him and changing my meal for the day.

"You're not cooking pasta anymore?" That was my third option and now I have changed my mind. "I thought you were going to cook creamy samp" And that my. . .I don't remember what option was this one because I have been changing my mind ever since we walked through this store "And also the beef curry and uphuthu sounded better as well" Is this man really

mocking me? I look at him and he has no sense of humour on his face but his eyes says otherwise and I can tell that he's pressing those lips together to hold back his laughter.

"Do you think you're funny Mthabela? Do you want me to scream and tell everyone that you are funny? Is that what you want?" I crease my eyebrow at him "You are not funny" Yes he needs to know right here and now before he considers stand-up comedy. What is this? Why he thinks my frustration is funny?

"Hawu" That laughter that wants to escapes his lips is being suppressed and then he pulls me closer to him with his hands circling around my waist looking down at me. "You have no reason to be nervous. My sister in law cooked an under cooked chicken when we went to her house for the first time. The moment you take a bite it bled but we couldn't say anything because she was going to slaughter us alive. We ate silently and until we finished. Really you're not doing this to impress my brothers but I want you to meet them and that's all. And I'm going to help you in the kitchen" This is supposed to consume me with serenity but it's not instead I am imagining them eating my undercooked chicken and comparing which one was better. "Nana don't worry about this or do you want me to just buy already cooked meals?"

“No. No. I’ll cook” I quickly say. If you think he’s going to marry you or maybe his brothers will like you for cooking undercooked chicken then you must think about that one again—my subconsciousness goes through the recipe she found from an instagram chef and blinking at me before she starts chopping onions. “Can you please get me plain yoghurt from the other corridor?” I plead him gently and then watch those perfect thighs and legs as he walks away disappearing somewhere through the hallway, leaving me behind to going through this recipe on my phone once again when I hear someone clearing their throat and making me whip my head up to meet with what was once my friend with a basket in her hand standing in front of me with a palpable expression.

“Nomzamo” when my name rolls out of her mouth it sounds as though I have never heard her saying it before. “I thought you were missing” she stands in front of me and tugging the strands of her dreadlocks behind her ear.

Oh no we weren’t missing but we were with that man you once thought you were going to end up with remember him? Hmm we went there to tell him that we hate him but somehow that night we. . .not to hurt yourself feelings but I touched him. Have you touched him before?—my subconscious creases her eyebrow at her with her lips curving into an impish smirk.

“I was found” Tell her that your man found you, my subconscious whispers and then glance at me and impatiently waiting for me to say what she has instructed me to utter. I breathe in and out not knowing what to say to her honestly and I am hoping that this man doesn’t come back just yet. “It’s great seeing you” I say after sometime of ear splitting silence looming between us and watching her opening and closing her mouth.

“It’s great seeing. . .” when she immediately becomes immobile and looking behind me I already know the reason behind that. I don’t have to turn around to see him because I can hear the footsteps approaching towards us. I am standing here with tiny drums against my chest. How should I feel? Because I am not feeling like an antagonist.

And when he finally reaches towards our direction I turn to him as he places his hand around my waist and putting on the yoghurt in our trolley. I look up at him. I wish I can conceal the passion and adoration that dances between us not to hurt her but it all so impossible. Even the eye contact we just made is as powerful as the one we make when we’re alone.

Yes yes yes! That’s my subconscious screaming and drumming her fingers against the kitchen counter. Now tell her that he was at your house paying for the virginity that he took. . .don’t forget about seven kids and also tell her that this morning you managed to peel of some layers into him and you are meeting

his brothers. Hmm tell her you're doing so well as a green mamba—I have to blink rapidly from the sudden dizziness because of my subconscious that won't stop rapping on.

“It was great seeing you Nomzamo”

A smile appears on her face but I cannot ignore the pain in her eyes either.

But that smile is like her friendship, my subconscious shrugs noncommittal and then she continues to chop her vegetables.

Then she walk pass us and sashaying her hips left and right before she pauses then swivel around. “I hope you are happy” I automatically assume that she's saying this because she thinks I might be sharing the same nature of relationship she had with this man standing next to me and not so impressed with what is being said to me but he remains motionless and narrowing his eyebrows at her.

“I'm at my happiest I've ever been” I respond back to her with no intentions to rub salt into her wounds but genuinely saying—especially with the new bestfriend whom still wants to fight her for calling me a snake. Wait but am I happy? I am, I believe I am because I don't have to question myself amongst a circle of friends nor am I there to make them feel comfortable about themselves.



The smell of meat that he marinated with vegetables is now wheezing in the air with all the aromas combined as I am stirring my pot and he walks in leaning against the entryway and attentively looking at me with music softly playing in the background and his brothers have announced that they'll be here any minute from now making me stay afloat with my very own perturb emotions. . .I have been focusing on nothing but these pots and blocking any other thoughts that keeps revisiting my brain like all those questions I am still yet to answer that he asked me this morning and meeting my friend without the both of us screaming in elation upon seeing each other after weeks. I didn't get to hear her high pitch voice but instead we didn't have words to say to each other. Thinking about it now I personally would've preferred if she chose to ignore me the moment she set my eyes on me

I would've been okay with that. I'm okay with what's now the nature of our relationship. "You apologized to her and now you shouldn't be feeling bad. It wasn't your fault. It wasn't her fault but mine. Now stop thinking about it" I really hate he can easily read me. Ah ah. Now I cannot even have a private conversation with my own thoughts because he can easily invade.

"I'm not thinking about it" I protest and closing my pots. I hope these people eat and even lick my plates. Yes he was waiting for me to finish stirring before he can come and stand next to

me—I told him that I don't want him to distract me, more especially with his presence. Now he's here in front of me and placing his index finger underneath my chin. "Mthabela if I burn my pots you'll tell your brothers it was your fault"

"Forget about that. They have their wives to cook for them. I love you"

"I'm cooking"

"Nana"

"I'm cooking" I smile at him.

"I love you"

"I love you too. Now please leave"

"Ngqiqabula qala" he demands for a kiss. He hugs me close and his hands sweeping down my back. Holding me so tightly I can scarcely breathe and then we hear the door opening and what follows after that is a baritone voice shouting clan names and Muzi looks at me shaking his head "My brothers are here" he announces.

They're where? Here? Jesus.

"Mthabela, Chibi, Mabhedla Ntshaziwe, Mpangezitha KaMlotshwa, Masimula" I can hear the voice shouting from the other side and my subconscious is internally ululating and dancing with her breasts out. This a moment of truth for me

and the heat from those pots has wrapped itself around me making me choke with perturbation. I decrease the temperature of my pots as my hand is being taken and we are about to meet his brothers. “Mthabela!” The voice shouts. I am reminded that I should start calling this man by pet names and not his surname. But I cannot bring myself into calling him “baby” or “sweetheart”. How do people call their boyfriends by the way? Especially those ones who cheat on you and blame it on spirituality like the one I’m dating?

The moment they see us appearing I can see smiles appearing from the faces, they’re different from this man I am with— they’re not robots and they show emotions. Look at him as we speak he’s impassive even though he’s seeing his brothers although I can see mirth dancing in his eyes but it would’ve been great seeing him jumping into their arms but he doesn’t. . they are not hugging or shaking hands but keeping distance and they’re respecting his space and they seem to be okay with this nature of their relationship.

I remember the one in blue shirt and already sitting on the couch with his legs crossed, that’s his elderly brother, Menzi. He makes me want to go down on my knees and bow my head when I am at his presence. “MaMbatha” I was hoping they’d call me by my name but it seems I should completely forget about that. He stands up and shaking my hand as he greets

before he returns back to where he was already sitting and nodding at his brother.

This one is grinning and seems rather elated to see me before he looks towards his brother and then me. “How did he kidnap you? Where you tied up on a chair Shadu kandaba? Did he starve you” I should’ve known that with that grin what is going to follow after that was nothing but him teasing me. I think I like him. It depends whether he approves me. . .not that I need approval. Now he’s laughing with his shoulders moving up and down. Well he’s the second born and introduced as Melusi, and already he’s complaining about hunger. “It’s great seeing you again” he makes himself comfortable on the couch and beaming at his brother who’s still standing next to me, I have been blessing them with my white stones.

I am then introduced to Mongameli and I had to hang my head low upon greeting him upon he asked me not to—his wife is the one that cooked undercooked chicken and he’s the one sitting on the throne.

Why don’t you cook undercooked chicken as well maybe you might become a queen? I have decided that I’m going to ignore my subconsciousness so that I don’t get inattentive. And then there’s Mnotho he has hardly said a word to me although his aura is very tranquil but. . .he has been intensely gazing at me as though he’s reading beyond my soul and my thoughts to

read me, maybe to see my intentions? I don't know but his eyes are piercing through me.

Then I found out that the last born is not here.

I just served them starters. . .I made them. Anyways I can hear their laughter from here filled with elation as they speak. I can even see the kidnapper laughing with his shoulders moving up and down, even his brothers pretty much adore seeing that look on his face, untroubled for a moment—that's what they said, they've been asking me what am I feeding him and they're not aware that this will be the first time he's eating food cooked by me. I've never cooked for my family but here I am cooking for brothers with high cheekbones and chiselled jawlines.

I have the biryani in beige ceramic bowls with scooped plain yoghurt at the top for aesthetics purposes and meat. And if these men actually don't appreciate all my effort then I am going to. . .I'm not that brave to promise them that I'll slaughter them. When I appear I can see smiles surely because of the aroma, for someone who never cooked this it smells divine. "Hah we are eating rice and ice cream? Is this ice cream MaMbatha?" That's Melusi looking at the bowl in his hands and teasing me yet again while grinning. "Last time we had inyama yenkukhu econsa igazi (we had bleeding chicken) and now we are now eating ice cream and rice"

“My wife cooks the most delicious undercooked chicken wena” Mongameli says with a marble face and shaking his head. I can only hope that one day my husband defends me like this. “And I am going to tell Yolokazi”

Now I am watching them eating and expecting some sort of facial expression. I guess it's their thing to remain impassive when someone is expecting some sort of emotion from them. Mthabela is licking his fingers though and Melusi has been licking his spoon. . .I don't know if I am reading too much into things but it seems they're enjoying my food and then that one who doesn't speak that much is taking his own time with eating even the way he chews—he chews for an hour before swallowing. “Awuuu MaMbatha thank you for the meal” Now that's Menzi their bowl are empty with only bones as I take them to the kitchen and followed by Mthabela who was helping me clean up the table.

Why they haven't said anything about how it tastes? Or maybe I should've prepared if I cooked cow head and intestines.

“Nana” his hands are around my waist and nuzzling on my neck. I attempt to turn around so I can face him but he won't let me, his fingers are trailing around my bellybutton and my body tremble once again and reawakening my orgasm from earlier and all the sensation while the warmth of his tongue is inside my ear. “Your food was delicious. Thank you thingo lwami” A

sensual whisper comes from him but his fingers are still against my stomach evoking celestial magic from within my solar plexus causing me to start breathing erratically. “Did you mean it?” I don’t where is that question coming from. But I’ve learnt that he can be so random sometimes. “When you said I’m worthy. When you said I’m worthy of love. Did you mean it thingo lwami?” How am I supposed to answer you when you’re paralyzing all my senses? Tell me how?

“You are worthy and you’re deserving” I whisper back to him like this is our mantra for the day. It even echoes in my head. “You are loved. You are love. And don’t doubt that Mthabela” I say in a monotone as everything around us is slowly fading. The sound of laughter from his brothers and the water running from the tap. All I can hear is his breathing and all I can feel is his touch on my stomach as his fingers keep moving in delicious patterns. “I meant it” my breathing is now ragged and my eyes are fluttered tightly closed.

With my eyes still fluttered closed like that next thing I feel that his presence is now gone. . .he just left me with my body needing his attention and my grapefruit overflowing with sweet juices, my breast pleading for his mouth there. What is this torture? I compose myself before preparing dessert and taking it to the living room where I find Mthabela hugging his elderly brother and everyone in this room is immobile with their

mouths opened as though they're seeing unicorns dancing to kwaito. I can hear their silence sniffles as they're holding onto each other before all of them wrap themselves around in their brother's arms—maybe for the first time. I don't know but. .  
.they're touching and hugging. They're holding their brother in this arms and this room is filled with masculine sobs eliciting my own. Is this why he asked me if I meant it? He needed assurance for those words to sunk at every corners of his brain.  
They're touching and holding him.



“We are black love, rooted in black spirituality”

I walk through the dark hallway and there's total silence in this house until I am in the living room where I find him alone in a moonless room with soundlessness. “Dali” I hear my own voice piercing through the silence and although I cannot see him but those white stones just appeared on his face—I did mention that I am going to find a perfect sweet name for him. I should've called him baby actually. “Mthabela” I call him yet again and then he switches on the pendant light that illuminates him on the couch with a charming smile.

I look at the total adoration shimmering in his eyes and those imperfect yet perfect teeth with his one hand clasped on the couch and the other on his knee, leaning back on the couch, lithe as a predator and there's a bowl with him. This man really left me in bed to come here and eat left overs. “I prefer being called like that than you calling me by surname. . .although it always amaze me whenever you call me like that. I never expected it from you” I crease my eyebrow at him. I want him to explain why he left me alone to come here and eat biryani without me.

“Why you’re not in bed Mthabela? You left me alone to come here and eat?”

“Hmmm” he glances toward the bowl not denying that he left me alone without any arms wrapped around me. “That what happens when you’ve been fed love potion” Is he saying I am the one who fed him that? Basically he’s calling me an enchanter.

“Who fed you love potion?” I don’t even know the doors to the sangomas, I always run away when I see one. Okay when I was young because as children we’re made to believe that traditional healers are subhuman. I was told they’d steal me and turn all of my insides into special herbs and eat my eye balls to gain superpowers. I don’t know anything about spirituality for that matter but as I grow up I always find myself being drawn into it. Being fascinated by the richness of our culture and the beauty of it. More especially with this man. . .that’s so in tune with who is and not afraid instead he holds sovereignty into his blackness and his ancestors.

“You’d be jealous if I tell you” When I told him that he’s not funny and doesn’t have any comical bone in his body he didn’t listen to me huh? Look at him now with that boyish grin searing through his face.

But I actually find him as we speak I am laughing ha ha ha—my subconscious says standing opposite me and looking like a

goddess in a short pink satin dress with toned legs and her buttocks perfectly rounded, securely held by hips and I am sure she's not wearing any underwear before she flicks her chin length fringe wig and glancing towards the man we're sharing then me still dramatically laughing.

"And why are you're not sleeping at this time?" Because I had a dream of a crispy blue sky and that was the most graceful picture I've ever seen. . .but that was before I saw myself standing on top of the mountains "Nana, come here" I take a deep breath and my feet involuntarily propel me to him before I take a sit with my feet on the couch and my head leaning on his shoulder and he kisses my forehead and strokes my hair.

"What wrong? Why you're not sleeping?"

"You shouldn't have left me alone on the bed Mthabela" I tell him and he continues stroking my hair and the kisses hasn't stopped either now on top of my head.

"I'm sorry. Do you forgive me?" I nod my head rapidly and his fingers are now drawing patterns into my thighs "I came here because I needed to pray and I didn't want to wake you up" I've noticed that he prays at twelve am and also at six am. Those are the normal times where he disappears on the bed.

"I want to pray with you" I don't know where is that coming from. Even my very own subconscious is standing there with her eyes out their own volition and for the first time she has no

words. . .actually her mouth is just slightly opened and she keep flapping her eyelashes over and over again. What am I going to say when I pray? I've never prayed before for that matter. I just know that "God bless our food" prayer because my grandmother used to force us into using it when we were young. I do speak to God though sometimes when my I feel my life is like a pile of papers in a bin then I visit him. Actually I know him when times are dark, I stopped being his friend totally the day he took my brother, I cannot be friends with someone who took something so precious from me. Basically even that one that I bumped into at the store was so much better than that man in the sky. Now he's making me dream about the very same sky and sometimes praying for people. Imagine. I dream about praying for people whom are kneeling in front of me, strange. "But I don't know how to pray" I tell him truthfully before he expects me to start praying until the kingdom comes.

Now here I am on my knees with my hands clasped on my thighs and eyes fluttered closely. I am fighting with my own thoughts and my subconscious that's demotivating me as she whispers that my prayers won't be recognized. I hear him clapping his hands together so gently with two taps at the time as though he's calling someone. . .but suddenly I feel heavy energies starting to dance in the air and urge to actually start a hysteria but I hold back. "Siyasondela. Siyasondela.

Siyasondela” I hear him keep saying and although those are just words but his expressive voice evokes the emotions of pure soul and he sounds more like he’s composing a song that embodies spirituality. “Sisondele kuwe. . .” Now I am also doing the two taps with my hands as he says—we are coming to you. And my body including my mind is becoming more tranquil blocking all thoughts and focusing on my hands that I keep tapping twice and my breathing. “Sisondele kuwe Mvelinqangi” This time he says we are coming to you Divine Consciousness almost in a sing song and the raw and unravel emotions laced in his voice. “Give us guidance and we are asking for your light. We are asking for your light to spread through us even in the darkest places we’ve never thought anyone could reach. Sisondele kuwe wena ophezulu” Again he says we are coming to you Most High “Sicela ukukhanya (We are asking for light)” My urge to cry just explodes from nowhere and warm translucent watery beads follows the valley down my cheeks and a lump expands on my throat as I am now repeating after his words, we are asking for light and guidance. I am feeling something much greater than sensory experience but divine and spiritually aligned, mumbling underneath my breath as he continues to pray and I pay attention to each and every word with my salty beads at the tip of my mouth.

“Amen” we say at once and I start to calm down from all the energy that has consumed me and trying to make sense as to

where my hysterically crying was coming from and that guttural sound that came from the depth of my soul. What elicited it? And who invited it? For what reason?

We haven't exchanged any words we both felt what consumed us instead of saying any word he takes my hand and leading me to the bedroom then he makes me sleep on the bed making sure that I am comfortable before he snuggles in and placing my head on his chest then kisses my forehead. . .I don't think he knows how much those warm kisses on my forehead means to me they hold a powerful meaning than the taste of his lips on mine.

"Nana" he calls me. We have calmed down now. Our senses are no longer paralyzed but we can use words.

"Dali" I can hear rather than see his smile.

"Ngiyakuthanda thingo lwami"

"I know. . .I loved you first" I am sure he has that smile that turns my knees into gelatin right now on that face. I don't dare look at him. I was just praying so I might as well just sleep before God second guess me when we are already forming a relationship here.

I am a bundle of nerves as are driving through the gate with his hand on my knee that is covered by the floral ruffled dress that I am wearing and both of us been having our own individualism

time in our heads as he swiftly moved through the afternoon traffic and tapping one of his index finger against the umbhaqanga music genre piercing through the leather seat car and I keep casting looks towards at how devilishly handsome he is as he plays with his mouth left and right, frowning from time to time and deep in his thoughts.

I am meeting his mother today that's why he's been diving in a pool of emotions. Just yesterday he was in his brothers' arms and today. . .I can only hope that he'll let his mother hold her son and finally love him the way a mother should without any restraining and respecting boundaries.

After this I am going back home and Muzi has been sullen because he wanted us to go out tomorrow but my father is coming back from his business trip that he took and he has been calling me about the plans of umemulo—I really don't want to dance for the community with my breasts hanging out while they pin money on my head.

We park outside the grey and stone house that has a feeling of serenity to urban surround. It doesn't come as a surprise that their home is nothing by luxe but this. . .this is very homely and beautiful as he opens the door for me and lacing his hands around my waist as though he's branding me and marking his territory. Can you believe that his man left those red marks on my neck on purpose and I only noticed the moment I glimpsed

at myself on the rearview while he casted a look at me with a capitulate smirk. As we speak I have foundation painted on my neck that really didn't do that much of concealing even the glitter shimmering there.

“Nana you don't have to hide already my mother knows that I am sexually active” he says as he sees me fixing my scarf the moment he turns the door knob opening the beautiful house allowing me to walk in first and my knees are like empty vessels knocking each other carrying a gift basket in my hand that has a bottle of wine, apparently this is my mother in law's favorite, this is how you pave your way to her heart.

I cast an infernal glance at him and he winks at me making my solar plexus quiver and I cannot hold back my own that forcefully crawls out of my mouth as we walk through the living room and I am captivated by the that chevron feature wall stripes the back of the kitchen, bringing a blast of pattern to the open plan living space and there is his mother on the couch wearing umbhanco and sewing something with her hands the moment her eyes meets with him they brighten up and also her face lighten up with colours blooming beautifully on her face with too many emotions painted there at once. That pain I once witness as she held me in her arms is there—I know the yearning to have her son in her arms and hold him until she plants the seed of her love into him until it grows and



consumes him. “Thingo lwakhe. Awww come here. Look at you” A curve forms in her face and she opens her arms for me. I glance towards this man who looks like he’s meeting other robots for the first time and elated about it. The adoration bounces in his eyes and passion as I let go of his hand that was intertwined with mine fixing the scarf around my neck first and taking only three steps before I am already wrapped around in her arms and she holds me so tightly. As if she wants me to exchange the physical touch that I’ve had with her son with her. There’s always warmth in her arms that’s so motherly and invites tears to prickle at the corners of my eyes for some bizarre reasons, already I can feel them warming my cheeks as she pulls away and cupping my jawline into her hands while a ravishing smile appears on her face. “Don’t cry now. What did he do so that I send lightning his way? What did you do to her?” she glances towards her son who’s standing there immobile with tears shimmering in his own eyes and his mother narrows her eyebrows observing her son who’s hands are shaking on his side and before she can open her mouth to say a word and he comes and kneel on her feet and leaning his head on his mother’s knees. A guttural sob comes out from her not knowing whether to touch him or not. Then she glances at me I smile through the tears clouding my eyes. “Aww Mthabela” That’s when the explosion of tears erupts as she places her trembling hand on his back and stroking him. Oh her wailing

pierce through my heart and it starts to endlessly bleed before he gets pulling his mother up and they're both standing face to face. Wrapping her arms around him, weeping into his neck—all self-restraint forgotten—and he just holds her, rocking to and fro, comforting her. Scalding tears pool in my eyes as she release him and still not yet believing that this is happening glancing at me and then him. Touching his chest, his arms, waist and looking into his eyes. Not believing that her son is standing in front of her and she's touching him, holding him, loving him. "Oh thank God" I hear her saying and clasping her hands around his waist just yet again and he hugs her once more then she pulls away again to look at him—they both have the same set of white stones. "Thingol don't move from there. We are coming back" I guess that's my new name then.

I am rainbow.

I rapidly nod my head but before they can leave he comes to me and bending, almost kneeling in front of me to look into my tear stained face. "Thingolwami lwenkosazana" the warmth of his hands on my cheeks seeps through me and he takes the scarf around my neck to wipe my tears. I just want to know is he crazy? Does he uses his brain to actually think? This is the same scarf I am using to hide the marks on my neck in this scorching weather. "I'm coming back. Don't miss me and it's too hot for you to wear this" That roguish smile that always

gives him boyish features appears before he takes the scarf and getting up. I am left here with my neck that has red marks and his mother is smiling at us before her son takes her hand and then disappears around the house. My heart and soul is full.

I continuously tap my hand against my thigh with my buttocks glued on this modular sofa that's split into two parts, giving the lounge area an L-shaped border. An eclectic pair of coffee tables mix modern and rustic vibes.

A bold yellow stripe strikes down the television wall of the industrial living room, where it becomes a three-d element as it overlaps the television stand. The black and white picture of his mother looking beautiful in her traditional wear with her husband makes a striking statement in this room. Then there's yellow lounge chair pulls up by the record player and a vinyl storage nook. The yellow trimmed curtain pool onto a custom built wooden window seat that runs the full length of the room.

The lounge furniture arrangement is bound together by a yellow patterned area rug. A cosy throw spreads the vibrant accent colour to the grey sofa. "MaMbatha" A voice interrupts me as I am staring at the picture on the wall of a happy couple gazing at each other and they seem to have forgotten about the camera that was capturing the moment and my eyes meet with Mnotho standing there wearing jeans and white shirt. And nervously I turn around clearing my throat. There's something

about him. I think it his cologne, intense aura and deep voice. Everything about him speaks money, power and dignity. “How are you?” At least he can actually smile unlike his brother who could hardly show his teeth.

“I am good. I was. . .I was watching the picture I hope you don’t mind” he narrows his eyebrows at me and then that smile dances on his lips. They all have the same set of teeth and cheekbones not forgetting the chiselled jawlines and at the corners of his eyes they’re wrinkled lines. “Your mother and brother left me here. I wasn’t stealing anything” I quickly say nervously and I think he’s examining my red stained neck making me conscious as my hands automatically touches there and clearing my throat.

“Hawu MaMbatha” Now he’s laughing with his shoulders moving up and down before he shouts for someone and a lady in her working uniform appears, he gives her instructions that I should be served something to drink before he goes on and sits down playing with the silver wedding band on his fingers. Should I continue gazing at these pictures or maybe go and sit down with him? What am I going to say yo him?

Tell him that your sister wants to be his second wife. . .I mean they could look beautiful together, he’s gorgeous but somehow dark—my subconsciousness yawns and only waking up now.

In total silence I continue watching the pictures hanging on the wall until my eyes meet with a beautiful picture with her hair braided in cornrows and she is wearing a tulle gown with two front missing teeth, and a tulip in her hand. In this picture she looks like she was five years with her skin so emollient and radiant. "That's my daughter she was five before she died" I hear his deep voice saying and I glance towards him and then look at the picture.

I smile sadly "she was beautiful" I pause wondering what happened. The woman in purple uniform places a tray on the coffee table with fruity juice and biscuits and a jar of prickles that he grabs and he eats them before I can ask what happened Mthabela walks into the room with red rimmed eyes and his brother seems elated seeing him.

"Nana my mother wants to talk to you" he announces with a sharp intake of breath. Although those glossy eyes have been shedding tears but he doesn't look grave. "I'm coming back" he says to his brother who nods and continues eating from his jar of prickles.

"Are you okay?" I ask him.

"Are you okay? Did my brother intimidate you?"

"No. But he told me about his daughter that passed away, she was beautiful" I smile at him and he hangs his head low

avoiding to look into my eyes. Is it the mention of that beautiful princess? Or the wounds are still had fresh. What happened to her. “What happened?”

“Someone was sent to kill her and her mother that was before my brother got married again” What the fuck? I wonder if that person was actually punished. I hope that person choked on their saliva and died.

“Were you able to find out who did it? Who would want to do such a thing”

“What matters is that he paid for what he did” In what way? I can see that danger oozing from him like that day when he asked me what he should do to those people who killed his fiancé. I can see the blood thirst that was once there. I can see the rage dancing anew in just a nanosecond as if all these images of what happened are scattered in his mind.

24

“My blindness is worth while

We gave birth to new ideas

But sometimes abortions”

The birds whom are beautifully singing are dancing on top of our heads in the crispy blue sky, in a garden bursting with red blossoms and bright pink flowers. The air is still warm embracing the lush heaven on earth as she sits opposite me with a white head wrap draped artfully on her head and wooden earrings looped on her ears with her teeth appearing behind the rosy colored lips and then she pours herself a glass of red colored liquid when she sees me quickly putting my eyes back to their own volition she chuckles, I have juice in my hand and she’s drinking wine.

“I met uMthabela when I was visiting my aunt eNanda and we went to EBuhleni. And there he was with gauged piercings wearing white and imbeshu and his neatly combed afro” she tells me reminiscing about her husband with pretty colours on her face “I kept stealing glances towards his direction and those high cheekbones and strong jawline. He was a man amongst any other men there. Until our eyes met he frowned at me whereas I blew him a kiss then looked away shaking his head

before he caught me staring again and this time I had a smile. Following day he was looking for me and he found me drunk so we couldn't speak, shame I had to go back home kwaLanga. When he went to my aunt's place looking for me I was long gone and he took the first bus to Cape Town and he found me. Our love was forbidden but he fought for us, he fought for what we had. Apparently I had no morals imagine?" she dramatically roll her eyes "But we got married and he changed the ways of his family because they were judgmental towards our love. The ways from one generation to another and from being Nazareth he adapted when he sat on a throne, his ancestors were not happy. And we had our six sons but one of them was different from the others and that was Muziwenkosi" At the mention of his name the passion she had in her eyes speaking about her husband mirrors mine. The bright colors that were blooming on her face are now on my own. "While my other sons followed the new ways of doing things being Christians, Muzi followed the traditions of this family" A smile creeps out of her mouth "Not even once he forgot who he was. His culture. The traditions, he is exactly like his grandfather" Another pause "That one has always been different in so many ways" I want to tell her that he's unique because he's a robot. "You see Muzi started talking when he was ten years old"

What?



“You mean he couldn’t speak at all?”

“Hmmm” she murmurs “And we thought he will never be able to speak and his father was very hard towards him because he was different. This was new for all of us, and that also planted the anger inside my son. He felt different amongst everyone more especially his brothers, I’d find him forcing a voice out of his mouth and he’d cry and fight. He was very violent that he’d win every stick fight with his brothers. One day he fought Mongameli and he couldn’t believe it when he was on that dusty ground with his younger brother on top of him and his chest rising and falling then Muzi walked away. We had to learn to love him from the distance because that was the nature of our relationship. His first words were the harmony of his great grandfather’s favourite song Lalela Zulu and he sounded so beautiful” I remember when I found him singing that song at his office. “And we knew right then that his voice was caged by our ancestors. It was a message that he was them and they’re him. You can adapt. You can believe in God and acknowledge your ancestors and that was something that their father wasn’t doing; he completely forgotten about them and pushed them aside. I listened to him singing with tears in my eyes and having to touch him and hold him today. . .It felt like the very first time I heard that harmony coming out of his mouth for the first” I smile at her seeing her tears prickling anew and at the corners of her eyes “I now know that our ancestors always send

someone into our lives for a reason. Yolokazi also brought my son back home to where he belongs, the throne. . .you see the rebellion of this family?" I nod my head "They're always the chosen ones for the throne. The ones where we take left, they take right. . .they're always chosen. Mongameli wanted nothing to do with the throne but they dragged him into it. He's doing an amazing job. Him and his wife who has made changes for women, she became a voice of some many women KwaHlabisa, she's fierce that one" And this time she places her glass aside and placing her hand on top of mine with her warmth seeping through me "I cannot repay you for what you've done for me but I am thankful and I hope that ophozulu nongaphansi blesses you. Your paths crossed for a reason and you'll know eventually what was the reason but if ever. If ever as time goes you realize this is not worth it for you don't ever be afraid to walk away. Don't ever be afraid to choose yourself and I always say this to all my daughters. You are my daughter. Don't be patient for a man, your sanity matters even if your heart screams for him just listen to your brain. If he wants to take care of you let him do so but also save some of that money for yourself. Nomzamo men change, you can never guarantee and I won't say stay when he changes because he's my son but leave. I will help you pack" Now she places her hand against my cheek. This woman. Is it too early to ask her to be my mother? Yes, okay I understand. "What's on your mind?" she looks straight into my

eyes yet unable to invade my thoughts and I hang my head low and swallowing my saliva.

Nomzamo if you dare say nonsense you're going to die, I swear. Don't speak just continue crying, you're doing great, don't speak—my subconscious says with her eyes burning with fury since she knows what's racing through my mind.

“Why you couldn't protect him? I mean against his father when he was being abusive. . .” I pause realizing I said what was on my mind and didn't push it back “I'm sorry” I quickly apologize but quickly all my nerves comes into serenity seeing a smile dancing at the corners of her lips. Oh we're good, I guess unless if she's planning an attacking me while still smiling.

“Awww he warned me that you always speak your mind” her shoulders move up and down from slightly laughing “I did protect him. I was there for him but maybe it wasn't enough of which I regret every day and I apologized to him for not being a mother to him. I understand where are your concerns coming from and there's absolutely no need for you to apologize” Now that she has wiped off my tears and we've both calmed from our emotional state she shows me yet another ravishing smile “We should go back inside before he comes here and check up on us. Again thank you thingo lwakhe. I know he wouldn't want to hear me saying this but I can now die in peace knowing my sons are in safe hands”

We return back inside the house hand in hand and even laughing about the times her husband will find her drunk and burping while they were still just dating—I'm so sure that back in the days they would've been amazing friends with my sister.

I cannot see him anyway around the house as we return back and I am told to go look for him at the patio and I find him there with a cup of black tea and biscuits that he keeps dipping in black liquid before it disappears in his mouth. Jesus Christ. Out of all men in this world you gave me the one that dips biscuits in tea? What happened to milk? Why is he drinking cream-less tea? Why am I finding him attractive as the sun rays lit his face and how he is holding the butter biscuit in his hand that has nicely manicured fingers.

“Dali” I call him since he wasn't paying attention and I see a curve forming on his face before he looks at me, chewing with impeccable mannerism then he swallows what is in his mouth and pushing his cup aside. I still cannot believe that he dips biscuits inside his tea.

“Nana, sondela” Now he's leaning backwards on the chair and calling me closer and I have no choice since my feet are already propelling me towards him and until I reach where he's sitting, he takes my hand and making me sit on his lap. Instead of looking at him my back is what his eyes meet instead. “Nana look at me” I breathe and then turn to face towards him before

he takes my arms and wrapping them around his own neck then his hands are circling my waist and our eyes interlock. "Sawubona" Aww this one is a charmer I am telling you. The sound of his baritone is so smooth; unbelievable that he once couldn't speak. Now his fingers are gently stroking my back causing my breathing to accelerate.

"Sawubona Mthabela omuhle" I compliment him and how beautiful and charming he is. Now look at him covered in a rosy hue and unable to hold himself from smiling.

"Ngimuhle mina? (I am handsome?)" This time he creases his eyebrow and I move a little on top of him coming in contact with his groin and he groans "Nana" I know that look. I can see the lust growing in his eyes and I purposely move again.

"Nomzamo" that sounded like a warning.

"Hmmm" I murmur.

"You have no idea what you're doing to me thingo"

"And what are you going to do about it?" I smile with a sensual tone.

"Do you want me to show you?"

"Hmmm"

"Use words. Look at me in the eye and tell me you want me to show you" I can't. I can't look at him in the eye knowing very

well what he'll do to me especially here—at his mother's house.

“Mthabela. . .”

“Say it Nomzamo”

“I want you to. . .” when more vowels are about to roll out of my mouth we are interrupted by a feminine voice before she appears looking beautiful with her braids falling down her shoulders like waterfalls, clad in a denim dress with a smile on her face showing her crispy white teeth.

“Ma is calling everyone inside for lunch” she smiles warmly and she has a very pure aura about her and batting her eyelashes at me. I cannot help but smile back. I am so sure that in this family everyone is beautiful. “I'm Imiyalo” she extends her hand for me to shake. I get up from this man's lap and he watches the both of us hugging instead of just a handshake. “I'm taking her with me bhuti” she says and taking my hand. I glance towards my man who winks at me and I wink back as we make our way inside the house to the kitchen where I help with setting up the table—I find out that this is Mnotho's wife after he walked in to get a kiss after annoying her by demanding attention. Aww they're beautiful. Then he leaves the room taking another jar of prickles from the fridge. “Ain't they weird?” she turns to me and I agree. The other one eats prickles and the other drinks tea with no milk and dips the biscuits inside, who does that?

I just laugh at her as she shakes her head and taking a bowl of salad. I follow right behind, making our way to the garden where I was having a talk with my mother in law and already she's with her sons and I don't know what they're talking but it seems serious, I can see by how Mthabela is furrowing his eyebrows. We return back inside the house as I walk in my phone ringing from my bag interrupts me and I excuse myself to answer the phone call, it's Rharha.

"Nomzamo where are you? This is 911. A critical emergency and I need you"

"What happened? Did you kill someone? Are you okay? Who did you kill? Did you kill Bontle? Omg Nandipha!" I panic.

"I didn't kill her. Jesus Christ what is wrong with you wena?" you and wena is the same thing right?

"Ohh" I breathe "What happened?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm coming home soon"

"Can you come now? I need you"

"Okay I'm on my way"

"Thank you. I love you till the end"

"I love you till the end"

What happened?

I don't know who should be in a state of apprehension between me and this man who dips his biscuits in his tea without cream. I glance at him again as he aggressively changes gears and then click his tongue because he couldn't overtake—I am going to die today, thou I shall die. “Muziwenkosi Mthabela are you trying to kill me?” Oh you should see how he's speeding on the road like we are being chased by the demons that had their tongues slit in two hanging out and penis has horns on their foreheads, chanting a demoniacal hymn as they run behind us. I literally almost hit my head on the dashboard regardless of having a seatbelt on. Again I glance at him and what bothers me is how he's looking so calm on that leather seat

lithe and only has his one hand on the steering wheel and using the other whenever he has to change gears. I get to study all his delicate features and chiselled jawline while he bats his eyelashes. “Are you crazy why are you over taking a truck?” I yell at him—this bloody biscuit dipper just glances at me and roguishly smirks. “Nxarga Mthabela!” I click my tongue after he has read my facial expression and met with my fury, he starts to slow down, glancing at me with an apologetic look. “I didn't say Rharha was dying” that's the reason why he's driving like a lunatic. Oh wait he is eccentric because he drinks tea without



cream and then dips his biscuits inside before he shoves it inside his mouth.

I don't know but I find it very attractive—that's my subconsciousness shrugging her shoulders at me and twisting her lips into a scowl before she glances at her manicured fingers. I don't associate myself with hypocritical people so I am going to ignore and avoid her.

“Nana you said your sister is not okay”

“And you decided it's okay to try to kill me?” I look at him again and this time our eyes meet. “Why are you smiling Mthabela? Do you think you're handsome?” The sound of his laughter was so unexpected and sonorous before he glances at me once. I am calming down seeing the serenity on his face and all the muscles there even those broad shoulders. I am also laughing with him now and calming down completely forgetting that this man almost killed me. “I wasn't trying to be funny” I sulk and he places his hand in between my thighs not moving them just comfortable with the warmth that seeps through him.

“I thought you said I'm handsome” The tone and atmosphere is changing. Even the wind escaping through the window is not enough for me to breathe it into my lungs at this moment. . . I don't know if it's the sound of his voice or the hand in between my thighs -or just him- but whatever it is this is just necromancy. “How is ntombazana? I haven't seen her in a

while. Do you think she misses me?” And yes he’s talking about what is in between my legs but referring it like he’s talking about a whole human being that has eyes and nose, not just lips.

“No she doesn’t” I respond on behalf my female organ that is suddenly the centre of attention at this moment. Hmm. I smoothen my own throat with the dry saliva since my tongue is not producing enough of it and then breathe trying to calm myself against this leather seat. “Why would she?”

“Because she’s mine” Apparently my own vagina doesn’t belong to me but it belongs to a man who dips his biscuits in tea. I’ve never been this traumatized in my life—Ah. My breath hitches when his hand travels further in between my legs and I glance at him to meet with his eyes that burns mines with rapid fire as we pause on a red robot and his eyes are on me with a sorcerer smile, his hand still in between my thighs and abruptly he removes it when he has to change his gears when the robot blinks green leaving me sulking. Why he didn’t use the other hand? Okay well he had to change gears and use the other on a steering wheel but still. He should’ve been a magician or something. “Are you okay?” he asks me as we swift through the road with music gently playing and now his hand back where it was earlier and the moment we turn around the corner, we are arriving at home already we are passing the green board

written New Germany. “Nana?” he glimpse at me. I cannot breathe. Well not with the warmth of his hand searing through me and I’ve completely forgotten that I have a critical emergency to attend.

“Hmmm” I murmur and gulp for air, gazing down to the hand in between my sweet and tender thighs. “I’m okay” I quickly say. “I mean I was upset that you removed your hand here but. . .I’m okay really. I’m fine. I’m not even mad that you almost killed me speeding down the road and I don’t find it weird that you drink tea without milk and dip your biscuits as well” I cannot stop talking. The more I open my mouth, the vowels keep jumping out. “But it’s attractive by the way like all your other weird characteristics that made me fall in love with you. Even that frown you’re making”

Nomzamo just shut up! Just shut up!—my subconsciousness is clearly disappointed at me because of that face she just gave me and shaking her head with disapproval.

“Haibo Nomzamo you think drinking tea without milk is weird?” Laughter comes out of his mouth “What else do you find attractive?”

“Nothing” I quickly say.

“Nana”

“Muziwenkosi”

“What else do you find attractive?” I don’t like what the sound of his voice is doing to me. The engine just died and we are parking outside my house, the sun is slowly setting creating a beautiful artistic picture and the sound of birds is fading. I can hear the dogs from my neighbor barking as the car drive through the gate but I have a man. . .beautiful man turning to face towards me and waiting to find out about all his attractive traits. “Let me know what was the emergency with your sister and tomorrow I’d love to take you out on a date then maybe you can tell me the long list of my attractiveness” Date? I’ve never been on a date before. I mean he did wanted us to go out today but changed plans because I had to meet and talk with his mother. I’m glad we had that talk honestly because somehow I got to peel off some layers into this man.

“I find everything about you attractive” I say whispering with a fresh shade of crimson covering my cheeks. “Your mother told me that you couldn’t. . .”

“That I couldn’t speak?” instantly he pesters and I hang my head low then look at him again. I hate it when he’s like that. When he remains motionless with his lips pressed into a thin line and his thoughts not so lucid. “What else she told you?”

“I don’t think it was a great idea to stop making music. You were given your voice for a reason to do something with it”

“I am doing something with it Nomzamo”

“What are you doing?”

“I’m using it to talk. Am I not?”

“No I mean making music. That’s your gift”

“A gift that keeps taking away from me” No matter how much he tries concealing the debilitating pain in his voice but I can still hear the rawness laced in it. “I’m not losing you Nomzamo”

“No one said you were”

“Good then because I’m not making music ever again”

“That’s what made me fall in love with you” I confess and expecting his eyes and face to brighten up, maybe instantly changing his mind too. But no, this robot here is furrowing his eyebrows and attentively looking at me and patiently waiting for me to continue talking. “At the office when you were composing. . .” before we were caught in each other’s arms “I’d love to hear that song while you’re making love to me” that sounds like a demand.

You can only hear our inhalation and exhalation in this car, the intensity of this atmosphere and his fingertips tapping against my thigh, it’s like fire blazingly wildly inside me and a bucket of water did little nothing to calm the fire surging through my system. We breathing in a same tempo. Our chests rising and falling. Our eyes interlocked and his delicate fingers moving through the bare parts of my skin and my eyes involuntarily

flutter closed. “Open them Nomzamo” I hate it when he does this. I cannot. I cannot look into those eyes. But when I do his silky touch sends me venturing further and further into the hot sensations he has brought to my body. “Is that what you want? Making love to you to the song we composed?” Oh he’s using plural. “We” I have noticed he uses that quite a lot. It warms me. Like that time when he said his house is mine—well it’s mine now. “I didn’t make your first time special. Can I? Tomorrow night? We’ll go on a date and. . . and. . .” I have never seen this combination of emotions before. It’s love, lust and nervousness at once and he’s stuttering with that oval shaped egg on his neck now moist while it moves up and down gently and my spinal cord is unzipping upon all these movements and every feature of his. “Thingo lwami” the husky, deep sound of his voice and provocative words he speaks reacted a small whimper from me. Maybe it’s not just words. But the magical fingertips and the eye contact.

“I don’t want to sit on the table while we are surrounded by people at the restaurant” I don’t want a typical date. I want to be somewhere I can see him dipping his biscuit inside his tea and hear the sonorous tone of his laughter. “I want us alone. Just us Mthabela so I can open up to like how you’ve opened up to me”

You are dickmatized hah!—my subconsciousness claps once and taking a sip from her drink with a smirk curving her lips and her hands manicured.

“I can give you that thingo lwami”

I swallow “I should go” I smile at him and placing my hand against his cheek and he nuzzles on it before I kiss him from the crown of his head to his forehead, his eyes and nose and I kiss his lips, my mouth clinging to his, pouring all the words I can never say into this kiss. “Be safe on the road, and call me when you get home”

“Okay” He’s still catching his breath “I love you”

“I love you too”

I know he’s going to watch me until I disappear behind the gate before he drives off. I turn around to look towards the direction of the car. I cannot see him because the windows are smoked but I’m sure he can see me. I smile before turning and closing the gate behind to walk into the deadly silence house. My mother is not around and her husband as well. “Rharha!” I shout walking through the hallway to her bedroom.

Remembering how panicked she sounded on my phone.

“Nandipha Mbatha!” I call out again to find her in her bedroom, peacefully sleeping and I walk in to sit beside the bed with her hair covering her face.

I remove the hair to be meet with tear stained face and I stroke her hair gently but she wakes up instantly like someone rising from the death and screaming. "I'm pregnant!" Those are the words that rolls out of her mouth leaving me frowning. And then she breathes out looking at her surrounding and when her eyes meet mines she gets off the bed quickly making her way to the bathroom. "Omg!" I hear a scream coming there. I'm left bewildered with what is going on. "Fuckkkk!" this time she screams loud causing me to run behind her to find her looking through the pregnancy tests sticks. There's bunch of them, some in the sink and some in the bin with pretty much the same results. "I'm pregnant. What am I going to do?"

"You're pregnant?" I blink.

"I'm pregnant" now she's murmuring "What am I going to do Nomzamo?" I don't know. What do pregnant women do? I don't know honestly. Eat some weird combination of food maybe? Like apples and jam. . .I really don't know. "Jesus Christ!" she slaps her forehead repeatedly starting to pace up and down.

"Who is the father?"

"Do you think I know?"

What the fuck?

"You don't know?"



“I mean I do know but. . .it only happened once and we met at a workshop. Your father is going to kill me”

“Haibo he’s your father too”

I receive a hellish glare from her before she glances at the test again written two weeks pregnant before she strides out of the room and grabbing her suitcase. “Rharha what are you doing?”

“I’m packing Nomzamo. I’m pregnant. I met the father once and I don’t know where he stays. Where is he from. Nothing. What do you think your father is going to do to me? He’ll humiliate me like how he’s been doing all this time” I can see tears prickling at the corners of her eyes. And then she pauses “That man always finds a way to treat us like shit”

“But you cannot leave” I say placidly “Okay. I’m going to pretend like I’m the pregnant one until we figure something out together. We are going to find him and tell him about this and if he doesn’t want to take responsibility of our baby then we are going to raise the baby together” she looks at me swallowing back her smile with her hands against her hips.

“You are going to pretend like a pregnant one? What happens in your head?”

“I don’t want you to leave” I’m sullen.

“I’m going back to stay with my mom”

“Rharha!” I blink “You are going to leave me here alone? Don’t do that please. Fine I’m leaving with you but not today. Let’s leave tomorrow. I’m going to speak to Mthabela so he can help us with something, I know since you’re working we can afford a place together but I’m sure he can help us with something. I’m going to do anything to make sure you don’t leave and we find him. Let’s stalk him actually on the internet or maybe spy him”

“We are not Charles Angels”

“We are trying to find him” And from nowhere she just explode with tears. At this moment I don’t even know what to do. I walk up to her and wrapping her up in my arms trying to calm her down. “Stop crying Rharha. It’s going to be okay”

“Nothing is going be okay Nomzamo. I’m pregnant” A guttural sob comes out of her mouth.

But you’ve ever heard of a condom though? Didn’t you force me to contraceptives? What happened?—My subconsciousness tugs her head in and I want to slap her across the face.

“Did the condom break?” I clear my throat asking and she looks at me with a devilry glare. Okay I wasn’t supposed to ask that.

“I am sorry. Now come here. Let me take you to bed” I take her hand and leading her back to her bedroom and tugging her in bed before she moves creating a space for the both of us. I hug her from behind and nuzzling on her neck before she turns

around to face towards me and smiles, sniffing. Oh her lush face is tear stained. “Do you want to tell me about him? Is he handsome? Do you like him?”

“I don’t want to talk about him. Not today at least maybe tomorrow and thank you for pulling through for me green mamba” she sniggers and I give her a look. If I mock her back about being pregnant what will she say? I’m joking. I’m not petty.

“Tomorrow I’m going out on a date with Muzi” I tell her with excitement.

“Make sure you get on top of him when you guys come back from the date” Get on top of him? When we come back from the date? How? Just sleep on top of him? “You do know how to it right?”

“No, not really”

“Feather!” Is that me? I’m the feather? “Okay get up let me show. Tomorrow you must look nice for the date. Don’t wear an underwear or bra, tease him the whole night and when you get home do wonders that’s how I got pregnant”

“I don’t want to get pregnant”

“Solela” she dramatically rolls her eyes “you won’t get pregnant because you’re on contraceptives. Now get up let me teach you” I am hesitant at first. Yes look at her she has completely

forgotten about her pregnancy as she places the pillow on the bed and asks me to imagine it as my man—this is udali basically. “Remember you’re in control and allow that to make you feel powerful. Let your hips guide you and do most of the work” she says the moment I get on top of the pillow.

“Rharha this is stupid”

“Trust me on this one. Okay do this with me because I’m trying to get my mind off things. Remember you’re in control”

I am in control, I’m in control, I’m the controller.

“With your hips spell the word coconut or cowgirl or the letter w or m” I start moving “Nomzamo not with your shoulders but your hips only. You’re not doing Thuso Phala here. Now move” Okay move with my hips and not shoulders. I start to succulently move my hips. Left and right. Up and down.

Clockwise and my breathing now accelerating maybe because I am imagining this pillow as him. I can see him looking up at me with a facial expression that is encouragement enough to do this exotic dance with my hips. I breathe through my nose then my mouth. “Tap into your inner goddess and let her control you” my subconsciousness appears naked with toned legs and her much gigantic breasts than mines sagging yet so beautiful at sight, her long hair falling down like waterfalls with her grape fruit decorated with diamonds before she shows me how to do this on the bed. Her screams and moans echoes in my head,

making my body start to hum a sexual hymn and I breathe, breathe. When I'm in a zone and feeling my body start to tremble Rharha claps her hands together. "Now you're good to go. When you go on that date do something fun. Maybe role play, make your sexual life more fun"

"Role play?"

"You can pretend like you've never met him before and you are meeting for the first time"

"Is this how you got pregnant?"

"Don't ask me stupid questions Nomzamo"

“As we collide to another planet”

I clasp my hands against the fabric that I am wearing with my other hand tapping against my thigh trying to take enough oxygen into my lungs with everything moving in the same tempo—the long lashes glued onto my eyelids, the new manicure on my hands. Can you believe those braids I did few days ago have been taken off? And the reason was that I had to look like a different person. I cannot breathe. I don't know why I am diving and drowning in a pool of trepidation as a driver moves swiftly on the road with his fingers drumming against the steering wheel. “We are here” he announces the moment the car stops moving and I flutter my eyes closed praying underneath my breath before the door opens he stands extending his hand with an amiable smile on his face and I glance at him once then my feet painted in white touches the ground when the warm breeze dances over my shoulders showing my white stones behind the glossy lips. “We can go this way” he has such impeccable mannerism and I follow right behind him with my eyes wandering around the beautiful garden with a unique landscape and the sound of my shoes matches my heart beat, at every step that I take lanterns lighten up and then it becomes dark and brighten up again at

my new steps, I am mind blown already and wondering what this man has planned. I hold onto my purse with sweaty palms when we come across a mirror that somehow looks like a wall and I catch a glimpse of a goddess that I have transformed into with a pixie cut hair style and the ocean blue dress with an open back, snuggling around my waist and the fabric I am clad in makes it lucid that I have no underwear underneath. My face is painted in neutral colors, almost natural with my cheeks shimmering with color gold. I look like a different person yet still mesmerizingly enchanting or even more.

I can now see the tall frame standing from the distance catching a glimpse at the silver watch on his wrists with eyes furrowed. I decide to calm myself down. I swallow the denim stuck on my throat and confidently walking with my legs propelling me towards him and now sashaying my hips left and right.

Until I can now clearly see him in a designer jacket with close fitting trousers that enhances his height, narrow hips, long and perfect legs. . .I want to start babbling about the perfection of his thighs behind these pants. He looks absolutely gorgeous and resembling all temptations any woman could hope he wouldn't be, he's really a fantasy. And it's not a surprise that he have a flair for selecting stylish and flawlessly tailored. The crispy black suit is a perfect fit and I think I am not breathing. I keep

reminding myself that I am in control but I am not. Maybe it's how his head is now freshly bald or the earrings in his ears. "Mr Mthabela nice to finally meet you" Oh my he's so fine and I am dragging my very own wet vagina on the floor as he frowns at first not understanding what is going on surely as I extend my hand for him with a gold bracelet. I am praying and hoping that he doesn't think I have lost my marbles and starts laughing causing my own laughter to elicit and I completely forget all about this role play. "Miss Mbatha" I quickly say waiting for him to shake my hand and he shows me his crispy white stones as he smiles. My god he is a charmer. He's refined, almost feline-like.

"I wasn't expecting you Miss Mbatha but expected my woman. Not that I am complaining that she sent you here" his tongue rolls out the beautiful melodic diarrhea and the breath I have been holding on comes out followed by a smile as he kisses the back of my hand instead of a handshake but making sure that his eyes are fixated on me. They move from my toes all the way to my new hairstyle and he looks like a man whom cannot believe that he's talking to a burning tree. "You look sublime tonight Miss Mbatha" As he touches my hand I am aware of the delicious current searing through me.

"I don't think your woman would be pleased to hear you complimenting another woman Mr Mthabela"



“I’m sure she wouldn’t mind, she sent you here for a reason didn’t she?” And now he creases his eyebrow at me smelling like a sheer of power “Shall we?” I nod my head slightly as he places his hand around my waist as though he’s marking his territory. The rhythm of our feet feels like we have practiced our footsteps. Regardless of wearing these high heel shoes, he still manages to be a giant. A powerful one. I look up at him studying his lusciously high cheekbone and that smirk plastered on his face then he glances at me. Our eyes interlock and my breathing hitches. “Everything okay Miss Mbatha?” he puts emphasize at the last words and I clear my throat with my head moving up and then down in agreement. “Did I mention that you’re all round God like?” his smile is dazzling, all teeth showing.

“You did mention I am just not sure that your woman would appreciate it”

“It’s an innocent compliment Miss Mbatha” this time he shows me that perfect smile yet again we walk in a room where there’s music playing softly illuminated by the scented candles and he pulls out a chair for me to sit on a table with fresh white roses in a glass vase and there’s a chandelier hanging over our heads then he pushes me forward and then he goes to sit opposite me taking off his blazer and hanging it behind his chair. There’s an easy, casual grace to his every move. His

gesture is so fluid it is hypnotizing. “I hope sweet white is fine?” Already he’s pouring the translucent liquid in glasses making eye contact with me causing all sensations that doesn’t feel so foreign but intoxicating to travel through me as I nod my head before he hands me a glass and I take a sip quickly needing to smoothen my throat. “Now I would really appreciate it if you can tell me more about yourself Miss Mbatha”

“What’s this an interview?” I chuckle at him and a smile etches on his face as he rolls the sleeves of his shirt and leaning backwards. Totally in control as I watch his hands making movements and the veins in his hands and arms. “I don’t know that question always makes me nervous” I confess with my truth refined.

“Can I ask why?”

I shrug nonchalantly and also leaning back to cross my legs under the table. This is what I wanted. Us—Just us. I would’ve loved to have him sitting here next to me rather than opposite me. “I don’t know it gives me anxiety because I don’t know anything about myself. I mean what can I tell you? That I am Nomzamo Mbatha and blah blah blah” I shake my head. I’ve never seen him that tranquil before even his shoulders and the muscles around his face “How about you tell me more about yourself?”

“What do you want to know?” Oh he’s oozing with nothing but confident as he takes sips from his glass and places it on the table. Did I mention that his eyes are fixated on me. I am looking everywhere but him. My heart is composing a sweet melody. “Look at me Miss Mbatha. I’d love to to see your face” I gather my confidence after tailor making it for this moment as our eyes meet yet again. Those glossy ones with all shades of brown are snatching my soul. “You’re absolutely beautiful” I hear yet another compliment from him and I smile with my heart shaped lips and bringing closer my glass to take a sip.

“Your music what inspires you?”

“Normally it just experiences that I am going through at that time and well sometimes I tell someone’s story through music. I create to heal and for people to relate. It could be harmonies without words as long as they understand the art behind that or the story behind that, for me that what matters. Sometimes music doesn’t need words but it has to control you and you should allow it to do so” I listen to him attentively mind blown

“Now can I ask a question Miss Mbatha?”

“I’d appreciate it if you can call me Nana rather” I say smoothly and a smirk dances around his lips. “That one sounds better”

“Nana” It sounds like the very first time I heard him saying it and everything in me starts to chant all sexual mantras that ever existed. “Do you have any more siblings?”

“Not that I know of but I have a sister Rharha and then my brother passed away years ago” I realize that this is the first time I am talking about him after his passing and I haven’t shattered. I don’t have tears wanting to explode.

“Would you like something to eat?”

“I’m starving” I chuckle and he calls the waiter who appears from nowhere making an order and he then disappears moment later

leaving behind comfortable silence looming between us and he takes his glass from the table just to hold it in his hand.

“Your brother what happened to him?”

“Ahem we found him dead on the floor after he was shot. We don’t really know what happened to him so we assumed that it might’ve been the drug business he was in. . .” I pause and then breathe “I kind of blame my father for his death and I think that’s also another reason our relationship is the way it is” It feels much easier being able to talk to him like this. Doing this role play like total strangers whom have a powerful chemistry between them that keeps wheezing in the air.

“Hmm” I don’t understand that murmur “Why do you blame him?”

“I feel my brother wouldn’t have become that version of himself if it wasn’t for my father and maybe I would’ve been a

better version of myself if I grew up having choices to know who I am and what I am rather than being told who I was” I don’t know who is talking between me and my subconsciousness because she’s always this raw and unraveled. Never too reluctant. I gain furrowed eyebrows from him as he’s processing each and every word I’ve said to him. Every time before he speaks, he thinks deeply about each vowel before they come out of his mouth “I don’t know but it has been hard to be his daughter and just forgive him”

“You cannot forgive someone who hasn’t asked to be forgiven or even showed remorse for that matter about their actions” Attentively he’s watching me with solemn dancing on his face “Who you wanted to become? And what you wanted to become?” That’s question—hmm. I shrug my shoulders looking at every shelves of my thoughts to find words and vowels that could sound perfect.

“Honestly I don’t know” I cannot believe that came out of my mouth nor can I believe how I’ve been truthfully since the beginning of this conversation “And I’m being genuine. I mean couple of weeks I thought I had myself figured out, going back to school but I realized that I wasn’t doing it for myself but to prove to people that I’m not a failure but not myself. I don’t really think studying what I wanted to study is what I really want to become but it’s something I wanted to do because my

mother was doing it. I don't really know who is Nomzamo" I pause "Do you think I'm weird?" I ask him narrowing my eyes.

"I think you're beautiful" all the seeds he has planted inside me grows into a garden of tulips and their colors painted on my face as I place my hand against my cheek batting my eyelashes when the waiter interrupts us by placing our food on the table and the smell is so divine, mouth-watering and I get to gaze at all his movements from how he holds his cutlery, how he's slicing his meat and the way he brings the fork close to his mouth. Oh the way he's chewing and swallowing.

This man is actually fine. What time are we having sex?—my subconsciousness can hardly reduce her high libido already wearing a lingerie and pushing up her breasts.

"When you were young what you wanted to be?"

"A security so I can sleep outside" Oh please don't judge me or even give me that look beside I still think and believe that those people are brave and they're heroes. He puts his cutlery down and erupts with laughter throwing his head back—that's such a beautiful sound. I can make him genuinely laugh, effortlessly from the depth of his bellybutton. "I mean the reasons are stupid but. . ."

"You just wanted to sleep outside? Aww thingo lwami" Now he's catching his breath and I savor in this delighting sight of

him. Aww man he's beautiful. A man amongst men. "But rather than being a security what else you wanted to become?" Now the solemnity is back in a nanosecond.

"I really love art. I think at some point I really thought I would've been a great artist, a sculptor actually and just appreciate the beauty of women and being artsy about it. I think that was really my passion but I had to dig a grave and just bury it"

"We can dig that grave and save it"

I glance at my meal and then him. The plural once again. It makes everything sounds, like a beautiful jazzy song. "I'd love that" I smile at him.

"Do you want to know what I would love Miss Mbatha?" My, my, my the sultry tone makes my humming bean dances. Or maybe it's the wine that's already traveling through my system and shooting through my bloodstream. "I'd love to have you sitting here next to me and not so far" He can remind my mind?

No he can read me and he can read me all night long. What time are we having sex?—Again my subconscious asks and tapping her foot on the floor.

I bring my chair closer to him and now we are right next to each other and he's no longer eating but looking at me as I chew, leaning closer he kisses my sheer shoulder and moving his

fingers there up and down. We make an intense eye contact once before we finish with the starters and the waiter returns taking our plates and disappearing. As we move to the main course we've shared a gales of laughter and I've received kisses on my shoulders and patterns been drawn in my arms until I cross my legs teasing him and he catches a glimpse of ntombazana, perfectly waxed and wet with all the flavored juices that he evoked and he swallows placing his hand on my thigh. The feel of his hand against my thigh and the fabric of my dress causes a strange yet powerful fraction. "Miss Mbatha I am very loyal to my woman"

"I'm pleased to hear that but a man can get tempted Mr Mthabela" I turn my body to him opening and closing my legs causing a groan to reverberate from his throat "I'm not the type to kiss and tell" I smirk playfully.

Aww my you're doing well—my subconscious takes off the lingerie she's wearing to jump up and down with her breasts hitting her face and following the rhythm. Okayy they're not hitting her face, I'm exaggerating.

"Oh really?" And this time his hand is in between my legs crawling to my grape fruit that's screaming for him.

"Really" I say breathlessly as he spreads my legs further apart and I feel him cupping my sex and his eyes interlocked with mines my breathing becomes erratic and he drags my chair



closer to him. I wonder where are those people who've been serving us and the ones who've been playing violins smoothly.

"Mr Mthabela. . ." I cannot find my voice "Not here"

"We could be anywhere Miss Mbatha and I will still find ways to make you feel good"

"I do"

"What?"

"Feel good already" My stomach tugs in anticipation.

"That was early because I still have to make love to you" I am already shamelessly horny and imagining the positions we will be doing. All slick and sultry and he just trail his finger succulently down once and removes it to suck his finger.

"Ntombazana is elated tonight isn't she?" Oh yes, yes.

"Is that your girlfriend's name?"

"We should go" I hear an announcement rolling out of his mouth after a chuckle. I clear my throat as he takes my hand pulling me up and placing his blazer over my shoulders and our hands intertwine. I can feel the turbulent thrills searing through me as our footsteps matches the sound of my heart beat—we are collided. I thought we were leaving but we are actually entering an elevator. I don't know what and where is this place but I watched his long delicate fingers summoning the elevator and we scrambled in "Are you okay?" He doesn't ever forget to

ask me. I think it's how he navigate my thoughts. "The date was it perfect?" Oh yes. I was focused on him and completely forgotten to mention the beauty of that monumental with vintage architecture building and very artsy with sculptures, we are still at the same building. Our table was at the center and the room was surrounded by candlelight and chandelier on top of our heads and those men whom were beautifully playing violin as we sat opposite each other and gazing at the beauty of his face.

"It was magnificent. I may have forgotten to mention that you're a wonderful distraction"

"Is that a compliment?" A flirtatious smile escapes his and as I nod the elevator pings. I cannot breathe now.

We are about to scream huh?—my ebullient subconscious asks.

I wait for him to unlock the door but before he can wrench it open he pulls me by waist and look down at me. "Can I fuck you tonight after making love to you? Can I give you a mind blowing fuck thingo lwami. I just need your permission"

"It's a night full of surprises Mthabela now open this door"

26

“The six regions of the body

The five states

They all have left and gone

Totally erased

And in an open

Void. . .

I am left amazed

The unobtainable bliss

Has engulfed me”

We stand in the middle of the room surrounded by scented candles and his proximity is so intoxicating including his cologne swirling through my chest, our eyes interlocked including our breathing moving in same tempo. Our chest rising and falling without any words rolling out of our tongues. I can feel the erotica sensations wanting to explode within my solar plexus needing him to touch me but he doesn't, he finds joy in seeing my breathing becoming short and shallow and my collarbone now visible then his lips spread into a capitulate smirk. I cannot stand and my knees are feeling like gelatine. I cannot speak

because my voice is lodged on my throat. I cannot breathe because I cannot get enough oxygen into my lungs. “Nana. . .” I flutter my eyes closed hearing his voice resonating through me, fearing I might feel the liquidity of my juices falling in between my legs before he can even touch me or even do anything to me. Just him looking at me like I am the most beautiful goddess he has set his eyes upon makes my mind run a riot. I swallow my saliva. “Look into my eyes and tell me what you said before I opened the door” his voice is oozing nothing but sex. If you could visualize, it would’ve looked like white roses dipped in honey. “Look at me” I find my confident and slowly look up at him, dominating. The smile that was there is no longer there but it has been replaced but the most sensual facial expression and brown eyes now darkened with lust “I am waiting Miss Mbatha” this reawakens my subconscious and she’s in a same position as me. Not breathing and taken by this man standing in front of us with his neck moist. The silence is overpowering me alongside his energy and aura.

Remember tonight you’re Solela and you’re the most beautiful sensual goddess, now confidently respond to him. I am here to guide you—my subconscious whispers and then pat my shoulder.

“I said it’s a night full of surprises Mr Mthabela” I finally found my voice, I sound poised compared to my weakened body.

“Hmm. Are you granting me permission to fuck you?” he creases his eyebrow “Hard” I watch the movement of his lips and almost gasped at that last word blinking up at him. “Miss Mbatha” Again he calls me.

“Hmmm” I murmur

“Hard?”

“Yes” I respond boldly and that was not a response he expected from me since he seems taken aback by that and then smiles.

“And I want the song playing Mr Mthabela”

“Your wish is my command”

I remain here with my feet planted on this cream carpet and looking around the room with the other side of the wall made of just a mirror and behind the headboard there’s also another mirror covering the entire wall. The entire room is painted in color white resembling serenity of my own aura and the candlelight resembles him—he’s the fire force. I watch all his movements as he takes off his shoes and neatly placed them in a corner of the room and then the white crispy socks, his toes showing at the hem of his black pants causing my saliva to drool at the beauty of them then he gets up and glances at me with a smile “Don’t move there Miss Mbatha” If only you knew. I don’t need instructions because already I am just a statuette that you’ve sculptured with your own hands. My throat keeps

moving up and down, gulping and gulping while watching him rolling up the sleeves of his shirt to see the veins on his arms come alive. "You're beautiful" Again he tells me. Not touching me. Not standing close to me. It feels like torture. "The things I am planning on doing to you Miss Mbatha"

"Is that a promise?" I ask after he has turned striding to the corner of the room where there's a vinyl. Oh man it makes everything rather too sensual for me. He glimpse at me upon my question instead of getting a response, I get a smirk rather before he turns yet again and in a nanosecond that music enlivens. Every piece of instrumental that was layered reverberates my body and moves like waves into my bloodstream causing every part of me to hum along to it has it take control over my body, my thoughts and intoxicate me. I am rouse at the sound of his lazy and sultry harmonies. No words are used but it's just entralling sounds that blends so perfectly together like how our breathes and energies collided in his office has he was composing. I am watching him pouring himself a short glass of cognac. . .and well the two bottles of wine that we drank has made itself comfortable in my own system.

After a groan that he makes has it take one long gulp of his drink, I can feel the flood in between my legs and slowly I take off the satin fabric that has been covering my nakedness, my

dress and it falls into the crease between my legs and my nipples perk for attention. When he swiftly turn around he's met by my denuded body and my waxed and humming ntombazana filled with elation staring and blinking at him. My chest rising and falling at each breath that I take. My eyes filled with tears I cannot understand where are they coming from. Jesus Christ. The way he's looking at me will make me waterfall before I can reach my orgasm. A trailing blaze start from my feet all the way to my face, with passion and adoration in those eyes. He remains standing just rigid and drinking in the sight of me in front of him. I move my hand to touch my own grapefruit "Don't dare touch ntombazana Nomzamo!" I pause hearing how stern is his voice and my body trembles "Don't touch what's mines!" I see him clenching the chiseled jawline and the slow steps he's taking towards me causes my breathing to accelerate until he's standing in front of me and he turns me around to face towards the mirror and I can see my own reflection. Hot and flushed. "Can you see how beautiful you are?"

"If you don't touch me now I'll be forced to touch myself" I say breathlessly.

"And you think I'm going to let you touch yourself?" I can see him through the mirror standing tall behind me and his eyebrow creased to perfection. Then he goes down on his

knees and helping me taking off my shoes but also making sure that there's no physical contact. My body is burning with sensations I thought I knew but they feel new and delicious.

"Nana" Oh fuck! Something watery just moves down in between my legs when his hands grips into my thighs and his finger digits digging into my skin. My body trembles and a loud gasp escape my mouth. "Look at yourself in that mirror" He's no longer touching me. I flutter my eyes opened since I've closed them to look at myself in the mirror and his hands separates my thighs, upon feeling his warmth again waterfalls explode and I gasp again this time seeing myself in that mirror with my mouth opened and eyes filled with tears, my chest heaving. I don't know if it's the sound of his sensual harmonies wheezing in the air alongside the exotic instruments or him delicately touching me but I am coming at just a mere physical contact. "What are you doing to me Nomzamo?" I should be asking him that. Not the other way around. "Your eyes keep them opened"

"I can't keep them open"

"Try for me thingo lwami"

Then he gets up and starts kissing my shoulders and I just look at him on the mirror if I dare blink my tears will fall. When he starts kissing my back, I blink and two drops involuntarily come out of my eyes. I breathe feeling the warmth of his lips moving



down my spinal cord, licking and sucking as though he's memorizing the very taste of me until he's yet again on his knees and he slides his hands over my buttocks and grips my luscious cheeks tight and then bite them gently "Oh my fucking God!" I moan and gasp "Mthabela. . .I need to breathe" I cannot breathe. Again his fingers dig into my buttocks and then another bite elicit another moan from me "Ah!" I throw my head back and closing my eyes and he pauses.

"Nana open your eyes"

"I can't. . .I can't"

"Try" I count internally from three to one and then open them to see the artsy of our bodies in the mirror. Him kneeling and glorifying my body. And I am standing with tears on my face and also my grapefruit crying from the amount of pleasure my entire body is feeling. Abruptly he turns me around and he stands on his feet looking down at me and wiping my tears with his thumbs "Do you have any idea what you make me feel?"

"I do" I admit

And then he cups my face into his hands engulfing me when our lips capture one another I taste the saltiness of my tears and cognac taste in his lips. It's a butterfly delicate kiss and my hands encircles around his neck as his tongue invade my mouth "I'm in love with you Nomzamo Mbatha" he says in between

the kissing and lifting me up with my buttocks. My legs are around his waist as he strides towards the bed and gently placing me there yet our tongues are still synchronized. "I'm in love with you and I am afraid what will happen if ever you chose to leave me" his breath fans my face and he looks down at me darting his eyes between mines. The soft music playing at the background surprisingly has all these emotions wheezing in the air. Our fears, the passion, lust and love everything is laced in those harmonies. "I love you thingo lwami lwenkosazana" Oh my, my whenever he calls me his rainbows everything in me responds and submit to him.

"I love you too dali"

"Now let me make love to you"

"Please"

I look at the perfect portrait kneeling in front of me with my legs spread open and seeing his reflection in the mirror with all the muscles on his back so perfect and he looks down at me as though what's in between my legs is exquisitely divine and then he smirks like he has found a diamond in crystalline water. I feel him inhaling my scent in his lungs as if he's enthralled by the smell of my sex, then his mouth crashes into mines and then again seeing him in that mirror with his head deep in between my legs intoxicate me and his lips covers my grapefruit - fully and possessively and he tastes me, devouring me as he tastes,

licks and sucks as I whimper in sexual longing. He gorge on me, everything about me and his tongue scrap over my now rosy bud, running around my hole, rimming me

all while drinking the sweet essence that is abundantly dripping from my drenched core and my hands are on his head pushing him deep within me and arching my back to meet him half way with my finger digits digging on his bald head every time when he sucks. He looks up, pausing and instantly my eyes open “Is she mines and only mines?” Oh no, he cannot be asking me that when I am about to explode at just one more hard suck. My chest heaves “Nana, tell me now that ntombazana is mines” “Muzi please” I plead.

“I am listening” I open my mouth to respond and his finger presses against my rosy and swollen bud causing my back to arch and she breathes on her own. I gasp. “Is she mines?”

“Yes. Yes. Mthabela she’s yours” my cries and whimper are like erotic backings alongside the music playing and they’re heightening the flow of intimacy between us and now his tongue lap my grapefruit like he’s about to reach the end line of marathon with his hands engulfing my thighs and I can hardly close them together and now my cries of pleasure intensify as he parts my legs wider to explore the hidden parts of my grapefruit, leaving no portion unexplored. “Mthabela she’s yours. All yours. Ah” while licking my jelly bean he inserts his

digit inside my drenched core and my inner walls wrapped him around and emotions flood through my chest as he's worshipping my grapefruit in a most carnal way.

He keeps licking my jelly bean and tickling the throbbing mesh of my very sensitive tissue making me moan louder, not just a moan but a shout louder in ecstasy. I am getting up from the bed and crashing back to the mattress responding to him wantonly. His digits moves in and out, finger fucking me, slowly at first until gradually increasing the rhythm as he continues to carnally glorifying what belongs to him and I'm digging on his head hard, crying as if delirium and my whimpers notch a few octaves. My breathing is harsh and labored. My hips are twisting on the mattress but he's holding me in place with one hand. "Oh my God! Oh my fucking God!" I shout in delirium. I am reaching the summit ecstasy and I try pushing him away but he doesn't budge and I am sure he can feel pain in his scalp as his digits fuck me as hard as he ever did. "Mthabela!"

"Hmmm" As he responds a loud guttural

sound comes out of my throat and my body jerks and in a nanosecond I break into waves of violent spasms. I can see a smile on his face after filling his mouth with my own juices with my orgasm so intense. And my body continues to shudder in ecstasy, he continues to lick me until I lay limp and chasing my rugged breathes. There's a glint of victory in his eyes when he

raise his head and levelling our faces with my mouth opened and with an afterglow of orgasmic sensations. I have succumbed. "Sawubona thingo lwami" he looks down at me and then stuffing his lips over my parted mouth, kissing me long and hard, I kiss him back with equal intensity, that consumes the both of us. Our lips and tongue dueled in a passionate kiss, in a sensual fight that leaves both of us longing for more before he pulls away and smiles at me.

"Sawubona dali" I say breathlessly.

"Unjani (how are you?)"

"I need you inside me"

"I need to be inside you thingo lwami" he straddles my legs with his hand and parting my thighs wide apart, opening me to him and he draws in a sharp breath, breathing in my mouth after he has taken off his clothes.

As we kiss torridly, he thrusts into me and digging his phallus in my slick opening, impatient for our bodies to collide and I flinch. He cusses in my mouth and still kissing me and determined he holds my hips in place and securing me in place and thrusting succulently and the hard. "Thingo lwami" a soft groan comes out of his mouth after wincing and his phallus sear through my core, digging hard and stretching me, taking me fully. Another swift move and he slips inside me like a breached

barrier and now going as deep as he could. And groans hard snuggled deep inside me. Panting and tearing his mouth away from mine and gasping to breathe “Nkosi yami ngiyabonga” he thanks his God. For what? For this sex?

Sinking my teeth into my bottom lip I close my eye savouring the intense heat that curls in the pit of my belly as he changes the pace, the rhythm of his hips so succulently and his mouth lick my erected nipple adding on to the foreign sensation reeling through my body and he starts moving much harder than before and he’s looking down into my eyes, I study the intensity of his eyes and muscles around his face, he’s speeding up the pace and pumping inside me. “Don’t ever leave me Nomzamo” lust is clouding his eyes and sends hot liquid to run through my legs “Thingo lwami don’t ever leave me. . .the day you leave me it will be the end of me. Nana please don’t leave me” my inner walls clench around him.

This is the time Solela, this is the time—my subconscious whispers in my ear.

I ignore her unable to gather my confident but also I cannot do it now. Not when I am being taken to nirvana once again and his lips brush against the raw spot on my neck and I bury my face at the crook of his neck as he’s now moving on a faster pace. Hard and Fast. And an animalistic groan escapes his mouth and the sound of my heart is pounding in my ears over

shadowing the heavy pants passing between us and my stomach clench in anticipation and the pleasure between my legs builds up on itself once again, getting higher and more intense. “Don’t stop Mthabela!” I gulp moistening my parched throat and then abruptly I switch positions unaware where that braveness came from, I look down at him with him still inside me and gathering my strength. I can see the shock in his eyes as he massages my waist.

“Nana. . .” he’s breathlessly “Nomzamo” He cannot believe this.

“It’s a night full of surprises Mthabela” I smirk.

Listen first close your eyes and start moving and the moment you’re in the zone look into his eyes and fuck him—my subconscious instructs and pounding herself with a dildo with butterfly nipple clamps on.

I flutter my eyes closed and take a deep breath before moving my hips alongside to the sound of the music following the rhythm and tempo, inhaling slowly in and exhaling out. I sashay my hips on top of his phallus and he’s holding onto my waist “Jesus Christ Nomzamo Mbatha!” I hear him groaning. Oh my. I am doing it right and not moving with my shoulders. A spank against my buttocks sends another sensation causing me to open my eyes and already in the zone. I balance my hands on his chest looking down at him and my breast on his hands. I move up and down, spelling all the letters of the word coconut.

“Tell me all your heart desires and I will give them to you Nomzamo. . .Nana. . .Don’t stop thingo lwami” I’m not planning on doing so. I am impressed with myself and seeing that look on his face. He’s thrusting from beneath me making me lose all control. “You wants kids? I am going to give them to you. . .All seven of them. . .Haibo Nomzamo” he says when I start moving faster and now balancing my hand behind his knee and his hand on my breasts as they move up and down. “Jesu Kristu” I hear him groaning.

My body tenses as the pleasure pull in together in one unbearable bubble and as quick as it came together shattering my body within fiery explosion and I scream his name. Again he switches position and now he’s no longer making love to me but fucking me senselessly with my hands held on top of my head, “I have names for all seven of them” I did him right didn’t I? Now he has names for our children.

Just two thrusts I explode with tears.



“And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods. Make heaven drowsy with harmony”

I look over the land so vast and ocean so serene and the waves moving in a same tempo when I look at the sky the full moon looks so magnificent alongside the bright stars shimmering and the breeze like soft hands brushing hair out of my eyes and dandelion seeds float through the moon-bathed sky light as feathers and the soft earth below my feet is humble and grounding brook beside me sing its sweet tune of water rushing through the rock and moonlight grazes my shoulders when I see someone standing from the distance and clad in all white with their natural hair looking like candy floss and so neat before I start to float more like flying as though there’s no gravity around me. I cannot speak. My voice is lodged on my throat and everything seems like esoteric art.

I forcefully flutter my eyes opened upon hearing the sound of my alarm annoyingly singing and I am sleeping on the floor in my bedroom covered in sheen of water. I am greedily gulping for air—that was a strange dream and I’ve been vividly having them for the past years.

Well sometimes I dream of paralyzed people or maybe praying for people.

I look around the room trying to find candles, this is the time where he prays and for some bizarre reasons I am feeling this need to shout from the depth of my solar plexus and my tears are just prickling at the corners of my eyes for absolutely no reason. Yes, yes, yes, I find the scented candles in the bathroom with my hands trembling and lightening them up making my way to the bedroom and I kneel down, I don't know how to pray, the only time I've done this was when I was with that man whom promised me all my heart desires and has name for all our seven children apparently.

I flutter my eyes closed and what happens next I am not even aware of it or where is it coming from it's a guttural sob and words just keep rolling out of my mouth involuntarily "Sibonge ophezulu, sibonge ongaphansi (we thank the higher power and we thank our ancestors)" I keep clapping my hands together in a double tap and traveling in an outer space of spiritual realm. I feel as though I am surrounded by celestial beings and that's when my feet propel me around the house praying and clapping my hands together with tears at the valley of my cheeks. I am screaming, shouting

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shivering and then finally a sense of tranquility wraps me around with warm arms and I remain here kneeling and just sniffing. I am still trying to make sense with how on earth did I manage to pray like that when I hear movements around the room. “Nomzamo! Nomzamo!” that’s my mother wearing a red lace night wear and she immediately tighten her robe around her waist then she comes and kneel in front of me “Nomzamo what happened? Are you okay? What’s going on they’re candles burning in your room and you were praying and walking around the house?” Me? I was doing that, I remember but I am just as surprised.

I seriously think you’re losing your marbles again. Remember when you were ten you’d sleep walk and sometimes end up sleeping on the floor in the corner of the house? After your brother died you’d sleep on that spot where you found him. But what if your going crazy though? Does that means I’m also crazy?—my subconscious starts running around the house naked and holding her head really believing that I am a lunatic.

“I am fine” I attempt on assuring myself and my mother is not acknowledging my lie either as she glances towards her husband who’s standing not so far and attentively looking at me.

“Ma she’s not okay, this must be ancestral or something but since we were young Nomzamo would pray even in her dreams.

. .” I diabolically just glare at her. What would happen if I tell her parents right here and now that she’s pregnant? What would happen because this was between me, her and our brother. Only they know about this and no one else, “or it might not be that deep but she just wanted to pray” she shrugs her shoulders nonchalantly and I turn to look at my mother who has her hands on my face.

“Nomzamo talk to us in the early hours of the morning you’re praying and screaming” Now that’s my father and as I attempt to get up I almost stumble and fall with my legs feeling like gelatin or maybe vibrating empty vessels “Nomzamo!” my father exclaims as he comes taking my hand and manoeuvring me on the couch and everyone else gather here. All of this because I was praying? Am I not supposed to pray? I shouldn’t have a relationship with God because they don’t have one? “MaMbatha talk to us what’s wrong?” I also don’t know. What are they expecting me to say that I just saw someone in my dream and I was flying and then felt a need to pray?

Tell them you’re losing your marbles, I am starting to think that my subconsciousness belongs to Rharha and not me.

“I need to talk to Mthabela. . .I mean Muzi” I know he wouldn’t dare think I am eccentric but rather he’d know what to say and interpret my dreams. Isn’t he a spiritual person? Besides having names for our children he must tell me what these dreams

means. Of course this has been going on before we even met but. . .I just want to be in his arms and see him.

“Mbatha can we call her boyfriend maybe he might help us? I don’t know maybe she can talk to him and not us” my mother suggests and you can tell my father is totally against that suggestion because he just narrowed his eyebrows “Babazi we need him to understand what’s going on” she says with a placid tone and my father glances at me with melancholy in his eyes surely thinking that I was once his princess who’d run into his arms and tell him everything even about the disturbing dreams and disturbing esoteric paintings that were inspired by my dreams that he’d shove in the bin. . .and now he cannot recognize his daughter with red rimmed eyes and a scarf draped around my shoulders.

“I’m going to call him to come here” I hear his voice saying and I look at him, he’s not so egotistic and too much of a traditionalist then he perks up the couch and leaving deafening silence in the room as my mother turns to me inhaling sharply.

I am standing in front of the mirror after braiding my natural hair into cornrows when my phone start to echo ringing in my room and his name flashes on my screen. “Nana” Oh my when his voice resonant me all the heaviness that has been expanding on my chest runs away and hide somewhere maybe in my lungs “What’s wrong? Your father called me telling me

you're not okay. Did I do something? What's wrong thingo lwami. I am outside but I cannot come in"

"Why you cannot come in Mthabela?"

"That's a sign of disrespect. I am not your husband as yet and haven't sent the cows either so I cannot come in. Tell me what's wrong talk me? Are you going to come outside"

"My father called you here Mthabela not me you need to come in" Oh now he won't say anything won't he? "Muziwenkosi" I call him after I haven't got a response.

"I'm going to ask my brother to come here before I can come in. Ngiyakuthanda Nomzamo Mbatha"

"You didn't do anything wrong if that's what you're thinking Mthabela"

"I'm just. . .Does your father disapprove of our relationship? Because I'd die showing him how much I am worthy of you"

"It has nothing to do with that. I need you Mthabela"

"Let me call my brother then. Ngiyakuthanda" Again he reminds me that he loves me and I stride to peek through the window only to see his car outside.

"I love you"

I return to the living room where my father is alongside her wife and that one who's hiding her pregnancy who's just holding on to the glass of juice and not drinking from it. Is it the morning sickness? I take a sit right next and she glances at me communicating with our eyes because there's something inside her mouth. "Rharha didn't you say you needed something in my room?" I crease my eyebrow at her and I don't even get a response from her because she just briskly walk out. Oh that man said he'll give me all my heart desires so he might as well get us a place to stay because my sister is not leaving without me. "Baba uMthabela. . .I mean uMuziwenkosi is outside but afraid to come in so he's waiting for his brother" I just get a nod from him as a response and then in nanosecond there's a knock coming from outside and my mother is the one who gets up to get it before we hear an exchanging of voices and chuckling. My father fixes himself on the couch before my mother appears with a smile on her face and followed by three men including mine who seems so uncomfortable with being here until our eyes meet and I covertly smile at him. He's with Menzi and Melusi. Heh now it suddenly feels like we've done some shenanigans when all of this drama is because I was just praying. I wanted to talk to my man and not his brothers and my parents—I doubt Rharha will come back here honestly.

They greet and shaking hands with exchanging of laughter and chuckles before they make themselves comfortable on the

couch. I keep stealing glances towards him and he remains impassive but those eyes don't ever lie to me, they always all have these emotions he conceals on his face. "Nomzamo tell us what wrong" My father says and I eyeball him with my eyes out of their volition. Did I say I want to speak to the whole Mthabela clan? Or just the one who is going to give me seven children? He's the one who has lost his marbles actually.

"What has happened?" Menzi

"We found her in the early hours of the morning praying and screaming. With burning candles in her room"

"Is something wrong with her praying?" From now onwards he's my favorite brother in law. Hmm my father who doesn't love being questioned is not so pleased about that question "I don't mean to be disrespectful Baba Mbatha"

"It's the condition we found her in. I have no problem with my daughter praying"

"Okay. Is MaMbatha comfortable talking about this with all of us here? I don't remember her being asked this. Because this might be personal and there was a reason behind her wanting to talk to Muziwenkosi about this"

"I'm not comfortable" I quickly say before my father can even say anything. It's normally his way or highway but he's not



getting away with it—shame. I glance to see him balling his first  
“I wanted to talk to Mthabela alone”

“Which one?” That’s Melusi being comical.

“If Baba Mbatha doesn’t mind can we talk outside with  
Nomzamo? I promise I won’t do anything to her”

Unamanga Baba Mbatha!—my subconscious screams that he’s  
lying. They’re capable of having sex outside.

“No problem at all”

The moment we step outside the gate he pulls me into him and  
pinning me against his car with his hands on my waist and  
looking down at me. “You promised my father you wouldn’t do  
anything to me” I say in a whispery tone with my breath short  
and shallow, my tongue not producing enough saliva.

“I’m not doing anything to you”

“You are. You always do something to me” I breathe “Even  
when you’re not around” Hmm this man still manages to make  
me spill the beans without doing literally nothing.

“Do you want us to take a walk so we can talk?”

“Hmmm”

Our fingers are intertwined as walk together with the same  
rhythm “I have been having strange dreams” I tell him.

“I know” I gape and pause walking to look at him. How on earth does he know? Is he a seer? “I’ve heard you talking in some of your dreams” Oh Oh I still talk? I thought that ended when I was young. “What do you dream about?”

“Rainbows and sometimes moon and stars and even the sun that’s just a starter. I always dream about water or even praying. It’s gets worse when I dream about about paralyzed people or maybe white people. It’s so bizarre”

Why he doesn’t seem prostrated? Or maybe thinks I am losing my marbles but instead he’s attentively listening to me and holding my hand tightly “Do you think I am maybe crazy? I mean I’d paint these esoteric pictures because some of them appeared in my dreams. I think ngiyahlanya mina Mthabela you should hear and see my thoughts” I tell him that I think I am unhinged and he looks at me showing all those white stones and then slightly laugh with his shoulders moving up and down. “Oh you think I’m crazy?”

“About me of course”

“Are you sure about that?” I crease my eyebrow and smile.

“Haibo!” those five vowels escaping his mouth makes me reminisce about my freshly stored memory that has been kept in safe place in a special shelf of my brain. And since that day, it has been revisiting me randomly with a ravishing smile

plastered on her face reawakening all those delicious sensations he made me feel. “You’re not crazy but unesthunywa. Which means messenger. You’re messenger and a mediator between physical reality and the spiritual reality. Isthunywa is a term used to refer an umbrella of spirits”

“What does that mean? Am I going to be a sangoma or something?”

“No. It’s nothing like that but you need to be spiritual aligned for your ancestors to talk through you. I have same dreams too. I believe all of us have isthunywa”

“Wait you also have this thing? Does that mean it’s contagious?”

He laughs, this is not funny!

“Being a couple is hard.

And committing, making sacrifices, it's hard. But if it's the right person, it's easy.

Looking at that girl, knowing she is all you really want out of life, that should be the easiest thing in the world.

And if it's not like that, then she's not the one”

I found out this is not contagious but it's actually spiritual and he fed me knowledge and enlightened me as we walk down the street with his voice much deeper and smooth than the usual. Even though this is not some dangerous disease but I was left petrified. And wondering why me and not Rharha?

From what I've gathered is that isthunywa or messenger are ancestors who were highly devoted to Christianity, most ancestors becomes isthunywa in a different way. Some through abandoning amadlozi and become messengers and some through isthunywa that already existed, these ancestors actually do not come with a gift of ubungoma but with a gift of visions, and dreams.

And the manifestation of isthunywa is through prophesy, empathy, use of water as a method of healing or constant

requirements to visit water bodies such as the ocean and the river. Fondness of candles, use of crystals and interest and deep knowledge of the esoteric art that I'd draw and see in my dreams interpreted in that mannerism. General pull into celestial bodies, sensitive emotions and general quick to cry. Hmm that's why I'm also just crying even at just a mere touch of this man who was explaining this to me—this is basically a result of the heart chakra expanding in consciousness as you welcome divine flow of universal energy, singing it has been said that isthunywa is very fond of song and counseling and metapsychology and cleanliness.

Isthunywa draws both strength from the same source, ancestors is just more connected to human energies and isthunywa energy is more universal and not limited to human. There is no one better and no one's spirit is better than the other and everyone is unique in expressions form of spirits. You can connect with it to understand how it functions and what it requires from you. Not two people are the same. No two gifts are identical which means his could work differently from mines and vice versa.

And his last words were “try to understand your gift then it's time for you to focus on it, work on ascension

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work on your energy, work on purifying and detoxing yourself to the purest and cleanest vessel for the spirit to flow. Stay grounded, stay vigilant and stay positive. We're in this together and we're going to be okay" Then he engulfed my face with his hands and anointed my forehead with the warmth of his lips before my eyes and lips.

You don't have to go through some initiation but isthunywa is raised through fasting and praying and the important times are at twelve am, three am, six am and nine am. It's believed everyone has isthunywa.

Okay basically you have super powers heh?—my subconscious creases her eyebrow and wearing a long dress, compared to what she's always wearing. I'm going to actually avoid her.

I glimpse towards him to see him with his cup of tea and biscuits on a saucer and he hasn't took a sip or a bite surely because he has to eat like a normal person around people not like a demonic creature. And he's listening to my father who's now pushing his personal agendas upon finding out that Mthabela is into manufacturing and investment business, quite successful but very humble about it. I didn't know either. But he's a CEO at Mabhedla Holdings (Pty) Ltd. Even though the other day he sent me an amount of money I could buy a four room house with just to do my hair but he's not triumph and my father here has been endlessly applauding him and his

brothers for doing well for themselves, not forgetting how he's showing his teeth more than he usually would.

"I see you're expanding. I've seen you've invested in a radio station and art studio. It's great really" That's my father beaming at Muzi.

When I attempt on looking at him this time our eyes meet and he impishly smiles at me. I am literally doing the unthinkable that even my own subconsciousness cannot find words to exclaim this but just flapping her eyelashes watching me grabbing a biscuit and dipping it inside my cup before taking a bite, it's soaking and just. . . I am wondering how this man finds this actually eatable and delightful in his right state of mind. But that look on his face when he sees I am making him seem normal amongst everyone who don't have some bizarre way of drinking tea and eating biscuits really warms my heart as a smile etch on his face. And the way he cannot believe this he keeps stealing looks at me before he grabs his own biscuit and does that satanism way of eating and now he seems comfortable.

My mother glances at me and frowning, I am sure she can see that I am not myself but possessed by the Mthabela demons and then she looks towards him, then me again before she smiles and takes her husband's hands. "We should go now. . ." Menzi announces and taking one last sip ". . .we came here

urgently because Muziwenkosi thought MaMbatha was leaving him and that's why you needed him here" Aww. I look towards him, well he's really edgy about being in a same environment as my father especially since he knows that we are sexually active. Hmm, I've made up my mind about him being a traditionalist just modernized with all beautiful renovations that took place "And hopefully next time when we come here we'll be shouting your clan names outside the gate" Oh no the idea of marriage just. . .A piece of paper won't really determine our everlasting love and that Mthabela is the only fish in the sea for me. Obviously every woman's dreams to walk down the aisle one day.

"Thanks to you Mpangezitha for coming at such short notice for my daughter. And she even seems better now. Thank you" My father says shaking the biscuit dipper's hand with a smile as they're standing on their feet. And I am not the one to walk them out but my father. Yes, I don't get a chance to hug my own man or even get a kiss because of my father who is busy talking about business blah blah. Mxm.

"Nomzamo help with this" My mother says when she sees me watching towards the direction they're disappearing to and my heart is bleeding heavy clots I am telling you. Those few hours of us walking and listening to the soothing sound of his voice were nothing really. Even though I got to drown in his aura and



enjoy the sound of his laughter. . .it feels like he's pretending when he's laughing. Although it's a beautiful sight but he just opens his mouth and moves his shoulders but sometimes you do hear that sonorous baritone. I get up taking a tray and following her behind. "Your sister left to fetch something in your room and never came back, she's acting really strange lately"

Oh she's just pregnant and doesn't really know how to locate the father it's normal—my subconscious says eating my man's leftovers and grinning. What the fuck? How on earth is she so nonchalant about what she just said.

"Oh ahem. . .maybe it's work" I don't know what other excuse I could possibly come up with because I've never been in this position before.

You mean you've never hide pregnancy before? Is that a position?—Oh my I need to put a tape on her mouth so she can just shut up for the eternity. "Let me go check up on her" I want to escape what will soon turn into an interrogation.

"No leave her" I cannot escape "That boy. . ." It's a man. Muziwenkosi Dali Mthabela is a man not a boy. "Does he make you happy?"

"Really happy ma" I tell her genuinely and then she nods her head slightly before she smiles warmly "I don't look happy?"

Why would she ask me that question?

I get to see those white short stones and pink gums as she beams at me “you’re glowing Nomzamo but I wanted to hear it from you” I am covered in all shades of crimson and fiddling with my fingers “What was wrong? Do you want to share it with me?” concern is laced in her voice. Imagine carrying a child for nine months only for them to run to their boyfriends when they have a problem—sad isn’t it?

“Ma” I breathe and take a sit on a high stool clasping my hands on a kitchen counter while she attentively looks at me “From the time I was young I had strange dreams”

“And you used to paint and draw about them” she smiles “that was your passion what happened?”

Well your husband said she cannot be an artist because there’s no future in that and he said that right after he threw away all her drawings and paintings at the age of. . .Nomzamo was it twelve or eleven?—Oh now she wants to ask me? Wasn’t she the one rambling about business that has nothing to do with her. “I don’t know. And these days I feel totally perplexed and just. . .I don’t know what I want in terms of career. Mthabela has been helping though. Would it be too late if I start doing art again?”

“It will never be too late my love” I wish I had my mother’s serene nature. Be so calm about literally everything even the sound of her voice is like listening to the sound of the chirping birds in a greenery lake at the early hours of the morning  
“Hmm tell me more about your dreams”

“They were different but now I’ve been dreaming about paralyzed people and white people. And sometimes just the beauty of nature and praying for people and I spoke to Muzi about it and he said I have isthunywa, apparently everyone has it. But I have that and it needs to be raised and I have to be guided. I can heal people through just a prayer. It’s not really a dangerous disease or anything like that but it’s more of a spiritual journey and being aligned. He has the same gift. Ma he’s so knowledgeable about this and you should see him when he speaks. With so much confident and. . .Muziwenkosi Mthabela is in tune with who he is”

“My mother was also a messenger. But I think we should consult someone who can help with this. Are you not scared?”

“I am but what’s the reason to be scared? I just have to keep my mind sharp as the spirit works perfectly well with an sharpened intellect because I’ll be using my mind to interpret prophecy and consciousness. And I have to allow the spirit to work through me. Beside I know I won’t be alone in this journey” I pause unable to conceal that all my other emotions.

Fear mostly. Of course I am scared. I have been since the dreams. . .What do I know about healing? It has been said that things will play in front of me like a movie before they happen. Again it should've been Rharha and not me. "I'm scared ma" I tell her genuinely and she comes and take my hand into hers and rubbing my knuckles "It's scary. Although I believe I'm going to be okay because I'm taking this journey with someone who's more knowledgeable about it but I'm scared"

"No need to be scared. We're going to do what needs to be done for you and you'll be okay Nomzamo. I love you" she places her hand on my cheek and in that moment my father walks into the room grinning and filled with too much elation and I am wondering what those men promised him in terms of business. "Babazi we have to talk about Nomzamo"

"I'll go and look for Rharha" I announce and getting off the chair walking out of the room. One day I'll have enough courage to speak to my father. Have a heart to heart conversation and maybe that would be my first step to everything. I walk into her bedroom and she's pacing up and down while running her hands through her hair. And then she turns to me and breathe "What happened Rharha?"

"I found him" Who? Who did she find "I just went through internet and remembered he was a guest speaker at that workshop your father sent me and bam!" she loudly clap her

hands together “I found him. I found him Nomzamo” now she’s just breathing heavily and fanning her face while gulping for air “Limakwande Khuzwayo that’s him” she hands me her phone to see a picture of him. Oh Oh she has a taste in men actually. I look at her and then the picture—actually this is the kind of man my sister would go for. An attractive creature that makes you change your wardrobe countlessly when meeting with them. “And he’s married. Ta-da! I slept with a married man Nomzamo do you know how that sounds?” Why is she saying ta-da though? I haven’t found words to say to her actually. Because she’s sitting and standing and pacing. “Are you going to help me kill him or are you going to help me bury his body? Which one?”

“Haibo!”

“What? It will be fast”

Haibo Haibo Haibo!

“Kill him no! I mean they’re so many ways you can handle this but not murdering him” she demonically glare at me before throwing her arms in the air and breathe out once again “Are you sure he’s married?”

“No I’m not sure” she smiles “Of course I’m sure Nomzamo it’s written there and he was standing right next to his wife. I don’t know. I don’t know” oh that was a fake smile, I could hardly

notice “I’m going to kill him and you’ll help me throw his body in the river”

“You’re not killing anyone Rharha”

“What should I do then? I’m pregnant I don’t know if I made myself clear to you. I am going to be a single mom while he wakes up every morning next to his wife and fucks her every night and what about me? Who will fuck me?” Oh she’s bothered about someone who’ll do that. . .that thing to her. After a moment of her breathing erratically she pauses and flicking her hair. “If you were in my shoes what would you do?”

“I don’t want to be in your shoes”

“Nomzamo” she warns “Just imagine”

“I think you should talk to him and tell him about this depending on how he reacts to the situation. . .”

“Then I can kill him?” she pesters.

“You’re not killing him but talking to him”

“Fine then we are going to where he works now and I’m going to talk to him”

“Now?” I eyeball her.

“Now and call Khensani she’s coming with us just in case there’s an emergency and we end up killing someone by mistake”

Did she say by mistake? By mistake?

“And go change that dress and look like some business woman. You’ll pretend to be my personal assistant”

“Why because I’ve been a personal assistant before?”

“Haike Nomzamo I’ll be the personal assistance” she dramatically roll her eyes.

“All we always do is try searching for such arms which would protect us from the chaos of this harsh world.

Where we would find our comfort, our peace and our home.

Some are lucky enough to find it and some just keep searching with a ray of hope and a bit of disappointment that someday they will also find their comfort in someone and someone will also find comfort in them”

Look at her!

I think I made the right decision with pretending to be a personal assistant, yes after quitting that job today I am pretending to be one. But my sister here—if my father could see his daughter I am sure he’d properly set an appointment for a meeting mistaking her as one of the most successful business tycoons, she looks like those women who knows how to make men feel antsy at the boardroom and she’s oozing sovereignty and clad in a black female suit that shows the passage of her cleavage that’s shimmering with color gold and her curly weave falls like waterfalls on her shoulders not to mention how her face is impeccably painted with neutral colors and her lips shimmering with lip-gloss and I am walking behind her as she’s owning the universe at each step she takes, this gives me a



clear picture of how she is at work and how she managed to attract a married man and she surely did that necromancy she taught me on him and ta-da, she got pregnant.

Our destination is at the headquarters of Mr Khuzwayo's enterprise and we have been stalking him on social media and indeed he's married and flaunting his wife on social media at every night and day, just minutes ago he posted her she's really mesmerizingly beautiful. Upon arriving we are met with a tall office building, all curved glass and steel, an architect's utilitarian fantasy. And now I am suddenly being choked by perturbation as we walk into the enormous and intimidating glass, steel and white sandstone lobby. "Are you not nervous?" I glance at my sister and she just shakes her head in disagreement without any words coming out of her mouth, I know that's a lie.

Behind the solid sandstone desk there's a beautiful petite woman whom smiles pleasantly at us and looking immaculate "I'm here to see Mr Khuzwayo" Rharha says her voice sounds too soft but stern enough at the same time to send intimidation to the other person. I am standing aside like a frozen pea holding useless notepads that surely has grocery lists written on them and blinking rapidly. This is dangerous. I've seen it in movies. Anything could go wrong. I mean what if we get

slaughtered or shot? I cannot breathe but Rharha seems too calm and collected like a cucumber here.

“Which one ma’am and is he expecting you?” How many are they? Of course he’s not expecting us, what’s all these questions? They’re throwing me in a deep freezer and also I am suffocating.

“I’m looking for Limakwande Khuzwayo and he’s not expecting me but I was hoping that I could see him” this time her smile is more amiable as she taps her manicure on the desk and glancing towards me, I smile at her attempting to calm her raging agitation because it’s painted on her face because it’s visible enough for me to see. I mean we can meet this man and everything could go from west to south, he could send us away.

“I’m sorry ma’am but you have to set up an appointment for you to see him. I can set up the. . .”

“I cannot set up the appointment because this is the matter of emergency so please help me. I need to speak to Limakwande”

“As I said ma’am you cannot. . .”

“Do you understand that I need to speak to this man? It’s not even about me at this moment but an innocent life. Can I speak to him?” Again she pesters and sounding emotional and not in tune with herself even her hands are trembling with tears shimmering in her eyes. The woman behind the desk nods her

head feeling rather threatened before she turns around and grabbing her phone while we step aside as she makes a phone.

“Rharha are you—

“I’m not okay Nomzamo so please don’t ask me that. Just give me a moment” she says not looking at me but her head hanging low, I’ve never seen this vulnerable side of her or maybe it’s hormones. As we are standing here we see two men approaching us clad in black uniform. What the fuck? This woman called security on us? Now we are being asked to silently leave the building before we can be dragged out. When the security with a mustache attempts on holding my sister’s shoulder she yanks him. “Don’t fucking touch me!” she threatens and now everyone is eyeballing us. As we are followed by the security us all the way out and unexpectedly Rharha turns around pushing them aside and running inside. Jesus Christ. They’re running behind her. I am. . .I don’t know. Who runs like that with high heel shoes? Has she forgotten that she’s pregnant? I mean this is comical but not at this moment because I am now following behind us. “Limakwande Khuzwayo!” she screams guttural.

“Sorry sis’ he won’t hear you because he’s at the last floor. Now come with us before we are forced. . .” The security doesn’t finished talking because she’s screaming again and again ignoring the fact that we are told he’s at the last floor and

won't hear us and we are being dragged with our hands being cuffed. Tears starts prickling at the corners of my eyes because I'm going to jail now.

"Bhuti please let me go I didn't do anything" I am crying with my hands behind my back trying to push against him "I wasn't screaming please let me go"

We get into the elevator and my sister is flaring her nostrils and repeatedly clicking her tongue and shaking her head. These two men right here don't even care honestly. We are taken into a room where we are asked to be seated and call someone who'll come and fetch us. . .basically this is jail that didn't go to private school. Their screens everywhere and it looks freakishly clean. We cannot call our parents because it will be a scandal of the year. I don't have friends after losing them over a man. I have no any other choice but calling Mthabela.

This security is attentively looking at me as I make this call, why are they acting like we are here to steal the computers or something? We just came here for. . .the call is ringing and my heart is drumming treacherously against my chest. "Ukhuluma noMuzi Mthabela (you're speaking to Muzi Mthabela)" Is this how he answer phone calls? Oh my this man sounds sensual unprovoked. Already everything in me is throbbing with those sensations only he invites to travel through my body.

"Sawubona" he says amongst not hearing a response from me.

“Mthabela” that came much lower than I planned in my head and the pregnant one is diabolically looking at me, I don’t know why because we are here because of her.

“Nomzamo. Nana. Thingo lwami” Oh he’s calling me with all these names at once “What’s wrong? Are you okay? Whose number is this?”

“I am arrested. I am in jail”

“This is not jail Nomzamo” Why is Rharha piqued? I don’t care whether this is jail or not but the fact remains that we had hand cuffs and we have two men goggling at us as though we were caught stealing the building.

“We were hand cuffed Mthabela” I tell him and there’s absolutely silence. Oh he’s not going to say anything? Not now? Maybe tomorrow? “Mthabela”

“Where are you?” his voice sounds sternly “Nomzamo why were you even hand cuffed? Where are you?”

“Ahem. . .I’m sorry” I don’t know why I am apologizing to him but I feel a need to.

“Tell me where you are and I’m coming”

I don’t know if I should pray because this man sounded really enraged and his rage was menacing in his voice. The security is sitting there on his chair leaning back with his hands resting on

his humongous stomach and swinging on the swivel chair looking at us with a smirk.

We are playing with our hair and fiddling with our fingers when the door opens. I have seen many emotions on his face excluding this one

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I cannot yet describe it but it has combination of incense and he looks devilishly fine, regardless of the fact that I was with him hours ago but it feels I haven't set my eyes on him. A quick glance towards me then he speaks to the security with his aura demanding nothing but respect since the one with a moustache is rubbing his hands together now he's the one apologizing "Asambe!" Mthabela announces clicking his tongue. We perk up at the same time following behind him and we are not using the main entrance. The way he's walking so fast we can hardly catch up with him until we are outside where that driver who drove me to him the other day when we had a date opens the door for us to get in. I glance towards Mthabela who's aggressively clenching his jawline glaring at me before we both get in the car and he goes to the front. No words have been exchanged. Rharha has succumbed to her own reality and leaning against the window looking outside. And this man at the front is making calls to his brothers that I was not in real jail but held hostage by the security since we were causing havoc. I

want to gasp and choke. Me? Havoc? I was just a personal assistance after that he clicks his tongue again. I notice that when he's really angry he speaks too fast and you can hardly catch a word he says so you need to pay attentive attention since he also hates repeating himself.

After sometime we parked outside his house again the doors are opened for us, he's the first one to walk out. I take a deep breath and glance towards Rharha who looks like me the first time I came here—mind blown then she follows right behind me making our way inside the house. And he's nowhere in sight. "Do you want something to drink Rharha?" I ask her and she shakes her head and laying on the couch "Uhm do you want to sleep?" Again she shakes her head "Do you want me to leave you alone?" As much as this hurt but I already know the response to this. And as I predicted she nods her head. I swallow the enormous lump on my throat and kissing her forehead before making my way to the bedroom.

"Mthabela" I call him the moment I walk in and he's doing something on his phone, standing in the middle of the room. One glance towards me and then he focuses on his phone "I went there to help my sister" I start explaining without being asked to do so. "Rharha is pregnant and she's been trying to speak to the father of the baby. . .they met once and then. . ." Am I not giving too much information? "They met just once and

then she got pregnant so we've been looking for him and found out that he's married"

"And how did you end up in jail?"

That had some sense of mockery in it.

I clear my throat "I was not in jail"

"You told me you were in jail Nomzamo and now I am asking how did my woman end up in jail? How did that happen?" But those two men in black uniform explained it to him so why must I narrate?

"Rharha was fighting because they couldn't let us talk to the father of her baby"

"And what were you doing?"

"Nothing. I just screamed when the security hand cuffed me and pushed me"

"He what now?"

"He pushed me so hard I almost fell and lost my teeth Mthabela" I tell him exaggerating and I know he already knows that I am adding my own spice because he wants to smile but swallowing it back "Are you mad at me?" I ask him flapping my eyelashes at him with my hands gripping the either sides of my dress. I actually looked like those amateur personal assistance



who're so clumsy in this dress, wedges and just cornrows but cute.

"I am mad at you"

"Ngiyaxolisa nje dali" I apologize again. I take steps forward until I halt in front of him and he looks down at me "I was helping my sister" I tell him and he just gazes at me. Can't he touch me?—Oh his hand circles around my waist and I look up at him with my hands on his chest. "What are the names?" I tease him and he frowns trying to remember what am I am talking about. Oh shame he suddenly he has amnesia doesn't he?

"What names now?"

"You said you have names for our children. All seven of them" I crease my eyebrow at him and oppressing my laughter seeing that facial expression and perplex dancing on his face. This man. I was already blooming with elation about the names but it wasn't him talking. Trust me I am sure he doesn't remember all about my heart desires that he promised to give me.

Oh now he remembers because suddenly his face etch into a smirk "Can you take it? Maybe we can make the first one and you'll know the first name"

We can take it, all of it, tell him—my subconscious who's dragging her wet and flooding vagina screams in desperation needing to be touched and tasted.

“My sister is here” I pause “she's the one who taught me to do what I did to you”

Nomzamo, are you crazy?

my subconscious smacks me from the back of my head and clicking her tongue.

He laughs “What did you do to me?”

“I made you think of the names for our children” I smile.

“Manje uzongiphinda nini (when are you doing me again?)” I look at him and almost choking on my saliva “Nana”

“Hmmm”

“When?”

“I must check on my sister” I clear my throat.

He laughs again and grabbing my buttocks on his hands and squeezing them “Who is the father of the baby?”

“Limakwande Khuzwayo”

“Oh” he sounds too casual “I know him”

Ah ah ah small world.

“How?”

“Well he’s from royalty that’s how we know each other basically the Khuzwayo family are isilo and with us. . .how can I put this. We are more like chiefs”

“Do you know him on a personal level?”

“Not really but I can call him after usungiphindile (after you’ve give me more)” This man has a high libido.

“Mthabela!” I warn him.

“I’m joking let me go speak to your sister first and see if she’s okay with me calling him” I nod at him “Nana?”

“Hmm”

“Please ride me again”

This man!

“I will do it after you’ve helped my sister”

I am taking slow sips from the cup of tea and watching him pacing up and down in the room on his phone in his hand, his eyebrows furrowed and it seems business related and then Rharha is silently eating and deep in her thoughts—Mthabela has called the father of her child whom announce he was coming here, they seem to have a causal relationship with my man.

Now he's gazing at me yet still flaring his nostrils and not pleased about what being said to him on the call. "No, no, no that's not an excuse to lose a house Mabutho because I asked you two months ago to handle this for me. Don't give me that. I asked you to get me that house because I wanted it and now you're telling me this? No, I made it clear to you that I needed that house by the end of this week. . ." Oh that's the last born of all his brothers whom I've never met as yet but heard about him. I watch Mthabela lacing his hand on his hip succumbing to the vexation and sardonically chuckling "What? Are you out of your mind wena? Where am I supposed to stay? I'm buying it because I want it. . ." The more the words exchange over this phone call, also his range accelerates "You will come to my house tomorrow and we will talk about this. I have guests right now. I don't care. No I don't care about all of that. You will come to my house so you can tell me how exactly you failed to do something so simple, so simple. I said tomorrow Mabutho" he seethes and then hang up to stare at the screen for few minutes before he comes and sits next to me still finessing his screen when we hear a doorbell.

And also what house was he talking about and about moving?

Rharha's eyes are out of their own sockets and she pauses eating from a bowl of fruits that Mthabela asked her to eat

since she doesn't want food. Hmm she agreed to him but not me.

At their age some people really choose to be twins? Are they three twins? I mean triplets and they're only separable because of their hairstyles and the fact that one of them is wearing those round eye glasses. I look towards Rharha who's frowning surely also perplexed about which one she slept with or maybe not but these men are quite attractive and gorgeous. . .I cannot compliment them further because I have my own man here.

"What happened Muzi?" one of them speaks and his voice is so sonorous; their energy reminds me of that man I am dating. For some reasons. They've handshakes and shared laughter because they come into the living room and gathering with us.

"I wanted to speak to Limakwande" Rharha says instantly and a frown appears on this man's face even his brothers, they have same facial expression on their faces. I thought Mthabela and his brothers freakishly look alike but it's nothing compared to these men. Basically their parents said we are going to make one attractive human but three times. And yes they're also going to be so different from each other in a way but still. . .it will be so hard to separate them.

"To me?"

“No” Rharha frowns. What the fuck? “I mean. . .Are you Limakwande?” Now they’re laughing even I am. Mthabela remains impassive. How is she going to separate them? But the shape of their penis? “Ahem were you at the workshop just few weeks ago?” Can she not see any of them here? I mean spot him.

He creases his eyebrow and clasps his hand on this thigh “Did something happened?” Instead of Rharha responding she just takes off her shoe and throw it at him. Where is this anger coming from? At least he dodge it. “And then? Are you crazy?”

“You’re going to sleep with me and then ask me that?”

“I’ve never met you before so how did we sleep together?”

“Bafo wait didn’t Lunzulu attend some workshop and standing in your place?” Oho which one is that one? Oh so they exchanged positions. This one is dying of laughter and holding a shoe in his hand. “I think she’s being mistaken here. Look what’s your name. . .” he seems nice compared to his brother who was about to slaughter my sister just because a shoe was thrown at him. Just a shoe.

“Nandipha Mbatha”

Today she’s not Rharha?

“Nandipha I’m Lubanzi; so the might’ve been a mistake here. There’s four of us. . .” Four? Their mother carried four of them?

Four people in one stomach “The workshop you’re talking about Limakwande was supposed to attend but he didn’t because of family emergency so Lonzulu attended because people can hardly separate them” I can hardly separate all four of you with those dimples and brown eyes. Are they genetic too? “I think you might’ve met Lonzulu”

“Is he married?”

Rharha, I mean Nandipha.

They all look at each other!

“I love you. . .and her”

## **R H A R H A**

Deep breath!

And then she walked into the curve building that was only made of glass and steel, and after that she took a quick glimpse at herself in the nearest car window before a smirk managed to escape her lips that were painted in a red color that matched the suit she was wearing—she loves wearing suits it somehow gives her a sense of masculinity and supremacy in a room full of men. The blazer somehow managed to show her tiny waist and then the pants showed how beautifully sculptured are her curves. “Miss Mbatha come this way” Although at some point she wanted to be an event organizer but she was becoming mature every day and open minded that she’s not going to be the life of the party for the rest of her life. Another reason she was starting to find passion into what she went to school to study. Well she doesn’t even know how she made it into university. . .or maybe her sister could be applauded for that. After she smiled at the woman who seemed to be intimidated by her and the waft of her sweet and feminine cologne she followed right behind as she was leaded into a hall that was full



of business tycoons already sitting in a row. Her father forced her to attend this apparently it was going to enlighten her about the business world since he has given up on trying to make his other daughter to be part of the family business. All he ever wished for was Nomzamo to see how intelligent she is and that she had so much potential. "This is your seat ma'am" she was leaded to the front row and then she looked up to this woman once again with an amiable smile before her buttocks sunk on a chair and then she crossed her legs opening a cap of the bottle of water to take a sip. But she wished it was something cold and intoxicating. Regardless of maturing but she pretty much still prefers where there's loud music and joyful dancing.

In a nanosecond the room was now full with different scents swirling in the air and piqued fake laughter and then the room went dark, only illuminated by the screen at the front before an white man with hair that resembled snow stood at the front leaning closer to the microphone that was glued on the podium and he chuckled at each and every word that he was saying. And her on the other hand she could hardly concentrate as she crossed her legs and uncrossed them, sit on the corner of the chair and second later, she'd sit lithe. "Are you that bored?" A voice said behind her before she could got a whiff of the stranger's cologne that was behind her then sensual laughter filled her ears. Her subconscious was too innocent and

therefore it whispered that she shouldn't turn around but pay attention to what was happening around and also take notes.

“Can we welcome on stage Lima Khuzwayo” the white man on stage announced and a round of applaud erupted in the room, suddenly women were beaming in the room and she was perplexed before she saw the reason behind smiles as he stood on stage with his short hair that had waves on and clad in light green suit and gold chain gracing his neck that matched his watch, bracelet, rings and earrings—he looked totally different from all these men whom were prim and proper, with ties that were suffocating them.

And he was just stylish and attractive.

As he was talking on that stage with his deep tone wheezing in the air, his attention was caught by the goddess who could hardly sit still as she moved every second on her chair and his eyes were fixated on her more than he anticipated as he felt all the sensations that he was forbidden from feeling—was it infatuation? He didn't understand either but it couldn't be love at first sight. He grabbed a bottle of water and gulped from it to smoothen his throat and threw all these thoughts that were dancing in his mind, they were ungodly ghastly. He made a promise to himself that he's not going to dare look towards her direction again. But who was is he lying to? Because his traitorous eyes directed themselves towards her again and

their eyes interlocked that he completely forgotten all the words in his head and everything in him just wanted her, sexually wanted her. Now he was greedily gulping and gulping for air until his speech ended and he was led to the chair where was supposed to sit on from the beginning but since he was late he just sat on his rightful seat. . .it was right next to her and her fruity smell somehow reminded her of. . .again he blinked twice and gulped for air and the muscles around his head were taut like rubber bands before he stole a glance towards her. Their eyes met and this time she showed him the crispy white stones of her teeth “That was great” she leaned closer to his ear and whispered. If only she knew what she was doing to him, she wouldn’t have done that because she was now giving him the illusion of how she would sound like next to his ear as she beg him not to stop and those long nails digging his back “The speech was great” again she repeated with her tone so exotic and he looked down at her, he didn’t mean to smile

he didn’t want to but it managed to etch on his face looking at those beautiful eyes that belonged to her.

Her mind was running around in riot. It was the smell of his cologne. It was the way he was smiling her. It was the way he was looking at her—she has met all different kinds of men, different sizes of penis, different masks painted on their faces

but they were absolutely nothing compared to this man that was sitting next to her and that's why she was so brave to dare him to fuck her after the event as they were standing outside. "Are you daring me to fuck you?" he creased his eyebrow looking at this woman with beautiful glowing skin as though she was born under the sun and rainbows. He has never met anyone who stood so confidently at him like this excluding. . .he thrust his hands on his pockets and fighting with his turbulent thoughts while tilting his head. "Is that what you said?" Hmm she walked up to him with her shoes clicking against the sandstone and she interrupted him while he was busy on his phone.

"You've never had anyone daring you for a good fuck before?" Although she was putting on the brave woman mask as she flicked her hair but God knows how much she was afloat with her agitation and her fears. . .fear of being rejected. But she was willing to take this chance. Even if it was for only one night, she just wanted to feel his warmth and those hands gripping and digging into her thighs. She wanted to hear how that deep tone sounds when he groans as he's about to reach his climax.

And now here they're after one night with consequences and she's crossing her legs on the couch looking at him and on his face, he has the look she remembers quite well. It's the same gaze he had watching her body shuddering with her mouth

slightly opened and the sound rolling out of her mouth was an audible tone since she had been screaming, moaning and groaning as he was thrusting deep inside her. This was the very first time she felt something that euphoric and orgasm that was so powerful. The only time she got to experience it was when she was cleaning her ears but that man. . .this man knew exactly where to touch her body. It wasn't a hard fuck as she expected it to be but it was as though he was learning her body, he was worshiping her with his hands and tongue from her toes to the crown on her head.

"I'm pregnant" she said once again thinking he might've not heard her, he was standing at the corner of the room and he kept running his hands on his head before his eyes met with hers. Those butterfly effect emotions that led into this erupted and travelled through his system. . .but he wasn't supposed to feel them. No matter how many times he reminded himself that but he couldn't oppress any of these feelings and the familiar pool that unzipped him. The only time he felt like this was when he met his wife and now. They're so many possibilities that he could lose her because of one night. It wasn't a mistake, that what bothers him that he doesn't regret what he had with this woman or what he's feeling for this woman. He has been thinking about her since the night they shared together. Every visual image of her kept playing in his mind that he has been spending most nights at the office

and not home because he'd randomly just see her face and feel her touch and hear her moans.

"Are you married?" This one question that has been bothering her choked out of her mouth. Did this make her another version of her mother? Was she really her mother's daughter?

"Yes" Finally he could speak. But those are not words she had expected from him. Instantly she became rigid on the couch and acidic liquid was burning her eyeballs.

"I'm going to throw everything in this room at you Lunzulu" she threatened and pointing at him with her index finger "What are you going to do now? Ask me to abort my child so that your wife doesn't find out about it?" she asked and poisonous emotions expanded on her throat.

"I'm going to take care of you and my child. I'm going to marry you Nandipha" he couldn't believe those were coming from his mouth. But he meant them. Each and every vowel that smoothly rolled out of his tongue, he meant it. And then the thought of his wife crossed his mind. He'll cross the bridge when he gets there but. . .what he felt for his wife was the same emotions he was feeling for this woman. But what he didn't expect was everything being thrown at him in this room. The cushions. The vases. Everything. While she let out a guttural sound. Yes, she's crazy. He thought as he kept dodging everything that was being thrown at him at this hotel room and

she looked vulnerable, much different from the time they met. The brave woman that once dared him for a good fuck was nowhere to be found.

Finally he embraced her in his arms and he wasn't expecting her to cling onto to him as she was shivering from anger that was menacing through her, his shirt was now dampened with her tears and her head close to his chest. "Nandipha" he whispered "I'm sorry" he was holding her tightly into his arms.

"Let me go Lonzulu!" she hated how he was making her feel. The warmth of his embrace and the sultry of his voice. "Leave me the fuck alone" she pushed him—these arms, she didn't belong to them. His arm was bleeding after she has hit him with a vase. "Let me go!" they were standing in the middle of the room in each other's arms and they were so synced. They looked perfect together as they though they belonged in each other's arms. In both their heads they didn't understand why something to wrong felt so right. "I'm going to raise my child alone. I don't need you"

"Nandipha!"

"Let me go Lonzulu otherwise I'm going to kill you. I'm not joking, I will kill you"

“Feelings are too inconsistent and too immature for love to be based on them.

You feel this now, and feel something else later. Love is a decision; it's a commitment that requires consistency, endurance, patience sacrifice, resilience and a little madness”

I am afloat with consternation and feeling edgy since my sister has left going to meet with the man who happened to be the father her child. I remember her when she first moved in at home and her hair was braided into Fulani braids with beads wearing a sheer pink and white dress; she's always been a fashionista trust me and the moment she stood in front of me she wrapped me around in her arms and made a promise right there and then that she'll always protect me. We couldn't sleep that day we spent the entire night under the tent we built with our duvets and sheets and twinkle lights until we fell asleep in each other's arms. I know her; surely more than she knows herself and when she left this house she wasn't herself but impotent and I don't know what was that fear dancing in her eyes but I could sense it.

“Nana” Mthabela calls my name as I come out of the shower with droplets of water falling from my natural hair to my



shoulders when he comes and stands behind me placing his hands on my waist and sweeping my hair to the side while he's making soft and succulent kisses on the side of my neck "I can sense you're not okay talk to me thingo" I exhale deeply as his kisses leaves me with electricity spurring over my body and it feels good. But not good enough for me to forget that my sister is somewhere with a man she only had one night of pleasure with. What if he doesn't accept the baby? What will happen then? I know she'll want to pack her bags and leave and I don't want her to leave. . . I don't want her to leave. I know that she must be an irk sometimes but she brings the light into my own darkness.

"Mthabela" I breathe. My nipples start to swell up and when I attempt on touching them he takes my hands into his; he caresses my body with desire and I lean my wet head against his chest "I'm worried about my sister. . .she'll leave me and I don't want her to go" Now the heat of his hand seeps through me as it travel from my waist to my thighs and I gasp.

"What do you want me to do for you Nomzamo tell me. Anything and I'll do it" now his hand is cupping my sex and I flutter my eyes. . .he begins swirling his finger around my sensitive humming bean. Okay for now I seriously just want my hands traveling behind his back and just allow him to worship

my body until I cannot take it anymore. I want to block out all these negative thoughts as I scream his name in euphoria.

“I want you” I turn around to face towards him and looking up at him with my hands laced against his chest. My eyes are interlocked with his and deeply inhaling “Mthabela”

“Nana”

“I want you. Do you want me?”

“I need you”

“I don’t want it slow today”

“Are you sure?” I nod my head in agreement and in a nanosecond I’m in his arms and he places me on the bed; separating my legs. You should see how this man is always painted with elation whenever he stares at my grapefruit. As though gods sculptured her with gold. I breathe as he strokes my opening gingerly as if I am a delicate flower that might fall apart. Hmm I said I don’t want it slow but this man. . .he’s always taking his time as though he’s learning my body anew and slowly he pushes two fingers into me and I soon find myself pressing into his hand; hard.

His mouth moves from my mine and trail down my neck until he finally reaches my naked breast. He kisses every part of me and then takes my nipple into his mouth; suckling as if I am his nourishment.

The hand inside me increases the tempo and I gasp at the mounting sensations within me. He licks my breast once more and traverse down my stomach to meet his currently occupied hand.

He stoop down to his knees and gently separates my labia with both hands. He angles his face up to kiss ntombazana first lightly, teasingly. Oh he'll always make love to her. Always, whether I want it slow and gentle or fast and hard.

He plunges his tongue deep inside of me and I practically faint. I begin pushing down against his mouth rhythmically. His tongue darts firmly within me — sucking, caressing and causing me to nearly explode. “Whatever you need I’m always here Nomzamo you know that right?” he looks down at me and my hands on his face and I repeatedly nod my head. “Do you still want it hard?”

“Hmm” I murmur and he smirks impishly at me

And he starts covering my entire naked body in kisses. Then he once again begins to kiss the innermost part of me — this time he goes painfully slowly, until my entire body quakes with delight. He kisses me down there one more time and grabs hold of my thighs while I buck against his mouth. Sitting up, he climbs on top of me and I can feel him press firmly into my pelvis. Running his hands along my bare breasts, he kneads them gently. He presses harder into my body until I feel I

cannot take it no more. And slowly, he begins himself against me. Every few seconds I feel him hit me just right, so that I keep wanting more — but also wanting him deep inside of me.

I watch him slipping off his pants and pressing against me. Licking his fingers, he rubs my insides once more and presses himself slightly into my grapefruit. He places one hand beneath my head and the other to my right side and slowly pushes his way deeper into my body.

Once fully inside my body, he begins to move on a much faster pace and massaging my tight channel. He shudders in pleasure and kisses my mouth roughly. Oh my fuck—he’s giving it to me exactly how I wanted. Hard and fast and I’m under his mercy. I’ve lost all my senses and my speech is paralyzed “Oh Nomzamo” When thrusts deeply inside me my back arches and meets with him. We are moving in a same tempo.

At this moment, nothing matters beyond the feeling of his bare skin against mine. His sweat and fluids

every single piece of his body belongs to me. Nothing else is anything. I sigh in perfect contentment.

-

Friday,

It's already late afternoon and the sun is stubbornly laced in the crispy blue sky. This house smells like the aroma of the stew and dumpling hanging thick and also the paint. This morning the moment I fluttered my eyes opened he was already gone for work but he left the note saying he had a surprise for me and that was canvas and paint brushes, sitting on a chair in front of that white board and holding a paint brush in between my fingertips felt foreign and I don't know as yet what's that I am painting. I have been frowning at it with perplexity dancing on my face. I don't know how many times I've stood from the distance with my hands against my hips to see what is this.

I have to check on my pots quickly. I briskly walk to the kitchen. I think this food is enough for today and tomorrow. Well starting from six pm anything with heat we won't be touching it and that's the reason I'm cooking this early—I'm starting to use plural as well. But we are planning on going to church tomorrow with his brothers and their wives then we'll have gathering later that evening. It sounds. . .nerve wrecking I know mainly because I've been stalking those women on social media and they're intimidating before I can even meet them. Also the gathering we'll be at Mthabela's new house that he doesn't want me to see as yet until tomorrow as speak they're brown boxes everywhere in this house. The reason for his moving is

because the nostalgia of this one is somehow bittersweet for him.

Okay the dumpling actually tastes and visually looks divine and enticing. I cannot believe this is me clad in a man's clothes and preparing dinner for him. My phone interrupts me as I am stirring my pots after pouring soup and I briskly walk into the living room rubbing my hands against the white shirt I'm wearing and grabbing my phone pressing it against my phone. "Rharha" I say immediately as I answer the call. I'm praying internally because I have been trying to contact her and she was unreachable "Are you okay? Are you home? How everything went?"

"Nomzamo!" she screams, not in a guttural way as if maybe she's in pain but in jubilation and she sounds intoxicated "Ah ah bitches say shit and they ain't saying nothing. A hundred motherfuckers can't tell me nothing. A beez in a trap, beez beez in trap!" she starts singing a rap song and then she pauses and burp.

"Nandipha are you drunk?" Isn't she pregnant for drinking? What's going?

"No, no I'm not drunk but. . ." she erupts with laughter until she chokes and starts coughing "Hawe ma!" now she's calming herself from the volcanic laughter "As I was saying. . .I am not drunk but" Again there's another pause "When it's time to flex

I'm Vera Cruz, looks like there's a demon in my shoes" I'm wondering where she heard all of these songs from.

"Where are you I'm coming?"

"Where are you coming? Don't come here you're going to ruin the fun for me"

I want to go where she is, it sounds like fun. What should I wear? A thong or maybe I should go there naked? Hurry up man Nomzamo—my subconscious is already standing on her feet and wearing a blonde weave, flapping her eyelashes.

"I also want some fun so tell me where are you?" I hope this fabrication sounds convincing for her to tell me where she is. What's wrong with her? Why would she drink knowing very well that she has a human growing inside her?

"I'll send you a location just now and look nice don't embarrass me please!" she says and then immediately she hangs up the call and a location follows right after. Okay she's at Florida road. My feet propel me to the kitchen and switching off my stove and then making my way to the bedroom to get the car keys and running out of the house. . .I'm covered in paint on my forehead and the shirt. And yet I was told not to come here looking like an embarrassment. I'm going to talk to Mthabela after I've found my sister. At least he'll come to prepared food on the stove and I'm sure there won't be that much heat.

Upon arriving at the location already they're cars everywhere and everyone walking towards the same direction which is at the entrance. Now the sun is setting and people are coming out to have some fun. I don't know why they're eyeballing me. Is it the first time they're seeing someone who's covered in paint?

The bouncer didn't want to allow me in but nothing money cannot buy in this world even an organ. I push through the crowd until my eyes meet with my sister who's standing on top of the table and holding a bottle of cognac in her hands, singing on top of her lungs alongside some hip hop song. Suddenly now that she's drunk she's what? A rapper? Jesus please help.

"Nomzamo!" she screams the moment she sees me and getting off the table "I love you. I love you and I love you" I've seen her intoxicated before but nothing compared to this, it's surprising that she still remembers my name. "Do you know how much I love you?" her breath with a mixture of something fruity and alcohol fans my face.

"I love you too now we should leave. I have a much better place where we can have fun. Asambe" I have my fingers crossed and hoping that she doesn't fight me. At least my ancestors are still with me regardless of the fact that I'm now fornicating.

Because there she is holding onto my hand and telling me that she wants to go to an expensive club and party until her own livers cannot take it anymore. I remember her drinking like this



after our brother passed on. It makes sense, it's away for her to avoid the pain. I shove her at the backseat and when I'm about to close the door she grabs my hand and dart her eyes between mines with hers shimmering with tears "I didn't know Nomzamo. I didn't know he was. . ." again she burps and then lean back on the leather and flutters her eyes closed, sleeping. What she didn't know? What happened when she had a conversation with the father of her child? And then now she's peacefully sleeping with her mouth slightly opened. I kiss her forehead and close the door behind and sliding behind the wheel manoeuvring the car on the road. I don't know where to take her. Should we go home or maybe Mthabela's house? But that will be inconvenience with all those boxes around the house and she cannot use hot water to take a bath. . .I guess we should go home and I'll find a way with my parents.

I have no choice but passing to the garage so I can get her a bottle of water when my phone starts ringing as I'm making my way through the corridors. "Nana" he says the moment I answer his call "I'm home and the house is empty. Where are you?"

"I cooked for today and tomorrow. I don't know if the food will be cold by the evening. I wanted to give you a foot massage when you get home. I took your car"

What did this man give you? Is he a sorcerer of some sort? A foot massage? You give men foot massage?—that’s my subconscious flabbergasted and furrowing her eyebrows. This one should honestly just leave me alone.

I can hear a smile in his voice and the opening of pot lid which means he’s going through my pots. I hope that food is actually eatable and doesn’t have too much salt. All my efforts will just go through the drain. “Ngiyabonga thingo lwami but does that mean I’m not getting a foot massage?”

“Not tonight. I had to go and fetch my sister at the club and she was really drunk and she doesn’t seem okay. But I’ll give you one tomorrow when we come back from church”

“When you get home please let me know and tell me you’re safe. And I cannot wait to taste your food. I see you were painting”

“I tried but my mind is blocked. What do you think of it?”

“I cannot wait to hang it on the wall of our new home”

I smile “I love you dali”

“I love you too thingo lwami and I’ll call you in few minutes time, be safe” Oh he emphasizes on my safety and I repeatedly nod my head and hanging up the call. I grab two bottles of water and some sweets. Returning back to the car she’s awake

with tears in her eyes and staring outside the window with her head leaned on. Well she's still intoxicated.

"Nandipha" I call her out and turning to face towards her at the back but she doesn't response but remains static and not blinking with crystalline droplets falling down her cheeks. . .I breathe "Do you want water?" she turns to me and taking a bottle opening the cap and gulping it. I guess we won't have a conversation. "You know I love you till the end right?" All I get is a nod and that's all. I switch the engine on and then start moving once again until we are outside the garage at home and she's the first one to scramble out of the car, stumbling everywhere and I follow right behind. Inside the house we find my parents and her mother.

Rharha's mother is here? For what?

When Rharha sees her; I didn't expect that facial expression from her. More apoplectic than elated. I think she still has alcohol in her system as she sits down on the couch and looking straight into her mother's eyes. Her mother is absolutely gorgeous by the way. "Oh look who is here!" Rharha says sardonically "My mother. . ." her voice is trembling "I'm just like you. Look at me. Well at least I didn't know he was married but you. You knew very well that he was married!" What is she talking about? Wait, the father of her child? What? He's married.

Basically it's a mother like daughter situation, an apple doesn't fall far from the tree—my subconscious takes a sip from her tea.

“Nandipha!” my father warns.

“I'm not you mama. I will never be like you and unlike you I didn't know he had a wife but you. . .you knew that you were sleeping with someone's husband and even gave him a child. You knew. I didn't” The intense atmosphere is suffocating. I don't care about anyone else but my sister who just went down on her knees and crying. I go to her kneeling in front of her and holding her closely into my arms “I didn't know Nomzamo” she clings into me and her head on my chest “I didn't know” a guttural sob escapes her mouth.

“Look how you found me

No one else sees this but you, but you”

My father is like a cannibal standing on his feet with his hands against his hips and his chest abnormally moving up and down as though he'll explode the moment he doesn't get enough air into his lungs with his eyes sharpened as they're following his daughter who's walking up the staircases making her way into her room. In a nanosecond my father is briskly walking out and following her. I run right behind him. “Baba. . .” I keep calling him expecting him to look at me over his shoulder but he doesn't. “Baba” Again I call out for him. They're so many emotions suffocating me all at once at this moment. When he's about to reach the door to his Rharha's room I manage to catch up with him and block him and he glares down at me, burning me with the incense looming around in his eyes.

“Nomzamo move!” he points at me with his index finger and for the first time I stubbornly plant my feet here and the expression painted on his faces mirroring my own. “Nomzamo I said move away from here!” Again now there's threats laced in his aggressive tone.

“If you dare touch Nandipha I swear to God and our ancestors today I’ll forget you’re my father and you’ll see another side to me. We cannot threaten our parents so this is not a threat but a promise” I seethe and although he’s taken aback by my words but he’s able to mask every emotion. I know he’ll scream disrespect just now. Our eye contact is painted with fury, rage and other unnamed emotions. “You haven’t been a father to us for years. For years of you being absent. Instead of fathering your daughters you’re training them to be just like you. Obsessed and greedy for money and power. You’ve been so drowned in your world that you don’t even know what’s happening in our lives. I don’t remember seeing you mourning the death of your son. Have you ever wondered how any of us felt? Did you care? Did you even care about my mother? Same day after the funeral you went to a business meeting. You’re always waiting for us to flaw so you can instantly remind us about it but who reminds you of your flaws?” The tears that starts to drown and sting my eyeballs were not supposed to come out in the first place. For once, for once all the anger that have been kept somewhere in a shelf at the corner of my brain explodes. But what I didn’t expect is the clap against my cheek. It’s loud and I gasp for air holding my entire face because it actually vibrated like there was tornado in this room.

“Don’t you dare speak to me like that Nomzamo. You will not speak to me like that now help me and tell your sister to pack

her bags and leave my house. I won't have anyone insulting me in my house"

Nomzamo push him against the wall and strangle him to death. Did he just slap you? Oh hell no—my subconscious throws her shoes across the room, medusa like angry and already balling her fists.

"We're going to leave you in your house where you won't be insulted Mbatha"

"I'm your father Nomzamo!"

"You're dead to me. You don't care about anyone but yourself. You're dead to me Mbatha" For the time I get to see him with glossy eyes as tears shimmer in his eyes and his hands shivering from rage "Every day I want you to remember this day when you killed your own daughter" Again another slap meets with the other cheek. I choke in my own tears because this one felt like it came with superpowers and I even stumbled backwards.

"Nomzamo go pack your bags and tell Nandipha as well. We are leaving. I'm tired of you Qondisani. We are done!" That's my mother standing in a hallway. In times like this she's still looking sophisticating. It makes sense the reason this man who just got physical with me fell in love with her. Maybe it's the voluptuous body or those perfectly aligned teeth. Is it her voice? "If you dare lay your hand on my daughter again you'll be counted in

jail tonight” she clicks her tongue and then she’s gone. I’m trembling with tears falling down at the valley of my cheeks walking to the room opposite—my bedroom. I grab out my suitcase with a blurry vision and guttural sobbing. It’s the pain on my cheeks. The pain I’ve been masking. The pain I saw in my sister’s eyes. . .It’s just torment I cannot use words to perfectly define. I shove all my clothes and not packing.

I can hear an argument and aggressive exchanging of voices from my parents dancing in the house. I grab another suitcase and just shoving my clothes. And the pictures on the wall. I’m done and ready to go. “Nomzamo shesha!” that’s my mother from the outside. I’m grabbing and dragging everything at once. Nandipha is already disappearing in the corner with her bags. My mother has changed into something comfortable while her husband is begging behind her. “All these years I stayed with you Qondisani. You kept bringing children after another in my house and I took care of them. But this. . .this was your last nail in your coffin!” Wait children after children? There’s more of us? When my father attempts on holding her she yanks him away and dragging all her bags while we make our way out to garage. “Who is car is this Nomzamo?” my mother asks me the moment I give her the keys. Hai she cannot expect me to able to speak when I’m hiccupping, I guess she should read in between the lines and yes she does. After sliding behind the wheel, I’m at the backseat with my sister who leans on my



shoulders and flutter her eyes. The moment my mother manoeuvres the car my father is chasing right behind it walking barefooted and screaming my mother's name. My mother focuses on the driving and not even once glancing at the rearview mirror to meet with the dismay picture of her husband who's now holding his head and watching the car as it disappears in his sight.

The drive is filled with deafening silence and each one of us just reflecting. I really just want to be in the warmth of his arms. Or maybe feel more than just that in an embrace. . .I want him to take me into that utopia we've always manage to travel to together. I want to be vulnerable beneath him as those glossy eyes with all shades of brown look beyond my bones and soul. I don't have to tell him how I feel because he can invade my thoughts and read whatever he needs to and navigate where is my state of mind. I want my head on that chest and trail my fingers on that tattoo of line art but also the line is sharpened like an arrow at the front. I've never asked him what it meant but it looks perfect there on him and artsy. I have no idea where we're going and my mother is driving aimlessly on the road but I'll call him. I'm sure he has eaten my dumpling and even went for some more, surely eating in the dark. That man really does some bizarre things sometimes. I wonder how is he licking his fingers after a piece of meat has disappeared into his mouth. I wonder how he looks with a smile on his face that I

never thought I'll one day see as he eats my food. Is he staring at my painting right now and wondering what was going through my head? He must be overly analysing it when it's not that deep.

My thoughts are interrupted by the movements of my sister as she moves from my shoulder to lay her head on my lap and peacefully sleeping. I take a deep breath and start stroking her hair backwards. My mother glances at us on the rearview mirror and then focuses on the road. We have been driving and finally we are driving to KwaNdengezi and she drives through the gate that has a board written "Nagina" This is a township but the moment you drive through this gate; it's a small suburb of some sort with houses that are built the same with red brick walls and painted in white at the front. I've never been here before and I don't even know who stays here for that matter. It's already dark so all the houses have cars parking outside. I cannot miss the lazy barking of dogs. And children who'll surely receive beating for gallivanting at this time of the night. The moment we park outside the gate opens, this woman looks exactly like my mother, it's strange and I haven't met her before.

"Zukiswa" she's frowning and holding a glass of wine in her hand wearing a silk robe before she opens the gate and steps out. But she doesn't seem pleased. Although they seem related

but. . .Or maybe I'm mistaken because here they are in each other's arms, embracing each other and crying. We have stepped out of the car and standing aside watching the emotional visual image in front of us. Well whenever I'm seeing someone crying

I cry—remember it's related to my heart chakra and being a messenger, I have no control over my own emotional behaviour. "Zukiswa come inside, come inside" she's holding my mother by her waist and my dearly sister and I gaze at each other before she shrugs her shoulders at me with a grin as we make our way inside the house and we make ourselves comfortable on the grey leather couches. "Aww Zuki what happened? You finally left him? You made a lot of sacrifices for that man. A lot of them. From losing children four times and Nomzamo was your gift. Enduring all the pain yet you still loved and stayed with him. I never understood why you stayed with that man. That one doesn't care about you" she takes a sip from her glass of wine.

We haven't been introduced. I gaze towards my mother that brave and strong woman mask she's always wearing is not there. . .It's strange seeing the two untouchable women in my life this vulnerable and being the one who wears their shoes and being the powerful one. I didn't know about this. My

mother lost children? What does she mean by me being the gift child when there was my brother.

“Yandisa not in front of my children please” My mother says with authority in her tone before she looks towards me, maybe to read my face and understand or navigate where is my state of mind. The questioning expression on my face remains there. That day at the restaurant—I don’t think she meant it when she said she was happy. This woman looking into my eyes from the couch across the room painted in white with grey and black furniture doesn’t look like a woman who is happy in her marriage. Or maybe she’s that despondent because of everything that happened tonight. What children did she lose? Who is this woman? And this house?

“Fine ke mzala we will talk about it later. As you can see I’ve been taking care of your house. I didn’t cook because I didn’t know I was going to have visitors but I can prepare lamb chops and bread. Oh I’m your aunt” she winks at me and my Nandipha. Our aunt? Honestly we don’t know anyone from my mother’s side of the family. I know some of them but she doesn’t have a relationship with them or whatsoever. This is my mother’s house? Now that she has said it—it represents her with the sophistication and elegance. Is this what Mthabela’s mother was telling me to do? Make sure that I keep some of

the money that his son gives me because men changes. Why mother never told me this? Is this what marriage looks like.

“I’m going to make something don’t worry. What do you want Nomzamo and Nandipha?” My mother perks up from the couch and making her way to the open plan kitchen with marble walls and white cabinets that are so shiny. I look at the time on the wall. I cannot eat anything hot from now until tomorrow around this time. Now how am I going to make that announcement? Knowing Rharha she’ll make a comment.

“You can make anything mama” Rharha is the first one to respond and then she glances towards me with a questioning look. Should I tell her first or maybe just say I’m full? But I haven’t eaten since that granola in the morning. I can have a fruit though right.

“It’s fine you can make anything mama” What was introduced as our aunts is eyeballing us, shifting her eyes from my mother to us and taking her sips from her glass, leaning back on the couch then she crosses her legs.

“You can go shower in the meantime”

“Let me show them the bathroom” Aww shame my aunt is so enthusiastic. I get our bags from the car first before making my way to the bedroom we’ll be using. It has neutral colors. Now I’m only left with my sister in the room and I can hear laughter

coming from the kitchen. I haven't heard my mother laughing that sonorous and so care free in a long time. I wish I can put a face into that sound and see the relaxation of her shoulders.

"You can go shower first" I tell my sister who's already taking off her clothes and shoving them in a washing basket turning around in a matching underwear—all the lessons about matching I learnt them from her. And then her body. You'd think my mother is her real mother because the most high really took time to sculpture their curves and gave them buttocks.

And then me?

He surely looked at you with a scowl and his arms against his chest shaking his head in disappointment because you were too late—my subconsciousness shakes her head and grabbing her own buttocks. They're round and perfect. I hate this woman. "I'm using cold water so you can just shower and then I'll come after you" I say to her and she looks at me tugging her head in.

"You shower with cold water now?" I should've expected this from her. "And since when? Wena? As in you?"

I look at her and blink "It's Sabbath tomorrow"

"Is it decorated with glitter and made of gold? Does diamonds come out after he has reached the climax? Which language do you scream in during sex?" What is she talking about? I'm

frowning and bewildered “I’m talking about his dick. You’re Nazareth now?” Oh I should’ve known she was going to say something like this. After that she starts laughing and throwing herself on the bed clapping her hands together and then she balances herself with her elbows on the bed “What’s next are you going to eBuhleni?”

“We were going to church tomorrow but. . .” I cannot finish my sentence. Ah ah the imbecile that I know is back. Wasn’t she crying just now and I was comforting her? Now she has guts to laugh at me “Rharha stop it!” I warn her and unable to swallow my own laughter that elicits.

“Ameeeeeeeenn!” I cannot believe that she’s mocking amaNazereth. The lightening that will strike even her wig will be worn inside out and she won’t believe it. “Muzi is really laying the pipes” she catches her breath from laughing and then pauses catching her breath “And also I heard you standing up for me to my father, you’re really becoming a real green mamba huh?”

Ssssssss—my subconsciousness hisses and flicking her hair backwards and then smirks, overjoyed to see the smile on my sister’s face.

“And two slaps!”

“I really appreciate that. I’m sorry you had to take those slaps”

“You know I love you till the end so you shouldn’t really thank me for standing up for you because you’ve been doing that all the time”

“When I’m ready to talk we will have that conversation but for know I just. . .I don’t want to talk about it” she shows me a weary smile and it doesn’t really matter whether she wants to talk now or five years later as long as she’s not crying. “Let me go shower Nazareth” she mocks and getting up from the bed taking her toiletry bag. Oho can someone break her heart again? “Wait did you know anything about my mom losing her children?”

“No, she never told me anything”

“Do you think she was happy in her marriage or she stayed for us?”

“I don’t really know. Did you call your mother to come here?” Now that I remember why was she there? Rharha looks at me and I can tell she’s hiding something from me. “What is it?”

“Well. . .they have another child with my father. My brother he’s like sixteen now”

What the fuck? Their affair continued even after they were caught how many years ago? Are you serious? “I threatened my mother to tell the truth”



My eyes are out of their own volition with my jawline hanging opened. I hate that man. I hate him so much for being so dishonest with my mother. I hate him for hurting my mother in this manner. No wonder she left him.

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“Wozani nizobona indoda! Wozani guys!” That’s my aunt running into our bedroom and breathing heavily as though she’s a woman coming from a marathon. I’m still sleeping. I haven’t slept because last night my mother and her dearly cousin were so drunk and dancing to afro beat music. Even the pregnant one was dancing with them. I haven’t been in a room with such ebullience since the death of my brother—he was the only person who managed to bring that amount of euphoria in a room. My mother danced like a young girl and holding her glass of wine, she could barely even walk into her room and I had to hold her hand. I’ve become the responsible one.

“Wozani nina! Wozani nansi ndoda (come and see a man!)” My aunt continues waking us up. Regardless of wanting to sleep but I cannot because of her high pitch voice. I flutter my eyes as she drags us with our ankles so we can see this man she’s talking about. I look at watch on the clock and both the sticks are pointing at ten am. Now we are following right behind her

at the hallway as she screams about this gorgeous man. We stand next to her and she lifts the roman blinds and. .

.Mthabela! Yes he's the man we're being waken up for. I don't blame her. He's wearing ibheshu and white cloth at the top and he's wearing iziqhaza earrings. Those sensations I felt the first time I saw them on stage come alive. My breathing coming erratic seeing him barefooted and frowning with his phone in his hands.

Oh shit we were supposed to go to church!

"Nomzamo that your man!" Rharha "What kind of sex are you guys having? I want to know because hhayi man"

"That's your man?" That's my aunt.

What is he doing here? I think he's trying to call me. Holy Crap my phone is actually off. I remember wanting to charge it. I leave them plaguing me with questions. The other one wants to know about my sex life and the other one wants to know whether Mthabela has brothers, she doesn't really care about age. I briskly walk to the bathroom and washing my face and quickly brushing my teeth. What should I wear? Okay Instead of going through my bags I drag out a mustard dress from my sister's suitcase and taking deep breathes before making my way out after donning it on.

“You’ve already bathed or did you just spray perfume?” My aunt asks me. And they erupt with laughter with Nandipha. Mxm. I am not going to say anything to them. He’s actually parking two houses away from mine. The moment I step out I feel my heart drumming abnormally against my chest. Even now he’s still on his phone and finessing his screen with his eyebrows furrowed.

“Mthabela” I call him out when I’m just two steps away and he picks his head up. Oh I thought he was going to smile. But he remains grave. Now he’s looking like that man who was yelling and simmering at me at the funeral with his eyes dancing with an incense. “What are you doing here?” I’m standing in front of him, taking him all in. And my, my he looks so damn attractive. Have you see how fine a man with ibheshu looks? That’s him right here.

“Why your phone is off Nomzamo?”

Ye ye ye—my subconscious is jumping like a toddler. I cannot believe her. How dare she finds joy into my problems?

“My phone switched off”

“And you lost your charger?” he creases his eyebrow.

“Chabo”

“And then what happened?”

“I forgot to charge my phone. I was going to charge my phone but I was half asleep and then. . .I just fell asleep before I can charge my phone it wasn’t on purpose” Why am I explaining like I did something wrong? “But I was going to charge my phone” I say with an audible voice.

“And this morning?”

“I just woke up now”

“What are you doing KwaNdengezi?”

How did you find me?

“Last night we got home and then Rharha got overly emotional so my father wanted to kick her out and. . .and I couldn’t let him kick my sister out mina Mthabela so I stood up to him and then he slapped. He slapped me twice and my cheeks were swollen” Your cheeks were what? Haibo wenja?—my subconscious just claps her hands once. This once really should get out of my head honestly. “And then my mother asked us to pack our bags and we came here. Your mother told me to keep me money whenever you give me and keep it safe because. . .because men change. And my father has been continuously cheating on my mother. Also my mother lost four children. It has been a lot” I think I’ve summarized everything for him now. At least I haven’t cried. Okay I do want to cry because this man just remains motionless and furrowing his eyebrows.

“Get in the car Nomzamo”

Okay so he’s not going to ask about my swollen cheeks?

“Mthabela. . .”

“Nomzamo get in”

“I was going to charge my phone”

“You’ve said that”

“I haven’t bathed”

“You’ll bath when we get home now please get in the car  
Nomzamo Mbatha”

“Fuck me when I need it and I can’t even go back”

In our one month relationship. Oh wait maybe we should celebrate that I’ve seen people doing that on social media with videos that has music playing in the background, actually ever since I started dating I’ve been standing aside on pavements with social media. It’s the fear of searching his name and coming across tweets from different women fantasizing about him and some fighting over him.

Or maybe your so called best friend talking about how much you’ve betrayed her, do you remember that?—One day I’m going to slit my head into half so that this woman who stays inside my head can peacefully just walk out. I cannot stand her anymore.

I glance towards him and his eyes are fixated on the road and he hasn’t glanced at me or placed his hand on my thigh. I’ve noticed that when he’s irate, he prefers being in his own head and thoughts. Without any sound of music in car or whatsoever but ear splitting silence. And also I can see those veins in his arms and hands that make me want to trail my fingers on them. But what’s the reason for his vexation? The fact that my phone was actually off and he couldn’t reach me? Maybe he thought I

came here to serve another man my vagina on a wooden tray. Does he really think I'd do that to him? In my right state of mind? Eh eh eh. Maybe I should ask Rharha how to pacify a man. Oh my phone is at home, now should I talk to him and asks him if I can use his phone? "Mthabela can I use your phone?" If we had music playing I'm sure he wouldn't have heard me because of how muffled my voice was.

Even now I'm not getting a response but instead he uses his head to point at it. Is he aware how much I am need of hearing his voice. "I want to talk to my sister" I tell him holding his phone in my hand. Again that tone that makes my body hums a sexual mantra and experience shockwaves doesn't come out of his mouth but instead he's nodding his head. "Rharha asked me if. . ." Where do I even begin saying this? I clear my throat "Mthabela she asked me if your penis is made of gold and glitter and if diamonds comes out after you've reached the climax" I expected my subconsciousness to say something but she's being rushed into coma after she drank dishwashing soap, gulp after another and fainted. This time he glances at me, I see the humour dancing in his eyes but he's not showing any of those emotions on his face. Not even laughter? I want to hear that beautiful sound coming from him.

“You were discussing my manhood with your sister?” What no? Now I’m surely throwing myself into inferno and no one can save me. I’m holding his phone with my sweaty palms.

“Chabo” I quickly defend and he creases his eyebrows and changing his gears “Okay I told her I was going to take a cold shower since it’s Sabbath today and then she asked me that. . .we didn’t discuss your manhood Muziwenkosi” What is he taking me for? Nxarga. “I’d never discuss that with anyone” I’m ruffled.

“And when she asked you that what did you say?”

“I said it’s made of steel” Hawu. He wants to know doesn’t he? Now there he has it.

“I wonder if you’d still say that when we get home and I actually get to fuck you” With a steel? I mean it’s not made of steel but I just. . .I gasp and gape at him and he glances at me with an impish smirk and turns his steering wheel to the right. We are close to home and my breathing is becoming short and shallow. My eyes are fixated on him and pressing my unbathed thighs together. “We have a lot to talk about as well after that fuck” This time my saliva moves through my throat smoothening the dryness. I blink at him and that seductive expression just remains on his face. I’m not going to respond to him. When I unlock his phone it doesn’t have password and it has my picture. I remember it in front of a mirror with my



natural hair opened and wearing sweatpants and a sweater.  
Where did he get this picture?

When sees that I've seen his wallpaper a smile etch on his face.  
What if I go through his phone and find something? Okay I  
might end up in coma as my subconsciousness, I took his phone  
so I can text Nandipha not to be an investigator unnecessary.

"What do you do to pacify a man that's mad at you? It's  
Nomzamo" I send her a message and impatiently wait for a  
response. I'm hoping she's not busy befriending our aunt and  
making her, her new best friend. Because we are going to have  
a problem, I cannot deal with traitors. Why is she not  
responding? I'm afloat with agitation and tapping my fingers on  
my thigh. . .Oh here's a response from her.

"You give him a blowjob. Is this his number so I can save it?"  
What's a blow job? I must blow his job? That's—it doesn't  
make sense to me. I cannot ask Mthabela either because I'm  
trying to pacify him.

"What's a blowjob?" I send back a message and I see three dots  
moving in waves at the bottom instantly. Okay let me wait for  
it.

"You give him head Nomzamo. Basically you'll suck his  
manhood into your mouth" My eyes are out their sockets  
reading this and the phone almost slips out of my hands but I

catch it quickly. I quickly glance at Mthabela and he didn't see that. Great. Now let me read this message again. What? Jesus Christ. I cannot wait to see Rharha drowning and diving in fire, right there in hell and begging me to help and save her while I'm sitting up there wearing white and carrying a lamb in my hand right next to the woman who gave birth to Jesus while Abraham is asking me how I remain godly all these years.

"I'm going to send you a video on how you'll do it. Keep the phone to yourself" I freeze and remain stationary. I look towards Mthabela and then these messages that just shook my whole Garden of Eden.

I breathe and breathe.

Okay the video hasn't been sent that's good sign maybe she changed her mind and secondly—why would I want to have his. . .you know inside my mouth? For some bizarre reasons I want to experience it and at that thought I keep touching the roof of my mouth with my tongue with an imagination of how he would taste and feel. Is he going to break? Fine. . .I cannot be thinking about this because I want to go to heaven.

After some time we are driving to an affluent neighbourhood and you can hardly see anyone on the streets. No kids are playing. No women standing outside their gates gossiping. It's just gigantic houses and flats with expensive cars parking in

the yard. And they're no tuck-shops but a mall around here, this is La Lucia.

After driving through the gate he's the first to get off and suddenly he's elated. No more anger? I guess I don't have to cover his manhood with the warmth of my mouth as well— what would be the reason?

I get off the car and he takes my hand still walking barefooted with those delicious looking feet. I can have them inside my mouth but not. . . whenever this thought crosses my mind, my curiosity blooms. "If you don't like our new home just tell me. We can find a new one. This is our love nest and when our seven children are born we can get a big house" he glances at me with a smile on his face with a key to the penthouse.

I look at him and smile "Open the door Mthabela" Aww he said this is our love nest. Now I cannot wait to see it. I'm not one who's interested in interior design but as long as it's beautiful and homely then we are on the run. "Muziwenkosi open!" Instead of opening he's staring at me.

"Nana close your eyes"

Which movie was he watching? Okay fine. I look at him and shake my head before closing my eyes and then I hear the key unlocking before he takes my hand so I can take careful and cautious steps as he leads me inside. . . this house smells good.

It's a scent of lavender and an incense which means he was here earlier before he came gun blazing looking for me. "Open your eyes now!" I can sense his agitation. What is he afraid of? Me not liking the house? Aww I'm going to suck—no I won't. I cannot do that.

I open my eyes!

This home interior is of made airy with a minimalist layout of breezy natural colors. An eclectic mix prevents the look from becoming monotonous. Blue and terracotta accents strike through an unique macramé wall hanging behind a rattan settee and then striking coffee tables brings in a chilli dark tone. This is truly a love nest with all these colors and how intimate it is.

I glance at him standing behind me with a smirk I don't wish to wipe off of his face because of how attractive he's looking I don't want to cry either but I am. Our love nest. I move away from him and taking in the beauty of this place by wandering my eyes around with his phone in my hand that just vibrated. It could be my sister but I cannot hand it to him now. I look around the concrete walls drop a cool background behind a lounge seating, whilst concrete flooring floods the entire open plan living. Wooden shutters gently screen the direct sunlight onto the distinctive area rug, which introduces geometric

patterns into the scheme. Arcs drop from a modern chandelier, a motif that is repeated across a prominent red side board.

The other half of the room is a spacious dining kitchen. Unique kitchen pendant lights shine above a concrete dining island for two.

Metallic tiles texture a backsplash across the unique kitchen design. Distressed wooden cabinets are stained with red and black. And the mixed stain creates a wonderful meld that vibes with a textured concrete kitchen walls. A black decorative vase stands on the concrete countertop of the kitchen island drawing color link with the black kitchen black splash and sink unit. A bespoke shelving units is suspended between the ceiling beams, trimmed with minimal decoration and the concrete walls that are rounded off at the corners creating a smooth flow around the perimeter.

I turn to him and wrap my hands around his waist to look up at him. "I love this house dali" I tell him literally blooming with all shades of pink and blinking at me "Our love nest" I like the taste of this against my tongue and he deeply gazes at me.

"You wanted to shower" Am I stinking why is he reminding me this? "You can go take a bath and come back here naked so we can talk"

"Why must we talk while I'm naked?"

“Because I have other ways planned to make you talk thingo lwami now please, go shower. I bought all the essentials you use. I’ll be here waiting for you. . .” then he pauses “naked” this man. Wasn’t he supposed to be at church? I breathe sharply and gaze back at the intensity of his eyes and the rapid fire there.

“We are. . .” I clear my throat “We are not doing it in the bedroom?” I stutter.

“Nana this our love nest we can do it everywhere” I cannot breathe “Now go, our bedroom is on your first left”

What can we possibly do without our clothes on? Okay maybe we will lay on the floor with our hands intertwined because the weather is scorching anyways.

I walk into the bedroom with a wooden platform bed that’s set in the absolute middle border of space left all around it. The margins allows for two closets to be accessed behind the headboard along with an archway into the en-suite bathroom. I still have the phone in my hand, I quickly check it to see Rharha asking me to tell her once I’m alone—what does she wants? My subconsciousness is still breathing through pipes in a coma.

My feet propel me into the bathroom with an unique bathroom sink and vanity that are formed out of precast concrete. A wooden towel shelf offsets the cold composite. Black granite

plate vanity lights for the concrete bathroom wall. Opposite the concrete vanity, there's a make up table that had been fashioned into a nook by the window. Bathroom storage fills up the opposite niche. A rustic wooden vanity stool is seated at the stone countertop.

I've taken off my dress and now bare naked before grabbing the phone and calling the sex doctor that I call a sister. "Are you alone?" she's chuckling over the phone the moment she answers.

"Just make sure I don't get pregnant"

"Did you get pregnant at my previous lessons? No now shut up" Why is she always enthusiastic to teach me about these things? And where did she learn them? "Okay so you'll start with your hands rather than your mouth. Incorporate a lot of different things all at one time. It's not all about sucking the head of the penis. . ."

"Is there any other way I can do blow job without sucking his male organ?"

"No" Now she's getting piqued "It won't be a blow job if you don't. Anyways this is more about worshiping the entire area like how he worships you down there. Run your hands up and down his thighs and pet his male organ and do some manipulation with your hand and squeeze it a bit and feel it as

the blood flow starts to get going. It's all about deep throating, facial, pearl necklace, hand job and tea bagging but for now just have fun with it"

"What's tea bagging?"

"That's to play and suck his balls"

I gasp "You do that Rharha? Are you not scared of going to hell?"

"No one is going to hell here Solela. Anyways lesson number one. Relax. . .relax your whole mouth including your tongue but remain in control of your gum movement" And then she pauses "And then number two, forget that you have teeth and remember that your tongue is the only tool you have and need to pleasure him"

"I must remove my teeth?"

"Can you remove them?"

"No"

"Then why you're asking me stupid questions?" But. . .I was just asking. I hear her clicking her tongue and then breathing out

"Okay now we're on number three when sucking his penis, do not aim straight for your throat, aim for the upper palate, it help with the gag reflexes" I should've taken a pen and paper

"let your tongue work for you, move your tongue around his



penis and play gently with it. Make circular movements that make him feel your texture and do not be afraid to spit on it and make it sloppy. . .that also helps with avoiding the taste of his pre cum. Do not mind a little spit escaping your mouth, it drives some men crazy” I don’t really know we’re on lesson number what but this makes my curiosity “there is no time to think about spitting or swallowing, you do what comes naturally to you and hand that you use to hold the dick in place has to be moist, firm but gentle and stroke the penis the whole time. Lick his dick, suck his dick and blow his dick. . .get creative and listen to his moans, they are your best directors”

“When he doesn’t moan?”

“He will moan if you stop asking stupid questions. And do not go in too rough too soon, start off gently and tease his dick by blowing warm air on his balls while you trace the line of his sack with the tip of your wet finger, you can even lick a little. Lastly, have fun and enjoy making giving him pleasure. Remember that a little gag never hurt anyone and in this case, it tightens the grip a bit and drives the man insane and unbraid your cornrows so he can have something to grab on. Don’t disappoint me. I sent the video and delete our conversation”

“I got it. Okay that was a lot but thank you”

“I love you till the end and don’t forget to make eye contact”

“I love you till the end”

All our chats and video are now deleted and gone. Now I need to perform fellatio.

I feel as though I am about to do unprepared speech at school walking down the hallway. It’s beautiful how this man pays attention to small things that I never even noticed, like what skin products do I use and hair products and cologne—I’ve only been at his house with my toiletry bag few times because all my visits are always not planned.

I breathe!

I walk into the room to find him actually naked and talking on his phone. How many phones does he have? We are going to talk about that but. . .when our eyes meet as I am slowly walking towards him he pauses talking for a second and my eyes casts towards his phallus. Jesus Christ I’m really about to do this. I etch a nervous smile at him while he has a gorgeous one on his face and then he continues talking to his phone. I can vaguely hear what he’s saying.

Nomzamo block everything in your head and focus on what you’re about to do, you got this just don’t be stupid and tell him who gave you lessons nxh—my subconsciousness says and putting back her oxygen mask and closing her eyes. Fine. I got this. I don’t got this. I got this.

I slowly decent on the floor in between his legs and for a moment his immobile with his mouth half opened as my fingers immediately curls around his erection. I look at him and he's holding his breath and looking down at me with his eye full of lust then he grins

My hands first!

I hold him with both hands. One hand at the root of his phallus and the other cupping my sack then I massage his inner thighs. While my one hand moves up and down on his manhood and he grunts. Oh he's still controlling himself and immediately returning back to the call. I gaze up at him and smirk when my wet lips descend on the plush head, covering it. It tastes. . . I don't know like meat but with less salt, actually it tastes like avocados. I suck him gently and he throws his head back and continues talking on the phone with his chest now heaving up and down.

My tongue moves over the tip, rubbing, and licking. His reaction sends sensation flares and sets my blood on fire, coursing through my veins, and his right hand grips the phone with such a force.

My tongue pulls back and I pull him in deeper. As I move along and inhaling his scent and I cannot get enough of the taste. It's strange. It's weird but good. I pull him into the hollow of my cheek. "Hmmm. Hmmm. What other changes are being

done? Yes Ahem. Yes” I don’t know if these are the responses he should be giving out but I’m enjoying having him under my mercy and piloting his manhood into my mouth.

Now his head is rolling back and he thrusts his hip into my mouth. Oh this wasn’t part of the lesson and I almost choke. “Ah ah!” Is he saying that to a client “No I agree with you” Aww Mthabela. I’ve never seen him like this. Maybe I had when I was on top of him.

I move my tongue underneath his phallus then I flicker my tongue on the rim. My hands and mouth work in sync driving and he’s grinding his teeth as I move with rhythmic movements and he’s now moving and curling his toes. “Go deeper and harder” Is he talking to me? Yes. I look up at him with him still in my mouth and he holds an intense eye contact that makes me shudder “I mean go a little deeper with what you just told me” I cannot wait to laugh about this, the veins in his arms are now showing.

I fist him at the root, and my fingers wrap his manhood like a glove sliding up towards the tip.

Hard!

Then my lips run down to the root, pushing the tip all the way to the back of my throat but I quickly regret that. I almost vomited. His hand grasps my hair, holding me in place and

when the pleasure wash over him he lift his butt off his seat and one of my hands wrap around him “Hawe ma Nomzamo!” I can taste something salty and liquid inside my mouth, pre-cum. I lick him and bare my teeth trailing back up to tip as I saw the video of my sister doing this on a cucumber. “Uhm sorry about that yes, continue” He he he.

A soft moan escapes my lips, when I suck on his crown and my tongue pleasure him. I plague his erection back to my mouth and hallowing my cheeks. I increase the speed and pulling him and tugging, sucking, coaxing pleasure.

My tongue caressing every pulsating vein making him swell thicker, swell longer. “Nana!” he groans and his phone falls from his ear while he fists on my hair and thrust on his hips. I hand cup his sack, caressing while my other hand and tongue, lips uncontrollably work towards pushing him into his orgasm. “Nana if you don’t stop I’ll. . .Hah I’ll come into your mouth!”

His voice is unrecognizable, raspy, deep and guttural. His hands are fisted in my hair, his eyes are rolling back into is head, and his orgasm releases in thick hot spurts into my mouth. He thrust his hips again into my mouth, his semen coating my mouth. His heavy erection is a different entity, pulsing and throbbing until I squeeze every ounce of pleasure out of his body. I keep milking him relentlessly, making his whole body

shake. “Ah ah ah!” his pleasure is released in the form of a groan and I only stop when he stops thrusting.

A satisfied grin appears on my face. My subconsciousness is clapping her hands in her hospital gown. I look at him from under heavy eyelashes and licking my lips while looking up at him. He’s still catching his breath and still cannot believe I’ve taken him into whatever world he travelled to. Usually he gets me a towel when I’m like that. . .coming back from utopia. Maybe I should too. I made him scream again. I walk away from him and leaving him sitting there to catch his breath on the couch while fetching a towel to clean him up but as I turn on the hallway I feel his hand gripping my waist and pressing me against the wall and I cannot see his face. “Your phone, why was your phone off?” I am pinned against the wall and feeling his erection reawakening “Nomzamo!” But I explained.

“Mthabela—I feel a spank and gasp. What the fuck? It’s different from the one he normally gives me. It stings and. . .it feels good. “Muzi” I breathe. My breasts are pressed into the smooth, cold surface of the wall as his phallus unexpectedly enters me from behind. No foreplay today? That was a hard thrust.

“Do you know how worried I was about you Nomzamo? Thinking something might’ve happened to you? I didn’t sleep. I tracked your car KwaNdengezi. Why your phone was off when I

asked you to call me when you get home?” My car? That’s your car. I cannot breathe. Because he’s not moving but inside me and my hands are pressed on the wall. Another spank—what the fuck “I asked you a question”

I’m alive! I’m alive! I’m alive—my subconsciousness gets up from the bed and screaming.

“I was going to call you”

“When?”

“When I. . .I—Another fucking spank. Even my mother never spanked me like this. The sensation that comes with this is exotic. I feel tears building inside my eyes and breath being knocked out of my lungs. But Rharha said blow job was going to pacify him.

“Don’t dare cry when this only the beginning of what I’m going to do to you Nomzamo!”

“But I explained Mthabela”

I’m going to cry. I’m really going to cry.

“What’s that you explained?” I push again to him so he can move but he pulls out. Ah ah ah. I might’ve made him angry but this is not the way. Ever. He’s Nazareth and he knows what’s the way.

“Muziwenkosi inside me now!” I demand.

“I’m not taking orders from you” Am I not his rainbow today?  
This man “What’s that you explained?” Again he roughly thrusts inside me and a tear jumps off my eye alongside a scream, not a moan. “Explain everything you told me” God please make him move.

“We got home and. . .”

He pushes up with a fast stroke of his hips, his hard body slamming into my mine like a conqueror. Again and again. My whole body shake the impact, my fingers trying to gain purchase on the wall, but failing. Only his hands on my wrists, his manhood deep inside me, holding me up. All these foreign emotions expanding through me I love them. His rawness and how he is unravelled. My mind is in a haze of pleasure and need, of surrender. “Khuluma Nomzamo (start talking)” his tone is full of sovereignty and lust. His hands are on my waist after he has lifted my leg up and curling it around his waist.

“I can’t talk”

“Do you want me to make you?”

“No!”

“Then start talking”

“I’m going to charge my phone” I don’t know what else to say to him. I’ve told him what happened and narrated everything.

“I love you” I cry out. God save me. “Mthabela”



“Nomzamo!”

“I love. . .fuckkkkkkkk!” his deep thrust formats every sense I have. My mind is just an empty vessel. I know I cry but there’s a reason this time. The amount of pleasure that I am feeling is indescribable. “Omg you feel so good. This feels so good” A sound I cannot recognize come from my own mouth. It’s a grunt, groan and roar combined together.

“You like that?”

“Hmmm”

“How much do you like it?”

“All of it” I breathe “All of it dali”

“Now take all of it thingo lwami”

I gasp as if his hard length actually forced the air from my lungs. I hold on to the walls but end up holding his hands around my waist and digging my nails in them. Mthabela seems to like the knowledge of my submission as I succumb to him. He lowers his lips at the back of my neck and shoulder as he continues to pump in and out of me just fast enough to drive me wild but deny me release. “Muzi please” I manage to beg. I want to chant the word until he gives me what I crave.

“You still think this is made of steel?” He spreads my legs even wider. He bends me over with my hands held at the back and

he's plaguing inside me. Hard and fast. Fuck. Jesus. "Nana is this made of steel?"

I brace my head back and our breathing is colliding as he fucks me hard and a pounding rhythm drives me higher and higher, closer and closer to the edge. "No. No it's not"

The wet sound of fucking, of flesh hitting flesh fills my ears as his ragged struggle for air came for air. I am completely under his mercy. He pauses and bends to bite my cheeks and I shudder before he gets up and thrusts deeper than expected. I scream. I cry. I plead and I beg.

"More Mthabela" I plead "More" I-she-this body beg him to go harder and faster.

"No" His deep voice sounds more animalistic and I shiver getting up from bending. I try to use the wall as leverage to push down into his phallus to force him to go harder than this.

"More. Please." I cannot recognize my voice. It sounds desperate and needy, exactly the way I feel.

He thrusts hard and deeper than before, striking my womb and a hint of pain shoot through me. With a shudder, I throw my head back onto his shoulder and wrap my lower legs around his thighs the best I can to hold him deep, where I need him.

With my legs around his and he let go of my thigh to lift my breasts. With each move of his hips he shifts a nearly

imperceptible amount, but the slight change of angle made his phallus hit me deep over and over. He forces me to hold still and he punches me and pulls my nipples and tugging them hard until I whimper. "I'm sorry" I apologize. Maybe an apology will help. "Mthabela"

"Nana"

"I'm sorry"

My grape fruit clenches and release his thick length and I try to wiggle, to make him move faster.

"You're mine Nomzamo" My body knows and understand.

"Yes. Yes. Yes." With each word he fucks me harder, as if my assent make him lose a little more control. When he drops one hand to rest over my clit I nearly cry with relief, but he simply holds me there, no stroking, no rubbing. My feet are on the floor again standing on my tippy toes.

His chuckle is so deep!

Yoh! Yoh! Yoh!—my subconsciousness is reaching her third orgasm and covered in tears.

"Please" Again I beg.

He keeps one hand over my jelly bean, then the other moves up to my hair where his large hand tangles and pulls my head back until my neck arches in a delicious offering. "I love you too" His

lips grazes my ear and I shudder at the carnal words. Yes. I want him. He is mine. Forever. I lick my lips, finally ready to speak the words I know would break his iron control.

“Then fuck me harder Mthabela!”

A shudder moves through his chest and arms. I feel his whole body shake as his control shatters. He holds my hair, his fierce thrusts breaking my hold on his legs as he drive in and out of me like a machine, hard, fast, unrelenting.

Pulling nearly all the way out, he uses gravity to bring me back down as the weight of my own body impales me on his male organ over and over in a rapid claiming that forces a whimper from my throat.

That one sound of surrender must have been what he was waiting for as he rubs my swollen bean, just a little rough, exactly the way I want. Head hold back, I spiral into oblivion, riding sensation after sensation as he fucks me like much harder than I imagined he would. He releases my hair and uses his free hand to land a stinging slap on the side of my naked bottom. I startle, my inner walls contracting around his him. I moan. He groans. He stroke again.

Smack!

Thrust. Withdraw.

Smack!

Smack!

He spanks my bottom until the heat spread like wildfire through my body, burning me up from the inside out. I can barely breathe as stops and slowly, so slowly that every movement feels as if it take an eternity, he withdraws my swollen grape fruit pussy and then pushes himself me once more.

“Come for me. Nana let go”

Lightly, he moves his fingers up and down above my bean and each soft strike a blast to my nerves as he spreads ntombazana’s lips open wide with two fingers of each hand and holds me open to rub and flick my bean with the other. He’s been so rough and now gentle. He can be both. He can be everything.

I lost hold of reality as my orgasm roar through me. A guttural scream erupts. My body pulses with pleasure and I feel dizzy and disoriented for a moment

My body pulsed with pleasure and I feel dizzy, disoriented for a moment. I close my eyes and draw a shuddering breath as the spasms finally fades as my tense muscles relaxes, he kisses my buttocks then he picks me up into his arms and taking me to the bedroom and succulently placing me on the bed. “Are you okay?” he pushes my hair back and looking into my eyes.

“I need water”

He goes and comes back with a bottle of water and my hands are trembling as the rest of my body and he attentively looks at me as I drink when his phone that I placed on the side table rings and he frowns and picking up his phone. “Mongameli” he answers and his other hand resting on my thigh

“We are outside” he’s on loudspeaker.

“Outside where?”

“Muzi just tell your security to open!” a feminine voice says.

“Yolokazi. . .”

“Open the gate wena John!” I almost choke from the water that I’m drinking when she says that.

I’m laughing.

“Okay I’m coming”

“Alright we are all here”

Hah!

“Whether you believe in them or not but they will show themselves”

My legs are still trembling as though we are calming from a natural disaster and my throat is still dry like I swallowed cotton wool laying on the bed and facing the ceiling, gently inhaling into my lungs—that was not just sex or making love or even a hard fuck but that was. . .why did I take an advice from Rharha again? Anyways I was still saying that was necromancy. And now I have to entertain visitors and be a great host.

“Nana” Ah his tone is still as unravelled as it echoes in my head, exactly like minutes ago when he was plaguing inside me and my intestines feel as if they’ve have been rearranged and now sitting somewhere in my rib cage. I turn facing towards him and he smirks, showing those precious teeth but this time that smirk is painted with insolent and his finger trailing my thigh  
“Do you want to take a nap? You don’t have to worry about the guests” Look at him, look at him so impressed with what he has done to me “Do you want me to bathe you?” I just gaze at him. Look at Mthabela and that smile that I wish I could wipe away with nothing but my tongue because it’s beautiful.

“No” I respond back to him and he creases his eyebrow “Make my legs stop shaking Mthabela” I tell him instead of his hand making the trembling pause he starts digging into my thigh in a most exotic way that reawakens my orgasm and my body trembles anew, causing me to gasp and clench on the duvet but we hear a knock. I guess the guests are here and the gate has been opened. “Make it stop now Mthabela!” I demand. All of these erotic sensations my parents never taught me about. . .ever, they need to stop or pause traveling through my bloodstream.

“I cannot make it stop because I’m still planning on fucking you nana” Yes, yes he’s saying that with a grave expression before he leans to kiss his favourite organ in my body—ntombazana and then gets up from the bed “I bought you clothes. . .dresses I’ve noticed you like them especially the short ones” Oh what else you’ve been observing? And also why my heart is turning into euphoric liquidity and glistening with glitter. “I hope you’re going to like them” I watch him from the bed and gaining enough strength. My legs, my legs, my damn legs are still shaking.

“I hope you manage to tell my mother what happened since I am now crippled” I respond to him attempting to get off the bed and the over cooked noodles I call knees are rubbery and shaky



## Advertisement

unable to stand. The cause of my death is sex and my murderer is erupting with laughter and throwing his head back buttoning his high waisted jeans. Hmmm there's nothing beautiful as seeing him in high waisted jeans and tank top that shows the beauty of his arms.

And his jeans shows the beauty of what is in between his legs, did you mention that?—my subconsciousness bats her eyelashes. Now she's awake from the death? Wasn't she in a coma and breathing through pipes after she drank soap? I thought she was four five seconds from death.

The knock is now louder followed by shouting and threats when Mthabela puts on a tank top and shaking his head. "Go I'm right behind you" I tell him after he has turned to me.

"I thought you were crippled" Suddenly he can smile more. Eh he's no longer some charming robotic and electronic creature that shows no emotions. He disappears and leaving his laughter still echoing behind at the diabolical glare I gave him and within minutes I can hear joyful laughter coming from the other room. The feminine sweet voices threatening at my man and masculine voices clicking their tongues. I take a deep breath and forcing myself into getting up regardless of having my knees vibrating like empty vessels. Have you guys also had this kind of. . .you know ahem sex before? How was the aftermath?

“Nomzamo! Did you kidnap her again Muziwenkosi where is she?” I hear a female voice shouting “Mongameli he kidnapped her again” she says with laughter in her tone. I get up eventually and quickly looking in a closet. Oh he bought me an entire store of dresses? And it’s exactly the way I love them in terms of fabric and texture and designs. “Nomzamo!” The voice doesn’t sound far anymore instead it’s followed by footsteps when the door handle turns I become rigid but someone quickly closes it “Hawu Muzi move!” they’re fighting and laughing over the door and banging on it. “Is she here?” she asks, their sonorous laughter elicits my smile. It’s hearing the sound of his carefree laughter from the outside.

“Yolokazi you can’t go in there” I hear Muzi responding and the door handle keeps turning from left to right. . .Oh this is that one who cooked undercooked chicken? Ha ha I am yet to finally meet her. But why my hands are becoming cold? Well because Mthabela always speaks highly of her, actually he is fond about all his sister in laws.

“Why? I want to meet Nomzamo. Were you guys. . .Hah! Hah! Weh Mongameli the reason why Muzi was not opening the door is because he was having sex. Zobuhle come and help me!” Where can I hide? I want to turn into a vase or something that could be a decoration or something. I quickly clad my dress

and using my hand to comb my hair. I don't look like someone who was having sex actually.

The door opens and my urethra is full, ready for my urine to move down my legs but instead Mthabela walks in quickly and closing the door behind while still laughing and two other feminine tones outside laughing with him. "I am coming with her" He says and locking the door then turning to me flashing the beauty of his white stones "Are you okay?" I nod my head rapidly at him and playing with my feet "You don't have to meet them if you're uncomfortable" Now he's solemn "And you don't need their approval in anything" I step closer to him and circling my hands around his waist, looking up at him. "That look you're giving me is dangerous" What look is he talking about? But I smile at him and flapping my eyelashes. "Are you ready?" I nod my head rapidly as he kisses me chastely then taking my hand. Oh thank God they're not standing outside the door. Already there's music playing loudly in this house. This family laughs a lot when they're together.

The moment we appear heads turn towards us and his brothers have grins on their faces and holding onto glasses of juices. I cannot see alcohol in sight, unusual because last time their throats were opened and they were drinking like damn fishes yet today they're sipping on decorated liquid with a platter on the table with fruits and other healthy food—not cooked

though. “MaMbatha” that’s Menzi and even today he somehow gives me a fatherly aura and it’s powerful. Before I can open my mouth a woman with long dreadlocks that are decorated and beautiful enormous earrings walks into the room. What a beaut! And those wide hips in that dress that holds her perfectly are just. . .God is really a woman and she has a such a beautiful smile on her face.

“I am Yolokazi. . .” she is says with a tone full of mirth and opening her arms for a hug. I take a step closer before I am in her embrace and she smells lovely and flowery “Oh nice to finally meet you Nomzamo” You should see how the brothers are staring at us as if they’re seeing two aliens on earth and now re-uniting. I don’t get to say another word when she takes my hand and leading me into the kitchen where there’s rest of the women. No one is drinking alcohol or even touching pots instead there’s already cooked meals they came with in white ceramic bowls. “Can’t we drink wine in mugs? I am going to faint” Yolokazi complains and gulping the glass of juice and turning to smile at me.

“I wish that was possible” Bulumko looks at her glass of juice and her tone laced with nothing but sombreness and I am sure she’s imagining it as a mimosa or some champagne that tastes like stars against taste buds “The conversation you had with these men ndlunkulu really had them reflecting and looking

back to who they are and after doing that things are slowly but surely falling back into place by just acknowledging their ancestors and going back to their roots not because they have to or something might happened to anyone but because they're embracing it" she says and pushing away her glass from her and shaking her head. These women—ha ha ha. "But what if we really drink wine in mugs ke guys?" What's the sudden change of mind?

"The thing is I know the Mthabela ancestors whether you believe in superstition or not. Or you think they exist but they show themselves and sometimes not in a tasty way but bitter. I lost a child because of them. . .we did everything we could with Mongameli to save all three of my children and I just had two. If it means going back to being Nazareth in this family so that no one find themselves in the situation that I was in then so be it. But I cannot lose anymore. I cannot bare seeing anyone in pain anymore" In two minutes that I've known Yolokazi I can already tell why this woman was chosen for the throne. It's not many words she has said but it's the transaction. How she can be this sweet and welcoming person and that have this sovereignty about her. "And I know what happens when they possessed you. What did you do Nomzamo when they possessed you?" she asks me—now she sounds comical than two minutes ago. Anyways they haven't possessed me.

“They haven’t possessed me” I smile.

“Trust me I’m sure they have. They’re powerful. You see me? They made me go down on my knees when I was serving Mongameli food for the first time” Laughter erupts in the room and she’s shaking her head “Hmmm today I’m a queen and you know why? I’m possessed mntaka bawo and I’m a mother of. . .I’m still calculating wait” she’s literally counting with her fingers and deep in her thoughts “I’m a mother of six” What? I don’t believe this. Her body refuses to agree with what she’s saying.

“I’m a second wife because I was possessed even when my parents tried to be exorcist I ran away from home and went to Menzi’s workplace” Zobuhle says with a smile. I don’t think I’d have the kind of relationship she has with Bulumko sharing a man honestly. . .ska screama gore (I’d scream) and murder Mthabela for even looking at another woman and bringing her into our love nest and home.

“When God created these men he gave them the looks and made sure that the sex. . .hmmmmm the sex” that’s Sthayiselo who was Melusi’s second wife but now the only one because the first wife left—they said she was divorced. Well Sthayiselo is very aesthetically pleasing with a head wrap that’s beautifully draped around her head and a dress that shows the beautiful of

her emollient skin. “Ah ah I swear that’s the reason or one of the reasons I agreed into being the second wife”

“You Nomzamo? What did you do when you were possessed?”  
Oh how about you tell them that after they’ve left you’ll tell your man all about this conversation? Tell them you’ll narrate the entire story has it is. Tell them that. . .eh eh Solela Rochelle Mbatha. Please tell them when you’re possessed you tell your man even the things he’s not supposed to know, tell them—my subconsciousness says and tugging her head and flapping her dramatic long lashes.

That’s not me!

I don’t tell Mthabela things that I am not supposed to tell him. Okay maybe sometimes but it naturally just happens.

Oh so you agree that you’ll tell him about this conversation after they’ve left?—my subconsciousness plagues me with a question.

I’m just wondering who gave her the right to question me? The audacity of this woman with red wig in her head.

“I went to his house with only an underwear and sheer robe to tell him that I hate him only to lose my virginity” I tell them and taking a sip from a glass of juice that Imiyalo has poured for me has laughter erupts “And that was a day my parents showed up with police since they thought I was kidnapped” Yolokazi is

laughing the loudest and even spilled her drink from laughing. As I am laughing a picture just flashes into my mind and my heart starts beating rapidly because. . .I am just seeing things. There's nothing. Absolutely nothing. I take a sip from a glass of juice.

"Every time when I hear this story I just laugh. How did your parent. . ." I cannot hear what she says after that because in my mind it's like I have travelled into another dimension and I am sitting down watching something on a television screen. It's my mother—I flutter my eyes closed upon seeing a child being ripped away from my mother's womb painfully and she starts guttural sobbing and her white dress covered in blood.

"Nomzamo" I hear a voice calling me and I whip my head up to see everyone gazing at me with concern in their eyes. Did I murmur something or said something? I doubt. "Are you okay? You're shaking" I look at my hands that are trembling.

"I'm fine" I assure them with a smile but I cannot stop the shivering of my hands "I need a bathroom" I excuse myself and they all have amiable smiles and solicitude. I walk out of the room with my feet propelling me to the bedroom and feeling sudden pain in my abdomen. It's unbearable like I am the one being ripped like that imaginary picture that I saw. What the hell is going? My eyes want to shut and my head is buzzing— Out of all days why is this happening today?



I take a sit at the corner of the bed feeling beads of sweat on my forehead but I am not sweating. . .does that even make sense? That picture just flashes again but this time my mother is covered in blood yet she's holding a child in her arms that's being strangled by an umbilical cord. "Nana" The door opens and Mthabela walks in "Nomzamo what's going on?" I cannot look into his eyes now because I'm going to cry. This happened the day my brother died. I saw a scary visual picture but the person that was holding a gun looked like a shadow. And now this? This. Couldn't this happened when they were no people around? Ah ah the pain again. It's like a sword being plagued into my womb. "Nomzamo talk to me" now he's holding my hand and the moment our eyes lock the rivers of my tears flow. It's not a hysteria but tears just overflow and he doesn't dare saying another word but he takes me into his arms. Holding me tight and eliciting all other emotions I didn't know were there. "Calm down thingo lwami"

"I'm scared Mthabela"

"What happened?"

"A picture just played in my mind. . .I just. . .I'm in pain in my lower abdomen" I tell him gritting through my teeth and now he starts panicking before he walks out of the room after making me lay down. In a nanosecond Yolokazi, Bumluko and Zobuhle are here and chasing Mthabela out. "Can he please

come in? I need him” I really do. I only want him and no one else. They’ve placed a warm bottle on my abdomen—this is not period pains but bloody murder.

“First take these pills for your pain then he can come in and if this continues we are taking you to the doctor” Yolokazi says making me comfortable on the bed.

“I’m fine” I lie and they don’t acknowledge that instead they start fussing even more. I don’t want to sleep. Actually it’s the fear of seeing that picture again. After taking the pills they walk out of the room and Mthabela walks into the room and quickly comes to snuggle me on the bed with his hands around me.

“Everyone is worried about me ain’t they?” I can hear the men in the other room asking inventible questions.

“Hmmm and they don’t want to leave”

“Can we go back? To the living room so everyone can see that. . .”

“Nomzamo are you on periods?”

What the fuck!

“The doctor said I won’t have my monthly visits since I’m on injection” I want to turn around and see his face but. . .that question was very uncomfortable.

“Nana you’re bleeding!”

I don't know what's going but it could be a normal bleeding. . .not really normal since the bed is suddenly covered in blood but everyone is now running around like headless chickens. I am in Mthabela's arms who've just changed me. I'm still trying to make sense of everything but nothing has some sort of logic for me. I cannot understand the apprehensiveness in everyone's face and the anxiety. It's bewildering because I don't know which question to answer between "are you okay?" and "are you in pain?" because I am not okay and yes of course I'm in indescribable pain and I cannot understand the picture that was a caused of all of this.

What if God is punishing you for. . .you know sucking his thing into your mouth? What if he's trying to show you that you're going to hell?—can my subconscious just rest? That's all I'm asking for. Her just taking a vacation and relax because this is not the time for her to drown me in guilt. Not when my man has tears shimmering in his eyes and holding me to him. Not when we have cars following behind and Menzi making phone calls I don't know to who. Everything is happening all at once and. . .and the picture repeatedly plays and the pain increases as well and the bleeding continues. This is not normal period blood. "Mthabela" I look up at him and my heart is accelerating; he looks into my eyes that are painted with pain "If I die. . ."

“You’re not dying Nomzamo!” I also don’t want to die but I’m scared. “You’re not dying so don’t say that” Okay fine.

“What if God is punishing me because I gave you a blow job?” Oh he thinks this is funny? As much as he attempts to hold back his laughter but he fails that sound comes out slightly and his broad shoulders move up and down.

“God is not punishing you”

“Then what is this?”

“The doctor will have a better explanation”

•

Upon opening my eyes there he is on the couch and doing something on his phone with a frown. I was sedated upon arriving here and I don’t know what happened right after that. “You’re awake!” that’s what he says the moment he whips his head up. All the panic that was dancing in his eyes has vanished but the concern is pretty much laced there, “let me call the doctor”

“What’s wrong with me?”

He takes a deep breath “It’s nothing”

“I was bleeding” he gets up and comes to the bed next to me and making me lay on his chest, again he inhales sharply.

“The doctors cannot find anything. Yes the bleeding is abnormal but they cannot find anything wrong with you”

“You are the fairy tale told by your ancestors.”

They couldn't find anything wrong with me so make it make sense why they still wanted to keep me in that grey painted room that smells like vaccine and pills. Even though Mthabela wanted me to spend the night since they wanted to run unnecessary tests I fought. I want to be home. I'd rather drink a bottle of painkillers to numb the pain that I am feeling than laying on that bed facing the ceiling and drowning in unnamed emotions and the cement is drying in my chest. We are all drowning in perplexity because there's no explanation behind this. His family really was fussing and fighting doctors especially Yolokazi who was throwing threats.

Breathe!

I open my eyes to be met with nothing but darkness the dream was vivid and again it was the same visual image that I saw and the pain on my lower abdomen is now bearable. . .like period pains starting to crawl before they feel like swords duelling in your uterus. I remove his hands around my waist and he's peacefully sleeping and his breathing just as tranquil. I look at him with a smile on my face and quietly walking out of the room to the empty room that has canvas and painting brushes switching on the lights. I don't know whether this is an inspiration to start painting again or my ancestors

communicating with me but whatever this is—it's blood-curdling with fear strangling me with both hands making me suffocate.

I take a sit on a wooden chair and with a paint brush in between my fingers after dipping it into the brown color then it moves gently against the white board. I have no idea of the outcome but my hands keep moving succulently until I hear birds chirping outside and the sun is starting to outstretch like an eagle in the sky. I don't stop mixing the colors and moving the brush against the canvas. Everything is blending and coming together—I can see the face of a woman and the beauty of her brass hair in the painted picture.

“Thingo lwami” That's his voice as I am staring at the picture that has finally come together a woman looking down to her swollen stomach with tears glimmering in her eyes and the baby in her stomach is strangled by an umbilical cord which means it won't make it out alive. My own water beads are burning my eyeballs with acid and taking deep and shallow breathes when I turn to him and he walks through the door. “Woza la” he calls to come closer seeing my emotional state and taking me into his arms, stroking my back and inviting tears in my eyes, “We are going to be okay” you see what I said before? This man uses plural. “How is the pain?” When we got home I couldn't do anything or even move from the amount of

pain I was experiencing. I shrug my shoulders and clinging into him. Which pain? The physical pain or the spiritual pain because of the perplexity of everything. “Let’s go back to bed and I’ll make you a cup of tea” This romantic gesture as he takes me into his arms holding me tightly into him and looking down at me with passion and adoration is the reason why I have a smile on my face as he places me on the bed gently and kisses my forehead and eyes then walks out of the room. What was the meaning of that painting and the vision that I saw? I mean why was it my mother? That day what she meant when she said I was a gift child?—I close my eyes and breathe.

I hear his movements and he walks into the room with two cups of tea, giving me one before he comes on the bed and taking my head to his shoulders and kissing the bantu knots he braided so I could fall asleep. “Nana I think this is a traditional thing and we need to consult with isangoma and also tell your mother. There has to be an explanation into this. You can’t just bleed and then it’s gone” The seriousness of his tone pierce through the silence and the slight chirping of birds in the early hours of the morning “I saw the picture you painted. Is that what you saw?” he asks me and I look up at him.

“Maybe this was some sort of inspiration to paint and nothing much” I shrug nonchalantly and he frowns at me as if he’s seeing a demoniacal creature going down on its knees begging



God for another chance. “We don’t have to take it that far honestly”

“This is not candy crush Nomzamo” But. . .but what does candy crush has to do with this? A game? Oh he means this not a game, he could’ve just said that, “I’m calling your mother and she needs to be here as soon as possible and isangoma” After that he takes a sip from his cup that means his way or highway and now nothing I’d say or do that could change his mind. I’ve always found fascination in everything traditional but somehow the idea of consulting isangoma is just terrifying. What if he or she tells my mother that before all of this happened I had Mthabela’s phallus in mouth and I made his toes curl? Me, yes.

“But I’m telling you I’m okay” That look was just enough. No words are needed. After that he’s on his phone and calling someone while I’m taking sips from the cup of tea when sleep revisits. I lay my head on his thighs underneath the duvets as he strokes my hair and talking over the phone until I fall asleep peacefully this time.

Strange isn’t it? That I woke up without any trace of bleeding or that unbearable pain? And regardless of telling that man that this was a some sort of inspiration for my painting he’s not having it. A knock comes from the door that could be either my mother or isangoma that he called here. “Where is she? Is she okay?” Oh that’s my mother the moment Mthabela opens the

door then I hear her footsteps because she's always wearing high heel shoes. Well she's looking as beautiful as always in a dress and a matching head wrap and she pulls me up by my hand taking me into her arms "I was scared. I thought something happened to you" she inhales and exhales. In that moment my aunt follows. The dramatic one. And she's wandering her eyes around the house. . .I would've appreciated it if my sister was here but she's nowhere in sight. I know she would've turned this into something comical. "Rharha couldn't come because of her morning sickness. Thank you for calling me Muzi" she turns to Mthabela who just sat opposite us and instead of him being scared in my mother's presence

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my mother is.

"Ma I called you here because this is serious" he says rubbing his hands against his thighs and my mother glances at me then him frowning.

"What happened?"

"Nomzamo saw a vision and then she started bleeding yesterday. We took her to the doctors and they couldn't find anything so I consulted isangoma and she's on her. . ." he doesn't get to finish his sentence when a knock comes from the door "that should be her" I can feel shivers running down my

spine as he gets up and my mother looks more afloat with her agitation than I am and they make an eye contact with my aunt before Mthabela walks into the room followed by a woman in a short hair and wearing red and black with traditional prints attire and beads. And the moment she walks into the living room she growls and moving with her shoulders.

“Eh eh!” she says and closing her eyes. That sound was guttural and had me holding onto my breath. “Hmmm” she says in deafening silence “Can I have candles only the white ones. And you please leave the room” she says to my aunt. Oh we are not greeting and introducing each other? Okay. Mthabela leaves with my aunt and I don’t know where is he taking her then he comes back with a candle and after she has laid a red and black fabric on the floor we are asked to take off our shoes and I lighten up the candles. “Hmmm” she growls and starts praising her clan names and calling on her ancestors with the smell of an incense burning in the room. Then I am asked to blow the bag with bones before she throws them on the floor and burps then growl “What have you been seeing in your visions?” How does she know that. . .I hope she doesn’t see that I’m sexually active. What would I do?

“My mother. . .” I pause “she’s holding a baby that’s being strangled by an umbilical cord”

“That baby is you” What is that supposed to mean? “You were not supposed to be born and your mother knows that because she ran away from her duties, she’s spiritually gifted but she ran away from that. Your mother knows she was not supposed to have a child but she begged the ancestors and she was given you but she knows that it meant you will not have children, she made that sacrifice. In your spiritual journey you are going to help your mother have children and other women in this family but you won’t have a chance to have children. This man right here. . .both of you are chosen to be together in a spiritual world and physical world” At this point I cannot hear what she’s saying. I am suffocating. My heart is choking me so much that I am afraid of looking towards Mthabela—I cannot give him children.

“What do you mean we cannot have children?” Mthabela “And my ancestors what are they saying about this? What are they doing?”

“Her mother made that sacrifice and there’s nothing your ancestors or anyone can do, she won’t bare children in her womb” she says after a growl “both of you need to start your spiritual journey and bare in mind that you will go through this journey together. You’ll help each other” I expected Mthabela to be the one stronger than the both of us but instead he just got up from the floor with his chest heaving.

“Tell my ancestors they can fokkof for all I care. I’ve done nothing but everything they asked me to do and they cannot do one thing for me? One? We want seven children and that’s exactly what they’re going to give us!” that came out as a roar and tears shimmering in those beautiful eyes with brown iris before he walks out of the room. I am here rigid. All my senses are not working. I can feel the coldness of my tears though against my cheeks as my mother continues speaking to isangoma and then she walks her out and come back to find me on the same position. All these years she was listening to me talking about how many children I want in future but. . .but she knew that could never happened? Why? Why she couldn’t tell me because—the emptiness I am feeling is not impassive but lucid. How am I supposed to help women have children when I cannot help myself?

“Nomzamo” she comes and kneel in front of me attempting to touch me but I yank her away. I can help women in this family have children but I cannot have my own? What’s more cruel than that? Tell me. Just when I was starting to believe that ancestors are there and our shields and then this? This? There’s no way I am taking that spiritual journey. “I-I-I. . .” she’s stuttering and choking into her mouth.

“Leave!”

“Nomzamo listen I. . .”

“You could’ve stopped this from happening ma”

“I couldn’t. . .”

“Ma you could’ve stopped this but you didn’t. I want you to leave” Everything and every part of me is experiencing pain that vocabulary cannot describe. No scientists can understand it either. I remain here stationary with my head still bowed and tears crawling out of my eyes “Leave ma, leave!” I scream when she tries touching me again. And I can hear than see her crying when my aunt walks into the room and in that moment I hear their footsteps and the door closing. All the emotions that were expanding on my throat finally explodes and the waterfalls in my eyes stream through the hallway of my cheeks. A gut wrenching sob escapes my mouth and my body yet trembling.

“Nana” I don’t want to see his face. I get up with my head remaining bowed and attempting to walk pass him but he grabs me by my hand and pulling me into his arms. This is what I did not want. Him evoking my tears. I cry. I cry. His hands and his warmth deep through me. I look up at him through the foggy vision to see his reddened eyes darting between mine.

“I’m sorry”

“What are you sorry for?”

“That I cannot give you children. I know you didn’t want them but. . .”

“Nomzamo!” he pesters “We are going to have our seven children do you hear me? I don’t care how but we are going to have children”

“I think we should break up”

“That’s not happening so don’t even think about it. None of this will change how I feel about you. Nomzamo Mbatha I love you”  
Aww Muziwenkosi Mthabela if only you knew the love that burns me for you and leaves me liquidity. You’ve possessed my mind, body and soul and it all belongs you. A part of me became a part of you in so many elements that I cannot even describe myself. The pain I’m seeing in your eyes is the reason I want to run, far away and don’t bother looking or turning back. I wish I can paint our own happy ending. “Nana” he calls me through my turbulence thoughts.

“Mthabela”

“If you’re planning on leaving me just know that would be the end of me”

“What about our seven children Mthabela?”

“Thingo lwami look at me” his hands are laced on the either sides of my face wiping my tears with his thumb “When I say we are going to be okay then trust me”

“three women, going through different struggles”

“Nana!” I hear his tone piercing through the room illuminated by the lamp and it smells like paint. “Nomzamo” Again he calls me and this time his footsteps are coming closer and closer matching the tempo of the brush I have in my hand moving against canvas, my chest is suffocated by cotton wool with tornado of desolating sadness and finally the warmth of his hands seeps through me turning me around and making me stand on my feet after my hands have been trembling—the waterfall of tears that has been oozing from my eyeballs threatens anew “You need to come to bed and sleep” he says his hands massaging my waist and we’re making intense eye contact.

“What’s the time? We have to pray” I cannot recognize my own voice since it sounds hoarse, the word prayer makes him remain impassive. It has been hours since. . .the taste of this against my buds is bitter and sour not forgetting choking. . .it has been hours of finding out that the dream of our seven children will remain a dream that’s laced with pearls and diamonds. “We need to pray” I’ve never felt an urge to pray like this before. A part of me have high hopes that God can hear and responds.



Instead of getting a response he takes me into his arms as though I have wounds underneath my feet and unable to walk. My hands are on his chest and I am attentively looking at him and the beauty of his sculptured face when our eyes meet the intensifying electric wave runs through my blood stream and my heart beats abnormally fast as I fall in love with him all over again. “Mthabela. . .” I call him as he gently places me on the bed and covering me with a duvet in a dark room “we need to pray, you introduced me into praying because you believe in it. We need to pray”

“I’m not praying” Excuse me? “I have so much respect for uMveliqangi and my ancestors and I’ve shown them that. What have they done for me?”

“They gave you me”

Hehake you think this is a movie? Or Netflix?—my subconscious asks and taking one last sip from her cognac and shaking her head before she burps.

After those words a light flicker on and I am beneath him as he looks at me with eyes that are shimmering with tears and his warm breath against my face, then he shows me his crispy white stones in attempts that his tears don’t fall from his eyes “Nomzamo Mbatha” he has never called me like this before, ever. With such seriousness “Ngiyakuthanda” When your man

reminds you of the love he has for do you feel your pulse becoming rapid too?

No but my clitoris dances and I just need him inside me. . .and by him I mean your man. Because your man, is my man—my subconscious sticks her tongue out already drunk and her eyelash attempting to fall off.

“ . . .I wish you were aware of the things you do to me thingo lwami” his voice keeps growing raspy and tears prickles in his eyes before they fall down his cheek. Our eyes are still connected. Our breathing is short and shallow. Our chest are heaving. Our fingers are intertwined and my eyes slowly becomes moist upon the emotions looming between us. “I saw that painting. . .you’re not less of a woman because you cannot have children” Strange how he always connects and understands my paintings at just one look. “You’re not less of anything”

“Well you didn’t want children so. . .”

“That was before meeting you. Of course I was afraid and I am still afraid and have fears of becoming a father one day but obviously I will mess up and that’s okay. We are not perfect thingo lwami” Immediately he interjects.

“You have nothing to fear now” I swallow the stones in my tongue down my throat.

“I have so much to fear because seven children is what we’re going to have. And we will have them the natural way” Then he smiles and trail his fingers on my cheek. This man—what a charmer “Do you know what’s the natural way?” Now he’s smirking roguishly.

“Sex?” I crease my eyebrow

“Hmmm and our third born will be conceived through a hard fuck” Why the third? What in the world? What is wrong with him? What happens in his mind? Now he has his bottom lip in between his teeth and the tears are still there

just dancing and no longer wanting to shatter in his eyes. I am beneath him and drawing patterns on his biceps. “Or maybe our first born so he can be strong yabo?” Our laughter erupts in a room. I laugh and laugh. . .until that sound suddenly becomes a gut wrenching cry remembering that we could make love or even fuck as he says but this conversation is nothing but us dreaming. I dreamt of being a mother. Lord knows how much I’ve always wanted to be a mother one day to hold a fragile human being in my arms after they have been growing inside my stomach for nine months. The thought of having someone besides this man on top of me sucking my nipples always brought up some sort of elation within me. “Thingo lwami” Now he’s holding me into his arms. My head on his chest and his hands laced with comfort and tender wrapped around me,

squeezing me in and followed by kisses on top of my head. “We’re going to be okay” he repeatedly says. Again and again until his words sink into me like melted caramel on top of vanilla ice cream. I cry and cry until eventually my head is heavy and my eyes completely just shut.

This morning is exactly as I am feeling. Again I am painting and clad in sweatpants and sweater with my natural hair falling down my face but this time my muse is a man that makes me feel like everything is going to be okay. A man that makes my body float into galaxies. A man that grooms and makes me grow mentality and spiritually. This is him on stage like the first time that I saw him wearing a tank top that perfectly mould his body and showed the perfection of his arms that are graced with veins. I swear I’ve never seen him in his own utopia like on stage and oh. . .when he looks down at me as his name rolls out of my tongue as a powerful orgasm comes crashing like a tidal wave. “Mthabela are you not going to work?” I pick my head up to glance towards him and he’s at the corner of the room sitting on a cushion with white sage burning in a room and he has a laptop in his thighs. “You should be at work” I look at the picture I am painting and this—this is the most beautiful piece of art I’ve ever worked on but I don’t want him to see it as yet it should be a surprise but he decided to come and sit at the corner of the studio and say nothing. He’s not distracting me but allowing me to be in my element.

“Nana are you indirectly asking me to leave you alone?”

“Yes” I answer and then chuckle seeing his facial expression, then glance towards the painting of him holding his guitar closely to his stomach and his hairy wrist bands shows how much he’s deep within spirituality. When I look towards him with a smile he tugs his head in perplexed “You’re so beautiful dali” I compliment him randomly and he pauses what he’s doing on his laptop and looks at me before he puts it away. Before he can get up and come here I’m the first one too, quickly. I don’t want him seeing the painting. I sit on top of him with my legs straddling his sides and my hands around his neck “Uyazi umuhle kanjani? (Do you know how beautiful you are?” I look down at him and massaging his scalp. A rosy hue covers his face and smile comes alive.

“Hhayi Nomzamo!” he nuzzles on my neck and I can feel than see his smile there before he can look at me again. I see all the summer colors blooming on his face as I wiggle my eyebrows at him “Nana” Now there’s lust in his eyes “Why you’re not wearing a dress?” he mischievously smirks at me.

“Because I enjoy seeing you taking off my clothes. . .” When he opens his mouth to respond literally his phone starts to ring. These days people have no timing or whatsoever. After clicking his tongue he takes his phone and answers it but his face goes from annoyance to solemnity as he speaks over the phone with

such a respective mannerism until the call ends and then he turns to me breathing out.

“That was your grandmother” That whose grandmother now?  
“she took my number from Rharha. I need to take you home”

“I am home”

“These days you keep giving me reasons to change your surname because mine will suite you better” Nomzamo Mthabela. Can someone ululate? Can someone sew my wedding dress? Can someone just—okay let me breathe. “Have you thought about marriage before?” he furrows his eyebrows.

“I never felt a need to get married one day to prove a long time commitment with a man I am in love with. This for me is enough. Being in your arms like this. Having you in a room as I paint. Watching you sleeping. It’s all enough for me”

“This is all enough for me but I still want to cry upon seeing you walking down the aisle”

“You’re giving me all the reasons to want to walk down the aisle”

We smile and smile and smile—Are we asking each other to get married? Marriage? I am so young for that. Wait, wait when is my birthday?

I also forgot—My subconscious says. Again she's drinking cognac and red bull.

“How about we have this conversation again when we come back? The elders wants to talk to us and we have no choice but going”

“I don't want to go”

“We have to go thingo lwami”

The drive home was silence with our hands holding and mine graced with kisses and my fingers also sucked as well. Okay not entirely silence because we somehow sang along to the music playing in the background—it was his songs. I still need to retouch the conversation about him making music again because his voice has a power of healing. I felt my wounds no longer bleeding and needing ointment as his voice danced in my eardrums, the heaviness in my shoulders evaporated like it was never there before. And then he was humming along. I kept my eyes on him and listening to the sultry sound coming from his mouth and watching his fingers drumming against the steering wheel. I don't know what's the reason we're being summoned home but I know that when I said I wanted to walk away from this relationship because I cannot have children at that moment I wasn't in a right state of mind. I cannot walk away from this, us, and this man.

We get off the car at once and I've changed into a dress as he takes my hand leading me to the door. I knock as though this is not my own home remembering what happened the last time we were here. My father who was running behind the car and begging my mother to come back. The ruckus that erupted when my sister pulled out his dirty laundry—I remember all of it so vividly.

My grandmother is the one who appears behind the door with a ravishing smile like the ray of sunshine opening her arms for me “Nomzamo” she comforts me in her arms and tightly holds me, inviting tears in my eyes. I'm not going to cry. I'm not going to dare to cry honestly—not now. “Come inside both of you” she says after kissing my face and hugging Mthabela next to me then she looks at me and smiles. We walk inside the house and this is a full blown family meeting. My uncles are here and some men I cannot recognize. I've never seen my father this nervous in his life. Rharha takes my hand and leading me into our room immediately. I don't know what's going on but she has an urge to tell me something. After walking into her room she takes me into her arms and holds me tight. This is all I needed. . .Of course Mthabela comforted me but I wanted this from my sister who thinks it's okay to call me green mamba and also makes fun of every situation. I wanted to sniff her sweet cologne and just cry. “Did you give him the blow job?” What the fuck? I am crying and covered with mucus and all she wants



to know whether the lessons she gave me worked in my favour. Whose sister is this? Wait why is she my sister actually? “I’m joking I wanted to see that smile on your face. I love you till the end”

“I’m okay” I tell her. Even though she hasn’t asked me how I am. Attentively she looks at me and not acknowledging my lie.

“I know you’re not okay green mamba but we are going to be okay and we are still going to cry together but I have something to tell you”

“Are you pregnant again?” I widen my eyes.

“What the fuck Nomzamo? No. I want you to hear this from me before anyone”

“What happened? You’re not moving ain’t you?”

“No but I am getting married. . .ahem I agreed into being a second wife”

What the fuck?

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“Why fight her and not him?

Are you not both victims?”

**R H A R H A**

Breathe!

Before she walked into the restaurant she inhaled deeply into her lungs then pushed the glass door with nothing but trepidation, walking between the wooden tables and someone who has a human growing inside her she looked like walking and breathing perfection that oozes confidence then she flicked her hair. A man she doesn't yet understand what's he making her feel is the reason she's here, remembering she once made an oath to herself in a bathroom wearing matching black underwear with candles illuminating a room that she will never, ever commit to man and then a married one walked into her life and everything just went from right to left. And since that day they were at a hotel when she announced her pregnancy and threatened to murder him they have been talking and meeting and sexually intimate without any regrets revisiting her whenever she walked out of the room. The only time tears prickled at the corners of her eyes was when he was thrusting deep inside her, slowly and succulently while breathing down

her neck and said “marry me Nandipha!” those words rolled out of his mouth velvety again and again. And her hands were held on top of her head, their fingers intertwined and their eyes connected and a powerful orgasm was approaching, all that she needed was one last thrust and she’d shatter. And all he needed was a response looking down at her seeing her eyes glossy as he paused doing his necromancy on her. What he was feeling for this woman was nothing less or more than what he feels for his wife. . .as egocentric as it may sound but he was in love with both of them equally. “Nandipha marry me!” Again he proposed one of his hands laced on her stomach and connecting the blip growing there.

As she opened her mouth to respond unexpectedly he thrust deeper inside her and she screamed “yesssss” with her eyes shut and tears falling down at the valley of her cheeks at the amount of euphoria she was feeling, “yesssss!” she said again and again with her nails digging into his skin until it changed pigmentation and he grunted at the pain.

Breathe!

Now she looked around the restaurant until she decided to take a sit at the corner by the window with a wonderful view of tall buildings and houses with impeccable architecture when she got a message that who she was meeting will arrive in the next two minutes and now her agitation was starting to suffocate

her and immediately asked for a glass of water with a slice of lemon from a waiter before staring at her phone in her hand, tapping her ombré manicure against her phone screen.

“Rharha” a sweet and smooth tone said, she had no choice but picking her head up, her eyes almost jumped off the table and bounced up and down. Oh my whenever he spoke about his wife she didn’t think—this was perfection a goddess who wears her ebony skin confidently with dreadlocked, half-shaven do and crystal strung. And she was wearing a white asymmetric dress underneath you could see her perked nipples

she was effortlessly sensual with a body of a super model.

“You’re expecting me” then she smiled which Rharha wasn’t expecting she came here thinking she could be violent but. . .a smile? That was unexpected “Can I sit?” Damn she had the most sultry voice that she couldn’t speak and all she did was nodding her head nervously and putting her phone away. “I’m Kelela Khuzwayo” she extended her hand for a handshake.

Funny enough both these women were afloat with agitation and the other with also guilt of the amount of pain and hurt she might’ve caused to the other. “Before we can even begin this conversation I just want you to know that I have nothing against you but my anger is all directed to my husband and not you” her heart was beating rapidly fast. Remembering that day her man walked into the room when she was filled with

ebullient to make an announcement that after all these years in their marriage, a miracle happened.

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“What’s wrong?” she asked him furrowing her eyebrows as he sat at the corner of the room on an armchair and playing with his wedding band and she could see that something was wrong. Well since weeks ago he has been acting strange and absent. This time she took a deep breath and took a step towards him to take a sit on his lap and his hands were around her waist deeply looking into her eyes. They always make an intensifying eye contact it was a way of them communicating, he always called her intellectual sexual. This woman was intelligent and could hold a deep conversation and debate, she fed his mind with amazing knowledge and enlightened him. And she also fed him sexually in a most exotic way, god damn she was a fucking beast in bed. “Talk to me” she spoke in her smooth and sensual tone that awakened him sexually—he hoped that she won’t feel that she wasn’t enough for him because she is. God knows he never looked at any other woman besides her until. . .until he met someone who made him feel exactly what she made him feel.

“I’m sorry” those words came out of his mouth with tears prickling at the corners of his eyes. The last time he saw him in this emotional state was when. . .she swallowed the denim growing inside her mouth remembering that bitter past event when she woke up to her sheets covered in blood and the human that was growing inside her was no longer there. “I’m sorry” Again he said and holding her tightly into him as though she was planning on running away and never looking back.

“What happened?”

“I met someone. . .” before he could finish she was already cold and rigid. But not showing any emotions or whatsoever just remained in his arms and watched tears spilling from his eyeballs, her hands burning and wishing they could land on his cheek as a punch and watch him bleed. “I am sorry” Again he apologized.

“You met someone and what happened?” That accent of hers since she was an Ethiopian decent always made him hard especially when she was moaning closely to his ear “You slept with her?” it came as a surprise that she was still calm.

“Yes and. . .and. . .and” she has known her husband for years but she didn’t know he was suddenly a stutter. She creased her eyebrow at him “And she’s pregnant” that was a punch into her solar plexus. This is what she wanted to announce to him that after years of trying they were going to be parents but. . .but he

went on and made another woman pregnant. Wait, he cheated and not used protection and now there was an innocent soul involved.

“What else you want to tell me? That you’re in love with her and you want to marry her?”

“Yes” she started hearing bells in her head, she was asking that out of anger and she didn’t mean. . .she wanted to remain tranquil as possible not for herself because if it wasn’t for the four months human growing inside her then this man would be hanging from a tree, death. “And I want you to know that you are—

“My flight is at seven which means I have two hours left. I have to go” she didn’t know where she was going but she was going to take whatever flight that was departing in the next two hours.

And now here she is opposite a woman her husband has admitted to be in love with. A husband she hasn’t seen in the past few days and have been ignoring his calls and knocks and sending back his gifts. Strange enough she hasn’t hysterically cried as the society expected her to, she was numb to the core that all she ever did was waking up and sitting in front of the television screen until the sunset.

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“What are you eating?” Kelela asked Rharha and going through her menu. Again she was surprised how she was handling this. Then she looked up at her seeing how beautiful she is. . .she couldn’t console herself about how she looks, hmm that’s how us women comfort ourselves.

“I don’t know what are you eating?” the conversation between them was naturally flowing. They kept stealing glances towards each other with nervous smiles and look back to their menus “I am going to have some pasta” finally Rharha made her choice, and placing the piece of paper on the table and leaning back while fiddling with her fingers.

“I think I’d go with pasta as well” Kelela giggles softly. Everything about this woman was just sensual even her body movements, the sound of her voice and her giggles. They waved their hands at the waiter who took their order and then disappeared leaving silence looming between both the beautiful goddesses who’re enchanting in their own unique way.

“I wanted to apologize for hurting you in any way. I didn’t know that he was married. I’d never hurt another woman like that



because I am a woman myself. I know the pain and I've witnessed it"

"That means so much to me" Kelela says and genuinely meaning it. "But you agreed to marrying him didn't you think that would hurt me? And no I'm not asking in an aggressive way or fighting you. Do you love him?"

"I don't know how to answer this question without being honest and hurting you"

"Nothing hurts anymore" she smiled weary and when she said those words Rharha wanted to be handed a shovel so she could bury herself. Again guilt suffocated her. "I already know that he loves you. . .do you love him?"

"I'm in love with him" Rharha said and blinked as her acidic tears burned her eyeballs "I'm sorry" she meant it. It was just two words but they held so much power. "I'm not going to marry him" she changed her mind right there and then seeing the pain in this woman's eyes "But all I am asking for is that he'll be present in our child's life. Including you because you're his wife. I've seen how my real mother caused pain into a woman who's been a mother to me and. . .I wouldn't want to be put you through that Kelela. I am really sorry" her tears touched her chin.

"Can you keep a secret?"

Rharha nodded “Do you want us to bury his body?” she asked. And Kelela erupted with sweet laughter and wiping off her tears and elicited Rharha’s laughter as she remembered that her sister also always laughed through her tears because of her dark humour “I know a place” she said again still laughing and the waiter placed their food on the table.

“We could go to jail but it’s better if we turn him into liquid” Kelela said. Strangely she yet didn’t feel an urge to grab this butter knife and stab this woman but. . .she also didn’t understand why she was so platonic with her. “I’m pregnant. It been four months and he doesn’t know”

Rharha gasped “Why you haven’t told him?”

“We’ve lost children before. I wouldn’t want to be excited about this one only for us to lose her as well. I’m asking you to please don’t tell him and don’t let it slip your mouth. . .” she said and then chewed the pasta in her mouth “this is our first sister wives secret”

“I don’t think you should be hiding this from him. You should share this journey with him and you’re not losing this child” Rharha paused remembering what she has said “sister wives?”

“You have my blessings”

“But. . .”

“As much as it hurts but. . .you didn’t know. We are both victims and you have my blessings but if he asks for the third wife then you can show me that place”

“I thought turning him into liquid was a better option”

“Whatever works” Kelela smiles but she couldn’t stomach anything and therefore she called a waiter and asking for a takeaway before she turned to Rharha “Remember our secret”

“Can I change your mind?”

“Nothing will change my mind. And take care of yourself and that little one”

“Ahem can we. . .we can attend our first appointment together if you don’t mind”

“Sounds great but he should be there and again thank you for the apology it meant so much to me. We will talk” she got up from her chair after the waiter gave her takeaway and when she turned around her man. . .their man was standing behind them with palpable emotion on his face. “It was great meeting you Rharha” Kelela said and attempting to walk pass but he blocked her with begging eyes. “Lunzulu move!”

“And if I don’t?” he asks in a deep tone.

“I’ll turn you into liquid” Their inside joke made Rharha laugh from behind but then quickly composed herself and looking

down at her pasta. This made Lonzulu curious. What if they sat on this table and they were planning how they'll murder him? He darted his eyes between both these women and breathed out. "Move Lonzulu" she said again—the way she said his name was too exotic for him. "Can we talk?" "No"

"Please" instead of responding to him she pushed him gently and then walked away. As she stated her anger was directed to her husband and not the woman who was just a victim as she is. He stood in the middle of the restaurant and watched her disappearing behind the door and then turned to Rharha.

"You better follow her if you know what's good for you" Haibo—he thought. What was happening? What were these women plotting against him? He gazed at her with bewilderment. "Lonzulu follow her" she said again seething and he attentively looked at her before he left and took out his phone and called one of his brothers.

"Khuzwayo" Limakwande answered.

"I think Rharha and Kelela are planning on killing me"

"Yoliswa would help them" That's their mother. . .

"This is serious"

"What you thought was going to happen? Rest in peace in advance"

“Monogamy is a choice but we are polygamous creatures”

“Are you okay? Is everything fine?” What is wrong with her? Has she fucking lost her marbles? What? Did she say polygamy? “Do you need pain killers? What did they give you? What’s the name of the drug?”

“I am fine Nomzamo” Aw she looks and sounds fine so what is this she just say “I know it sounds. . .I know how it sounds but I’ve made my decision be this is what I want” she tells me with raw emotions laced in her voice and I attentively look at her “I met the first wife”

“What’s going to happen now you’ll also take a second husband?” I ask her.

“Nomzamo!” she dramatically rolls her eyes at me and then shakes her head “No” she boldly responds back to me.

“Isn’t strange how we’re always glorifying polygamy but a woman who takes polyandry is always shamed in our society? Everything a man does is always right but not a woman” I say and attentively she gazes at me and batting her long lashes “I’ve never imagined you sharing a man but maybe having two husbands is something I wouldn’t be surprised of. I don’t know for me personally the idea of polygamy just tastes bitter against

my buds. I am not against it or anything because it's out of choice when one chooses to get into but it's how we are always expecting the two women to get along and love each other and be so accepting because of a man. It's how it all started Rharha. Fine you love him. Fine she has accepted you as the second wife but. . .but the way this started I'm against it" If it was a mutual decision between the wife and husband where they sat down and both decided they wanted polygamy then I would've been elated about this but what about the other woman? Who has to accept that her man is in love with another and her emotions are just invalid? Or maybe it's different in this situation but there's an understanding or whatever but no matter what's the case—the husband cheated on his wife and there's nothing distasteful as that.

"But I spoke with her and I genuinely apologized for hurting her in anyway"

"And your expectations were her accepting your apology and moving along with it? Because you've seen your wrong and you understand her hurt since a woman walked into her marriage and now she has to share a table with?"

"What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing is wrong with me Rharha but I want you to see and know that while you're celebrating your love and marriage with this man another woman is in indescribable pain and sleeping

on wet pillows. You found out that he is married, of course the fact that you didn't know that he is married was and is forgivable but after you found out what did you do? You slept with him didn't you?"

"I'm not the one who ran after him"

"But you could've stopped everything from happening right? Again I don't want you to see this as me being against the decision you've made but I'm your sister. I'm the only person who'll be honest with you without being scared or afraid. I'm genuinely happy for you, trust me. I love this for you seeing you happy and glowing with that diamond ring on your finger. . ." I smile at her softly until a smile appears on her face ". . .I hope your apology to that woman was genuine and I hope she finds it in her heart to forgive you because karma never leaves any stone unturned" I know that monogamy is a choice and we are naturally polygamous creatures and we are loyal to our partners out of respect—now when you cheat on your partner where is the respect in your relationship?

Our conversation is interrupted by her phone as it starts to ring and she glances at it once and she grins before answering her call. Is that her to be husband? "Kelela, are you okay?" she answers the call. Who is that and why there's so much mirth in her tone when talking to this person? Does she have a new friend and never told me about? I don't want to share her. "I'm

fine and yes he's been trying to call me as well but I ignore his call" she chuckles and then look at me once "We must make him run around the city naked. But are you okay? And how is my baby?" Rharha has given birth already? "I'm glad you're okay. Come where? You're in Cape Town? Okay I'll get back to you but maybe I can come in the two days. . .I am sure he'll lose all his marbles

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change location? Okay that's perfect. Okay sort that and in the mean time. . .Oh oh that's great take care of yourself" she hangs up the call with a smile still painted on her face "That was my sister wife" she's still blooming with tropical colors. What? That—she makes polygamy look and sounds like rainbows and sunshine. Or maybe it's how it was portrayed to me. Personally I'd cut myself into half if ever a man cheats on me.

The first wives are always not so good looking and antagonists who runs to traditional people to destroy the young wife. And then the second wife is always painted as the most beautiful woman the husband has ever set his eyes on and he loves her so much and completely forgets about the first one. I've seen it in books and pretty much in reality as well. It really irks me.

"You guys seem to have platonic relationship"



“You should see how beautiful she is. I’ve never seen someone so beautiful in my life” Excuse me? Am I not standing here in front of you “After you of course” she says immediately after she has seen the facial expression on my face. “I think I might be going to Cape Town to see her”

Whoa, she’s seriously forgetting about you. You are not her sister anymore. Her sister is now her sister wife—my subconscious spreads all these negative thoughts in my mind.

But we are interrupted again when the door slightly opens and my mother walks into the room with her iris red and including her nose. You can tell she has been crying makes me wonder what has been happening in the living room because obviously there’s a meeting. Regardless of her being in that emotional state she’s still so beautiful and matching from head to toe from her head wrap to her shoes. “Rharha can I talk to your sister?” she asks for privacy. No, I am not ready for this conversation. I am not ready to be reminded about—I am not ready. “Just a few moment and your grandmother asked for you downstairs” my mother says with a slight smile. It lasted for a second but it feels like eternity.

We are now left alone in the room and she’s still standing by the door and I am planted on the same spot and abusing the muscles around my muscles to stop myself from crying. My heart is thunderous and treacherous. And my breath burns like

acid as I take a breather into my lungs. “Mzi was not your son?” That one question that has been strangling me erupts and I bluntly utter first. I gaze at her and she chews her bottom lip and tears prickling at the corners of her eyes. “You said I’m your gift child. And what about him?”

“You’re my only child” I can hear the pots and bells in my head. I can feel sweat draped on my skin and I am drenched. My breathing had been knocked out of me. “You’re the only one I got to hold in my arms”

“And I’ll never hold my own in my arms ma” I blink at her and she hangs her head low still standing and now holding onto the door knob. Greedily gulping for air.

“After months and years into my marriage of not giving your father children his family was starting to insult me and calling me names. After losing a child after another. It was hard and what choice did I have Nomzamo?”

“Respond to your calling. That’s all you needed to do. What now? I should also be insulted by my in laws because I won’t be able to give Mthabela children? You made a sacrifice so that your daughter can go through what you went through?”

“Your father didn’t want me to go on with intwaso” Isn’t that man a traditionalist of note? “And I was scared too. I was young”

“You said you are happy in your marriage just months ago when we spoke how true is that?”

“It was very true. Every relationship has its trials and tribulations just like mine and your father but I love him. . .I was happy”

“Trails and tribulations?” I tug my head in “A man who constantly brought different children in this house and abused his power on you made you happy? All you ever did was making sacrifices for him and making him happy but has he ever made any sacrifices for you? And what are those sacrifices name one ma”

“You won’t understand Nomzamo”

“No one understands more than I do because you know why ma? I met a man who loves me so much and won’t ever stand in the corner and watch me as his family insults me about not being able to give him children. That man is the one motivating me to take my spiritual journey and wants what’s best for me. Ma I know how love feels and I know how it feels being loved and being happy. You are not happy and you were not happy and this. . .this is not the love you deserve and I hope one day you walk away and find someone or something that makes you genuinely happy” I say to her and then walk pass her out the door as tears are laced on the valley of her cheeks and as I turn I hear her gut wrenching sob. I want to. . .I want to hold her in

my arms and console her. But one day who'd hold me? As I cry and in pain who will since she took that away from me? I haven't realized the anger I have growing inside me and it's roots spreading on every part of my body until my body trembles with the poisonous emotion that I am feeling. In the living room there's an intense meeting happening. And Mthabela is nowhere in sight. What? And no one bothered to tell me when he was leaving?

My father is crying as one of the men I cannot recognize is talking to him and when they see me their heads turn around and their voices die out. "Nomzamo, mshana come here" I guess he's my uncle huh? I mean he just called me his niece but anyways I stride to take a sit far away from my father. This man, that man I cannot even look at him. He's hanging his head low and crackling his knuckles. My grandmother is just sipping from her tea without any care in the world that her son is busy snorting. "Your boyfriend has just left" Now they announce "Because we were sorting out some family issues but we have spoken to him about how it's important for you to have umemulo. Nomzamo they're a lot of things that has to be done in this family"

"Will that be any help to me?" I ask creasing my eyebrow.

"Yes. For all of us we'll be guided to the light as a family. Your father has to apologize to our family for not allowing your

mother to take the spiritual journey she was supposed to undergo and also for how he has been treating her. Umemulo has to be done for you. We need a ceremony for your brother and also introduce your other siblings to the ancestors the one your mother never got to hold. Then you can start your spiritual journey”

“After that what’s going to happen? After we’ve introduced my siblings? Will I have children in future?” I ask and my grandmother gazes at me with melancholy and suddenly her tea is too hot for tongue and throat. My uncle looks towards my grandmother and then my aunt who has tears shimmering in her eyes and hanging her down.

“Nomzamo. . .” my grandmother.

“I just want an answer gogozi” I pester.

“That would be impossible” It doesn’t hurt. Trust me I am not hurting at all. Instead I am smiling and rapidly nodding my head. “We have to go emakhaya to make preparations for your ceremony”

“Okay” I answer back to her. “Can I leave now?”

“Yes mntanami when we are done talking to your father I’ll come to you”

“When they call, respond”

Wait!

Basically what they’re saying here is “Nomzamo please help us resolve our problems but after you’ve helped us yours will remain unresolved my darling but we are also here for you” ha ha ha funny isn’t?—I guess cohabiting it is. I am not going to have any ceremony now that. . .excuse me there’s nothing happening under my name.

Yes that’s on purrr—my subconscious says and doing a peace sign with her fingers, her glossy lips pouted and batting her long lashes.

“Baby girl uyahamba?” A taxi conductor says the moment he sees me approaching and his feet propel him towards me “Uyahamba ma?” Again he asks me whether I am coming along. I couldn’t take any of the cars home because they would’ve been able to track me. And I couldn’t take an uber as well that’s also traceable. Well I don’t have my phone with me, I am unreachable so no one will figure out where I am at. “Hawu woza baby girl” Now he’s walking beside me and I trail a gaze from the flip flops he’s wearing that shows his clean and delicate toes and shorts. “Ngena! Ngena! Asambe!” The way

he's loudly banging on the door I almost crawl out of my own skin as I make myself comfortable on a leather seat and the piqued loud music fry my eardrums as amapiano fills the entire taxi with disco lights. Immediately the driver manoeuvres the taxi on the road and at the back seat they're four drunk passengers whom are smelling like alcohol and perfume and arguing about who's going to pay and who should've stayed behind.

I glance at them behind and then look outside the window with my head leaned on seeing the sun disappearing already in the sky and dusk is slowly approaching. "Where is everyone going?" I hear a driver asking and looking at us on the rear view mirror.

"Where are we going?" One lady in white braids asks from the back seat and then chuckles "He he he wena where are you going heh?" she asks the driver who glances at her once on the rear view mirror and then focuses on the road changing his steering wheel after he has changed his gears. "Driver!" she screams "Where are you going wena? As in you. Where is that you are going?" After that she burps. Now her friends are asking her to stop being chaotic. "Haibo nina he can ask where we are going but I cannot?" Once again she burps and furrowing her eyebrows "Driver we are going to emcimbini" Is that a place? "Emcimbini ilapho ozongithola khona!" she sings and then erupts with laughter clapping her hands together.

“Nonhle stop it man!” One of her friends reprimands her once again “We are going to Umhlanga” The friend responds and the conductor is the one who sends the message to the driver who’s attentively looking at the burping and singing woman. I steal a glimpse at them again and they’re looking absolutely gorgeous and as though they spent hours lavishing in the mirror. My subconsciousness could be friends with them.

“Nonhle stop this nonsense man!” Again the friend says.

“Haibo Londiwe!” she exclaims with a high pitch husky tone “Yey inkinga zami zine nkinga zazo don’t dare me! (my problems have their own problems)” I have never related to anyone in my life than her. You can hear the pain in the sound of her voice that she’s attempting on numbing.

What if we leave with them since you don’t want to be found?  
You have problems

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she has problems, everyone has problems let’s go to emcimbini—my subconsciousness is already looking for dresses to wear on her wardrobe. Is she out of her mind?

After just few minutes they’re getting off the car and they compliment me before they ask the driver not to kidnap me since I am the only one left. “Girllll take my number and call me when you get home safe” one of them who doesn’t seem too



drunk with a shoulder length fringe weave says. I don't have a phone but I use a pen and a paper that the driver has given me "If you don't call in the next three hours I am calling the police" Tears prickles at the corners of my eyes by our encounter and just how hard it is being a woman in this country. But also just sharing this moment and getting hugs from them. Do you know comforting is an embrace from a stranger? You have no idea don't you?

They close the sliding the door and I say a silent prayer underneath my breath and I am only left with two men. "Give me directions to where you going I'll leave you there" The drive says with just impassive facial expression and drumming his fingers against the steering wheel and I show him directions until he is parking outside where I've never imagined myself ever coming.

I have mixed emotions because of the nostalgia this place is bringing. I take a deep breath after waving at the driver and making my way towards the door and knocking twice while getting enough breath into my lungs. "Nomzamo" A voice that belongs to what was once my friend says and her eyes are out their own volition. Reminding me of the same day she called me like this as she appeared behind the door with a humongous stomach months ago when it was her baby shower "Ahem. . .what are you doing here?" I cannot really read her

face. What am I doing here? That's a really good question. What am I doing here? "Uhm come in!" now she shows me her white stones and her cheeks spreading into a smile and she takes my hand leading me inside. "Are you okay? What's going on?" I am following right behind her with our hands holding but I become rigid when she leads me into the living room where they're people gathered around the table with alcohol and sharing gales of laughter including what was once my best friend but upon seeing me all faces become marbled.

"I didn't mean to intrude and I didn't know you have guests I should leave. . ."

"Nonsense Nomzamo, come in. Follow me let me get my glass. You guys know her right no need for introduction" Karabo says and taking her glass of wine.

"Of course how can we forget someone who went on and slept with her friend's man?" Manthe comments and tugging her hair behind her ear—Excuse me? I didn't sleep with no one's man but mine. I slept with him after they ended what they had and by then he was my man. Okay technically he was not her man by then or whatever that he had with her.

This bloody chameleon is rude!—my subconscious seethes. Did she just. . .did she just? He he he. I cannot believe she called her a chameleon because she has enormous eyes.

“You won’t be rude to Nomzamo because she did nothing wrong. And she’s not here for any of you but me” Karabo immediately says and I am surprised that she’s standing up for me while my once upon time best friend who called me a green mamba is just sitting there and saying nothing. I had expected her to give me a hellish look or even beat me up to the pulp by now but. . .nothing instead she remains nonchalant. “Let’s go Nomzamo” my hand is being taken and Karabo leads us to the kitchen. It still looks the same. Like that time I was here to fetch alcohol for everyone and he just walked in and we kissed. I want to smile at this past event dancing on my mind but I cannot. I wonder what is he doing now. Is he praying? Is he composing? Or he’s drowning himself with work—that’s somehow becoming his copying mechanism these days. I just. I just want us to be okay and that’s why I needed to be where no one would guess I’ve gone so I can catch a breather.

“Are you okay? Is everything okay? It’s so great seeing you?” Karabo pulls me in for a warm embrace and we remain in each other’s arms for a while until she pulls away from me and attentively looks at me “A lot has been happening. I wanted to call you and find out how you’re doing but. . .I have been in and out of hospitals when my son was sick and I couldn’t get time to myself cause I was just always there”

“I’m so sorry. How is he?” I ask her.

“We lost him” I don’t know what in the world is God saying to me or what sign is he giving me but I am suffocating. “Oh God he fought. He fought and fought but eventually he gave up” A sad smile appears on her face then she takes a sip from her drink “How you’ve been? I’m glad you came here because I recently just found out about everything that happened I was never told”

“We need to pray” I don’t know where is that coming from but I just said it and she frowns at me. “Ahem if you don’t mind can we go to your room and call your man. We need to pray Karabo” There’s something burning me from within. It’s volcanic and the lava travels from my heart to my stomach. This urge to pray is so powerful and I cannot control it. Karabo leaves the room to call her man and we make our way to their bedroom. They’re perplexed with what in the world of Israel is happening.

We kneel on the floor with a white candle, glass of water and bibles and our hands are joined. I am glad she had given me a head wrap and what comes out of my mouth makes me travel into my own spiritual realm and the interstellar energies are here—surrounding us. I can feel the divine power in our presence but I am not fully aware of what is coming out of my own mouth as I pray. “Amen!” that’s all I hear in my consciousness and opening my eyes Karabo and her man have

tears in their own eyes and holding each other. I need to leave this place right here and now. Why did I even come here? What just happened?

I get up and wanting to escape. “Nomzamo” Karabo calls for me and looking up from her man’s arms “Don’t leave. Nqubeko please give us privacy” Her man nods his head and wiping her tears while she does the same to him with smiles in between. Aww her womb will be blessed with beautiful fruits. Yes, she had received what she has been yearning for. And those who have been speaking evil on her name won’t succeed—that’s the message.

Nqubeko mumbles something to me I cannot make out but he smiles genuinely and then leaves the room. “Nomzamo what’s going on? Talk to me? And don’t say it’s nothing because we both know that’s not true. What’s happening? That was powerful and your presence. . .whats going on?” she cannot find words to describe this either.

“It’s a long story Karabo. We’ll have to talk some other day”

“I have all the time in the world”

Sigh—I tell her everything as we are sitting on her bedroom couches and she attentively gazes at me and listen to me with her facial expression changing at every word that I murmur to her afterwards she hugs me again. “I am sure you might’ve

think I am not a true friend but there's so much that has been going on my side. I have nothing against you after what happened with you and Bontle. Awwww Nomzamo I am so sorry" I guess she's referring to the fact that I am infertile hmm? Great. "But how are you? And how is Muzi?"

"We're fine. I'm okay"

"I know you're not and it's okay not to be okay. I know the pain but I cannot compare yours to mine. I want you to know that I am your friend that I was back then and I am so sorry about this. And thank you for coming and the prayer. Thank you so much Nomzamo you don't understand what it did to me. I've been in so much pain but. . .I suddenly feel at peace" Then she pauses "Oh Nomzamo I cannot imagine how you're feeling" she says after a while and brushing my knee covered in a dress and then smiles wearily at me "You're going to be okay"

"Thank you so much" I sigh "I have to go. Can I use your phone to make a call?"

Well I wanted to disappear without anyone finding me for some strange reasons but now I want to be home in our love nest as he said on a lovely early afternoon before we were thrown in this world that has no vocabulary to describe it—I am holding a phone in my hand and it keeps ringing and ringing then goes unanswered until I attempt one more time.

"Muziwenkosi Mthabela sawubona"

“Mthabela” I say the moment he answers.

“Tell me you’re okay” He sounds panicked. I know he is and surely angry too but mostly his perturbation kept levitating.

“Nana please tell me you’re safe and okay”

“I need you to fetch me”

“Where are you?”

“I’ll send you the location”

“Are you okay?”

“When I’m with you I will be dali” I say placidly and he breathes out that’s him being relief from bondage of agitation.

“Ngiyakuthanda Muziwenkosi”

“Thingo lwami” I can hear a smile in his voice “Did you think about what we spoke about?” Didn’t I say I love him?

That doesn’t matter. Did you think about what he spoke to you about? And what was that? How come I don’t know?—My subconsciousness glares at me with her hands against her hips.

“Mthabela I love you” I repeat.

“And I love you too. Okay fine we will talk when I get there” I don’t remember what is that we spoke about. We talk about a lot of things. What is that we spoke about?

I have sent him the location and La Lucia is not far from here. I think it's a ten minutes' drive or so only if he's at our new home but if he's somewhere else then it may take longer for him to get here.

Oh he is here!

He just sent a message. I announce to Karabo that I am already leaving and she accompany me when we get to the living room Bontle stands and block me. "Is this why you came here? For everyone to see that you're still with him? To prove a point?"

"Ha ah Bontle she came here for me" Karabo.

"Where does your loyalty stand?" she turns to Karabo "Have you forgotten what she did to me?"

"I don't know what else you want me to do Bontle because I apologized to you"

"Bring back my man Nomzamo! I want what belongs to me"

Oh no she's smoking ecstasy. No it must be cocaine. Actually she's on xanax. No ways she must me on molly. It must be codeine. I think its amphetamine—I am flabbergasted by the amount of drugs my subconscious knows.

"Didn't you say this guy never loved you but it was sexual relationship so how is he your man? You're fighting a wrong



person. Just fight with the one you were sleeping with.  
Nomzamo let me walk you out”

“Karabo is this you? Turning your back against me when I was there for you when your disabled child was. . .” Before Bontle can finish a slap is gorgeously laced on her cheeks—pha! pha!—and she holds her cheek. That had to be done.

“Don’t speak about my child like that!” Karabo says and then walk out first. “Nomzamo come!” I hear her voice.



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“Being in a couple is hard.

And committing, making sacrifices, it’s hard. But if it’s the right person, it’s easy.

Looking at that girl, knowing she is all you really want out of life, that should be the easiest thing in the world.

And if it’s not like that, then she’s not the one”

I spend most of my days painting and this room is now surrounded by piece of arts—I normally wake up in the middle of the night or early hours of the morning and find myself here. It has been a great escape from reality. This is my nirvana. And Mthabela is also spending too much time at home and no longer going to work. I think he fears I may run away again or maybe I may do something to harm myself. That thought has never crawled into my mind. Also he has been disconnected spiritually and no longer prays. My family has been trying to reach out to me about the preparations to everything but I’ve created a distance. I don’t understand how is umemulo needed to be done honestly. I feel they’re finding reasons to slaughter a cow and waste money and just have a celebration. It’s not an essential for me to get it done, I just want to bring clarity into the midst. I don’t think my emotions are invalid or even

considered here. Does that make sense? No one has ever asked me how am I doing but all they care about is me being part of these ceremonies that would bring light and peace into our family.

What about what brings light into me? I don't remember getting a call where everyone wants to know about my wellbeing excluding my sister who's provinces away with her sister wife and making their man run around the city like he has lost his marbles. I swear she's making me reconsider and change my thoughts about polygamy because of the relationship they share—it's sisterhood and friendship than anything else. "Ha ah where is she? Where is Nomzamo?" I hear a feminine voice screams exchanging with Mthabela. I am in a studio room painting again. I have completely shoved the thought of going back to school at the back of my brain. Maybe some other time or another year. "Nomzamo wherever you are come out!" I can hear laughter erupting in their tones. I place my brush aside and walking out of the room to find Muzi blocking Yolokazi and Zobuhle from coming inside the studio room. "Oh there she is. What are you doing swimming in paint?" Yolokazi frowns at me and then smiles "Go get changed we are going out. We haven't been out" That's one thing about her trust me, she's not asking me but telling me. I glance towards Mthabela and he has a smile on his face and standing aside with his hands waving in the air. I know this was his idea

and his way to get me out of the house. I know how much it utterly breaks him seeing me despondent every day.

“Go get ready Nomzamo!” Zobuhle says and I giggle as my feet propel me to our bedroom and I strip off my clothes when a door opens and Mthabela walks into the bedroom and closes the door behind. I turn around facing towards him, standing in the middle of the room denuded and my breathing hitches at the sight of him and lust drowning his eyeballs.

“Nana. . .” words rolls out of his tongue as though he was being choked. They’re velvety and exotic. Yes, the sound of his voice still pretty much awakens erotic sensations and makes ntombazane hums a sexual mantra. “Nomzamo I miss you” The melancholy in his voice makes my heart drown at the pit of my stomach and my nauseous builds up on my throat. “I feel like I don’t know how to make you happy anymore thingo lwami. I don’t know what to do. What should I do?” My feet are still planted here with my chest moving up and down, my breath is now short and shallow. “What I should do thingo?” tears are prickling at the corners of his eyes and for the first time or maybe second time? In three months after we have found out about the gut wrenching reality he’s vulnerable in front of me. “Ngiyakukhumbula” Again he says that he misses me and that all it takes for my emotions to expand on my chest and tears to rain from the clouds of my eyeballs.

“Mthabela I am here”

“You’re not here Nomzamo. Ever since I came to fetch you from your friend’s place you haven’t been the same. You don’t want me to touch you anymore. You’re distant. You’re disconnected from the world. You wait for me to fall asleep before coming to bed and also wake up before I could. You don’t talk to me anymore and all you ever do is paint. And I am not against that. You’re despondent and I don’t know what to do anymore”

Yes we are having this conversation with me naked and he’s standing distance apart not knowing what to do with his hands. To hold his head? Hold his hips? Cut them off?

I breathe, “I just. . .I’m scared”

“What are you scared of? Have I not assure you enough that I am not going anywhere? I am in love with you Nomzamo Mbatha. No one else but you thingo” If he blinks those crystalline beads will shatter in his eyes and they’ll wet his cheeks. “What do you want me to do?” Again he asks and I smile at him. I smile because I am witnessing the vulnerability in him. I am reminded of how much he loves me.

“I want you to come and stand closer. You’re so far” I tell him and his cheeks spreads slightly before he takes steps closer to and he halts in front of me and he holds me by waist and deeply looking into my eyes—beyond my soul and bones.

“Mthabela. . .” I think about what I am about to request to him and then swallow “I want you to fuck me” I say boldly and he looks at me intensely first and then smirks. And after that no words are exchanged instead he’s taking off his clothes in one swift and right after that our teeth crash and we bruise our lips at how hardcore is the kiss as he grabs onto my buttocks violently “Ah” I moan inside his mouth—Oh no he’s rough, too, too rough. Maybe because I asked for this. Or it’s a way of him showing how much he missed me? Excuse me but the ooNdlunkulu will have to wait because we haven’t been sexually interacting for the past three months. I was supposed to set up the appointment with the doctor for my contraceptives but why should I bother? I cannot have children anyways so I might as well just enjoy raw sex without any fear of falling pregnant.

I feel stretched. Filled. Like I don’t want to move, the pleasure of having him inside me is so great. I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him, bite at his lower lip, play tongue war as his fingers press into my buttocks with every slow yet deep thrust. I’ve completely forgotten where I am, where we are. It’s just empty space, air to breathe while we are doing ungodly ghastly things—I needed this.

He groans against my mouth, holding us tight together as he grinds his hips into me, circling, then driving upward again. My

breasts bounce with each thrust, and my pelvis is completely slick with moisture. It's running down both our thighs, and I love that. Just like I love hearing him move, the slap of him against me. It's so primal, so uninhibited. Neither one of us is trying to hide our need, our desperation for each other. It's obvious in every guttural thrust, every drop of pre-come inside of me, every suck of my tongue into his mouth.

I rake my hands down his neck to his shoulders. God, his skin is so hot, so hard with lean muscle. I wish I could feel the artwork beneath my fingers as he drives into me.

"Nana" he rasps against my hungry mouth. "I missed you"

"I missed you too" I mumble nearly incoherently.

"Come back to me"

I groan. He's so deep inside of me now my walls are contracting around him. Much more of this and I'm going to come. "I am here" I cry out.

"You're not now come back to me Nomzamo" His fingers brush over the seam of my buttocks.

I can only nod. My breath is stalled inside my lungs and my heart is slamming against my chest. Oh, god—is he? Is he going to touch me there?

"Come back!" He eases his fingers lower



drenches them with my cream, then returns to my ass and I scream and cry and plead. “Nana look at me” Slowly, he enters me with one wet finger. “Is this what you wanted?” Yes! Yes! Yes!

I cry out. It’s too much. Pressure and pleasure. He moves us. Somewhere. A wall, I think. He presses back against it and bears down on me, fucking me so hard I scream, all the while using his finger in slow, gentle strokes. The combination is my downfall. I cling to him, my eyes clenched tight. I’m shaking, convulsing, writhing, a wave of dizziness coming over me. And yet, I can’t stop. I buck against him, moaning that I need more, I need all of him. “Is this what you wanted?” he snarls close to my ear. “Fuck you feel so damn good”

My nails dig into his shoulders as I feel him jerk and grow impossibly bigger inside of me. I gasp, shove my hips forward. I can’t get close enough. His finger presses deeper into my rear and his thrusts go hard, fast and deep, hitting that spot in me that sends me flying. And I’m off, gone. Shattered. Crying out my climax, my eyes flood with tears. Waves upon waves of intense heat lash over me as he continues to fuck me, using my orgasm to send him into his. “Yes this is what I wanted!” I admit and he smirks.

“Now take all of it. There you have it” he groans, thrusting fiercely into me, chasing his high. “You wanted this dick didn’t you?” Oh he sounds so unravelled.

This is Pornhub. Wait it’s Brazzer. No, no it must xxxvideos. All in all this is hardcore porn—my subconscious takes out her dildo and starts to rub her own clitoris before she enters herself already aroused.

I feel the hot rush of his come bathe my walls, and I grip him even tighter, hold him even closer as he eases his finger out of me and satisfies my last clenches of orgasm with four deep, yet slow thrusts into ntombazana. God, this is right. This is it. How it’s supposed to be. Finally, he slows, drops his head back against the wall and wraps his arms around my waist, locking me in. “I love you” he breathes.

“I know” I say dragging my tear-stained face across his shoulder. “I love you too” Without another word, he pushes away from the wall and heads out to the bathroom. Sweat clings to us both as he carries me there with him.

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Zobuhle is the one manoeuvring the car on the road and this woman is invented the word gorgeousness wearing sunglasses

and her manicure is too long—I wonder how does she wash or even touch anything. “Okay ndlunkulu where are we going? We had to wait for the last born to finish having sex. I cannot wait to tell Menzi and Bulumko about the amount of trauma I’ve been through” she says. Why is everyone making polygamy relationship sounds like fun and making me envious? “Yoh! You can scream Nomzamo” she glances at me on the rear view.

“You heard her? “Yes! Yes! Yes!” Haibo. Ngaze ngane traumza ngimncane (I’m so traumatized while I’m so young)” Trust me when it comes to Yolokazi she literally exaggerates everything. I don’t moan like that honestly. No, I don’t sound like that “And when she moans it starts on a lower tone and then it’s a full blown scream. It’s like listening to those opera musician on Umzwilili” The car is filled with laughter “It starts with “a a a” and then right after that it’s “ah ah ah ah” while you’re still traumatized by that and then Muzi follows. . .It’s a symphony” I have jabs being thrown at me. One after another. And Zobuhle laughs with that aesthetic of rich people. You see those people who shows their teeth with their eyes half closed and no sound coming out? It’s just them showing how white are their stones because they regularly see a dentist that’s just her. “But she’s better than you and Bulumko. Omg I’ve been through so much!” I think she just remembered that she once heard them.

“That’s enough Yolokazi!” Zobuhle says and changing her gears yet still suppurating from laughter “Because I’ll also take out your own dirty laundry”

“Hai shame who doesn’t know I am having sex? I have so many children to prove just that”

“You’ve also heard them with Bulumko?” I ask her and laughing from the backseat. It’s a surprise that Zobuhle is still driving yet she doesn’t know where we are going because Yolokazi hasn’t answered. I guess she’s the one whom planned this gateway.

“At once. I heard them scream at once” Wait what is that supposed to me? Does she mean. . .Did they? At. . .I mean. . .No ways. Ah no. I refuse to think about it.

Yes Nomzamo. All three of them were in a bedroom and having sex. This sounds hot. Ask for more details about how they go on about it. Ask them Solela. Ask now!—my subconscious is coming down from her orgasm and on the bed with her legs spread apart and catching breath into her lungs.

“Are we talking about my sex life?” Zobuhle chuckles and turning the steering wheel.

“You have a very interesting sex life” Yolokazi glances at her and the wind is blowing her hair beautifully and she tugs it behind her ears and then grins “Are you guys always having three sum? Or what?” Omg! Omg! They’re really having sex

together in one room and see each other's organs? I mean that what happens when people are having sex. How do they do that?

"We do three sum when we are spicing things up in our marriage it's our way of forming a bond and our choice to form it. Well Bulumko suggested it first and I thought it would be uncomfortable. . .but the chemistry was so amazing when we did it. Honestly if it was for me we'd do it all the time but also it's great having our alone time with our man but rather than that we have a very wildddd sex life trust me" she says with a smile on her face. I want to know how wild is the sex life now. This is so interesting. Why people don't portray polygamy like this? Without any fights between two women or any necromancy involved. "But not as wild as Yolokazi who would literally leave everyone in the room with her man to have sex"

"Excuse me those men have high libido!" Yolokazi says and then shakes her head "Ah ah now that I think about it all of them actually have a very high libido and I am assuming their father had viagra when he was making them"

"Only you would say something like that" I say laughing and clapping my hands together.

"Okay where are we going Yolokazi" Zobuhle asks as we stop when the robot turns red.

“We are going to my house”

What the fuck?—Did this woman makes us dress up to go to her house? “What? You thought we were going somewhere” And she’s laughing and has turned into a tiny insect “Ah shame. You guys don’t ever visit me anyways. We are going to my house and everyone is coming too”

“You should’ve just said we were going to your house”

“But I just said it. Don’t worry we are going to have fun even Kwanda is coming” she says and then turns to me “And that my twin sister who calls her husband ubhuti” she tells me and then turns facing forward. I think she has said this before “We haven’t gathered in a while. The Mthabela and Mcelu family” I guess Mcelu family is somehow their friends “Anyways the Mcelu Nomzamo is where my sister got married too and my friends. Khethelo who is married to my cousin and then Onalenna who is married to my brother in law’s brother. They’re amazing people. We are just going to my house to marinate ourselves for tonight”

“We haven’t gone out in a while. We’ve been busy with our lives and caught up” Zobuhle suddenly sounds elated. It seems like it’s going to be fun. “Are you okay Nomzamo?” she steals a glimpse at me on a rear view mirror with a smile and all I can do is smiling and nodding at her “We should get her drunk” she looks towards Yolokazi who’s also on that mission.

“I didn’t bring anything for going out” I tell her.

“We have Kwanda who’s a stylist and a buyer she’s always carrying clothes with her and then Lulama who’s our friend and a designer also always carrying clothes with her don’t worry about that just worry about how drunk you’re going to get. I just don’t know if Thimna and Thamani are coming. You might be famous as well after tonight when you end up in papers!” Yolokazi winks at me from the rear view mirror.

When we get to her house Zobuhle is the first one to get off the car—this one loves anything associated with alcohol and going out and she grabs that chance when she gets it, ha ha ha. We get off the car at the same with Yolokazi who holds me by my hand and looks up at me. Yes, I am tall. “I want you to know that sometimes you don’t have to carry a child in your womb for them to be your own. I have five children but not all of them are mine and secondly you and Muzi should respond to the calling you have. Don’t stop praying Nomzamo. Trust me both of you are going to be great. Your womb will be blessed. You’re amazing” she says to me. I didn’t think I needed to hear this from anyone until I know “But today we are going to have fun. Get drunk and forget about men and children. Okay” I smile at her and nodding my head then we continue walking.

Great—I am going to get drunk and forget about women and children.

“Family isn’t always blood. It’s the people in your life who want you in theirs, the ones who are there to ensure you succeed, the people who encourage you to be better. The ones who would do anything to see you smile and the people who love you no matter what”

I don’t think anyone understand when we say black women are beautiful. The beauty of our women is sorcery. I am in room with all shades of beauty and size and color. And literally everyone is unique in their own way. It’s that kind of winsomeness that cannot be compared to anyone from different kinds of hair— dreadlocks, cornrows, weave, short hair, long hair and braids. It’s turning to your right and seeing a goddess you never thought existed and turning to your left and seeing a goddess you’ve always seen in your dreams.

“We are taking shots before we start getting ready!” Kwanda walks into the room with a bottle of tequila in her hand. And she looks so much like her sister and the only difference is that she doesn’t have dreadlocks and she has tattoos. Oh she doesn’t have curves as her sister—they call her the “cool aunt” here, I guess because of her sense of style. We have just finished doing introduction. It’s rare seeing women effortlessly getting along without another feeling intimidate or whatsoever. I’ve never been in this kind of environment before. We gather



around the table as she pours the liquid in short glasses and she's grinning. Everyone is elated about us going out. "Okay I am going to count from 1 to 3 and everyone must take a shot and if anyone spills their drink somehow we are taking another shot" What level of being drunk these people want to get? I have such a weak system. Before you walked through that door you had to take a shot. Now this? Already my head is buzzing. I'm used to something light like ciders. A tequila? No ways and this taste so bitter.

"Are we leaving this house already drunk?" Onalenna laughs and she has a long blonde wig and such an athletic body.

"Isn't that the point?" Zobuhle has prepared her throat already and ready for a shot "start counting Kwanda. I am ready!" she rubs her hands together and holding her glass in her hand including everyone.

"One, two, three, go!" We all pick our glasses up and taking shots. No one wants to spill. The moment the liquid burns our throats I hear groans erupting in a room and then chuckles.

"My chest is burning!" Kwanda complains and hitting her chest. I feel like there's a volcano about to emit lava from within me and I can feel the alcohol starting to travel in my system.

"Kwanda do you have something Nomzamo can wear?"

Yolokazi asks her and handing me a glass of mimosa. I just. . . I just had a shot of tequila and they're giving me more alcohol?

Can I get a break to at least catch a breather? “I know Lulama does I don’t even know why I am asking actually. We have to get ready because we are leaving in three hours and I know everyone will need more time than that. All phones must come to me”

“And how will I call Kayise when you take my phone? We have husbands and children to call throughout Yolokazi” Khethelo is the first one to complain, she also has dreadlocks and she looks exquisite in that sheer dress. There’s something pure about her aura, it’s like she belongs to the water—a mermaid.

“I said phones must come to mwaaaa!” she’s not listening to anything or anyone. At least I don’t have a phone with me. All phones are being handed to her. We are served different platters so we could eat and not drink on empty stomach. The music is now wheezing in the air. I am getting in the zone and getting ready with Lulama in the room. Okay I know I said I am surrounded by beautiful women but describing her as just beautiful is an understatement because she’s beyond that word itself with that unique shaped patch around her forehead, she has vitiligo. We are almost same size so she’s the one who’s giving me something to wear. Hmm I am in a room with a global fashion designer who’s work has been called a definition of haute couture. I heard stars like Issa Rae have worn her clothes.

I am painting her face with colors that matches her outfit and just having a conversation when Kwanda walks into the room already giggling. I think we are almost tipsy if not tipsy. We have been complimenting each other and sharing hugs and talking non-stop. Well she has a bottle in her hand and it's now half. I don't know many shots we've taken but by the look of things we are about to take one more. "One shot for just being beautiful. It must be hard being a ten all day everyday. . ." she pauses and snorts as she laughs. Lulama just threw her self on the bed laughing at that. I'm standing in the middle of the room holding a make up brush and exploding. "Imagine saying "thank you. Ngiyabonga. Thanks oe. Hawu thank you so much" everyday because compliments are just being thrown your way. Being God's favorite must be hard. Here Nomzamo two shots for you for being beautiful and having that amazing hair. Lulama also two shots for you for being absolutely perfection" Imagine. Having friends who makes you feel good about yourself and not questioning your worth. Are they my friends? I don't know. But I just took my two shots for being beautiful and having amazing hair. Kwanda pulls us in an embrace and kisses our cheeks "I love you guys. Do you love me? I love you. . ." she kisses Lulama's cheek "And I love you" then she kisses my cheek and grabs the bottle and walking out of the room.

We are done getting dressed up!

And Lulama made me look absolutely dazzling and it didn't come as a surprise finding out what I am wearing was made by her. "You make this dress look amazing on you. You should be a model for my clothes. You look beautiful Nomzamo" she says with a satisfied smile on her face and trailing a gaze at me from my toes to my hair before she takes my hand and we walk out of the room screaming the lyrics of the song playing through the hallway. I think I am drunk or maybe I am already drunk. I don't know but. . .the amount of sadness I have been feeling has been replaced but ebullient emotion and I have been having everyone randomly walking into the room where we were getting ready to give me a hug and kiss and just making sure that I am okay. I don't know whether they're sent by Mthabela or what but no matter what the case may be it means the world to me and maybe the universe or the planet or the. . .or the.

But saying universe was just enough. What was the meaning of planet hmm?—If my subconscious dares taking another shot she'll be drunk and unable to walk.

"One more shot before we leave the house!" Onalenna announces and she's the one holding the bottle now. Kwanda is being romanced by her twin sister. They're now inseparable and on each other's tail. On the other hand Yolokazi is complaining about how everyone doesn't visit since her new

status and we've all made a promise that once a week we'll be together. It must be alcohol speaking but the affection is all around us. "Okay. One, two, three, go!" We pick our glasses up and drink. In that moment tears starts prickling in my eyes from nowhere, the acidic water attempts on falling down but I catch it with my fingers.

"Nomzamo what's wrong are you okay?" Bulumko is the one who takes my hand and leading me to the chair and making me sit "What's wrong thingo lwakhe? Why are you crying?" she asked me with unease in her tone. "Talk me what's wrong?" she asks.

I look at all of them one by one. And then smile. How can people be so beautiful? How does that even happen? What was going through God's mind? "Are you guys my friends?" I ask them and they're eyeballing me as though I am an alien giving birth "If you're not my friends I am going to cry. I will cry until Mthabela gets here. Tell me now are you my friends?"

"Alcohol is really older than us!" Yolokazi says chuckling "Nana is this you?" now everyone is clapping their hands together and laughing at me. What happens after that I am being in everyone's arms as they embrace me. Now I'm not crying—yes, these are my friends and we are drunk. Okay I am drunk not them. I cry when I'm drunk and I am still going to weep. "One more shot for alcohol being older than us!" I'm going to die

from the amount of alcohol I am consuming and I am telling you now.

We are so beautiful, have you seen Lori Harvey with her friends? OTeyana Taylor and Justine Skye we are exactly like them

gorgeous, gorgeous girls.

Hhayi ngidakiwe, ngidakiwe, ngidakiwe!—my subconscious has a bottle of savannah on top of her head and dancing with different kind of facial expressions. I need a new subconsciousness. What is this?

We have been driving and luckily no one between us is behind the steering wheel. The bass of the music and vibrating windows is the reason my eyes are heavy and the reason I can no longer sit down but needing to be on my feet and dancing. I don't like this genre of music but hear me, just hear me out. Amapaino really sound different when you have a tequila and mimosa running through your system. It's like the alcohol injected my veins and muscles and every part of me

just wants to move. And finally we arrive and we've asked to use the back door to enter because we are here with a queen and public figures. I am the only one who's not a public figure here. I'm going to cry.

We are treated with so much respect as though we are made of diamond and gold and what is reserved as our table already has alcohol. “I don’t want champagne anymore. I’m fine. Do you guys have brutal fruit?” Lulama asks as the waiters are attending us. And within a second what she has requested is here. Our opened throats are gulping the intoxicating liquid, bottle after another and the dimmed lights with invigorate disco lights is the reasons why no one is able to sit down on their buttocks. There is Onalenna there twerking on the couch and there we have Imiyalo on the table and dancing.

Kwanda grabs me and Lulama by hands and taking us to the dance floor—I don’t know what is Yolokazi doing on the floor literally but she’s there. Or is that a dance move she’s doing?

We are pushing through the crowd and it smell like sweat in here but no one cares. Everyone is involuntarily moving to the sound of the music. I swear on God that this song is demoniacal. It’s the same one my subconsciousness was singing. Everyone is dancing some sort of dance move and it looks so cool. It requires you to bend your knees and your back and then move like waves in the shore. Lulama is actually murdering it perfectly. Okay I got it. Also your head needs to move like you’re nodding at something but you’re also having some sort of a seizure or something. Do you know fun? Have you ever had fun in your life? No you haven’t when you’ve

never had to scream as your friend is dancing and everyone stepping aside while she grabs all the attention to herself.

We are standing with Kwanda and hyping Lulama and now the rest of the ladies are here with us, screaming that she's our friends and on the other hand Onelanna and Imiyalo are fighting anyone who wants to take a video and bouncers comes to help. The dancer is not stopping at nothing. How does she move like that? No wonder she wore sneakers and not heels— she knew exactly why she left the damn house and that was to have fun. Okay now we are returning back to where are sitting. I need to call Mthabela. I miss him so much. I just need to hear the sound of his voice but I don't have a phone and Yolokazi made it clear that we cannot make calls.

My forehead is covered in salty beads and I excuse myself to the toilet and finding a lady there who's gazing at herself in the mirror so I borrow her phone. As women we become family when we are drunk don't we? We've been throwing compliments at each other and she's going on and on about how much she wants this dress and saw it somewhere. . .I just want to call my man that's all. Finally she hands me her phone and my hands are weak. I can hardly see the bright screen but I can see the ten digits now and the phone is ringing against my ear. "Mthabela!" there's music also playing in his background my voice is echoing in the bathroom "Where are you?"



“Nana I love you” he screams. What the fuck this man?

“Ngiyakuthanda yezwa. Whose number is this? I love you thingo” Didn’t I ask where he is? “Where are you?” I asked first. “We are at Bambatha’s house and we were drinking. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I miss you. I needed to talk you. I love you too and I’m in a toilet with a lady in purple dress. I’m so drunk Mthabela. I had shots, I had so many shots and then Lulama gave me a dress from her recent collection and she made me beautiful. They said they’re my friends and I cried. . .” I breathe. This lady is attentively gazing at me and thinking I’m not okay upstairs. I cannot stop babbling, shame, she doesn’t know I sing when I speak to this man. “We are going to be okay dali right?” I ask him. I don’t want to cry.

“I love you” Again he repeats and I can hear a smile in his voice “And yes we are going to be okay and soon we are going to hold Uyatholwa in our arms” I hear him saying and suddenly sounding serious “I know you think I no longer pray but I’m always praying for us it may not be out loud but UMveliqangi can hear and see my heart thingo lwami”

“Is that the name of our first born?” I chuckle and this lady is getting impatient now. “I have to go Mthabela”

“Where are you? I’m coming”

Heh he wants Yolokazi to kill me?!

“Ngiyakuthanda baba ka Uyatholwa”

This name means you find or you receive, and what I would interpret it as would be some sort of law of attraction. So whatever I put out to God, I believe that I am able to receive it and as well as what I put out in my person, I believe I am able to reciprocate it.

“Nana where are you?”

“Ha ah bye bye Mthabela” I laugh and immediately hang up the phone and returning it back to the woman in purple dress and I thank her. I also bought her drink and a sign of gratitude. I thought we were done with the alcohol and shots but, no, no, no regardless of my throat that’s unable to take it any longer. But I am forcing it anyways. The night is absolutely amazing as we dance, sing, scream and cry our eyeballs off for absolutely no reason until we decide we are gate crashing the party these men have.

The music is loudly playing when we get to the enormous house and it smells like whiskey and cigarette when we get there and meat. These men are having fun without us? Look at Mthabela. How dare he laugh without me around? They seem exuberance with our presence but not pleased with how intoxicated we are and we’ll have to explain tomorrow.

“Nana!” Mthabela’s eyes widen as I dance on top of him with my buttocks coming in contact with his scotch and moving sensually on top of him “Nomzamo!” he groans and cusses underneath his breath as I turn to face towards him and my hands round his neck intently looking deep into those eyes with his bottom lip in between his eyes and he gazes me with lust “You’re so beautiful!” he murmurs and holding onto my buttocks.

“Hhayi stop, stop we heard enough of your screaming today Nomzamo. Move from there, come. Mongameli take your brother. Bambatha tell everyone no one is having sex at your house” Yolokazi is a damn cock blocker.

I want Bambatha—whose subconsciousness is this? I don’t want him. What the fuck? Haibo.

“You’re included Yolokazi you’re not having sex in my house” Bambatha teases her.

“I wasn’t planning on doing so. And please play amapaino. Why would you guys sit here and listen to maskandi?” They’re literally listening to maskandi.

There’s an argument about the changing of music but when Lulama spoke immediately her husband changed music. I can no longer stomach the alcohol anymore. I’m in my man’s arms and he’s drunk and stuttering. Not forgetting how overly

affectionate he is and sticking his tongue into my ear and also biting my earlobe. "We are going to sleep!" Mthabela announces and taking my hand. No one is going to sleep here. "Nana just told me she's exhausted"

"Ninamanga go back to your seats!" Onalenna says.

Haibo!

“This road is yours.

iziThunywa and amaDlozi are as individual as we are as abaNtu bomhlaba.

Like us, they have personalities; likes, dislikes, moods, preferences in diet, clothing and behavior”

I am watching him struggling taking off his clothes and stumbling everywhere in the room. I would be doing the same thing but I am not going through that when I have a man who has two hands and can take them off for me. I'll just sit here and watch him until he's done to peel off this dress. “Nomzamo I love you” Now he's hiccupping and still struggling to take off the tank top. Does he have any idea how intoxicated I am. “Nana” His deep tone reverberates in this room “Nxarga!” I think he has had it with trying to take off this top. “Nana I love you” Now he's saying it in a sing song and trying to catch enough breath into his lungs. I get up and striding towards him and pushing his hands away helping him take off his top. This is comical. Two drunkards having hardship with just taking a top? We are suppurating with laughter as he stumble backwards and in a blink of an eye we fall on the rug in the bedroom and I end up being beneath him. Now he's on top of me and in between

my legs and staring deep into my eyes then he smirks, “Sawubona” he drags his voice and his breath with a mixture of whiskey that he has been drinking and the cologne emanated on him. “Do you have any idea how beautiful you are?”

“Mthabela. . .” Before I can say anything else he wraps his hand around my neck gently at first before he tightens it in a most exotic way making me gasp for air and making ntombazane rain. “You said I am exhausted and need to sleep. I should. . .Hmmm” Now he starts moving his hips and his bulge in contact with my entrance as he thrusts yet he’s still wearing his jeans. The fraction is mind-blowing. I need to breathe. I need to sober up. I need to—damn this feels so good. “You make me happy” I say with a hoarse tone and he tightens his hand, choking me and I breathe out feeling all the erotic sensations moving in waves through me and he keeps moving his hips and mines meet his thrusts “I’m wet Mthabela”

I see an impish smirk appearing on his face and his eyes are squinted with his throat moist with sweat “Tell me how wet are you”

“Why you don’t feel it”

“I’m not going to do anything to you Nomzamo” What the fuck? What is he saying? This man is just awakening all my sensations for what? Ah ah ah. “Get up we need to sleep” He moves away from me and taking my hand helping me get up. Is he serious?

Look at him with those well sculptured lips forming a dangerous smirk that makes me want to. . .touch myself in a way that he taught me. “Nana get up” I take his hand with annoyance on my face and he’s chuckling. “Okay what do you want thingo lwami?” he asks after reading my facial expression.

“I want you”

“Haibo!” Who gave him alcohol? You should’ve heard how he gasped, so dramatically “What are you going to do with me?” I cannot help it. I am smiling, showing all my teeth at him. What an ignoramus. An enchanting one at that. “What do you want to do with me?”

“Do you want me to show you?” I take a step closer to him and his breath hitches. It’s great seeing the amount of effect he on me is mirroring in his eyes. “Mthabela”

“Nana” his breath his shallow

“I’m going to show you”

He gazes deeply into my eyes when I cup his phallus into my hands and my mouth half opened feeling how hard he is. Oh Jesus. I can see him playing with the muscles around his jawline. And roughly he grabs me by my neck and our teeth crash and our lips bruises. Our tongues duelling. His breath on mines. And my breath on his. He brings his tall frame against mine and our bodies sync. My hand massages his male organ

gently as our lips move in a fast tempo. And he pushes me against the wall. I am feeling warm and airy tasting the whiskey from him and making me even more besotted. “Is this what you wanted?” He asks lifting my dress to my waist and pulling down my underwear. My leg around his waist and he plagues a finger inside me.

“Ohhh” I throw my head back against the wall.

“You’re so wet” he says against my lips and pushing his finger further as though he has found the diamond from within me.

“I told you. . .” I cannot finish what I wanted to say as his fingers swirl and curves inside me.

I whimper while he picks up my right leg and hooks it over the crook of his elbow, opening me wider. I cry out as he adds another finger, thrusting so deep that my body slams against the wall. He crashes his mouth to mine, swallowing up my moans as his fingers plunge in and out, and his tongue plays with mine. “Did you think I don’t want you as much as you want me?” He sucks hard on the skin of my collarbone and leaving marks. My muscles clench and squeezing his fingers and when his thumb teases my jelly bean I explode. I was already close. From the time I was dancing on his lap doing what he calls pornography on him my bean was bumping and needing to be touched—to be touched like this. “You should see how



beautiful you are when you collapse in my arms” He then kisses me through my orgasm and then sweep me off my feet.

I reach down and pulling down his jeans making eye contact with him and he intake sharp breath with his rapid fire gaze on mines. I push down his clean boxers and his phallic that’s curvy is resting at his stomach. I reach out and wrap my hands around his buttocks to pull him closer and then my mouth envelopes him. “Nana!” he hisses while I take him deep swirling my tongue around his shaft. “Thixo!” I hear him again with his hands disappearing on my hair and guiding my head back and forth, groaning in time with my bobbing. “HmMMM” I take him deeper and pulling back to look at up at him and he smiles catching his breath but I don’t give him a chance as I lick the tip of his head and he hisses through his teeth and smirking wickedly.

“Do you like that?” I ask him.

“I love you”

I grin in reply before taking him deep again, but after a few seconds, he gently pushes my head away. He moves around me and his hard phallic bobbing in my face and he leads me to the table on the bedroom. “Bend over and hold here” I can feel his erection pressing against my buttocks.

“Oh Jesus!” I moan and do as he says, bending over and supporting my hands on the side of the table. Then I feel his hands on either of butt cheeks before he thrusts inside. “Ah ah!” I gulp and guzzle for breath. And he’s thrusting quickly inside me and spanking my buttocks hard. Spank. Thrust. Fast. Deep. My voice is two octaves higher but not as loud as the voice I am hearing coming from another room belonging to Lulama. Ah ah—That was so deep as though he could somehow sense I’m getting distracted. I can feel a scorching heat ramming between my legs.

His thrusts are unbelievably deep and urgent, making my breasts bounce giddily before me. Mthabela leans into my back, and I hear his palm hit the wall above me, bracing himself as his hard chest moulds around my spine. With his other hand, he reaches around to cup my breast, fondling one and then the other, tweaking my nipples between his fingers. My back arches. “Oh Oh Oh!” I shudder and clench around him once more, and he rolls his hips as he lets me ride it out with him deep inside. When my legs give out, he wraps an arm around my waist and turns me around, lifting me against the nearest wall before pushing himself inside again.

I am overwhelmed and bewildered in the most wonderful way. I’m drowning in him. He surrounds me everywhere as he pounds into me relentlessly, holding both my hands in one of

his over my head while he supports me with the other. His mouth moves against mine while his tongue tangles lazily with mine, and incredibly, I feel that indescribable heat rushing through my body, concentrating itself at my apex once more. "Mthabela I can feel it coming again!" I yell incredulously.

"You wanted all of me didn't you?" he growls and thrusts faster and harder, and I yell and scream and come undone, gripping his shoulders. My nails scratch up and down his back while I wrap my legs tightly around his hips. By the time I'm coming down, I hear him grunt as he impales himself inside me and shudders against my body.

For a few minutes afterwards, our breaths are ragged and I am spread out for him. And finally he chuckles and stands straight and places his hand around my waist to help me get to my feet. "Nana come to my bed" What is he saying? I must come to bed or come to sleep? He kisses me tenderly on the lips as I am in his arms and my legs locked around his waist as he strides to the bed.

I thought we were sleeping but instead I am being gently placed in the middle of the bed with pillows that smells wonderfully and blossoms. "Are you not coming to bed dali?" I ask him since he's standing at the foot of the bed as soon my back hits the mattress and hard once again.

His phallus stands at full attention as he grabs my ankles and drags me down so that my buttocks are at the edge of the bed.

“I need you one more time

and then I'll let you sleep. I promise” My heart chants as he spreads me wide yet my legs instinctively bend at the knee, welcoming him. This time he plagues me gently and passionately and closing his eyes.

And despite the utter fatigue I felt just a few seconds ago, my body automatically responds.

“Muziwenkosi”

I pant as he starts moving inside me yet again. I watch him standing in front of me, his beautifully thick brows furrowed in deep concentration while his hips move rhythmically back and forth. The light of the moon streams in from the windows behind him, illuminating his perfect, naked form. His stomach muscles flex every time he thrusts into me. And his handsome face scrunches up into the most erotic expressions and now he's making love to me. He bites his lip, gazing between my eyes and between where we are joined, his own eyes full of the most delicious lust. “Ahhhh”

“HmMMM” he hums responding back.

I lift myself on my elbows so that I can see what he is seeing.

“Oh my God. Yes! Yes! Yes!” I cry quietly, watching where he moves in and out, disappearing inside me inch by solid inch before slowly reappearing, wet and glistening. My back arches, and I drop to the mattress again, moaning so loudly. And he takes one of my legs and lifts it to his shoulder, raising the other leg to his other shoulder. He pulls me in even closer so that my buttocks are moulded against his thighs. I cry out at how unimaginably deep he starts hitting me. “That was deep Muzi. That’s so deep. . .hmmm!”

“This is me you wanted. Nana this is all of me take it” I hear him saying throatily. “Take all of it Nomzamo! Here you go!”

This continues for a wonderfully indeterminate amount of time. Every few thrusts, he pulls out almost all the way before slamming back in. All the while, my eyes open and close, my head thrashes from side to side, and I’m sure I must’ve drowned in those waters and went straight to heaven. When he suddenly pulls out, I am left empty and bewildered.

He stands there, breathing hard, his phallus glistening and then suddenly, he drops to his knees and his face disappears in between my legs. My back arches completely off the mattress. I open my mouth, but no sound comes out.

“Umnandi untombazana. (You taste so good)” I think I hear him murmur, but I cannot be sure because I am floating into another dimension and maybe Niburu. He licks around my bean

before plunging his tongue inside me and my eyes roll with a low guttural sound escaping my mouth and my body lifting up from the bed but he holds me back by my thighs that vibrates uncontrollably. “Nomzamo hold it in!”

“I can’t Muziwenkosi. I can’t” I cry out. He sucks my bean hard this time and his fingers thrusts deeply I almost choke from my own voice. “Yesssssss!! Yessssss!! Hmmm” I come so hard and so loud I vaguely hope I haven’t woken up anyone. With my body lying there devoid of any muscle, Muzi stands again and pushes inside me once more, thrusting hard once, twice, three times, and then he drops over me stiffly, grunting his own release.

For a few minutes, he rests his head on my stomach while both of our breathing slowly regulates and he kisses me there almost my bellybutton. Then he climbs onto the bed and wrap his arms around my waist, guiding me up the mattress to the pillows. When he spoons me against him, I mould myself into his hard chest, and he kisses my temple.

.

I see my brother standing in the middle of our living room with beseech dancing in his eyes but he stands confidently and looking towards the shadow before he can open his mouth I

hear a gun shot close to my ears. My breathing becomes shallow seeing him going down on his knees and another one goes straight in between his eyes that remained opened. The blood spreads out on our tile floor as he takes his last breath. I cannot see the shadow but I can hear the sound of the camera flashing and then another shot that makes me gasp for air and start crying. “Nomzamo!” A voice pierce through shaking me and I open my eyes instantly.

“Nomzamo” I hear his voice again and he’s kicking off the sheets and kneeling beside me. He grabs me with my shoulders and shake me, tears spring to my eyes. “Nana wake up” I can sense he’s panicking “Nomzamo” My eyes were half closed but now they’re fluttered opened and my pupils enlarged with fear. I stare vacantly at him “What did you see?” I blink and look around frantically and drowning at my surrounding. It was a dream. It was dream but it felt so real. “What did you see?”

“Mthabela”

“I am here thingo lwami. Talk to me”

“My brother. . .a shadow. I heard a gun” At first he frowns and then pulls me into his arms and embracing me “I saw how my brother died Mthabela” A guttural sob escape my mouth and my breathing comes harder and shallow. I am smothered by the emotions expanding on my throat. I cannot breathe now. I

tenaciously grab him closer needing the physical consolation. “I saw him”

“Thingo lwami shhhh” I feel his hand soothing me at the back with gentle strokes as he kisses the top of my head “We are going to pray. I’m sure your ancestors want to tell you something”

“I’m scared”

“No need to be because I am here with you. In the morning we’ll call sangoma and ask what we need to do to start our journey okay. We should pray” He wants to pray? Regardless of being covered with mucus and tears a smile curves on my lips. He haven’t been praying. Not at all. We scramble out of bed to kneel and I cover my shoulders with a duvet since I don’t have a scarf I can drape. Luckily in this house they have scented candles in every bathroom so we use one.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath clapping my hands together. One. Two. I clap alongside with him. “Mveliqangi wena owadala izulu nomhlaba (The Most High, creator of all things). . .” I hear him saying. I know his heart is heavy. I know how deranged he still is at God and his ancestors. I know he doesn’t want to do this but doing it for me. I can hear from the sound of his voice. I hold his hand and squeeze it before I continue clapping my hands and continue praying.



I clap my hands twice at each word “sisondele kuwe ophezulu sivula inhliziyo zethu sibonge ukuthi usasigcinile (we open our hearts and thanking you for guiding us)” Yes—I cannot believe what comes out of my mouth all the time. But I’ve also learnt that I lost all control when the interstellar energy is surrounding me.

I hear a gunshot again close to my ear and the candle switches off.

What on earth?

43

“I’ve realized that no matter where you are or what you are doing

I’ll always honestly, truly and completely love you”

I hope and pray the media stop portraying this place as the only place people run to for sorcery and necromancy. And I hope the picture that has been painted about our ancestors changes but not only that. I pray that as people we learn to respect each other’s beliefs, religion and ethos. “Mkhulu is waiting for you inside” says a young woman wearing yellow and white. And she looks like she bathes in diamonds and glitter. I take yet another deep breath. Ever since my feet touched these grounds I have been burping and yawning a lot.

We are leaded into a hunt where we take off our shoes and make our way inside the house and I thought when she said “umkhulu” she was talking about an elderly man with wrinkled face but it’s a woman. These days I am coming across beautiful women in different forms. I take a sit on the floor opposite her and also Mthabela while the smell of incense dances on my nostrils making me burp once again and grunt with my shoulders moving up and down. “Ouuuuuuuuuuuuuu!” I hear the diviner grunting when my urge to pray suffocate me and

expanding on my throat. I don't know what's happening. "Pray maMbatha. Pray that's what they want you to do!" Unwelcome tears stream down the valley of my cheeks and the man who's my anchor is asked to leave the room—I don't know what's the reason. But the celestial magic in this room is so powerful. I am praying and incredulously yelling that my solar plexus hurts. I scream. I yell. I cry and I call upon God, gods, ancestors and the higher power. I can feel their presence on my shoulders.

"Yeeeeeeeeee!" I hear another grunt from a woman who's opposite me and she's praying along with me and then after a moment my sonorous tone becomes soft and then a whisper after that there's complete silence. "Why you don't listen? Why you don't listen?" Her husky voice resonates me as she shakes her head repeatedly at me with a disapproval look and then she grabs a bag and making me blow before she throws the bones on the floor. "Hmmm. How long you've known about your gift of isthunywa?"

Before you answer her how about you ask her why they call her umkhulu? I don't understand that and it's weird—my subconscious is frowning at me. Not today. Not now. And not ever so I am going to suppress her voice.

"It been few months" I respond to her and swallow. I am still calming. "But I've been connecting with my ancestors through prayer"

“You need to raise isthunywa. Your task is so simple. You need to pray and fast and be away from everyone. Unesthunywa samanzi so you need to pray at the waterfall through your process of raising isthunywa sakho. Do you think only just praying is enough? Is that what you think?” Why do they call you umkhulu?—Again my subconsciousness asks so hassled by this. “Where is your mother?” she asks me and I shrug nonchalantly

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she might be home with her husband. “Your ancestors wants your mother to slaughter a cow as an apology of what she did to you, she threw all her burden to you. Your mother knows she has a gift but chooses to turn away from it. Tell her to come to me and also tell her what I’ve told you. After that ceremony of apologizing to her people the light will shine upon you” I don’t know what light will shine upon me maybe my heart desires. I don’t want to ask about infertility because it has been severally said that it’s impossible for me to have children. I believe Mthabela when he says that the impossible will be turned into possibility. But right now I have accepted my fate and I don’t want to crawl into the dark I was in few months ago. “You’ve been dreaming about your brother?” I nod my head at her and feeling emotions growing inside me.

“I saw how he died but the person who was holding the gun was a shadow. I hear gun shots closed to my ear. I try praying but the candle switched off”

“I see. . .” What does she see? Isn’t she supposed to tell me the meaning of that?

Remember she can hear your thoughts. Do you want to be chased out of her? My subconscious reminds me. “I can see him here and he’s crying. But the same way he took someone’s live is the same way his life was taken” What is that supposed to mean?

“My brother was not a murder!” I defend him. Not my brother—I found out he was not my mother’s child but we are still siblings and the love I had for him then even now hasn’t changed. I know him. The man who walked into my room every morning to give me a hug and kisses me every night couldn’t have been a murder. I swear I know the fatherly love through him. “My brother was not a murder!” I repeat once again, saying those words is smothering me. I don’t want to believe it.

“He has blood in his hands. . .” I am not going to sit here and listen to this woman talk about my brother like this. I perk up and standing on my feet with my eyes drowning in acidic tears. “If you want to leave then fine but go to your maternal home. Go there and fast and pray. Do not ignore the gift you have. Your brother needs you to apologize to the ones he has hurt”

“He has never hurt anyone!” I protest.

I walk out and clicking my tongue. How dare she? This woman doesn't know my brother the way that I do. I won't let her speak on his name in that mannerism. Mthabela is under the tree when he sees me approaching towards him with fire coming through my ears. “Asambe Muzi!” I seethe and walk pass him. I'm sure he had a frown on his face. I get in the car and fasten my seatbelt throwing the scarf that was on my head at the backseat. “Nxarga” I click my tongue again and leaning at the backseat. After a moment I see this man approaching towards him. God you took time sculpturing him and creating him. Today he's wearing iziqhaza. Instead of sliding behind a wheel he's opening my door with an impassive expression on his face but the muscles there are placid—Okay.

“I don't know what happened in there but angidlali mina ngedlozi (I don't play around with ancestors) What we are not going to do is leaving this place when you haven't listened or even disrespected that woman in there”

Tell him she's umkhulu and not a woman—my subconscious says and I glare at her once then this man in front of me and flaring my nostrils.

“I didn't disrespect her!” I mumble and folding my hands against my chest. I look away from him. “In fact she's the one who disrespected my brother”

“How did she disrespect your brother?”

I glare at him once and then ahead. I cannot say this. I don't want to say it because it's nothing but fabrication under my brother's name he wouldn't do that. “Mthabela I want to go home”

“We are not going home” Haibo! Haibo! “Like I said you don't disrespect ancestors Nomzamo. Anything could happen to us on our way home. Or at home. It may not happen now but they'll show themselves to you. You're going to go back and apologize to that woman. If you don't want to hear anything coming from her then fine. But you are not going to disrespect someone who's the closest thing to your ancestors” I don't dare say a word. “Nana” I look at him with his hard stern face and a disapproval look on his face. I have no choice but getting off the car, sullen. I wrap a scarf around my head again and he takes my hand leading us back into the hunt. Nxargh. I wonder where is he going to get sex from for the next seven years. He shall stay using his hands for pleasure. I'm going to walk around the house denuded to see the lust in his eyes and phallus throbbing but he won't be able to do anything about it.

For how many years? Yoh be angry alone but leave me out it please—that's my subconsciousness. What she got to do with my sex life this one? Mxm.

I return back inside and this woman smiles when she sees me. “I would love to apologize for disrespecting you in any way” I apologize. I had to pay as well. I’m glad I am not asked to slaughter a chicken or a goat. But she asked me to make sure that my mother comes there tomorrow before she can take me to my maternal home. And she then spoke to Mthabela privately and now we are going home. I haven’t said a word to him. I’m not planning on doing so. I’m drowning and diving in my thoughts. My brother a murder? It cannot be. I refuse to believe that honestly.

“Before we go home do you want us to buy something to eat or should I cook?” he asks and changing gears. A response from me? I, Nomzamo Mbatha? Not happening. “Nana” I don’t care how charming that sounds but I am not responding. “Are you not talking?” I still don’t respond.

“I love you” I look at him and he’s smiling. Mxm. I look away so he doesn’t see a smile on my face. “Thingo lwami”

“Muziwenkosi”

“I don’t want us to have any problem that’s why I wanted you to go back there” You said that earlier. I ignore him again and he chuckles softly and continues driving forcefully holding my hand to his until we get home. I am the first one to get off the car and he’s laughing—Oh I am comical to him? Is that so? Great.



“Nomzamo!” I hear him shouting from the kitchen “I am cooking dumpling and tribe. Is that okay?” Again he shouts. I can hear movements from here. I am in the bedroom and coming from the shower. “Nana” I’m sure he’s impatient with the response.

“Please put some chillie on your tribe” I shout back.

“Oh you can talk to now?” Mxm. Let me ignore him. Now he’s laughing. Don’t date. Whenever you’re thinking of dating just make sure you block that thought and remain single and happy without a man like Mthabela. Ha ha ha I am kidding. “Okay I’ll put the chillies. Are you coming to help me?”

“Ngiyeza!” I respond back and looking for something to wear in his closet when a brown envelope lands on my feet and the pictures from it comes out. I quickly grab it but instantly my body becomes immobile. I am like the pivot the earth has turned. I am smothered by so many emotions at once and my thoughts raging. I greedily gulp for breath into my lungs and seeing my pictures of my death brother laying on the floor. What are these pictures doing here? What’s this? I try to remain tranquil but I cannot. I sit on the edge of the bed and looking at these pictures. I cry and cry until I decide to put on something to wear and composing myself when my feet propels me to the kitchen that smells like tribe and Mthabela moving around the kitchen humming underneath his breath.

Maybe he has an explanation. I don't know, something. I stand here and just watching him looking for all possibilities of murdering my brother but I cannot find them. Any signs. Anything. "Have you killed someone before?" My voice startled him then he whips his head up and searching my eyes. I have the envelope behind me and looking straight into his eyes. A murder? I cannot find one in those eyes. "Muziwenkosi Mthabela"

"You're crying. . ."

"Have you killed before?"

"No" He boldly responds.

"Don't lie to me Mthabela because I am going to walk out of that door and never look back again"

"Nomzamo—

"Have you killed anyone before?"

"Chabo"

Oh the guts of this man!

Now he has stopped mixing his dough and looking at me with a sphinx like expression and narrowing his eyes. "What is this?" I throw the envelope and the pictures on the counter. And he remains calm not like an adolescent that was caught having sex

in the back room. “Muzi what is this?” I’m not going to tell him that this is my brother.

“I can explain”

“That’s what I’m waiting to hear from you. Did you kill this man?” I ask him and my emotions want to explode. I am going to oppress them. I am not going to shatter now.

“Chabo”

“Then what are these pictures doing here?”

“He’s the one who killed Mnotho’s daughter. And when Mnotho killed him he took these pictures. I kept them here for him when the police started sniffing. That man deserved to die Nomzamo”

“That man in that picture is my brother Muziwenkosi!!” I shout.

“A gift from us. . .you’ve asked for it”

My heart is pummelling against my chest malevolently and tears with combined emotions are drowning my eyeballs and his frame looks like a reflection in water moving in waves and I continuously blink until I can finally see him standing there with palpable emotions and immobile.

We stand distance away from each other trying to make sense of everything and each emotions dragging us from one side to another. I don’t know what to say. All words and vowels have been formatted in my head and I cannot speak. I keep opening and closing my mouth only to taste the bitterness against my tongue.

My brother took away something special from his family and his brother took something special from me. A man who I have been praising for all my life is nothing close to what I have portrayed him to be but a murder. A man who took away a woman and a child’s life. What’s more distasteful? What is my gut wrenching than this?

“I’m sorry for how you must be feeling but I’m not sorry about the death of your brother Nomzamo” Finally his voice resonates through the intense ambience and that felt like a kick

against my solar plexus that I gape and gasp “The amount of pain he caused to my family. . .” He cannot even find words. I see him clasp his hands on the counter needing balance and strength. His head is hanging low and he keeps rapidly shaking his head until he gazes at me with tears shimmering his eyes. What am I supposed to say? Does he think his brother didn’t cause pain into my family? What should I feel about those venomous words he just spat onto my face.

“Mthabela come here!” I demand flaring my nostrils and tears falling at the valley of my cheeks “I want you to come here and open my chest. Take my heart. Take it because you’ve made it yours and I want to stop loving you right here and now!”

“Nomzamo—

“Now Mthabela” I cry out “Make me stop loving you Muziwenkosi Mthabela. Now” I am smothered by unnamed emotions. I breathe with my breath short and shallow. “I want to walk away from here but before that make me stop loving”

Instead of doing anything he just stands there with perplexity of what is happening and flaring his nostrils and his eyes luminous with tears. We just stand without uttering any other words to each other. “I’m leaving” I announce to him. “Muziwenkosi say something” I half expected him to say something but he doesn’t. Anything. He remains there rigid and looking at me with same passion and tender in his eyes.

“You want to leave?” Finally he speaks. Those words alone have sombreness so lucid laced on them. “How can you leave me when you know you’re the reason I’m breathing Nomzamo? Why would you want to stop loving me?”

“My brother—

“What does that got to do with us?”

Don’t let us go! I don’t want to leave! Omg please just fuck her brains scattered at least but don’t let us walk out of that door— My subconsciousness screams and greedily gulping for air and crying.

“I don’t see ourselves moving from here”

“Do you see yourself as a widow?” The solemnity painted on his face makes me oblivion and my stomach stutter violently. My hands are trembling at the side of my body and nausea rises to my throat. The tears I have been oppressing in my eyes are like a turbulent of rain. Breathing becomes a laborious thing. “I am in love with you Nomzamo does that matter to you right now?”

“I don’t know” I murmur “How can I erase the memory of finding my brother’s pictures in your closet? My brother was killed brutally Muziwenkosi. I walked into him on the floor in a pool of blood”

“And my niece died in my hands after. . .”

“I know what my brother did” I choke.

“I wasn’t gonna say anything about your brother but all I am saying is I’ve been through the same amount of pain. I don’t care what your brother might’ve did but I love you. All that he did doesn’t matter to me right now Nomzamo” I just stand here with my feet planted and my voice lodged on my throat. “I can take you home so you can take time to think things thoroughly but if you make a decision of wanting to walk from us then you must think about that one again because it’s not happening” I still cannot find words until he throws the dough in the bin and the pot that has been burnt.

Our drive is silent but the emotions are deafening. I wish the passion and love isn’t seeping through me the way its doing. The butterfly effect he has on me is wheezing in the air and my breathing is facile. My mouth is not producing enough saliva. I glance towards him to see the expression on my face mirroring his. I place my hand on top of his lap and I thought he will push it away but instead our hands intertwine and he kisses my knuckles then he looks at me. I am seeing the man who was standing behind the podium crying in front of me again.

“Ngiyakuthanda Nomzamo” Again he says to me and I vigorously nod my head. As we are parking outside my mother’s house. I don’t know what to do or say. Do I kiss him before getting off this car? Are we ever going to be the same

after this? His family, what will they think of me after finding out about this. “Before you sleep today please call me” He hasn’t called me by his rainbow. Should I ask him why? Let me not. After few seconds of gazing in each other’s eyes and looking beyond each other’s souls and bones I get off the car and closing the door behind me.

I walk through the door and my mother is on the sofa and watching television. Instantly I kneel in front of her with my head on her lap and I cry. I cry and cry. When she strokes my back as consolation that invites the water beads in my eyes. “Nomzamo what’s wrong?” I hear her asking through my guttural sobs as I choke. It has been years since I ran to come and cry in my mother’s arms. But I feel like her princess that would walk into her room after she had a dreamt that made her stay up all night. In her arms everything was soothing. The warmth of her body and hands. The sound of her voice pouring into my ears. Just like now. All the anger that I’ve had towards her is being overshadowed by motherly love. “Rochelle talk to me. What’s wrong?” I cannot tell her. I’m not going to tell her.

“I went to isangoma. . .” she’s attentively looking at me “she asked to see you tomorrow. You have to do a ceremony and slaughter a cow apologizing to our ancestors before taking me to our maternal home and after that everything will be fine” Yes—this sounds like a believable excuse has to why I’m crying.



“I want us to leave for your maternal home in the early hours of the morning” I don’t know where is my mother’s maternal home. But I hope we are going to travel far, very far that I won’t be able to run and come back to Mthabela. I want to be far away from him as possible.

“Okay my baby we will wake up in the early hours of the morning and start to the sangoma first but what is bothering you? I’m your mother Nomzamo. I know when something is bothering you”

“Have you walked away from something you love?”

“I walked away from your father” What? I know we haven’t been talking for the couple of months. . .but maybe a child in me had hopes that her parents could be together again. “We are divorcing” I hear her voice slithering and my pupils dilate. “Why you’re asking? Is everything okay with you and your boyfriend?”

“We perfectly fine” she acknowledges my lie by placing her hand on the either sides of my face and looking deeply into my eyes as though she’s searching for something. “I’ll be in my room mama”



The sound of the shores moving in waves is so ambience and serene. I am clad in a sheer white dress and walking barefooted on sea sand with the rainbow luminous on my skin. “Oh Lalela Zulu. . .Oh Lalela bantu bengiphethe ngezwe lethu” I hear a baritone voice singing and I cannot see the face. But I can see a tall frame standing from the distance with natural hair that’s shinning and clean ““Siyazizwa izizwe zivungama

Advertisement

zivungama ngawe njenge zinyoni zisho amahloko hloko  
ayicekezala insimu ka Dingana noSenzangakhona

ayiqhendile mamu sizwa ngomnyaza ka Ndabuko. Oh Lalela Zulu” The person singing is off tune but it sounds ethereal and powerful. The way his baritone voice echoes draws me in and I propel my feet towards him.

“Sawubona” I greet the man who’s wearing white sheer top and imbesho with a crown around his head. When he turns around I get to see his face, around his iris he has color blue but his eyes are brown. He has gauged piercings and iziqhaza hanging from his ears—an elderly charmer but in his hands he’s holding something wrapped in a white blanket and when our eyes meet a smile curves on his face.

“Thina boMthabela sithi thatha nasi sipho (Us, the Mthabela clan we are giving you a gift)” That all that comes from his

mouth and he hands me what was in his hand. I carefully hold it in my hands only for my eyes to be met with a baby peacefully sleeping and her hands covering her face, she has hair all over her forehead and the hand resting on her face has a birth mark. "Nangu ke unkosazana (here is the princess)" that's all he says to me after handing me a child and then he walks away leaving me with a child who's lashes are resting at the bottom of her eyes.

"Green mamba!" A voice pierce through and I snap my eyes opened and gasping for air. That was a dream! Jesus what kind of a dream was that? And who was that man? Why he looked like Muziwenkosi? A baby as a gift? This is the most ridiculous dream I've ever had out of all my dreams "Nomzamo wake up we are here" Rharha shakes me. The moment my mother called her and telling her about my crying she flew back home. "Wake up we are here sweetheart" Again she says and I blink. Looking around at my surroundings and we are my maternal home KwaMaphumulo. "Are you okay?"

"I just had a strange dream but. . .but I'm fine"

"You cannot lie. We will talk about it later"

The Mthabela clan giving me a gift? Why would they after my brother. . .this doesn't make sense at all. A baby as a gift? That old man is out of his mind.

## “You’re The Only Fish In The Sea For Me”

The ambience from under water sounds almost musical sweeping from deep, earthy vocals to androgynous and ethereal falsettos and I can feel the seraphic presence from my ancestors as I rise up and gasping for air as the woman wearing all white drowns me once again for the third time and I hold my breath with my eyes fluttered open and this time I vividly see the man I’ve been dreaming about handing me the most beautiful baby I’ve ever set my eyes on peacefully singing. I can hear his singing echoing with glee. I gasp rising up again.

“Phuma mntanami!” The spiritual healer says I should come out of the water holding my hand and leading me out. The candles we’ve lightened up are still shining so bright as though it’s the stars in the sky. It been a week of fasting and prayer and gravitating towards God and being spiritually aligned. A week in gut wrenching agony and trying to make sense of everything while diving and drowning in melancholy. “Asambe!” she says we can go home and she has a smile on her face. Impressed maybe? Of what I have done? Today is the day my mother does the ceremony as well to apologize to our ancestors. We woke up in the early hours of the morning before the sun could ululate beautifully in the sky to the waterfall. The water was

singing sounding like an orchestra calling me inside before my feet touched it and when they did it was like I am being wrapped in a blanket of celestial magic.

I completely had to format and shove all thoughts at the back of my mind including him even though his picture would appear the moment I close my eyes with those artful cheekbones. That man, he has managed to haunt me in my day dreams and wet dreams. I cannot possibly think of anything besides me. At times when I wanted to give up I could hear his stern deep tone pouring in my ears and reprimanding me. I could feel his hands laced on my waist and rapid fire gaze boring dreams at me.

“Now you’ll be able to connect to your ancestors, they’re with you. You’ve come so far and I’m proud of you” says a woman who has been guiding me through this journey with her dreadlocks dripping with droplets of water, she glances towards the candles I had lightened up the moment I got here and taking my hand. I cannot even swallow back the smile that crawls out of my mouth as we are making our way back home. I did it. I cannot believe I did it. I wish I could run in his arms and he catches me swinging me around and graces my face with kisses. The nausea rises on my throat and I pause from walking.

“What’s wrong?” The elderly woman asks me. I cannot tell her. My grandmother gave me a scrutinizing gaze when she caught me spewing all my insides at the back of the roundvel. The

smell of the cow that was being slaughtered outside was not pleasing at all.

I smile at her and swallowing the bubble of nausea expanding on my throat and gulping the bottle of water in my hand. “It’s nothing. I needed to catch a breather” I say guzzling on the bottle of water and she nods her head. This is the second time I am feeling like this. First it was last night when the cow was slaughtered and now. . .I don’t know it could be something that I ate but also I haven’t eaten. We continue walking with the rest who came here to accompany dressed in white.

After our walk we arrive at home and everyone is walking up and down. The three leg pot is sitting on top of the inferno and I can smell the divine dumpling dancing on my nostrils. The moment my grandmother sees us she ululates and calling our clan names. Apparently it was possible for me not to come back under that water.

You could’ve turned into a mermaid maybe. That would’ve been great. I think we would’ve met Ariel and Nemo—my subconsciousness says. What is this? A fairytale movie produced by Disney?

Everyone is now out singing joyfully and embracing me in their arms. My mother tightly holds me into her arms and crying while she thanks all her ancestors and God. I don’t know what the sangoma said to her the day we went there but she has

been praying with me and holding my hand through this journey. I cannot be angry at her for eternity because I understand what pushed her into making that decision. "Nomzamo. . ." she holds my face into her hands and darting her eyes between mines "I am so proud of you MaMbatha" A ravishing smile appears on her face. "Woza, woza, woza!" I am being leaded inside the house now where I ask to be excused and making my way to what is my bedroom. All this exuberance wheezing in the air is suddenly suffocating. I need to catch a breather. I still need to make sense of the dream that has been bothering me for a week. That isn't only a bothersome thing that has been strangling me and making me stay afloat with perturbation but having to announce to my family what my brother did so we can do what is right meaning going to the a Mthabela family and seeking forgiveness.

As I am about to sink on the bed and take a sit the nausea rises again and I quickly open the door and briskly walking to the bathroom. Ha ha ha there's no en-suite bathroom here. The moment I get there I kneel down and a powerful acidic water comes from my mouth. It tastes disgusting. I start to sweat from my forehead and everything around me is duplicating. I haven't ate in a week

obviously I'm just throwing up my insides. All my intestines and livers. "Nomzamo!" The door opens and Rharha walks in finding

me making a guttural sound as I throw up and she closes the door behind. “Haibo!” she exclaims “Nomzamo are you okay?” I cannot catch enough breath into my lungs. “Nomzamo!” Now she’s panicking with that stomach behind her dress. “What’s wrong? Let me call umama” she says. No, no, no.

“I am fine Rharha” I drag my voice and wiping my mouth. In all honestly I am not. What if something went wrong? Or the ancestors still want more from me? What’s this so suddenly? “I haven’t ate in weeks so my stomach is just. . .” I don’t have a valid explanation honestly. Maybe I wasn’t supposed to come back from that water. I told you. You should’ve been a mermaid wena. My subconsciousness says. Nxargh. “I just need something to eat that’s all”

“Are you sure?” she’s attentively looking at me and searching for something on my face and I nod my head vigorously. “Okay. I am going to make something for you to eat then. Get up and take a bath. The ceremony is starting. I’m so happy for you” she says. I wish I was as elated. But nothing. . .nothing is euphoric. Not the smiles I’ve been receiving or hugs. I can only offer a smile and holding back the spew inside my mouth. “Fine let me make something for you to eat. I love you till the end” I show her my thumbs up and a wink then she disappears behind the door.



I just finished taking a bath and lathering my skin with a lotion now I'm wearing the dress that was neatly placed on my bed and draping a head wrap gazing at my reflection in the room and she looks absolutely gorgeous completely different to what is inside—shattered and utterly broken—I force a smile on my face and taking a deep breather before fluttering my eyes open and walking out of the door to high pitch voices of my aunts I didn't know about their existed fighting over potatoes and my uncle asking where is the traditional beer and Rharha suppurating with laughter. “Nomzamo have you eaten?” my grandmother asks the moment I take a sit on the chair and she's attentively looking at me yet again as though she's reading me and then smirks. What is wrong with this woman? “You need to eat mntanami”

“Nandipha made me something to eat” I announce and she smiles at me and walking outside with a tray that has vegetables. The yard is now buzzing with cars that keep arriving and family members. We are introduced to different relatives and I am feeling dizzy from one hug to another and kisses from elderly women. And surprisingly my father is here with his aura demanding all attention and he came with his family and they're treated like they fart rainbows and sunshine. I've been avoiding interacting with him. After our last encounter and him getting physical with me I don't think I want to talk to him right now. Anyways everyone is sharing gales of laughter completely

forgotten all about that has happened. “Nomzamo tell your mother ooMthabela sebefikile” My grandmother shouts for me as I am serving the men sitting around in a circle traditional beer. What did she just say? Which Mthabela? Maybe the ones around here. My mother would’ve told me. “Nomzamo!” My grandmother shouts, uMaMbatha. I am standing here with a bucket of beer and rigid. I need to breathe. It can’t be them. He would’ve told me. Okay how when I don’t have my phone with me? “Ngizokushaya ngempama wena (I am going to slap you!” My grandmother threatens.

I briskly walk inside the house and looking for my mother whom I find in the kitchen. “Ma can I talk to you?” After she has turned to me she agrees and we make our way to the bedroom. My hands are sweating and my urethra is full with urine while my breathing is ragged.

“What’s wrong Nomzamo?” Let me count from one to three. One. Two. Three. Breathe. Breathe. I rub my hands against my dress. “Nomzamo start talking. Can’t you see I’m busy?”

“Did you call Muzi and his family here?” I cross my fingers but seeing that look on her face I already know what’s the response. God of gods. What on earth? What did I do?

“Maaaaa!” I exclaim with my eyes bouncing off their sockets.

“Why would you do that? You could’ve told me?” I don’t know

why but my tears want to be part of this conversation but I furiously blink them away.

“Nomzamo I know the truth”

I freeze!

“What. . .what truth?” I stutter. I just hope she knows that Mthabela and I are not in good space since I have been fabricating under God’s name and been perfectly concealing all my emotions. I hope she doesn’t know what she considered her son wasn’t what we thought he was.

“I know what your brother did. Not only he has been bothering you but me too. That day we went to isangoma he revealed himself to me and I have been dreaming about him since. It’s in my hands as your mother to do this after everything I’ve done. Your father thought it was the best to have my ceremony of seeking forgiveness to my ancestors and have them here as well so we could talk. They already know what happened it’s a matter of us going to them sometime next week with cows and asking for forgiveness but we don’t know how things could turn out today” This was going so well until she said that. I am afloat with many emotions. This is when I should be throwing up. I want to throw up all my insides and just evaporate. “It’s going to be okay” No it won’t be. I am shivering as though I’m under the snow when she pulls me in her arms and assuring me that it’s going to be okay before we walk outside where the cars

have been parked and my uncle is walking up the hill with them and laughing at something. I have bad luck of uncles who smokes cannabis or maybe it's good luck. This one is telling ooMthabela about how he slaughtered a cow. They're attentively listening to him until they reach where I'm standing. I cannot see him. I expect everyone to be giving me malevolent glares and spits on my face but his mother beams beautifully when she sees me. It strange how she's always there when we are facing a steep slope in this relationship.

“Thingo lwakhe you look beautiful” she's examining me from head to toe. “You are glowing” she then says emphasizing and quickly glancing at my mother, she's giving me the same smile my grandmother has been giving me as though she had discovered something no one knows. “I knew ooMthabela won't sit and not do anything” her hand travels to my stomach strange enough and again she smiles beautifully. “He's there waiting for you” she points towards the cars.

He's here!

Muziwenkosi is here!

Everyone including his brothers and even Mnotho has the same beams they've always had when seeing me. The same warmth and tender. I don't understand. It doesn't make sense. They should be here gun blazing. My mother leaves with them inside the house as I walk to the car that slowly opens and he comes

out. Oh God. I didn't know I ached for him so much until now. I didn't know I was longing to be in his arms until now as I take steps toward him and love pushing me harshly to him. He's standing there, charming and wearing umblaselo and iziqhaza. Isn't he beautiful? I cannot believe God said I must fall in love with someone who's godlike.

"Nomzamo" his voice resonate me "Nana" his tone trembles this time and I don't give him another chance to dare say a word before throwing myself in his arms. He doesn't push me away. No, no. He envelopes me as if his arms is where I belong. My forehead is graced with warm kisses. His touch and cologne awakened emotions I knew never died. Nothing could've made them evaporate. The guilt that has been chewing my brain runs away to the forest. He doesn't have to say it but I can feel it. The love. The passion. And adoration. But also nausea rises all the way up my throat and I push him quickly. Oh shame he must be thinking I don't want him near me, I bend distance away from him and throw up. "Thingo what's wrong?" he asks.

"Ngiyashona! (I am going to die)"

I tell him. I haven't told anyone that death is near me. I mean what else could be the reason for me to throw up like this. "I'm going to die Mthabela" Again liquid comes out of my mouth and tears squeezes themselves out of my eyes.

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“You’re meant for me, you I adore

You’re sent to me

For you, I’ll do more

My destiny, that I have searched for

You’re meant for me

My destiny”

I thank him as he gives me a bottle of water and guzzling it down. I’m covered in a sheen of sweat on my forehead and trying to catch enough breath into my lungs taking a sit on a hard rock next to the car and he comes bend almost kneeling in front of me with a scrutinizing gaze and giving me that look he always gives me after I’ve said something idiotically. A smile on his face that wants to grow into laughter but he’s suppressing it by pressing his lips together. “Nana what’s wrong?” Again he asks me. He has been asking me as I spew all my insides.

“Nomzamo!” I hear his sonorous tone as I start throwing up again the moment I tried opening my mouth. “That’s enough I’m taking you to the doctor!” I hear him saying. I don’t want to go there. What if I die there and become a ghost that wanders around the hospital? No. I’d rather die home. “Nomzamo what’s wrong? How long this has been happening?” Now he’s stroking my back. I shrug my shoulder nonchalantly. He’s

getting deranged. I don't know maybe because I'm not giving him straight answers. "Have some water we are going to the doctor" I can see all the muscles around his face honed.

Just tell him that you're turning into a mermaid and these are the side effects—my subconscious says and shrugging her shoulders before she steals a glance towards Mthabela who has a panic look on his face. I gulp and gulp from the bottle of water until it's finished hoping to regain my strength.

I look at him with teary eyes and dragging breath from my chest "I wasn't supposed to come back under the water maybe. . ." I pause and a frown grows on his forehead. "I should've been a mermaid mina" I tell him and I can see it. I can see he wants to laugh until he turns into a tiny insect "If I am not throwing up then I am seeing your grandfather in my dreams singing his favourite song and giving me a baby. I've said this before Mthabela that I'm losing my mind or I'm hallucinating I don't know" I start babbling and now his face remains solemn. What does he see some fish scales somewhere on my legs? I look down on my legs and they're covered by a dress. Okay that's impossible. What's wrong. "Your grandfather it's been a week seeing him in my dreams, funny isn't it?" I chuckle and take yet another sip from the bottle.

"What did he say in your dream?"

“I don’t remember” I scowl my mouth fabricating. I remember what exactly what he said but I don’t want to hurt this man by giving him high hopes that. . .I just don’t want him to think there was any deep meaning about that dream. “Okay fine” I say the moment his eyes darkened. “I was walking at the beach with beautiful sand and wearing a white dress. The sky was—

“Nomzamo what did he say?”

“If I don’t tell you everything from the beginning than I won’t remember Muziwenkosi” I think when I narrate the entire dream by the time I get to the point he won’t be paying attention into it.

“What did he say?”

“He gave me a baby” I say with a monotone and he gives me that look that I should continue talking. I intake a sharp breath “And he said that I asked for a gift so ooMthabela are giving me what I asked for inkosazana (a princess) and then he walked away singing that song I once caught you singing in your office”

I see tropical colors blooming on his face and watery beads forming in his eyes. Wait does that mean. . .I’m dying? But he cannot possibly be covered in elation about my death. “How long you’ve been throwing up Nomzamo?” What’s with the questions? Why he isn’t asking about me turning into a mermaid? “Nana”



“Hmmm” I murmur

“How long you’ve been throwing up?”

“It started yesterday I think it was the smell of a cow and then again this morning. I was just. . .nauseas. I couldn’t stomach the fruit salad” I tell him. Basically I haven’t eaten in a week and my stomach and intestines are floating in water. Just drowning and diving. “I’m scared that maybe the ceremony or everything didn’t go well” I tell him. And he takes my hand and pulling me up to embrace me in his arms. For a man whose woman is turning into an under the sea creature he seems too relaxed.

“You’re not turning into a mermaid and you are not dying”

Then what’s wrong? “We are going to the pharmacy and we will find out what’s wrong thingo lwami and get you something to eat okay?” I look up in his eyes. They’re glossy with tears.

“Kade ngikhumbula ubusuku nemini Nomzamo ikhanda lami liphithizela (I missed you, day and night I was losing my mind)”

Our eyes are interlocked and darting at each other. “Imizwa yami ayinguqhuki imile. Ngifuna wena izolo, namhlanje nakusasa nemihla yonke yokuphila wami. (My feelings haven’t changed. I want you yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever)

Thingo lwami” Whenever he calls me rainbow all the butterfly effect sensations awakens. My emotions are reflecting his and my tears tastes. . .does your taste delicious? Not salty but they’re just—my tears tastes different. I blink and the sheer

beads touches my cheeks and a smile grows on my face. “I want to be with you and I am willing to fight anything and anyone for what we have”

“I’m sorry” I apologize.

“What are you sorry for? And stop crying”

“But you’re crying too. . .” we titter in between and he wipes my tears with his thumbs and kisses my forehead “I’m sorry for doubting how much you love me. I thought you wouldn’t want anything to do with me after what my brother did”

“You didn’t send him to do it or did you?”

“No!” I protest boldly and dragging the word. Oh now he’s funny? Suddenly he has a sense of humor. Good for you Mthabela. “I’m in love with you Muziwenkosi Mthabela”

“Nomzamo! Weh Nomzamo!” That’s my grandmother MaMbatha shouting at me “Nomzamo come back from there to serve your in-laws. Woza, woza, woza!” This woman

can’t she see I’m in my man’s arms and confessing my love for him? “I’m going to drag you from there wena!” This woman doesn’t want to see me happy. Ever since she got here with her son she has been following me around and making my life a living hell.

“Go and serve your in laws” Mthabela says confidently “And I’ll go to the pharmacy and then get you something you can eat. Do you want something specific?”

“Just get me anything dali. I have to go” I quickly kiss his cheek and turn to run away from him but he grabs me by my arm. And then? I have to run and serve his family.

“Don’t run Nomzamo please” And why not? I cannot amiss the grave facial expression. Fine then I won’t run. I briskly walk away from him and turning to smile at and he’s still standing with elation that has been dancing on his face since I told him about the dream.

“Take these to the living room Nomzamo and make sure you go on your knees” What’s wrong with my family? I don’t know but they’re glowing with ravishing smiles on their faces. They have. . .It’s almost the same facial expression that Mthabela had. I walked into ululating into the house. Are we not talking about my brother’s sins? They should be walking barefooted on lava and not here ebullient. Anyways I walk into the living room and immediately their voices becomes whispers. It’s only men here. What’s happening? I place the tray of food on the table.

“MaMbatha I wanted to talk you” Menzi says. Well he’s the elder of the family so he’s more like a father to his brothers. I am on my knees. How ridiculous is this? I take a seat on a reed mat and bowing my head like my grandmother said I should—

what do we call this? Us, women that are more enlightened and know their rights? What's this? Patriarchy. Yes, yes. "The news that we've discovered hasn't changed anything. Our family still loves you the same we did from the moment we discovered my brother kidnapped you" I hear deep voices laughing in the room. I look towards my father and he has an apologetic look on his face. Why am I feeling sorry for him? I shouldn't. My mother is leaving him because she deserves better. Yes, yes and that's not him. God what if he has changed? No, impossible. "We don't want you feeling in any way about everything because you didn't do anything. The only thing you did was bringing my brother back to life. I cannot hate you for that. I don't know about the others but. . .I cannot hate you"

"What you mean about the others? Are you not talking for the rest of us? Hawu" That's Melusi and his sense of humour. I am here drawing patterns like a woman being asked whether she knows these men who are here to send cows. After some time of them talking I am dismissed. Great. Now I can breathe. I felt like I was suffocating in a corset. They have nothing against me. They don't hate me. I cannot thank God and my ancestors enough. I've been chewing a lot of lemons and I deserve this.

Rharha drags me by my hand to the bedroom and closing the door behind giving me a skeptical look. What happened?

“Nomzamo I want the truth and nothing but the truth from you” What’s wrong? “Are you pregnant?” What? That’s. . .that was unexpected.

“I am infertile Nandipha” I remind her “I cannot her pregnant. Where did you get that from? Why are you asking me this?” I cannot believe her out of all people why would ask me this question. I mean pregnant? No ways as much as I do want children but not now. It’s not like I’ll have them anyways.

“When was the last time you went for your injection?”

“Why would I when I cannot have children? Rharha what’s wrong? Have you lost your mind?” I frown at her and she pretty much does the same and examining me “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“The last time you went on your periods?” I shrug again nonchalantly and now her face is unreadable. And she comes back with a plastic in her hand after she left the room and asked me to stay behind. “Muzi gave me this and I found this” she grabs out a pregnancy test. What the fuck? Has he lost his marbles? Maybe he bought it thinking it’s a thermometer since I have been feeling sick and he didn’t see the bold fonts written “pregnancy test” I don’t know maybe for a second he was blind.

Or maybe you're pregnant—my subconsciousness says and then lowers her head to evade eye contact. Nxargh she better just do that because she's talking nonsense.

“You were throwing up this morning” Rharha states. “And you don't remember the last time you went on your periods after you stopped the injection. Nomzamo what if the ancestors. . .” The dream. Wait the dream. I was given a baby in a dream by ooMthabela and they said it's a gift. Ha ha that's impossible I cannot be pregnant.

“I cannot be like you” I hear a gasp coming from her mouth “I'm not saying it in a bad way but I'm so young to be pregnant that's technically teenage pregnancy” I pause and feeling my emotions expanding on my throat “I mean I dreamt about it but no, I'm not pregnant”

“Haike teenage pregnancy go and urinate on this thing and we'll see”

“Rharha no!” I don't want to get my high hopes up for nothing. I cannot have children and that stands. I have faith in God and my ancestors but I don't want to hurt myself like that. I'm leaving this room. I walk out and pause at the passage. Okay I need to catch a breather and just—I return back into the bedroom and grab the pregnancy test from her and flaring my nostrils “I'm going to do it!” I seethe and leave for the bathroom and closing the door behind and taking a seat on the

bathtub with my eyes fluttered closed. I've never been afloat with any emotion as I'm floating in agitation right now. I've done everything that my ancestors have asked from me and to God. Breathe, breathe. "Let me do it" I get up and urinating into the stick on a bathroom seat and placing it on a sink and pacing up and down. A baby? I cannot be possibly having a human growing inside me. I'm so young. I want my seven children but not now. I want to pursue my artistry and just. . .the thought of knowing that I can carry a human in my womb washes me with euphoria. I'd love to, I'd love to hold her the way I did in my dream. It been five seconds already so let me check. I flutter my eyes closed after picking up the stick and gulping for air and looking at the result. My heart immediately swims at the pit of my stomach upon seeing one line. I should've known. I should've just known. What was even thinking? That a miracle will just happen. The door slowly opens and my sister walks into the room.

I sink into the floor and erupt with a guttural sob and she comes and kneel in front of me to envelope me in her arms. I push her away and fighting but she still holds me tightly anyways. Until I'm nuzzling on her neck and sipping on my tears "Stop crying Nomzamo. I'm sorry" her tone is soft and stroking my back as I tenaciously hold her and burying my head on her neck and choking. I cry. I cry like a woman who has lost a child before she can even hold it. "What did it say?" Obviously I'm

crying because of melancholy what is that question supposed to mean? After crying in her arms she pulls apart and wiping my tears “Don’t cry now. We are going to be okay” she says and grabs the stick and then glances at me then the stick. Me and the stick several times. “Nomzamo after how long did you check the stick”

I sniffle “I don’t know Rharha, just throw it away. I have to return back to the kitchen”

“Look at this wena!”

“Hhayi!”

“Nomzamo look at this!” she forcefully hands me the stick “Now say hello to teenage pregnancy” she says grinning and I narrow my eyebrows and then look to the stick. This. . .I know what I saw earlier.

Arg she drew the second line—my subconsciousness says. How when she doesn’t have a pen? That’s the most ignoramus thing she has ever said. “Rharha please call Mthabela here now. I don’t know how he gets in but I want him here” My sister walks out of the room and running. I’m immobile with a stick that smells like my urine. This. . .this is not true. I know what I saw. Let me place the stick away and maybe something went wrong.

I can hear voices outside the door. It’s my mother and grandmother wanting to know what’s going on and Rharha



chases them away before Mthabela walks through the door alone and closes it. My breath is shallow. I glance at the stick and it has the same results. “Nana. Your sister said you’re not okay what’s wrong?”

“I think I’m pregnant” I tell him “I mean. . .I did test and when I checked after two seconds it was one line and now I see two lines. I think. . .Mthabela I’m pregnant” I cannot believe that these words are coming out of my mouth. “I’m pregnant” My voice breaks this time and the glasses in his eyes shatter. I walk up to him and hold him in my arms, holding him so tight that I’m sure he cannot breathe. He embraces me back and we cry in each other’s arms. With him calling out his clan names and thanking them. And I chuckling upon seeing him like this.

The joy on his face. The completeness. The warmth of his arms.

“Ngiyabonga thingo lwami” He thanks me for helping him insert his phallic inside ntombazana maybe? I don’t know. “Ngibonge ooMbatha no Mthabela” he thanks my ancestors and his.

“Are you happy?” I ask him.

“I’m beyond happy thingo lwami”



His family and him included had just left. I have asked him not to tell anyone has yet about this pregnancy. I don't know maybe because I'm scared that what was on that stick was not true. But this man cannot hide his euphoria. Ever since they got into that car leaving as we waved our hands at them he has been blowing up my phone. He wants to know whether I have eaten or whether I'm still nauseated. If it was in his hand we would've returned back to our home together. I keep absently holding my stomach in hopes of feeling something maybe a voice or dance movements. I don't know. I have been asking Rharha questions about what a pregnant woman feels like and I think I have become such an irksome to her that she runs away from me. We are alike. We are the same. We are pregnant—elating isn't it? I cannot help but also feel that this happened sooner. Of course it's what I wanted but. . .I can still go back to school right? Regardless of becoming a mother? I've seen other women doing it and I can also do it.

We are being called into the living room for a family meeting. I cannot stop eating the dumpling and tribe that my grandmother has been feeding me. I still don't understand the look that she keeps giving me. Anyways I walk into the room and suddenly feeling denuded as though they can that I'm. . .I cannot say it.

Don't say it they'll hear you—my subconsciousness says. And I cannot wait to crave for a porsche and maybe a house somewhere in Ballito. My subconscious continues saying and rubbing her flat stomach. What on earth is this?

I take a sit on a couch and placing a pillow on top of my stomach to hide my invisible stomach and Rharha grins and coming to snuggles right next to me. Two pregnant women sitting next to each other. What if this is somehow contagious? It cannot be.

“We have come here because today was a success. Zukiswa and Nomzamo's ceremony went very well” my uncle says and he smells like the traditional beer that he has been drinking and he keeps rubbing his hands together. There's a deafening silence looming in the room. “We decided to invite Nomzamo's in-laws as well which was something that we were not supposed to do because the issue involves the Mbatha family and not us but since it has happened then there's nothing that can be said or done. The Mbatha family will take the matter into their own hands and they're going to ooMthabela to do what is right and thina we will see you when ooMthabela comes to take their flower as they have left the letter” What letter? And why everyone is eyeballing me? “Zamo we've called you here because that boy wants to make you his wife” Which boy? Wait. Who's becoming the wife? Me? Ha ha. It cannot be.

“Here’s the letter” He points on the table. I have no choice but taking it and averting my eyes on them and looking down to the letter. Muziwenkosi’s family are asking for my hand in marriage.

“Can I be excused?” I need to call him.

“Hamba mshana (you can leave)” he says. I get up from the couch and walking of the room. I’m outside with my phone against my ear has it keep ringing until eventually he answers.

“Nana”

“You want to marry me?”

“Yebo”

“Why?”

“Hawu maka Uyatholwa”

“Why Mthabela?”

“Ngoba ngiyakuthanda (because I love you)”

“In ten years to come when I’m old and no longer beautiful will you still love me Muziwenkosi? When I have missing teeth and hardly even remember the names of our seven children, will you love me then?”

“Yebo because you’ll still be beautiful then. I’d still love you because you’ll be the same woman who gave me hope to life

and showed me what's love. You'll still be the same woman who saw my scars and still loved me nonetheless when I thought I'm not worthy of love. You'll still be my rainbow and the one who'll carry all my seeds. You're the one I want next to me the day I take my last breath Nomzamo Mbatha because you're the only fish in the sea for me"

"Where did you read that from dali?"

He laughs "From my heart thingo lwami"

"We are only getting married and having a wedding after I've went back to school and persuade my passion for art that's after giving birth. And you're going back into making music again Muziwenkosi"

"Music? Hhayi Nomzamo"

"Then we are not getting married Mthabela"

"You're emotionally blackmailing me"

"I am"

"Okay. I'll go back into making music"

"Ngiyakuthanda"

"Is that you saying you'll marry me?"

"It seems like it"

“You are something that I can never forget”

## **R H A R H A**

Gulping!

Before he could leave his car he said a silent prayer underneath his breath and gazed at himself on a rear view mirror and counting from one to three until a sense of tranquility washed over him as the trepidation was dancing on his throat and his hands were clammy then he get off the car and briskly walking towards the door and doesn't bother knocking but walks through entering and the house seemed empty. “Kelela!” His deep baritone voice sounded velveteen as it echoed in a marble home, shouting for his wife who has summoned him home after three months of being ignored. “Baby!” Again he shouted through the deafening silence. “MamKhuzwayo” There was no response once again and he took a deep breath striding towards the bottle of cognac and pouring himself a drink so he can bring some sense of serenity into his turbulence thoughts and grabbing his phone out of his pockets to make a phone call but it goes straight to voicemail but the sound of the shoes clicking forces him to spin around. “Kelela. . .” His syllabus was

too fat on his tongue and he stared longer than anticipated. A dark smile doesn't spread too far across her face but it's still enough to throw him that he almost dropped the glass from his hand. A trailing blaze with his eyes laced with rapid fire made her confidence grows as she sashayed her long toned legs towards him and tugging the strands of her dreadlocks behind her ear to reveal a single drop of diamond weird shaped earring and for a moment he wondered if she was even real—she looked like a god in a human form and clad in a foiled sprigs embroidered garter that showed her ebony glowing skin as though it was pearls glistening in a glass of water and he gulped his drink.

“I thought you'd knock” even the way she opened her mouth was enchanting and her blazing hazel eyes met his, it was like she was transferring the a chill straight to his core and he nearly froze by her effortless intensity that she always managed to wash over him. Damn he was mesmerized that he barely even his senses stopped working. The metallic sheen around her pupils seemed too smoulder in the candlelight, the flame reflecting at him like embers between ashy coal in a fire-pit. It was just like coals stuck in his throat and he was struggling to gulp anything down. “I thought you wouldn't come” she said with a sultry tone and taking a sit on a couch and crossing her legs, he could see what was in between her thighs and his breathing become ragged. “I wanted us to talk Lunzulu” For

some reasons he cannot fathom, he felt compelled to please her.

After he cleared his throat he nodded his head and took another gulp from his drink to calm the lecherous sensation running through him and his feet propelled him towards the couch opposite her. “I don’t want to lose you” he said his eyes moving from her painted toes to her denuded waxed legs and to her radiant breasts and then captivating face—God took time here. “I know I’ve hurt you so much and no words can describe the amount of pain I’ve caused you. I’m sorry” It has been months and months of apologizing to this woman. And he wasn’t planning on stopping anytime soon until he was back in her arms. “I’ll do anything you want me to do Kelela” he looked at her and she leaned back on the couch and suddenly the atmosphere was warm hazy vignette.

“I didn’t call you for that Lunzulu” The thrill resolve shoot through him like quicksilver climbing a fevered thermometer and he looked back at her brushing his hands against his pants “But I missed my husband” an unexpected smile grows on her face “I know you’re sorry and I forgive you” he couldn’t believe what she has just poured into her ears that his heart beat accelerated “I miss you Lunzulu” Her eyes almost glow at him and he could feel heat burning through him “I didn’t call you here so we can do this kind of talking” she stand on her feet



and he could see her camel toe from the sheer fabric that she was wearing and the perking of her nipples. Now he got to admire her from her painted toe, to her plump stomach that brought smile as the the thought of his seed growing there danced in his mind—Oh yes he knew now and when the news were delivered to him crystalline beads danced in his eyes and then her face that was beautiful sculptured all the way to the follicles of her hair. “I have a surprise for you” she evoked something only she managed to bring out of him and an impish smirk was painted on his face as he got up from the couch and striding towards her. “Do you want to find out?” He pulled her towards him and they meet into a kiss. And he could taste the aromatic sweetness of her tongue and when he pulled away from the kiss his heart flipped and a hot shiver flicked down his neck.

“I missed you so much” He tucked the length of her hair behind her ear and the heat palm of his hand on her face. “What’s the surprise?” And before she could respond his face was already nuzzling on her neck and tasting more of her flash and she went rigid only to melt when his cheek meets with her fleeting warmth “I love surprises” he trailed his fingers on her spine and she seductively giggled. Their lips interlocked and he reached and gripped her plump posterior and his hands moved with cautious respect to the dark between her legs and met the heat radiating from her before he can go anywhere near touching

her “Do you like that?” He whispered into her mouth. And she purred then mewled when he cupped the source of her warmth in his palm and start rubbing back and forth, pressing the seam of sheer underwear to the contours of her slit swollen plump of jelly bean. Her face was perfection when her head tipped back and the breathing hitched and she swelled and puffed against him. Then she threw her arms around his neck and raised her one leg open up to him. He leaned in, pressing her into the wall and kissing her back with fervor and sucking her tongue into the gaze of her mouth. And her precious jaw opened and his tongue lolled from her clutches. Despite the layers between the build was obvious and he felt himself rising towards her and her dampness has soaked right through the material to his finger. “I’m sorry” Again he apologized for all he has done and then thrust his hand past the drape of material until he found her waistband and slide down between it and her silky smooth flesh. Kelela whined and pressing her skull into the wall like it was trying to swallow her and Lunzulu slide the flat of his hand down the front of underwear and she was impossibly wet, coating his fingers with slick upon contact. She had a piercing on her clitoris that made his made run wild. He watched her unravelled as watch, he consumed every contour with like a voracious, unsighted reader. His fingers licked up and down between her folds until he was covered in her. He dipped into her once, twice, deeper. Her hips rock in time to his thrusts,

encouraging him not to waver, grinding into his palm to slow his pace.

He slipped out to circle her bean, softer and more sultry than ever. The rhythms came so naturally and he moved by her openness with her.

The tension radiating from her body thickens the air so much that it felt hot in his lungs. Her eyes rolled so far into the back of her skull that the whites went black, she was terrifyingly gorgeous; and he has never known such reverence.

Kelela grunt and groan and bite down hard his shoulder until she collapsed and melt into him, whimpering into his flesh.

As if she has passed her dizziness onto him, through her, turning every nerve ending white-hot. Like her orgasm has become his too. The sensation overtook him completely that he rolled back his eyes with hers and everything goes blank.

“What’s the surprise?” He drawled into her ear

“While I’ll be preparing it in the bedroom how about you continue having a drink? And when the music invites you can come to the bedroom”

“Oh yeah?”

“Hmmm”

“I’ll be waiting then”

A soft seductive giggle rolled out of her mouth as she briskly walked away from him—If only he knew—she thought with too much exotic and elation growing inside her as she returned back into the bedroom and found Rharha who was gorgeous in her bohemian paisley embroidered garter belt and Kelela walked towards her with all the oversexed sensations wrapped around her. “I want to kiss you” she said to her and she didn’t need a response. The lust that was dancing in Rharha’s eyes after she was listening to Kelela’s moan was not amiss and her lips were on hers, and a groan escaped Kelela as her tongue massages hers. Her mouth travelled down her neck and shoulder with light pressure. Rharha was serene yet hyperaware of Kelela’s dreadlocks as she stroke it and pulled her closed. When Kelela suggested this to her she thought she might’ve lost her marbles but after taking time of deeply thinking about it—the thought alone would revisit her in her dreams and she’ll find her hands circulating her swollen bean while she moaned loudly and finally she agreed. The sweet and fresh of Rharha’s peach lotion increased the pleasant friction of her clit against the seam thong.

Rharha ran her fingers over the smooth skin of her jaw and bringing her lips back to hers and allow their tongues to probe deeper. Their cheeks brush as she dared to flick her tongue of her earlobe.

“Let’s get this off” Kelela said peeling off the sensual material she had on and running her hands down her back and squeezing her plump posterior then lightly bites her neck. Once undressed Rharha bend down and ran her tongue over the ebony skin just above the sheer cups of her bra and she threw her head back and moaned. And suddenly Kelela was denuded at the top and Rharha stared at the perfection of her breasts. “Like that?” When Rharha nodded she smirked “Now come here” Kelela whispered and walking backwards to the bed and taking off her thong

tossing it aside and Kelela lay on her back and Rharha’s remaining nerves evaporated into pure want.

Rharha spread out beside her and her tongue licking her breasts and nuzzling the white mounds and sucking her nipples. “Harder!” Kelela breathes and fisting into her hair. And she did her best to comply and rewarded with “Ah yessss!” And Rharha explored her body and rubbing herself against her smooth legs when Kelela gently rolled out under her. And she couldn’t help but ogle the beauty of her buttocks as she bended over and fumbled in her drawer then came back with a vibrator.

And she flicked a switch on the toy and immediately it emits a gentle hum. Then she flicked it again for shorter, more aggressive buzzing and then leaned on towards her and start kissing her neck. “Easy” Kelela giggled—she was dominant.

With one move Rharha's bra was off. And Kelela nuzzled and lick her bare breasts and her nipples pebbled when they met the cool air. Kissing down her growing stomach and then she lowered herself between her legs and it takes everything in her not to shove her beautiful face into her pussy. Unexpectedly Rharha feels her tongue first playing over clitoris in a gentle figure eight. Gasping. Then she raised her hips to give her more access but she kept teasing her. Finally Kelela hooked her leg over her bare shoulders before going deeper. Kelela flattened her tongue against her clit, licking her low, slow, tongue darting in and out. A finger plagued inside Rharha and she moaned softly at first and the loudly as she added another finger and began to thrust. Rharha was tingling and on the verge when a slight knock came from the outside the room. It was Lunzulu after he heard the arousing moan and thinking maybe his wife was playing with herself. "Do you want him to watch?" Kelela roguishly smirked and lifting her face from between Rharha's legs.

"Get him now" That's all Rharha managed to choke as she murmured breathlessly.

A thrill ran through Rharha and in tune with her surrounding and Kelela's soft mouth and probing fingers, the waves of pleasure ran through her and immediately they heard heavy footsteps and clothing hitting the floor followed by a decidedly

male groan—Lunzulu. Who found what any man could ever desire for and his phallus was about to explode and bleed. Kelela's tongue was in Rharha and she stopped thinking about what was about to happen and she was in a moment. Rharha opened her eyes she saw her man—their man standing beautiful naked and his hazel eyes interlocked with hers and drank in the beauty of his naked body, potent and before anything she felt a vibrator after Kelela has replaced her tongue with the toy fast and she held it against her clit, fitting it perfectly between the lips and vulva. The pink toy vibrated in short, quick burst and she arched her back. “Do you like that?” Kelela asked. Lunzulu was aroused by her dominance. One of the reasons she loved about her, she knew how to take charge in everything and she did it effortlessly.

Rharha can only gasp as the rapid buzzes give way a long, sustained vibration and she tried to tighten her legs around the vibe but Kelela gently held them apart, torturing her in a most exquisite way and gently kissing her thighs. Rharha looked over Lunzulu and his eyes were at the back of his head with his hands jerking off and still watching the piece of art in front of him. Something in Rharha broke open and she reached the headboard and let out a strongest moan with her voice two octaves higher. It just came in waves of intense release washing over her and she arched her hips until the last tremor complete.

While she was still shaking, Rharha sat up and reached for Kelela and they dived in each other's mouths, and she could taste herself in her tongue as he pulled her close, running her hands over her smooth curves. And she felt her hands in her breasts stroking and lightly pulling at her nipples. "This is a lovely surprise" Lunzulu's baritone awakened every sensation through them "Khuzwayo wants to be taken care of" Kelela smirked at him in euphoria.

Rharha and Kelela slither off the bed onto their knees before him and Kelela nipped her earlobe and giving her permission "You go first. . ." And then she watched mesmerized by the sight of Rharha's beautiful lips expertly gliding up and down Lunzulu's phallus, the pure pleasure on his face as he grunt with desire sent a a shockwave throughout her body.

Rharha unlatched with a smirk "Your turn" she said. Kelela kisses her to taste her man from her mouth and then she placed her tip on his crown and massaging the head for few second enough to make his mind run a riot before taking him fully and stroking his balls and he grunted and she savored in his phallic and taking him deep down his throat and using her hand on his shaft and then she comes up for her and let Rharha take over. Lunzulu's grunts gets shorter and rougher and more demanding. Kelela was fascinated watching how Rharha moans softly while taking him deep and she kissed her shoulder and



bite her neck and she moaned again this time because of Kelela.

Without a word, they double down. Kelela lunging his phallus and Rharha cupping his balls and followed up with her tongue. Lonzulu brushes his fingers over Kelela's breasts and his hands travelled to her hair pulling at the roots as she goes deep as physically possible, groaning around his thick and hard shaft. As he roars through his climax Lonzulu shoots hard into her that she has to relax her throat.

"Get on the bed!" Now he was taking charge and saying to Rharha and he positioned her on the bed and gets on his knees in front of her. Kelela climbed on the bed allowing Rharha to lean against her. The room now smelt like their desires—heady and musky and intoxicating. As Lonzulu thrust into Rharha she lets out a high-pitched little shrieked, the most feminine gasp combined with breathy and entreaties. "That feels so good. Yes. Yes. Harder" Lonzulu's tongue was now on her clit while using his one finger and then two to probe deeper into her. While Kelela admired the view, she rubbed Rharha's breasts and the curve of her waist. And her pomegranate seed hardened again and her vagina widening and she gently bite Rharha's shoulder as she was reaching her climax and letting out a soft scream before she found her mouth for a long deep kiss.

Lunzulu grinned and kissed Kelela hard and aggressive, faint stubble stretching her chin and his tongue swooping through hers and moving in and out of her mouth. Kelela groaned and outstretched on the bed and his hands found her breast, expertly stroking her nipples as she grabbed his buttocks. And then she switches positions and gets on top of him and relishing the pleasure and start the work with her hips up and down. Rharha was on his face and he was plaguing his tongue inside her—they looked like a picture of a puzzle. Lunzulu groans as Kelela thrusts deeper and so does his tongue on Rharha.

“I’m close!”

Rharha and Kelela chant at once.

It happens all at once and an operatic moans erupted from them.

“She who breathes into life Gods and Men”

It been nine months!

And it was nothing but a nightmare that I thought one day someone could wake me up from. I don't know how many times I've thrown tantrums and hysterically cried mostly in public spaces. If it was for me personally I would've grabbed a knife and slice my stomach in half and then grab out this damn baby and throw it at Mthabela's face while he's peacefully sleeping. I said I want what? I said seven children, that's not happening. This one was enough to send me running into Garden of Eden and fighting Eve for eating that damn fruit because pregnancy wouldn't have been this hard for women. Not mentioning my incalculable cravings. Well sometimes I crave a glass house and maybe an island in the middle of the night. It depends really but sometimes I just want a boat. . .It really just depends on time and day.

“We are about to leave the house!” I hear a scream that belong to Rharha as she screams and I stand in front of the mirror in a neutral off shoulder dress and heels that will be painful in just few minutes and my stomach looks humongous. These people want me to leave the house looking like this? I just want to sleep and wait until my water broke and then scream at Mthabela for doing this to time and then faint. I really hope

that I do somehow just faint and wake up with a baby serene and sleeping in her cot because from the videos that I've watched whether my stomach is being opened into half or I push the baby through my vagina none of these options sounds better than the other, they're horrific and see me pregnant again I'm turning into a damn mermaid. "Let's go!" Rharha shouts now before my door wrench open and she finds me on the bed eating dry fruits. I would've preferred if this was soil though but Mthabela is totally against that and I don't know how many pillows I've threw at him. "Are you ready mama?" I have no idea where we are going and I'm hoping it's not another baby shower because we had one just a month ago and it was beautifully planned. I hope it's not a surprise wedding too because I'll be a runaway bride. No ways I'm getting married when I'm carrying a ten litre breadbasket. "Aww don't give me that look now get up green mamba and lets go" she says with too much utopia in her voice—Oh she's a mother now and a officially a second wife. I don't know how she's managing being a second wife but they make it seems like. . .It's normal to share a man. I cannot do that. If ever Mthabela approaches me about polygamy his death will be in my hands. I'm not a mermaid for no reason. I will drown him in the sea. "Nomzamo" I have no choice but getting up from the bed as she takes my hand and we walk out of the room. And she's looking absolutely beautiful in her oatmeal colored dress

and blooming with tropical colors. My mother is here and all my sister in laws as we get into the car and they've been taking pictures of everything. I just wondering what on earth is happening!

Maybe they want to make a sacrifice with you? I mean what if they do?—my subconscious asks and sitting on a chair with her legs spread apart and her hands rubbing her swollen stomach. Now please call Mthabela and tell him that I want a juice that's made in Paris. What the fuck? Now we'll have my man traveling the world for what a juice? There's fusion, she must drink it and leave my husband alone. Yes. . .I remember that day vividly as his uncles were shouting outside my gate calling out my clan names and after that day I became an official ingodusu.

I am in a car and listening to the music softly playing. I don't even bother with plaguing everyone with questions now because they won't even bother retorting so I might as well lean back and flutter my eyes close. After what felt like an eternity of traveling we are at KwaHlabisa and already they sky is turning dark with the stars looking like a mat. We left when it was already late anyways. I remember being here. What are they planning? I keep stealing glances at them with their phones out and capturing the moment as I get off the car. Oh God—It has been a year since that day we sneak out in the middle of the night coming to an event where I first saw him on

stage, performing and sounding ethereal. “What are we doing here?” I ask them and they are hiding behind smiles and euphoria. It seems like they’re having an event again. Now Lulama is holding my hand and she is the one who made this beautiful dress that I’m draped on. Finally after walking through the gate we are invited by nothing but darkness but one candle lit up on stage, followed by another and before I know it the stage is surrounded by candles with a soft sound of piano playing in the background and then the drums creating an heavenly sound. I keep moving my eyes around everyone even his brothers that we found here. They make me sit on a chair and immediately in that moment he appears on stage and holding a guitar in his hand. uMthabela wami. The tears prickles that at the corners of my eyes tastes different, not salty but sugary or maybe it’s the combination of the lipgloss that I have on my lips. I cannot keep my eyes off how beautiful this man looks in his linen pants and matching shirt with the last two buttons opened and showing the captivating chiselled. “From the time I saw you from the distance. . .” A sweet androgynous falsetto rolls out of his mouth like waves as he sings “. . .you’ve been running through my mind. You’re so beautiful like the egg horizon rising behind the mountain. Beautiful like a rainbow dancing in crispy blue skies” Oh he sounds so spiritual yet sensual. I don’t know how he manages to combine those two emotions in a song as he sings on top of eloquent instrumentals

and the backing vocals sounds like how angels would sound in heaven as they see me approaching.

I clutch my chest and listening to him singing from one vowel and note to another. With my heart dancing in jovial. Everyone around me fades away and my main focus is on that man who'll be running to Paris after this performance to get me a juice. It's unbelievable that it has been a year and I have no doubt in my heart. Every day, minutes

seconds, weeks and months I have no doubt that he's with me because I was a better choice and not a second option. I have no doubt that he's deeply in love with me and he'll move the world for me.

I am disturbed by pain at my lower abdomen feeling as though a sword is being shoved through my vagina and straight to my abdomen. I've been feeling this pain since morning. It's not that painful. . .whoa! I think I might change my mind about that, it was an unexpected cramp. But I am fineeeeeeeeeeeee. I'm not. I'm not okay. Why it suddenly feels like my guts are now also being sliced up. Trust me I'm okay and this song sounds—I cannot take this. “Ah!” I cry out in pain and no one can hear because it's muffled by music. Or maybe they're thinking I'm singing along to the song? I don't know. Wasn't I supposed to go in labor sometime next week? It could be false alarm like two days back. Now let me bring back my attention to this. . .I

can't pay attention whether to this man or this song or anyone for that. "Ah ah ah!" Again I cry out and this time Yolokazi is the one that hears me as I lean back on the chair and she comes and kneel in front of me. "I'm in pain. . .I don't know what's going" I tell her before she can ask. Muziwenkosi can see what's happening because the guitar just landed on the floor and he jumps off the stage and comes to kneel in front of me and holding my hands as I try to catch a breather.

Was Mary also in this amount of pain when giving birth to Jesus?—my subconscious asks and fanning herself as she starts to sweat. How am I supposed to know? I wasn't there. Why is she asking me? Ah Ah I cannot take this. I think I want to stand and sing on that stage I don't know.

"Nana what's wrong?" Mthabela sounds panicked and darting his eyes between mines.

Tell him he should leave you alone and you hate him.

Nomzamo say it now and stand up!—my subconscious instructs as I inhale through my mouth.

"Leave me alone Muziwenkosi! Get out of me! And I hate you. Oh God I hate you" I simmer and immediately after those words my pain grows even more unbearable. And I try standing up but he holds my hand and making me sit back on the chair. I can hear people screaming about a car or something while on the other hand I'm being asked how much pain I'm in.



Mthabela on the other side wants to know what's going on. He doesn't care whether I want him to get out of me or I want him to leave me alone but what he wants to know is what's happening and losing his marbles at my screams as they crescendo.

Tell him that you love him now! Tell him you want to spend the rest of your life with him. Let's go Solela say it now—my subconscious instructs again as he holds my hand and leading me in the car. My mother on the other side is screaming.

Tell your mother to leave you alone. My subconscious basically wants me to tell everyone to tell me alone? Not happening.

As we are making our way into the car I feel something watery flowing down my legs. You got to be kidding me. Oh Jesus Christ are you serious? Right now? This place is literally in the middle of nowhere. "Thingo lwami. . ." The shockwave just shoot through him because his eyes are out of their own sockets and looking down at my legs. "Nana look at me and just breathe okay? Don't overthink just keep breathing"

Unexpectedly he picks me up in his arms and holding me closely to his chest "We are close to the end thingo lwami and I want you to keep breathing"

"End of what? The world?" I scream and cry. And he looks down at me. I can see it. This man wants to laugh and if he

dares laugh then I'm going to kill him. Jesus this man is going to die one way or the other. "End of what Mthabela?"

"End of this journey thingo lwami. We are getting in the car now. Are you still in pain?"

"I'm going to kill you. Obviously I'm in pain" I gritted through my teeth and he shoved me in the car with my head on his lap. I have my eyes closed. I can hear voices speaking and asking me questions but I ignore them. I'm crying and screaming. "I will never have sex again" I make an oath in front of God. I hope he's listening to me right now. The car is moving now, I don't know who's driving but this stupid man that made me pregnant is counting from one, two, three and then asking me to breathe. Apparently that should be helping me somehow with what? Pain maybe? I don't know.

You can be silent now for a few minutes the pain is not that bad—my subconscious instructs. My screams slowly but surely fade in the car. That somehow scares Mthabela. My breathing is short and shallow. I'm running out of breath. And I'm holding onto his hand that's resting on my stomach and looking up at him and he has a smile on his face and eyes that are shimmering with tears. "We are going to be okay thingo lwami" I believe him as his words sink slowly into my brain.

Oh this is too romantic now scream!—Already? My subconscious hates me. Now I'm screaming. Actually what on earth? Wasn't there any other way we could've given birth?

"Whoever is driving this damn car I want you to stop it! Stop the damn car now!" I scream and kicking the windows. I want the car to stop moving. I'm suffocating and the movements makes the pain increases. "Mthabela stop the car now!" We've been driving. They said the hospital is two hours away from here, in total it was three. I want someone to tell me what was I thinking coming here? To celebrate my anniversary yes. But still what was doing hmm? "Muziwenkosi I want this car to stop!"

"Nana we are almost there"

"I don't care. I don't care this car should stop now" I scream once again. I hear him talking to someone and the car doesn't stop. He doesn't know me. I start kicking windows almost breaking and screaming until the car eventually halts. "Open the door Mthabela open this damn door" I know he wants to fight me but I'm crying and screaming and yelling and shouting. I don't know who's opening the door but someone does. I can finally breath. I hear some doors opening which means everyone is getting off the cars to find out what's happening. They're saying we should quickly rush to the hospital. My mother comes to me and talk to me before she comes and check in between my legs then she screams. What's going on?

Mthabela is now freaking out. I don't know who is checking me now and separating my legs.

Oh Jesus what's that? Is that a hand? Is that a leg? Is that a nose? Okay a nose cannot be that big. Omg it's a head. A head is coming out of your vagina. You have a head in your vagina— my subconscious screaming and stands on top of the car for the whole world to know that there's a head coming out of my vagina. Nxarga.

"We won't make it to the hospital" Now that's Sthayiselo speaking "Nomzamo we are going to have this baby right here and now and she's going to come out just fine okay"

"No!" I scream. I'm not giving birth in this damn car. No ways. "Mthabela please" I cry looking at him. "I don't want to have my baby here" I cannot have her here.

"We have to make it to the hospital Stha" Mthabela says. Oh yes. Thank God. I cannot be pushing this baby at the backseat of a car.

"Muzi we won't be able to make it to the hospital we have two hours ahead. And the baby is close"

"We'll call a helicopter or something!"

"This baby needs to be delivered now" I have no choice. I seriously have no any other option right but delivering this baby right here and now in my backseat. I hear the exchanging of

voices. “Nomzamo open your legs and we’ll count in three before you can push okay” she says.

We have neighbours who’re the closet that have come out and offered us towels and bowel with warm water.

I’m giving birth in a car and covered in a sheen of sweat with Muziwenkosi who looks like he wants to faint and wake up when it’s all over. I should be fainting not him.

My nails are digging deeper into his skin and I see him starting to bleed but he doesn’t groan nor saying anything besides stroking my hair back and reminding me how much of a strong woman I am. I’m not a strong woman. I don’t want to be. I just want this damn baby out of me now.

“Nomzamo push!” I hear a scream and Mthabela holds my hand tightly. I push and scream.

“I want to go to the bathroom!” I announce. I seriously just want to go to the bathroom and then we can come back and do this.

“You don’t want the bathroom. Just push thingo lwakhe. Keep pushing” Again they do the count down. I cannot do this. The more I am pushing I am feeling my own breath crawling out of by body as well as my soul.

I can feel tears crowding my eyes hearing everyone shouting that I shouldn't give up. I cannot do this. One more push that will be my last breath and end of me.

"Nomzamo!" I hear Mthabela screaming at me and holding my face in his hands. "Nomzamo!" Again he screams and all noises starts to fade. It could be my imagination but I can hear a baby crying as though she was meant to sing and joyful screams. Oh no I'm not imaging it. I'm just falling into total oblivion.

"Nomzamo is not breathing! Nomzamo is not fucking breathing" His baritone resonates and they're voices exchanging as my eyes slowly closes. "Nomzamo Mbatha don't you dare. Don't you dare me"

The sound of the constellations sounds beautifully against my ears and my body floats in the air and clad in a gold shimmering dress that holds me perfectly and I'm surrounded by cherubic women who're clad in same beautiful fabrics and wearing their skin with pride.

Their natural hair delicate, braided in different forms and some looking like candy floss as I walk barefooted.

At each step the melody is created until a woman with a crown in her head turns around to look at me a frown "You shouldn't

be here. Go back!” I want to respond but my voice cannot come out of my mouth.

It’s heavenly here, she’s laying in her divine feminine energy.

“Go back! Go back! Your child will be the first woman to sit on that throne. You’ll have to be there when it happens.

This is not your time. Your ancestors are guiding you and with you. Now leave”

Again no words can come out of my mouth instead I turn back and walk away from here. I gasp!

“Nomzamo!” I hear his voice and slowly dragging my eyes opened to see him covered in his tears with red rimmed eyes and the moment he sees my eyes opening and lashes brushing at the bottom of my eyes a smile crawl into my mouth “Thingo lwami. . .” I almost died.

I cannot tell him because he’ll probably think I’m being dramatic. Who was that woman? Where was that place? “Uyatholwa she’s here” he says and I’m trying to catch a breather before I’m being given a baby and they place her closely to my chest. Everyone was crying. I don’t know why. I look down at her.

And she’s the most prepossessing thing I’ve set my eyes on. Better than the dreams—with her birth mark in her hand and she looks exactly just like. . .

her father with a mixture of me. “Ngiyabonga thingo lwami” He thanks me. I don’t know if he’s thanking my womb for keeping our princess safe or what. “Ngiyabonga MaMbatha”

“Do you know what I am?” I smile weakly and hearing the sounds of the sirens. “A mermaid?” “You’re not funny” I laugh softly. “You’re The Only Fish In The Sea For Me”

“I was going to say I’m the mother of your first child but I can take that”

.....**THE END**.....

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