

BAD DECISIONS HAVE BAD OUTCOMES

A Kasi WIFE

BUT SURPRISINGLY YOU ARE THE BEST OF IT.

THANDO MKHIZE

Chapter 1

I looked out of the window of this car at the kids that are displayed in front of me scattering into what is called a 'School'. I have confusion hung up in my head of why I am here. Is my father deserting me ? Is my mother also coming to the slums of this place as well since they are divorcing ? Why is my father deserting me? He said that it is between my mother and himself and It shouldn't affect me but it is affecting me.

“Vaya joh ngifuna ukuhamba(Get out I want to leave)”, I move my eyes from the window and look at him as he takes some money from his jeans and waves a R10 my way.

“Here, isgriza sithe angikunike (Gogo said I should give this to you)”, I know she handed a R50! To him but I won't say anything.

How would I survive with this much money a day?

“Thank you”

“Yeah get out I have somewhere to be”, I grab my purple boomerang bag and open the door.

I hop out and close the door. I breathe in and out looking at the security man in front of me. Very different from what I am used to. I take out my hand sanitizer from my bag and I squirt it into my hands and rub it around before I walk into the school premises. The car speeds off after that. It is a Mercedes Benze Midium class from the 90's and it was once

owned by my grandfather. I heard that he had a good job that bought him this car. He worked at a Nestlé factory that was in Pietermaritzburg but now the factory is no more. It has relocated. When he died my grandmother built the house that we have now with his pay out money.

I walk into the school premises and already I am feeling scared just by the looks from some of the kids I am passing. They are not following any school uniform regulations and some have different jackets on. At Kingsway we don't do this. We pride ourselves very well in our uniform to look like a proper school child. The fact is now I am not at Kingsway but here in the township where there is no pool and no fun sporting activities. I miss my friends more especially I miss my boyfriend Ntando.

“Eita!”, One boy whistles my way

He is standing funny, leaning on his side while one hand is behind him holding the other one from there. It is like he will just pull a knife from his pants and chase me around with it. I am scared, I feel hopeless.

“Hawu how was school?”, it is the first thing my grandmother asks when I come through the door.

I have had a long day, being mocked for speaking some English fluently. It is not my fault my father made sure I went to great schools from birth with better education. I don't know what to make of the teachers from that school. They teach most of the subjects in isizulu than English imagine! My God I don't like this place at all.

“It was fine”, I lie.

My grandmother is quiet excited that I have moved in with her and my mother is to follow soon as well. I am currently using her room as my bedroom. Not much like my bedroom but it's what I can work with.

“I cooked, I didn't know ukuthi uthandani so ngenze usu ngaxova inhlamu(what you like so I cooked tripe and steam bread), can you cook?”

“No”, I say lowly.

I have never saw the chance to do so. My mother was the one who always cooked and cleaned the house and we had a weekend helper who came in from time to time. That is all my mother did , she cooked, cleaned and took care of us. Fetched me from school everyday and now I have to catch a taxi or get in my grandfather's old car from ancient times. See my mother is nothing but a house wife. I don't mean any disrespect, I love my mother very much and she is a good woman. Very humble and kind as well that is what my father attracted him to my mother. She never finished school or succeeded in life but boy oh boy did she become the next big thing when she got married to my father. I mean being married to a General practitioner aka Doctor was something in these community eyes. They were young, very young when they got married. 26 years and 20 is young then 3 years down their marriage I came along and I was the ‘Miracle’ baby after 5 miscarriages that is why I am the only child. So my mother is not smart. School wise but she is the nicest person you would know. Fairly I have never heard my mother shout in my whole 17 years of being on this earth.

I am half of my mother and father as any child should be. I have my own academic struggles but I do really good if I put my work into it. I don't have a favourite parent or who I am more close to but both my parents. My parents are going through a divorce that I don't know in full detail of what is the cause but I know just a little of 'I don't want to compete with her anymore', is what I once heard my mother say to my father.

That day I had just came back from my netball practice from school. It was netball and swimming season. Last year is what I mean. I was the happiest really, I mean you are 16 and feel like you are already part of adult hood when you are not. I got my sweet 16 and I was just in grade 10. Things are well and great. No dating, nothing really until December when my mother and father dropped the news of me moving away home to live with my grandmother. It would've been better if they moved me to Umanzimtoti but no they moved me to Umlazi. The most known township in Durban well what I know where safety is not really garenteed.

I mean we used to watch Umlazi gangster in our IsiZulu classes from time to time and poor movie and quality of it but I am not here to judge the directors and producers of that movie one bit. I am just saying, guns and all. I still don't understand why I had to change schools as well. Did my father loose his licence or maybe his Surgery has a problem? I don't understand. From ukushaya impilo eskhebheni in La Lucia to hitting rock bottom in Umlazi.

"Your parents ruined you. It's a basic skill. I always tell Mfanele that", my grandmother says.

Mfanele, my cousin. My uncle's son who was dropping me off in the morning. He acts like the new Tupac after Tupac. Baggy clothes are his thing and those jeans are lower than some people's Maths marks I tell you.

“He knows how to cook?”, she nods.

“I am dishing up go and change ”, she disappears leaving what is playing on the TV on.

It's SABC 1. She loves it for some reason and whenever she walks into the lounge she wants it on. I don't know why there is DSTV if we will watch SABC 1 the whole day. This is one of the reasons why I miss home really.

I drag myself to my bedroom. I get in and close the door before I drop my bag and hurry to my phone. I left it here in the house. Mfanele advised me this morning to do so. He said “Ntwana Leh phone yakho izohamba lingaka shoni ilanga (Your phone will be gone before the sun sets)”so I listened to him.

He was right those kids look sketchy. Some of them. A knock comes from my door. “Mshano!”

It's my uncle. Why can't I have some privacy in this house?I go and open the door.

“Mshano how was school mlungu wami?”

“It was ok malume”, I say

“Here hold some”, he gives me a folded R20

“Thank you”.

“Uziphathe kahle (Behave yourself)and if anyone bothers you tell Bra Tales neh?”,he takes out a lighter and cigarette from his leather jacket.

“Who is that?”

“That's me. Ngeke ngiyeke ingane kadade wethu iyodwa ngiphila never (I won't let my sister's child fend for herself while I am still alive)”,I just nod with a smile.

“Okay”

He walks off and I close the door. I go and throw myself on the bed before I open my data and go to my Instagram. There is this girl Called kali.califonia, yes I think that is her name. I just see her in passing and she has a funny personality even though I don't understand her sometimes. She speaks Setswana so sometimes I get lost in what she says but her personality draws me into her page. I have been trying to grow my page and I am sitting on 7K followers. That is something right?

“Hey babe”,I send the message to Ntando.

He is in grade 12 from my former school. No he is not a head boy, he doesn't have any school position except being captain for the rugby team that's all. He is really good at it and has honours to prove it. He is in the Midlands Under 19 team as well. That's how far he is now and he was looking into getting with the Sharks. He has done his trials before but hadn't succeeded and the last time he had trials he was injured from a game so he couldn't play. He lives rugby, actually he is passionate about it.

Right now he might be at practice or maybe juggling school.

“Lethi! Come and eat”

My grandmother calls. I get off the bed and make my way out.

It has been over 4 days since I started schooling here and I am trying to adjust. My parents haven't called yet and I am hoping they are sorting their issues soon. I don't want to do my grade 12 here. In an environment that I am not familiar with.

“Don't look at the place like that Wena Njabs, It's not that bad yazi”, I turn from the window and look at him.

He is applying some lip balm on his lips.

“You don't know how I feel Bayanda”, he stops that and they both look at me with Mfanele.

I have been dragging going out today.

“Well this is where we schooled too. Mtsele Hawu (tell her)”, Bayanda pushes Mfanele with his arm to vouch for him.

My grandmother's last born, He is 24 years old and is studying at Howard university around here in Durban. The one and only child from my grandmother's womb who went to university. I think he said Philosophy or something along those lines I think. I wasn't paying much attention when he was explaining what he is studying. He is a ball of life actually. Loves colourful loose shirts and skinny jeans rocking them with either sneakers or a boot. Sometimes sandals. If I say this boy sleeps Kwa Max lifestyle would be an understatement because he parties alot. A full definition of someone who doesn't sleep at home is him. This all makes my mother the middle child. He doesn't behave like an uncle more like a cousin.

“Ntwana uzoba grand (Ntwana you will be okay)”, Mfanele tries to be nice.

I sigh and a BMW M3 CS parks in front of this retro car we are in and I hop out. Mfanele does as well and takes my bag from the back.

“Come let me accompany you”, he throws it on his shoulder.

One hand in his pocket and he walks towards the orange BMW. Nice cars don't come this side so there is curiosity in me.

“Woza Ntwana(Come)”, he says.

I follow behind him. He gets to the driver's side and the window rolls down.

“K’hamba kanjani?(How are you?)”, Mfanele asks the guy.

“Move so I can get out”, the guy says.

His voice is raspy and sounds slow but it seems like it not. It is deep as well. He steps back and the guy gets out of the car.

“Ntwana take your bag and go inside”, Mfanele hands my bag over to me.

“Will you fetch me?”, I ask

“icherry?(your girl?)”

“Nix, Umzala(No, cousin)”

So they are talking about me here?

“You will catch a taxi if you feel lazy to walk”, he fiddles with his pockets and hands a R20 to me.

“Vaya ke(Go)”

I left him there. I walked inside the school premises hoping it would be better than the other days but it wasn't really.



I look outside the window as the noise surfaced within the class and papers being thrown around. I turn from the window and look at the children scattering in the class as our teacher makes his way back inside the class and they sit down quietly. We look at him as he looks at us.

“Hey, can you borrow me your pen?”, the boy seated next to me says.

“I don't have an extra one”, I lost it yesterday. I always carry extra pens and pencils just incase one gets lost and it was on my table yesterday and then the next thing it was gone. Vanished from my eyes.

“Sokhela!”, the teacher says.

“Ingoba ungangi boni nomngani wakho?(Is it because you don't see me with your friend?)”

“Sorry , sir”, the guy says.

The bell rings saving us from the awkward silence.

“Tomorrow I want 6 activities done or you will suffer the consequences. Dismissed !”

We quickly get our things and make our way out of the class. I think I am going to start hating doing Mathematics in this school. Too much work being given, some classes we hardly get any work and I am questioning some of these teachers teaching skills. I walk out of the gate and remember that Mfanele won't be fetching me and Bayanda is

probably at school or home. I am not used to taxi's but now they are something I should get used to. I really hate this life. The sound of music playing is much loud. One of the things I can't cope with. How are kids supposed to learn with this much noise in the area? I just don't understand selfish people really!

I walk out of the gate and I see the same car that was here this morning. Only difference is that the driver is standing by it while smoking. Oh the music is coming from his car. He is bobbling his head back and forth while he takes a puff it. I proceed with my journey going home.

"Nana!", I stop my tracks and hold onto my bag.

He throws his cigarette and I look behind me. I carry on with walking.

"Nana with the purple bag come here !", I stop my tracks at that and turned to face him.

He is leaning by the car. He has a gold chain on his chest and is wearing a flowered shirt. It's hanging a bit loosely around his body. Black jeans and a Bennie on his head. He looks at me and signals with his Finger that I should come to him.

I swallow. I shouldn't be talking to strangers really. He was with Mfanele in the morning and maybe he wants me to pass a message to Mfanele. I get to him and he looks at me shoving his hands in his pocket.

"ugrand Nana?(Are you good?)", I nod. I don't like the Nana word.

"Yebo Bhuti(Yes)"

“Get in the car”, he instructs pointing with his head to the passenger side.

“Why?”

“Don’t ask questions Nana and get in.”

I shake my head stepping back slowly. He manages to catch me with my arm and I scream. People have now stopped doing what they are doing but none of them are coming close. He scans around and looks at me.

“Get in the car now Nana”, he says rather more softly and calmly.

He lets go of me and moves from where he is and goes around with me. I am scared and what if I am getting kidnapped? It's no secret that girls go missing everyday. I open the door with my shaking hands.

“Give me your bag”

I take it off slowly and hand it to him.

“Get in”. I get in the car.

He closes the door and opens the back throwing my bag inside before closing the door. He gets in the front and starts the car. He looks at the side mirror before the car starts moving. I look for the seat belt and quickly put it on but he doesn't. His speed is making me anxious. I don't say anything. The car is nice and the leather red seats. Orange on the outside and red on the inside. I wonder what my grandmother will say if she finds out that I get into such cars.

He doesn't indicate when making a turn. Fairly he doesn't even follow some road rules like putting on a seat belt. It looks like he doesn't care

at all. He gets into the road where my grandmother's house is an parks a house away from her house.

“Thank you”, I slowly take of the seat belt and open the door.

“I will fetch you tomorrow”,I look at this man who helped me but scared me at the same time before I get out of the car.

I thought he would leave now but the car doesn't move until I get home and I make my way inside the house. I get inside and close the door, lean against it and then breathe out.

“Was someone chasing you? Yini wahefuzela kangaka(why are you breathing so heavily?)”,if only you knew what I had just went through now.

“Have my parents called?”,I asked my grandmother who is focused on her SABC 1 shows.

“No”

“Ohw”,She turns to me.

“They will call don't worry”,She says with a smile. She stands up and goes to the kitchen.

I feel tears prickling my eyes as I make my way to the bedroom and I close the door and throw myself on the bed. I feel like crying. I don't want to be here, I don't want to live here. I take my phone and try my father and mother but it doesn't go through. I feel like screaming. I wipe my tears away and I send a message to Ntando once again.

“Hey, I miss you. I know I left without explaining but I can explain now”,I really don't want to explain that I downgraded.

I sigh and throw my phone on the other side of the bed and I take the pillow and put it over my head. I really feel like my life is coming to an ultimate end and I wasn't asked for the opinion about it.

“Lethi shintsa uzodla!(Change then come and eat)”,It's my grandmother.

I get off the bed and change from my uniform before I walk out of the bedroom and make my way to the living room. My grandmother walks into the living room with my food.

“Here is your food. I want those bones gone”,She says.

Wow really? A knock comes from the door and she goes towards it.

“Ubani?(Who is it?)”

“It's me Gogo!”,she opens the door and a lady appears in front of her.

“Oh Pabi Mntanami unjani?(How are you?)”,She asks.

“I am good Gogo. I am well, I hope you are too”

“Besides old age I am well. Come in”,the lady gets inside the house.

“This is Lethi, Lethi this is Pabi from next door she was doing Matric last year”,Pabi giggles.

“Gogo, I came to see Lethi.”

Me? What about me? I don't know you.

“Oh, so sweet of you. Let me dish up for you”,My grandmother says.

“No thanks gogo, I won't be staying. I heard she is in grade 11 so I wanted to bring some books that I used to use if they will be helpful. I went to the same school”,she says with a smile.

“Thank you”,I softly say and she hands me a bag.

“Awu, that is sweet of you Pabi”

“I have to go gogo “,She says and she waves before leaving.

My grandmother closes the door and turns to me while I start eating.

“You should keep yourself close to her. She is a very good child” „She says

“Mmh”,I carry on eating.

I just want to go home to my old friends and all. That's all I want.

It's another day going to this place. Honestly I hate being here, I really don't understand why I am here and no one really wants to explain anything to me. I can't ask my grandmother. She is just happy to have me with her and my parents are not saying anything so far. They haven't even called to check if their daughter is still alive from living in this place. Gun shots and everything if I have met a bullet as yet or not. The car is parked outside the school and as always I am taking my time to get out of the car. Actually I am dreading with getting out of this car really.

“Hurry up Lethi, I have somewhere to be”,Mfanele says a bit annoyed.

I turn to him.

“Gogo said you should give me money”, I know he has been robbing me off my lunch money these past few days.

“No she didn't and Vaya(Go)”, I open the car door. So much for being a fake Tupac.

I bang the car door and he shouts from inside the car.

“Uzoyikhokhela lento ofuna ukuyibulala!(You will pay for what you want to break!)”, I ignore him and he starts the car and drives off while leaving me there standing on the side of the road.

I look around as the children make their way inside the school. I see some kids making their way out of school without their bags going to the near by tuckshop to buy some food. I look around and follow after them and soon enough I pick up my pace and walk past them. I don't know where I am going but I want to find a taxi that will take me home. I don't want to be here anymore. It feels like I am losing everything in my life. Ntando hasn't responded to me after sending numerous texts. Maybe he is worried about me wherever he is and I need to assure him that I am okay. I see a taxi approaching and I make hand gestures for it to stop and it comes to a stop. The door opens and I hop inside quickly.

“I need to get to La'Lucia”, I say in hope that it takes me there.

Everyone inside looks at me as I hold onto my Boomerang bag. The conductor closes the door and the taxi starts moving. I feel my heart at ease for a moment that I am leaving this place. An Orange BMW comes out of nowhere speeding and it makes a stop in front of the taxi making the taxi stop. The people inside complain at this dismay and that

moment the person from the BMW gets out and makes their way towards the taxi. The taxi driver rolls down his window.

“You are standing in our way Mfwethu, I need to deliver people”, The driver complains.

It's the guy from yesterday. He leans by the taxi window and looks at the taxi driver.

“I am looking for a school child that just got in this taxi a few minutes ago”, my heart skips a beat.

Everyone is looking at me. The conductor opens the door and I look at him. The guy from yesterday moves from the window and comes to the door and looks at me.

“Get out of there Nana, Singaxabani(Let's not fight)”, He says calmly yet it sent chills down my spine. Fear is what I was feeling.

I slowly got out of the taxi and he took my bag from my hands.

“Seningahamba ke(You can go)”, he says to the taxi driver.

He walks off to his car and I guess I should follow. Shoot me please, I was half way out of this place already. He put my bag at the backseat and he goes to opening the passenger door for me.

“Get inside”, he says and I do as I am told.

I settle on the red leather seats once again and he gets in the car and bangs the door. I swallow as he starts the car and then he speeds off with me inside it. I hope he doesn't kidnap me because I don't know him. Yes I might hate this place but that doesn't mean I want to be kidnapped. I do a silent prayer in my heart for God to hear me in this

time of need. I wear a seat belt after that because I don't want to die from this man's driving. He drives to the other side of Umlazi and I have never been to this side. For a moment I thought he was taking me to my grandmother's house but he wasn't. He gets to a nicely fenced house and he presses on his keys and the gate opens. He drives in and parks the car and the gate closes. It's those wooden nice gates. The house is not big but it is beautiful and neat on the outside. He hops out of the car and I remain seated. He comes around and opens the door for me.

“Come”, I get out of the car and he closes the door behind me.

He then goes towards the house and I follow after him. We get inside and I look around. Everything here is out of place but there are beautiful things.

“Sit down”, I do so on the couch and he disappears to the bedrooms I assume.

I sit there and look around for a while. He comes back carrying a bag.

“I will be back, change and eat”, he then walks out after and locks me inside this house.

What am I going to change with? I sit for a moment and try to figure out what is going on before I stand up and walk around the house going to the bedroom side and I see that he has laid out a top on the bed. I go and take it, it must be his. I take off my uniform and lay it on the bed and wear his top and it fits me like a dress. I move from the bedroom and go to the kitchen. I open the fridge and there is alcohol in the fridge and braai meat. I take out the meat and search for some bread and I couldn't find any. What am I going to do? I put the meat in the

microwave and heat it. I will just have it and some water. I am a bit hungry even though I ate this morning. Maybe it's just because I like things that I want to have some of this meat.

It had been a few hours since I was left here alone in this house and I am bored out of my mind. I wonder when this man will come back so that I can go home. I really want to leave now and I don't want to stay in this foreign place. As I am still in thoughts the door unlocks and opens and he comes in the house. I sit up from the couch and he places a gun on the coffee table and I feel like wetting myself. I feel scared of that moment. Will he shoot me?

He turns to me and closes the door locking it.

“Why did you bunk school?”, I don't know what to say.

I look down and fiddle with my Shakey fingers.

“Ngikhuluma nawe(I am talking to you)”, He says.

“I...I wanted to go home”, I say

“Didn't you leave home this morning?”, I feel like crying.

“I am sorry”

“I don't want your sorry. I am asking why did you bunk school?”

I don't know how to respond to his question.

“I will never do it again”, he huffs.

“Angizwani nodoti Lethi uyangizwa?(I don't like nonsense Lethi, do you hear me?)”, I nod and tears fall on my face.

“Wipe those tears”,I wipe them quickly.

“Have you eaten?”,He asks.

“Yes I did”,my voice is Shakey.

“Mmmh”,he goes off and disappears to the bedrooms. I sit there and wipe my on coming tears. I am scared and I have never felt this scared in my life.

Chapter 2

“It's Nokwanda Nkosi here. I can't currently come to the phone but leave a message and I will get back to you by...”,the line says once more.

“Mah it's Lethi,I want to come home. I miss you and Daddy. I have been trying to call you but I can't reach you. Please get back to me”,I softly say and remove my phone from my ear.

I sigh. It has been some time since I have heard from my parents and I am worried about that. I want to hear them say that they are okay and they are trying to fix things atleast. That would make me happy.

“Lethi woza uzongisiza!(Lethi come and help me!)”,my grandmother shouts for me.

I groan and get off the bed. My phone pings and I quickly look at it and it's a message from Ntando.

“Hey babe, I got your messages and I am sorry I couldn't reply on time. School was distracting me but anyway I hope you are okay and I miss you so much”,my heart skips a beat. I feel it ease at the same time. I am so happy to have recieved a message from him.

I send a message replying to his message quickly.

“Lethinjabulo!”

“Ngiyeza Gogo!(I am coming Gogo)”

“Uyeza uyizulu yini?(Are you a storm?)”,My grandmother though.

I place my phone down after I am done with replying and I go to where my grandmother is outside the house.

“Hurry Babes this thing is heavy”, Bayanda complains about the wet blanket.

I rush to them and help with carrying the blanket and hanging it over the fence.

“Yhuuu iqolo Lami alisavumi(My back is sore)”, My grandmother complains.

She is one to say. I am wet from this blanket so as Bayanda.

“Bayanda go and buy some airtime for me. I need to call Mam'fundisi”

“Okay, I need some too. Come with me Lethi”, Bayanda says.

I could use some fresh air. He rushes inside the house to go and get some money. I don't leave the house with my phone. I don't want to find myself losing it here so I leave it at the house. We wear our flip-flops and make our way out once my grandmother had given Bayanda some money for airtime. We make our way down the street walking as Bayanda is blabbering about not being able to stay at home this weekend as he needs to distress from having a very hectic week at school. The fact that he is still passing still baffles me but I guess I wouldn't understand how he juggles everything at once.

“There is this chisanyama area. It sells airtime so we will go there”, he says and I nod.

We make our way there in this hot blazing sun that is roasting our skins but in no time we get to the Chisanyama that he was talking about. We make our way in and there is a carwash as well. Cars are being washed and people are enjoying the food some the music as well. As we make our way in I see the guy of the orange BMW with some other men who

look as shady as him. He is in a top with a chain around his neck and a pair of jeans as well, a Bennie not to be left out. He see me and I look away from him.

“Can we hurry up and get what we need?”, I say.

“Uh okay Miss English”, Bayanda says.

We make our way inside and we get to the counter where we will buy the airtime.

“Hello can I have some airtime please”, Bayanda says.

I stand next to him.

“Make it R200. I will pay for it”, Bayanda gasps and we both turn around to the voice behind us.

I swallow as he stares at me but his gaze moves from my face and goes to my breasts. I look there and see that my chest is a bit visible because my top is wet and it is see through.

“Really?”, Bayanda asks just to be sure.

“Yes, anything else?”, He says.

“I do feel like having a Savana nyana”, Bayanda says.

“Get a 6 pack and some meat. I will pay for it”, He says and takes off his top and hands it to me.

“Thank you”, I look down embarrassed that my boobs were seen by the whole of Umlazi. I quickly wear it over my wet top.

He is left with his dangling chain and nothing on top.

“Christmas comes twice a year”, Bayanda says in excitement of being bought booze for him.

“We have to go home. Gogo wants the airtime to call Mam'fundisi”, I say eying Bayanda.

“Did you have to kill my mood?”, he asks.

“You can come back and get your things”, the guy says.

“Let me get the airtime then we will rush home”, Bayanda says.

He turns around and the guy signals with his head that I should follow him and I contemplate with myself before following after him going outside. We get outside and he stops his tracks and turns to me.

“How are you Lethi?”, still baffles me how he knows my name.

“I am good”, I say

“Nami ngiyaphila. Ngiyakukhumbula(I am good as well. I miss you)”, he says

“Ohw”, I say.

“I will come and see you tonight”, he says.

“I am not allowed to go out at night”, I quickly say.

“I will see you tonight Lethi”, he emphasis that. I keep my silence and sigh.

“Lethi!”, I turn around and it's Bayanda.

“Lets go”, he signals with his head.

I turn and look at this man and then turn around leaving him there. I go to Bayanda who has a plastic with him and we then leave.

“Lethi don't associate yourself with Trust. He is not good”, Bayanda says.

“I thought you were happy that he bought all of that for you”

“Yes I love free stuff but not at your cost. Don't associate yourself with him, umgulukudu owaziwayo loya (He is a well known thug)”, I nod my head. That explains alot.

“I will not associate myself with him”

“Good. He uses girls anyway”, he says and I keep quiet after that.

We make our way home and we arrive there. We find my grandmother at it with watching SABC 1 again. Bayanda goes to his room first before going to the kitchen.

“Nithathephi inyama?(Where did you get the meat?)”, My grandmother asks.

“We bought it”, Bayanda lies through his teeth.

“Mmmh”

“I need to study”, I say and make my way to my room. I go to my phone and check if I don't get any message from Ntando and nothing.

I sigh and sit on my bed and lay on it. What am I going to do about this man that is coming tonight? I have been warned about him and I should stay away from him.

The sun has set and Mfanele has come back from wherever that he went to. My Saturday was quite boring to be exact. Bayanda didn't leave tonight like he wanted to earlier on. I guess he got what he needed in order to distress of which is the alcohol I guess. I just finished doing my homework and my grandmother called us to come and eat for dinner. We are seated in the sitting room and my uncle makes his way in the house.

“Mlungu wamalume!(Uncles Coconut!)”,My uncle shouts as he plays with my hair.

“Ayi Wena yeka ingane(Leave the child alone)”,my grandmother says in annoyance that we are disturbing her TV time.

“I am tired. I am going to sleep, go and lock up the gate Mshana”,My uncle says.

“Malume?”,I look at him.

“Go and quickly lock the gate Mfanele”,My grandmother says. Mfanele gets up and goes to take the keys and goes out to lock the gate. I finish my food and I go and place my dish in the sink. I am tired, I just need to sleep.

“Lethi”,It's Mfanele. He calls me.

“Umfunani umntwana Mfanele?(What do you want from the child Mfanele?)”,My grandmother asks while frowning.

“I need her help at the gate. The lock is not moving”,he says.

He looks at me not pleased and signals I should follow him. We go outside and I follow after him.

“Trust is calling you”

“What?”,he points at the car and it flickers it's lights.

“Hurry up”,he says.

But I have been warned about this guy. I sigh and move towards the car and he drives slowly closer to me. I stand next to it and the window rolls down on the driver's side.

“Get in the car”,I look at Mfanele.

“I can't, my grandmother won't like this.”,I say.

He bites his bottom lip and looks at me for some time before he lets out a soft chuckle and then fiddles with a black bag next to him and takes out a roll of money.

“Okay, I will let you go for today. Thatha(Take)”,he says

“Why?”

“Take it Lethi”,I do so and he then looks at me.

“I will see you tomorrow. Uyasonta?(Do you go to church?)”,I shake my head.

“No”,he smirks.

“You look sexy. Go back inside before any of these boys see my girl”,he says.

His girl? I turn around and walk off. I look back for some time and then go to Mfanele who pulls me inside the gate and closes the gate. I go inside the house and rush to my room saying a quick goodnight. I close

the door and after some time the door opens and I push the roll of cash under my pillow quickly and Mfanele shuts the door behind him.

“What is going on with you and Trust?”

“Nothing, I don't know his name”

“Don't associate yourself with him Lethi. You are in for a dangerous run if you do”

“I won't, I don't want to either”, I say.

“Be warned”, he clicks his tongue and walks out of my room.

I sigh and take out the roll of cash and rush to lock my bedroom door. I then remove the elastic and it's a lot of money. I count it and it's R1 000. Let me put it away under the mattress. After I did that I sat on the bed. What is this man doing and wanting in my life?

It's a Sunday and Kulungile Baba by Sfiso Ncwane is on full blast for the whole neighborhood to hear. I am annoyed at the moment but my grandmother seems to be in the Sunday spirit. I get up from bed and remove the cover. I check my phone and it's dry as ever. Only a few messages from my old friends but either than that there is nothing there that is interesting. I reply to them and they inform me of a school game that is happening on Tuesday. I might go and see what is happening there. I miss being in my old school honestly. I get out of the bed and make it because I know my grandmother will come knocking on the door any minute. I get done and walk out of my room and she is dressed up in her church attire.

“Awu Lethi usuvukile(You are awake)”,she say.

“Yes Gogo, good Morning”

“I cooked porridge. You can go and dish up”,I nod.

“Did my parents by any chance call?”,she looks at me in eyes of pity.

“No, they didn't”,I press my lips together.

“Okay”

“Don't worry. They will soon call”,I nod my head.

“Can I go to the mall. I need to get a few things”,I ask.

“Be quick. By 14:00 I want you home”,I nod.

“Yes gogo”

“Let me go, I will be late for church”,she grabs her bag and bible. I say my good byes to her and she rushes out of the house singing.

Bayanda walks in after holding his head.

“I am tired yoh, can this music just pipe down”,he goes and switches it off.

“I am going out to the mall. Want to come?”

“I would love to but I am tired Nana”,bummer.

“Oh, okay”,he goes to the kitchen. I follow as well. We dish up and eat then we wash the dishes. After that he goes to his room. I prepare to bath and go to my room to take out clothes to wear. I will just wear something nice and simple. Some leggings with a top and sneakers. Maybe, yes that. I go and bath then I get dressed after, I take a small

bag and put in my little pink purse and also add some lipgloss inside then I make my way out of my room.

“Mlungu wami”,it's my uncle.

“Sawubona malume(Hello Malume)”,I say.

“Where are you going?”

“To the mall, I asked Gogo”

“Bamba lah Mshana (Hold here)”,he takes out a R20 from his pocket and gives it to me.

“Buy some sweets”

“Thank You”

I say my good byes and walk out of the house. I hope I quickly get a taxi so that I can go to the mall quickly and get everything done. The sun is very hot and it is not giving me any mercy at the moment. I pass some people as I am walking and make my way hoping that a taxi comes and stops infront of me . I stand for a moment and look around and the orange car makes it way towards me slowing down and it slows down infront of me. The window rolls down.

“Get in the car”

“No thank you, I will wait for a taxi”

“My woman doesn't take a taxi ngikhona(When I am here)",he says.

“I am not your woman”,I fold my arms.

“You are and I get what I want”,I swallow as he says that.

“Kuyashisa Lethi ngena emotweni(It's hot Lethi, get in the car)”,I sigh and look at him.

I have been warned about him before. I look around before I look at him and he smirks and gets out of the car and goes around to open the door. I go towards him and I get in and he closes the door and goes around to his side and gets in. I look at him as he starts the car and drives off.

I keep my silence in the car as it is moving and he plays some music while bonking his head back and forth.

“I am going to the mall”,I say. He looks at me.

“Okay”,I keep quiet there after.

“How do you know my name?”,I ask.

“Its for me to know”

I keep quiet.

The drive to the mall is not long really. We get there with time to spare. I undo my seat belt and open the door.

“I will be waiting here when you are done”,he says and I look at him.

I open the door and get out. I close the door and make my way inside the mall. This man won't let me catch a break at all. Ah I need to browse around and just treat myself. It has been a minute and my life has been hectic for quiet some time.

I stayed inside the mall for close to 2 hours and I had enough. I got what I needed and wanted an some time to treat myself at the same time. I get out of the mall and I only have a few hours before the time my grandmother had set for me. I make my way out of the mall and the little cheapstake me had hope that the Trust guy was still here and I went to where I left him and he was still there. I got to the car and he rolled his window down when I stopped my tracks.

“Come inside Nana”,I sigh and make my way inside the car. He takes some of my things and move them to the back before he looks at me.

“You look beautiful”

“Thank you”,I say while shying away.

“Are you going home now?”

He starts the car and I put on the seat belt just to be safe.

“Yes I guess. I have nothing else to do”

“We can go somewhere else if you are not in a rush”,I look at him.

“Uhm...” ,I look at him as he looks at me.

“I don't bite”,I sigh.

“I have to be home before 14:00”,I say

“That is enough time to spend with you”,he says with a smirk.

Well I just hope this is the last time I meet up with him. I have to tell him to stay away from me but he seems like the type of person who wouldn't listen to what I am saying. I sigh, this is a tough one.

We get to this area that I don't know. It seems like it is a Township as well but I am not sure if it's where we live. I keep my silence and do a silent prayer that I don't get lost with this man. I literally took my life and put it in his hands at this moment. He drives to some house and there are cars parked there. Nice cars and some of those old BMW's. What do they call them again ? Oh yes Igusheshe that is the one. My heart skips a beat as he parks the car and he looks at me and then shares a light laugh amongst himself before he gets out of the car and goes around coming to my side. He opens the door.

“Come”,he says.

“Where are we?”,I need to know if I should send a Location to one of my friends.

“Trust me”,he says and closes the door behind me.

He fixes his jeans and I see the gun. Oh my God what have you gotten yourself into Lethi. He takes my hand into his and we make our way inside the house. It seems like a chilled session or something but these people look scary.

“Trust, I thought you said awuzi(You are not coming)”,One guy says.

He is shirtless and has a few tattoos on his body and some rings on his fingers. They seem to be playing cards at the moment while there is music. Guns scattered on top of the coffee table.

“I changed my mind”,Trust says.

“And the baby next to you”

“Its for me to know only”,he says.

I feel like crying what was I even doing agreeing to be here. I should've listened to my cousin and Uncle back home when they said I shouldn't associate myself with him.

The guys that are puffing and smoking are creating a whole lot of smoke that seems to be choking me. He goes and sits himself down on the couch and pulls me to his lap.

"Are you okay?", he softly whispers into my ear and it sends shivers down my spine with his raspy voice.

"It's just the smoke", I say. It's everything!

"Don't worry Nana, we will leave soon", he says.

I nod my head.

"Do you want juice?", He asks.

"No thank you", what if they drug me?

A few ladies come and they bring some food and drinks.

"Uh Trust. You made it!", some woman in the most skimpiest dress says.

"I did", He says to the lady in a not so interested manner.

The drinks and food are distributed and I decline all of that. I don't trust these people. He takes the dumpie and he opens it with his fingers and then he gulps down the cold beverage.

"Isn't drinking and driving dangerous?", I softly say absent minded.

"Don't worry baby, I will get you home safely", Trust snaps me out of my trans and I look at him. He smirks and I look at him carefully. He has a

really nice smile with a great set of teeth. He takes another sip of his drink and stares at me.

“I so want to kiss your tiny lips badly”,He says and I swallow.

“I am not allowed to kiss older guys”,he chuckles.

“Then I will be your first”,he comes closer to my face.

“And your last”,he holds my neck and kisses my lips softly. He bites my bottom lip softly parting my lips before he kisses me good.

This old guy is kissing me so lovely, I have never been kissed in such a way and I feel bad that I am enjoying it so much.

I look at myself through the mirror as I have tied my hair into a bun. I hear my grandfather's old Mercedes hooting outside and I know that Mfanele is getting impatient with waiting for me. I quickly move from the mirror and grab my phone and check for any messages. I think I left 5 missed calls yesterday on my parents phone and I hope they get back to me but my hope is really running low. I feel like they have deserted me in these slums.

“Lethinjabulo!”

“Ngiyeza!(I am coming)”,I take my phone and shove it in my blazer and then grab my bag before I rush out of the room.

“Uzoba late, Here is your lunch”, My grandmother gives me my lunch bag.

“Thank you gogo”,I smile.

This is the first time she made lunch for me. Maybe it's because I told her I will come a bit late because I want to pass the library. Lies, it's Tuesday today and there is a sporting event at my old school. I will get to see my friends today and also Ntando. I have missed him so very much. I really do, I have pushed away the fact that I kissed another man. A guy who is older than me. Shoot me now for enjoying it. I couldn't even stop thinking about that kiss but I have to. I have been warned about Trust guy so I have to distance myself from him. I have to find a way.

I rush outside and Mfanele is already looking upset.

“You will walk to school Wena”, he says as I get inside the car.

“Sorry”, I close the door and he starts the car and drives out of the yard.

“Will I be fetching you today?”, I look at him as he looks at me through the review mirror.

“No, I will take a taxi.”, he eyes me for moment.

“Mmmh Vele I wasn't offering to fetch you”, mxm.

I look out of the window as the car commences to school. When we get there he parks the car and I get out. I close the door and soon he speeds off and I make my way inside the premises.

“Lethi!”, I turn to whoever is shouting for me and it's that boy from class. I think his surname is Skhosana or Sokhela or something starts with an S though.

“Hey”

“You look pretty”,he says.

“Thank you”

I wait for him to say whatever he wants to say.

“I want to get to know you so can I have your...”

“I don't have a phone. Sorry",I quickly walk away from him. Oh hell no, I am not about to date one these shady kids. I have Ntando.

My rugby superstar in the making. I quickly make my way to class before anything else. I am quiet excited about today. I hope nothing ruins my day.

*

I won't lie, my day seemed way too long but I was more than happy to leave school when the bell rang. I quickly made my way out of the school and went to catch a taxi quiet quickly and I got one going to town. As I was in there I texted my friends telling them that I have just gotten out of school. I then put my phone back where it was. When I got to town I went and found another taxi going to my school and I got one. When I saw my old school from a mile away I was so happy. I looked cute as well for the day so everything was good for me. I got out and made my way inside. I went to the field and I saw my friends on the bleachers.

“Nolwazi!",I waved and they screamed for me and came running towards me.

“Friend! Oh my Gosh it has been so long!",Nolwazi says as they all squeeze me in a hug.

"I have missed you guys. I have been in hell for the last couple of weeks",I say.

"How is it?",they ask me.

"Horrible. Those kids are shady",I say.

"Your parents have to bring you back Friend. This is not on",really it is not.

"Where is Ntando?",I ask.

"He is on the bench. You just missed a few minutes of the game"

"Why is he on the bench?",I ask

They pull me to come and sit with them.

"He got injured on his last practice so his shoulder is not okay for now"

I see him seated with his friends down by the benches.

"Let me go and greet him",I say and gave them my bag.

I walked down the stairs and went towards him. As I was approaching him a girl from matric stood in front of him and they spoke a bit before he stood up and kissed her cheek. I was in disbelief. They laughed for a moment and the girl looked at me and it faded away and Ntando turned to look at me. I shook my head and walked up the stairs.

"Lethi!",he shouted for me.

I went to the girls and I took my bag. I felt someone holding me from behind.

"Lethi",his voice says in my ear.

“Ntando let me go”,I say

“Let's talk in private.”he says and I turn to look at him and I look at my friends.

I followed him and we went up the stairs and found a quiet spot away from everyone.

“What was that Ntandoyenkosi?”,I ask feeling upset.

He scratches his head.

“Talk to me”

“Lethi”,he sighs.

“I can't do this anymore”,he continues.

“What?”

“I can't do us anymore? You are beautiful and all, smart but I want more. Something you can't give me and that is sex”

“You want to have sex with me? I told you that we will have it when I am ready”

“Then where do you think I get satisfied while waiting for you?”

“Fuck you Ntando. After so many years you do this to me? Is her wrinkled pussy that good?”

“Lethi calm down”

“Voetsek don't tell me to calm down when you are dumping me”

“I am sorry”,I feel so hurt.

I try to walk away from him but he holds me.

"Babe", I break down.

"You don't want me anymore"

"I am sorry Lethi, I love you but love is not enough", the fuck.

"Leave me alone", I remove myself from him and go to get my bag. I need to leave this place.

My friends look at me in pity.

"We are sorry babe, We didn't know how to tell you", Nolwazi says.

"Nolwazi"

"Wow, so much for being my friends" I get my bag and walk up the stairs.

"And Wena Ntando! Stay with your small dick that you want to advertise to every skirt in this school!", I run after that and get out of the gate. Tears are just falling freely on my face.

"Lethi!", I ignore whoever is calling me.

I get out of the gate and collide with a hard chest before arms wrap around my body.

"Who made you cry Nana?", I instantly knew who it was.

"Please take me home", I say.

I hear him heave a sigh.

"Okay, come let's go", he removes me from his chest and wipes my tears with his rough hands.

"I don't like this",he says with a frown on his face.

He pulls me around his car.

"Lethi!",it's my friends and Ntando.

I get inside the car quickly and Trust closes the door. I don't even know how he knew that I am here but I am glad to be leaving this quickly. Who knows when the taxi would've arrived here. He goes around and gets in. I watch what used to be my life standing by the gate. I closed my eyes as tears made their way down my cheeks. Trust starts the car and drives off.

"Those kids hurt you?",I wanted to say yes but I remember that he is shady. What if he does something to them.

"No, I just miss my parents",I softly say and wipe my tears.

He steals a glance at me as he is driving.

"I really hate this. I hate it very much",I swallow.

"I am sorry"

"Don't apologize",I sniff and wipe my tears.

"Should I give you money to make you feel better?"

"No",he sighs seemingly feeling frustrated a bit.

"Break my virginity",I say and he turns to look at me.

"What?"

"I want you to break my virginity. I don't want to be a virgin anymore",it's what made me loose the boy I love.

"Are you sure?",he asks.

"Yes..",I say.

"Mmmh",he makes a turn and drives to the nearest hospital.

"What are we doing here?"

"To get an injection and tested. I don't want rubber",he says and he then parks the car and gets off.

I stay there for a little moment contemplating with myself before I followed after.

I was feeling a bit nervous a few minutes ago but now I am feeling a little confidence. I guess having a mother like mine who loves wearing matching things help even though I don't wear a bra. His cold hands rest on my breasts and my nipples react to the coldness as his kisses are on my neck. I am loving the feeling, I am really loving it. My mind is far that I don't even care at this point but everything in my life is going left. Might as well add to the list. We went to the hospital and I got an injection so safety first I guess. He stops kissing me and looks at me in the eyes.

"Lethi are you sure about this?", isn't he supposed to have been inside of me already? Guys like this right?

"I am. I am Trust",I say.

"Call me Tshepo",he says and I get to know his name after so long.

"I am Tshepo",he nods and looks at me one more time and takes my hand and kisses it.

“It will hurt a bit but hold onto me Nana”, I nod and I feel the painful sensation coming on. I close my eyes as I cry in pain.

“It will be over Nana. This will be the last time you cry in pain when I am inside you”, I nod.

He kisses my neck and thrusts inside of me as I still feel the pain.

“Relax”, his raspy voice whispers in my ear.

I try to relax my body. My phone starts ringing but I ignore it. I should've switched it off.

Chapter 3

"I will sort everything out tomorrow. For now I am still busy", I open my eyes and find this man sitting at the edge of the bed with his back facing me. I look around and it is dark. I must've fell asleep after going to pee and it was a painful and hard to get it out.

"I said I will sort everything out tomorrow Price don't test me", he says through his teeth and hangs up on his phone call. I sit up and he turns around to me. I pull the cover close to my body and shy away from looking at him. He is still naked.

"Its 19:00", he says.

"Ohw", I pull my legs up a bit.

"Are you still in pain?", he asks.

"Yes I am", I say softly and remove the hair from my face.

"Lay on your back, I am coming", he stands up and his dick dangles touching his thigh. Oh my gosh I can't believe I let that inside of me.

I swallow and lay on my back as I am told to do so. I can't believe I am not a virgin anymore. I really can't believe it. After some time of laying on the bed I feel a warm towel on my valve and he opens my legs and wipes me inside. He lowers his head and kisses my valve then he softly goes on to kissing it some more. It feels a bit ticklish. He lifts his head and looks at me.

"I won't hurt you okay?", I nod slowly.

"Trust me", I sigh and nod.

I feel him making his way inside of me and I move up a little.

“Relax your body”,I do as I am told.

He starts moving inside of me.

“Is it still painful?”,he asks.

It is but not as before.

“It is but also good as well”,I say.

“Okay”,He goes to kissing my nipples.

“Am I taking you home after this?”,he picks up his pace and I feel the pleasure.

“I will go tomorrow”,I say.

“Okay baby”,This feels so nice.

I hold onto his body as I take in the sudden pleasure that is replacing the pain I was feeling earlier.

I don't know when I fell asleep. All I remember is being given pleasure that felt so very good and made my body shake in a way I cannot explain at all. It's morning now. The next day and I feel the breeze from outside. I open my eyes and look around the room and it is just only me on the bed. I sit up slowly and feel the burning sensation between my thighs. I had it rough last night I guess. I can't believe I am not a virgin anymore and I can't believe I really gave it up. I close my eyes as I am seated up and breathe out before I get out of the bed and look for my blazer and get my phone. It has alot of missed calls I can't even see who it is from who. I check the time and it's 11 am. I wobble my way to the bathroom and I get in there and I go and pee, it is a bit painful down

there but after a long time I get done. I put some bathing water inside. I need to bath and feel fresh at the moment. I get inside the bathtub once the water is ready and soak myself inside whole closing my eyes. I relax a bit.

“You look tired”, I open my eyes upon hearing his voice and look at him as he is leaning against the bathroom door frame.

“I am a bit”, I say softly.

“How are you feeling?”, he asks.

“It burns down there”, he chuckles and comes forth towards the bathtub and crouches before me.

“You asked for it”

“I shouldn't have”, I softly say.

“I am glad you did. Now I have marked my territory”, he says running his hand to cup my breast.

“I want to go home. My family must be worried”, he nods.

“Okay, finish up. I brought food for you.”

“Thank you”

He gets up and walks out of the bathroom. I get on with bathing and I get done with some time feeling much better than I did before. After that I got out of the bathroom and went to his bedroom. I went to get my uniform and he gave me some sealed cosmetics. They are female products.

“Thank you”, he nods.

I get on with lotioning and getting dressed before we went to eat until I was full. I went to grab my bag and then we soon left his place. The drive was silent from my side. I was looking outside the window still in thoughts about Yesterday. I can't believe that Ntando has been cheating on me for so long. I thought that he loved me. I mean we have been together since I was in grade 8 and he was in grade 9. Why would he do this to me? I feel like crying all over again because this is painful. More than my virginity being taken.

“Nana”, I turn and look at Tshepo.

“Yes?”

“We are home”, I didn't even feel the drive.

I take off the seat belt.

“I will see you tonight”, I nod my head and get out of the car.

I close the door and take my bag and put it over my shoulder. I make my way to my grandmother's house and the car hasn't moved as yet. I get in the yard and I see my father's car. What are they doing here? I make my way inside the house and I see my parents on the couch. My mother is crying in my father's arms.

“Calm down Honey. Everything will be okay”, Is what my father was saying to my mother.

“Lethinjabulo”, My grandmother says in a not so pleased tone.

Everyone turns and looks at me and my mom moves from my father's lap.

“Oh my baby”, she comes my way and squeezes me in a hug.

“Where have you been Lethi? You got us all worried sick!”,my father bursts.

“I need to rest”,I remove myself from my mothers hold and rush to the room I am using.

“Lethinjabulo get back here I am still talking!”,my dad says and I close the door and slide down it and bursts into tears.

I feel someone playing with my hair and I open my eyes to find my mother seated on the edge of the bed brushing me and smothering me. She looks big as well, well I won't lie but she seems to have gained some weight. She smiles when I have opened my eyes fully.

“I can't imagine loosing you like that”,she says and I keep quiet.

“I felt like my heart was being ripped out of my chest when your grandmother said you weren't back home”,I keep quiet.

“Where were you Lethi?”

“Why weren't you answering my calls?”,I ask and she swallows and looks at me.

“I am sorry baby, We were busy with your dad with the whole divorce thing”

“To even check up on me?”,I ask softly.

“I am sorry Lethi, we love you so much”,she says and hugs me while I sob in her arms.

“I am hurt mom. You guys hurt me by leaving me here”,I cry.

“Shhh”,she tries to hush me.

“I know baby. I am sorry”,She holds me tightly in her arms as her voice is breaking.

“I promise we won't desert you again”,I sniff.

“You are our pride and joy”,She carries on and I keep quiet while sniffing.

The bedroom door opens and my father walks into the room and finds my mom comforting me.

“What you did yesterday Lethi is very wrong. You put your grandmother and us under very intense stress”

“Not now please”,my mother asks.

My father shuts his mouth and nods slowly. He still has it,the will to just do anything my mother says. Does he still love her? I am here trying to figure out why they are divorcing. Maybe I should ask.

“Why are you divorcing with dad?”,I look at my mother and then my father.

They look at each other for a moment.

“Its between us honey”,My mother smiles faintly after saying that.

“Why is it affecting me then if it's between you guys?”,I ask.

“Lethinjabulo”,My dad says in a warning tone.

I hate this really. I get off the bed and go to the wardrobe and I change out of my uniform. I tie my hair neatly.

“Where are you going?”,They ask.

“To my friend. I need some space. I will be back in a few hours. You guys are not answering me so I need to collect myself”,I quickly say.

“Lethi wait”,my mother says and I just walk out of the room.

I pass my grandmother and go out of the house making my way out of the gate. I don't even know where I am going but I am just hoping for some miracle to happen that I stop crying maybe and feel better. Get all my answers from my parents as well. My life is a mess!

I find myself at the chisa nyama that Bayanda and I last went to and I get there and decide to buy some airtime. I have a bit of money and maybe a cold drink. I get to the counter and I ask for some airtime and cold drink.

As I was standing there waiting for my things I felt a hand snake around my waist and the smell of nicotine mixed with a manly perfume as well.

“I thought you would be home at this time”,I turn around and look at him leaning against the counter.

“I had to leave home before I got crazy”,I say.

“Everything okay?”,He asks in concern. I never expected it really.

“No”,I shake my head and feel the tears coming on again.

I look up to push them back.

“Here are your things”,The lady gives me my things and I thank her.

“Come”,I follow after him.

He stops his tracks and tells me to walk in front of him to his car. We got to his car and he opened the door for me and I got inside. Then he closed it and went around the car and got inside his side and then he started the car and drove off.

The drive is filled with silence and it is what I need. I don't know where he is taking me but at this moment I am not worried about that. I close my eyes for a moment and I ended up resting there and there.

I opened my eyes when I heard someone talking to the phone and a tongue click followed before that person hung up. I opened my eyes to meet Tshepo. He turns and looks at me and I look outside the window and we are by the ocean. I sit up in the car.

“We are here to swim?”, I ask.

“No, we are here to breathe”, he says and gets out of the car.

He comes to my side and opens the door for me and helps me out. He is a gentleman. He then closes the door and lifts me up and I wrap my arms around his neck before he places me on his car bonnet and stands in between my legs.

“You look beautiful Nana”, he says and I look down.

“Thank you”

“Trust likes you very much”, I look at him.

“How old are you?”, he chuckles and runs his hands on my bare thighs.

“Don't worry. I am the perfect age for you”, I shake my head then focus my eyes on the sea.

He goes to kissing my neck and I moan.

“Mmmh”

He stops sucking on my neck. I sigh and look at him. His phone rings disturbing the silence and he takes it out of his pocket and he places it on his ear.

“Sho”, I look at him for a moment as he buries his one hand deep into his pants pocket and the way his brow is furrowing.

“I don't know but I will have my people look around”

he says

“Mmh sho”, he hangs up and shoves his phone in his other pocket placing both of his hands in his pocket.

“I am still sore from yesterday”, I say

“Don't worry. You will get used to it”, he says and I nod my head.

I find myself pulling him close to me and wrapping my arms around him. He leans in and captures my lips and I close my eyes and go with the flow of him kissing me. He deepens it and I feel his one hand on my thighs caressing them here and there. I feel tingles going down my spine and the feeling of warmth between my thighs. We break the kiss and I am catching my breath.

“Your family is looking for you”, he announces.

“I don't want to go home for now”

“Okay”

He doesn't ask why and for this moment I really appreciate it because I don't want to find myself crying all over again.

We stayed at the beach for some time until the sun was starting to set and Tshepo suggested that we leave. He got me off the bonnet of the car and wrapped his arms around me before he stared down at me.

“Usuright manje?(Are you okay now?)”,he asks.

I nod my head while pushing a small smile onto my lips as they curve a little.

“Yes, it's cold now”,I say.

We make our way inside the car and then he starts the car and drives off taking us back home. Back to where I have unanswered Questions that I know very well my parents would not bother with answering them as they think I am not involved in their issues when I am because it affects me.

“Nana order what you want”,I didn't realise that he made a stop at Nando's drive thru.

I look to the lady awaiting for me to order. I might have zoned off really bad for me to not have felt the ride and to also feel that it is short.

“Anythin is fine”,I just say and slowly look out the window.

Trust turns down the volume of the music in the car a bit and places his rough hand on my thigh.

“Lethi”,I look at him

"I don't like it when you are like this"

"I am fine", I say while staring at this man who is written thug all over his face but he is not bad looking at all.

"Can I go home with you?", I ask

"No", he says and I frown upon his answer before he increases the volume of the music and starts to drive to the collection point.

"Why?", I ask. I am confused.

He keeps quiet ignoring me. He was a caring person minute ago so what happened now.

"Tshepo", he keeps quiet and gets my food. He hands it to me.

"Eat"

I told my arms.

"Why don't you want me coming to your place?"

"I won't be home tonight", he says and drives off.

"Where are you going?"

"Don't ask me", I huff.

Oh my God this man.

"Eat Lethi", he says and I ignore him. Instead I look out of the window as he is driving ignoring him.

I have too many problems to worry about at the moment than to worry about a grown man like him.

The drive is filled with silence the whole way back home and no one is talking to anyone instead the music is occupying us with our unsaid selves. He gets to my street and I see my grandmother's house in a distance. He parks the car a house away and turns off the ignition then he looks at me.

"I will fetch you tomorrow ",I huff and get out of the car without saying anything.

I close the door and make my way to my grandmother's house. I open the door to the living room and Bayanda turns from the TV and looks at me.

"Eh and where do you come from? Ubhaleke wayaphi? Omawakho bayakufuna(Where did you run off to? Your parents are looking for you?)"

"I was somewhere",I say

"Where they sell Nando's ? And I saw headlights ngaka makhelwane"

"I need to eat and rest I am already tired Bayanda",I say a bit annoyed.

"Stay away from that boy or man. Don't be like girls around here who sell their bodies to dirty men around here. Aim for your Umhlanga boys uhluwane novucu lwalah",Bayanda says

"I don't know what you are talking about",my heart is thudding.

"Don't say I didn't warn you",he says and turns back to the TV.

I leave him in the living room and rush to my room. I get inside and close the door before placing my food and throwing myself on the bed. I am really tired, I need to rest.I could hear Bayanda speaking to

Someone and It sounds like he is on the phone. When I hear my mother's name and my name in his conversation, I knew then that he is talking about me. Really now? I can't believe him. A knock comes from my room and Bayanda opens the door.

“Your parents said get ready, they are going to fetch you”,He says.

“Okay”,he closes the door and I get off the bed and start to pack.

I take my phone and I have some missed calls from my old friends. I should block them for what they had done really, I can't believe they let me be a fool of myself while they knew that Ntando had moved on and was cheating on me.I finish up with my packing and then I wait for my parents to arrive while I have some of my food.

After a while I hear some commotion from the living room and my mother and Father's voice is heard. I knew then that they have arrived. I stand up from the bed and take my things then decide to walk out of the room. My mother rushes to me and engulfs me into a hug.

“You got us worried”

“I am sorry”,I say so every sincerely.

“Come, let's go”,My father says.

I take my things and the family walks us out. I get inside the car and my father speaks to my grandmother for a while before he comes towards the car and gets in. He starts the car and it drives off leaving this place that I saw as a hell hole.

My heart feels content at the moment and that is being home. I still don't understand why my parents are getting divorced but for now I am enjoying the moment of being on my soft bed. I woke up to a knock on the door and I go and attend to it. It is my mother with a tray in her hands full of breakfast.

"I thought that you would like some breakfast", she says.

"Thank you", I take it and she walks inside the room following behind me.

"Lethi, I know that you are confused with what is going on at the moment and you are waiting for an explanation", I sit on the bed and she does the same as well.

"Mom what is going on?", I really want to know.

She heaves a heavy.

"I am pregnant", She smiles and I see her eyes sparkle.

"You are pregnant?", She nods and releases a sigh.

"Yes", I see sadness reflected on her face.

"You don't seem that happy", I say.

"I am, it's just that it should be a happy moment here at home with you here but now..."

"Mom what is going on between you and dad?"

"I am just tired of competing with another woman. You know your mother is not educated so that's that."

"So dad is abandoning us?"

“Daddy loves you so much Lethi”

“Does he know that you are pregnant?”,she shakes her head.

“No, I will tell him when I am past my first trimester”,I just nod and hug her.

“Everything will be okay”,My heart is beating fast.

“Lets go and buy some things for you and watch a movie together at the mall”

“And School?”,I ask.

“You will go back at your grandmother's house soon”, oh well atleast I am here.

“Okay”

She gives me a small smile before she stands up from my bed and make her way out of my room. I look at the food that is infront of me and I start digging in. I had missed this so much. Even though I am adjusting to Gogo’s porridge but this, I missed this greasy breakfast filled with a heart attack on the go. After I am done with breakfast I get off my bed and make it before I head down to the kitchen with my tray and put it on the counter. After that I go upstairs to take a shower.

After just a few minutes I am out of the shower and already lotioning and getting dressed. Once I am done I take my phone and I walk out of the room going downstairs. I find my mother waiting for me already and she has a smile plastered on her face when she sees me.

“Are you ready?”,She asks.

I nod my head.

“Yes”

She faintly smiles. This...this is not my mother right here. The sparkly bubbly down to earth person I know. She looks like a zombie or maybe it is because I now know that my father and her are separating because of a woman. A woman that I really don't know off.

“Come let's go then”

She stands up from the couch and takes her hand bag. Soon we are out of the house in the car and driving off to wherever the road leads us.

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I am famished at this point. We have been on our feet for hours and mainly it has been my fault. My mother complained about her feet being swollen and hurting and that is when I stopped with the shopping. It was fun and very therapeutic for me. I got more school supplies plus other things to decorate my room at Gogo's house a bit and make it more suitable for me. My mother agreed to me doing that since it is her room so I am changing it a bit and bringing it to life. Surprisingly I got some things for Bayanda and also the cousin. I hope that they like it and don't dispute all my efforts you know.

“Let's get some take away before we leave”, My mother suggest.

I agree and we move to where the franchises are situated around this mall. We settle to buy pizza and I am the one sent to order what I like. I order then I go back and settle with my mother. She has been smiling at me the whole day, well it doesn't reach her ears as it always does but I don't like my mother being down like this. I don't know how I can comfort her in these adult things.

“Lethi, please work hard in school and be something in life. I want you to be the best thing that I ever wasn't”, my mother mentions.

“I will work hard mah”

She smiles.

“Good girl”

We end up talking about other things that seem to be lightening up the mood that is around us at the moment. We sit for a while before we get our order and we walk out of the mall going to the car. We load all our things in there and then my mom starts the car before she drives off

I plug in some music through the radio and we are now listening to it. My mother doesn't mind unlike Mfanele who always has a problem when I suggest him changing the type of music he listens to. He only listens to Bayanda and seems to be bullying me a lot but hey, I guess it is what cousins do right?

We get home and my mother parks the car behind my father's car and I see a frown on her face before she quickly removes it. We get out of the car and make our way inside. We find my father sitting on the couch watching a doctor's documentary while in scrubs and I greet.

“Hello dad!”

He turns to us and smiles.

“Come here”, I rush to his arms and he places me on his lap as he hugs me.

I have missed this, being close to my dad for a moment.

"How was your day?"

"Good, I went shopping with mom and I bought alot of stuff"

"You haven't changed"

He laughs and I joined in as well. Well old habits die hard I guess.

He shifts his eyes from me to my mother and I remove myself.

"I will get the shopping bags so far",I quickly say.

"No honey,go and rest. I will get them"

"You are a star!",I quickly say and run off but stop midway up the stairs just so I could eavesdrop.

"You look pale", my dad says

"I am just tired from Lethi's shopping. You are back early",my mother replies.

"I am still on call but I couldn't focus at work without talking to you"

"I will not change my mind about the divorce"

"Why Nokwanda?I don't want her,I want you. I have always wanted you!"

"But you cheated with her Nkosi, you still did that and ontop of that you impregnated her and now you have children together. A full grown ones, daughters.",She says the last part softly.

"Its not about her but you.You didn't love me, us.", my mother again.

"Don't say that. It is not true"

My father speaks softly and calmly.

“Is it not?is it? And the fact...”,I hear my mother gagging and It seems like she is vomiting

I rush up the stairs after that and my heart is thudding. I get into my room and close the door then lean against it.

I can't believe that my dad has other children. I always thought I was the only child,I don't know how to comprehend all of this. I don't know how I feel about such news and I can't ask my mother about it because it seems confidential to them.

I go and jump on my bed and I am left in deep thoughts. Can't my parents find a solution to everything that is going on? I don't want them to seperate at all. I love having my family together and the thought of all of us seperating is getting to me.

Chapter 4

I am back again to these slumps that I have now tried to get used to than the life that I was once used to. I stayed with my parents for a week before I was sent back here and my mother? Well my parents fought more when I was there and now I get the reason why they shipped me here. They just didn't want me hearing about their business. My mother wanted to come back with me but my dad did not allow it. He really didn't so eventually she stayed. Lucky her if you ask me.

Mfanele dropped me off today at school and I had an okay day. That boy who always bothers me; bothered me today. Honestly I cannot wait for the year to end so that I can finish being in this school and go to university. The bell rang indicating time for us to go home. I am really eager to go home and just stuff my face and get to organise my room. I really didn't have time to do that when I got back last night.

I walk out of the gate, I have people I get along with here. I wouldn't say they are my friends but I do get along with them mainly because we are in the same class. Tomorrow I have a maths test and I am not that worried. I am really good in maths. Not your 90% girl though but I can get really good marks if I put in the work. I hear some music outside as usual. It must be those loud transports that fetch kids really and it is one. As I am making my way out of the gate I see him standing by that orange car with a new face today that I don't know.

He is staring at me and it is evident that he is just waiting to see my next move. I sigh and make my way towards him. He looks at me as I

make my way towards them and then he places his hands in front of him as I reach him.

“Sanibonani(Hello)”,I greet.

“Nana”,I look at him then his accomplice.

“Get inside”,He says moving from the door and opens it for me.

I sigh and get inside the car and his friend gets in the back. He goes around and gets in as well. He starts the car and drives off, it is silent in the car except the music that is playing in here. It isn't loud enough to cause my ears an ache but is at a very okay Volume.

He hasn't said anything until he dropped off his friend somewhere and then after turned to me before driving off. We are heading to his place and I swallow. I don't want to be late home today as I want to get some studying done as well.

After he parks the car we both get out and make our way inside the house. I sit down on the couch and he pulls the coffee table and sits on it while staring at me.

“Why didn't you tell me you were leaving?”,He doesn't look happy.

“I didn't know I was going to leave. It was a last minute thing”

He is silent and seems to be battling with his thoughts.

“Tshepo”,I say.

”Mmh”

”Are you angry at me?”

I have to ask.

"I am"

I keep quiet. He swiftly pulls the coffee table closer to the couch until he has me concerned and then he squeezes my cheeks and we stare at each other. His hand is so strong.

"Never do that again", He says.

"You are hurting me"

"Do you hear me Lethi?", I nod my head.

"Yes", He lets me go and then stands up and goes to the bedroom side.

I am left there to nurse my sudden hurting face. He comes back.

"Are you sleeping over?", he seems a bit calmer now. I don't know.

"No, I have to be home and study. I can't sleep over", he nods and presses his lips.

"Don't fail otherwise you will know me", I swallow.

"I won't, I never fail", I see a slight smile on his face.

"Can I kiss you?"

Ohw he is asking? What a polite thing to do.

I nod and he comes close to share a kiss with me. He breaks it and brushes my cheek with his hand.

"You are mine Lethi and no one else can have you", I swallow.

"What do you mean?"

"Just that"

Oh god.

“Come, lets get you home”,I stand up and take my backpack.

He takes it from my hand and we walk out of his house. He doesn't lock the door of the house but I don't ask. We get into the car and he drives off going to my grandmother's house. We arrive there and he kills the engine and then fiddles with his pocket and takes a out a roll of cash.

“I won't see you for two days”,he says and hands the cash to me.

“Thank you”

”Bye Nana ”,I nod and take my bag and get out of the car.

I shove the money in my bag and quickly make my way to my grandmother's house.

So Lethi this is now your life huh?

It has been what? 4 months now that I have stayed with my grandmother and I would say alot has changed in my life. I have adjusted to school and honestly speaking I am quiet frankly understanding my present teachers than my previous teachers. They put in alot of effort in making us understand. I have a friend,yes! I do now. Her name is Palesa and she is very nice shame. We study together in school from time to time plus she lives in the same street as I so that is a bonus. It makes it easy for us to access each other. My mother has moved in with us and we share a room. That is the bummer of things

but she does go and sleep with my grandmother from time to time. I guess my parent's divorce has been finalized since she moved here.

My mother is heavily pregnant. I didn't believe that she is pregnant really but she is, she has some complications here and there but Hey she is quiet excited and actually gaining weight and looking beautiful. My father does pop up to check on her and even run around for her cravings and boy is my mother experiencing the worst craving. It's bad that sometimes she cries but it is really annoying when she cries. I am glad that Tshepo makes sure that I don't get pregnant because I really don't want to experience what she is experiencing.

Speaking of Tshepo and I. Well we are something. He is my boyfriend and I am his girlfriend. I love the money that I get weekly and he does give it without fail. I noticed he is not the romantic type but hey he does give something atleast. I do sneak out and go and see him sometimes and we just sit in his car or we go to his place and he brings me back on time. School? Well it is going great. Again, trust me I don't have a choice but to pass and Tshepo is making sure of that. Did I tell you that he threatened me with a Sjambok when he saw my report and I got 3 level 4's on my report. Let me quote his words

“I will hit you Lethi if you get this rubbish again. Uzobona Wena(You will see)”, with his long finger pointed at me.

And he wasn't joking, he really has one just for me and I am scared of failing so I study like I am a mad woman. That man doesn't make empty promises I believe.

So yes that is my life update so far.

It is the holidays, Easter holidays and I am glad to be on them but hey I can't have a break after my psycho boyfriend demanded to see my report and threatened me so I do study while on holiday.

I have my earphones plugged in while listening to music. My bedroom door opens and my mother walks in while she is wiping her face and I already know that she has been crying. I can't wait for 3 months to end so that she can give birth.

“Mah ukhalelani?(Mah why are you crying?)”, I ask

“Your father doesn't want me eating igwinya”

Oh, frankly I wasn't a fan of that heart attack but after tasting the ones down the street from Bayanda then I finally understood why people like them.

“You want some?”, She nods her head.

“Okay I will go and buy them”, She smiles.

“I want warm ones”, I nod.

“Okay”, I leave my books and then she settles on the bed.

I wear my shoes and take the money and then I walk out of the bedroom. I inform gogo that I am going to the shops to buy amagwinya(Fatkoeks) for my mother.

I walk out into the street and I bump into Palesa as well.

“Heyy, how are you?”, She asks.

“I am good, Wena?(You?)”

“I am good. How are the holidays treating you?”

“Boring but I can survive with a weeping mother”,She giggles.

“Askies, are you going to the shops?”,I nod

“Yes”

“Okay lets go together”

We walk together to the shops and we get there. I ask for two of amagwinya and they tell me that they are still making them. I have to wait a bit.

My phone rings as we are chatting with Palesa and I answer.

“Hello”

”Usuphendula kanjalo manje Nana(You answer like that now Nana)”,I roll my eyes.

“Tshepo”

“How are you?”

“I am good how are you?”

“I miss you”,He mentions.

Wow that is a first.

“Really?”

”Yes”

“Isn't it you left for days for whatever that is”

I hear him heave a sigh.

“I know baby and I am sorry”

“So?”

“Try and reason with me here Lethi”, I keep my silence.

”Baby”

“Mmh”

“Usungikwatele?(Are you angry at me?)”

“Yes”

“How much money do you want?”

“This isn't about Money Tshepo. I have it, You spend most of the time with me in the dark ngathi ngimubi(Like I am ugly) for the world to see”

He chortled on the other end.

“Its not funny”, I emphasized.

“I am going to make it up to you then”

“By what?”

He keeps quiet for a while.

“You will see”

“Mmh”

“I have to go baby”

“Mmh okay”

He hangs up and I sigh. It's so hard dating an older guy. Palesa looks at me for a while.

“Spit it!” ,I say

“So you are dating Trust?” ,I look at her for a while.

“Uhm we are...”

She cuts me off.

“Just be careful. You are young for what he does. He isn't the good guy”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean you have seen the money and suspicious things before right?” ,she asks.

“Not really” ,yes.

“Just be careful” ,she ends there.

I am deep in thoughts after that. I really need to know who he is for real. We get our amagwinya and then we leave.

When she gets by her house she waves goodbye and leaves. I quickly walk home and get in through the gate and make my way inside. My mother jumps up when she sees me and she smiles.

”You are a blessing” ,She kisses my cheeks.

“Oh thank you”

“Come and eat Lethi” ,My grandmother calls.

“I will”

I rush to my room and get on my bed. I am not really hungry, I will eat later. I get back to studying.

—

It's the next morning and I informed everyone of my day today. I want to go by Tsepho's place and confront him of who he really is. I have been getting these type of warnings about him before we even started dating and now I need some full answers. I helped my grandmother with cleaning and I then made some hangover serum for Bayanda after his night out. He really should slow down on the drinking and more on the studying. After that I went to bath and got dressed. I wore something simple, a dress with my slides and then I took my phone. I walked out of my room and found my mom stuffing her face with Waffles.

“Where did you get those?”, I ask.

“Your father had them delivered”, She says.

She carries on chewing while watching a omnibus of Generations.

“You miss him?”, she stops chewing and turns to me.

“Mmh?”

“Do you miss dad?”, She sighs and places her plate down.

”Lethi”

“I mean it's okay to miss him. He was your husband after all”, I say.

“He still is”, she lightly smiles.

“Your father hasn't complied to signing the papers”, I go and sit next to her.

“Atleast he is here during the pregnancy ”,I say and she smiles.

”One thing I ever wished was to give your father as much children as he wanted but I failed.”

Sadness filled her eyes.

“Then you my sunshine came and i thought everything will be alright”

“Don't beat yourself up mom. You are too pretty for it”,she laughs.

“Just go. Behave”,I nod and stand up.

I give her a peck on the lips and then I leave her.

I walk out of the gate and make my way to go and catch a taxi that will drop me off near his street atleast.

I get one and it does get to drop me off near his street. I have been here many times that I have mastered the way of coming here. I walk down the street and get to his house and the gate to my surprise is open. I make my way in and there is his car and two other cars here. Which means he is here and not alone.

Wow! Just wow!

I make my way in feeling a bit pissed off and I just open the door of his place and within seconds 4 guns are pointed at me.

I have never felt so scared in my life.

“Nana”,He is the first one to lower the gun once he sees my face.

There are stacks of cash on the coffee table, alot of them like they just did a robbery. He comes towards me and his friends lower theirs as well but slowly not sure to back down or not.

He still has a gun in his hand as he is coming towards me. Maybe this is what they meant, that he will kill me!

I shake my head and turn running out of the house. He comes after me and catches me in his arms and lifts me up putting me over his shoulder.

“Tshepo put me down!”

My high pitched voice screams.

He doesn't care about that instead he goes and locks me in his bedroom and there I was seated on his bed trying to think of who could this man really be.

—

I have sat here for over 2 hours now and I was feeling hungry and a bit tired as well, the door is unlocked as I am feeling like that and he walks in the room. We look at each other with no one uttering even a word to one another. He leans by the doorframe stuffing his hands in his pockets.

I can smell the nicotine from where I am and it is evident that he has been smoking.

“What are you doing here?”, he asks.

The audacity!.

“I want to leave”, I say

“I asked you a question Lethi, what are you doing here?”

“It doesn't matter”, I say softly and look away from him.

"I don't like repeating myself Lethinjabulo",he says that through his teeth.

He is pissed off now and by the look of things if I don't comply to him then things will go south.

"I wanted...I wanted to talk to you"

"About?",he frowns.

I swallow. He is making it harder than it should be. I keep my silence and play with my fingers.

"I will lock you up in the room until you are ready to talk then"

he turns around.

"Who are you Tshepo?",he stops his tracks.

He has his back facing me.

"What are you?where do you get all that money from? The gun? What is this?",I ask as my voice starts shaking.

He keeps quiet but he doesn't move.

"People have been warning me about you and it doesn't sit well with me "

"So you listen to what people say?",he speaks.

"No, that is why I came here to know what is going on myself"

He keeps his silence.

"I am scared, I am scared that whatever you are doing will lead me to being killed and I am too young for that."

“Nothing will happen to you Lethi, I will make sure of it”

“How do you know?”

“Trust me”,he says

I keep quiet and he turns around to face me.

“There is no way out of this Lethi only a way in”

”Meaning?”

He stares at me. I hate it when he becomes silent.

“There is food in the kitchen”

“Tshepo don't you dare Ignore me”

I warn.

He looks at me.

“I can't tell you anything now but trust me”

I sigh. I look at him and stand up leaving him there and go to the kitchen

I get there and I see that he has ordered some take away, I take the food and I go and settle on the couch and start with eating once I am comfortable. He comes from the passage and he stands by the wall and looks at me while I am eating.

“Lethi”,I look at him calling me.

“Trust me Nana, everything I do please just trust me”,he says.

“Why don't you trust me with being transparent Tshepo?”, I look at him.

“What do you know about me?”, He asks and stares at me.

What do I know about him? he sure is shady but I haven't put a finger on what he really does.

“Do you steal? Are you some gangster?”, I ask bluntly.

I can't keep on beating around the bush because that won't get me the answers that I want.

“I hustle”

“Don't sugar coat things Tshepo I can take it”, I look at him with pleading eyes.

“You shouldn't get back home late”, I sigh.

He doesn't want to be honest with me.

“You are not ready for the truth”, he quickly says like he can figure out what I am thinking.

I look at him while pressing my lips and I nod.

“Okay”, I finally settle for that.

There is silence between us for a moment and I finish eating with him staring at me. I stand up and I put the left overs in the fridge and I get some cold drink from there and pour it. Once I am done drinking once I am done drinking I wash my glass and I place it where it belongs.

“I am leaving”, I say.

“You are not staying?” ,he asks now surprised with my sudden departure.

“You said that I shouldn't get home late” ,I say.

“But it is not even one O'clock Nana” ,he says.

I go to him and stand in front of him and he doesn't move his gaze away from me. Instead he places his one hand around my waist and pulls me close to him and I stare at him as well.

“I missed you” ,he mentions.

“I did too, so much”

“Sleep over please” ,he says.

“Tshepo you know that won't happen” ,I say.

“Mmh other vros call their men by cute names Wena ungishaya nge Government name Yami(You call me by my government name)” ,I giggle.

“Askies ke baby”

“Mmmh, you look beautiful. I love your dress” , all this while we are talking with us just staring at each other.

“I wanted to be simple”

“And accessible” ,he says and runs his hand under my skirt and spans my butt.

“Ouh!”

He bites his bottom lip with a smug over his face.

"I like that",he dips his head and goes onto sucking my neck and kissing it.

"Tshepo!",I say.

"Mmh",he doesn't stop and the way he is enjoying my neck I have a feeling that he will leave a mark.

"I can't go home with a love bite"

"It will fade away ka boma two weeks so(In two weeks)",he utters so carelessly.

"But baby..."

He picks me up and I wrap my legs around his waist. He goes to the couch and he places me there. He slowly takes off my dress and I am left with my underwear only and no bra. He goes to sucking my nipples and I love it when he does that, circulating his tongue on there. He stops after some time and he goes to my lips and gives me a kiss. It is slow and filled with passion. He sucks on my bottom lip while I suck on his top lip. We exchange the roles as we are being deeply feeding the satisfaction of this kiss. He breaks the kiss and looks at me.

"Baby have you done oral sex before?",I shake my head.

"No"

"I will teach you today",I nod.

As long as I don't get pregnant then we are good.

He takes off my underwear and discard it ontop of the coffee table and then he opens my legs wide for him. He presses his thumb on my clitoris and starts to circulate there. I release a soft moan and he takes

his thumb and wet it before doing what he did again. I was starting to feel aroused as he done that. He then slides in his middle finger from the same hand and thrusts it in and puts another one in.

“You are so wet Nana”,he says.

“Mmh”,I moan as I feel the pleasure.

He up his thrusting pace and was about to dip his head between my legs when a knock came from the door.

“Grootman!”,The person who was knocking said

“Fuck!”,Tshepo cursed in anger and then he looked at me.

“Tshepo move”,he carries on thrusting but faster as he is looking at me and I throw my head back at the pleasure that is taking over.

“Please!”,I beg. The knocking is still persistent.

“Trust we have problem open the door!”,the person shouts seemingly pissed that the door is not being opened.

My toes start to curl and I arch my back more as the pleasure starts getting better and better.

“Cum Nana, don't hold it in”,Tshepo says and kisses my thighs and I go through an orgasm.

He holds me down so that I can shake under his control and he throws my legs over his shoulders and dips his head in and starts eating me up with my juices included.

“Tshepo!”,I moan.

He stops and then he picks me up and takes me to his room and puts me in bed.

“I will be back”

He walks out without closing the door. Wow what was that?

I hear people talking I cover my body with a towel and I stay on the bed.

“Amagata are snooping around and they got a tip off to come and search here about the heist”,The other man says.

“Fuck! Okay, how far are they?”

“They are just waiting for a search warrant but some are already around so I suggest you start moving now with whatever evidence you have in here”

There is silence after some time. Oh my God that money is stolen? I should've known with the large stacks on the table when I came in here. I hear footsteps and a part of me wants to close my eyes and pretend like I am sleeping and I didn't hear nothing. As I am contemplating with myself.

“Nana you I need to take you home”,Tshepo says.

“Is everything okay?”,he nods and brings my dress for me and helps me get dressed.

“My underwear”,I quickly say.

“I am keeping it”,he says and I just nod.

I am not happy with what is going on at the moment. He takes something from the wardrobe and then I take my phone and walk out of the room and wait for him in the car after taking his car keys. He comes out with two heavy bags and he throws them at the back seat and then he gets in the front. He starts the car and reverses the car and then drives off.

"I won't be around for some time", Again?

"Again? Tshepo"

"Nana I just have some business to take care off"

"What is going on Tshepo?"

He kept quiet and I decided to do the same. I am not about to beg an old guy.

I looked out of the window as he is driving and he keeps on pressing his lips. I am in the verge of dying with the way he is speeding. He gets into my street and there are police cars there patrolling.

"Shit!", my heart is beating fast with no reason. Some police try to stop his car.

He reverses the car quickly.

"Tshepo I need to get home", I am now scared.

He doesn't acknowledge me and does a quick U-turn and he drives off the street and he presses on the accelerator speeding much more.

"Slow down please", we hear police sirens and I look back and it's the police car following us

“Tshepo what is going on?” ,now I am scared.

“Nothing”

“Nothing? Stop the car then!”

“I can't Nana, it's more dangerous” ,he says.

“Dangerous?..” ,He gets in another street and it seems like we have lost the police.

“Where is your father's house?” ,he asks.

“La Lucia”

“Mmmh”

We got to another place here in Umlazi and Tshepo quickly hopped out going into the house. After some time he came back out and he opened the back door.

“Get out we are going somewhere ” ,he says and another guy comes out of the house shirtless.

He has tattoos all over his upper body.

“I am sure they are tracking your car right now,I will sort it out” ,the guy says.

“Sure” ,Tshepo gets inside a black GTI and it has no number plate.

“Get inside Nana” ,I get inside the car and he loads the bags inside and he gets in once done. Soon we leave the place and exit Umlazi.

“Is anyone at your house?” he asks.

“I..I don't know ” ,I say shaking.

“Check Nana”,I take out my phone and call my dad but then I reject the call.

I look at Tshepo.

“It will be suspicious if I ask”,I say. I don't know what I am saying.

I knew then that I was in whatever mess Tshepo is in.

We got to my home in La Lucia and luckily my father was not home. It was empty. I don't know what Tshepo wanted here but I figured it out when he took those bags and a spade and we went to the backyard.

He was burying them in our backyard and I was helping him. I couldn't believe that I was involved in whatever crime he was committing. I didn't ask questions but helped him in whatever he was doing. I kept on checking the time and it was 4 O'clock in the afternoon when we got done with burying everything. Once we were done Tshepo looked at me.

“This stays between us”,I nodded and he pulled me to him and gave me a hug.

“I am sorry for this Nana. Everything will be okay”,I nodded.

I bursted into tears as the fear sank in deeper and I cried on his chest.

“I am sorry Nana”,he kept on saying that and I just kept on crying on his chest.

What have I gotten myself into?

Chapter 5

The whole Easter holidays ended with me not being okay, well I wasn't talking to Tshepo and he disappeared and that gave me some relief because I didn't want to be involved in anything that he is going to be doing. Already I feel so guilty that some stolen goods are buried at my father's yard and I allowed a Man to do that. I mean I just met a few months ago. I don't think I would be able to handle this if you ask me. I am young for this actually.

Today is my first day back at school and so I woke up this morning and prepared for School. I feel like this term is going to be my term. I have been studying a lot and I feel ready for it too. My mother was asleep next to me and she has been very grumpy lately. I don't know what it is about her or maybe the baby is bothering but my grandmother said that sometimes women's hormones do that everytime that they are pregnant. I went to the bathroom to take a bath and then when I got done I got out and went to get dressed. I had my braids done and I looked cute as well. I did it with the cash that I had from the times Tshepo gave it to me. I sigh as I look at myself and then I get done and I take my bag and I walk out of the room and I see Bayanda having some cereals while watching some TV.

"Good morning", I say.

"Good morning Cutie", I giggle and I go to the kitchen and make some cereals too..

He walks in with his bowl and goes to the sink.

"Lethi", I look at him.

“I warned you about Trust”, Bayanda says and I look at him.

“I hope that you have stayed away from him now that he is gone away”, Bayanda says.

“Yes”, I say.

“Gone away where?”, I ask curious and he looks at me.

“Jail”, what?

“For what?”, I ask.

“Not following law protocols. I am glad Mfanele is now staying away from him. Yes he has money but it's not worth it my little sister”, He says and washed his dish.

I keep my silence and eat. Mfanele comes in the kitchen and he greets. We greet back and he eats as well. When we are done with eating I go and take my bag while these two go out.

I am worried about Tshepo. Yes I am angry at him but how did I not know that he is in jail. I go out and already Mfanele has my mother's car ready. I am so glad that the old Mercedes Benz is given a break and plus Mfanele was pleased to be the one driving my mother's Range Rover. I get inside and Mfanele starts blasting some music for us to listen to and it is not boring and Bayanda seems to enjoy it.

Bayanda has a morning class today and his Exam week is nearing as he has mentioned before if he felt like we are disturbing him.

We get to my school and Mfanele takes out a R10 for me and hands it over to me.

“No thanks”, I hop out of the car and walk inside the school premises.

I see Palesa and she is already here in school. I rush up to her and give her a hug.

"Someone missed me",she giggled.

"I did. How are you?",I ask.

"I am doing good, you?"

"I am okay",we make our way to class.

"We have assembly today",I nod.

"Oh okay then",she smiles.

"You look pretty, how were your holidays.",She asks and I don't feel good anymore.

"They were okay, I spent them with my mom and dad",yes I did.

My dad is still sucking up to my mother to take him back and quiet frankly I am not even entertaining their mess when I have my own.

"Must be nice having a dad",she mentions.

"Yeah it's okay",we get in class and we go and put our bags down before we go to assembly.

Assembly happens and we are given updates and words of encouragement to do better than the last term and I am motivated I won't lie. After that we sang some songs and then prayer happened before we were told to go to our classes after the assembly was done. Palesa and I had English first. I was really good in English here. The teacher loved me and in my previous school I was doing English home language and here they only offer English First additional. We get to

class and we settle down before our teacher comes in and she starts her lesson.

My day today was good, I bought food for me and Palesa during break since I had some money and we sat together. Her old friends didn't like that she was befriending me and I simply do not care. We study together during our break times and get each other's understanding and views on things. I really want to pass this year well and so as the following one so that I can go to university and make my mother proud. I still don't know what I want to study as yet. I am not sure but I still have time to figure it all out so no pressure.

Mfanele fetched me and drove us back home. He kept staring at me through the review mirror but I wasn't minding him at all. I miss my old friends though, yes they did me wrong but I really miss them shame. We get home and my dad's car is parked out. I hop out of the car and make my way inside and I find my grandmother watching some news with my uncle sleeping with a hat covering his face on the couch.

"Hello gogo and Malume", I say.

"Hello Lethi, go and change then come and eat", I nodded my head and went to the bedroom.

I knocked before I heard a come in and I walked in and found my parents on the bed.

My father was massaging my mother's feet and she had her eyes closed.

"Feeling better?", My father asks her.

“Yes”,she opens her eyes and they look at me.

“Hey baby, how was school?”

“School was okay.”,I quickly take something to change and walk out.

I don't understand my parents really if I have to be honest but hey it is none of my business. I go to my grandmother's room and I change there before I go to the kitchen to eat and then when I am done I go to her room and get on homework and studying.

I plug in some music and I start with my work. As I am in my moment my phone rings and I look at it. It is a number I am not familiar with.

“Hello”, I say

“Nana”,my mouth becomes dry.

I keep quiet for some time.

“Lethi”

“Tshepo”,I say after some time.

“How are you Nana?”,he asks.

I feel myself having to go through mixed emotions at the same time.

“You have the audacity to ask me that Tshepo Phakade!”,I say with much anger laced in my tongue.

“I will explain Nana when I get back”

“I don't want this relationship anymore”,I say and my heart feels heavy.

“I will talk to you when you are more calm and no one is breaking up here”,he says.

“Well I will still have the same concept and that is I don't want to be involved with you”, I say.

“He chuckles and by the sound of things he is sounding pissed off.

“I will fetch you tonight to teach your some manners”,he hangs up after and I click my tongue.

I won't go to him even. He disappears for weeks after what he did to me and he expects me to welcome him back. To hell with him!

I was disturbed from my studying that I couldn't concentrate properly so I packed my books away and slipped into bed to calm down for a moment. I ended up dozing off.

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I woke up late at night and it was dark outside. I was alone in the room and I assume that my grandmother is still watching TV. I get off the bed and make my way to the living room and I greet everyone.

“You slept for so long”,my grandmother says.

“Yes I was tired.”,I smile.

“Your father left, your mother is asleep so as everyone else.”

“Mmh”,I went to get my food and sat next to Bayanda as we were watching the TV.

We watched Soapie after Soapie on SABC 1 until my grandmother got tired and said that she was retiring to bed. Bayanda also got tired and

said that he is going to sleep. I went to wash the dishes and after I was done I made some coffee for myself and then I drank some while I went to get on my books.

I sat down at the kitchen table and took out my books and started studying. My brain felt clearer now that I had rested plus everyone was asleep so that made things a bit more easier. Time passed and it was midnight. My phone rang and I looked at it. It was Tshepo. I ignored it until it stoped ringing and it started ringing again. I took it and answered.

“Leave me alone”

“Are you talking to me like that Lethi?”

“Who else am I talking to?”,I was feeling angry really and annoyed the most.

He chuckled.

“Come outside now”

“I won't, I am not coming”,I say.

“Lethi don't test me, come out of that Damn house or I will drag you out of there and don't try me. I will do it!”,he says.

I keep quiet for a while contemplating with myself..

“I am coming”

“You have 2 minutes”,he hangs up.

Argh I feel like screaming. I stand up and I take the keys to the kitchen door and I open it and quickly I rush off and get to the gate. I jump out

of the gate and I see his car in a distance. I walk towards it and get to it and stand by the window side of his car. He is smoking and he looks at me.

“Ngena(Get inside)” ,he says.

I look at him and he chuckled shaking his head.

“Lethi I am pissed off already get in!” ,he says.

”Say what you want to say I have some studying to do”,I was feeling a bit cold.

“You don't want me to drag you in here Lethi!” , I look at him not moving.

He opened the car door and gets out and I step back.

“Okay I will get in”,I go around the car and I get inside and he gets in as well banging the door.

He throws away his cigarette and starts the car before driving off. I was silent as the car drove over to his place. We arrived there and we got out of the car.

“Get inside, I need to teach you some manners” ,he says pissed off.

I am equally pissed.

“Do they teach you how to do that in jail?” ,my tongue slips.

“Uthini?(What did you say?)” , I get inside the house leaving him outside.

He gets in the door.

“Repeat what you said to my face and don't walk away”,I turned to look at him and he was really pissed off . I kept quiet.

“Yazi uyanginyela manje (You are shutting me)”,he chuckled in disbelief.

“You grew some balls on me huh Lethi?”

“No I didn't. I just don't want to tolerate your shit anymore that's it”

“My shit?”,he raises his brow as he says that.

I keep quiet.

“Khumula(Undress)”,he takes off his belt.

“What? Why?”

“You are big now so I will show you what I do to big girls”,I swallowed.

All the anger vanished in an instant.

I couldn't take it anymore. My body was seriously aching and my hands were in pain but he kept on going. He releases yet another spank on my bums and it burns now, I am sure that they are red if not purple from all the spanks I have been receiving. He placed his hand on my waist and u feel his dick on my uterus as he is now into deep. I am laying on my stomach as he has my hands cuffed to the bed.

“Baby, I am sorry please!”,I say tired.

He doesn't say anything instead the slapping sounds increase with him thrusting in quickening pace.

"Angithi usuyadelela wena?(Isn't it you are disrespectful?)" ,he says.

He has been saying that for over some time now and I have been apologizing for some time too. I feel my self about to hit an orgasm but he stops thrusting when he feels that I am near and pulls out. He lets me cool off and I feel drained at the moment. Another thing he has been doing, he has been depriving me off an orgasm.

"Please Tshepo"

"I am not done with you until I am satified",I press my legs together and he opens them wider.

"Don't do that. You won't get what you want until I am happy with you",he says.

How can this man be so cruel?

"Please baby, I won't question you and I love you. I will never leave you",I say.

He slaps his dick on my clitoris before he inserts in side and then pulls out. He goes and released my hands and my wrists are on fire. He opens my legs and gets between them. He starts thrusting and turns me around and now I am facing him.

"Don't ever do that again Nana",he says and kisses my neck.

"I won't"

I wrap my arms around his body and wrap my legs around his waist.

He humps into me until I reach my orgasm and he lets me go through it. I hold onto him as I am shaking under him until I am okay and then he lifts his head and looks at me.

“I hate disrespect Nana”,he says now more calmly.

“I hate lies too Tshepo”,I say.

He presses his lips together then he gives me a kiss and rolls over to my side and he rests his body next to me. I am feeling tired. He pulls me close to his body.

“Don't close your eyes, I will be back”,I nod and he goes and gets a towel.

He wiped me and when he was done he walked out and came back after some time and rested his naked body next to me.

“Are you a criminal Tshepo?”

I ask him while looking at him. He is silent for a moment.

“Yes”,he doesn't deny it.

I feel my heart thudding.

“I want you to trust me Nana and know I will handle anything for you. I will do anything for you if you trust me. Whatever you need and want I will provide it but don't betray me”,he says and I swallow

“You will kill me?”,he kisses my chest.

“No Nana ”,He says and I keep quiet.

“Don't hurt me Tshepo. I am trusting you”,he smiles and kisses my lips and I respond to his kiss as well. There is no way out of here. Only a way in and I am in too deep.

“I am sleepy, I need to go home”

“Do you want to bath first?”,he asks.

I am really tired but I can't go home smelling like this.

“Yes please”,he nods.

He gets off the bed and he goes to the bathroom. He comes back when I am half asleep and he picks me up.

“Wake up Nana, don't sleep”

“I am tired”

“Mmh”,he puts me in the bathtub and then he lets me bath.

After I am done I get out and I get dressed. My body feels drained like I have been hit by a train. After that he went to bath as well and then changed and took his car keys, I went out of the house and got inside his car and he came and got in as well before he drove me home. We got to my road and he parked a house away. I am sure the neighbours are now cautious of this car that always park here at night. He turns to look at me for a brief moment.

“I don't want to be in trouble Tshepo so whatever you do make sure that I am never a part of it”,I say.

“I will Nana”,I nod.

“Give me a kiss”

I look at him.

“Asixabene right?(We are not fighting right?)”

“No”

“Kiss me so that you can go and sleep”,I lean in to kiss him. Have I mentioned that I like the way he smells? Have I not?oh well. We break the kiss off and I open the car door.

I get out and quickly make my way towards the house. How am I going to jump the fence this tired? Really?

It's been 5 days and Tshepo and I have fixed things. We really have and I would say we are in an okay space. Today I am going out to the mall with Bayanda. He wants to do a little shopping and mina I just want to catch a breather. Mfanele will not be driving us to the mall so we will catch a taxi going there. I look at myself through the mirror while I tie my hair nicely and my mother keeps on starring at me from behind while she is seated on the bed.

“Mah how do I look?”,I turn around and face her.

“You look pretty my baby”,I nod my head.

“How are your friends, I haven't heard from them in a while”,Well I cut them off after that Ntando saga.

“We went our seperate ways”,I say and quickly grab my bag.

“Oh, I am sorry my baby”,I turn to her and plaster a smile on my face.

“Its okay”

“Do you have your card with you?”,She asks.

“Yes I do mom, thank you”,I climb in the bed and lay on her.

“Yeyi Wena you will kill my child!” ,she says hitting me and I laugh getting off her.

“I love You”,I quickly say.

“I love you more my baby” ,she smiles.

She seems to be in a good space really.

“Let me love and leave you”,I walk out of the room and I find Bayanda ready waiting for me.

“I am done”,I say.

“We need to leave now, I want to go out later tonight” ,He says.

“Okay”

We say our goodbyes and make our way out of the house going to catch a taxi. We get one and hop inside and it drives off to town. Bayanda is busy on his phone while I look out of the taxi. I hope I have enough money to pamper myself really. We get to town and we get out of the taxi, Bayanda asks that we start somewhere first before moving to the mall but suggests that we get things done here in town. I don't mind actually as long as I get what I want really of which I don't know what it is.

We start off at Mr Price and we browse for some clothes. I see some that I like and I want to try on their size. Bayanda is buying something to wear for tonight and I wonder what is the special occasion for tonight really.

“I have to look good tonight. Do you think this is good?” ,He asks while raising the flowered shirt up.

“Yes, try it on”, I say and he nods taking it and goes along to find suitable jeans for himself.

I end up taking a cute top and I want to try it on. I take it and inform Bayanda that I am going to the changing room and he nods. I go and get there. The lady lets me in and I go and try it on. I wear the top and it looks cute on me and fits me perfectly. Definitely taking it really. I take it off and get dressed and then I walk out of the changing room. I don't find Bayanda so I guess he is going to fit his clothes. I browse around the store waiting for him and I take some jewellery as well. He comes out and comes my way.

“I have found the outfit. Let's go and pay, are you done?”, he asks.

“Yes, I am done”, he nods.

We go and pay separately and when we are done we walk out of Mr Price.

“Where to now?”, I ask.

“I know a place that sells nice shoes. We can go there”, I nod.

We lead the way man! We make our way to where he was referring to and we got there. There was a variety of shoes there and he went about choosing a pair that he wants. I didn't find what I liked so I waited for him to get what he wanted. As I was waiting for Bayanda my phone rings and I take it out of my small bag and I look at the screen before answering it.

“Hello”, I say

“And I thought we were improving”, his voice booms.

“Hai suka. I am in front of people”,I quickly say.

“Where are you?”

“In town, with Bayanda my uncle”,I say.

“Mmh”

“What are you doing?”,I ask.

“I am somewhere around here just getting something's done”,well I won't ask any further.

“Mmh okay,I miss you. I haven't seen you in a long time”,I say.

“You saw me yesterday”,he says. Yes I know I was exaggerating but I have been laying low on going out at night. I don't want to be caught.

“I know”

Bayanda comes to me with a pair of shoes.

“I am going to pay for these”,he says and I nod before he walks away.

“What are you buying?”,Tshepo asks.

“I just bought a top and necklace”,I say.

“Mmmh”

“After the town trip I will come and pass by your place if you are back home”,I say.

“Its open. You can go in and wait for me”,he says.

“Why did you leave it open. Someone might come in and...”,He interrupts me.

“No one would try me Nana, We will talk later. I just needed to hear your voice”, he says.

“Okay, thank you for the call. I will see you later”

“Okay Nana”, he hangs up and Bayanda makes his way towards me and he has his plastic in his hands.

“Let’s go and eat”, Finally.

We make our way out of the store to go and find the nearest franchise we could find so we can eat.

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I parted ways with Bayanda and spun a story of going to a friend real quick but I would be back. I quickly made my way to Tshepo’s place and I got there and it was really open. I placed my bag on the couch.

Bayanda left with my plastic so I came with my bag and a plastic that has take away in it. I go and open the fridge and it has some beers in there the most but rarely food. I wonder how this man survives and it needs some cleaning too. I close it and I open the cupboards and then I look through there before closing it. I go to the bedroom and I just browse around. I find my underwear in his wardrobe and I just think back at the day he got it. Wow time has passed. It was the day we buried that large amount of money in my father's yard. I put everything where it is and I check the time. Tshepo hasn't arrived and I need to be home now. I will just come back tomorrow. I go and take my bag and I take out my phone and I call him. It rings unanswered then it goes to voicemail. I try again and it goes through this time.

“Lethi”

“I am leaving, Its late for me. I will come back tomorrow”,I quickly say.

“Okay then”

“I left some food for you when you get home.”,I say.

“Thank you Nana”

“Okay Bye”,I hang up and then shove the phone in my bag before I walk out of Tshepo’s place making my way back home.

I get home in no time and already my grandmother is glued to her favourite channel while watching whatever that is playing there.

“UBayanda Kade ebuyile(Bayanda was long back)”,She mentions.

“I went to see my classmate. She is sick and she hasn't been to school so I was checking up on her”,I quickly say.

I have mastered this lying thing too quickly.

“Mmh”,she ignores me and goes back to what she is watching.

I go to my room and I open the door.My mother is not here so I wonder where she is. I walk out of the room and I go to my grandmother.

“Where is mah?”,I ask.

“Your father fetched her to go and buy one of the things she wants”,She mentions in a dismissive tone.

“Oh okay”,I go back to my room and close the door.

Let me get some studying done while at that.

Chapter 6

I am seated on the bed while watching my mother pack up her bags as she is getting ready to be fetched by my father. I really don't understand their relationship at the moment. One moment they are separating the next they are back together so I don't really get it. She turns from the wardrobe and she places her jacket in the suitcase as she is humming. She is even humming!

"You sound happy", I say to her and she gazed up on me.

"I am just singing"

"Mmh", she carries on with what she is doing.

"So what are you doing this weekend?", my mother asks. I don't do anything besides studying and sneaking around to see my boyfriend!

"I don't know. Probably going to tackle some studying on the things I don't know", I say.

"Have you went to a teacher to ask for help?", She asks while focusing on what she is doing.

“Yes and I still don't understand”,I mention.

”Growing up we used to form study groups just for those reasons.
Where is your new friend? Do you do the same subjects as her?”,She is referring to Palesa.

”She lives close by and yes”,she closes her suitcase.

“Why don't you go to her home and study with her?”,She mentions.

“As in sleep over at her place?”,I ask.

“Yes”.

“Let me call her and ask.”,I say and quickly grab my phone.

She nods.

“I want some biscuits. Let me go and grab them”,I nod as she walks out.

I contemplate with myself for a moment. Should I really go to Palesa's home or should I?

I make the first call and It rings for a moment before it gets answered.

"Nana", His raspy voice booms through the phone.

"Hey, Are you home?", I ask.

"Yes, I am home. What is wrong?", he asks.

"Well I am coming there", Yes I am choosing going to isfuba over books at the moment.

Well it's not like Palesa is the bright student plus the concept that is whooping me is whooping her so might as well ditch her. It's not like he knows I am coming to her house or thinking of that or whatever.

"Really? Should I fetch you?", He asks unsure.

It's the afternoon and I am sure he is confused as to how I am going to come there.

"Yes I am coming and no don't worry"

"Okay", We both hang up after we are done talking. I get off my bed and I go and pack some books and a overnight bag.

Well I don't know what to really pack. I am quiet excited. I get done and I walk out of the bedroom and my mom is now having tea with bread while watching TV.

"You are done?", I nod my head.

"Yes"

"Your dad is a few minutes away. We will drop you off there", I bite my bottom lip.

"Okay", I have to come up with a way for them not to drop me off directly at Tshepo's house.

My dad arrived after a few minutes and I can't even eat. I pack some of my study snacks and I rush up to my dad when I see him. I am so excited about today.

"My baby, how are you?", He asks.

"I am good dad, You?", I ask.

"i am good. Someone is excited", he says

"Mom allowed me to spend the weekend studying with my friend from school", I say.

"I saw your test results and you are doing good. Smart like your dad", If only they knew that I was threatened to get those marks.

"Indeed", My mom comes out of the house and Dad loads our things in the car.

I say my goodbyes to gogo and my uncle. Mfanele went somewhere and Bayanda yena he was still in school or not I don't know really don't care at the moment.

The drive commences and they ask me to direct them to 'Palesa's' home. We get to Tshepo's road and I tell my dad to drop me off at the corner. He stops the car and he takes out a wallet and hands over a R100 to me.

"Buy more snacks for studying. Be careful and call us once you are inside", I nod.

"I will, bye parents", I get out of the car and take my bags. I then make my way down the street as the car disappeared.

I got to Tshepo's house and I made my way inside the yard. There was a car that I don't know off and quiet frankly I don't care who it is at this point. I get inside and knock on the door. I don't want a repeat of that saga that happened last time.

"Come in!"

I open the door and make my way in. Tshepo is with some two guys I don't know off sitting on the couch and there are beers being downed here I guess.

He stands up immediately as he sees me with my bags.

“Nana”,He says.

“Sanibonani(Hello)”,I greet.

They greet back and go back to what they are doing. I move from the lounge and go to Tshepo's bedroom and place my bags on the bed and he follows behind me and closes the bedroom door behind him.

“What is going on? Did they chase you away from home?”,I laugh and turn to look at him with a frown plastered on his face.

“No, my mom is away for the weekend and she let me sleep over at a friend's house,You are the ‘Friend’ ” I say and I see him smirk.

“So you are spending the weekend here?”,he asks.

“Yes, I am leaving on Monday”

“I am happy you thought of me”,I go to him and I stand on my toes infront of him and he places his hands around my waist and lowers them to my butt and squeezed it.

“Mmmh”,I say.

He lowers his head to my level and he places his lips on mine before we are sucking each other's lips slowly but surely picking up the pace a bit. I break off the kiss after that.

“I need the mall to buy a few things”,I say.

“Sure Nana”,he says and we let go of each other.

He goes out of the door and soon enough his friends leave. I go and freshen up a bit. Vele some stores will close in two hours so I still have time to go and buy what I need. I wear some leggings and a top with shoes and I tie my braids well enough. I get my small bag and he comes back from the lounge.

“We can go”,I nod and we make our way out going to his car.

We get inside and he starts the car and soon drives off. I really need to get a few things for that house because one thing I know is that I don't want to wake up tomorrow morning eating pap and livers or Woers so no thank you. I need proper breakfast. We get to Galleria Mall and he gets parking space before switching off the ignition.

“Do you need me to accompany you?”,he asks.

“No, I will be quick. You will drag your feet”,I say and he nods.

He takes out some money from the space that is between us and he gives it to me.

“If it's not enough for the things you need. Call me”,he says.

“Okay,let me go”,I get out of the car and make my way inside the mall I just make my way to the supermarket.

I go and buy some fruits and also get two cartons of Long life milk. I buy some Oats and Rice Crisps and also add some 5Kg Sugar as well. I do a mini grocery. Some tomatoes and Sausages with a dozen of eggs. I really did some mini shopping for food and then bought some cleaning products as well. I bought a kettle too. I know that man doesn't have

one. I wonder why not really but I got it. When I got everything I wanted then I went to pay for everything. After I was done I passed by a home products shop and bought some things I know I need. Mmmh Lethi taking upon these duties. I get done with paying and the money Tshepo gave to me was more than enough. I then made my way out of the mall and went to where he parked. I got there and he got out of the car and looked at the big trolley that I have there and offloaded everything into the car.

“You sure went shopping”,He mentions.

“Yes, we need these things and you hardly have food at your place”,I say.

“I am hardly there”,he says.

“Well I am there”,he nods.

When he was done unpacking we got inside the car and he started the car before driving off. He plays some music in the car and the streetlights are now on. I take out my phone and I call my parents.

They answer the phone and I tell them that I am okay and very fine at the moment and they are happy to hear that. After the call Tshepo increased the volume of the music. He passes by Nando's and buys take away. After that we leave and we drive off going home. We enter our area and going to his house. We get to his house and he parks the car inside the yard and I get out of the car first and he follows.

"I will bring the things inside the house", I nod and make my taking the take away and then we enter inside the house. I take out the plates and start to dish up.

He brings everything inside the house and I go and give him the food and he thanks me.

"Baby you need to get atleast a tv", I mention.

"But I don't watch it Nana", He says and pop a chip in his mouth.

"Where am I going to watch movies when I am here?", I mention.

"Tomorrow we will buy it", he says and I nod.

“Thank you”,I go and kiss the top of his head and move back to the kitchen.

I unpack all the groceries and make space in the fridge for what needs to be stored there. Atleast he has some bread and meat in the freezer but no man this man can't live like this really! I wouldn't.

“Tshepo,do you eat?”,I ask while in the kitchen.

“Yes, why do you ask?”

“Your cupboards are always empty, there is always alcohol”,He walks in the kitchen with his plate empty.

“I eat at the chisanyama mostly”,I give him look.

“One day uyophalaza inyama ngiyakutsela(You will vomit meat)”,He laughs then places his plate in the sink and stands behind me.

“Angithi awunginaki(You don't look after me)”,He mentions.

“I am just a baby”,I say.

“My baby”He kisses my neck at that.

It's the next day and I did get to study yesterday day before I slept and it was so nice to sleep next to Tshepo though I have slept next to him countless times but hey I am just happy that I am not going home as yet. I woke up from the bed and already he was awake outside doing whatever. I got off the bed and made my way to the bathroom to pee before I washed my face and brushed my teeth then walked out of the bathroom and went to moisturize my face before going to the lounge. I get there and the door is open. I go and stand by the stoep and I see him smoking while he is shirtless in his boxers. He turns to me as he lets out a puff and looks at me.

“Good morning”,I quickly say.

“Morning Nana”,He says and opens his one arm wide and I rush to him and give him a hug.

“You woke up early”,he mentions.

“I wanted to get some things done. You said you would go and get that tv”, I say and look at him.

“I will be leaving soon”, I nod and move from his hold and walk back inside the house leaving him there to smoke.

I go and start with making cereals for me before I take out a pan and start with making some eggs and sausages I bought yesterday with some fried Tomato slices as well. After some time he gets inside the house as I am making some food. I get done and slice the bread well and lay the food on the plate and pour some liquid fruit juice I bought yesterday in a glass before going to call Tshepo. I get in the bedroom and he has some things on the bed. There are two guns on there and some cigarettes with some cash. I swallow at that.

“Baby, food is ready”, I say and he looks at me.

“I am coming Nana”, I nod and walk away from the bedroom.

I can't get used to the fact that Tshepo does illegal things. Really I just hope I don't get harmed in the process of it all.

He comes out and I tell him the food is in the kitchen. I follow after him and I go and make some cereals for me and he thanks me. He jumps on the counter and sits there while eating as he looks at me as I move the pan from the stove and throw it in the sink.

“You should visit more often”,he mentions.

“Well I can't cook. I am leaning though but I can fry”,he chortled.

“Ngikuthembile(I had trust in you)”

“Well tough.”, he gets done and he gets off the counter. I start with my eating and he stands behind me.

“What else do you need?”,He asks me.

I turn to look at him as he stares down at me and I look at him.

“Nothing, everything is here”,he nods.

“Thank you Nana, for trying to be in my life even though we are both difficult at times”, He mentions and I hug him.

“I love you Tshepo”, He keeps quiet but wraps his arms around me for a moment before we break the hug.

“Let me get going”

I nod and he walks off.

I stay in the kitchen and eat. When I am done I place my dish in the sink. Tshepo soon leaves and I start with washing the dishes before I do some cleaning around the house.

Really this place needs to be thoroughly cleaned. Yes he does clean but for people's eyes. I go to the bedroom and remove the cover. It has been there for far too long. It's time for change. I bought three covers. Two for the main bedroom and one for the other room. I change the cover and place the dirty one in water as I will wash it a bit later. I get on cleaning the fridge once I am done with changing the cover. After I am done I went to the bathroom and cleaning there and then when I was done I went to get the plastic from yesterday and placed some carpets that I bought for the bathroom and also scented candles with a toothbrush holder as well. After I was done I opened the window and placed some air freshener there on the toilet and made my way out. I

played some music on Tshepo's speakers and listened to it while I was cleaning. Staying with my grandmother and mother alot really got me used to cleaning. I am domesticated in cleaning but not cooking though. When I was done I go to the lounge. Atleast there is a TV stand but no TV. I remove the dust everywhere and then I took the fleece I got from the plastic and went to place it on the bed before then. I went to the wardrobe and everything is organised neatly. I then find some space to place my cosmetic bag next to Tshepo's cosmetics and then I am done with the bedrooms. I start sweeping and from then on I am done. I mop the whole place and open some windows and the kitchen door for fresh air. Once I am done I go and take a bath just to change out of my clothes that I was wearing. Now this feels like a home. I relax in the bathtub for a moment. I close my eyes and rest a bit before bathing and I get done. I get out and I go and moisturize before I wear a dress and take my books and get on my homework and then I study.

After some time I heard the car driving in and then I peaked out of the window and walked out of the bedroom and Tshepo got out of the car and went to get things from the backseat and came inside the house and looked around and places the TV on the couch.

“I got this one”,he mentions.

“It's perfect”,He smiles before turning and walking out.

It will fit perfectly with the little vase that I bought. What? Don't look at me, shopping with my mother got me here.

He comes back inside the house and he looks around.

“The place looks bit different”,he mentions.

“I did some cleaning”,He nods and then he gets on putting the TV together and installing it. After some time he gets done and the TV is on.

“Thank you so much baby”,I mention.

“I love what you have done with the place”,he says.

“I can do more, you really love it?”,he nods his head and comes towards me and takes me in his arms.

“It shows there is a woman here”,I smile.

Well people! There it is.

“Well there is one”, I laugh after that.

“I have to be somewhere for a few hours”, he mentions and I turn to look at him.

“Haah Tshepo”, I sulk. I really want to spend time with him.

“Nana I promise I will be back”, I look at him.

“Fine”, I let out a sigh.

“Thank you”, he kisses my lips and I return it.

He really should be back on time even. I am not here to stay alone.

He prepared to leave and then he left me there in his house. All alone.

Tshepo didn't come back on time and it's literally 2 am now. I really can't believe it, tomorrow I am leaving this place and I haven't really spent much time with him. I am laying here in bed and I have ran out of sleep. I hear the door opening and closing and I decide to close my eyes. He walks in the bedroom and I could hear his movements and a few minutes later he slips in the bed and he feels cold. He pulls me closer to him and I keep my silence.

“Lethi”,he says and I ignore him.

“Nana please open your eyes”,he begs

“I don't want to talk to you Tshepo Phakade”,I hear him heave a sigh.

“I am sorry I got caught up”,he mentions.

I sit up and turn to him.

“In what? Was it that important for you to be there?”,I ask.

“Yes, Ndimase was arrested and I had to take care of some things”,he mentions.

“Who is that?”,I frown.

“Its one of my friends”,he mentions.

“I really hate this because I wanted to spend time with you not with your house”,he keeps quiet for a moment.

“I am sorry Nana”

“Lets rest, I am sure you are tired”,I mention.

“Mmmh”,I hope he didn't do something stupid today.

“Baby”,he says.

“Tshepo”

“I need you”,he mentions.

“I am here njena”

“I am horny”,I turn to look at him.

“Please I promise I will be gentle. I won't let my emotions get the better of me”,he mentions.

“What do you mean by that?”,he keeps quiet.

“Nana”,I sigh.

The weekend with Tshepo was bitter and sweet as well. I could say so but I don't regret choosing to lie to my parents and actually go to his house. A week has passed and I haven't seen him in that week. He did mention that he needs to lay low for whatever reason that he couldn't mention and I just didn't take it into my mind. Yep this is what you get for not dating guys your age Lethi but hey I love it. Yes I have to admit I love being Tshepo's girlfriend though it's tough at times but I love that man. I have grown to love him so much and I am okay with it.

Today I am outside with Palesa and we had just finished some studying together at her house. We were sitting while munching on a bunny chow that we got from another container that sells it. My father would freak out if he saw that I actually buy food from these containers. He doesn't trust them and he says that they sell unhealthy food that is his argument. Hence my mother having a hard time with trying to get her cravings that are associated with these containers unless we sneak around and don't tell my father what she ate. My mother is still in La Lucia and it seems like she is not coming back anytime soon. I hope that they are fixing things with my father or at least getting there.

"Lethi!", It's Palesa calling out for me.

"Yes?"

"I asked for you to pass that jug full of water", she mentions.

We are sitting on a grass mat outside her house. Don't ask us why we are doing so, it's cold anyway but we are doing it.

"Sorry", I take the jug and I pass it to her and she places her food before taking it to drink.

I wrap my food and put it aside. I will eat it later. I am full right now.

"Lethi are you okay?", I look at Palesa.

"Yes I am okay, why do you ask?"

"You have been awfully quiet. Is it your boyfriend?", she emphasized boyfriend.

Well no it's not him. I am thinking of my parents and my previous friends.

"I am thinking of my old friends", I mention.

She turns to me.

"What did they do?", she asks.

I sigh and sit up straight before I talk.

“They didn't tell me when my ex boyfriend was cheating on me with another girl from my old school”,I mention and she looks at me.

“I am sorry”,I nod.

There is silence between us for a moment before she speaks.

“Have you talked to them since then?”,No, but I kinda miss them.

“No”

“Maybe they had a reason to not tell you. Maybe they thought they didn't want to break your heart or you wouldn't believe them. It happens”,she mentions.

“What should I do then?”,I look at her.

Really they should've told me though. I would've understood or try to understand because they were my friends. I trusted them so much.

"I don't know but there are reasons behind people's actions",she mentions

"Lets go and help your mom out inside the house",I say while getting up.

"Okay lets go",we got up from the floor and she rolled the mat up before we made our way inside her home.

We helped her mother who was now cooking with one chopping that she needed assisted with and after that I told Palesa I am leaving as I have to be back early and plus I have some school tomorrow so I need to be ready.I made my way home and I greeted my grandmother who was watching some TV and went to the kitchen and found Mfanele there.

"Hey would you like this?",I ask.

"Yeah sure",I give it to him and he stares at me and goes back to what he was doing.

I move away from him and go to my room. I get inside and I went to take my school shoes so that I can go and brush them outside.

My phone rang as I was about to take them and head for the kitchen. I took my phone and answered it.

“Phakade”, I answered.

“Phakade Lami”, I found myself blushing.

“How are you? I miss you”, I sulk.

I am like that lately. I am clingy on him but he doesn't seem to mind I guess.

“I am good, I miss you too. I just want to be with you right now”, he mentions.

“I can sneak out to go to the store but it will only be for a few minutes”, I mention.

“I want that”

“Okay, meet me at the red container in a few”, I say.

“Sho”

We both end the call and I take my shoes before I go to the kitchen and get the polish. After that I go out and brush my shoes and in no time I am done. I went back inside and placed my shoes down and then I went to my grandmother and I told her I needed airtime to do some research for school so she let me go but told me that I should quickly come back. I thank the Gods that she didn't suggest Mfanele to go for me and knowing him he wouldn't have wanted to. I made my way to the container and I saw Tshepo from a distance leaning against his car and talking to someone who looks shady as him. One thing that helps with him but my man is handsome people I have to say. In my eyes I see no one else at the moment. They have car parked next to each other. I finally reached them and they turned to me.

“Sanibonani”, I greet.

“Nana”, Tshepo lets out his one arm and pulls me close to him with it.

He plants a perk on my lips and looks at me in the eyes before we turn the attention to his friend.

“Finally I get to meet the vroe”,the guy mentions and Tshepo chuckles.

Tshepo's hand travels down to my bum and he places it there while he keeps on squeezing it here and there.

“Baby, this Ndimase and this is my Nana”,this is the first time officially meeting one of Tshepo's friends.

“Nice to meet you”,I mention.

“Mmmh”,the guy just nodded his head.

Tshepo told me to get in the car and I did as I was told. He talked to his friends for a few minutes before he got back inside the car.

“Do you lay low with your friend?”I ask and he starts the car.

“Mmmh”,I guess he won't answer me.

“I have to buy airtime before I go home”,I say.

“I will buy it for you”,I smile and lean over to kiss his cheek..

“Thank you so much”,he places his hand on my thigh and brushes over it.

“Tshepo”

“Mmh?”,I keep quiet for a moment before I look t him.

“How old are you baby?”,he keeps quiet after my question and I do the same.

We get to his street and he goes to his house. He parks the car and soon enough we get out of the car.

“I won't be staying for long”,I say

“I know”,we get inside the house.

I sit on the couch and he disappears to the bedroom and he comes back carrying a little bag and he hands it over to me.

“Should I open it?”,I ask.

“Yes”,I open the bag and it has diamonds inside.

“Tshepo where did you get this”,I ask him and he crouches infront of me.

“This is our future baby. I stole them from some big shot while we were doing a cash in and I found them there. The others don't know and I trust you. ”,he says with so much stern in it

“But baby how can you sell this. It's not right, what if this big shot finds you and kills you?”,my heart is beating very fast.

“We will keep them for now but one day it will be possible for us. I promise”,he mentions and takes my hand in his and kisses it.

“Promise me you will protect me”,I say even though I am fearful.

“I promise Nana, with my life”,I nodded and closed the bag and I hug him and he returns the gesture.

I sigh and he kisses my chin at that and breaks the hug.

I hope that this doesn't backfire but I am scared. What if he goes to jail, I wish I didn't know anything that way I can be safe but Tshepo trusts me and I don't want to double Cross him.

Chapter 7

It's my birthday today, I have been granted yet another year to live and I am so happy about it. I look everywhere around me and I am surrounded by people who love me, my family and friends. Old and New. I didn't think that my birthday celebration would be this big but it is today.

We are at La Lucia at my father's house. My mother is smiling brightly with my little brother in her arms and my father standing next to her. Have they fixed things? I don't know. My mother doesn't stay here though and my father visits almost everyday to see them the most. It has been going on for a year. Yes it has been a year since I started living with my grandmother and a Year later I have patched and left some things as they were if I saw it best fitting.

“Make a wish Friend!”, Nolwazi says.

Yes my old friends are also here. I reached out to them and we apologized, patched and forgotten about Ntando and our break up. Palesa is my closest friend though, she knows most inches of me. Not all of them though.

“Mom?”, I look at her and her look gives off an encouraging smile.

I close my eyes before I blow out the 18 candle and there after I hear claps and flashes are there as well as photo's are taken.

I rush to my parents and I hug them and my father embraces me the most.

“I love how grown you are now”, he mentions.

“Thank you baba”,I am happy and content.

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My uncle is pissed drunk, laying around the pool chairs. The cake has been cut and I am collecting some of the dirty dishes. I walk inside the house and went to the kitchen. I looked and felt beautiful as well plus the speeches were heartwarming so as the gifts. I found my aunt's from my dad's side washing the dishes.

“Put those here Leh”,My aunt mentions and I do as I am told.

I put the dishes on the counter and I grab the juice and pour in a clean glass and I drink up.

I take out my phone from my pants and I check on my phone once again. I have been doing that the whole day, waiting for something from Tshepo.

My phone doesn't have any new missed calls or messages from him. I sigh and shove my phone back in my jeans.

“Lethi!”

My cousin rushes in the kitchen followed by Bayanda.

“What is the rush?”,my aunt's look at them.

“Your father just said we can go with you today”,they get excited.

My face falls.

“Oh, I thought I was sleeping over”,I mention with sadness.

“Hawu Lethi you have been here your whole life”,Sebe rolls her eyes.

They pull me out of the kitchen.

“We are going to Kwa Mzo.” I frown.

“Where is that?”, I ask.

“Its a joint by your area, My boyfriend is going to pay”, Sebe mentions.

“Where am I involved?”, I ask with a frown.

“You are our cover”, What?!

“No”

“Don’t be a bore or I will tell your parents who you are dating”, Bayanda says raising his brow

“Who?”, Sebe asks looking at him.

I thought I kept my relationship underwraps as best as I could.

I huff.

“Fine, let me pack my things”, they high five.

“I told you it will work”, wow just wow. Bayanda just blackmailed me.

“Can I go and enjoy the rest of my birthday now?”, I ask.

“Yeah sure but remember”, I nodded.

I went away from them and I went outside. I went to where my mom is and she hugs me in her one hand while she is seated around the table feeding my little brother while conversing with her sister in law.

“Can I take him?”, I ask.

“I am still feeding him baby”, my mom mentions and I nod.

I pull a chair next to her and I play with my little brother. Yes she gave birth months ago, 7 months ago and this little guy is growing. I love him so much, I cannot not gush over him.

"Lethi you are distracting him", my mother mentions.

I look at my little brother and he is clapping his hands lifting them up wanting me to take him.

"I will go, I will be back though", I say getting up.

My mom distracts him before I slip away running. I find my friends seated together and I join them.

"Right? And then they have the audacity to do that", Nolwazi speaks.

"Who has the audacity?", I ask.

"Some schoolmate of ours. Hey we have been missing you. We should go out some time with Palesa as well", I smile at them including Palesa in the plans.

"Sure", I sit down.

We continue conversations with anything that pops into our minds. We laugh here and there until we have tears until it was time that people had to start leaving. I escorted my friends to their parents and hugged their mothers. I thank them for bringing them to celebrate my 18th with Ime. They wish me well and they soon leave. I stay at the driveway with Palesa.

"Have you talked to Tshepo?", She has accepted my relationship with him. She had no choice than to do so.

"No", I mention softly and she places her hand on my shoulder.

“Lets go and get some cake. It was nice, I want another bite”,she smiles and I laugh.

“Lets go”,I wrap my arm around her shoulder.

“You are so short mntana”,she touches the top my my head

“Hayi Wena!”,She giggles.

”Short base”

“Long tom”,she gasped dramatically and I laugh.

We walk inside the house and go to the kitchen. We ask whoever is there for cake and they get it for us and we thank them before we head upstairs to my room to help me pack because Sebe and Bayanda really are determined by their trip.

I have never been to a drinking spot before or a club not even a pub ever in my life. This will be the first time I get to go to one. We have left La Lucia with Bayanda and Sebe and all the others as well that were going to stay with us at my grandmother's house. She was staying with my mother at my father's house so we kids are all home alone for two days.

I look at myself through the mirror and turn around in around in each angle. I have gained weight and my mother signed me up for gym for a few months and I quit. I wasn't able to juggle school and being in the gym as well so no and as far as being a matric student I want to put my whole focus on that.

“Lethi!”,It's Bayanda's squirky voice calling me out from my room.

Il look at my sneakers and the shorts i have on and the top and I feel okay I guess.

I take the shorts off and the too and I just slip In a dress and I feel okay. Yes this looks okay

The door opens and it's Sebe.

“Dude my boyfriend is outside waiting”,she mentions.

Aren't they scared the neighbours will inform my grandmother what her child and grandchildren are up to?

“Okay, I am coming”,I say and I grab my phone and my little bag. I just have lipgloss, some bubble gum and some emergency money If we need to escape and come back home.

I move from the room and get out.

I can hear the music from where I am. Bayanda locks the door and gives the keys to me.

“Put the keys there”,he mentions and I do so

I am feeling nervous as we walk towards this guy's Toyota Yaris. He steps out of the car as soon as he sees Sebe and she rushes to his arms and grabs a hold of his neck. His hands guns to holding her butt and he squeezes it before letting go.

“Baby these are my cousin's. Baya and Lethi”,Sebe says as soon as we reach them.

Sebe is my cousin from my father's side of the family and they get along quiet well with Bayanda since I can remember.

“Nice to meet you. Clive”,the guy says.

I just nod my head.

“Nice to meet you Clive”,Bayanda mentions.

We are soon inside the car and honestly Gqom music is not my favourite cup of tea but also that doesn't mean I don't listen to it if people are listening to it that time but I just wouldn't do it willingly though.

Bayanda is already dancing to the song that is playing as the car starts moving so as Sebe as she joins in on the dancing. I feel like the odd one out at the moment but hey I won't even try to dance just to fit the category of being‘Cool’ at the moment. We arrive at a place and there are cars parked and already the music is playing from inside the place. The guy finds some parking and then we step out of the car. I can feel the fresh air. I think I was stuffed in that car honestly.

I am nervous as well, I have never been out and about in this manner but there is a first time for everything.

“Lethi come”,Bayanda mentions and I walk towards him and we walk side by side going inside the place.

There are girls and guys dancing. The girls being in revealing clothes mostly and they do not care, hair make up and nails also done.

“Lets go to that table”,Clive mentions and we walk there.

There are a group of men and women sitting there. The girls stand up and scream at the sight of Sebe, so as she. They hug and Clive greets

the gents. We stand there like statues. More or less I am standing like that.

"These are my cousin's. Leh and Baya.", Sebe mentions

"Hi", They say and we soon are seated.

They ask what are we going to have and Sebe mentions a lot and then they keep on having a conversation. I feel my phone vibrating and I take it out hoping it's the boyfriend but nothing. It's just those stupid telecommunications messages with what deals they have now to offer.

"Lethi here", Sebe says handing over some beverage to me.

"What is this?"

"It's Pine twist", I nod and I took a sip from that.

This is my first time having alcohol and it tastes nice.

"It's nice", I mention to Sebe.

"I know right?", I just nod and drink some more

The conversations keep on flowing and as I was drinking the pine twist other drinks were offered to me to try out and taste and I did and they tasted okay and some didn't but I was feeling woozy after some time. Music kept on playing and now I had let loose. I was even bobbing my head here and there to the rhythm of the song as well. I even forgot that I haven't talked to Tshepo in a long time as well. I had my eyes closed while listening to the music when Bayanda tapped me out of my trance.

"Mmh?"

"Isn't that your so called boyfriend?",he mentions in a not so pleased manner

He doesn't like Tshepo that I know and have came to terms with. I look in the direction he pointed to and I set my eyes on another table filled with shady people as well. I see Ndimase but most of all I see my so called boyfriend there as well! Wow what a joke really! I feel myself getting a bit pissed based off the fact that there is a woman I don't know who is too close to him for my liking. Jealousy, yes that's the word for it. I am feeling jealous.

"I will be back"

I mention as I place my drink down and standing up.

"No Lethi just sit down. Don't go over there",Bayanda mentions.

"I am going". I grab my little bag and give it to Bayanda and I go over to where Tshepo is.

This woman is laughing and keeps on running her fingers on his chest with those long fake nails. I get to the table and I greet.

"Sanibonani",Tshepo sets his eyes on.

"Nana",he frowns at that.

I move the lady's hand from my man and I settle on his lap. He places his hands around my waist.

"Sisterr zikhiphani?(How are you?)", it's Ndimase.

He is older than me but he is calling me like that.

“Angikho right(I am not okay)”,I set my eyes on Tshepo and then this lady that is sitting next to him.

“Are you his little sister or something?”,The girl asks.

“Its non of your business who I am, just keep your hands to yourself or else I will feed them to you”,I say in a threatening tone.

I hear some laughing and Tshepo looks amused. The lady frowns and scoffs.

“You wouldn't dare”,she mentions.

“I would try me”,I say folding my arms and Tshepo runs his arms along my thighs and pulls me closer to him.

His warm breath hits my neck as off that and he whispers into my ear.

“You drink now?”,He whispers into it and his raspy voice sends signals to my body.

I turn to look at him and show a smile.

“I just turned legal today I am off age now”,I mention and look at him.

“Mmmh”.

He takes his drink and takes a sip off it and I grab the glass from him and drink up from there.

“Don't contact me until I contact you. Bye Phakade”,I perk his lips and I smile and stand up not even fixing my dress that has gone up.

As I am about to walk away he grabs my arm and stands up from his seat. I look at him.

"I am coming back",he mentions to the guys.

"Trust",the annoying lady says but he ignores her and pulls me out of the place going to his car.

"Tshepo where are you taking me? I have to go back to my cousins and leave me alone!",I say.

"You ambushed our seating so what do you want me to do?",He asks me that.

"So you would be okay if another man touched me over my legs and everywhere and being close to me",he clenched his jaw.

"I will kill him",he says facing me.

"I will chop that lady's fingers trust me Tshepo. She should try me and I will stab that chest she is caressing",I say and he keeps quiet.

I don't even know what I am saying but I have never done that before.

I look at him.

"It's my birthday today and you didn't even wish me well. It hurts because you are my boyfriend then to see you with that lady just...",I kept quiet and I sighed.

I don't want to cry at the moment.

"Nana",I look at him.

He pulls me to the car and I don't oblige. I get inside and he does the same and he starts the car before driving off. I look out of the window and keep my silence and he does the same. I sigh many times trying to get rid of the lump stuck in my throat. We get to his house and he gets

out and I stay in the car. He goes to the door and waits for me. I sit for a while before I get out and follow him. We get inside and he disappears to the bedroom. I throw myself on the couch and wait for him to return.

"Lethi", I look up and see him standing by the passage.

"Mmh?"

"Come this side", he mentions

"I don't want to sleep with you Tshepo", I mention.

He keeps quiet. He still stands there and I look at him. I sigh and get up going to the bedroom and I open the door and there is a gift box on the bed.

I turned to him in utter shock.

"Is that for me?", he nods his head and goes to taking it. It's a small rectangular shaped box. He opens it and I see a diamond necklace.

"I used one of the diamonds to get it made", he mentions and I feel tears nearing my eyes.

I drop the gift on the bed and hugged him.

"Thank you so much", I never thought he could be this sweet.

He holds my body close to him and sighs.

"Anything for you Lethi. You are my Queen", Well I do feel like one.

I break the hug and I kiss him all over his face and he frowns.

"Baby", he complains.

“I love you Phakade Lami”, I mention and he just nods with a smile.

I get back to the diamond and I look at it. I love it so much.

I woke up to the music from outside playing and the sun penetrating inside the room. I opened my eyes and I was still in Tshepo's room. I didn't leave last night but stayed here. I felt a bit nauseated but I didn't have a headache like Bayanda does have all the time. I get off the bed and I make my way out. I find Tshepo on call while in the lounge. I go to him and kiss his bare back before going to the bathroom to pee and rinse my mouth and wash my face. I finished then I walked out to the kitchen. I checked my cupboards. I want something Spicey. I find some eggs and and untouched bread as well. Atleast my boyfriend has improved in buying some grocery nyana now so we wouldn't starve. I check the fridge and there is meat. I take it out and a pan and I start making breakfast for the both of us. After some time I get done and I go and get some ice so that I can some cold water. He comes to the kitchen and stands behind me. I turn around.

All of yesterday was forgiven when I got that gift.

“Baby”

“Good morning. How are you?”, I ask

“I am good”, He mentions and I tip toe towards him and he puts his hand around my butt and squeezes it before he gives me a kiss and I wallow myself in it. I look at him, I love this man.

“You are cooking?”, I nod my head while giggling.

Yes I am still not the best cook but hey. Living with my grandmother as taught me a thing or two about cooking and I am better than last year when I couldn't cook at all.

“Come lets eat”,I mention.

“I have to be somewhere. I will drop you off home”,he mentions and my face falls.

“Oh”,I unwrap myself around him and I go and attend the food.

“Nana”,he says softly.

I keep my silence. A knock from the door disturbs the quiet moment and he goes to attend the door.

“Yah! Ubani vaar?(who is there?)”,Tshepo speaks.

He opens the door and I hear people talking. I move from the kitchen and I go and peak. I see him standing with a guy dressed in a police uniform. My heart skips a beat that moment. Is he getting arrested?

He lets the man in and I move from where I was and I go deep inside the kitchen. Oh my god what am I going to do? Should I escape or? I don't know at the moment. I hear laughter from them and I frown at myself. I decide to go to the lounge. I get in and I find them seated and talking.

“Sawubona”,I greet.

“Yes”,the guy replies.

Tshepo doesn't introduce us so I see that I don't have to know this man.

I go back to the kitchen and I search the cupboards and I find some almost full juice that I get the last time I came here of which is last week and some biscuits. Well this will have to do for now. I set up everything and I go and serve them and then move away from them. I see this as an opportunity to go and take a bath. I first clean up in the main bedroom before I go and put water in the bathtub. After a while then I get done and I close the water source. I get in the bathroom and get inside the bathtub. This is what I needed honestly. I take a bath and after I am done I wash my underwear and place it on the towel rail in the bathroom. I wrap a towel around my body then I make my way out of the bathroom into the bedroom. I take Tshepo's lotion and I smear it on my body and then take my emergency roll on and apply it. Yes I have my own cosmetics here because I am here most of the time. After I am done I dress in my dress then walk out of the bedroom when I am done. I find Tshepo all alone and his guy friend is no where to be seen. They drank the juice and ate the biscuits though. Not all of them but they did that.

"I am leaving after eating", I say collecting my things.

"Okay, come", he pulls me to the kitchen and we go and eat other.

After we are done we wash the dishes and as we are doing that while laughing at the silly things we are saying silence prevails between us.

"I am 28", I shoot my eyes and look at him.

He looks at me with a straight face.

"You are 10 years older than me.", I say in utter shock.

"11", he mentions and I am in lost of words.

I keep quiet. Well I know that Tshepo's birthday is late during the year but I didn't think he would be that older than me.

“Oh”, I don't know what to say.

“Baby...”, he tilts his head and looks at me.

“Nothing changes”, I mention and he nods with his lips pressed against each other.

I smile and carry on with the dishes. Wow just wow, I really don't know what to say.

We finish and then end up leaving his house going to drop me off home.

Grade 12 oh may I just hang myself at the moment. I have mentioned that I don't have it easy at school but I also don't have it rough as well. I am in between of being smart and not smart but with hard work I am smart. Boy am I being a hard worker because I want to make my mother proud and also my father. Still as it is now even going towards the middle of the year I still do not know what I want to be but I have applied for Nursing, Dentistry, Financial Management and a few of other degree choices. I don't know really so whatever that will take me I will grab it with both hands and try to make the best of it. Where do I want to study? I don't know but hey I will see when I get there.

Today we have assembly at school and the principal made us sing. We sang like we are in a struggle as always but it has touched my heart each and everytime. It must be weird to think that I have one friend from school and I don't. I just have two but I am closer to Palesa. The

other is Lee, short for Lizwi and boy does she have a beautiful voice when she sings. We just got along recently hence my parents not inviting her to my birthday celebration. When assembly was done we went to our classes. This morning I had Life science with Palesa and Lee. We are in the same classes for that and Maths with Lee.

I get in and Ayanda makes his way towards me. The boy who used to pester me last year about knowing me. He is a great guy yena shame but still I don't trust guys from school shame.

"Lethi I heard you had a massive party but didn't invite me", he sulks

"It was a surprise party. I didn't know of the guest list either", I mention the truth.

He nods while chuckling and sits next to me as I sit down. My friends are there chatting up so as everyone else.

"I have a question", he asks and I look at him

"Yes?"

"I heard you are dating. Are you dating Trust?", I roll my eyes inwardly and in my head not physically.

"Yes, do you have a problem?", I stare at him.

"No I don't but I just wanted to know. You know girls like you don't suit guys like that", he mentions.

"Well I don't care", I say.

"Ayanda can I have my seat?", Palesa says and he moves from it.

"Bye Lethi", I nod and he moves away.

“The life science teacher is absent”,she mentions while sitting down.

“Well lets study then while at that”,she smiles.

“I have improved my grades since you came into my life Lethi. Thank you”,I nod.

“Thank you as well”,I hug her.

Yes I have also improved since being in her life.

Chapter 8

I couldn't wait any longer for After school because I am so tired. This week has been hectic and being in this school meant that alot of work has to be done. I have been having extra classes until half past 4 in the afternoon since the year had begun and I am getting tired of it already and it hasn't been the middle of the year as yet. Today it's Friday and we don't have an extra class today. I get out of the classroom as soon as we are dismissed and I make my way as quickly as possible out of the gate so that I can catch a taxi that will take me home already. I didn't even have time to see Tshepo this week and he has been understanding. He also had his things to sort out so that worked in my favour for the time being. He wants me to pass so he should let me study please.

“Lethi!”,I groan at whoever is calling me.

I stop my tracks and it's Palesa running towards me.

“You are leaving already?”

She caught up to me and we were now walking side by side.

“Yes, I am so tired Mngani yazi angifuni lutho(I don't want anything)”,I quickly said.

“Well your lucky stars are with you because here is your man”,I look out and I saw Tshepo leaning against his car with hands in his pockets. I was so happy to see him that moment plus saves me transport money and being squashed in a taxi.

I ran up to him and he took out his hands from his pocket and embraced me as I did the same. He kisses my neck.

“How are you Nana?”,he asks.

“I am good. I am so happy to see you”,I mention.

“I am too”,we break the hug and I pull Palesa closer.

“Baby this is my friend Palesa. Lesa this is my boyfriend. Bathi uTrust(They call him trust)”,Only I should be familiar with the name Tshepo.

“Fede(sharp)”,Tshepo said and Palesa nodded.

“Can you give us a lift tuu baby I am so tired”,I mention.

“Get in”

Palesa gets in the back and Tshepo gets in the passenger seat.

“Is someone driving?”,I ask.

“Yes, you”,I frown.

I fold my arms across my chest.

“Haibo Phakade, I can't drive”,I mention the obvious.

I am a certified passenger and I am proud of it.

“Ngena uzodriver Njabulo(Get in the car, you will drive Njabulo)”,Palesa softly giggle.

“Don't shorten my name like that. It sounds boyish”,He chuckled and I gave my heavy bag to him and went around the car.

Well let's try to drive this baby.

I got inside and I adjusted the seat properly.

“Baby check the mirrors and see if you can see properly anything behind the car or oncoming cars on the road.”

“I can see properly”, I mention.

“Is this automatic?”, I ask.

“No”, I groan more.

“You can do this Lethi”, Palesa encourages.

“Where is BMW?”, I ask.

We are in another car that I don't know.

“At the house. Now focus”, he mentions.

“Are you comfortable?”

“Seat belts please”, I mention and Tshepo frowns. I look at him. Palesa quickly grabs hers and gets it on.

“Baby angifuni ufe Lana (I don't want you dying)”, I mention.

“I won't now start the car”, I do so.

He tells me what to do next and we wait for a while before he tells me which paddles I should release and press on after releasing the hand break. I do so and the car starts moving.

“I am doing it!”, I feel so excited. Fear wasn't even there anymore and I didn't feel the tiredness.

“Focus Lethi don't get over excited”, Tshepo mentions.

“Put on some music please”, I mention.

“No”,I sulk.

He instructs me on what to do and tells me to indicate on prior time. Well its rich coming from someone who hardly does that in these streets but I was driving. It a slow pace yes but I was doing it. We get to Palesa’s home and I park a house away from her house and she takes off her seat belt.

“Bye Lethi, thank you for the ride”

“Bye Mngani, see you later”,she nods and gets out of the car.

I look at my boyfriend for a moment.

”Do you want to switch seats?”,I ask.

“No, keep on driving”,I start the car excited. Well it's not like I wanted to anymore after getting that right.

I drive off after some time.

I got to my house and I parked the car and looked at him.

“Will I see you tonight?”

“Yes”,I giggled and kisses his lips.

“Okay then”,I take my bag and get off the seat after removing my seat belt.

I wave away when I am out of the car and rush to my house.

I find my little brother playing with his toys in his corner.

“Hey bhabha”,I put my bag down and pick him up.

“How was your day?”,I ask.

“He was naughty. He broke my phone”,my mom says as she walks in the room.

“Sorry but he is small”,I play with his cheeks.

“Small for what?”,I giggle and get lost in a world where me and my little brother exist.

“Lethi...”

“Mah?”

“We need to talk”,I look at her and I swallow.

“Yes?”

“Your father is having dinner tomorrow night. He wants to tell you something”,she mentions.

“What is it?”

“I can't say”

“Will you be there?”

“Yes”,I nod

“Okay then”,She nods and I sit down on the floor with this guy.

“Lethi usuqomile?(Are you dating?)”,my heart beats on my throat.

“Mah?”

“You heard me”,I look at her.

“I...I..”,I get tongue tired. I am speechless.

She looks at me.

“Why would you ask that?”,I ask.

“The neighbours have been complaining about a car parking near the house most of the time”,she mentions.

“That's one of my classmates brother, he gives us a lift majority of the time if Mfanele doesn't fetch me”

“I hope you are being honest. I don't want you getting pregnant. This is crucial year and dating in this environment is not for you.”,she mentions.

“Yes mah”,she nods then takes her child and walks off.

I breathe out after that. Yoh these neighbours love to stick their nose in people's businesses.

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It's Saturday today and I didn't get to meet Tshepo as promised but today I am determined to go and see him. I woke up early and cleaned the house with the help of my mother and Mfanele as well. After that we had some porridge that my grandmother had cooked and then I washed the dishes. I went on to bath and I asked my mother if I could go out for a while but I will be back on time before we go out for the dinner and she agreed on that. I went on to take out my leggings and a top and I will top it up with sneakers and I will just brush my eyebrows after that. I went to bath and then after got dressed and I was on my way out.

“Be back by 2 Lethi”,my mother emphasized.

“Yes I promise”.

She nodded. I rushed out of the house and made my way to catch a taxi going to the other side where Tshepo lives. It dropped me off and I made my way down his street and got in his yard. I knocked on the door once and I got inside. The door is mostly unlocked unless I am here then it is locked. I still don't understand how Tshepo just leaves his house unlocked. It was quiet. I made my way to the bedroom while calling his name.

I got in the bedroom and he was laying on the bed facing up while in boxers. I took off my sneakers and I got on him and he stirred and wrapped his arms around me before he opened his eyes.

“Phakade lami”,he slightly smirks.

“Hey baby”,I perk his lips.

“Unlike you to wake up late”,I say.

“Ngathi ngingenwa iflue. Ikhandla liyangishaya (I think I am having flue. I have a headache)”,he mentions.

His raspy voice is even more raspy.

“Askies baby. Do you have lemon juice here? Let me make some breakfast for you”,I say.

“I want to sleep”,he mentions.

“Okay, I will go to the container to get some Grandpa and Med lemon for you”,I mention.

Shame my poor baby doesn't look okay. He lightly chuckles.

“I will be okay. Sleep here”,he says

I wrap my arms around him. He closes his eyes as he goes back to sleep. I watch him for a moment. I love how smooth Tshepo's skin is and the fact that he has bushy eye brows makes me feel a bit jealous. I always wanted to have thick eye brows than these non- existent ones I have.

I let him rest for a while before I get off him and I go and clean up around the place. It could also be a not so clean place that contributes to him being sick as well. I have mentioned before that Tshepo cleans before people's eyes. He doesn't do it thoroughly unlike how we do it at home. Living with my grandmother has trained me to being domesticated. Trust me I have learnt a thing or two in the year that I have lived with my grandmother. After I am done with cleaning I take it as an opportunity to sneak out and go get those things I mentioned earlier from the shop while Tshepo is still out of it.

I make my way down the street and I reach a tuckshop. I take out some money and I buy some of those things and also some snacks. After that I made my way back to the house. I made my way to the kitchen and I made some Spaghetti and a sandwich. I got how to make the food from YouTube. After I get done with the sandwich I boil some water and make my way to the bedroom and I wake Tshepo up. He opens his eyes and they are blood shot red.

“Here is some food for now so that you can have something in your stomach. I will go and get some medication and get the bath water running for you”,I say.

“Don’t worry I will be okay. I don't get sick always”,he says.

He is being stubborn for no reason.

“I wasn't asking you bhuti”,He chuckled and I gave him the sandwich.

He started eating and I left him and went to run that water for him. I made the Med lemon then got him glass of water for the grandpa. I got in the bedroom and he was done. He was out of the bed already.

“Here”,he takes the hot beverage and he gulps it without any care that it is hot.

“Slow down uzo zishisa(You will burn yourself)”

I was concerned.

“This thing is tasteless”,he mentions like he did not just burn his tongue.

I am speechless to be quiet honest.

“I am going to Gauteng sometime soon. Do you want to come?”,he asks while taking out something to wear before he finished the left over Med Lemon and guns for the grand pa without water.

“As in like a road trip?”

“Whatever you think it is Nana”,he mentions.

How will I get to leave home on that?

“Yes”,he smiles and pulls my cheek before kissing it and biting on it softly.

“Hai Tshepo!”,he chuckles and spans my bum before walking out of the room.

I am left to clean it up. Well how am I going to ask my parents to be in another province. Well I will come up with a plan. I wonder what we will be doing there really.

I get done with the room and I go and check my spaghetti and it is done in no time. Tshepo gets done and he comes to the kitchen to place the cup while butt naked.

“You should've put a towel over you”, I suggest.

Because if he does not I will be charged for what I am about to do to him. I love his butt so much. Like you can grab it and spank it all the time. The shape of his bum is firm but cute.

“It's not like you don't know me naked”, He mentions.

God this man.

“Umuhle baby(you are beautiful baby)”, he frowns.

“Ai Lethi Indoda ayikho yinhle(A man is not beautiful)”

“How is a man then?”

“Lookable”, I laugh.

I don't know anymore.

“Don't say that again”, he says

“You are beautiful and I like your bum”, I spank it and he jumps.

“Lethinjabulo!”, his deep raspy voice booms through the whole kitchen.

“You do that to me, what is the problem when I do it to you?”

“Ai”, he shakes his head standing far away from me. I laugh.

“I am sorry”

I get closer to him and he steps back.

“Phakade I won't do anything to you”,he breathes out.

I get to him and I stand on my toes and wrap my arms around his neck.

“I love you”,I say while looking at him.

He kisses my lips and I respond to the kiss. He holds my waist and I feel his shaft growing hard on my abdomen. I break the kiss.

“Go and get dressed”,I say softly.

“Just one round”

“One?”,he nods.

I run my fingers on his chest and kiss him again then he breaks it. He cups my valve and rubs my clit through my leggings. I stare at him feeling tingles creeping in.

He turns me around and places my hands on the kitchen counter and then pulls my leggings along with my underwear down. He then rubs his shaft from the tip going downwards before he rubs it against my clit and I softly release a sound.

I start to feel myself getting wet as he continues to do so for some time and slowly he enters the tip and thrust it in a bit before he pulls out and continue the process. I am feeling quiet wet and can't wait for him to fully be inside of me.

“I am ready baby”,I softly beg.

He firmly holds my waist and then parks my butt cheeks before he fully slips in going deeper and realeases a groan from the deepest part of his Adams apple. I realeas a light scream at that.

He starts banging me against the counter as I keep on screaming his name in pleasures.

I look at the house. I have become a visitor in my own home. It has been so long since I have lived here fully but I love being at my grandmother's home. My pussy is burning but it felt better after the cold bath that Tshepo gave me. His energy didn't show that of a person who was claiming to be sick or sounded to be like. He made me shiver at his mercy and crying for him to stop only to want him to keep on going until he gives me another toe curling orgasm. I tried my best to perfect my walk as it is. My little brother clapped his hands as soon as he saw my father standing by the driveway waiting for us.

He rushes to us and he opens the back door and takes his son out while greeting me. I take off the seat belt and my mother is already out of the car. I take my little bag and follow after them as they leave me outside. I made my way in.

"So what is the dinner about?", I ask and I set my eyes in front of people that I don't know off as we get into the dining room.

"Hello", I greet and the girls greet but the older woman does not.

These girls look older than me if I am not mistaken.

"Lethi, this is Londeka and Samke", My dad mentions.

"Ohw nice to meet you", we settle down on the chairs.

My mother and the older woman have tension between them. I can feel it.

My dad settles as well and a helper comes to serve starters.

“The reason why I called this meeting it is to meet your sibling”,my father says and I give him a look.

“I didn't know”,this is a shock.

I look at the girls.

“I know baby, it is coming out as a shock but I want all my children knowing each other”,I had so much to say but held my tongue.

“I have never had big sister's before so I wonder how it would be like”,I say.

“well Samke is the same age as you are”,I pop my eyes out and clear my throat.

“Thats wonderful”,So my father cheated!?!I can't believe this!

We had our food and my father was doing the most talking. I lost my appetite along the way.

“Can I be excused upstairs for a minute?”,I asked.

“Sure”

I got up without wasting some time and went to my room. My mother followed after me and got inside as well.

“I know it is overwhelming but...”,she was talking but I interrupted her.

“Dad cheated on you!”,I was feeling angry.

”Lethi is was years ago”,she mentions.

“Is that the reason why you are divorcing dad?”she closed her eyes.

“They have another child together with the mother but she died 4 years ago”,She says.

“We are getting out of here”,I say.

“Lethi!”,my mother begs.

I ignore her and make my way downstairs. I trusted my dad. I thought he loved my mother so much. I got downstairs and took my bag from my chair.

“Lethi where are you going?”,my dad asks.

“I won't stay here. I can't stand you right now”,I say.

“Lethinjabulo!”,my mother warns.

I ignore her and walk out of the house running out. I get down the driveway and I run out of the yard with my parents calling after me.

I keep on running. I thought that he loved her but he didn't. He ruined our family our life. I trusted him!

I ran until I couldn't anymore and I was out of sight from being home. I took out my phone while tears ran down my cheeks. I dialed his number and it rang once before he answered.

“Nana I am in the middle of something”

“Please come and get me. In La Lucia I am scared”,I mention.

I hear him sigh.

“Okay”

He hangs up.

I keep on moving through the street. I just want to be out of here really .

It didn't take 5 minutes for Tshepo to reach me. I know my parents are looking for me because I saw their car driving around looking for me while I was hiding and they called my phone a few times. I didn't answer them.

I got inside the car and I sniffed.

“Ugrand?(Are you okay?)”,he asks.

“My father ruined my life”,I say.

He keeps quiet as he doesn't know what to say.

He just started the car and drives off.

“You will be okay”,that is his word of comfort.

Well it doesn't feel okay. We keep quiet through the whole drive and he is not driving home right now but going somewhere else. I didn't even ask. We got into a gated community and he drove in. I didn't even ask what we are doing here. I looked out of the window and proceeded to look at these houses. He came to a halt in front of one house and he looked at me.

“Come”,we got out together.

We made our way to the inside of the house and he just opened the door like it is his house.

“Tshepo you don't do that in people's homes you knock”,I softly scold.

He ignores me. We get greeted by a very young woman. She is fairly in her late twenties or in her early thirties.

“Tshepo!”, I frown upon her saying that.

“Where is your husband?”, I have learnt that manners use something this man lacks sometimes and it is not cute.

“He will be down now. He is just changing from his uniform.

He nods and soon a man comes through the passage of this house. It is very beautiful, the house that is.

“Ndoda”, the guy says and Tshepo tells me that he will be back and leaves going with the guy.

Wait I know that guy. It's the police guy who came the other day.

The lady turns to me and smile.

“You must be Lethi right?”, I am alarmed that this woman knows me.

“Yes I am”

“Well I am Buyi Phakade”, she reaches for my hand and I see a ring on her left finger.

“What relation do you have with Tshepo?”, I ask while shaking her hand.

I am curious to know honestly.

“He is my brother in law”, Wow! So that is his brother?

“I didn't know he had an extended family”

I say honestly and she giggled.

“I understand, Tshepo is reserved when it comes to his personal self”,and I have been dating this man for some months and I have never even known his family. I never really asked because I trusted he will tell me when he is maybe ready.

“Mmmh”

“Please take a seat and make yourself feel at home”,she mentions while disappearing from me. I look around the house and wait in anticipation.

I switch off my phone for a moment as I do not want to talk to any of my family members. The lady comes back after a while with some refreshments and she places them in front of me and then she then settles on one of the couches.

“So Lethi, I heard that you are doing your matric this year”,She says.

“Yes I am”

“How is it going so far? ”

“It is going well but its just that hard work has to be put in”,I say.

She nods her head and she takes up on the first bite and I follow.

“I am not trying to seem like some type of way about what I am about to say...”

She keeps quiet for a moment before she continues.

“Tshepo is older than you by many years. Yes I know that age is just a number and it is but also as young as you are its also.How do I put it? Challenging to date an older man. I hope I didn’t offend you”,she smiles after.

“No you did not”

I understand what she meant and pretty sure that anyone would question about Tshepo and I's relationship. We talked some more about general things and I got to also get her age as well. She is not that old, well not what I thought of her age. After what seemed like a while Tshepo came back with the man he disappeared with and he came to me.

“We should be leaving”, I stand up from the couch.

“It was nice meeting you Lethi”, I nod at Buyi and soon we leave.

We get to the car and get inside before he starts the car and drives off. Silence prevails the whole car for some time until I decided to break the ice.

“How many siblings do you have?”, he keeps quiet and I do the same.

He sighs and then he says.

“One”, I nod my head.

We arrive back home and he looks at me.

“Should I take you home?”, he asks.

“No, I will go tomorrow”, he nods his head.

He drives over to his place. I just really need to process all of this then I will be able to talk to my parents.

Chapter 9

I cannot comprehend the way that Tshepo trusts me as much as I trust him. Yes there are times where we do not tell each other anything only because we have a valid reason in doing so. I woke up hearing the sound of music coming from outside. It must be one of the houses making noise down the street that I know. I touch my side and Tshepo is nowhere to be found next to me. I sigh and slowly get off the bed before I quickly grabbed my phone and I switched it on, seconds later my phone starts pinging and it is Messages and missed calls from half of my family. Even aunty Nonny, my father's sister. I sit on the bed and I dial my mother's number while it rings. I keep my silence for a moment until it gets answered.

"Lethi, oh my God where are you?"

"I am with a friend", I mention.

"Come back home so we can talk, give me the directions so that I can fetch you.", I hear her shuffling.

"I will be back in the afternoon. I just need some time to think", she sighs.

"Baby I am sorry", I feel for her honestly. Now I get why she wanted to divorce my father.

"It's okay Mom, I understand and it is not your fault", I say.

"We should have told you the truth a long time ago"

“Dad should have, he was the one cheating”,I feel my anger rising. I just cannot believe him.

“I forgave your father. I love him, please process everything and we will be waiting for you”,I nodded my head and breathed in and out.

“Okay, I will take my time”

“We love you so much Lethi,that will never change. You are our joy”,I smile.

“I love you too Mom”

I hang up after that and I sigh. I really do not know where to start if I have to try and process this. How could I start doing that? I really have to come to terms that I have siblings and it is not going to be easy.

I try to call Tshepo to ask him where he is and he answers his phone almost immediately.

“Nana”

“Where are you?”

“Mega City, I am trying to get a few things. I have not bought things since the last time you did”,he says.

I check the time and it is 10 am.

“You could have woke me up and we could have gone together”,I say.

“Okay, I am coming to fetch you”

“Okay”,we end the call.

I get off the bed and I make it and tidy up the room before I go and fill the bathtub with water. after that I took a quick bath and then finished on time. I got done and went to get dressed and I heard the car pulling up on the front of the house. I wore my shoes and I took my bag and Phone before walking to the lounge and I found Tshepo there.

“We can go, I am ready”, I say then he holds my waist pulling me to him and kissed my lips.

I returned the kiss before we broke it off.

“You look better today than yesterday”, he says

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“That I do not like seeing you cry”, He pinches my cheek.

“Let us go Tshepo”, I walk away from him and he followed after.

We got inside his car and he reversed out of the gate and it closed before he drove off. After all this time I have known Tshepo he hardly wears a seat belt but he does when going out into town and all of that. He is playing some music and it is house music. I listen to it while bobbling my head back and forth looking out of the window and would look back inside the car. The window's were rolled down as the warmish air kissed my face in the process.

“I need to buy pads, I have run out and I am due soon”, I mention.

“Okay baby”

I sometimes cannot believe how comfortable I have become around Tshepo and I love it to be quiet honest. We make it to Mega City and he finds some parking space before we get out and make our way inside.

I am holding his arm and he has his hand around my waist gently. The smell of nicotine mixed with his signature perfume cannot be missed when upclose.

We get to a supermarket and I take a trolley and push it inside as we get to make our little grocery shopping.

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I am done for the day, I feel tired as it is already. A part of me did not want to come back home but I had promised my mother that I will come back this afternoon. I asked Tshepo to take me back home and he did not even protest against it, though I promised that I will see him soon and he understood and that is what I am grateful for.

He parks the car a distant away and he turns to look at me and lowers the volume in the car.

“Nana”, he says.

“Tshepo”

“You will call me if you need anything right?”, I nod.

“I will not be home for a week”, I sigh.

“It is okay”, He nods and pulls me by my neck and lays a perk.

“Behave”

“I will”

He takes out a roll of cash and he hands it over to me.

“Will you need more?”, He asks.

“No thank you”,he nods.

I kiss his lips before I hop out of the car and made my way going home. I hope no one ruins my mood.

I got home and my mother was there with my grandmother and little brother.

“Lethi”,my mother stood up on her feet.

I greeted everyone.

“Where is everyone?”,I ask.

“Mfanele went out and Bayanda is asleep”,I nod.

I excused myself and went to my room. I threw myself on my bed and I started crying. This...This is not how I imagined things to turn out to be.

My mother walks into the bedroom as I am laying on the bed. I guess she left my little brother with my grandmother.

“Lethi, can we talk?”

She seems nervous. She should not be, I am not angry at her or my father but just disappointed in my father’s actions.

“When is the divorce being finilised?”,I ask.

I never cared to mendle myself in their business. Yes not everyone is perfect but my mother deserves better honestly.

“I do not know Lethi, your father does not want us to seperate”

She sighs. I nod in understanding. Maybe I should really exclude myself in their issues and deal with mine.

“Okay Mah”

“Where did you sleep?”,she asks all serious now. My heart is beating against my chest.

“At a friend’s house”,I say.

“Is that friend a boy?”,She raises her brow.

“What? No”,I lie through my teeth.

“I hope whatever you are doing Lethi that you do not get into drugs, contain some diseases and get pregnant. Your father’s issues will be the least of your problems”,I nod my head.

“Yes Mah”,she stands up and walks out of the room. I breathe out.

I get off my clothes and change to another set and get down with some reading.

It is a Sunday and my grandmother is at it. This time she is blasting some Benjamin Dube this time. I think she has upgraded her music taste in gospel but still it is causing unnecessary noise in the morning. I get off the bed and I make my way out of my room while rubbing my eyes. They are singing and dancing with my uncle. He seems sober and maybe he didn’t have anything yesterday too.

“Hello”

I greet.

“Oh unkulunklulu mukhulu Lethi(God is good Lethi)”,My grandmother says.

“Did something happen?”, They are clearly in the spirit today.

“Yes, God gave me a family and life for all of us”, here I am expecting something else from this sudden excitement.

I go to the kitchen and I make some cereals for myself. The kitchen back door is open and my brother is with my mother on her back as she is doing some washing. As I finish making my cereals Bayanda enters the kitchen.

“Hey Nana”, he says.

“Hey, how are you?”

“Exhausted, I just want to finish this degree”

“I want to finish the year as well”

“Trust me, university is not all fun and games”, he says.

“I know”

He goes and makes some cereal for himself. He finishes and we make our way to the front of the house and already people are out and about on the street. We sit on the stoep and we get to chatting while eating. My grandmother still blasting her gospel songs. After cleaning her house I know she will stop the music and go to church. She does not force anyone to go to church as we are older but encourages my mother to at least get my brother baptised.

“I will never understand something”, Bayanda says in the mist of us having a conversation.

“What?”

“I don’t understand how a girl like you is dating Trust. Yes I know that he can get any woman he wants but you, I expected better Lethi. I want what is best for my sister’s child. I do not want you to chase the fast life because that is what Trust is living but get a beautiful life. Your father is a whole doctor dude obviously you having a greater future is higher in chances.”

I keep my silence for a moment and then I sigh.

“I understand where you are coming from and I love him. I really do, I still have those chances”

He just nods.

We get done with eating and my grandmother asks us to go and get her some airtime to call her friend and so we went to our regular chisanyama where we usually buy airtime and we buy it and some meat as well with the money that Tshepo gave to me. He sent a message this morning and I have not replied to it yet but I will when I get time. We get what we needed and head back home.

We get inside and give my grandmother airtime. She does not ask about the meat but my uncle is already after it like a fly saying we should’ve mentioned going to the chisanyama, he would have asked us to bring him a bottle of Black Label.

My grandmother is ignoring all of this because she wants to have a peaceful Sunday by the look of things. I go to my room and I find it cleaned already. I get my phone and I send a text to Tshepo replying to his morning message. My phone rings within a few seconds and I answer.

“Hello”

“Ayi Lethi”, I giggle. I know how he dislikes the way I greet him.

He says it is non spontaneous and like I am greeting someone who is random.

“Phakade lami”, I say

“That is more like it, how are you?”

“I am good, what are you doing?”, I ask.

“I am going somewhere”

I do not ask. I will not even start asking.

“Okay, we will talk later I have to get working”

“Sure”

We cut the call and I get something I will wear and I go and take a bath after that call.

Exam season for the term is finally approaching and I feel like I have prepared myself very well over the period of time that I have spent with getting myself ready for this exam. I have not spoken to my father but I have been contacted by my new siblings and they are nice but their mother is not the best. I promised Tshepo that we will go to Johannesburg together soon and we agreed at that I remember agreeing but now. I do not know how I will ask my parents to go there with him.

“Forge a letter. They will not see”, Lee Suggests.

It is break time and we discussed my issues of how I can make it to Johannesburg without my parents knowing I am out of the province.

"My parents might call the school", I say.

They sigh. Palesa takes her ice lolly and she sucks on it before she pops her eyes at me.

"I have an idea", She mentions.

"What could it be? It better be good", Lee says.

Palesa rolls her eyes and playfully pushes her. I really hope that it is good.

"There is a church camp for the youth in my church this weekend, you can use that as a cover up", She mentions and both Lee and I jump on her.

"You are killing me!"

"You are such a genius flower"

"Honestly you are the best!", We say in unison.

She pushes us off her and I kiss her cheeks.

"Aahhh Lethi save those kisses for Trust please. I do not want him to kill me"

"He will love you for this so receive them"

"Yes because you will not be getting them anytime soon", Lee bombards her further.

She groans as I let her swim in my kisses before I let her rest.

“So how will you break it to your mother?”, Lee asks while looking at me.

“Leave that to me”, I say.

We carry on talking about other things and before we knew it, break time was over and we had to go back to class. This plan will be perfect and the fact that Palesa is willing to help me says a lot.

The day proceeds quiet well and soon enough the day is over. I am tired and the amount of revision that we are doing as we prepare for our end of the term exams is too much for me. I get out of the gate with my friends while Lee waves at us and goes a different direction. I see Tshepo parked outside the gate. That is his car. I thought that he will not be back wherever he is until Thursday because Friday we are leaving. The front door opens and his brother in his work uniform steps out of the car and I freeze on my way there.

“Let us turn”, I say.

“I thought you said Tshepo will be back Thursday”, Palesa says

“I thought so too”

The guy just looks at us and we stand there for a moment. Curiosity is over Palesa but she has not said a thing and not asked why we are standing and not going home. I gather courage and make my way to that man. He is in my boyfriend's car so I have to ask. Palesa stands where she is and looks at us from a distance.

“He sent me to fetch you”, I am confused.

“Where is Tshepo? Hello”

“He is still away”,

“I do not know you well”, I say.

“You do not have to know me well, you know Tshepo”

I sigh and look at Palesa, I turn back to him.

“I have my friend with me. She is leaving with me”, he nods.

“I will drop her off”, I signal for Palesa and she comes closer.

We just get in the back seat of the car. I did not even introduce them as I do not even know his name. He does not even bother with the introductions. He is on his phone within seconds and he is talking to someone.

He hands the phone over to me and I take it. I place it against my ear.

“Hello”, I say.

“Njabulo”, I groan. I hate it when Tshepo refers to me using the last half of my name.

“Phakade”

“How are you?”

“I am okay, what time are you coming back on Thursday?”

He clears his throat.

“I am not coming back”

“What?!”, Tell me he is joking.

“I am sorry Nana but Buyi will make sure to bring you here”

“So already you are in another province?”

I can not believe him.

“Call me in an hour.”, I hang up and hand the phone back to his brother.

He takes his phone and shoves it in his pocket. I keep my silence and look out of the window. Palesa is dropped off first and I am next. His brother drops me off at home and I walk inside. I find my uncle watching some tv with his son.

“Hello Malume”

“Mlungu wami, how was school?”

“Okay”

He nods and Mfanele ignores me . I hit his head slightly and rush off to my bedroom. I hear him screaming for my name and I laugh. I breathe out and take off my uniform and I take my phone and scroll through it. Ntando is in University now and doing okay I guess. I blocked him last year everywhere but then I unblocked him again. I am very over him, trust me.

My phone rings and I sit on my bed and grab a towel and wrap it around my body.

“Tshepo explain”, I say.

I feel a bit furious at this point.

“I will when you come here”

“I hate this secrecy Tshepo Phakade. I really hate it and I will certainly not tolerate it”

He keeps quiet.

“What is so important there anyway?”, I ask.

“A lot”, I breathe in and out.

“You have some explaining to do when I come there”

“You are coming?”, haibo this man!

“Yes Kanti I should not come?”

“Okay”

“I better not die in another Province Tshepo”

“You will not. I promise”, I sigh.

“Okay, buy something nice for me there”

“Okay”

We hang up after that. Tshepo is going to be the death of me.

Chapter 10

It was hard, convincing my parents to go to the church camp. My father was more skeptical with the idea. He really did not want me to go but my grandmother was ecstatic. She felt like God has answered her unheard prayers about her children getting delivered. Well I for one am going to be delivered. I will be delivered in Johannesburg that is where I will be.

I am packing the last content of my suitcase and I even strapped my sleeping back to the suitcase. My mother walks into the bedroom as I am zipping up my bag.

“Lethi Hurry up you will be late for school and Mfanele has to drop you off at Palesa’s house.”

“I will be done in a second”, I zip up and place my suitcase down.

“Behave and also call us if you need anything.”, She mentions.

“I will, I promise”

She comes and gives me a hug and I return it.

“Your father sent some money for you just in case”, she mentions.

Yes I saw the R400 that he sent just for an emergency plus R50 airtime too.

“Thank him for me”, She sighs.

“How long will you keep on avoiding your father?”

“Mom, I am not avoiding him. I am simply trying to process everything”,she nods while pressing her lips.

“Please do not let any of this affect you from your school performance”

“I promise”,A hoot comes from outside.

“Go”,my mother ushers me out and I say goodbye to my grandmother. She tells me that from her next pension she will buy a bible for me so that I can be a full church member.

I smiled through that and got out of the house. Mfanele was already in my mother’s car. I think that my mother has let him have his moment for a very long time with this car. He shows off with it around the neighbourhood and he caught some 'fish' a couple of times with it. I get inside the car and close the door before he starts the car. He seems a bit annoyed today but I really do not care how he feels at all. I am excited about the trip ahead.

My mother stands by the drive way and waves as the car reverses out. I wave as well and then the car drive off leaving home.

“You are seriously going to some boring church camp this long weekend?”,Mfanele asks.

“Yes, it is a camp so?”,he shakes his head.

Same as Bayanda. He did not understand why I would devote such a big weekend for “church”. I send a text to Tshepo informing him that I am going to Palesa’s house and Buyi will find me there. I am skipping school today so I will have enough time to travel and get to johannesburg during the day.

We get to Palesa's home and I hop out of the car and go to the back to get my bags and then wave my hand to Mfanele who just hoots before driving off. I get in the yard and I knock on the door.

"Palesa!", I say.

The door opens and we hug each other.

"Oh my God, I cannot believe this is happening"

"It is, I brought the sleeping bag. You can take it", I say.

"Thank you, I hate trying to fit in other kids little mattresses. ", we walk inside.

Her mother has already left for work.

"Come, I am almost ready", she says as we move to her bedroom. I take off my uniform and change to some jeans and a top and put on a jacket. I tie my hair properly after it being messed up and look at myself.

"Chesa motho wa Tshepo!", I push Palesa lightly as she dramatically makes the comment.

"Hai wena"

"Do not get pregnant", she says.

"I will not. Tshepo makes sure of it"

"Good"

I sit on the bed and wait for her to get done with getting ready for school. My phone rings and I take it out of my pocket and I see that it is Tshepo calling. I answer.

“Hello”

“Buyi has arrived. Are you ready?” ,Oh that was very quick.

“Yes I am”

“Okay,I will see you in a few hours”

“Okay then”

We hang up and I turn to Palesa.

“My ride is here”,I get up from her bed and take my things.

“Good luck, do enjoy”,we share a hug.

“I will definitely enjoy”,we laugh and break off the hug.

I take my suitcase and she escorts me out. We see a car parked across the road outside the yard. We get out and Buyi hops out of the car looking very lovely.

“Hello Lethi”,She takes me into her arms and I inhale and exhale her marvelous scent.

“Hello Sisi”,She breaks off the hug and gives Palesa one before she assists me with my things.

I say my last goobyes to my friend and then we get inside the car.

“Will you be driving alone all the way?” ,I ask as the car starts moving.

“No, I will not be. How is school?”

“Okay,I start writting on Tuesday”,I say.

“Are you ready?” ,she asks.

“Yes”

“If you pass well

I will take you to a spa and get lunch with your friends”, she says.

That is nice of her really.

“Thank you so much, I will not disappoint”

She nods her head. We keep on conversing as the road leads us to where we are going.

I am exhausted. Being on the road for long hours is not so nice and No child's play. After we left Palesa's house Sis Buyi fetched her husband and some other man I do not know. I was calm the whole time because I know Tshepo would not get me into any danger and the fact that there was another female inside the car as well. We got to Johannesburg in the afternoon and the streetlights were about to be on. The thing that delayed us on the road is the many stops that we had to take.

They drive the car into another area. I am looking outside the window. It feels like a dream, I have never been in Johannesburg. Capetown Yes, for my parents Anniversary/Vacation thing. I was 13 then so I still remember some things. We drive into another township we approach a Yellow painted house and the car parks there. Sis Buyi jumps out of the car quickly and a beautiful short lady steps out of the house. She has a yellow skin that compliments her beauty well. She is slim but has some chubby cheeks from the look of things. She is wearing a dress as Sis Buyi hugs her.

I am instructed by Tshepo's brother to get out of the car and get some fresh air. The guy that I was sitting with just opens the door and lets the air in the car.

"Sbari, hawu ninjani? Kade sanigcina (brother how are you? It has been a long time since we saw you guys)", the lady says as they now have approached us.

He chuckles lightly to her comment and places his hands in his pocket.

"It has been a minute.", he ends there.

She turns to me and greets and I greet back.

"I am Nobuhle", well that name is for her surely.

She has a perfect face that shouts for everyone to stare at her given that you cross paths with her.

She is beautiful.

"I am Lethi"

"You look young.", I do not know how to respond to that so I keep quiet.

I learn that she is Sis Buyi's younger sister and her family resides here. After some time the couple says that we are rushing somewhere and they will visit longer another time. I get inside the car and soon they follow as well.

After some time we drive off going God Knows where. I have not told Palesa that I have arrived safely but I quickly inform my mother that I am okay before she starts to panic. After what felt like forever we arrived at another place and it looks like it is in a decent

neighbourhood. The car gets parked on the driveway of this house and we are told we can get out.

We do so and make our way inside. We reach the living room and we are met by some people I do not know and Tshepo being amongst them too. He sees me and gets off the couch and comes my way and engulfs me into a hug picking me up. I giggle.

“Put me down Tshepo”, I softly say.

He does just that and holds my waist. Some guy stands up. He has some tattoos over his neck.

“Mrs Phakade Snr”

“Tee”, She responds and he comes closer to us.

He stares at me for a while and I swallow while maintaining the stare. Actually why is he looking at me? He then hand shakes Tshepo.

“Mmmh”, he says and Tshepo nods.

What are they saying? This is weird.

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I do not know why Tshepo is here. I really do not but I will not be asking that at the moment. We are sleeping in one of the guest rooms that are in this house that we arrived in. I was so tired I did not want to do anything and so I slept right after taking a shower.

I am woken up by someone who is wetting my ear. I shot my eyes open and turned around as the hands of this man are around me. I look at him and he smiles.

“Tshepo eating people’s ears is gross”,I frown and yawn.

He pinches my lips together.

“You will eat me”

“Mxm”,I attempt to close my eyes.

“We need to talk Lethi”,I open my eyes quickly.

“What is it?”,I look at him.

“We cannot talk about it now but we will talk”,he mentions.

“I am scared”

“Do not be Nana”

I cannot help it. I hope it is not something bad. I nod my head.

“Did you get me anything?”,I ask.

“No”,Ah this man! After asking him nicely.

“Ah Tshepo really?”,I say.

“I did not know what to get”,He says.

“Anything would have been okay. You were able to get those diamonds and use one to make a necklace for me”,I say.

“Baby,I will make it up to you”,he says.

I frown and sigh.

“Is it a big deal?”,he asks.

Ofcause it is!

“No, it is not”,I turn around and he slips his arms around my waist and kisses my neck.

“Look under your pillow Nana”,He whispers and I remove his arms and look at him before I lift the pillow up.

It is a card. I open it and read through it and frown.

“What is this?”,I ask.

He does not say anything and takes the card away from me and pulls me to his lap.

“Lethi, things are going to change. You will witness alot at times. I just want to know that you are up for it”,this just took a turn quickly.

I swallow and look at him.

“Tshepo,what do you mean?”

“I mean are you ready to go through it all with me?”

“Ye...Yes”,my voice comes out.

My heart is beating fast. He is scaring me.

“Okay”,He kisses my lips and I respond. All the gift thing forgotten about.

He breaks the kiss.

He did not forget buying me something as I had assumed that he did. He just got me some sneakers. Yes they are a size bigger but we still can go and change the size. I was grateful shame. My man spoils me shame

without fail. We stayed in bed together and decided that we will not wake up anytime soon. We had each other though. With all the touching and little kisses her and there obviously we would be aroused and things will happen.

I had my eyes shut and trying to get some proper air and go back to my breathing patter when I had felt Tshepo's warm fluids inside of me. He rested his body ontop of me and then flipped us over with me ontop before he wrapped his arms around me.

"Which university are you going to?",he asks.

We just shagged each other. Let me catch my breath first sir.

"I do not know. I am not picky",I say.

He kisses my cheek and looks at me.

"I will give you the world"

"Are you okay?",I ask

Tshepo is not expressive. He laughs and I join him and then lay my head on his sweaty chest.

I seemingly do not care.

Chapter 11

I felt so very tiny as the car drove between these tall buildings. It is very hot today reason why I am wearing my shorts and Tshepo does not mind at all. Well he did not say anything when I was wearing the short and Buyi complimented me too when we were going out. I do not know where Tshepo is taking me but I hope that wherever we are going we will have fun or maybe just have some little fun.

“Where are we going?”, I ask.

“Spin off”, he says.

“What is that?”, I ask while looking at him and he laughs a bit

“The suburban girl is kicking in I see”

I just shrugg.

“You will see”, I nod my head.

We get to another place that I do not know. It is very crowded and I see some smoke around. It smells of burnt tires as well. We get out of the

car and I followed Tshepo while he held my hand as we walked through. People were drinking and I got to Understand the concept of the Spin Off that we are in. Cars are spinning on the road. This looks Ghetto, very ghetto I will not lie. I have never been to a place like this before but I guess I will have to give it a try.

We get to see the cars that are being spun around causing some smell that we have to inhale.

“You seem quiet”,Tshepo says.

“I am observing”,I turn around and stare at him.

“Can we get some drinks?”

“I do not like you drinking Lethi”,he says.

“I am with you, nothing will happen”,he is a bit skeptical.

After some time he takes my hand and we go and get some beverages near by. There are two food trucks that are selling here. Mostly beverages and Meaty food as well. I can hear the car noises all the way

from where I am. Tshepo gets some food and beverages for us. We go to the car and he places me on the bonnet and he then sits next to me.

“I love spinning”,he says and then opens my cider for me. I take it and have a sip while he opens his beer and has the same.

“Car spinning?”

“Yes, I used to do much of it in my early 20’s”,he says.

“What stopped you?”,I take the food and start to eat. He stares at where the car show is at.

He takes a sip off his beverage and then swallows before lickibg his lips lightly.

“I got injured. ”,he looks at me.

“I was doing a stunt. One little mistake and I was under that car with it crushing my bones”,I cringe.

“Were they damaged beyond repair?”,Stupid question Lethi.

“Not really”,he shrugs his shoulders and takes a sip off his beverage.

I do the same and then take a bit off my food and offer some to him and he brings his face forth and I feed him. Some sauce is left on his upper part of his lips just below his nose and I laugh lightly. He removes it with his finger and licks his finger.

“It is not funny”,He mentions.

“It did look funny”,he shakes his head and takes a sip off his beer.

“Come here”,He says and places his beer on his left side of the bonnet and pulls me onto his lap to sit between him. He kisses my neck and I rest my head on his chest.

“What else do you like?”,I ask.

“My car”,he says.

“Would you let me drive it one day?”,I ask.

“After you get your license.”

“I have not asked my parents to do my learners yet”,I say.

“I will pay for everything”,he says and I turn to him.

“Really?”

“Yes Nana”

There is silence between us for a moment and I speak

“Well I love shopping”,I say and he chuckles then wraps his arms around me and he places his beer between my exposed thighs.

“I know Nana,After exams I will take you shopping fod the house”,he says.

“Are you being serious?”, I ask

“Only if you pass well. I will let you do whatever you like”, he nibbles on my ear after that.

“Arg sies man Tshepo, iGoli selikufundise umkhuba omubi wokudlana nendlebe zabantu (Johannesburg has taught you bad habits of eating people’s ears)”, I say.

“You smell like Vanilla and coconut creame baby”, he whispers into my ear and his warm breath sends shivers through my body.

We ended up taking some photos as well while there. Yes he agreed. I am not very photogenic since Last year. My account on instagram is still growing but not that much as I do not post as much as I did. Tshepo is not photogenic either but we did take a few. After that we decided that we are leaving the place.

We got off the bonnet and we made our way inside the car and then drove off. Tshepo drove to the mall and we got there. We got out of the car and he took me to the salon to get my hair done. I opted for cornrows and I looked good after them. I am giving my head a break from braids.

Tshepo kept on touching my head here and there after and I think he likes it.

“What do you need?”

“I have ran out of my stationary supply.”,I say.

“You want to buy it?” ,He asks.

“Yes please”,We get to a stationary store and he told me to get what I needed. I went and took what I needed and then he went to pay for everything. We got some take away and then he drove back to that house that we are in for a moment.

“Whose, house is this?” ,I ask.

“Ndimase”,he says.

“Does he not live in Durban?”

“He visits frequently”,well thats new.

“Is he your best friend?” ,I ask.

“No”

I just nod.

We get to the house and made our way inside. I rush off to the room that we were using yesterday to put my things away.

Tshepo has been leaving during the day and coming back at night and he lets me sleep ontop of him through out the whole night. I like it. One thing though is that Tshepo is strict when he wants to. He took my phone when he left and told Buyi to make sure that I study and she should keep an eye on me. I thought that was a bit dramatic but it was helpful because I was bored out of my very mind.

It is the next day, morning and Tshepo’s thing is poking my stomach. He does not move when he is asleep. He has been holding me like this since when he got in bed. He did not let go or even try to loosen up his grip around my body but remained like that. I woke up before him and

just stared around. I could not move while he is asleep so I watched him. I noticed that he has a little scar on his upper lip at the corner. His nose is big but for his face it's perfect and could be taking all the oxygen I am trying to get. I like his skin colour. It has some of its imperfections but hey I love this man and everything is beautiful about him.

I get bored with looking at him and I try to gently remove myself from his hold and his grip tightens around my body.

"I am going to the bathroom", I say.

He lightens his grip around me and let me go.

I pull the cover off my body and I go under it and cover myself. He is still sleeping, I assume. I pull his boxers a bit and let his manhood free. I cannot see it under this dark cover but I navigate my way through with my hands. The cover is removed and he has his eyes opened facing me.

"What are you doing?", I feel so caught.

"I wanted to wake you up", he pulls me up to lay on his body and hugs me.

“I do not want us to have alot of sex this weekend. I do not want that to be an answer you think off during an exam”,I laugh.

“Okay Baby I understand”

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he nods and kisses me then looks at me.

“I do not want to let you go nana”,he says

“I would not let you”,he nods and kisses my nose in the process.

He closes his eyes to sleep again with his manhood laying skin to skin with my thigh. He seems to not care at all or does he?

I eventually fall asleep once again in his arms.

I woke up later and there was no one in bed. I got off the bed and I made my way out of the bedroom going to the bathroom and I knocked on the door, no one answered so I assumed that no one is in there. I got in and went to use the toilet. After I was done I filled the bathtub with some water and went back to the bedroom and cleaned up everything. I opened my suitcase and took out the clothes that I am

going to wear and I went to close the tap and then stripped off my clothes and got inside the bathtub. I ran my fingers through the water and let it run its course through my body. I rested there a bit before I started with taking a bath. After some time I got out of the bathtub and drained the water. I brushed my teeth and then took a towel and wrapped it around my body before walking out of the bathroom and making my way out to the bedroom. I moisturize and get dressed. I take off my doek and look at my fresh cornrows. They really make me look cute. I smile and take a picture. The sun is really doing a great job as well on my skin on the picture. I will send it to Tshepo.

I do just that and then make my way to the living room and I hear people laughing and talking. I find Buyi and Her sister there having some cake and juice.

“Lethi, I almost thought you would not wake up”, Buyi says

“I woke up early and slept again”, I say.

“You know Nobuhle right?”, She says

“I remember her, hello sisi”, She smiles and nods.

“Sit with us”,I join them

“Where is everyone?”,I ask.

“They will be back, do not worry”

I just nod my head. I ask that I go and make some food and Buyi excuses me and tells me that Ndimase got some cereals for me. Tshepo must have mentioned that I eat them when I am at his house. I make some Coco Pops and do not add sugar. I do not understand people who add sugar to their cereal. They are very weird if you ask me. I get done and go to the living room and join the ladies as they are chatting away. They try to accomodate me and I am accomodated.

I eat my cereals and after sometime I get done and then I go and wash my bowel and come back and sit with them.

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Time passes and these men are not back. The clock is going onto five in thr afternoon now. Nobuhle is still here and she is said to be leaving right after the men come back from wherever they went. I started to

get worried because I could not get a hold of Tshepo when I tried to call him.

“Lethi sit down, they are okay”,Buyi says as I am pacing up and down.

“What if they got into a car accident or something. I do not feel so good”,I say.

“They will be okay, just wait”,We hear a car pulling up the drive way and I rush to the door.

They follow after me. I open the door and two cars park behind each other. The people from the first car hop out of the car and rush to the second one. We are looking wondering what is going on. Three guys come out carrying Buyi’s husband. She has her hands over her head.

“What happened?Nathi?!”,her voice is breaking.

“We need your help, he has been bleeding for over an hour.”,One of the guys says.

“Where is everyone else?”,I ask.

Where is Tshepo. I knew something bad has happened. I felt it.

Buyi nods and pulls his sister inside while they take her husband inside. Ndimase opens the back door and Tshepo wraps his arm around his neck and they come towards us. His upper body is drenched in blood so as his left thigh. My hands are shaking as they approach me. I cannot even move from shock. My lips are trembling.

“Nana, I am okay”,he says.

“What happened?...”,I just release a sob and Ndimase lets him go as he limps his way towards me.

“Nana...”,he says softly.

“Let us go inside”,he nods and Ndimase comes forth and he wraps his arm around his neck and we get inside. They place him on the couch and I bring forth the coffee table.

“What should I do?”,I ask.

“Get warm water in a big bowl and there is a kit on the left drawer in the kitchen.”, I nod my head and go do what I was instructed.

I get everything that was needed and then came back.

“You are going to treat his gun wound”, What?!

“I am not a doctor!”, I say.

“You are now. Get to it if you do not want him to be infection from the wound”, Ndimase says.

I look at Tshepo and he is quiet.

I sigh and stand up going to the bedroom we were using. I can hear commotion from the other room.

“Where are you going ?!”

I take my phone while my hands are shaking. I breathe in and out and call my dad. He answers within seconds.

“Lethi, are you okay? Do you need me to fetch you?”

“Yes I am okay”,she was lying. She was not close to being okay.

“Okay what is the problem?”

“There is a debate here and other youth members are biblical through out. We were talking about healing and wounds and One mentioned God heals all wounds so I was asking even Stab and Wounds? Not possible. From a Doctor’s perspective Gun and stab wounds need medical attention even if there is God”

“Yes”

“So what really prevents them from not being worse but heal medically”

“I do not have time on my side to answer that now but let me send a document I constructed on that”

“Okay Thank you”,I hang up and breathe out.

I make my way back to the living room and I find Ndimase ripping Tshepo's pants off with a knife exposing his wound and then he tries to plunge in a knife.

"Stop! You will hurt him!"

"I know what I am doing", he says.

"No"

I move him away and kneel in front of Tshepo and then open the document dad sent. He is a life saver. I went through it quickly and did the best I could with helping him.

"Does it hurt?", I ask.

"No", He says as I clean up the blood.

I nod my head. Ndimase left to check up on Buyi's husband.

“What happened?”,I ask.

“I was trying to save him then I got shot”,He says.

“Take him to the hospital and report this to the police”

“We cannot Lethi”,He says.

“Why not Phakade?”

“We were doing something illegal. The police are looking for us”

“What? Does your brother know that he just jeopardised his Job?”,Foolish if you ask me.

“No one saw our faces”

“What did you do?”,I asked.

“I will not tell you all the details”,I nod my head.

“Okay”

I stood up and took everything away. I sighed while holding onto the counter. I then move out of the kitchen.

Nathi suffered shots on his abdomen but they say it looks promising. His recovery that is. If he is still breathing on his own then thats good. Buyi has been locked up in the other room with him since yesterday. Today we are going back home and Tshepo booked a flight for us. I really want to go home now. I did not enjoy my stay that much in Johannesburg. I zip my suitcase on the bed and I hear my phone pinging. Tshepo said he is going to check on his brother before we leave.

I took it out and it is a bank notification of R7000. I see who the reference is from and then I lock my phone and sit on the bed. I am just glad no one is dead from all of this. Tshepo walks in the bedroom after some time and he looks at me.

“The money is too much”,I say.

“You can save it”,he says.

“I am worried about you”

“Do not be”,he comes and kisses my lips.

“I love you, do not die yet”,He chuckles.

“I will not. We should get going”,he says.

I stand up and take my suitcase and roll it out of the bedroom. Goodbye Johannesburg for now

Chapter 12

It is the holidays and I had kept my end of my promise that I will do well in school and my results have proven that I did quite well. Yes I have not received my report just yet. I will receive it the next term but I have seen how I did on my papers and I am quite happy with my results.

Buyi is going to keep her end of the deal and so as Tshepo. Her husband is recovering so that is good. Still Tshepo never really told me what they went to do and what they were doing so then I did not ask but had to trust my man. I now have an allowance. Just for me to get the things I need each month. It is R2000 and it is more than enough for me to use really.

Today I am going shopping for Tshepo's place and also there will be a braai hosted. I asked to invite my friends and he was okay with it. For my spa date I invited my newly found siblings. I think it will help to actually get to know them at the same time while having time to bond and try to form a relationship. If they do not want one then I will be okay with it.

I just got out of the house and I asked Bayanda to come with me to the braai and he was more than happy to have free booze and meat as he is broke. Well killing two birds with one stone for him I guess.

We are at the mall and Tshepo does not want to show that he is dragging his feet but he is. I did not leave him in the car this time. It is his space so I need his input as well.

"I like this vase", I say looking at the long red vase.

“Take anything you want Lethi, I do not know these things”, I turn to him

“I know but I need your input as you stay in that house more than me”, I say.

“I do not mind”, I sigh.

I wonder if Tshepo is lazy like this when group work is done. I get other things I thought the house would need and I got done. He went to pay without any complaint and we soon left the mall. I was very tired and I still had to call Bayanda to bring my overnight bag. I do not know what lies he will feed my grandmother and at the moment I am not worried about that.

I sigh and rest my back on the red leather seats and Tshepo steals a glance at me and then starts the car before he drove off.

“What food do you want?”, He asks.

I am tired of Nandos and Tshepo loves it so much.

“Mc Donalds”, His nose scrunches but he does not make a comment.

He once did though. He said it is unhealthy and he does not like McDonalds. He prefers Steers.

Well I do not care! As long as I eat really. We get to McDonalds drive thru and I order what I want and add some ice cream. I thank him when I get my food and start to indulge in it while. He drove off.

“Please do get some white wine too when you are buying the beverages”, He nods and presses his lips.

He hates it when I drink but he also prefers it if I do that when he is there.

He says it does not suit my innocent character and he does not want me getting used to drinking at this young age. Well this is the time where I should be experimenting things.

“What brand?”,he asks.

“Any but something that is good. You will ask there”,he just nods and I stuff my face with some food.

“Phakade”,I say and swallow.

He turns to me for a brief moment and then looks onto the road.

“Mmmh”

“I do not know what I want to do next year. What to study”,I say.

He looks at me for a brief moment and goes back to looking onto the road.

“I do not want you staying home Lethi”,he says.

“I know, My parents would not want that too.”,I say

“You still have a few months to figure it out.”

I sigh. I thought he would bite my head off.

“Thank you for supporting me”,He nods.

I carry on eating and he then sighs before he speaks.

“What do you think about moving?”,He clears his throat after that.

“Moving as in Now?”

“No, in a few months to come maybe”,he shrugs his shoulders after that.

“I mean I would not mind much really”,I say.

He nods and I look at him.

“Why are you asking?”,I ask.

“Just”,he does not continue from there.

We get to his house and get out of the car. A moving truck was already there waiting for us.

I get inside and then things are moved inside. The moving company assists me with displaying everything in the way I want it and then after a few hours they left. I was left to clean up everything while Tshepo went to buy some beverages.

“Lethi! I am here!”,it is Bayanda’s high pitched voice.

He comes in and claps his hands.

“Is he in?”,he asks as he finds me sweeping.

“No, he left to buy some alcohol”,he claps his hands.

“I never thought I would see your snob ass slaving around a boy’s house you are not even married to”,He says.

“Please leave me alone”,I say.

“Nice place though, here is your bag”,he places it on the couch.

“Thank you, what did you say to gogo?”,I ask.

“Do not worry about it”,I just nodded.

“Let me show you the guest room where you can put your things down and I need to take a bath as well.

We go to the bedrooms and I show Bayanda where he can place his things and then I quickly go and take a bath. After some time I get out of the bathtub and already I can hear some people talking. I go and get dressed. I do not put much effort really but I wore a dress with pinkish pushins. I get out of the main bedroom and go to the lounge and already I see Nolwazi trying to work the stereo.

“How do you open this thing. I want to plug in Aux”,Nolwazi says.

“Ask the owner’s girlfriend over here”,I push Bayanda and he laughs.

I quickly go to Nolwazi and we hug each other.

“Wow, You look beautiful”,I compliment her.

“Thank you so much friend. You would not say I was crying the whole term”,We laugh.

Bayanda rolls his eyes.

“Where is everyone?”,She asks.

“Palesa is on her way but she will leave early though and Tshepo’s friends, well I hope that they arrive when he is here.”

“I cannot wait to meet your boyfriend”,Nolwazi says.

“I cannot wait to introduce you”

“Can we have something, some hospitality can be appreciated”, Bayanda says and I shake my head and ask them that we go to the kitchen.

Soon with time people started to arrive even Buyi with her husband. They are now frequent faces that I see. The men decided to start with the meat and I wonder what is holding Tshepo up. He soon arrives with his accomplice and I rush up to him and wrap my arms around him.

“I was worried for a second there”, I say.

“I am okay. We bought lot of things”

“Can I drink today?”, He is hesitant but soon nods.

“Do not leave my sight”, I nodded.

“I want you to come and meet one of my friends”, I pull him to the kitchen and everyone greet him even Bayanda as well.

“You know Palesa. That is my friend Nolwazi, Lwazi this is my boyfriend Tshepo”

“Her man”, He says and Nolwazi swallows.

“I-I- Nice to meet you”, she says and he nods.

“Is the booze here already? I want to get sloshed”, Bayanda says.

“In the car”, Tshepo then walks out and Bayanda with Buyi follow. Nolwazi releases a breath.

“What the heck Lethi, that man is so intimidating. I do not like his aura and he looks old”, Nolwazi says.

“He is in his 20’s”

She looks at Palesa for some back up.

“Tshepo is a quiet guy. He is good for Lethi”

Palesa says.

“No, Lethi this is a downgrade. Honestly is the guy educated?”

“He has money”

“From where? And if he had money he would not be staying in this dangerous pit hole”, Nolwazi says.

“Now that is enough! I will not have you come to my mans house and disrespect him. He is my boyfriend Nolwazi and I love him and he treats me well. That is all that matters”, she raised her hands in a surrender.

“I give up honestly”, I ignore her

“Let us go and get some drinks inside”

We walk out of the kitchen. I expected this honestly.

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The music is nice and so were the meals that we had. There was even some cake to celebrate my marks though I have not even passed my grade 12. Nolwazi said she will be sleeping over as she cannot go home out so Tshepo was okay with it because some of his friends will sleep over too. The sun has set and the kasi vibe is there as well throughout the braai. Laughter and silly stories shared over alcohol. I am seated on Tshepo and I am down to my 2nd Blush and I had Gin before this anyway. I tapped Tshepo and he removed his cold beer from his lips and gave me attention.

“I need the bathroom”, I whisper and I hear Buyi laughing and I laugh as well lightly.

“Okay, come”, He puts down his beer and we leave. We go inside and we head to the bathroom. I get inside and I do my business while he watches me.

I get up and wipe myself with wipers. Tshepo comes forth and uses the toilet while I wash my hands by the sink. He finishes and flushes the toilet and comes towards me. He washes his hands too and I look at him through the mirror.

“I wanna try smoking one day”

“Ngizokubulala Lethinjabulo(I will kill you)”, I laugh

“I am joking, I do not look pretty for it” I say and turn to him.

“Do you want to rest a bit?”, he asks.

“Yes please”

We get out of the bathroom and go to the main bedroom. Tshepo undresses me and gets me under the covers. I pull him towards me and kiss him.

“You are beautiful Phakade Lami”

“Men are not beautiful Lethi”, he says.

“But you are baby, you are beautiful”, I kiss him again and he responds to the kiss.

I soon pass out from being tired with him on top of me.

I woke up with a massive headache and I hate that but I wanted to drink yesterday. I got out of bed and wore one of Tshepo's tops and walked out of the bedroom.

"Morning sleepy head", it is Lwazi.

She is having cereals while speaking to one of Tshepo's friends.

"Morning, where is the man of the house. ", I ask.

"Kitchen", I thank her and go to the kitchen.

I find him eating actual food and not one prepared by me that I have to force him to eat. Well he is not forced but he eats it though.

"You look horrible", He says and I pull the high chair and sit on it.

"Thank you for the vote of confidence. I feel horrible"

"You wanted to drink", he says

"Please do not remind me."

He opens the cupboard and takes out pills and brings water.

"Drink here", He says.

"Thank you baby"

I take the pill and swallow it before drinking water.

"How do you feel about marriage?", Tshepo asks.

"I love it. Why? Are you proposing?".

"In the future maybe but not now", Yes not now.

This is the first time he has asked me such.

“Okay then”,he makes some food for me and then he places the plate infront of me and then jumps ontop of the counter.

I indulge on the food and it tastes spicy and hot. I push the plate away.

“This is spicey”,I complain.

“You will have to indulge it if you want to feel better”,He says.

“This is not what I signed up for”,I complain.

Bayanda walks into thr kitchen and greets.

“Lethi your phone is ringing”,he hands it over. I even forgot about it.

I take it from him.

“There is food in the fridge”,Tshepo says to Bayanda and he goes to the fridge and take some.

I think Tshepo is warming up to Bayanda. I mean he is being nice to him.

I check my phone and it is a missed call from Londeka, the older sister.I check if I have some airtime and then I call her.

“Hello”

“Hey,I just saw your missed call. I wanted to ask where are we going to meet”,she says.

“Let us meet in town but I will inform you if there are any changes.”

“Okay then, see you in two hours”,We hang up.

“Take a cold bath when you are done eating”,Tshepo mentions

I finish up eating and then I go and wash the dishes. After that Nolwazi and I went to bath together much to Tshepo's annoyance. I got out of the bath tub and went to get dressed in the bedroom. I find Tshepo there already.

"Did you take a cold bath?"

"No", he shook his head.

I got dressed and wore some shorts and a top with sandals. I expected him to say something instead he did not. I finished up getting ready and I took my bag.

"Please take us to town", I beg.

"Take the car", I look at him like he grew some horns.

"Why? You said I will drive it when I have my licence. I will get arrested", I say.

"You will not", Yes I can drive now because I have been practicing but I have not gotten my Licence yet.

"Okay", I sigh and take the car keys.

"If I get caught, I will haunt you", He laughs.

Tshepo is lazy these days honestly. I give him a kiss and then I walk out of the room.

"Guys let us go, we still have to get Palesa!", Bayanda comes out looking good.

"I do need that distress after last night", he exaggerates.

Nolwazi comes out too and we get out of the house and go to the car. I unlock it and we get in.

“Haibo since when do you know how to drive?”, Bayanda asks.

“It has been a long time now”, I adjust the seats and start the car.

I drive out of the gate and Bayanda plays some music.

“Hayi Trust may be all things but he spoils you sana!”, he says excitedly and I laugh.

“Well, he does”, Nolwazi remains quiet.

We get to Palesa’s place and she comes to the car and gets in.

“He gave you the car? Wow!”

“Yes he did”

“Whatever you are doing to that man keep on doing it”, Bayanda says.

“Wena futhi?(You again?)”, I chuckle.

“Haibo phela just for today”, he argues and I shake my head. We drive up to town and get there. We fetch Samke and Londeka and then we go to meet where Buyi booked us. I park the car and we all get out of the car.

“Nice driving”, Palesa compliments.

“Thank you”

“I hope you are not sleeping with the guy Lethi”, Nolwazi says and I keep quiet.

I enjoyed it! Being pampered and all. My sisters are great people and they are not as bad as I thought they are but they are really nice people. Sweethearts even to say the word. We went to have lunch and we had some fun ordering as well. We got tired and decided that it is time we went our separate ways and go home. I dropped my sisters at the Taxi rank and the rest of my friends were fetched by their parents. Now I was left with Palesa and Bayanda. Heading back to the slums of where we were coming from this morning. I am even impressed that I did not crash Tshepo's car.

I get to his place and park the car and we get out. I make my way inside the house and find him with two of his friends. I greet and Tshepo stands up from the couch and walks outside and I follow him as well. I find him looking around the car and he turned to me.

"Now you can get that licence".

"Hopefully soon"

"Hopefully"

Chapter 13

Tshepo has not been going away for a long time and I kind of like that I am seeing him as frequently as possible. I am sitting with my little brother outside the house with my grandmother who is seated on the grass mat while reading a news paper.

“Mshano!”, My uncle says as he comes out of the house in his vest and boxers.

He is not caring who is watching him in that and what the neighbours are saying.

“Hamba uyogqoka wena usivezela ingalo zakho engekho (Go and get dressed and stop showing your boney body)”, My grandmother says and I laugh.

My brother claps his hands and then picks up his toy in front of him and throws it on my lap.

“Hayi”, I reprimed him and he giggles and I start tickling him.

It is a very hot day today and all I just want to do is lazy around the whole day. My mother walks out of the house carrying a diaper and picks up my brother from next to me.

“I heard you went out with your sisters to bond”, My mother mentions.

“Yes, we did go out”, she nodded.

“I am happy you are reaching out and trying to get along”

Well we have to.

She turns and walks away with her child..

"I hope Bayanda has not influenced you through his bad habits", my grandmother says.

"No Gogo, do not worry", I stand up from the mat.

"I am going to see Palesa", I say.

"Okay", I quickly walk inside the house and inform my mother

She is okay with it so I leave as quickly as I possibly can. I get to Palesa's home and I go and knock on the door.

Her mother opens the door and she smiles at me.

"Lethi come in, she has been sitting in front of that Tv since morning", I giggle.

"Hello mah", I walk inside and she closes the door behind me.

We get to the living room.

"Palesa", Palesa turns from the tv and looks at us.

"Hey", She gets up from the couch and her mother disappears to the other rooms.

"I guess we are all bored huh?", I say throwing my body on the couch.

"You cannot be bored. Why do you not visit Tshepo?"

"I love him neh? but sometimes i need a break from him so he can miss me", she laughs and shakes her head.

My phone starts ringing as we are still laughing. Her mother appears.

"I am going next door. Do feed Lethi Palesa please"

“Yes mama”,her mother leaves.

I take out my phone and look at the number on the screen. I do not even know this number but I answer it anyway.

“Hello”

There is silence on the other end of the phone. Palesa stands up and goes to the kitchen.

“Sweetheart”,my heart drops to my stomach.

I keep quiet as I do not know what to say.

“I know this is a shocking call and that you blocked me but can we talk?”,this man.

“Ntando what do you want from me?”,I finally gain the will to speak.

“I want us to talk about Us and...” ,I interrupt him by laughing.

“Us?you have got to be joking right now. There is no us, you ended it”,I feel myself getting worked up already.

“I know but I made a mistake. I love you”,I laugh.

“This has got to be a joke”

“I am in town, I would like for us to meet up and talk things through”,he mentions.

“My boyfriend will kill you if you come anywhere near me wena and stay where you are”

"I am not scared of him. You are mine Lethi, always been and we have been together for the longest time. We are meant to be", I hang up on him.

This man is delusional. Palesa comes back with some snacks.

"Hey are you okay?", she asks.

"Yes, I am good. My ex just called and ruined my mood. Wanting us to get back together"

"You have Trust so do not worry", I nod.

"Thank you.", I take some chips.

"Can I talk to you about something?"

"Yeah sure"

"I am not trying to cause a rift or something about what I am about to say but I think Nolwazi is not entirely happy about your relationship.", I sigh.

"I know. I mean here ekasi its normal to see a girl dating a slightly older guy than her and it is adjustable but with Us from the burbs. Our dating is different. I think it comes with concern as well. She does not want me to date out of the league that we had set for ourselves and to her Tshepo is out of my league and very old. Which is true but I love my Phakade and that is what is important to me", she smiles.

"I get it now that you explained it", I nod.

"I hope she comes around one day"

"She will", she adds on.

We sit and watch some tv while talking here and there. I am quiet nervous about what awaits for me the next year so I really hope that everything goes okay. My phone rings again and I take it.

“Hello”

“Usungibingelela kanjalo manje Lethi?(You are greeting me like that now Lethi?)”

“You are calling me with a number that I do not know of Tshepo”,I say.

“Mmh,I am back”,he went to see his brother. He is better now and I think he is back at work. That is what I know.

“I am at Palesa’s house.”

“Okay Ngiyeza(I am coming),he says and then hangs up.

“I am about to leave. Tshepo is coming”,she nods.

“Thank you for coming”,she mentions.

“I will ask mom to sleep over here”,she laughs.

“Please do friend”

We sit down and finish some of the food and then we go to the kitchen and place away what was left and then washed the dishes. My phone rings and I know who it is already. I answer.

“I am coming”

“Okay”,I then got out of the house and Tshepo id parked 3 houses away which is good. I rushed to the car and opened the door and got in. He retrived a paper bag.

“For your friend to apologise that I am stealing you”,It is a Steers paper bag. That is sweet of him.

He does always steal me and Palesa has never complained.

“That is sweet Phakade”,I kiss his lips and get out of the car. I rush to Palesa’s house and find her watching some tv.

“Hey ,Tshepo said I should give you this and apologise that he is taking me away from you”,I say and she sits up.

“He did not have to.”

“Well he did”

“Thank him for me”,I give it to her and then give her a hug before I rush off. I get inside the car and close the door and look at my boyfriend.

He looks different. Decent even! He has black chino pants on and a Golf tshirt on. There is even a watch on his wrist. He drives off at that heading to his house.

“Baby”,I say.

“Mmmh?”

“You look different. What? You look different. Were you somewhere?”,I ask.

“Yes, I had a meeting to attend”,Meeting?

I frown and he had a meeting from where?”

“Meeting? For what?”,I ask.

“I cannot tell you now but I will eventually. I was just with my brother and some guy”

he says dismissively.

“Oh okay”,I nod.

He drives to his house and parks upfront. If the yard was not small already, I would have suggested he gets a garage or shelter done for his car honestly. We step out of the car and make our way inside the house. I throw myself on the couch and I moan as I feel the cold breeze coming inside from the house. I grab the remote and open the tv. Tshepo comes back wearing shorts and he dumps his body next to mine.

“I have to take you to the doctor next week to get your shot”,He mentions.

“And get tested”,he nods.

I trust Tshepo when it comes to us being intimate. He introduced this testing frequently in a year and it has been working for us well. It makes me feel safe to be intimate with him and trust him with my whole body.

I place my legs on his lap and he slowly starts picking on my toes. I turn my head back to the tv and he kisses my legs and then pulls me to sleep ontop of him. We watch some tv together.

I had my head buried inside the bucket while my butt was seated in the toilet releasing as well. I would vomit inside the bucket while my

bottom half released some waste as well. It is 7 am in the morning and I am at Palesa's house. I slept over but this morning I woke up sick. She comes inside the bathroom. My pyjama pants are on the floor on my feet and I feel awful. I feel like I am dying as I feel drained.

"I am dying", I say.

Tears leave my eyes and Palesa looks at me worried.

"You are not. I made some food. Should I call your mother?", She asks.

"What if I am pregnant? Pregnant women vomit", When I say that I feel fear creep inside of me.

"Lethi you cannot be pregnant. You have been careful with Tshepo"

"Contraceptives are not a 100% guaranteed", She paces up and down.

"What are we going to do?", She asks.

"I do not....", I vomit inside the bucket again and my butt hole pulsates so as my stomach but nothing comes out.

"Let us get you bathed then figure things out from then on", I nod.

She takes the bucket from me and goes out. I then finish in the toilet and she comes back and opens some bath water for me. I flush and clean the toilet.

"How are you feeling now?", Nauseated.

"Sick"

"It could be nothing too", It could be but I do not want to rule out all possibilities.", She nods.

“Please call Tshepo for me ”she nods and walks out.

I strip and then get inside the bathtub then close the tap and add some cold water. I then close it and lay in there. The breeze coming from the open window comes in contact with my skin.

“Yes,she is sick so she does not really know why....Okay, bye”,Palesa knocks on the door and comes in.

“He said he is on his way.”,I nod my head.

“Food is ready”,I smile.

“Thank you for taking care of me”,I say.

“You are my friend”,Palesa is such a good friend.

She walks off and I bath my body. After that I get out. My stomach feels like hot peppers are inside. I then go and get dressed. It has stooped for a while. I then finish and then Palesa walka inside.

“Tshepo has arrived”,I nod my head.

“Okay, I feel like vomitting”,I go to the bathroom and I vomit in the toilet. I then finsih and lay there on the floor and cry. I feel so weak.

“Where is she?”,I hear Tshepo’s deep raspy voice.

“Bathroom”,I know how Tshepo hates being in people’s houses.

He comes and croutches infront of me.

“Nana”

“I am weak. I am dying”,I say.

“Lets go to the doctor”,I nod.

He picks me up. I ask to brush my teeth and Palesa flushes the toilet for me. I get done and then he picks me up and tells Palesa that we will be back. He gets outside to his car and puts me inside and closes the door then gets in the other side and then starts the car before he drives off.

I rest my head on the leather seats.

“Tshepo”

“Nana?”

“What if I am pregnant?”, I ask.

He keeps quiet.

“I am vomitting so what if?”, I ask.

“It could be anything Lethi”, I then keep quiet.

“But if you are then there is nothing we can do but be responsible”, he looks at me and I nod.

I do not want a child right now. I am still young and have to finish grade 12.

We get to the doctor and Tshepo carries me out and we get inside. We had to wait as there were two people in front of us. I had my head rested on his lap and he was gently rubbing my arm.

We wait for a while and after some time we were next. We get inside the doctor’s office together and then we get seated.

“What can I do for you today?”, The doctor asks with a smile.

“I am vomitting and releasing fluids down there at the same time.”, I say.

“Oh, it could be bile...”she mentions.

“Can I get a pregnancy test done and a scan? I want to be sure”,she looks at Tshepo.

“He is my boyfriend”

“Oh, okay then”,she pulls a container out and asks me to pee in it.

I do so and then she gives me bottled water and says I should drink it. I do as she mentions and then I go and pee then come back. She places a stick in it and we wait.

“Do you want to test for other things as well?”,she asks.

“No thank you, I do regulary.”,she looks at Tshepo and nods.

“Okay”,we wait and after some time she takes out the results.

“You are not pregnat”,she says and I release a sigh.

She asks that I get on the bed so she can do a scan for me and then I go and lay there. After some time she pulls up my top and applys some cold gel on me before she does the scan. She looks at the screen for some time and says.

“Everything is clear. You are not pregnant but please stay protected. You just have bile and will be okay tomorrow. I will give you some medication for the nausea”,I nod.

“Thank you”,she smiles.

I get off the bed after the gel was wiped off and go to Tshepo.I sit next tof him and the doctor gives me the pills and multivitamin pills as well. I thank her and then we leave.

“Are you hungry?”,Tshepo asks

“Yes but I am scared of eating”,he nods.

We get to the car and get inside before he drives off going to the mall. I am happy that I am not pregnant. I do not know what I would have done if I was.

He gets out of the car and tells me that he will be back. I take his phone and call my phone as I want to get to Palesa as I forgot mine and it gets answered.

“Hello”,she says.

“Palesa it is me. I am not pregnant”,I hear her heave a sigh.

“Thank God. As much as babies are a blessing but you do not need that blessing now”,she says.

True I do not need it now.

“Yes I agree. I am getting some food. The doctor said I will be okay tomorrow”,I say.

“Okay that is good. I will see you then”,she says.

“Okay”,I hang up after that and wait for Tshepo.

He comes out of the mall carrying some plastics and food and gets inside the car. He hands the Pizza over to me and I take it and open it as the steam comes out. He gets inside and takes a hoodie from the backseat and folds it then places it under the box on my lap so that I do not get burnt. I smile.

“Can I kiss you?”,I ask.

He nods and I do just that and break away from it.

“I love you, you are the best boyfriend I have had Tshepo”, I say and then go and indulge in my pizza. He takes my hand into his and rubs his thumb at the back of it and smiles.

Ntando really should not bother me or try to worm his way out of the pit hole that he is in.

Tshepo starts the car and drives off going back home. I take out the 1liter liquid fruit and drink up. There are even fruits in the plastic and yogurt as well. I eat and leave some for Palesa. I feed him also too.

Chapter 14

I have my bag packed up already all my things have been moved out. I am quiet excited but at the same time I am scared.

“Lethi come we have to leave!”, My mother shouts for me from outside.

“I am coming mah”, I drag my suitcase out and I find my grandmother already standing by the door.

“Bye Gogo”, I say rather quickly.

“Uziphathe kahle Lethi!(Behave yourself Lethi!)”, she shouts as I am running to the car and my dad takes my suitcase and puts it in the boot with the rest of my things.

“I will gogo! Bye!”, I wave and hop inside the backseat of my dad’s car.

My brother stumbles his way next to my grandmother and keeps on waving. My mother comes and gets inside the car.

“I cannot believe that you are leaving”, My mother says.

“Me either”, My father gets inside the car and starts the car.

He reverses out of the driveway and then he drives off on going out of the township. I have lived here for the past two years. Though it was hard to adjust to this place but I got the hang of things and now I am leaving and starting a new journey outside this place on my own.

“What snacks should we get. It is going to be a long journey”, My father asks.

I roll my eyes inwardly. It is not even going to be a long journey. Just an hour drive from Durban to our location.

“Anything”,My mother says as we approach Mega City and he nods and looks at me through the review mirror.

“Lethi”

“Dad?”

“Do you need anything?”,he asks as he finds a parking spot.

“No thank you”,he sighs and then nods.

He parks the car and takes his wallet and quickly jumps out of the car and make his way to the center. I stay in the car with mom and there is silence between us. I text Palesa and we keep on talking for a little while. I cannot believe we are now going our seperate ways.

“Are you excited about being away from home?”,mom asks and I lift my head and give her attention.

Yes! A part of me is happy but another part of me is not happy about leaving my friends and boyfriend behind.

“Yes I am. Making new friends and all”,I say.

She smiles at me.

“I am proud of you Lethi. You really made me proud”,I am happy to hear that from my mother.

I am happy that I made my family and Tshepo proud when I got my matric results. I even did beyond my expectations.

“I am glad I made you proud”,she smiles.

We wait for dad and he comes back with some snacks and then my mother takes them. She hands the Maynards to me and I thank her.

After that my dad starts the car and then he drives off going off to a journey that I do not know where it will lead me. I was crying just a few hours ago on my phone to Tshepo that I am going to be away from here and he assured me that I have nothing to worry about and should go and explore and be in a different environment. He wanted me to “Experience” University life.

That is the thing! I am not going to experience it with any of my friends. Some are headed to Capetown, some the Eastern Cape and Palesa is going to DUT and no, not the ones in Pietermaritzburg so I will be in that City all alone. Yes I am going to Pietermaritzburg to study at UKZN. I am nervous and scared at the same time. I wish I had seen Tshepo properly and maybe, I would have felt a bit better at that.

My father parks the car near the freeway and there is a beat up Corolla in front of our car. My dad unbuckles his belt and gets out.

“Where is he going?”, I ask.

“To fetch Samke. She is going to the same university as you are”, Great!

Did I mention that in getting to know my sisters that I do not get along with one? Yes that is Samke. She always has something to say but Londeka is such a sweetheart. Plus I did not say her mother should sleep with my dad and have kids with a married man if she is trying to fight her mother’s battles.

My dad comes back with her and she has her suitcase. She gets in next to me as dad places her things in the boot. He closes it and gets inside the car.

“Hello Samke”, My mom greets.

“Hello”,I look at her and look out of the window.

“Lethi”,My dad says in a warning tone.

“Ya Samke”,She just nods.

He sighs and starts the car before we drive off and connect through the freeway heading to another City.

My mother tries to hold some conversations with Samke. Why did her mom not take her there herself and make sure her daughter is okay? Actually I wish Dad kept it in his pants honestly.

I take out my headphones and then connect it to my phone and play some music. I pressed my hands against the headphones as I listened and leaned my head against the window. I see my mother sigh and then I turn to look out of the window.

I eat my Maynards and forget about everything else that is going on.

We enter Pietermaritzburg and I look around. I feel like I am in a foreign place. We pass by the university to get ourselves registered and we do in no time. After that my dad took us to where we will be living. We got to an apartment in Pelhem and then we went inside. I looked around the place. It was half furnished.

“You will be staying here together”,What?!

I turn around.

“Thank you daddy”,Samke says and I roll my eyes.

“Dad this is not part of the varisty experience where are the horrible roommates and res all of that?”,I ask.

My mother giggles. Well horrible roommate is included with Samke here.

“It is better like this. That way you guys will have your own space and rooms. Plus this is big enough and you have privacy”,This is not what I signed up for.

“Thank you Dad”,I do not want to seem like I am ungrateful.

“Now lets offlaod your things then we can buy groceries.”,My dad says.

“Am I going to get a car for easy transport?”,I ask.

“I think cabs will be just fine since Samke does not have a licence yet”,Well yes I lied to my parents and said I saved money to go and do my licence when Tshepo paid for everything. They believed me and so now I have a licence.

“I will get one do not worry”,Samke says and smiles while looking at me.

“Good now let us go and get your things.”,My parents walk out of the door.

“This will be a great stay don’t you think roomie?”,Samke says.

“Yeah sure”,I walk past her and she holds my arm tightly.

“Ouch wena!”

“Do not think for a second I am your friend Lethi, I am coming for you and your mother trust me”,she stares into my eyes. This snake!

She then lets go of me and smiles before she walks out. I cannot believe that psycho is my dad's sperm.

I walked out of the apartment with my arm painful and went to the car. I got inside and buckled up. This one does not know me. Two can play this game. My dad drives off and we are on the road for some time until we reach a mall. We get there and it is written Liberty Midlands Mall. We hop out of the cars and dad takes us inside. We start with our house shopping. Mom is the one choose and Samke and I do some stationary and also some clothing shopping. We get everything we need and Dad gets us some food there after we leave heading back to our place. We get there and get out of the car and go inside. Soon enough we start unpacking and Mom is helping with setting up our place. I place my things in the built in wardrobe and then after I start making my bed and setting up everything I need. Dad bought a little dinning table for us that we can also use as a study table when we want to study. After we were done then dad gave us some money after that.

"Please buy text books and call if you need anything", Is what he said before they could even leave.

They gave us a long lecture about what we are here for and we listened and promised a whole lot of things of which some I doubt we will even remember. My mom gives me a hug.

"I love you", she mentions.

"I love you more", I do. I love my mother.

She then lets me go and hugs Samke before they bid their goodbyes.

"This should be fun", Samke says.

“Try me and your precious father will fetch your body.”,I click my tongue.

I wish to wrap my arms around her neck. She laughs at that.

“Are you threatening me?”

“No, I promise I will”,I say and leave her going to my room while she laughs.

I lock my door and get on my bed. I am so tired. I call Palesa and she answers after some time.

“Tsala!(friend!)”

“Guess what Nightmare I am in”,I say.

“What?”

“I am living with Samke”,I say.

“What?!How can your dad allow that? She almost killed you last christmas”,Yes did I mention that she put some rat poison in my drink? Yes she did that and I was rushed to the hospital.

It was our first christmas together going to my dad’s family home. My aunts loved the new kids well except for aunti Hle. She did not get along with them easily. She is team Mom. Her sister in law all the way. She is not speaking to dad as we speak and she is a tough cookie so you can imagine.

My parents thought that maybe I was trying to kill myself because I was anxious of the results. I did not tell Tshepo what happened really but I just told him I ended up in a hospital for being Sick. That is when I

started hating Samke. I do not blame Londeka. I adore her. It is this ugly thing I hate.

“Yes so that is what is going on”,I say.

“Can’t you argue your way out of this or get another roommate?”,she asks concerned.

“I cannot. We live in an apartment”,Now I regret going here.

“Just watch her please”

“I told her I will kill if she tries me and she laughed”

“She is psycho”,honestly.

“Just be careful of her”

“I will”

“How is school?”,she giggles.

“I have not started yet but my room is nice and my roommate is quiet so that is good”

“I wish I could trade places”,I say.

“Do not worry, everything will be okay”,I sigh.

I hear some music from where I am.

“I am going to call you back”

“Okay”,I hang up and get off the bed and open the door.

Samke is dancing in front of the tv while playing some music. She starts screaming while waving her unhealthy hands in the air. She looks ashy. She turns to me and winks

“Lets dance”

“No thank you”,she shrugs and turns back to the tv.

I hate my dad for this.

I turn and go back to my room. I lock the door. I have a long day ahead of me tomorrow.

It is my first day today and so I am getting ready. I am very nervous. I have been coupling myself in this room without moving and going to explore the area that I am in. I slap on a black mini skirt with a yellow top and wear some sneakers. I then moisture my braids and take my backpack and then walk out of my room and then get into the kitchen and I find Samke there eating.

“Good morning”,she says

“Morning”

“I have called a cab. It is almost here”

“No thank you. I would rather walk”,I say. I do not trust her.

She shrugs. I grab an apple and I go out of the house and I call a cab to come and get me. It gets here on time and then it leaves with me going to campus. I get there within 5 minutes and I pay up before making my way inside. This place is big and already I feel like I will get lost. I find some group of people standing together and I approach them.

“Hello”, One guy turns to me.

“Hey”

“Uhm I feel like I am lost already. Do you know where I can find...”, he interrupts me.

“Are you new?”, he asks.

“Uhm yes. First year”, he smiles.

“I can show you around. Lizwi by the way”, I frown then smile.

“I have a friend with that name”, I mention and he chuckles.

“Male ?”

“Female”

“Oh interesting Miss”, He tells his group that he is showing me around and we walk off together.

“You did not tell me your name”, he says.

“Lethinjabulo”, he smiles and nods.

“Well Lethi, I hope to see more of you”, he mentions.

“Maybe”, Hopefully not really. I do not want to make unnecessary male friends.

He just nods.

We keep on going to wherever he is leading me.

*

Nothing much was done. Well that is what I think and today was okay. I am so tired right now. All I want is some food and getting to take a bath. I pass by scottsville mall and get some snack burger from KFC and a cold drink with ice-cream before I leave the place and get a cab going to my place. I get there and there is no one inside. Thank God. I take off my shoes and make my way to my room and I find my room a mess. My clothes on the floor. I get closer and all my clothes are in shreds so as my covers and curtains. Tears blur my eyes as I feel so angry. This little twer! I take my phone and take pictures of my room and send it to dad.

“Look what your precious princess did!”, I type away and send it to him. I then send one to my mom as well and she calls almost immediately.

“Lethi, what happened?”, she asks with concern.

“Samke trashed my things. I left today and my room was okay and then I come back to this. She ripped everything of mine in here”, I break down and cry.

She sighs.

“I will talk to your father”, she says.

“I do not want to live with her. She will kill me !”

I say.

“She will not Lethi that is extreme”, really? I was hospitalized because of her.

“It is not. She will do it”, I say.

“Okay, let me speak to your father”, she hangs up after that.

I wipe my tears and then go to the kitchen and get a trash bag to collect all my things. I go past her room and try to open the door but it is locked. I click my tongue and go to my room and start disposing everything in the trash bag. My phone rings and I go and take it. It is my dad.

“Lethi what happened?”, is the first thing he says.

“Samke trashed my room”

“What did you do to her?”, he asks.

“Really? Are you going to ask me that?”

“I am still your father Lethinjabulo. Talk to me properly”, I cannot believe this!

“I did nothing to her. She said she is coming for me and mom”, he sighs.

“I know that me having children beside you and your brother from another woman does not make you happy but Lethi let us not lie and cause a fight between my children. I love you all”, Wow! He does not believe me.

I keep quiet.

“I will see you guys this weekend. Please behave and do not fight. I will talk to Samke, okay?”, I remain quiet.

“Okay Lethi?”

“Okay”

“Good, I love you”, I hang up after that and breakdown. I throw myself on the ripped bed and I cry my lungs out.

I feel so hurt by mom and dad. Why could they not believe me? I kept on crying until I fell asleep.

.

I was woken up by something falling in my room. I opened my eyes and tried to get up but someone put a pillow over my face. I tried fighting to push that person off me.

“They won’t know what happened to you”,she laughs.

I scratch her arm and she curses.

“You bitch stand still and let me kill you”,I cannot believe I am about to die.

I felt like I was going to die already. I was deprived of air and my chest felt painful from trying to find air that I was not getting. I just closes my eyes and let my body go and stopped moving. She sat there for a second and let me go. She lifted the pillow off my face to see if I was dead. I opened my eyes and pushed her over and she landed on the floor. I breathed in quickly gasping for air.

“You bitch!”,she screamed!

I quickly got off the bed and ran out of the room she followed after me. I went to the door and tried opening it and it was locked. She ran to the kitchen and I saw the keys on the coffee table and ran to take them. My chest was not taking it. I was shaking trying to open. She came back with a knife.

“Leave me alone you psycho!”

“You and your mom stole our life from us!”

I unlock the door and she plunges the knife on my shoulder and I scream and push her off and she hits the floor. She stands up and I quickly open the door and rushed out and ran down the corridor. She stood by the door and watched me as I ran away.

“You will be back!”

I went downstairs and rushed to the neighbours and knocked on the door.

“Help!”, I say and the door gets opened by a woman.

“What is wrong?”, she asks.

“She is trying to kill me. Please help me”, I cry.

“You are bleeding”

She says.

“Babe!”, she pulls me inside and trails of blood are left on the floor. She gasps as she see the knife still stuck on my shoulder. It is painful. I am a crying mess.

“Love, what is...”, Her husband comes out and he freezes.

“Let us get her to the hospital and call the police”

“Can I call my parents?”, I ask.

“Okay but we are going”, The lady says.

I nod. They get ready and they give me a phone. We go to their car and they report to the security guy. He says he will inform the police but I say I want to speak to my mom. I cannot talk at the moment.

They rush me to the nearest hospital which is Medi Clinic. I call my mom and she answers.

“Hello”

“Mom...she stabbed me. She suffocated me with a pillow. She wants to kill me. I am going to the hospital now the neighbours took me there”,I say.

“What?!Let me speak to your dad”

She hangs up and then I get admitted inside. The doctors stop the bleeding and removed the knife.

The lovely couple stayed with me. I could not stop crying. Their phone rang and they answer. The man answered. He spoke with whoever for a few minutes and then he handed the phone to me.

“Lethi Samke is denying everything. She said she does not know where you are as you left after being angry. I do not know what to believe now Lethi. Your dad says we will come there tomorrow to sort whatever fighting you two are getting up to”,I cry.

“Mom, I am your daughter. Please believe me”,I say.

“We will be there Lethi. Do not inform the police yet, your dad says he is going to sort it out.”

I cannot believe this.I cry and hang up on her call as she is speaking. I wipe my tears and make another phone call.

“Let us give you some space”,The lady said and they walked out of my ward.

The phone rings for a few seconds before it is answered.

“Hello”

“Tshepo, it is me Lethi. I need your help. My sister stabbed me and she tried killing me by suffocating me. My parents do not believe me and think that I am being dramatic. I am at the hospital right now. Please believe me”, I break down.

“Fuck! Which hospital are you in?”, he asks.

“Medi Clinic”, I say.

“Okay, I am coming Nana”, I nod my head and cry more.

The call gets hung up and I curl up on my left side.

After making sure that I am okay and settled the couple leaves and then I am all alone in this place. My dad loves Samke more. He said he loves us equally but he does not show it. He thinks I am jealous of her but I am not.

I cry myself to sleep that moment.

I wake up to someone touching my cheek and I jump in fright and my eyes land on Tshepo and Buyi behind him. I cry as he comes closer and tries to embrace me.

“Do not worry, I will take care of everything”, he says.

“I do not want to go and live with her. I do not want to be near her. She said me and my mom robbed her of their life.”, I say.

“I am sorry Lethi”, Buyi says and I wipe my tears.

Tshepo holds my face.

“I will take care of everything okay?”,He says and I nod.

“Tshepo”,I turn and his brother warns him.

“When are they discharging you?”,Buyi asks.

“Tomorrow”,I nod.

“Okay”,she nods and smiles.

“We will be back”,she says and pulls her husband out of the room and I am left with Tshepo.

“You drove from Durban?”,I ask and he nods.

“You need me”,I find myself crying again.

I wish my parents could just believe me and be here for me as I need them.

The following day I got discharged in early mornings. They were all still here and I really appreciated that they are all here with me and that atleast some people support me.

We drove to a Bnb in scottsville and then I was told to rest. Buyi sat next to me.

“You are so brave Lethi”,She says.

“Thank you”,I smile.

“We are family and we may not be blood related but we will have your back”,I nodded.

“Thank you, that means alot”,I say.

Tshepo walks inside the room and you can smell the nicotine from him. He hands his phone to me.

“Palesa has been wanting to talk to you. She said Bayanda was trying to call you”,he mentions.

I nod and I take the phone. I call Palesa and she answers.

“Hello”

“It is me, Lethi”,I say.

“Oh my God Lethi Nokwanda told me what happened. I do not understand how they can be so delusional. Where are you? Are you safe? Tshepo needs to kill that bitch and I will help him!”,it is Bayanda’s pitchy voice that comes on.

I do not know when did he get to Palesa.

“I am okay. I do not want you guys to go to jail for murder”,I say and Buyi shifts next to me.

“I do not care. Your father did not do any justice and ask that ugly things mother to abort her so we will do the favour and send her back where she came from”,I laugh.

I know Bayanda cannot fight or even kill a fly.

“Thank you for that, I will keep it in mind”

“Arrest her”,Palesa mentions.

“I will see. I am just tired guys”

“We love you Lethi, we could not imagine you gone”,Palesa mentions and I feel like crying.

"I love you guys."

They hang up and I sigh and look up to not cry.

"It will be okay Lethi", I look at Buyi.

"Can I call my parents?", I ask.

Tshepo nods.

I dial my mother's number and it gets answered immediatly.

"Hello"

"Mom"

"Lethi we are 25 minutes away", She mentions.

"Tell dad that I do not want to be his daughter anymore.", I say.

"Lethi, do not think irrationally. Your dad loves you", she says.

"Not enough to see me dead from her precious daughter", I hear some shuffling.

"Lethinjabulo let us talk", I feel a lump form in my throat.

"This would not have happened if you did not cheat on mom. I would not be in danger because of you. Bye", I hang up and block the number.

"What now? she cannot leave university", Buyi mentions.

"We can get her a transfer or something", Tshepo says.

"To where?"

"Durban. I need to be closer to her", he mentions.

“Okay. I will tell Nathi”,Tshepo nods.

She stands up and walks out.

“Trust me”,he says and I nod.

I trust him.

Chapter 15

It has been over 3 weeks and I have not spoken to any of my family members since that day when Samke almost killed me. I did not go back to that place but I did ask Palesa to get Bayanda to get my important things as I needed them. Tshepo got me transferred to UKZN in Durban and I was able to start even though I was 3 weeks behind but it did not matter. I was trying as much as I can to adjust. I have been living with Buyi at her house and her sister was there as well visiting. I really appreciate what they have done for me so far.

I had just got out of my last class for the day and I walked out to the parking lot. Tshepo said that he will wait for me there. I went to the parking lot and I found him there. I get inside the car and I look at him.

“Hello”, I say and he looks at me before he smiles.

“How was your first day?”, he asks.

“It was okay. I will adjust, I have assignments waiting for me”, He nods and starts the car before driving off.

“I will buy a laptop for you tomorrow”, I nodded

“Thank you so much”, I appreciate it.

“I got you a place”, he mentions and I look at him.

“Why?”, I ask.

“We should not co-habit baby”, I sigh.

“Okay then”

“You will live with someone but It is someone I know and trust”,he says.

“Is it a boy?”,he shoots his eyes at me and then looks back ahead to the road.

“No, it is Ndimase’s sister”

“I hope she will not kill me”,I say.

“She will not”,I nod my head.

“That is all I need”

There is silence for a moment in the car.

“Have you talked to your parents?”,he asks.

“No, I do not want to”,he nods.

I turn to him.

“You never speak about your parents”,I say.

He keeps quiet for a moment.

“It is complicated”,he says.

“Are you not speaking?”,I ask.

“I do not know where my father is. He ran away”

“And your mother?”

“My father killed her”,my heart drops onto my stomach and leans against my liver.

I keep quiet and look out of the window. The drive commenced with us being in total silence and the only thing heard in the car is the music that is playing.

I cannot imagine my father killing my mother. I would most probably hate him forever. I feel sorry for Tshepo and his older brother. We get to another area and there are apartments. He parks the car and I turn to him.

“I am sorry about your family”, I say to him.

He kisses my lips and then he unbuckles my belt.

“Let’s go inside”, He says and I nod.

We get out of the car and make our way to the new place. Tshepo just opens the door and then we find Buyi and Palesa with another lady there. Palesa stands up from the floor and rushes to me and hugs me gently not to put me in pain.

“Oh my God I missed you”, she says.

“I missed you too”, I say.

We break the hug.

“I am glad you are okay. Guess what?”, She says but pauses and greets Tshepo and he nods.

“Tell me what?”, I ask.

“I will be living here too”, she says and I feel relief wash over me.

“Really?”

“Yes , we figured you would be uncomfortable with a stranger here alone”,Buyi says.

“Thank you so much”this is amazing.

I go and hug her and she giggles.

“It is okay”

We break the hug and I greet the lady of which I learned is Kholeka but she said I must call her Leka. Well that is fine.

They tell me that my new things have been moved to my new room. I am going to be more relaxed now that Palesa is here. Tshepo asks for me and he leads the way and I follow to one of the bedrooms and he gets inside and I do the same and he asks if I can close the door. I do so worried.

“Is everything okay?”,I ask.

He closes his eyes and opens them again.

“You remember that bag we burried in your father’s back yard?”

“It was bags. What about them?”

“We need to get them now”,I look at him.

“Tshepo”,I say lowly.

“I need them so that I can take care of you”,he says.

“I am sorry for being a burdan”,I say.

He comes closer to me and pulls me to him.

“You are not a burdan. You are my woman. I have to take care of you forever”,He says.

“It is too much Tshepo”,I say.

“Lethi, Nothing is too much for me. You will get whatever you want and studying is the first priority. Do not worry about anything that concerns finances but let me do that okay?”,I nod.

He perks my lips.

“Thank you for taking care of me”

“It is my duty”,I nod my head and wrap my arms around his waist and he holds me back too.

“I will give you the BMW”,I look at him.

“Tshepo, that is your favourite car”,I say and he chuckles.

“I will get another one. You need easy transport”

“This is too much”,I say

“Lethi, do not worry about anything”,He says.

I stand on my toes as I get closer to him and wrap my arms around his neck.

“Thank you for everything”,I say then I kiss him and he responds to the kiss.

He places his arms around my waist and then he moves them to my bums and lifts me up and I finally wrap my legs around his waist and he holds me close to his body. I break the kiss and smile while looking

at him. I did not ever think that I will have a great boyfriend in Tshepo. I giggled.

“What is it?”

he asks with a smirk on his face.

“I used to be scared of you before”

“You are not now?”,he raises his eyebrow.

“No”,I perk his lips and he chuckles.

He then lays me on the bed and gets on top of me and looks at me.

“You should be”,I laugh.

“Cute”,He chuckles and shakes his head.

“Make love to me please”,I say.

“Are you sure? I do not want to hurt you”,he says.

“I am sure”,He nods and kisses me. I respond fo the kiss and wrap my tiny hands around his neck. He presses himself ontop of me and I can feel his hardening shaft. He pulls my pants down and then presses his fingers on my valve before he removes the underwear and puts it in his pant pockets and then he goes to kissing my legs softly making his way between my inner thighs. My breathing hitches as I felt shivers go through my body. He then reaches between my thighs and he goes to my valve and kisser it.

“You smell like Vanilla and coconut butter”,That is why he bites me sometimes or licks me. He always says that.

“That is why you bite me all the time”

“I imagine you tasting good all the time so I try to taste you”,I shake my head and laugh.

His warm breath comes in contact with my valve and I try to maintain my breathing.

He kisses it and then slips a finger through pass my folds and he starts thrusting slowly.

“Look at me Nana”,I look at him and he slips in another finger and I gasp.

He kept on thrusting while I was enjoying.A knock came from the door.. Whoever that is will not be in my good books at the moment.

“Tshepo”,He does not stop but keeps on thrusting.

“Guys”

One thing about Tshepo, he will not stop until he is done.

“Isn’t it you want me to make love to you?”,I throw my head back as he thrusts deeper.

“Y-Yes”,I say.

“Then I will make love to you”,I feel my abdomen pulsating.

He moves his fingers out and he smiles while looking at me.

“You are so wet”,He says and licks his fingers. I swallow.

The person who was knock has stopped. He unbuckles his belt.

“Come, let us get you undressed. I want to feel your nipples against my chest”,He says as he pulls me up to undress.

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He looks at me and goes to kissing my neck for a moment and and I wrap my arms around his body. He slowly slides into me and I gasp for air as he does slowly going deeper.

“Are you good?”, His raspy voice vibrates against my ear.

“Y-Yes”, He goes deeper.

“Oh Tshepo!”, I close my eyes while gripping onto his body. He slowly pulls out and pushes in again and he groans.

“Baby you are too warm for me”, He says and and he grips around my waist and he pulls out and goes in again and I gasp again.

He then starts to thrust slowly. I wrap my legs around his torso and it makes him slip in and out going deeper.

“Fuck!”, He curses.

I softly moan against his ear holding him closer to my body.

“Lethi stop gripping”, Tshepo warns.

He hates it when my walls grip on his dick while he is in me. Well when I do it intentionally of which I am. He keeps on thrusting.

“Lethi!”, He warns and I let go and he groans.

“Shit”, I kiss his shoulders.

“I will get you for that”, he says.

I like feeling his cum inside of me. I look at him.

“I like feeling you cum in me”

“You will, not now though”,He says.

I nod and tilt my head to the side and before I know it, I am biting his shoulder. He does not mind at all.

I keep on moaning his name. I go through my first orgasm. He starts rubbing my clitoris as off that and I shake under him.

“Yes!”,I gasp.

He stops and keeps on thrusting in and out.

I woke up to the darkness the consumed the whole room. I touch my bedside and it is empty. I get off the bed and make my way to switch on the lights. I go to the wardrobe and get a gown and I walk out of the room. I find Palesa and Leka sitting together watching Tv.

“Tshepo left.”,Palesa says and laughs.

“Oh, let me and freshen up”,she nods and I walk away and go to take a bath.

This will definitely be a long night. Honestly speaking. I go and put in some bath water then I go and get some of my new clothes and I take out my new pyjamas. Really I appreciate having Tshepo in my corner. I do not know what I would have done if he was not in my life. I then went to the bathroom to close the water and then after that I put in some cold water to make the water warm for me enough and then I jumped inside and laid my body there. I think I might sleep peacefully and knowing that Palesa is also here makes me at ease. I bath my body then I get out and wash the bathtub. I go and brush my teeth soon

enough I am out and going to get some food. I went to join the girls in the living room. Our space is big enough.

I sit on the couch in front of the tv.

“Are you okay?”, Palesa asks.

“Yes”, I say

“Your parents have been calling me asking if I know anything about you”

“I do not want to be in contact with them for now”, I say.

“I understand.”

I carry on eating. We watch some tv and I get done with the food and I go and wash my dishes. After that I joined them in watching tv for an hour before I retired to go to bed. I called Tshepo with my new phone and he answered in no time.

“Nana, are you okay?”, He asks.

“Yes I am okay. You left before I could say goodbye”, I sulk.

“I will see you tomorrow”, He mentions.

“Okay, Goodnight.”

“Goodnight baby”, He says and we hang up.

I place my phone on the bedside pedestal and then I notice car keys.

Tshepo left the car already? I will go and buy a Laptop tomorrow then and some of the textbooks that I have not bought yet.

It has been a whole week since I have lived with my new roommates and everything has been good lately. My boyfriend and his family tried to make my life easy for me and I really appreciate it so much. I do not even know how I would start by repaying them. Tshepo asked me if I want to change the color of the car and I jumped in and said yes!. The orange is good neh?but it has run its course now. I opted for it to be painted red and he did not mind getting it done and it was done quickly and it looked very beautiful to be quiet honest. Palesa says that I am gaining weight and who would not when I feel happy and content where I am.

I am in the flat and I am doing my assignment. Palesa and Leka went to campus while I stayed behind. I did not have any classes today so I am taking the time in being productive. I sigh and close the laptop when I am done. I get up and I go to my room and place everything of mine away and I go and get changed. I want to go and get some Nandos spicy rice.I am bored so I call Tshepo and he answers almost immediatly.

“Nana are you okay?”

“Yes, I am. I am just missing you”

“Can I call you in 30 minutes. I am in a meeting”,Meeting?

“Eh...Okay”,I wanted to ask what meeting.

“I will come by okay?”

“Okay”,I hang up and then sigh.

I take my wallet and then make my way out of the apartment and then I get downstairs. I go to the parking lot and get to the car unlocking the doors and I get inside. I place my wallet on the seat next to mine and I

start the car. I buckle up before I drive off going to Nandos. Dating Tshepo had gotten me used to Nandos. I swear that man lives and loves this franchise. I get there and I feel a bit happy. I get to the drive thru and get ready to order.

Chapter 16

I wave my hand up and she quickly rushes to me and pulls a chair and sits in front of me. Bayanda follows after her and he comes and sits next to me.

“Yoh You look so beautiful. Tshepo is doing the things I guess”, Bayanda says and I laugh.

We stand up and hug. Palesa pulls my burger and she takes a bite.

“Palesa!”

“I am hungry, Sorry”, She says and I look at her and shake my head.

Bayanda and I sit down and then Palesa excuses herself so she can go and order.

“How are you holding up?”, he asks.

It has been two months since the incident and he is the only family member that knows that I am in Durban. I hope that he did not tell anyone but I trust Bayanda.

“I am doing okay, things have been okay. I am at peace. Tshepo really pulled through for me. I love him”, I say and he nods.

“I may not be a fan of him but he makes you happy and has proven to be by your side”, he says and I nod my head.

“How is mom?”, I ask. I miss her especially my little brother.

“Mxm Loyo, She is not holding up well with your disappearance but I do not buy her act”, he says and rolls his eyes.

“Haibo that is your sister”, I say.

“A dumb one for that matter. Gogo is angry at her”,I sigh.

“Everything will be okay”

“If you are good. I am good as well”,He slaps the side of my thigh.

“Haibo!”,We laugh.

Bayanda is such a great Uncle. As young as he is but I appreciate his support.

“How is school? Are you adjusting?”,He asks.

“School stress has got me by the tits but It is okay”

“I understand. I cannot wait to graduate next semester”,he says.

Palesa comes back and tells Bayanda what he ordered for him. We sit together for a while and we chat. Their order comes in no time and then they start eating. I go and order another burger. I always feel bloated these days and I think my periods are approaching. The gaining weight though is what I love. It shows that I am at a peaceful place in my life.

My phone rings and it is Tshepo. I have not seen my boyfriend these past 3 days and I miss him so much, I am also trying to keep myself occupied with school in those days but I still miss him.

“Phakade lami”,Bayanda looks at me and carries on talking with Palesa

“Baby, how are you?”,he asks.

“I miss you, I have not seen you in like forever”,Well I am exaggerating but he chuckles at that.

“I will visit you once I am back”,He says.

“Kanti Ulaphi?(where are you?)”,I ask.

“Pretoria”,Excuse me.

“Tshepo really?”,Why did he not tell me? Is it because I keep quiet or what but I do not like it.

“Nana,listen I will explain when I get back”

“I do not like this at all.” I stand up and leave these two. I do not want them hearing my business.

“I know baby”

“Tshepo I though we were working on being transparent here. I know I am young but trust me with whatever that you need to. I am your girl or is there something I do not know”,he sighs.

“How did we get here manje?”

“Uqondeni?(What do you mean?)”,I ask.

“Lethi,I do not want us to fight. I am sorry”, he says.

“You are not Tshepo. All you do is tell me ukuthi you are disappearing for some time and to God knows where!”,I say.

“Cela sikhulume mangibuya(Lets talk when I come back)”

“No stay wherever you are. Ngikhathele mina(I am tired)”

“Uyazibona usuqalile Lethi?(You see that you have started Lethi?)”

“With what?”

“I do not like your tone. We were talking so well and now you have decided to start a fight. If you are bored tell me so I can buy you some toys”,What the hell!?

“You are disrespecting me now”,I hang up. Did he just indirectly tell me that I am childish? Wow.

I walk back inside going to the table and I sit down.

“You look angry”,Palesa says.

“No it is nothing. Just got annoyed by something”,I say.

“Or someone”,Bayanda mentions and I look at him.

I ignore him and carry on with my eating. We sit and they start another conversation that gets me to relax and forget about my sudden outburst on Tshepo. To be quiet honest, I trust him but this is getting out of hand and I do not like it.

Time passes and We get up and prepare to leave. We get out of the franchise and we get inside the car and I start to drive Bayanda to wherever he was going before Palesa and I are go home. We drop off Bayanda and then I drive off going to the apartment. Palesa has been very quiet for my liking.

“Are you okay?”,I ask her.

“Yes I am”,She turns to me for a second.

“Let us say I got pregnant. How would you feel?”,she catches me off guard.

“Are you pregnant?”,I ask her. She has never talked about having a boy in her life.

“No, I am just asking”

“Uhm I do not know. You are young but I will have your back no matter what”, I say.

“Okay”, she nods.

I look at her suspiciously.

“Does Tshepo love kids?”, She asks.

I do not know really.

“I do not know really.”, I feel bad that I do not know that.

“Do you want to have children with him one day?”, Palesa asks.

“Yes, Maybe when we are ready.”

She nods and she smiles.

“I am sure you would make cute babies. So will I one day”, I laugh.

“What is with you and baby talk today?”

I ask.

“I saw an adorable child today and I just thought how would mine look one day”, I just nod my head.

My phone rings and Palesa takes it out of my bag and I take it.

“Yes”

“Selehlile iconsi?(Are okay now?)”,

“No”, I say.

“Lethi what do you want me to do?”,He asks.

“I am driving right now. Call after 10 minutes”

“Sho” he hangs up. I give my phone to Palesa.

“Are you okay?”,she asks.

“Yes”,she just nods.

She clearly can see that I am not well. We get to the apartment and I park the car. Soon we get out and make our way to our place. She throws herself on the couch as soon as we are inside and I went to my bedroom and closed the door before I called Tshepo.

“We can talk”,I take off my shoes and rub my feet.

I had a long day today and my feet look a but swollen.

“Lethi”,He sighs and I keep quiet.

“I am sorry for what I said earlier”,Oh okay.

“Tshepo am I the only woman in your life?”,I ask.

“In terms of relationship”,I say.

“No”

“What?!”

“Yehlisha umoya(Calm down)”,he should not tell me to calm down.

“Do not tell me that. So you are two timing me?” I ask. I feel like I am going to vomit my heart.

“Buyi is my sister in law so I have a relationship with her”, I slap my forehead.

“I mean romantically. Like your girlfriend. Your woman Tshepo not family related”

“Oh, you are referring to that. Yes I only have you in my life”, I smile.

“Okay, bring something nice for me there”, I say.

“What would you like?”, he asks.

“Anything”

“Okay”

“Do not forget. I hope whatever you are doing there Tshepo it is worth it”, I mention.

“It is”

“Okay come back soon. Do not stay too long”, I say

“I will not”

I bite my bottom lip.

I woke up quiet early this morning because my periods have started. This is my second time this month that I have went on my periods and I do not know what to do. It has never happened before but I will see with time if anything changes then I will go to the doctor. I went to take a bath and then got dressed in a onsie. Today I do not have any classes but I will stay indoors and study. I walk out of my bedroom and it is quiet around the apartment indicating that the others are still sleeping.

I go to the kitchen and I take out some milk from the fridge and then take some Chereos and take out a bowl and make some cereals. I then turn the kettle on. I finish making my food and then I went to get a hot water bottle and put the hot water inside. I moved to the living room and sat in front of the tv and turned it on watching whatever that was in front of me.

I ate my cereals and when I was done. Leka walked in the living room.

"It is 5 am Lethi, what is wrong?", She asks and dumps her body next to me.

"I am on my periods"

"Again?", I nod.

"Do you feel any cramps?", She asks.

"Yes, they are much bad but I have the hot water bottle", she nods.

"I used to have a cousin who went through the same thing"

"What was the cause?"

"Oh it happened only when her cycle was about to change. She would go twice in a month"

"I hope it is over soon"

"Do not worry", she stands up and takes my bowl.

"Snacks?"

"Please", she walks away going to the kitchen.

After a while she comes back with some snacks and settles next to me. She grabs the fleece blanket and put it over our legs. She puts a cushion on her lap and let me rest on it.

“If the pain gets bad just take pain killers from my room okay?”,I nod.

“Thank you.”

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They left. Palesa and Kholeka and I was left all alone. The cramps did not subside so I just went to get the painkillers that Leka told me to take from her room and I drank them. They knocked me off pretty good honestly. I woke up to hearing some voice in the room and I looked around opening my eyes and spotted him by the window wide open. Seemingly smoking maybe.

“Tshepo”,I softly say and he ends the call that he is on and turns to me.

“When did you arrive?”,I ask and he comes to the bed.

“A few hours ago,you were bleeding”,he mentions and that is when I noticed that I have changed clothes.

“I am on my periods”,I quickly said.

“I noticed”,he gets on the bed and I snuggle closer to him and he holds me.

“I am still feeling the cramps but they are better now”,I say.

“Do you need the doctor?”,he asks and goes to playing with my ears.

“No,What were you doing in Pretoria?”,I ask him and look at him.

“I was doing some business”

“What business?”

“Logistics business”, I sit up and look at him.

“You are starting a business?”

“Maybe”, I frown.

“I guess you do not want to jinx it”, he keeps quiet and pulls me to his lap.

“I missed you so much”, He kisses my neck. I moan at that.

“I missed you too. Where is my gift?”, he stops kissing my neck.

“Can’t we bond first?”, he asks.

“We can baby, I am sorry but you bought it right?”

“It is not like I had a choice”

“You do, You always do”, I perk his lips.

“Mmmh”

“Will you take me to the beach?”

“I will do anything for you”, I smile.

“Please sleep over”

“Okay”, he lays me on the bed and starts to tickle me then presses his body on me.

“Tshepo uzongibulala!(Tshepo you will kill me!)” I say in between the laughs.

Chapter 17

At this point I miss my dad for one thing right now and one thing only! How he can take care of my period cramps when they get really bad that I cannot handle them. It has been 2 days of me being on my periods and for a moment Leka came up with a remedy from her cousin that helped me for a day only of which was yesterday and I was fine. I was able to go to school and actually not laze around and cry myself feeling sorry. Tshepo did not know what to do the only thing he would recommend is me chewing ice and swimming in it! Imagine. Sigh, he was trying to be helpful shame though I snapped at him and he practically left me in the hands of other kids and there after he left, I cried my eye balls out thinking he was never going to come back. Palesa tried calming me down as my emotions were all over the show. I could not control them and the fact that I was in abdominal pain was not making things any easy. My flow is heavy though much to my discomfort but I was glad that Leka did something that helped me with the pain and I had been good until an hour ago.

I had just came out of the library from studying. It is the afternoon and I stayed in so I can prepare for my upcoming tests. I thought University was easy, the partying fun and also not being dictated and all but to be quiet honest this is not the Varsity life that I had ordered last year.

I have a study group that I study with and they are productive people shame. That really helps me because with the boyfriend I have. Failing is not an option, the pressure is there for myself as well to make myself proud in the moment of it all. Having to catch up on the weeks I missed

while I was being transferred was too much at times but now I have found the balance of it all.

“Lethi are you okay?”, One of my study mates asks.

I shook my head.

“I am not feeling well guys, I think that I will go home”, They nod.

“We will send the summarised notes in the group”, I stand up and pack my things.

“Thank you guys, Bye. I will see you tomorrow”, I take my things and then walk out of the library.

I walk to the parking lot and I take out the car keys and open the car. I get inside and throw my bag on the passenger seat and quickly put on my seat belt.

I grab some water from my bag and so as the painkillers that Leka gave to me and I drink two pills and then placed the bottle on the seat when I was done. I rested my head on the steering wheel as tears streamed down my cheeks.

“God, I am sorry.”, I do not know what I was apologizing for but I mostly apologise for Eve’s sins that have got us here!

I find myself sobbing as I hold onto the steering wheel for a moment then I wipe my tears and sniff. I just have to soldier on and get home. Bath then rest, I know I will wake up pretty much better.

I start the car and I drive out of campus heading to the north side of the City. I take my water bottle and I drink some of the water. I call Palesa and she answers within time.

“Hey Love”

“Where are you?”,I ask.

“I am home”

“Oh okay, I am on my way there. Please check if my pyjamas are clean for me”

“Okay”

“Did Tshepo get the snacks I asked?”

“Yes he did, Leka got them”

“Okay Thank you”,I say

“Are you okay? You do not sound okay”

“I am juat tired”

“Oh Okay then. See you in a bit”

I nod and hang up. I increase the speed a bit and in no time I reach the apartment and I park the car and take my things then I get out of the car. I lock it and I make my way up the stairs and I feel a sharp pain surfacing on my abdomen. I bend and hold onto the rail,I breathe in and out and I make my way up the stairs slowly until I reach the end and then make my way to the apartment. I open the door and get inside, I find Palesa watching some tv while Leka is doing some work on her laptop.

“Leka, the cramps are back. Can you make that remedy again?”,She gets up and so as Palesa.

“Maybe you should see a doctor now Lethi”,Palesa mentions.

“I will book an appointment for tomorrow morning”,I say.

“Please. I will go make that remedy”,Leka says and moves to the kitchen.

Palesa helps me to the bathroom as I asked to get a bath before I sleep. She says she is going to make some food for me so that I do not sleep with an empty stomach.

I open the bath water and then I open the toilet and pee. After that I wipe myself and the toilet paper comes back soaked in blood. I quickly get up from the toilet seat and close the water and take off my shoes.

Blood gushes down my legs that very moment and the cramps come back ten times worse than before. I start crying all over again at the unbearable pain. I end up going on my knees and holding onto the toilet seat.

“Guys! Help!”,I scream.

I feel something sliding down between my legs and the door opens.

“Lethi!..”

“Oh my God”,I was crying.

“I am scared to look, How much blood am I loosing? Am I dying?”,I ask and Palesa is frozen not talking. Leka has hands over her mouth.

“Call an ambulance Palesa”Leka rushes to me as Palesa leaves the room.

“Kholeka what is going on?”,I ask.

“Come here”,She holds me and I wrap my arms around her waist.

“Lethi, I will need you to keep your eyes open even when you feel tired”,She says.

“Okay”

She pulls me to the side and then Palesa comes back.

“They want some details”,She says with a phone in her hands.

“Hang up and call Tshepo and tell him to get here quickly, Useless, What if someone is dying and they ask unnecessary information wasting time?!”,Palesa nods and hangs up.

She goes out and comes back with my phone and she dials on it.

“Am I dying Leka?”,I ask.

“No you are not Sweetie. I have to tell you something okay?”,I nod my head.

“Do not look yet but a baby came out of you”,My heart stops.

“I am not pregnant Leka”,I say.

“You were. The baby is not good. It is not looking good. I think you miscarried. The baby is not crying or moving”,I cry.

“I am not pregnant I swear! I am on my periods”,She hushes me for a moment.

Palesa looks at us.

“He is on his way”

Leka asks that she brings a towel and she does. She wraps it around me and asks for another one before she sits me down and I get to see the

pool of blood from where I was kneeling and a very tiny thing laying there in a foetus position.

“Should we wrap the baby in a towel or cloth?”, I felt like vomiting that moment.

“I do not know, I think we should wait. Is it moving?”, Palesa responds in a shakey voice.

“No, it is not fully developed yet. She must have been 5 months or less pregnant”, I cry after that.

Palesa comes and she holds me in her arms.

“Everything will be okay Lethi, we did not know”

“I did not know Palesa. I was not ready, I....”, she hushes me.

I feel tired too at the same time.

“Lethi!”, We hear Tshepo’s voice calling out for me.

“In the bathroom!”, Kholeka responds and he appears by the door.

He stops his tracks and scans through the room.

“What is going on?”

“She had a miscarriage. We need to get her to the hospital”, Leka says and takes the baby and wraps it in a towel.

“I did not know Tshepo. Please believe me”, He swallows.

“Tshepo please move it, I know it is shocking we all are but Lethi needs medical care”, His feet move and he comes towards me.

He kneels and carries me off the floor. The towel is already soaked.

He walks out of the bathroom with me crying in his arms. Leka and Palesa follow after us.

He gets out of the apartment and gets down the stairs and goes to the parking lot and he places me in the back with Leka and Palesa gets in the front. Leka has the baby wrapped in her arms. Tshepo starts the car and drives off to the hospital.

The beeping of the machines was what I heard first. My throat feels dry and my eyes feel heavy as well. I try opening my eyes for a while and I succeed after some time.

“Lethi, you are awake”, Sis Buyi is by my side in a second.

She has a faint smile on her face.

“Where am I?”, I ask.

“The hospital. Thought that we almost lost you”, she says.

“Why?”

“You were bleeding alot. The doctor has checked on you. He said your blood pressure was high. The baby would not have survived. He recommened that you attend therapy for the attack, your family and the baby too”, Tears stream down my cheeks.

“Where is Tshepo?”, I ask.

“They went to check on the baby’s body with Nathi. He will be back. Do you want to see your baby?”

“It is dead”, I say.

“Yes but maybe for closure”,I look at her.

“I did not get pregnant on purpose.”

“We know. Tshepo told us you were on a contraceptive”

tears blur my vision for a moment.

“I want to see Tshepo”,I say.

“He will be here..”

Tshepo and his brother walk inside the room and I swallow.

“Let us give you some space”,Buyi kisses my forehead and she walks out with her husband.

Tshepo stands there in silence.

“I am sorry”,He comes to my side and pulls a chair and sits down.

“I am sorry for getting you pregnant”,he says and I look at him.

“We did not know that I could get pregnant even with that protection”,I say.

“Still, it is my fault. You...”,he keeps quiet and swallows.

I sigh and wipe my tears.

“We are going home tomorrow”,I just nod and bite my bottom lip.

“Can we hug?”,He nods and comes closer. I wrap my arms around him and he heaves a heavy sigh.

“I am sorry”,I say

“Me too Nana”,His raspy voice becomes more raspy.

It is my fault. I should have seen this and went to the doctor sooner.

I was discharged sooner than I thought. I was sad, really sad. Yes I did not expect to be pregnant but that image of that day played vividly in my mind. Tshepo said we are going home today so I guess we are going to his house then. He walks in the ward as I was waiting for him and he has a big bag and he places it on the bed and opens it. I have bathed already and I did not want to wear what I came here wearing so I was still in the hospital gown. He opens it and takes out my cosmetics and then some floral dress and sandals.

“Should I wear this?”, I asked.

“Yes”, I nod and he helped me off the bed.

I then went to the bathroom and changed into the dress. I wore the sandals and went out of the bathroom. He was waiting for me. I took the hairspray and spray my hair. I wore some vaseline on my lips and then he put everything else away . He closed the bag.

“I have already signed the discharge forms.”, He says.

“Okay then”, He sighs and looks at me.

“Your parents know you are here as they are your next of kin”, my heart drops to my stomach.

“Where are they?”, I ask.

“Buyi told the doctor that can you see them after so that they do not disturb your recovery and he agreed. Which was tough but he did”,I hug him.

“Thank you”

“Let us go”,I break the hug and we walk out of the hospital. We get to his car and it is very clean.

He opens the door for me and I get inside and soon he does as well. After that he starts driving. I felt drowsy.

“Please wake me up later”

“Okay”

I close my eyes and rest as the car moved.

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I opened my eyes and it seemed like we were still on the road. It was dark now. Tshepo was listening to some house music at that. I sat up from my seat.

“I bought some food, it must be cold now”,he says grabbing the Steers paper bag from the back and hands it to me.

“Where are we going?”,I ask opening the paper bag.

“My home”,my heart beats on my chest.

“I thought we were going to your place”

“We need to be cleansed Lethi for the baby”,I swallow and nod.

“Your brother will be there?”

“He will arrive tomorrow”, I just nod.

I look out of the window and we are on a gravel road. We pass some not so okay houses and some I cannot even see how they are as it is dark only those that the headlights shine on.

We get to a nicely fenced house and Tshepo parks on the outside of the gate. It looks like it has a big yard. He gets out of the car and opens the gate. I am very nervous. He gets inside the car and drives in a bit then gets out and closes the gate. I see from afar a figure standing by the veranda of the house. There is a rondavel and two small rooms then a big house. As the car approaches I see a man standing by the Veranda watching as the car parks upfront. Tshepo sighs and he gets out of the car. I put my food away.

“Hawu Bonginkosi uwe loh Ndodana!(Bonginkosi is that you Son?)”, The man says as his voice is loud enough for me to hear.

“Yebo baba”, Tshepo has another name? Wow.

The man stands in front of Tshepo. He offers a handshake to him and he gladly takes it.

“You do not visit anymore ever since you went to Durban with your brother. All you do is send money.”, the man says.

“I-I need your help baba”, Is that his father?

I am asking myself those questions. Tshepo talks lowly and the man listens attentively. He then frowns and then it is gone. He looks towards the car and the old man talks to him and Tshepo just nods and comes towards the car to my side. He opens the door and I look at him.

“Let’s go inside”,He says.

“I am scared”,I say

“Don’t be”,He unbuckles my belt.

I get out of the car holding onto him and he pulls me to him and closes the door behind me. I look down as we go towards the man and we stand infront of him.

“Sawubona Ndodakazi(Hello)”,The man greets.

“Yebo baba”

“Get her inside the house”,Tshepo leads me inside.

It looks so beautiful. Like Buyi’s house. It has nice couches and for a place that seems to be in the rural area this house looks nice. He sits me down on the couch and then the man appears.

“Your brother moved to Capetown to live with his mother since he has school. I am all alone here,Makoti are you hungry?”,I am not even married here.

“I bought food for her on the way”,Tshepo says.

“She needs to rest, I have the white chickens here in my yard. We will use those tomorrow”,The man says.

“Ngiyabonga baba”,Tshepo says.

“I am glad you remembered home”

This will be a long journey. I look at Tshepo and he looks at me.

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I did not sleep much. Tshepo ran some last minute errands with his baba at night and I was told to rest. He came back after midnight to the room that we were allocated to and he took off his clothes and just slipped in bed and I snuggled closer to him and he let me be. That helped me sleep.

We woke up at the early hours of morning. The sun had not risen as yet when we had to leave. There were three white chickens that we had to leave with. Some woman was fetched and she was wearing scary things. She had feathers on her. I was scared of her, I will not lie. She smelt weird and did not even wear shoes, she had some beads around her hair. I have never encountered such before. I was praying internally as she sat next to me in the car while Tshepo was driving and his 'baba' was next to him in the front seat. The chickens were on baba's lap. I could not even hold one. This is very scary. The lady turned to me as the car moved.

"How old are you?", Tshepo looked at her through the review mirror.

"I am 19 years", I mention.

She nods and starts to burp really loud. It was scary.

"Do not be scared, I will not do anything to you", She says and keeps on burping.

The chickens start making noise in the cardboard that they were in.

"Where is her family?", The scary lady asks and Tshepo clears his throat.

"In Durban. There are some complications", she just nods.

“Have they been informed?”, Why is she asking a lot of questions?

“Not yet”, the man is quiet in the car.

The car comes to a stop and we are told to get off the car. I am wearing a dress and have a shawl around my shoulders. The lady takes her small bag and she takes out some white candles and then she lights them up while chanting the Phakade clan names. The chickens get restless.

“What will the child’s name be?”, I looked at Tshepo.

“It will be...”

I am drinking some tea and the sun is already out. I haven’t eaten yet since we came back from the river. I was scared for a moment that I was going to drown in there even though I could swim but it was very dark. I feel a bit warm now than I did when I came back here from that little ceremony that was done. I am sitting outside on the Verander. Tshepo disappeared with his baba inside the house and I have been sipping this tea for hours. I was hoping it would keep me warm quickly but it only did half the trick.

He walks out of the main house and stands in front of me before he crouches next to me and we both stare onto the green yard that the view leads to the dusty road ahead.

“Thank you”, I look at him.

“For being here”, I continue and he takes my hand into his and kisses it.

“Sit down so you can tell me about your family”,I say patting on the space next to me on the grass mat.

This place is very peaceful. I like it very much. He sits down next to me and he looks at me.

“What do you want to know?”,He asks.

“Who is Bonginkosi?”,He looks at me.

“It is my second name. My father gave me that name and no the one inside the house is not my biological father. He is my uncle. My mother’s older brother. My parents never married,Phakade is my mother’ maiden surname. Our extended family is somewhere, where my uncle knows, I have a little brother, around your age. He is my father’s child but my mother took him in. We do not know his family from his mother’s side. He went to Capetown.I have an aunt. You will meet her one day”,He says and looks at me.

“She will love you”,He smiles and I do the same.

“Are you sure about that? ”

“Yes”

“I am a snob”,I say.

He chuckles.

“A great snob”,He pulls me to his chest and I rest my head there.

“I love you Phakade Lami”

Chapter 18

It has been a few days since the loss of our child. The child we did not know or prepare for. I could not sleep well some night. I would wake up and just cry my eye balls out thinking of the day where the bathroom was full of my blood. I was scared, scared that any moment I would step in that space that everything will come back and replay itself. Palesa and Leka would try to change between each other and I would sleep with them in bed but Tshepo saw it best to just take me and go to his place to live with him for a little while as I will be under his watch and the flashes would not be there. We never talked much of our unborn child or have discussed the unreadiness that the death of it came with. If I knew I was pregnant maybe it would have been less scary to remember in that sense.

Maybe what is bothering me the most is that through all of this I need my family. I need my mother to comfort me. Yes Tshepo is there but he also has his cross that he is carrying and I am trying to be okay for him even though he does not mask his emotions easily. I think he is trying to be strong for me and wants to be there for me. I appreciate it so much that he does not give up on me even when I deprive us of sleep.

I am seated on the high chair in the kitchen. He is outside taking his morning smoke before he takes me to school. I have been trying to get into the groove of balancing school and my personal life and I seem to be failing these days. I have not prayed in a long time. I am not a prayerful person but today I was reminded of my grandmother when she would blast her church music in the early hours of morning before she went to church. I remember this other one she loved too beside

Sfiso Ncwane's songs. I do not remember it properly but it talks about tears being wiped. Well I am tired of crying now and having those nightmares. I just want to sleep and be peaceful for a moment. I wish I can go back to Tshepo's family home. That place is peaceful.

"Lethi are you getting ready?", I turn and Tshepo is leaning by the kitchen wall.

I pull my gown together as he stares at me.

"I am not well", He seems concerned.

"What is wrong?" he asks while coming closer.

"I am tired. I do not think I will get through the day", He nods.

"Do you want to sleep?", I nod my head with tears prickling my eyes.

He comes and embraces me in his arms and heaves a heavy sigh. I hold onto him.

"I am sorry for all of this", he mentions.

He has been apologizing every chance he got. It is not his fault. We did not know and there is no reversing everything we saw. He most probably feels the same way I am feeling.

"Can I go and see my grandmother?", I ask.

"Do you want me to take you there?"

"Please"

"Okay"

He lets go of me and then he wipes my tears.

“Lets go and get you ready”,I nod.

He helps me off the high chair and I get down. We go together to the bathroom and I open the bath water and I take off the gown. He watches me as I do so. Soon I close the water and I strip off my pyjamas and he strips off his clothes as well. We get in the bathtub together and he places me between his legs. I rest my head on his chest and silence consumes us.

“Baby”

“Mmmh?”

“Do you wish your mother was still alive?”

He keeps quiet for a moment.

“Yes”,he caresses my shoulders.

“No one can replace her but I will try to be there for you and stick with you through just like she would have”,I say and look at him. He perks my lips.

I then let the water that was in his hands slide down my body.

We finally bath after some time of sitting in the water. We get out and he drains the water out of the bathtub. We got to the main bedroom and I take my cosmetics and moisturize and he does the same with his. I get dressed in some tracksuits and then get done. He finishes getting dressed and he takes the car keys and I take my phone.

We walk out of the house and I rush to the car and I get inside. He comes after some time and gets inside as well.

He starts the car and then he drives out of the yard and drives to the other side where my grandmother's house is. I curled myself on the seats of the car as he was driving.

"Do you need anything?", He asks.

"No thank you", he nods.

"I will wait for you", He says and I nod and give him a kiss.

I then breathe in and out before getting out of the car. I jog my way to my grandmother's house as Tshepo parked a few houses away from my home. I get to the gate and I stand outside the gate for a while.

It has been months since I came here and I am scared. I do not know what to expect. I try to calm down and I see Tshepo step out of the car. I look at him for a moment before I get inside the yard. I make my way to the front door and I knock on the door hard and quickly as the nerves kicked in hard. My heart was beating in a pace that I could not handle. I felt like my heart was about to come out of my mouth. My hands were shaking as I kept on knocking.

"Haibo uzobulala umnyango!(You will break the door!)", The door opens and my grandmother stands in front of me.

"Lethi!? Oh Mzukululu ka Gogo(Granny's child)", She pulls me into her arms and I cry. She also cries at the same time.

"Awu siyabonga Jesu, Siyabonga Simakade, Awu nkosiyami!(Oh thank you Jesus, Thank you Lord)", She sings praises to God.

My mother appears behind her with my brother following behind her.

“Lethi?”, She quickly comes and wraps her arms around me as I get squashed between them.

“I am so sorry baby, I am so sorry. ”, Ny mother says.

Honestly I am not thinking of what happened. I am just happy to be in the presence of people who I love and are my family.

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I have been served anything that can give me a heart attack but mostly I have been served a home cooked meal. My grandmother is sitting in front of me as I am having tea with condensed milk. It has always been one of her favourites to be quiet honest. I feel at home and for a moment I feel like I am okay. Just okay.

“Where have you been? We have been looking for you everywhere?”, It has been a question I have been waiting for since I came back.

The little reunion show is over. Now I am being questioned.

“We have been worried. I could not sleep at night not knowing where you were”, My mother mentions.

“I was hiding from Samke”, I say and she swallows and looks down.

“I am sorry I was not there to protect you Lethi”, my mother says.

“You know what hurts the most mom? Is that strangers jumped to help me and make sure I am okay. That I am protected from danger and believed me without even hearing Samke’s lies and putting my life in jeopardy and my own parents did not. It felt like you guys turned your backs against me and favoured Samke. That is why I stayed away because I am not safe”, My mother swallows.

“I am deeply sorry by baby. Please forgive us”,I sigh.

“It will take time”,I say.

“I diregistered in pietermaritzburg”,She swallows and nods while looking down.

“I am sorry, I am sorry that we hindered you from studying instead of jumping to protect you”,I nod and sip my tea.

“Is there a mark where...Where she”,She could not even say it.

I nodded my head and put my tea down. My grandmother was quiet. I stood up and I took off my jacket and top and revealed my shoulder to her. I looked at my mother and she flinches there after she gets up on her feet and embraces me in her arms.

“I am sorry my baby. I am deeply sorry”

“It is okay”,I just want to move past this already.

She cries for some time then she let go of me and sits next to me. I wear my top as well.

“I am glad you are back home Lethi”,My grandmother smiles sweetly.

“I will not be staying gogo”

They look at me.

“Why?This is your home Lethi. You cannot wander around when you have a home”,My grandmother speaks.

“I know Gogo but I do have a place to stay. I am okay where I am....I am just here to tell you something”,I say and they both look at me.

“What is it?”,My mother asks concerned.

“I-I-I fell pregnant”,My grandmother gasps.

“No Lethi!”,My mother says softly but with firmness in her voice.

“Kodwa Lethi”,disappointment cannot be hidden from my grandmother’s voice.

“I am sorry”,I say and cast my eyes on the floor.

My mother sighs.

“I did not know I was pregnant when I miscarried the child a few days ago. It was a baby boy”,My mother cries and holds me into her arms.

“I am sorry Lethi, I am so sorry”

“He was tiny, he..he..he did not grow fully. I did not know he was growing inside of me mah. His tiny body is all I see when I close my eyes with it laying in a pool of blood”,My mother flinches

I cry and she tries to hush me. I release a painful cry and she holds me tightly onto her chest.

“You do not deserve this nana. You are young for that trauma. I am sorry I was not there for you”,My mother says.

My grandmother stands up and goes to the kitchen. She comes back with a glass of water and hands it to me.

“Drink up”,I take it with my shakey hands.

I drink up and it is sugared water. I calm down after some time so as my mother.

“Where is the father of the child?”,My grandmother asks.

“He..He is there.”

“His family needs to come and do right by this issue”,My grandmother says and I nod.

“I will talk to him”,She nods.

I sigh, I feel like some weight has been lifted off me.

“As much as I am disappointed but I do not wish you went through that Lethi”,My mother says and I smile faintly.

I stay with them for a little while longer and I even get to get some sleep that I have been craving for the past few days. I hope everything works out good from here on wards.

I still live with Tshepo and things these two days have been okay. I am able to get some proper rest. My study group has been off help too with getting the work that I need to get through for the days that I have not been at school for. Tshepo went to get some food for me. Well some snacks since his house does not have that. I was craving some chocolate and the sweetheart that he is went to get some of that. I am on my Laptop and books are scattered on the floor. I opened Tshepo’s speaker to listen to some music while I am studying. There is a knock on the door before it gets opened and sis Buyi walks in.

“Hey Lethi!”,Does she not work or something?

“Hello sisi”,Her sister follows after her and I greet.

“Where is Tshepo? Why are you sitting alone?”,She asks

“He went to get some snacks for me to study in”

“Lucky you”,Nobuhle says and sits on the couch.

“Well I bought some cake for you”,Sis Buyi says and goes out of the house.

I carry on with my work.

“How is school Lethi?”,Nobuhle asks.

“It is tough but ut is going okay”,she nods.

“Mmh, I nevee thought that Tshepo would date long term”

“Meaning?”,I ask her.

“That he is committed to you. Which is beautiful to watch”,she says.

“Oh Thank you I guess”

“I mean I have known him for as long as my sister has been with his brother and he is realky committed to you. Age is not even a number. Which is beautiful”,I just faintly smile at her.

She is talking too much. Buyi comes back and she hands the cake to me. I remove my books and put them on the side.

“Thank you”

“I know it has been a tough couple of days. I do not know how you are feeling but I sympathize with you. I will be here for you when you need me with Tshepo”,I nodded.

“Thank you so much for everything”,I say and she nods.

“Pleasure”

“Why cake though?”, I ask while opening the box and drool over the chocolate cake.

“I just did not know what to buy”, We laugh.

“Thank you so much anyway”

“I hope everything lasts forever. The great moments”, She mentions.

“Me too”, I really hope they do.

I stand up and go to the kitchen and get them pieces. After that I come back and we sit together and eat cake while they share stories. I am just listening attentively. I wonder, really wonder why Sis Buyi does not have a child yet. I mean she is in her 30's with her husband so I do not understand what they are waiting for. Even if it is one child or maybe they are not ready yet and that is okay. They are in their early 30's so there is still time for them to have plenty of children in the future.

I really hope that we heal from this with Tshepo and this does not stop us from loving each other and blaming each other on things we have no control over. I hope we really heal and I hope that even though it will take time but we stick together through it. I do not wish to lose him at the moment. He is all I have and trust at the moment. Even my own family I cannot trust fully with my life as I do with him. He has proven to me that I should trust him no matter what and I will do that through and through.

Chapter 19

I have always dreamed of what my wedding day would look like. Marrying a man who is over my imaginations and with the high expectations. I did not though go into detail of how I would imagine my life married but I did imagine life with Ntando and I at one point married and I saw myself as a rugby WAG with the rate that Ntando was good in Rugby but that is not something that would happen. I had never imagined my life turning out like this, beautiful is the word. Yes in other's eyes it may not seem normal or beautiful or even ideal as my parents have always wished the best for me. Marrying a man that went to university. The good boy or the path that my father is living but that is not the case with me. For the past 6 years I have been with man who is rough around the edges. Many do not understand him and still do not but I do.

He may not seem perfect but is perfect for me.

Today I am getting married, to the man I have been with since I moved to my grandmother's place. I did not even think I would fall for a man of his caliber but I did and I still do. A part of me feels blessed. Many have been saying that marriage for a man like him is never something that crosses his mind and you will either end up a girlfriend or his baby mama and a wife is something far fetched but here I am. Ready to be one with Tshepo and be his forever.

I am at my father's house. As much as I wanted to be escorted out of my grandmother's house but I am a Nkosi after all. My friends are all here but most especially Palesa is here with me. She has been there for

me through the years and throughout the processes of me getting married.

There were ups and downs. More especially from my family not approving me of getting married to Tshepo. Firstly the reputation he has around the neighbourhood, secondly being the age gap between us. My mother wanted me to blink twice if I am in an abusive relationship because of me being young and that maybe Tshepo is holding me hostage or against my will but I assured her that I want this as much as he wants it. My grandmother did not have a problem with Tshepo and I's age difference but his character that they all know from street talk.

They most disapproved the fact that he has no solid career thus I trying to voice out and mention that he is self employed. Still much to their disapproval. It took months in order to get through the lobola process and after that we hopped onto planning the wedding without wasting any time.

I am in the bathroom in my bedroom hugging the toilet for dear life. Yesterday I was excited but today I am scared. I am going to be someone's wife in just a few hours and I am feeling anxious enough to make me vomit.

"Lethi come out please!", It is Palesa she has been knocking since an hour ago.

"I do not want to come out!", I mention.

"We have to be at the alter in less than an hour"

"I am scared"

“Talk to me”,I wipe my lips and then stand up from the floor.

I go towards the door and unlock it before I open. She looks at me.

“Are you pregnant?”,She asks and I laugh.

“No, I am not. I took a test yesterday.I am just nervous”,She nods.

“You will look beautiful and you are going to become Tshepo’s wife. This is an exciting experience and you get to spend the rest of your life with him.”,I smile.

“I do want to spend the rest of my life with him”,She smiles.

“I am so happy for you. Tshepo is good for you”,I giggle.

“He is huh? I never thought”

We laugh.

“Alot of people do not approve but what if you guys believe in each other then ignore everyone else. ”,I sigh.

I give her a hug and wrap my arms tightly around her body.

“Thank you friend. Thank you for supporting me”

“I am your best friend. It is what I should do”,I nod and then we break the hug.

“Well let us get me ready. I do not want to keep my fiance waiting”,Palesa laughs.

“Let us get you ready then”.

I go and brush my teeth and after that wash my face before I stare at my reflection through the mirror. I feel my nerves subsiding a bit but I

am still nervous. Tomorrow we will be going to Tshepo's family home for the traditional stuff. All of this just makes me sick as the moments are happening and they are not far where I can be excited that they are going to happen and have to imagine how they would play out. I sigh and wash my hands before I get out of the bathroom. The stylist is already waiting for me for over an hour to help me get ready. What Lethi wants is what Lethi gets. That is what Tshepo said and I want a big fairytale wedding. I want flashy and everything beautiful that is what I wanted but most of all I want everyone to see me become Mrs Phakade and those that did not believe in us to swallow their words.

I sit on the high chair and the stylist greets me.

"Nervous?", I nod my head.

"Everything will be okay, drink here", She takes a glass of bubbly and hands it over to me.

One thing I am glad off as well is the fact that Samke is admitted in a mental institution. She will not be coming out any time soon. I never held her craziness against Londeka. Londeka has been nothing but a sweet big sister over the years and it would be hypocrite of me to let her carry sins she did not commit.

"Tell me how you met your fiance. Maybe it will calm your nerves down. It does with other brides", the stylist mentions.

"I was 17 when I met him", She smiles. I was actually fascinated by the car he was driving. An M3 in a township baffled me so much but that did not mean I was interested in Tshepo.

The lady got on with doing my make up. I wanted something simple yet elegant. I wanted to look beautiful without putting on a lot of eye shadow but keep it natural. The door opens and Bayanda walks into the room wearing a red suit. I never thought I would ever see him in one.

“Haibo, Are you having cold feet?” Bayanda says.

“No, I was just in need of a moment”, I say.

“Your parents were happy for a moment until Palesa busted their bubble and said you are getting ready”, I sigh.

“Well, I am marrying Tshepo no matter what”, He just nods.

“Is everything else okay at the venue?”, I ask.

“Yes, do not worry. I checked if things are in order and they are.”

“Thank you so much Yanda”

“Let me go and make sure everyone is ready. You can be late but not everyone else”

“Okay”, he walks out of the room after that leaving me to get ready.

I was still feeling agitated and nervous as I was waiting inside the car. Palesa told me that Tshepo has already arrived and he is waiting for me to walk in. I am over 30 minutes late but I tried my best to get here as quickly as possible. The car door opens and my dad lets out his hand for me to take and I take it.

“You look beautiful Baby”, I smile.

“Thank you dad”

I pull my dress up and he helps me in the process.

“Are you sure about this?” ,He asks.

“Yes I am,very”

“You can turn back Lethi, you do not have to do this. You are 23 years old. You sti have a life ahead of you. You just obtained your degree, don’t you want independence ? There are many men out there. Not every man you meet first is your soulmate.” ,I look at my father.

“I love Tshepo and he is for me dad. I know it” ,He sighs and closes his eyes.

“Fine,I do not like him though.” ,I already knew that.

He pulls me away from the car. We get to the entrance of the venue. I feel like vomiting once again.

“Can I have some water?” ,I ask.

My dad nods and they get me some bottled water. I drink some up and there after I do breathing exercises before I nod at my father. He then helps me get ready and the music starts. I close my eyes for a moment before I open them and we start walking down the aisle. I could see him, standing at yhe front wearing a black and white suit. For the first time in my life, I see him wearing a Tuxedo. Tshepo is very handsome when he cleans up pretty well. It is like he is an innocent child and all his sins and all that is spoken about him and his previous crimes were all just rumors made just from utter lies and that he was just being painted bad when some of those things were true but I did not see that

in that moment. I saw the man who has been there for me more than anyone would. The man who would take a stand for me and the man who makes me smile even when I am angry at nothing. He is the man in situations of me being crazy or angry he will remain calm just for the sake of us and fixing things. I have learnt a lot from this man and patience and listening to one another being the most important thing of it all.

I find myself having tears streaming down my cheeks. He flashes a small smile when I get closer to him and I do the same and giggle in between my tears. Who is this man in front of me? This angel that I am gazing upon. He looks heavenly, like he was newly crafted overnight. I get to him and my father hands me over to him and looks at him for a moment.

“I do not care what you have done but I will kill you if my daughter is mistreated.”, you can hear the hatred in my father’s voice.

He hands me over to Tshepo and he nods after that. My father goes to his seat and everyone settles down.

“Umuhle....kakhulu(You are beautiful...very)”, Tshepo mentions and everyone hears him. They share a laugh.

I blush at that very moment.

The pastor starts the ceremony. We did not have our own vows. I was not prepared because I did not know what to say plus I was focusing on my nerves. In a matter of no time, I was Mrs Phakade under God and Witnesses.

Tshepo removed my veil when the pastor gave him a go ahead to kiss me. He stood for a while and just looked at me before he smiled at me and I blushed. He places his hand on my tiny neck and leans in to kiss me. He sucks on my bottom lip and I moan softly and he groans after that.

“Woah Bafo that is enough for today”, His brother holds him back and the people laugh.

I feel so embarrassed at the moment doing that in front of the elders.

“She is my wife now. I am permitted to kiss her anywhere”, Tshepo mentions before he goes in for another kiss and people ululate that very moment.

“Thank you Nana”, He says in between the kiss.

“I love you”, I mention and we break the kiss.

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We agreed that the reception will be at the township. Well we wanted at least the close family and friends to share that intimate moment of us being united before we let everyone else join in the festivities. It was going to be at my grandmother's house.

We travelled to my grandmother's house together and we arrived there. There were cars being spun on the road and already there were some of Tshepo's groom's men pouring some alcohol on the road.

“It is going to be a long day”, I say.

Tshepo's brother laughs as he looks at us through the rearview mirror.

“You wanted this and what Lethi wants. Lethi gets”, I look at Tshepo and he is not even paying attention. He is just playing with my ring. He has been hogging my hand since we left the wedding Venue.

“Lets skip the reception. I do not see the need we will eat wherever we are going”, Tshepo says.

“Haibo, I want the whole experience baby. Come”, we get out of the car and people are already singing wedding songs.

Tshepo seems to be over being around people but he is soldiering on for me. The tent is in the middle of the road and When we enter the area. I see that the decor is wonderfully done just the way I wanted it to be done. I feel so happy that nothing bad has ruined my day. We settle on our designated are and all the attention is on us. Did I ever mention that this man of mine hates attention. He does not like it. Well he married quiet the opposite because I am lovibg the attention I am recieving. My friends do not approve of my marriage as well. They are concerned that Tshepo will not provide for me the life we have always dreamt of but he does and more. I know my husband and one thing I have known over the years is that he provides without any fail.

I do not care what anyone says but what I am satisfied with. I am happy with my man here.

Speeches are made and my family emphasies on me coming home no matter what. Palesa wishes us luck, so as Tshepo’s friends as well with our marriage. They joke that Tshepo will now be hogged by me and would not be able to go anywhere with them now that I am here of which is not true. His family though is the sweetest I must say. The aunt

is here and she has the most tiny voice I have ever heard but her speech was heartfelt.

We get to eat at long last and I am feeling tired already but the party is far from over that I know. Tshepo gets up to make his thank you speech in the process.

“I did not want this big wedding. I did not mind going to get signed and have Lethi as my wife but she wanted this and it makes her happy. I even dressed up to look atleast presentable next to her”, People laugh.

He clears his throat and his left hand is shaking so he opts to tuck it in his pant pocket while the other is holding the microphone.

“MaNkosi, Thank you for everything. You have shaped me to half a man that society aproves. I would have never done it if I did not have you beside me. I want the best for you and I will give you the best for as long as I live Nana. We are both not easy at times but we make it work the best way we know. I have never been a husband before. My brother has but I know that his formula for his marriage will not be the same as the one for our marriage but I promise to be the best partner fit for you and you only”, He looks at me and I wipe my tears.

He puts the mic down and sits down. I fan myself. That is was short but sweet at the same time. I try to calm myself down before I stand up and give my own speech.

“I do not know what to say. Mainly because I am speechless but I promise to be a great wife and that I be a good daughter to your family. Thank you for making me an addition to your family and loving me to share your everyday with me as much as I would. I love you Phakade

Lami, You are indeed my forever sthandwa sami", I smile and sit down as well.

The day commenced well there after.

It is the following day and we are on our way to Tshepo's home stead. I am leaving with my parents as I have to arrive there and he introduced to their ancestors much to my grandmother's disapproval as she is christian. We get there and already there are people waiting for the festivities to start. I am not going to officially be Mrs Phakade. We get out and part of my family sings by the gate waiting for it to be opened as we came bearing gifts for Tshepo's family. After some time the gates are opened and we walk inside. I am soon taken away to get all that needed to be done out of the way. I get changed into Isidwaba and have the beads around my body. I wanted to have no top on and just leave my upper body bare but Tshepo disapproved that he did not want any man seeing where he sucks. Honestly this man, I did not even think of it that way. I wanted to honor my culture and look beautiful. Imagine what I would look like on Instagram. I will be hitting the charts of Twitter being the most beautiful snobbish Zulu bride. Either way I looked beautiful and I think one thing I looked forward to wearing is Isicholo with my attire. I looked beautiful that I was in shock that I am someones wife already.

I am escorted esgcawini with traditional songs. I do not know how to dance but today I am prepared to try my best and make it work.

Chapter 20

I am very tired and people around the area are still here even though it is past 7pm and people should be in their homes but they are still here celebrating. I want to bath and just rest. I want to sleep like a baby cuddling next to my husband. The nerves are over now and the excitement begins. Women have been giving me some advice that marriage is not really easy and I know that. Considering my parents failed marriage it has come to my attention that marriage is not easy but I am ready to try and fail trying at this marriage thing. I was in the kitchen and the attire has been off my body over 3 hours ago. I could not handle walking around with that heavy thing on my body. It was draining me as it is already. I was making some tea for some old lady that I do not know sitting in the living room of this house. The kettle clicks indicating that it is done and I pull the cup that I have shoved the tea bag inside with water. Tshepo's little brother Khalipha walks into the kitchen as I put everything that needs to be on the tray.

"Sisi, Bhuti is asking for you", he mentions.

"Bhuti Nathi?", I ask and turn with the tray ready to leave the kitchen.

"No, Bhuti Bonga", I still cannot get used to Tshepo's second name. They call him Bonginkosi when he is here.

"Okay, I will be with him in a second", He takes the tray from my hands.

"I will take it away for you"

"It is for that granny in the living room", He laughs.

“Gogo will surely wringle you just like Sisi Buyi but don’t let her”,He then walks away.

I sigh and walk out through the kitchen door making my way outside. I went to one of the rooms outside that Tshepo and I will sleep in and I found him seated on the little couch eating some cow meat with steam bread.

“Why are you eating alone?”,I ask and sit next go him.

He takes a bite from the meat and then he dusts his hands and looks at me.

“I am not eating alone”,He gestures for me to take some and I do.

I pop the steam bread and meat into my mouth and look at him smiling.

“You are beautiful bathini kombe? myeni wami(What do they say again? My husband)”,He frowns.

“Nana indoda ayikho yinhle iyabukeka(Nana a man is not beautiful he is lookable)”,I laugh.

“Oh please and who told you that?”

“It is commonly known”

I roll my eyes and he grabs some steam bread and meat.

“Well thats new”

He hands some to me and I take it.

“Do you like it?”,I nod my head.

“Suprisingly I am not choking and it is salty”,I reply.

“I will call Khalipha to bring something to drink”,I nod my head.

I rest my head on his shoulder as I carry on eating and he looks at me and I look at him.

“What?”,I ask.

“Nothing,Is it a crime to look at you?”

“No it is not”,he opens his arm and lets me rest on his chest.

“I am tired”

“Let us eat up so we can take a shower”,he mentions.

“I am full now”,He chuckles.

“Finish up then here”,I pop the last content into my mouth and he stands up and goes to the bathroom. I clear up everything and go to my bag and take out my new set of nightware. There is a knock on the door and he comea out of the bathroom and he goes to open the door. He speaks to someone and then he takes the tray that has the meat and left over steamed bread and he gives it to the person and takes the 2 Litre cold drink and closes the door. He comes and places the 2Litre drink.

“The water is ready”,He says and I turn to him.

“Come”,I pull him with his hand and we go to the bathroom.

We strip off our clothes and then we get inside the shower.

He wraps his arms around my waist and kisses my neck and starts nibbling on it.

“Did you get everything you wanted?”, He asks while his voice is raspy.

“Mmmh...yes”, I got that and more for my wedding day.

“I am happy then”, I bite my bottom lip as his hands trail down to my bums and squeezes them before he navigates them towards my thighs moving them up to my valve.

It was 6 am when my phone rang disturbing me from my beauty sleep. I was very tired and my body did not want wake up after the events of yesterday. I opened my eyes and Tshepo was not beside me. I took my phone and answered it.

“Hello”, I rub my nose and eyes.

“Hello baby, I am sorry to wake you up. I thought you were awake now”, It is my mother.

“I am tired mah”

“Mmmh, Anyway I wanted to check if you are still fine”

“I will not be back home anytime soon mah”, If that is what she thinks.

“Let us hope”

“Bye, we will talk later”, I say.

“Okay, Bye”, I hang up and throw my phone on Tshepo’s side of the bed and turn to lay on my stomach.

I close my eyes and try to fall asleep once more when there is a loud bang on the door. I groan and ignore it. I take Tshepo’s pillow and cover my face. There is silence for a moment and the door opens. I keep quiet

and try to get back to sleep when the covers are pulled off me and so as the pillow. I sit up straight frustrated.

“What the...”

“Akuvukwa ngalesi sikhathi mawuganile! Vuka uye emabhodweni, ngilinde itiyе kuyoze kube ini?(You do not wake up at this time when you are married! Wake up and go to the pots, How long should I wait for tea?)”, it is the old granny from yesterday.

“Phuthuma!(Hurry up)”, I look at her and then get out of the bed.

This, this is not what I signed up for when I said yes to Tshepo send his uncles to my house the week before the start of my negotiations. I did not agree to this. Tshepo never complains when I sleep in for some time so who is this lady but my grandmother will kill me if I backchat an elder.

She watches me as I get off the bed and try to head to the bathroom.

“Do not go and bath. You will bath later. Make your bed then come and make food for everyone”, She says and

I take the pillow and get off the bed. I make it while she watches me and she keeps on making remarks and shaking her head.

“You do not make your bed like this. OBonginkosi bavele bashade nje, yini lento leh?(Bonginkosi just takes whatever and marry it. What is this?)”

“I am not perfect mah but please do not try to make those remarks”, She claps her hands.

“Heeh

Are you talking to me like that?”,She asks.

I keep quiet.

“I am talking to you girl!”,She shoves me and pulls me by my pyjama top.

“This is not the city my girl. This is the Phakade house hold and you do as I say!”

She pushes me roughly and I do not fight back instead I loose some balance and land on my butt on the floor. She charges towards me.

“What is going on here?”

Tshepo is standing by the door. He is wearing a black top and blue work overall pants. The look on his face is displeasing.

“Your wife is disrespectful. She is backchatting me and calling me names. She was fighting me when I asked her to come and be busy like every wife should”

“I did not marry Lethi to be your slave Gogo. Leave my room and if Lethi wants to wake up at 5 in the afternoon so be it. She is my wife not ours”

“Bonginkosi kodwa...”,He raises his hand as an indication that she must stop talking.

“Gogo ngicela ungiphumele uhlukane nomfazi wami. Ningabhekani nokubhekana (Gogo please get out and leave my wife alone. Do not even look in her direction)”,The granny huffs displeased and she looks at me before she walks out of the room banging the door.

I breathe out. I did not even know I was holding in my breath. Tshepo comes towards me and pulls me up.

“Go and bath, we are leaving”,He mentions.

“I thought we were staying for a few days”,I mention.

“Lethi we are leaving”,I just nod and go to the bathroom.

I get inside and close my eyes. That granny is something else, I wonder why she is like this. I knew that some people will not like me but I did not expect this at all.

I take a shower and wash my body properly and then after that I get out of the bathroom and wrap my body in a towel. I get to the room and find Tshepo all packed up already.

“Phakade”,I say and he looks at me as I hold onto the towel.

“I am sorry, for makung you fight with your grandmother. I should have woken up early to avoid all of this”,I mention.

“You were tired and you needed to rest. Even so she would have been on your neck even if you tried pleasing her”,he says and puts my shoes in the suitcase.

“I know that some people will not like me in your family but...”

“But nothing Nana, Your family does not like me and I do not care. I only care that you fuck with me”,I smile.

“You are swearing and yes I fuck with you.”

He looks at me and smirks.

“You are swearing too,do not care what anyone says okay?”,I nod.

He pulls out a short and a top.

“Wear this”,I grab it and take my cosmetics.

“Isn’t a wife supposed to wear something longer?”

“You are mine not theirs”,Well folks he has spoken.

I got dressed after moisturizing and then he took our bags out.

I finished and walked out of the room. The granny was sitting on a bench outside watching the people who were here to collect the tent and left over things. She looks my way and shakes her head in disgust.

Tshepo is at the car already. His aunt comes out of the house and comes towards us as I go to the car.

“Haibo Bonginkosi seniyahamba?(You are leaving?)”

“Yes Ncane, We cannot stay anymore. Your aunt is making ut difficult”,Tshepo says.

“Oh,I was hoping you guys stay longer”,The aunt mentions disappointed.

“We will visit soon”,I say and she smiles.

“Okay then,travel well”,She pulls me into a hug.

I like her, she is nice. We break the hug and I get inside the car. Tshepo goes into the main house for a while before he comes back out and gets inside the car. I buckle up and he starts the car and reverses out.

“Can I rest a bit?”,I know that sometimes people when they are driving do not like it when the person they are travelling with is sleeling.

“Yes”

I nod and then make sure that I am comfortable before I close my eyes.

I do not know when we arrived in Durban but I woke up and I was in the main bedroom. I was very tired to be quiet honest and I feel much better than I did when I left that place. Tshepo was asleep next to me so I snuggled closer to him and wrapped my arms around him. He does the same and I look at him.

“I thought you were asleep”

“I can hear movements when I am asleep”, I nod my head and he looks at me.

“What time is it?”, I ask.

He grabs his phone from the pedestal and looks at it.

“It is 6pm.”

“Okay”, I get off the bed and he sits up.

I wear my shoes and go to the bathroom. I first do my business before I rinse my mouth and then I make my way to the kitchen. We have not done grocery shopping just yet but there is something I can work with. Tshepo comes into the kitchen and he goes and gets some water.

“We should go out for breakfast tomorrow. My treat”, I mention to him and he turns to me and drinks his water before he responds.

“I have a meeting tomorrow morning with Nathi. I will fetch you after then we can go”, I nod my head.

Tshepo and his brother had started a business together in logistics. It seems to be doing pretty good for them because I have not had Tshepo disappear for days in a long time of which I would have not handled it well if it was to happen. His brother quit his police job to work hand in hand with Tshepo in their partnership.

“Okay then. Should I boil or roast the chicken”, I ask.

He jumps onto sitting on the counter.

“Do not cook. You can order”, I smile.

“Thank you baby”, I am tired really.

I stand between his legs and stand on my toes and look at him.

“You are beautiful baby”, I say to annoy him and he frowns.

I laugh at that.

“I do not really know why you hate that”

“It does not make any sense to me Lethi”, I just shake my head.

“Well it does in mine.”

“What makes sense though is me between your legs ngidla kamnandi(Nicely)”, I gasp.

“Tshepo Phakade”.

“Why are you shocked Nana? You like it”, this man!

“Leave me alone”, He chuckles.

“That is why I put a ring on it. So I can have it 24/7”

“Stay away from me!”, I ran off and he jumped off the counter and came after me. I got in the living room and he caught me and we tripped. He landed on his back with me on top of him. He wrapped his arms around me tightly.

“Tshepo, I am out of breathe”, He chuckles as I breathe heavily. He kisses my forehead at that.

I really feel the heat from that running.

Chapter 21

I look at my wrist watch and I look at the time and then I sigh before I take my 3rd glass of coffee and I sip on it. I should be high bent overhyped right now with the amount of caffeine that I have consumed but I am not instead I am slowly getting pissed at the moment and I huff. He is over 2 hours late now. I just drink the last content of my cold coffee and then I call the waiter over and he comes.

“Yes ma’am”, The white little boy says.

“Can I have my bill please”, I say and he nods and walks away.

I sigh and my phone starts to ring and I look at it for a second and I let it ring. I sigh and I answer my phone.

“Nana”, I hear him sigh.

“Bonginkosi”

“Where are you?”

“I am still at the cafe”, I say.

“I am on my way”

“I am leaving”, I say.

Right now I am just tired and I do not have the energy anymore.

“Stay, I am coming there”

I sigh.

“Okay”

He hangs up and I just sat there. The waiter brought my bill and I thank him. I take out my card and I get onto paying. Tomorrow Palesa is leaving to stay in Port Shepstone. She got a job there but at least she will be an hour away. I am going to help her with leaving and I was hoping that I would accompany her with going there and helping her settle. I go onto social media and keep myself busy as I wait and after a few minutes Tshepo walks in through the Cafe doors and he stares at me from a distance before he makes his way towards me. I am lost in looking at him for a moment and my anger of being stood up vanishes for a few seconds. He looks good. I love this new him, the him that is more familiar with chino pants and loafers and Golf shirts instead of jeans and everything else that made him look, Ghetto. Now, now he wears like a business man. That man who wears a watch that fits perfectly around his wrist and blend well with his popping veins on his arms. I drool and watch him as he gets closer to my table and he then dips his head down and kisses my cheek. I get to inhale his scent and it sends shivers down my spine. I feel like pulling him closer to me and just bury my face on his hard chest.

“Phakade lami”, He smiles as he pulls away and leaves my nostrils embeded with his scent.

He goes around the table and grabs a chair and pulls it to sit next to me not opposite me like normal people would, this is not normal. Tshepo is not normal.

“Tshepo”, I tear my eyes away from him and I call the waiter to take my bill.

He watches me in silence as I am looking for a waiter and then one comes and he stands in front of us.

“Would you like anything?”,I ask Tshepo as I turn to him and he does not tear his eyes away from me.

“No”,I just shrug my shoulders and I give the waiter the bill and he says he is going to get the speed point.

Tshepo pulls out his wallet and he takes out a few hundreds and gives them to the waiter and he takes the bill and the money away.

Tshepo turns to look at me.

“Are you just going to look at me ?”,I ask.

“I am sorry for coming late”,I grab my bag and take out my wallet and place my card inside.

“It is okay,it did not matter”,I place my wallet in my bag and I stand up and he looks at me as I do so.

“I will see you at home Phakade.”

He stands up as well and I move away from the table. He follows after me. We get out of the cafe and I make my way to the car and he follows me. I unlock the car and get inside. He holds the door when I am about to close it.

“I need to go home,I am tired”

“Let me drive you”

I know he will not give up.

“And your car?”,I look at him.

“Do not worry about that”

I just nod and get out of the car. He blocks my way and I look at him.

“Can I pass?”

He moves out of my way swiftly and lets me through. I go around the car and I get inside the passenger seat and he gets inside the driver’s seat and then he starts the car and drives out of the parking lot and leaves his car there.

There is silence inside the car and the radio is playing some music.

“I was thinking”, I look at him.

“Of buying the house nextdoor and extend the house”, He mentions.

“Extend the house on what reasons?”, I ask.

“The space is small in the yard to extend the house to have more than one bathroom and also I need a room where I can get my things done. I am sure you also want some space for our clothes.”, He is right.

“I think that is a good idea”, I mention.

“I will be in touch with the agent then get someone to design what we want”, I nod my head.

There is silence between us.

“How many minutes should I give you some space?”

“6 hours”, I say.

“Ayi Lethi that is alot”

“Tshepo you litterally stood me up and did not even bother to send a message about you being late”, I say.

“I am sorry,I will never do it again”,He mentions.

“It is okay”,I say.

Honestly now I am over it really. He steals a glance at me for a moment.

“Do you need anything?”

“No”

He stops the car in the middle of the road and turns to me.

“Can I get to confirm that we are atleast slightly okay?”

Cars were hooting behind him. He just turned off the ignition.

“Tshepo cars want to move”

“Angeke ngizwe ngabo(I will not be told by them)”,This man.

Is he serious?

Someone got out of their car behind ours and comes to our car. I quickly give Tshepo a kiss and he smiles through it. I retrench from the kiss.

“That was not enough”

He pulls me by my cheeks closer to him and he gives me a kiss. I respond to it weakening to my knees. I forgive him already, I have forgiven him for him being late for our Brunch. A knock comes onto the window and knowing my husband he does not stop until he is satisfied and done. The knock becomes more aggressive and persistent and then Tshepo breaks the kiss.

“Yeyi wena Sthotho uvimbe indlela uthi asihambe laphi?!(You fool you are blocking the way, where should we go?!), There are three other men behind him complaining.

“Let us go”, I say to Tshepo.

He ignores me.

“This is my car and I will drive when I want to”

“We do not care if it is your road or not this is everyone's road and we should be using it!”, Out of nowhere the side of my window is crashed and I scream.

Tshepo gets out of the car and pulls out his gun and he cocks it before shooting in the air and I cover my ears. Tears stream down my cheeks as my lap is full of the broken glass. I open my eyes and Tshepo has the man who was going off him against the car.

“Who broke the window?”, The man looked terrified.

He pointed somewhere and Tshepo let him go and he went away.

“Tshepo!”, I called out for him but he ignored me. I was afraid to get out of the car so I stayed inside and waited for him to come back.

God I hope that he kills no one. I have never seen Tshepo in that state before. I know he pulls stunts but this. This is all new to me.

I was nursing his knuckles surprisingly I feel much better now that I am home and we are in our private space. For a moment I was scared. Scared that he will kill some random person for breaking the window of the car with his gun but he did not. Instead he fought that man until

he was unconscious even so when people were trying to get to him to stop as the person was not moving and blood was all over him, he did not stop. He carried on until his mind reminded him that he must stop.

We have not spoken since we left that scene and quiet frankly I am afraid that police will come here anytime to arrest him for beating that man. He does not flinch when I apply some Detol on his bruised knuckles instead he holds my tiny hand into his and I look at him as he does so. He swallows then lets out a low "Sorry", As I carry on with nursing his bruised knuckles and he does not say anything after that.

"You should keep your temper in check", He wanted to say something but he just nodded.

"I will", I nod and then I finish up and he holds my hand tightly.

I lean in and give him a kiss. That is what initially started this whole mess we are in. A mere Kiss!

"I love you okay?", He nods his head and pulls me into his arms.

I inhale his scent. I then hold onto him a bit tightly and a knock on the door disturbs us. It is persistent so I get off his grip quickly and I go and open the door. Nathi walks in.

"MaNkosi", I nodded and left them as he looked displeased.

I went to put away the first aid kit and I could hear them arguing.

"What would you have done if it was Buyi in that position huh?", For a second after Tshepo mentions that there was silence.

"You are putting the company in jeopardy but I will fix this", Nathi replies after his long silence.

I hear the door being shut and I sit on the bed. I just hope Tshepo did not kill that man, he walks into the bedroom and I stand on my feet and faintly smile.

“Let us go and get you cleaned up”, I walk up to him and get him to take off the bloody top.

He sighs and nods his head. I do not want to fight with him right now but be supportive of him and help him get through this. I do not blame his reaction. I could have been injured from the window break but through God's grace I did not.

It has been a full month since I got married and marriage life is, well something. You learn new things about your partner every single day. Tshepo does not want me to go and find a job and work. He wants to provide for me but he says if I am bored I can go back to school and further my degree and get an honours and further until I get a Phd. Well I took up on that offer and I am applying to study for my honours. I am fine with that. I have a degree and it is something no one can take away from me. I also do not want to work. I do not think it is within my desired capabilities to be a person of labour so if my husband wants an educated house wife then so be it.

I hope I do get accepted to study for my honours. Really that will keep me busy now that all my friends have lives away from Durban and plus I am married now so our schedules clash here and there. I was meeting up with my father today. He wanted us to talk about something and so he took time to meet up with me for lunch today. I am thinking of passing by Tshepo's work place just to pop in and say Hi. You know

boredom, but I will not be bored for long when the house extension starts. I will have a lot to do then.

We are meeting at The Terrace and so I look around the place before I spot my father seated. I walk towards his table and I pulled my chair and sat in front of him.

"Hello daddy", He smiles as he looks at me.

"You look beautiful", I smile.

"Thank you"

"I did not think you would come", He mentions.

"Why not?"

"After how our relationship has become rocky since...", He clears his throat and I just nod.

"I understand", I mention and the waitress comes to take my order and goes away.

"I am not here for that. How is your marriage?", he asks

"It is okay, I am learning new things along the way"

"About your partner?", He asks.

"Yes and just ways of how to handle situations within our relationship", He frowns for a moment.

"I thought you knew your partner"

"I thought I knew you too"

There was a pin drop of silence for a moment. He sighs and closes his eyes.

“You will never forgive me for my mistakes Lethi will you?”

“There is a mistake and then there are deliberate actions filled with ignorance. You dad did not make a mistake when you took Samke’s side without being fair and you did that because you wanted to make up for lost time on my life expense. You cheated on mom, why?”, I wanted answers. Answers that I have been craving for a long time.

“You will not understand”

“Mmmh”, My beverage arrives and I thank the waitress.

I look at my father.

“So far my marriage is going great dad. Just because You and mom’s marriage failed does not mean mine should. If the ideal men are like you as a partner then I do not want them. You are a great father and I will not hold that incident against you but as for a partner I would not wish to have one like you and Tshepo hopefully is not one.”, I say and he keeps quiet.

“That was a mouth full”, He says.

“Mmmh”

He stares at me for a moment and then he sighs in the mist of it all.

“I did not know you feel that way towards me”, he mentions.

“I am just disappointed in you dad. ”, I sigh while closing my eyes for a moment before I stare back at him.

“I have always looked up to you dad. Being the great father I have known most of my life and a great husband to my mother. When your infidelities came out in the open all of that shattered. You know Girls look to their fathers for the type of men they want in their lives. I wanted that all my life, what you and mom had but I never knew what was happening behind closed doors and now I say that give my husband a chance. He may not be the ideal type of man you would want for your daughter but if you gave Tshepo a chance you would realise that your daughter is happy”

He keeps quiet for a moment and sighs

“You are happy?”

I nod my head.

“Yes”

He bites his lips and he nods as well.

“Well I will try but I still do not like him. He is old for you”

“He is in his early 30s dad. It is not bad”, I take a sip off my drink.

He chuckles.

“He is old”

Well I do not care.

“You have grown. I think that is what scares me the most, I never thought you would get married this early in life right after university. I always thought you might first spend my money for years while working before you even find a stable boyfriend”

“It would have happened if I was your only daughter”,He keeps quiet for a while.

“I want all of you to get along.”

I smile at him and take a sip off my drink.

“Well I am not going to try getting along with your little loony bin thag is for sure”,I flash him a smile and he sighs.

He has to know that I will never try getting along with Samke. I do not even want her near me even if she gets released from the place.

We have some lunch together and after some time I tell him I have to leave before lunch hour is over and he understands and asks me to visit sometime. I will see and speak to Tshepo about that.

I get to the parking lot and get inside my car and I take out my phone and make a phone call. It rings twice before it is answered.

“Nana”,I smile. I used to hate being called that when he first started referring me to Nana.

“Where are you?”,I ask.

“At the office”

“Okay then.”,I hang up after that.

I start the car and drive off to the other side of the city to where Tshepo is. I get to their offices and I park my car before getting out of the car and I make my way inside I find the receptionist busy on the computer.

“Hello”,She greets with a smile.

“Hello,I am here for Mr Phakade”

“Snr or Jnr?” ,She asks.

“Jnr I guess.”

She giggles.

“You can go through,he has not meeting”,I thank her and make my way through.

The company is not that big but I love how the place looks. I am just happy that Tshepo is trying to prove everyone that he is not just some thug but more than that. I get to his office and I knock before I enter and his office is a mess. There are papers all over his desk and some on the floor.

“Haibo Phakade your place is messy”

I dump my bag on the chair and I get to collecting the papers on the floor.

“I should have never let Nkosinathi convince me to be this business man.”,He says seemingly frustrated.

I take the papers that were on the floor and hold them while going towards him and I give him a cheek kiss.

“Well you look more sexy in an office baby”,He huffs.

“Have you eaten?” ,I ask.

“Yes in the morning”,He says as he rummages through this messy pile.

“Bonginkosi do not tell me that you last ate that breakfast I made”,He looks at me.

He really does not like his other name but he knows that I am serious when I use it.

“I will eat when I get home”,He mentions.

“No, an hour is dedicated to you relaxing and eating. Probably why this office is a mess. I will order some food and clean up everything. How about that?”,He sighs and leans back on his chair.

“Fine”

“Good”,I give him the papers and I go to my bag and I take out my phone and order some food for him. After that I get onto cleaning up his space.

He relaxes on the chair for a moment.

“You should get a personal assistant”

“Buyi suggested that. I do not want a baby sitter”

“It will help you stay organised and remind you of important things like meetings and dates with your wife”,I say and he looks at me.

“I will see”

“Perfect”,I finish in no time and food arrives.

I get it for him and I take out ny sanitizer from my bag and tell him to sanitize. He does not oblige though I know he hates sanitizing before eating as he complains that he tastes the sanitizer off his food.

Well tough then we do not know what germs those hands touched. I get his food out and he takes it and thanks me. He starts eating and I let him be as I get on my phone and go around social media. My mother

sends a picture of my brother and her at Ushaka Marine. I sent her a message asking why she left me and she mentions that I am a married woman now not a child. Wow low blow though.

Tshepo tells me that he is done and he calls me to him. I go towards him and he pulls me to his lap. He rests his hands on my thighs and bums.

“I feel better now”, He says and I smile.

“Should I make lunch for you everyday?”, I ask.

“No, I will order. I do not want you waking up early. You love to sleep”, Well I do.

“Well I do anyway to make breakfast for you”

“I will think about it”, He mentions.

“Well there is not to think about but okay”, he trails his eyes off my face to my legs.

“Can we go home? I want to be between your warm thighs. You are gaining”, He mentions while slightly licking his lips.

“After knocking off time baby. You can have me all night”

He looks at me and smiles.

“Nana do not say that. You get tired after the second round.”, He mentions.

“Do you blame me baby? We do acrobate phela”, He laughs.

He stops and kisses my neck nibbling on it and goes for my ear and I push him off.

“Argh Tshepo you still have that habbit of eating people’s ears”.

“You smell so good,I feel like having desert”

“You will get desert home. I do not your work mates hearing my moans”

“Mmmh”

“Plus you do not finish when disturbed”

“They should wait for me until I am done”,See.

I shake my head while looking at him.

I just got a call from Palesa and it is the middle of the night and I panic for a moment when I recieve her call. I answer almost immediately to her call.

“Paless are you okay?”

“I miss you friend”,She says.

“I miss you too, are you okay?”,I am panicking at this point.

“Yes, I just had a few glasses of some and I am depressed”,She mentions.

“Why are you depressed? Talk to me”,I plea.

“I am in love with a bad boy. For years and I am heartbroken”,My heart is thudding.

“Who?”

“Leka’s brother”,Ndimase?

“Haibo how?”,I am confused.

“Well, I have a crush on him”,She giggles.

“Man that man is beauty at its best. The way he handles things Lethi and his aura. Everything about him is...just turns me on”,I giggle. I never thought! Palesa into bad boys!

“He is a full grown man you know”,I say.

“And he lives all the way in Gauteng. I feel like relocating to be closer to him”,She giggles.

“I love you. No I will not date him I just crush him. I am waiting for my church goer”

“I love you more”,Maybe a pastor’s child will love Palesa one day.

She hangs up.

She almost got me worried. I laugh and I sigh as I look at my empty bed side. I get off the bed and grab a gown and get out of the bedroom. I find the front door open. It is 1 am. I get out and find Tshepo smoking while he is in his boxers.

“It is chilly out here”,I say and he turns to me and throws the cigarette away before making his way towards me.

“Not really”

“What are you doing outside?”,I ask.

“I am thinking”,He says and I look at him.

“About?”

“Everything”, I see a scratch on his face and I touch it.

“What happened here?”, I ask.

“I got it a long time ago”, He mentions.

“Come cuddle with me. Maybe you can teach me how to smoke and we can smoke together”, He gives me a death stare.

Tshepo really does not want me to drink or smoke.

“Lethi”, He says in warning tone.

“I am just saying ”

He chuckles lightly displeased before he closes the door behind him when we enter the house.

“I will get that out of your head trust me”, I just giggle.

We get to the bedroom.

TSHEPO PHAKADE

I hate it, this 9-5 job but Nathi said it the benefit of us. Well it is as it brings in some money plus it does. This helps when we get sums of money out of know where and we have to clean it up before any higher authorities come our way and do investigations.

It is the next day and I am making my way to the office. Ndimase is making his way down to Durban today and we are planning something

that will give us generous benefits. I can afford to buy a house in the suburbs and make Lethi comfortable and give her that she desires but I do not want to move away from eKasi. I would rather have the type of house she wants in that area and she does not mind as she has never mentioned us moving away from that place.

I get to the office and take the lunch that my wife made. Wife, an unexpected turn that I did not expect from the past life I was in.

I get in and the receptionist greets and I just nod and get inside the office. It is clean all thanks to Lethi. I sit on my chair and a few minutes later Nathi walks in the office and looks at the lunch box on my table and smiles.

“Your wife is stepping up I see”,He mentions.

“She almost bit my head off for skipping lunch yesterday”,He pulls a chair and sits in front of me.

“Marrying Lethi was the best decision you have ever took. She loves you”,He mentions and I swallow.

“I know,I would do anything for her”,I mean it, she means something to me. I do not know what it is but...

“Well then. Good, Buyi told me that Lethi is worried that you do not have a personal assistant”,I nod my head.

“Well, I have found one for you and you will meet her next week”,He mentions.

“It must be someone who I can work with and would not shit on me ”

“Worry not Mr Phakade”, He stands up and then he walks out of the office.

I take my phone and decide to call my wife.

Chapter 22

PALESA MOKOENA

I grew up in Kzn most of my life with my mother. She moved here from the Freestate when she found a job just like me and met my father. To unfortunate mishaps I never got to meet my father as he left the world of living just before I was born. It has always been me and my mother also her prayers and Church. I live in Portsheptone now and I am a teacher. I love my career and I had always dreamed of being one. Ultimately what I love about my life the most was being able to make my mother proud.

I woke up with a bit of a headache. Thank God it is Friday today and I do not have the energy to get to work. Plus it is Sports day so I will be able to miss work and give off a Valid reason. I miss home though more especially being away from my friend. It is hard right now being away from everyone that you love more especially being alone in a place that you are not used to then it would be quite difficult to adjust to that kind of environment. I went to take a shower. I live in a two bedroom apartment near Margate and I love how small it is just to accommodate me as needed for my comfort. I open the cold water and I get inside the shower and I take my time to get out of the shower just to enjoy the water that was splashing onto me. I then get out after 45 minutes. I take the bathroom towel and I wrap it around my body before I go and brush my teeth after then I finish and I walk out of the bathroom. I go to my room and I lotion my body then pull a dress out of the wardrobe and I slip it on. I look at myself through the mirror and I hear my phone

ringing. I move from the mirror and I make my way to my phone and it is Leka calling. We have not spoken to each other in a while.

“Sisi”, I answer.

“Hey girl, How are you?”

“Hung over but good, how are you?”

“I do not know you anymore since you have moved back to your home city”

She giggles.

“I love Durban neh? But I had missed living home for a while”, I just giggle.

“Well I guess we are all different”, I say.

She clears her throat.

“Someone wants to talk to you”, she mentions.

“About?”

“I do not know. You will hear from him”, she says.

“Him?”

“Mbali”, his voice is the first thing I hear after my question.

I feel agitated at that very moment.

“Are you still there?”, he asks and then chuckles too.

“Bhuti”, I say and he chuckles.

I do not even know how I should act or speak to this man. I never practiced this before, even so. I still would be tongue tied.

“Unjani?”

“I am well, is this a social call?”

“Yes”, Why?

“Where are you? I heard you moved. I was not informed”, he continues.

“I did not know that you had to be informed that I am moving. We are not friends”, I say as I gain some courage to say so.

“Mmh, We will talk. Enjoy the rest of your day Mbali”, he hangs up after that. My heart is thudding against my rib cage. I place my hand there.

Palesa, this is not good. Do not fall for this man’s silly charms. You are better than that. Just pray about it. Lethi can handle it. Well I would not be able to just like her.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

Tshepo seemed to be more exhausted than I have ever seen him before. He did not look like his usual self. Well who would be their usual self after having a long day at the office. He dumps himself on the couch. I have already cooked dinner and I do visit my grandmother from time to time for some cooking lessons but I have improved over

some time. I head to the kitchen and leave him there to relax for a little while. I get to the kitchen and then I dish up for him and take the food to him. He even has his eyes closed. I got to him and placed the food in front of him and he turns to look at me.

“Eat”

He heaves a sigh and grabs the food.

“Thank you Nana”, I smile

“Let me go and open some bath water for you”, I then move away from him.

I go to the bathroom and open bath water for him. I put in some of my bath salts. That will help him relax. I get back to the living room and he is done with eating. I get the plate.

“Do you want more?”, I ask.

“No, I want you”, I am blushing.

“You are tired baby”

“I am never tired for you”

“Okay, let us go and bath then I will do all the work”

“We might have a baby after”

“You want a baby?”

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I ask and sit next to him.

“One day when we are both ready”, I smile.

“Well you are in your thirties. Maybe next year or after two years when the business has taken off well and stable enough and I have at least done my Honours ”

“Okay Nana”, I look at Tshepo for a moment and then take the plate and go to the kitchen.

I throw it inside the sink and then I make my way to the bathroom and I close the water. I call Tshepo and he comes. We strip off our clothes and we get inside the bathtub and I sit between his legs. He then kisses my shoulders as we are rested there.

It is a Saturday today, I have dedicated the morning to being domesticated and getting the house looking in a great shape as well. It has to show that it is clean. What will someone who is visiting say when they find the house not in proper shape. Tshepo left to get new tires for my car so he left me. I finish cleaning and I then go and bath before I get done and sit down in front of the tv. I watch some B.E.T and watch all the interesting shows that I could find there. I take a fleece and wrap it around my legs. My mind wanders off to the day I miscarried. Our child would have been 3-4 years old. Grown boy who would be running around the house. I wonder who he would have looked like. More of me or more of Tshepo or the best of us. I was not ready to have a child. The most haunting thing is the image of when I was bleeding. That is what haunts me the most. I am disturbed from those thoughts when my phone rings and I then get off the couch and I go and get it from the main bedroom. I take it and it is Tshepo. I answer it.

“Phakade”, I answer.

“Nana when did you last take the car to service?”,he asks.

“It was last month. Why?”

“There is a minor problem with the car, do not worry”,he says.

“Is it fixable?”

“Hopefully yes”

“Okay”

“At 6 bath, I will fetch you”

“Where are we going?”,He keeps quiet.

“I cannot tell you.”

“Is it a surprise?”,I ask now curious.

“Yes It is one of those”

“Okay then. What should I wear?”

“Anything?”,he mentions.

“Okay then. I will wait then”

“Okay”,he hangs up after that.

I wonder what surprise that Tshepo has up his sleeve. He is not a man of surprises so I cannot wait to actually see what the surprise is about.

I go back to the lounge and I sit down and carry on with watching some tv.

.

It is 6pm on the dot and this man is not even a second or minute late. Actually he was 20 minutes early and I was still getting ready then. He just wore casual clothes so I took it upon myself to do the same. I wanted to at least look pretty for unexpected pictures that might be taken while in that surprise moment. I walk out of the bedroom and I find Tshepo downing a beer already. He downs the last content of it and he places the bottle on the coffee table and he comes towards and pulls me towards him intoxicating me with his perfume. I take it in and let it rest on my nostrils and also within my lungs.

“You are most beautiful wife I laid my eyes on” He whispers into my ear and I feel butterflies nestle in my stomach.

“Thank you baby”, He squeezes my butt softly and then gives me a kiss on the neck.

“I like that you are gaining weight”, He mentions and squeezes my butt again.

“Really?”, he nods and looks at me.

I smile at him.

“Let us leave for that Surprise”, He nods and then he grabs the car keys to his car.

We got out and I go into the car after he unlocks it and I get inside. He gets in too and we drive out of the area going wherever that Tshepo is taking me. I relax onto the car seat and look out of the window. The sun has already set and the street lights are on already. We get to another place in Umhlanga He parks the car and we get out of the car.

“What are here for?”, I ask.

“Things”,He has started.

I let him be as he takes my hand and we are led in the hotel. He leads us to the restaurant of the hotel. Well this place looks quiet fancy. We enter and it is not much crowded but has less people.

A waiter comes towards us and we are led to a table and we get seated.

“This is your surprise?”,I ask.

“Yes”,I smile.

It may seem small but it means a lot to me. Tshepo is not romantic. I do not think he knows how to be properly but he tries his best.

“Well thank you. I love it”,He smiles seemingly proud of himself for pulling this off.

“You love it?”

Well I have not eaten yet but to be out with my husband for dinner it is nice. What is not there to love,plus I did not plan it and force him to be out and about.

“Yes,So much”

He seems satisfied.

“We should do this more often”,I say.

The waiter brings our menu.

“I will do anything for you Nana. What ever makes you happy”

Tshepo is nailing this thing in his own way and It makes me love him more.

We have some dinner together. We get to laugh and my stomach hurts from all the laughing and eating. We bond together in those moments. I wish my family can see how this man makes me feel. Maybe they might like him. Just maybe

Chapter 23

Finally Thsepo got a personal assistance that will help him with work. It really has made a huge difference and he sees the difference. Nobuhle, Buyi's sister is the one to fill in the shoes in the job so that has really been of good help. I also see difference as Tshepo now makes it to any planned lunch out I might have instore for us which I appreciate. Well I am car less. My car engine was getting damaged and I did not notice also those service people are to blame. How can you service a car and not fix the issue at hand or even inform me that there is an issue at hand. That is the flip side of things but good thing is that the process of the house being extended has started. I am so happy and could not wait until the house is done. I want it to have a little pool too but maybe we can make it an indoor pool just so that there is space outside.

We met with the person who will design the structure of our home and I was satisfied so as Tshepo so the building has started.

Today I am visiting my grandmother. I want to spend the day with my mother and brother the most though. I wish Palesa was still here. I do miss her alot but we do talk from time to time calling each other.

I arrive at my grandmother's house and I walk inside the yard and make my way to the house. I can hear my grandmothers sunday gospel music though it is not a sunday. I knock on the door.

"Knock knock!", I make my way inside.

“Hawu mshano!”,I meet my uncle seated with my little brother who runs up to me. I cannot believe how grown he is now. He hugs my waist.

“Hello Boy”

“Lethi, mama took me to see sharks” he.mentions all too quickly

“Really?”

“Yes and I played all the games that were there”

“Did you enjoy it?”

He nods his head.

“Why are you not at school?”,I ask

“I am sick”

Well he does not seem like it.

Well I did not bring anything,I only planned this visit late so I just open my purse and I hand him some money and he gets happy.

“Thank you sisi”,he hugs me.

“Where is gogo and mom?”,I ask my uncle.

“Your mother went next door, she will be back shortly and gogo is in the kitchen”,I nod thanking him.I make my way to the kitchen and I find my grandmother singing while making some porridge.

“Gogo!”,she turns to me surprised.

She leaves the porridge and engulfs me into a hug and I sink into her arms.

“Hawu why did you not inform us that you were coming to visit. Uphimkhwenyana?(Where is my grand son in law?)”

“Oh I left him at the house.He is working”,I mention

“Come with him more often,he is family”,I smile

“I will next time. I have been missing everyone”

I throw my bag onto the counter and then pull a chair to sit.

“I made porridge,do you want some?”

“Yes please”,It has been months since I had some porridge.

She goes on to dish up for me and I wait for her.

“Phela bese ngithi awusabuyi nokuzovakasha(Well I thought that you are not going to come back to visit)”,My grandmother mentions as she dishes up.

She places the porridge in front of me and she gets some butter for me and places it in front of me.

“How can I not?”,I thank her.

“We would not know Lethi,marriage holding you down”,she mentions.

“Well everything is good. I am enjoying my new life”

I stand up and I go and get some sugar for my porridge. I then sit where I was and I get on with mixing the ingredients. She joins me shortly and sits opposite me. My brother is sitting with my uncle so I do not bother about him for a moment.

I have missed being home for a moment and the fact that we live close by is convenient for me as well. I tell my grandmother about us buying the property next door that was for sale and getting to extend our home to be at our desire. My grandmother asks about kids and I just tell her that children are not what we are working on for now but in future we will. We finish our porridge and I opt to wash the dishes that we were using and my mother walks in that moment.

“Lethi! Wow what a nice surprise. You gained are you pregnant?”, my mother asks all of this rather too quickly.

“No, I am not pregnant”, I giggle after.

She comes and takes me into her arms.

“You look beautiful baby.”

“Thank you mom. Well I do feel happy where I am”, I just throw it there for her to know that Tshepo is treating me well.

“I love that for you”, I am happy to hear that honestly.

PALESA MOKOENA

Working in a high school was ideal for me but I did not realise the amount of work that is there. I should have been a primary school teacher instead but I chose this and I have to stick to it. It is break time and I am going through my work. I am preparing a test for next week that I will present my class to see if they understand and to improve

their performance and see where they are lacking. A knock comes from my door and I look up.

It is Mr Shezi. He has an interest in me..I know this because he is a little too nice to me than any of our female colleagues.

“Miss Mokoena”,I flash him a smile

“Mr Shezi”,he walks in carrying his lunch bag.

He is a nice light skinned man. I love the way he carries himself as a person.

“Mind if I join you?”

“Not at all”,I mention..

He pulls one of the chairs and sits in front of me. My mother would not mind having a son in law like him. Look at you Palesa thinking ahead already.

“I made some lunch this morning. I want to share it with you. I hope that you do not mind”,he flashes a smile and I return it.

“Sure”,I remove my things away from my desk.

“We will share each other's lunch”

“Perfect!”

As we lay our lunch on the desk two girls who are in my class knock..

“Come in”

They walk in and greet us.

“Miss, you are asked for at the office”they say.

“What for?” ,I ask..

“We do not know. We were told to ask for you” ,I sigh.

“Okay,I am coming” ,They nod and walk out. I stand up.

“I will be back”

“Okay, I will get everything ready”

I nod and I walk out of my classroom. I make my way to the office and I get there and meet the reception lady.

“Hello,I was told I am needed”

“At the principal's office.” ,I feel my heart thudding against my chest.

”Okay” ,I breathe in and out before I made my way there and knocked.

I hear a come in and then I get inside and I see someone that I did not expect to see.I feel myself sweating. I swallow some spit as I walk inside. The principal stands up.

“I will go and get something to drink” ,he then Walks out leaving me with this stranger. He stands up from the seat and says.

“Mbali” ,I swallow.

“Bhuti” ,My voice seems to betray me.

I swallow nothing once more. How can the principal allow this? When did he get here and why is he here also.

“Will I not get a hug? I last touched you at the wedding” ,He says and I find myself going to him and he wraps his around me. I feel tiny at that moment. I take in his scent and sink myself deeper into his arms.

“You were in my arms when we were dancing”, I feel a stampede in my stomach as he says that.

“You smell wonderful”, He mentions

“Thank you”, He smells great as well.

We break the hug and he smiles before he pulls a bouquet of red roses from the second chair and hands them to me

“I am leaving. I just did not want to leave without seeing you”, he mentions. This is the first time I receive flowers from a man.

I am quiet surprised as well that he bought flowers. I never expected it.

“Thank you”, he flashes a charming smile that has me weak in my knees.

“Visit me during the holidays Mbali. ”, he says and then flashes that weakening smile before he disappears.

I stand there like a statue what just just happened? Am I dreaming? I do not think so though. I try to pinch myself for a moment before I go out of the principal's office.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I enjoyed spending time with my family today and Malume gave me a R20 like old times to buy some sweets that I will share with ‘iskhehlele Sami’, his words not mine. I took a taxi going off to where the house is.

It has been so long since I took a taxi and It felt weird being in there for a while. I got off the taxi and I went to the nearest tuckshop and I bought some sweets with my uncle's money and made my way to the house. I got in and Tshepo's car was already there. where there was a wall seperating the neighbours house and our house has been removed and part of the what was built already was connected to the house already. I got inside and I found him watching some soccer. I place my bag on the next couch then I threw my body next to him.

"How are you baby?",I ask and he places his arm around me while he is concerntrated on the soccer before he pauses the recording and then turns to me.

"What did they feed you back home?",I frown..

"Food

a lot of it and news. Why?",He chuckled.

"You are breathing heavily like you were being chased",Mxm

"My uncle uncle gave us sweets. Uthe angidle nomkhehlele wami",he frowned and I laughed.

"It is not funny",He tickles me and I carry on laughing.

"I am sorry!",I quickly say.

Tshepo stops. I breathe in and out, I do not like being tickled by him. He does not stop even when you feel like you will pee on yourself. That is why I apologize very quickly so he does not reach that point and he knows it.

"How was work?",I ask.

“It was okay, we have been invited to dinner by a business associate”, I smile.

“When is it?”

“Two days from now”, he mentions and I stand up.

“I need to get fresh new hair and do nails and get a perfect dress. You need to get a great outfit too. We need to leave a good impression. Should we match but no it would be too boring if we go colour coordinating. It is just dinner but this could open doors if planned perfectly. I know we should go to the mall tomorrow and see what we can find during your lunch. I am so excited!”, I jump around.

I find him looking at me and he is amused by this. He pulls me to him and places me on his lap.

“I Knew you would be excited. You love dressing up ”He mentions.

“And shopping...”, I nod my head in satisfaction then kiss his lips.

“Tomorrow at lunch? I will pay for your lunch if you go with me?”, I say.

“I will fetch you”, I hug him.

“Well baby let me go and cook some food for you then later you can deal with the cook”, He smiles amused.

“How about I start with the cook first?”

“Really?”

“Yes”, he holds my face and he gives me a passionate kiss and I return it. He breaks it like he remembered something.

“I have a surprise for you tomorrow”

“What is it?”

He blinks and looks at me.

“I do not think I should tell you what it is”.

“Okay, how is the car going?” ,Actually I am saddened that the M3 is not okay.

Tshepo long forgot about it when he bought another BMW.

“We will go and check it out tomorrow” ,I nod my head.

His phone rings and he takes it out his pocket and he places it in front of me and he answers it.

“Aunti” ,He answers

He takes it and places it on his ear and I stand up and head to the kitchen. I take some ingredients that I will use to make something to eat very fast. After some time Tshepo comes into the kitchen.

“It was Aunty. She said Khalipha wants to visit before going to Cape town.” ,He says.

“I do not mind. He is your brother and I am sure he will be happy to spend some days with his brothers” ,He groans.

“What?”

“He is going to cramp our space”

“Haibo Tshepo there is an empty bedroom and no space will be cramped. Who told you about cramp?” ,I ask.

“I hear Nathi say it alot” ,I laugh.

“How about you talk to Nathi and then Khalipha will split his days here. Half of them here and half at your brother's house?”

“That is better”, I nod.

“Please prepare some bath water while I cook?”

“Sure”, He walks away and I am left to prepare some dinner.

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It is the following day and Tshepo kept to his promise of being punctual. He really made it at 13:00 on the dot to come and fetch me so that we can go through our errands. It was chilly today so I slipped on some leggings with a black sweater and some sneakers. I undid my hair and then washed my hair. It was growing long shame. I should start being a natural hair influencer and maybe Hair brands might work with me. I was still on Instagram and I have reached more than R10K followers. People were interested in my life but I think more especially that I was young and married. The Facebook people were more. I got to Tshepo's car and gave him a cheek kiss. This old man of mine was beautiful and he refused to know it. I put on my seat belt.

“Where are we starting first?”, I ask.

“The shopping then checking the car”, He mentions.

“Okay, I bought a weave last night and they said I must fetch it at the hair studio so we can pass there first before anything else”, He nods. Tshepo drives out of the yard and then we make our way to our errands.

Music is playing in his car and I am bobbing my head back and forth slowly.

“Baby?”, he turns to me face me for a little bit.

“Your birthday is soon. I was thinking that maybe we should do something this year, like I party. You are turning 34 so I want it to be special”, he flinches on his seat and shifts a bit.

“Do you want to do it?”, I look at him.

“Well this is not about me but you. I want to make you feel special and loved. Having your friends and family there. Celebrating your birthday with me for the first time and being jolly.”, I say.

He breathes in and out. I know I am touching a sensitive topic. Tshepo does not like his birthday for some reason and I have asked until I gave up the reason why he does so I just let him be and wait until he tells me.

“Nana”

He steals a glance at me for a moment.

“Can we talk about this when we get home?”, I nod.

“That is fine. You do not have to think about it now”

“Thank you”

We start at the hair studio and I get to go and retrieve my hair. It is a Bob ear to ear weave so I am going to install it myself. I can do not doubt my powers. Then we went to buy an outfit for tomorrow. Something semi formal so that we do not look too over dressed and also too underdressed. We paid and Tshepo was more than happy

when we are done. He does not like shopping and tries to show some interest but he fails dismally. He gets some take away for us before we leave going to the panel beater where the car is being fixed, it is at its dealership so that the manufactures of the car can know what their baby is going through. I eat my food and then wash up with some juice and I hum to the song on the radio. We get to BMW and then we get out of the car once Tshepo has parked his car. We then make our way inside. I really hope the car is fixable because I cannot function without it. I need easy feet to get to places and yesterday I went through that trouble of getting to the places I wanted to go to. I cannot even go far, I have to wait for Tshepo to take me wherever I wanted to him.

We get inside and we find someone who comes immediately to help us.

“Good day”, We greet as well.

“We are here for her car”, Tshepo mentions.

“Oh yes follow me this way”, We follow after him going behind him.

We get to another area and there is a car upfront parked with a big red ribbon on it with Balloons all over it.

“Surprise!”, I hear that scream and Buyi jumps out with her sister Nobuhle from behind the car and some staff members of the dealership too appear as they clap their hands. I hold onto Tshepo in fear.

“Nana”, He whispers softly in my ear.

“Tshepo what is going on?”, I ask.

“Do you like it?”, I look at him as I see some worry all over his face.

“Tshepo what is going on?”,I ask the same question once more.

I am tongue tied and confused.

“The M3 is not good for you anymore so I thought I should get you another car. I know it will not replace the M3 but...I hope you like it Nana. If you do not we can change it and get another one that you like”,He says speaking much faster.

Tears just streamed down my cheeks unexpectedly and I hug my husband.

“No one has ever done this for me”,my heart is beating against my ribcage rather too fast from shock.

He hugs me tightly and there are flashes around. I bury my head on his chest and I sob.

“Lethi are you okay? Did I hurt you?”,You cannot miss the worry in Tshepo's voice.

I giggle through the tears. To say that he was Mr tough cookie and now he is worried by my tears but then again they always got him agitated when he saw tears.

“I love you,Thank you I love it”,he sighs and starts to relax and then I remove my face from him.

He smiles at me and I return the favour.

This is going onto my Instagram! I have to thank my mother for divorcing my dad because I would not be here if it was not for her!

“Does she like it?”,Buyi asks.

Tshepo nods and she seems excited.

“He planned it all. We just assisted where we could”, This man!

Nobuhle shared a faint smile with us as we were in the moment.

Chapter 24

The house is coming together and all that is left is the painting and then I get to do the buying of new furniture. It has been somewhat Almost a year since I got married and in that year alot has happened, good and bad but mostly good. I would say that I am one of the lucky women who enjoyed her first year of marriage all thanks to my husband. Business grew on my husband's side and next year I am going to start with my honours. I have been accepted at UKZN so that shall keep me busy I guess. Palesa is going to be back home in the next month or so as the holidays will start and I cannot wait to have her close by instead of driving for atleast an hour to see her when I miss her. It will be much convenience to the both of us. It has been long overdue with the wait though. Anyway back to my new home. It is beautiful so far, the outside just needs painting of which will be done this coming weekend and I cannot wait for that to happen to complete the house. Tshepo really did outdone himself with his pockets flowing to get this done. My baby has been working quiet hard to generate a generous amount of money so we do not encounter problems. They have been holding the fort really great with his brother.

Buyi and Nathi went to Capetown . Something about a bae cation for them along those lines. Well I would have loved one too but it will happen at its own time plus we still have the house to think about and the car that Tshepo got for me so I did not want to put pressure on my husband and having stress out on silly things that can be done another time. Already he is doing enough and I appreciate it so much. He really did put in making the word provider a reality in my defence.

Today I am on my way to Tshepo's office. I am going house shopping for the house furniture and Tshepo told me to come and take his card. My father did transfer some money into my account just as a gift for our new house. Though he did not understand why we did not just move to another place but I do not want to. It is closer to home so I can visit my family during the day and laze around with them. I am also fetching my brother from school after passing by Tshepo's office. Tshepo though did not want me to use my father's money to contribute to the furniture shopping so I will just open an investment account at the bank and save it there. I arrive at Tshepo's office and get out of my car. I then close the door and lock it making my way inside the place and I greet the receptionist.

"Mrs Phakade Jnr. How are you?",She asks.

"I am good Enhle. Is he in?"

"He is not busy. He just finished his meeting, I think he has a briefing with Nobuhle"

"Okay,thank you",I make my way to Tshepo's office.

I knock once and make my way in and Tshepo looks towards me and I walk inside the office.

"Hey, sorry to disturb",I mention.

"No you were not disturbing. We were already done",Tshepo mentions.

"Hello Sisi Nobuhle",This woman is beautiful.

"Hello Nana",She stands up.

Tshepo takes out his wallet and hands over his card.

“If you encounter a problem call me”,He mentions and I smile.

“Thank you,I will”,He nods and pulls me closer to him and gives me a neck kiss.

There is something about Tshepo liking to kiss my neck.

“I should get going. I still have to fetch my little brother”,I say.

“Go with Nobuhle,she might help you with the shopping”,I turn to Nobuhle.

“I do not mind.”

“But I still need to get on with...”

Tshepo looks at her.

“You are assisting my wife.I mean it is not a crime to share the load. I will ask Enhle to get on with the rest of your duties”

“Yes Mr Phakade”,She walks out of the room.

“Well, Let me get going.”

I give Tshepo a kiss and he smiles.

“Why are you smiling?”

“You are beautiful Nana”

“You are beautiful too baby”,he frowns and then he grabs my butt a bit hard and I screech.

“Tshepo!”

“When will you ever stop saying that?”,He says amused by my short lived discomfort.

“When you become ugly”,He shakes his head.

“Come let me walk you out”

We walk out of his office hand in hand and we find Nobuhle ready by the reception. I say my goodbyes to Enhle and then we all walk to the car. I open the car and get inside and so as Nobuhle.

“I will see you at home,I will come back early”,he mentions.

“Okay baby, bye”

I start the car as he steps away from the car and then I drive off.

“Yoh it has been cold lately. How have you been finding Durban so far?”,I ask trying to make some conversation.

“It is okay I guess. I miss home sometimes”,She mentions.

“I am sorry, it must be tough being here all the time”

“It is.”,she flashes a smile.

“I have to pick my little brother up. I hope you do not mind”

“Not at all”,I nod and I drive to my brother's school.

I get out of the car and then rush to get my little brother. I find him playing with other kids. He runs to me as soon as he sees me.

“Nana!”,He hugs my legs and I giggle.

I pick him up. He heard Tshepo call me Nana and he calls me that everytime he sees me.

“How are you?”

“Good, Come let's get my bag and leave”, He pulls me to go and get his bag.

We get it and then hurry back to the car. I get him inside the car and he greets Nobuhle. I buckle him up and then I close his door and get inside my seat and buckle up before I drive off.

“We are going to do some shopping with aunty before we go home”, I say.

“Okay”, He is jumpy on his seat.

I smile.

“How old is he?”, Nobuhle asks.

“He is 5 years”, I mention.

“I wish I had a child”, She says and I swallow.

“Me too hey”, She looks over to me.

It does get to me sometimes how I would be if I didn't miscarry our child. It does haunt me from time to time. I would love to be a mother more than anything now but I am scared of falling pregnant. I am scared of losing another child and having to go through what I went through once more.

“Tshepo is growing so you should be having a child already or are you not ready and still young? He will be in his 40s by the time you want to have a child”

Nobuhle mentions.

“We still have 6 years before then”,I quickly say and she turns to me.

“It would not be the same”

I keep quiet.

“Nana!”.

“Yes baby?”,I ask.

“Can I get Ice cream?”

“It is cold nje,I will buy a happy meal for you”,He nods and keeps on being jumpy on his seat.

“Don’t you find it weird?”,Nobuhle speaks.

“What is weird?”

“How Tshepo groomed you”,I frown.

“He did not groom me”

“He went for a 17 year old while he was heading to his 30s. That is grooming. He wanted you to be something that he wanted can't you see that he is controlling you? I mean kids your age are working and you are not just getting everything on a silver platter if he approves it. I am sure soon he will abuse you for that”

“Some of us are actually getting educated. Do not get it twisted, just because I am not working a 9-5 job that I got from my sister's connections does not mean that I am not doing something about my life. Beside not alot of us actually know the door of a university looks like but I wouldn't say much. My husband is fine with me spending his money anyhow I like and what I want I get. Plus not alot of us dream of

doing labour and having a boss to dictate majority of our day and you wouldn't understand much . You have not been married even at your age or having a stable relationship to comment much, married woman would understand like your sister.”,I say while flashing a smile and she keeps quiet after that.

Silence prevails inside the car. This woman should not test me please!

.

We went shopping it was very sour on Nobuhle's side that she asked to leave early of which I did not mind. I did not want her presence anymore. I bought a Happy meal for the little one like I had promised and I did not get to do much of my shopping because I was very much annoyed. I left the mall and went home. I first dropped off the little one and left home. My uncle was home and he kept on asking me when I will visit with Tshepo and I told him soon. I drove back to the house and drove in. I parked the car in our new garage and then I got out and made my way through the door that is connected to the kitchen. I then made my way inside the house and went to the bedroom upstairs. I got inside and threw my bag on the bed and sat on it. Tshepo walked out of the ensuite bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist.

“You are back early”,he mentions.

“Nobuhle ruined my day”,I say.

“What did she do?”

“It is what she said? She was busy indirectly calling me a gold digger and stupid girl who dates grown men. That being you,I put her in her place. I am not her friend”

I sat up and saw Tshepo's unpleasant face.

"I will sort her out",He mentions.

"I got some McDonald for us",I know he does not like it but I had no choice.

"You bought the Fold over?",He asks.

He only makes an exception for that and their nuggets.

"Yes"

"Okay, come here",I get off the bed and go to him.

He picks me up and I wrap my legs around his torso.

"Do not mind anything anyone says. You know who you are and you know that I do everything and anything for you Nana because I want to and I will",I smile.

"I know baby and I love you for that",I perk his lips.

"Baby"

"Mmmh?"

"I want us to have a baby",He keeps quiet for a moment letting me carry on.

"I am just scared of getting pregnant",I say.

"Gettibg pregnant is part of having a baby Lethi",He says.

"I know. It is just that...Maybe we should revisit this topic some other time",I mention.

“Are you sure?”, I nod.

“Tell me why you hate your birthday?”, I ask changing the topic.

“Let us sit down”, I nod and he walks over to the bed and he sits down with me on his lap.

I look at him and give him an assuring smile. That it is okay and I am all ears.

“My father and I share the same birthday”, He mentions.

Oh that is why.

“Do you hate your father?”

“Yes”, He does not waste anytime thinking about his answer.

“I hope one day you find it in here to move on and detach from anything that involves your father and learn to be happy. I know that he stole away your childhood by taking your mother away from you and that is not good and you have every right to be angry because you are hurt but I do not want you hurting forever. I want to celebrate birthdays with you, anniversaries and enjoy it with family and friends. Do not let him have a hold over you as well and I may not know your father but one thing he did that I am most grateful for is giving me you”, I smile and he does the same.

He heaves a sigh.

“Maybe next year we can try this birthday thing”

“Really?”

He nods. I hug him.

“I promise to make it the best one you have ever had”

He hugs me back holding me tightly.

“Don’t give up on me Nana. On us”

“I would never”

NOBUHLE

I was pissed off to be quiet honest. I cannot believe that child spoke to me in the manner that she spoke to me. Just because she is riding Tshepo’s dick does not give her the utmost right to speak to me the way she spoke to me.

Today is another day and I prepared for work. I am quiet happy and grateful that Buyi got me this job. I had been struggling for the longest time to get a proper job, I had piece jobs here and there. Buyi has always been the lucky one in life. She never got to university and never passed her matric that well to get admitted but she met this man back home in Johannesburg who introduced himself as a Policeman. That is her now husband. They have been together for many years. They do not have a child because Buyi cannot bare children and her husband is okay with that. He actually adores and loves her which I did not understand since it is well known that men want a legacy and want children in their lives but Buyi told me that her husband was mainly okay with it because he has brothers that will do so.

I met Tshepo when we were in our early 20s, back then he used to reside in Johannesburg with his friend Ndimase and I met him ofcause through my sister.

I never expected him to marry, get married. He did not seem like someone who would. He was not a family oriented person and was a free person who used to drag race for fun. Girls loved him and would fall on his feet because of his charisma and charm. He had a bad boy aura which attracted alot of girls to him. Not mentioning his facial and physical features that played a perfect role of making him the perfect bad guy. He got what he wanted and his go getter self was dominant on the list of wanting him. He did not stop at nothing.

Watching him growing up, I always knew there was something shady about him and indeed they were criminals with his brother. He was the actions guy while his brother was the brains and planned everything before they executed their plans.

As much as girls fell on Tshepo's feet and he looked like a man who would change girls from time to time but he was not that. He did not strike as what you thought once got to know him. The last woman I knew Tshepo was with was a friend of mine from back home. Well ex friend of mine and they did not last even 6 months and after that Tshepo moved here in Durban.

The last thing I ever expected was Tshepo getting with someone that young and even marrying them.

I got to the office and I greeted whoever I saw. I got to my station and I placed my bag down and I heard footsteps. Tshepo was making his way in. I live with Buyi and her husband for now but they are away on some

little vacation. These Phakade men did everything and anything for their women. I for one should be in the same position that they are in especially instead of being a personal assistant at work for Tshepo I should be his personal assistant in life.

“Good morning”, I say

He grabs my neck and pins me against the wall. The state that he gives me scares me that moment as his strong hand tightens around my neck.

“Never bother Lethin with the bullshit you did yesterday. I am not your friend Nobuhle, I will forget you and I are family through our siblings and I will kill you if you ever bother my wife, Understood?”, I tap my tiny hands on his arms.

He lets me go and I gasp for air and cough in the process.

“I want those invoices from yesterday in a second”, He walks away and leaves his scent behind.

He shuts the door closed.

He almost killed me for that kid. She is sensitive I did not even mention much. That child!

Chapter 25

PALESA MOKOENA

It is stupid of me. Very stupid of me to just arrive at another city for a man that I hardly knew. I was told to visit during the holidays but I did not the last time and so I thought that this weekend would be perfect for me to go and visit. What baffled me is the fact that I did not think this decision through or even tell Lethi that I will be having a weekend away in Johannesburg with a man that I am not even dating or having some sort of interaction with either than those weird phone calls that leave me rethinking my life choices once again. I feel caught between choosing to go with the flow or do what is right and what is right is choosing a man like Mr Shezi or going with this bad boy that leaves me wanting to sink in more to his world. I know very well that this man is a man that many people in society disapprove especially at church they would very much disapprove him if we had a thing going on. I know Lethi would support me. I mean she took the risk and did not care what society said about her and Tshepo and she then married the man that her family disapproves and she does not care at all. At this point I think she will choose Tshepo over her family. They have failed her many times, her words not mine so she would choose someone who has her back in the process of it all.

I am in Park station and I had called him about a few minutes ago informing him that I have made it in Johannesburg. I sounded stranded and seemingly like I am following some man who would rock my world without any thought put into my decision of coming here but now I am

here and a bit scared. I have never left KZN ever in my life so this was about to be an experience.

“Mbali”, I snap out of my thoughts when I see him standing in front of me.

He smells good and his perfume just hugs and rests well in my nostrils. He looks decent and hides away majority of his tattoos that are over his body but the one around his neck peaks out so as the one on his arm as he is wearing a t-shirt.

“Bhuti”, He chuckles.

I feel the flutters in my stomach and I swallow that very moment.

I hold onto my bag and he smiles while looking at me. He steps forwards and pulls me into his arms for a hug and I sink into his arms. I take in his scent for memory's sake before we let go of each other.

“I cannot believe that you made it”, he takes my bag from my hand and pulls me in the direction of where he parked his car.

“I did not think you would ever come”, he says.

“Why not?”

“Why would you?”, Good question. What am I doing here?

“Mmmh”, I just settle for that.

“But I am happy you are here”, He mentions.

“Really?”

“Yes”

We get to his car and he opens the car door for me. I get inside and thank him before he goes to the back and places my bag and proceeds to go into the driver's seat and starts the car then drives off.

Silence prevails the car. I am still in shock that I am actually here. I am asking myself questions of what am I actually doing here if that is the case.

“Bhiti what do you want from me?”, I ask and he looks at me.

“Why can't you used my name?”, He mentions.

“I am sorry Ndimase”, he smiles.

“That is my surname”

“I did not know”, I keep quiet. I do not know what to say.

“I want to spend time with you Mbali. Is that a crime?”, he asks.

“No”

He nods. What does he mean spend time with me ? What does he want from me? It is very unusual. We only got to know each other a bit when Lethi and Tshepo were getting married. He was the best man while I was the matron of Honour. Lethi surpassed all her friends that she knew for the longest time and chose me for that position and I felt very honoured. That is when my silly crush started for this man. I did not think it would escalate to this. This could be a set up too just to make fun of me but then again he is a grown man. He does not have time for games or so does he?

We get to a beautiful neighbourhood. To my surprise. I did not expect this, I thought maybe we would end up in a place that is like Umlazi but

no. This neighbourhood is not what I expected. We arrive at some beautiful house, the gate opens and he drives inside. Is he a drug lord or something like that? I feel like praying for my safety. What will I say to my mother if I am found injured in another province or better yet dead? He parks the car in front of the garage and he turns off the ignition and turns to look at me.

“Welcome”, Well that welcome seems friendly and warm too.

“Thank you”

“Kholeka is not here. She went home”, He says.

I even forgot that he has a sister that knows me. I just nod my head.

We get out of the car and make our way inside after he takes my bag. He places the bag next to the couch once we are inside and I just look around the house before my eyes land on him looking at me.

“Would you like anything?”

“Water please”, He steps closer to me and I take in a deep breath.

“Don’t be scared. I promise I am not here to harm you”, I look up to him. He places his fingers under my chin and bites his bottom lip looking into my eyes.

“You are really beautiful Mbali”, He mentions.

“Thank you...I did not get your name”, He chuckles.

“I will tell you one day”

“Why not now? It is not like it is expensive and stuff”, He laughs.

His Adams apple moves up and down showing well on his throat as his deep voice is let out as he laughs.

“Oh really?”

“Yes”

He seems amused by this. He leans in and his lips touch mine. My heart is beating very fast.

“I am Luphelo”, He mentions as our lips are touching before he moves away from me taking my bag and going up those stairs leaving me paralysed.

This man will be the death of me!

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

“Please bring that box over”, He carries it from where it was and walks inside the closet and places it next to me. I take out his shoes and lay them out on the floor.

“Where do you want your shoes to be situated? The left or right side?”

“The left side”, I nodded.

“I think I should give away some of my clothes.”, I mention and Tshepo pulls one of the little round sofas and sits next to me.

“Why?”

“I have alot of clothes and they are going to take up so much space”,I say.

“Only donate the ones you do not wear”,I nod my head.

The amount of different coloured all star sneakers that Tshepo had. I had to believe that he was collecting them for keepers sake as he loved them. They dominated any shoe he had in his collection.

“Why don't we leave this for tomorrow, we have done alot today and let us go and take a shower with those nice things and then I will cook for you”,I quickly look at him and laugh.

“Baby you cook? I know I am not the best but ayi ngeke”,He frowns and I keep on laughing.

I give him a perk.

“Okay we can go and take a bath and I will cook for you. You will help me”,I mention.

“That is a great idea”,We share a kiss.

A ringing phone disturbs us and Tshepo takes out his phone and he answers it.

“Yes?”

He listens attentively before he stands up.

“Okay, I will be right there”

He hangs up.

“I need to go to the police station. Something happened”

“Is everything okay?”

“It will be. I will be back

I promise.”

He gives me a neck kiss before he rushed out. I am left with these shoes. Might as well get this done before going to take a bath. I get on with placing his shoes well before I go to bathroom and I open bath water for us and I strip down my clothes. I get inside once the water is ready and I sink my body in. Nothing feels good than taking a bath in your home in your own bathroom. I relax in the bathtub for a moment before I get out after some time and I wrap a towel around my body. I wash the bathtub after draining the water then I went to the bedroom to get dressed. I got out of the room and went downstairs. I found Tshepo's brothers downstairs seated on the couch. I thought the little one was in Capetown.

“Hello”, I greet.

“MaNkosi, How are you?”

“I am well and yourself?”, I ask Nathi. Khalipha is very quiet.

“I am good. Sorry to intrude your house like this”

“Oh no it is okay. This is your home too, let me go to the kitchen and get you guys something quickly”

“I am not staying ”, Nathi mentions and he gives a death stare to the little one.

I see that something must have happened for him to be here.

I rushed to the kitchen and started with making supper. I wonder what is going on but I will wait for Tshepo to come back and explain why he was called.

PALESA MOKOENA

I let the water splash over my body, I ran my fingers down my skin going up again as the water rolled down from my shoulders to my feet. I felt relaxed for a moment when that happened as the warm water rushed down my back. I then turned off the water and opened the shower door. I reached for the towel and then I stepped out of the shower and wiped my body before I wrapped the towel around me. I walked out of the bathroom and I went to my bag. I took out my clothes and I got dressed just so that I can be comfortable as I was told to freshen up and when I am done I would find some food. It is getting dark already and I am still uneasy that I am under the same roof with this man. Maybe it is because his presence does something to me and brings some foreign thing that brings discomfort to me. Damnit Palesa! I am too old to be having silly crushes like this. Really! I go and get lotioned first before getting dressed then I walk out of the bedroom that I was allocated. It seemed bigger and smelt like him but I did not ask many questions. I walked down the stairs and I find him by the door retrieving what seems like take out. He closes the door and turns to me . I get to the couches and I sit down.

“I did not know what you do not like”,He mentions as he places the Pizza boxes on the table and then he places another box on top of it.

“I got wings too”,He smiles.

“Thank you”

“I have wine. It is great with Pizza”,He mentions and walks away leaving me stuck with this food here.

He comes back with two glasses and some wine as well. He places it on the table and takes two cushions and places them on the floor and he pulls me to sit down and he does the same. We start eating the Pizza. He opens the wine and pours some for me. I have only seen these in Movies.

“I hope my hospitality is atleast okay.”,He mentions and flashes his knee weakening smile.

“It is great!”,I say

“Well I am glad, usually I am not a great host”,He hands the wine glass to me and I thank him and take a sip.

“I wonder why”,He chuckles and close the wine.

I take another gulp of the wine as I feel more nervous when he looks at me.

“Mbali”,I look at him.

“I am not the 6 figure perfect guy...”

“But I know my business and I know what I want”,He mentions.

“What do you want?”,I ask.

“What do I want?”, I nod my head and take a sip from the wine while waiting for him to speak.

He pulls me by my cushion and there is small space between the both of us. He then places his wine glass down and he lays his fingers under my chin.

“I want you”, He mentions as his lips are on mine. He sucks on my bottom lip and it takes some time for me to respond. I kiss him back closing my eyes and I can taste the wine and mint flavour off his lips. They seem edible and the fact that I am kissing him makes me want to kiss him more. He pulls me onto his lap that very moment and goes on to kissing my neck trailing soft kisses up to my collar bone.

“I want you Mbali”, He says as he stares at me for a moment.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

Nathi left a few minutes after I had served them a bit of beverages while I was cooking. Khalipha was stuck on that couch from the very moment he came here. I got done with cooking and made my way to the lounge.

“Food is ready”, He looks at me.

“I will eat later”, He mentions and I nod.

“I will be upstairs if you need me”, I say.

The front door opens that very moment and Tshepo walks inside. He gives one glance to his brother before he comes my way and gives me a

cheek kiss then pulls me up the stairs disappearing from his brother's eyes.

“What is wrong?”, I ask.

“I need to take a shower. I feel tired”, I nod my head.

“Come, I will give you a back scrub”, He smiles.

“I do not know why that boy is doing here in Durban at this time of the year!”, He vents

“What happened?”, Curiosity got the better of me.

“He got arrested while he was here with his little friends. They were in possession of cocaine”, I gasp.

“Oh my God, what is going to happen?”

“We managed to get him out of trouble but his friends are still there”

“I am sorry”

“It is not your fault Nana”, He gives me a perk.

“Come so you can give me that back scrub”, he mentions.

“I have already bathed”

“You will bath again”, He picks me up.

“Bonginkosi!”, he ignores me as he walks through the bathroom door.

Chapter 26

PALESA MOKOENA

I set my eyes on him as his hands wrapped around my waist. He had this thing of staring at me and I would do the same before shying away. I do just that. I shy away from his eyes as he stares at me.

“Please look at me”, He says and I stare at him.

He caressed my face and pulled me to him and I laid on his bare chest. He ran his fingers through my back as silence prevailed the room. His phone rings and he looks at me as I look at him. He reaches it from the pedestal and answers it.

“Sho”, I close my eyes and sink in the moment of being in his arms.

His breathing patterns start to change back to the way they were.

“Fuck! I will be there in a minute”, he hangs up and then he looks at me.

“I have to go somewhere”, he gently removes me from him.

“Where? It is late at night”, I mention.

“Just take a shower and rest after. I will be back do not wait up for me”, He mentions as he pulls his clothes from the floor and gets dressed quickly.

“Ndimase”, I say softly.

“Palesa we will talk when I come back”, The Mbali name gone out of the window.

He pulls the drawer open and he takes out a gun. I swallow before he closes it.

"If you need anything it is around the house", he dashes out before I can say anything back.

He left me in his house all alone. I pull the sheets closer to my body and I slowly make my way out of the bed and go to the bathroom. I let the sheets go and open the shower before I step inside. I take a shower and let the water run over my skin as if before and scrub his scent away but it is there. It is stuck at the tip of my nose. I got out and lost all the appetite that I had. I get into my pyjamas and then try to find new linen and I do. I put it on the bed and get inside once done.

What did I expect? This is his life and he could disappear while with me. I try to distract myself for a while and eventually I fall asleep.

.

I woke up the next morning and I got off the bed. The view in this house's backyard is quiet a catch and something to look at. I went to take a shower. The side of my bed was not touched but maybe he slept in one of the other bedrooms, yes that may be the case. Palesa you are not even in a relationship with this man. You do not even know what you guys did last night and what are you going to label it.

I slept with him, yes that is it but it was the most beautiful thing I have ever experienced. For the first time in my life I felt comforted and engulfed by a hot feeling and I knew right then that the silly crush I thought I had was not a crush anymore but more of a feeling of connection and Love. I could be forward but that is how I felt. I felt like I am one with him and I did not want that moment to stop but it was

short lived after. I cleaned around the bedroom and I made my way downstairs to the lounge. I was quiet famished. The wine glasses and food from yesterday was still where it was. I cleaned up everything and went to warm up the food from yesterday. I finished and went to the living room and opened the TV. I watched some news and I hear the door opening and some poeple laughing. He walked in with two guys behind him that looked just as dodgy.

“Mbali”

“I thought you were done with abo Mbali”,one of the guys mention.

Unbelievable!

He comes my way and stands by the couch.

“Hello”,I greet. I cannot be rude even after that comment.

“Hello sisi”,I will not offer hospitality. This is not my boyfriend's place.

“Can we talk?”,I stand up leaving the remote and he walks away. I follow after him.

We get into a bedroom that is downstairs that is hardly used by the looks as there are things stored here. He looks at me.

“How was your night?”

“Apart from my host disappearing it was okay”,I say.

“I am sorry about that. I had some business to take care off”

“What do you want from me Luphelo Ndimase and do not give me that I want you speech or whatever it is”,I say while I fold my arms across my chest.

“I do want you. I want to see where this goes between us”,I huff.

“Awucacise Kahle ngoba angikuzwa mina (Make things clear because I do not understand you)”

“Ufuna ngithithi?Palesa you might have an idea of what is going on in my life. This is me and that is not going to change anytime soon”,I blink my eyes looking at him.

“Sure. Do not call me Mbali ever again.”,I try moving to the door but he holds my arm.

“Do not take what anyone says to heart”,I do not like it anymore.

I stare at him before I remove my arm from his hold and get out of the room. What a morning!

NOBUHLE

I am annoyed to the core to be quiet honest with Lethi but I have been behaving as Tshepo wanted me to. Today he was coming into the office a bit late and so I was busy preparing things for the day. I chose to go shopping as that child made sly comments at the mall when we were together. Talk about being petty if you ask me. Buyi was quiet impresses with the way I changed my style and said that having my own money might inspired it but to be quiet honest alot has inspired this look. I also want to be noticed and taken care off. I go through the stuff that I need to for the day and his scent was the first thing I noticed. He

is here, I look up and watch him as he makes his way towards the office. He does not greet, no Tshepo clearly made it clear that we are not friends and I also do not want to be his friend. He walks into his office and I stand up from my desk gathering some papers that he needs to sign and make my way to the door. I knock and he is standing behind the desk. Man who would've have thought that Tshepo would look this handsome in suits. I wish he could wear this each and everyday and his style is also improving in this formal world. He looks up to me and I decide to make my way inside the place.

“Good day Mr Phakade. There are papers that need your signature on it”

“Why don't you take them to Nathi?”

“I did,they require both of your signatures”

“Put them on the table. I will get them signed by the end of the day”,He mentions and goes back to what he was doing.

I nod and make my way towards his desk and place the pile of papers on it. I stand there for a minute and he seems occupied with whatever that he is reading. It must be a contract, this might be my opportunity to get to him and get under him maybe.

I unzip the side of my skirt and then let it down to my ankles. He looks up and I am in my underwear. A frown plasters on his face.

“What are you doing?Get dressed and get out of my office!”,He mentions seemingly angry but I ignore it and step off the skirt and walk up to him.

"I know it could be frustrating at times in life but...",I kneel in front of him and he stands up and opens the drawer of his office and pulls out a gun.

"Get up Nobuhle before I kill you",He says while cocking the gun.

The disgust on his face cannot be missed.

"Please Tshepo I will not tell anyone. No one has to know that we..."

"Baby I...",I look towards the door and it is Lethi. She freezes by the door and I am satisfied with what she is seeing.

"Tshepo what is going on?",her voice is faint.

She drops her bags holding onto her phone and keys that were in her hands. She is in a state of shock.

"Nana nothing is going on"

"Tshepo please do not leave me!",I say while crying and he shuts my head with the back of the gun.

"Voetsek Nobuhle!",I fall onto the floor and blood comes out the corner of my forehead.

His wife is gone by the time I look towards the door and he is following after her. He turns to me for a quick second.

"Run Nobuhle or else I will kill you and your sister will bury your body parts",The way he said that made me shiver.

Blood kept on running down my face. Would Tshepo really kill me for that child? Can't he see that we should be together. We are in the same age group for goodness sake!

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

Tears blurred my eyes. I could not get that image out of my mind. My phone kept on ringing and I have not had the courage to actually answer it. I got to the house, I even left my bag on Tshepo's office but luckily my house keys were attached to my car keys. I got off and made my way inside. I even forgot that his little brother was here and would be leaving tomorrow.

“Sisi are you okay?”, His voice laced with concern but I ignored him.

I ran upstairs to the main bedroom and threw my car keys on the bed and made my way to the closet. As much as I love Tshepo but I cannot stand cheating men. I vowed that I will not be a fool like my mother was but overall I am heart broken at this instant. I cannot take the little pain that keeps on creeping in that I am feeling. I pull my suitcase and pull everything from the railings in the closet and shove them with the hangers into my suitcase. I sink down to my bum and I let out a piercing cry.

How? How could he do this to me? I understand Nobuhle she does not owe me a thing but him? He was trying to silence her for their affair and make me a fool? I should've know from the way Nobuhle was talking to me that something was going on between them. I feel like the next big fool of all time.

I hear my phone ringing and I take it out of my pocket and it is him. He is trying to call me to feed me all his lies. The “It is not what you think story”

I ignore his call until he stops and I quickly go to my contacts and call Palesa. It rings for a couple of times before she answers.

“Mrs Phakade hello!”,She says a bit cheery. I break down .

“Lethi what is wrong?”

“He...His sister in law was naked in his office and he was threatening her about their affair. I am hurt Palesa”,I let out a sharp cry.

“Oh my God”

“How could he do this to me after everything?!”,I feel a bit of anger creeping in.

“Do not think irrationally. I will be there just now, we will sort this out once I am there just avoid him if you feel like killing him”,she mentions.

“I will kill his bitch first!”,The anger is slowly dominating.

“Okay, wait for me. I promise I will be there this afternoon”,she says and hangs up.

I lay on the floor and curl up next to the bag as I cry. So this is how my marriage is ending. I should have listened to my parents. I would have not been in so much pain that I am feeling right now.

“Lethi!”,I could hear his raspy voice shouting out for me.

I sit up and get off the floor. I walk out of the closet and meet with him as he walks into the bedroom. He shuts the door behind him and locks it taking the key.

“Nana let us talk”,I chuckled bitterly between the tears and sniffing.

“I should have known”,I say.

He makes his way towards me.

“How many times have you slept with her Tshepo?”,I ask him as my voice breaks.

“I have never”

“Why was she naked in your office. Look me in the eyes and tell me the truth Tshepo Phakade!”,He steps closer and holds me in his arms.

I cannot fight him. I feel weak and powerless at the moment. He pulls me closer to his chest and holds me tightly.

“Nana I would never cheat on you. I would never hurt you in that manner”,I sob.

He pulls me off him and makes me face him.

“I am not lying. I have never slept with Nobuhle. I would never. If I wanted her I would have had her a long time ago and not had you in my life but I never wanted her. I want you. You are my wife and I hate that you are crying right now. Do not leave me for something that I did not do Nana. Trust me”,He says.

He lays me on his chest once more and I cry in his arms.

“I am sorry for concluding”

“It is okay”,he brushes my back slowly.

“Tshepo we have been together for 7 years and you have never told me that you love me, do you?”,I remove myself from him and look at him.

He is quiet for a moment and looks at me.

“What makes you ask that Nana?”

“You have never uttered those words,Tshepo.”,I say.

He sighs and closes his eyes, I move away from him. I go and grab the spare key on the dresser and unlock the door before getting out of the room.

“I am going to check on Khalipha.”

“Lethi”,I ignore him and walk out of the bedroom. I wipe my forever falling tears. I walk down the stairs and get to the last floor and quickly make my way to the kitchen. I get some water and gulp it down just to try and get the lump that is stuck inside my throat out. I hold onto the sink and just let the tears flow for a moment. I hear footsteps behind me.

“Nana”,his raspy voice is now hoarse.

I turn to him and it sounds like he is about to lose his voice. He makes his way towards me and I stare at him. His eyes are red. He clears his throat and takes my hands into his.

“I-I love you so much Nana. With my whole heart. I do not see another woman that I would love to have by my side like you. I love you so much and I only want to make you happy. I want to show my love to you,I do not want to utter only these words, they seem pointless but I

want to show you how much I love you and I am sorry I made you feel like I haven't been loving you enough...",I pull him in a hug and hold him tightly.

"I love you Tshepo. You have shown me that you love me. Do not question yourself please.",I wraps his arms around and me and breathes in and out.

"I love you Nana",I love him too. So much.

PALESA MOKOENA

I cannot believe what Lethi just told me. Tshepo adores Lethi and does not seem like a person who would be unfaithful to her but then again men can be something else that you cannot guarantee or trust them. His sister in law Pho! Hayi I am going to get him for playing with my friend like that.

Luphelo walks into the bedroom as I am running around like a headless chicken look for my shoes and I find them. I have already booked a flight going home and I was in luck to get one that is leaving in 30 minutes.

"You are leaving?"

“Yes, I am needed back home”

“Is someone dying?”

“No”

“Then I think tomorrow will be fine for you to leave”,He mentions.

“Please I did not stop you yesterday from leaving so please do me a favour and do the same”,He raises his brow.

“I thought we were over this Mbali”,I feel like biting him.

“My friend needs me. She could be killing herself wherever she is”,I say.

“Could you be selfish for once and think for yourself. Lethi is married and has a family back home can't they run to her needs?”, he says frustrated.

I take my bag.

“Unlike some people I am selfless. My friend needs me and no she has no one but me,she would do the same for me. You would do the same for Tshepo”,He keeps quiet.

I take my bag and walk out of the room leaving him.

I try Lethi and her phone is not answered. I did not think this man would get on my nerves like this. I do not think I can handle him at all.

Chapter 27

I needed to sort out my issues with Nobuhle. She has taken it quiet too far with mending in my marriage. Palesa landed last night and she came as quickly as possible. I did not even know where she was but she told me she was out of the province and did not go much into detail instead the most dominant subject that we had at hand was the Nobuhle situation. I could not even get her out of my mind and that image just disgusts me. Today this morning we woke up quiet early. I wanted to sort her out myself because I can see ungithatha kancane logogo (She is taking me for a ride this granny). Tshepo was still asleep and he was quiet exhausted from yesterday. I was too as well. I volunteered to take Khalipha to the airport and see him off mainly because I want to go after and see that granny before anything else. I finished getting ready and I left a note for Tshepo stating that I was already gone and I will be back. I then took my bag and walked out of the bedroom and went to the room Palesa was busy using. I knocked on the door and it was slightly open also. I heard her talking.

“You are being so inconsiderate right now Luphelo!”

There is silence. My nosy self is eager to listen to the heated conversation at hand. I wonder who is this Luphelo. Maybe a colleague.

“You know what? I cannot do this, we are not even in any solid situation but you are dictating me”, I hear her huff.

“Cool”, qq says and I just knock on her door and she tells me to come in.

“Good morning”

“Morning, how are you?”

“I am good, how are you?”

“I am okay. Are you ready?”, I sigh and sit on the bed.

“Yes I am. I just hope that I do not kill her”, She looks at me.

“I am just going there to make sure that you do not get killed or end up in jail.”

“That will not happen but we can go if you are ready”

“I am ready”

I walk out of the bedroom and I go downstairs. I found Khalipha eating and I greet him while he is watching some TV.

“How was your night?”

“It was okay”, He mentions.

I go to the kitchen and get some water to give him some time to finish eating. After he is done he comes into the kitchen and places his dish in the sink.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes I am”, he mentions. I nod and grab my things.

We then walk out and meet Palesa. We all go out through the main door and I open the garage before we go to my car and hop inside. I buckle up and start the car. I then reverse the car and open the gate with the remote. It then opens and I drive out before I close the gate

and drive off. I play some music just to occupy the car. We get to the airport and I wish Khalipha a safe trip and he nods at that moment. Really he did cause trouble these couple of days and his brother's were not very happy about his behaviour. They did the same thing, the life of doing something illegal but I guess that they did not want that for their younger brother. Yes they do not share the same mother with him but they share the same father and that is what brings them together. Their mother's good heart of wanting to raise another man's child. I wonder if my mother did the same with my father's children would we have gotten along well and also would Samke not blame me for stealing her life.

“Bye, do call and come back”,I say.

He smiles and nods.

“I definitely will”,He hops out of the car and walks out.

We wait for him to get inside before we drive off going to where Buyi's house is. Nobuhle lives with her sister but I also do not want to disrespect her house so I will wait for her to prepare herself for work. We get there and park the car a two houses away and wait for her to come out. Nathi and Tshepo will not be at the office today, that I know. We stay in the car and wait for her to come out.

“What will you do when she gets out?”

“I do not know Palesa but all I know is that I want to teach her a lesson”

“Anyone you are dating?”,she shifts.

“No,I have been having lunch with someone at work though”,she smiles.

“Really? How is he?”,I ask.

“He is nice”

“And I thought you still have a crush on Ndimase”

She nervously laughs or is it my mind messing with me?

“Me? No, I was just drunk that day”

“Okay then”

“There she comes out!”,She mentions and I start the car and drive towards her.

She looks at the car and I hop out of the car.

“What are you doing here?”,I gave her a slap and she dropped her bags.

“Stay away from my husband and myself.”

“Or What?”,I throw a punch on her and my nail breaks but I did not care.

I then throw another and she screams when I wrap my arms around her neck.

“Lethi!”,Palesa screams.

We see her sister and my brother in law run down the gate. She pushes me off and I check my nail and my finger is bleeding. She tries to attack me but Nathi holds her quickly.

“What is going on Lethi?”,Buyi asks.

“Your sister has some nerve to try and seduce my husband. I found her in the office naked yesterday. Tshepo was about to shoot her when I found her there begging my husband to have sex with her.”,her sister turns to her.

“What?!Nobuhle!”

“Oh shut up Buyi,you know that Tshepo was supposed to be with me in the first place”,I jump right to her and pull her hair as she is in Nathi’s arms. She screams and Nathi tries to get me away from her.

“Uyigwala unjalo mahosha ndini(You are a coward even you slut)”,I said.

“I will sort this out Lethi, I promise”

“I do not ever want to see her near my family again because I won't hesitate like my husband did”

“I promise”,I nod and turn going to the car. I get inside and Palesa looks at me.

“Let me drive. Your finger is bleeding”,I see blood all over my finger.

“Okay”

We exchange places. She started that car and drove off. My phone rang and I put it on Bluetooth.

“Baby”

“Where are you?”,He asks.

“We are on our way home”,I mention.

“Okay

I will see you now”

We hang up and Palesa blows out some air.

“Wow remind me to never be on your bad side”,I giggle.

“She has tested me too much”,I click my tongue.

“Still just remind me”,I laugh and shook my head.

I do not think that is possible with Palesa. She is too sweet and she would not do that.

We got to the house and then she parked the house. We got out and made our way inside. I rushed to the main bedroom and found Tshepo getting dressed. He turned to me and frowned when he saw blood on me.

I went to take out the first aid kit.

“What happened?”

“I went to beat up Nobuhle”,I mention.

He opens the kit for me and he looks at me and smiles.

“I have never seen you fight before”

“Ah I do not like violence but she was asking for it”,she mentioned.

“I will finish the job”,I just nodded.

He too the twizzers and nail clippers and he he gently tries to cut off the nail and remove it and he successfully did.

“You should get new ones done tomorrow”

“After my real nail has healed”, He nods and then gently tries to clean up my bleeding wound. I look at him. I cannot believe I did that. My mom should have bought a sjambok and hit my father and Samke’s mother. She would have felt much better after just like how I am feeling.

NOBUHLE

I was stuck with my sister in this room. Her husband left following Lethi to her place to check if they are okay after the stunt I pulled. Buyi is very furious. Furious is not even the word to describe how she is right now.

“If you were not my sister I would be hitting you right now”

“For a man that is not even yours?”, I say.

“I will hit you Nobuhle do not try me. I am older than you, As much as you are my sister Lethi is also my little sister in this marriage too. I have to protect the both of you but when you are in the wrong I have to call you into order same as Lethi and I as well.”

“I cannot believe you want to throw me under the bus like this”

“It is not throwing you under the bus but being a big sister. Tshepo has no concious when it comes to Lethi. He beat a man for breaking his

window by Lethi's side. That man suffered a lot of blows from him. Do you want to die for trying to break up their marriage?"

I kept quiet.

"Do not be stupid Nobuhle. Get your own man that will want you whole heartedly and you can get anyone you want but other people's husband's", she says.

I keep quiet.

"I am getting you a flight back home. You have caused enough trouble"

"You are throwing me out of your house? I thought we are sister's but clearly we are not"

"This is my husband's house. You threatened his brother's marriage so I do not think he will be comfortable with having you here. Do not argue with me Nobuhle, I am doing you a favour and protecting you here."

"It is fine Buyi, I know who's side you are on now", She Huff's. I stand up and leave the room. I cannot believe my own sister turns her back on me. She knows that Tshepo and I should be together. I have been wanting him for years.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

My finger got swollen after some time and I could not bear it. Nathi came to the house and they are with Tshepo together somewhere

around the house or in Tshepo's office. I then found Palesa crying in her room as I walked in. She wiped her tears and then I looked at her with worry.

"Palesa are you okay?", I ask.

"No", I sit next to her and hold her hand.

"What is wrong?"

"I think I love someone", I look at her.

"Who?"

"Luphelo"

"Is it the guy you have lunch with at work?"

"No it is someone else, Look. I think I love the idea of being with him. We have not known each other that much but he is so amazing Lethi, I like the way he makes me feel when I am around it is like I loose my mind. He wants to dictate what I do and change the way I do things to suite him", she mentions.

"Did you guys have a fight?"

"Yes"

"Talk to him and tell him how you feel", He mentions.

"I did, but do you think he understands? No"

"I am sorry", I hug her and she wraps her arms around me.

"Can we watch a movie?", She asks.

"Ofcause. I will get some ice cream too"

“And tissue so we can cry about our issues”

“Let me ask Tshepo for some wine”,She smiles.

“Please”,I get up and make my way out of the door.

I go downstairs and I find Tshepo speaking with his brother. The look on his face shows that he is not happy at all.

“Sorry to disturb”,I mention.

“It is okay Sisi”,Nathi says.

“Baby can we get some wine?”,I know Tshepo hates it when I drink alcohol. He only relaxes when he is around.

“Sure”,I quickly rush to the kitchen and get some.

I get everything we need and I make my way back to Palesa’s room. I find her already set up the TV.

Yes there is a TV in every guest room in the house. We get some movies and I jump.on the bed once we are done with placing everything.

“He agreed?”

“Yes, phela he is not that bad. Just does not want me to get addicted”,I mention.

“I am happy that you guys are happy”,She smiles.

“You will be too, do not worry”,I say.

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Chapter 28

I have been seated on this seat for quiet an hour now watching over this thing that is in front of me not believing what was in front of my eyes. I take a sip off my glass of water and I feel like it is surreal at the moment. I pick up the 5 of them and then place them on the counter and take another box and make my way to the bathroom staggering a bit with my walk. I get to the bathroom and I shut the door. That water should do enough to get me pressed. I rip open the box and take out its content and I start to pee on the stick. After some time I get done and pull my tracksuit pants up and I flush the toilet before going to the sink and I wash my hands. I walk out with the stick and I go back to sitting by the counter waiting for something that I am failing to believe at the moment. I grab the wine bottle and take a sip but my mind tells me to stop the drinking and actually sober up for when the results come back. I let it sit for 10 minutes before I take a look on it and the same results display on it. My heart sinks to the pit of my stomach and I swallow. 6 sticks and they all say the same thing. It does not sink in me fully what has become of me instead there is still a hint of being in denial. What should I do? Should I call my friend and let her know? Should I go home this weekend and tell my mother of this sudden change that has occurred or should I call him even though we haven't talked in 4 months. I am the one who cut the cord between us. I may have feelings for him but being in his "Busy" life is not for me. I cannot handle sit as I thought I would and I was not ready. Certainly I am not. I breathe in and out and collect the 6 sticks and take my phone. I dial his number and my heart beats abnormally. I feel my hands shake as it is ringing and when it was answered I dropped the call immediately and breathe in and out while I close my eyes.

My phone is ringing in an instant. He is calling me, I do not know what to do but the best thing I did was reject his call and wait for a moment. He tries again with the calling but yet again I reject it. A Message follows after the rejected call from him.

“Mbali talk to me”, I read it.

I do not know what to say. I expected something else, maybe a message from him telling me to fuck off or something after ignoring him for months until he gave up contact of which broke my heart but having to receive this from him makes me happy. I do not know what to say to him anyway.

I take a picture of the tests and then send it to him accompanied with a message stating:

“I am pregnant”

I do not explain further than that. The pregnancy test clearly shows how far I am. I still cannot believe it and it has not sunk in. I do expect him to deny it or even tell me to abort it. Men of his range do not want to have children for one simple reason, they do not want baby mamas holding them down. I know it far too well but for now I am scared of what decision I will take. I am working so I think I might be able to take care of it but I never imagined being a single mother like my mother. I wished for my child to experience something that I never had the chance to.

My phone rings that very moment and it is him. I breathe in and out. I cannot ignore him forever. I need to hear what he has to say and make a decision from that.

“Hello”,I bite my bottom lip as I answer.

“You are pregnant with my baby?”

“You are the last person I slept with”,I mention.

There is some silence after that and it unsettling me at that very moment.

“Can I see you tomorrow? I am in Durban”,He mentions.

“Oh, I didn't know”

He chuckled.

“You ignored me nje”,I keep quiet.

“Yes we can meet”,Again something comes to tie us forever that is if he wants to be part of it.

“Okay.”

“Bye”,I quickly hang up and then breathe in and out before I look back at the tests. I cannot believe this is happening to me.

I feel like crying most of all. I take the bottle of wine and I go and put it in the fridge. I take the sticks and I throw them in the bin and I make my way towards the bathroom. I got in and opened the shower water. I need to bath before I rest. I might feel better after I am done. I do not have an appetite even now.

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It is the next day and I am feeling nervous. He is coming. Well he said that he is coming. It is the weekend anyway but I still have to come back home and wrap up some of my work for the term before the kids

start writing and I have to prepare my revision plans as well. I ate, seemingly today I am feeling a bit better than I was yesterday when I was feeling a bit sick. I comb out my hair and tie it up removing everything from my face. I then look at myself through the mirror and I feel ready though I am not dressed to kill but I am comfortable. A knock surfaces from my door and I am alerted to it. I move from the mirror and go to the door. I breathe in and out before I open the door and he is standing there. I flashes a weak smile and already it has some effect on me.

“Mbali”, I told him once to stop calling me that but he is stubborn.

“Luphelo”

He walks inside the apartment without me letting him in. So much rudeness! I turn to him after closing the door and he turns around to face me.

“You have been ignoring me, why?”

“I have my reasons”

He just chuckles and nods.

“So what is the decision. Are you in or out?”, I ask

“In what?”

“The pregnancy? The whole thing. You should've used a condom”, I add on

“We are both at fault here. I did not fuck myself Palesa we cannot blame each other. We are both grown adults”

“You see? ”

“I am not here to fight you. I am here to be part of my child's life and do not make it difficult for whatever reason you are suddenly hating me for”

“I just dislike your lifestyle”

“I won't leave it Palesa. I told you this, it's either you take it or leave it”

I close my eyes for a moment and I just sigh.

“I did not expect to be pregnant”

“It is here. There is nothing we can do”

I just look at him.

“I was thinking of heading to the doctor just to make sure of everything”, I mention.

“Let me take you there”, I nod my head.

I move away from him but he holds my arm.

“I still want you Palesa. I am not going to give up and I will not let another man see an opportunity to waltz into your life”, I swallow.

That effect again.

He lets go of me and I walk away.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

“Lethi, Lethi”, I look at my mother as she holds onto the dress she is wearing.

“How do I look?”, She asks as she looks at herself through the mirror inspecting if it is perfect enough for her.

“It looks good”, I smile and she turns to me.

“I love it too”, I smile more at that.

“Let me change so we can go and pay for it”, she closes the door to the changing room and I look around the place. I am already tired for the day even though we have not done much of shopping but with my mother she can take you to a hundred stores just to get the perfect thing for her. I go out and wait for her and she comes out after some time dressed. She thanks the lady that works here who is next to her and she comes towards me. I go to the counter and then I offer to pay.

“I will pay Lethi”

“No, it is my treat mom”

She nods and smiles.

“Thank you”, I then take out my card and I get to paying for her dress. After that we get everything that we bought and leave the store.

“You have been awfully silent, is everything okay?”, My mother asks.

How do I tell her? How do I confide about my marital issues to her?

“Let us get some food, I am famished”, I mention to her just to avoid the conversation.

She lets me be and we find a restaurant in the mall and settle. We get our menus and we order what we want before the waitress takes away our menus. My mother holds my hands.

“I am your mother Lethi, I can help you with anything and I will listen to whatever you want to say and try my best to support you”

she mentions.

“I want a baby”,She is taken aback by my response.

“You will have one”,she says assuring me.

“I do not know mah. I have been off the contraceptive 2 months after my wedding and I haven't fallen pregnant since then. Tshepo and I do not use protection so I do not understand”

“Listen it will happen it's own time Lethi. Just relax and enjoy your marriage. Has your husband initiated that he wants a child or put pressure on you?”,I shook my head.

Tshepo has not for once mentioned us having a baby right away,I am the one who would love for us to have one and he does not mind. He wants one too but he always says at our own time though of which we are not favoured in right now.

“No, my husband is okay with us being childless at the moment but I would love to have one mah”

“What about school?”

“I will juggle everything. Some women do, plus honours is just one year”,I mention.

“Just wait and stress also contributes into a person not getting pregnant. Do not put pressure on yourself. Your husband is not doing so and so I do not get why you want to put that on yourself”, I sigh.

“Maybe you are right”

“You will fall pregnant”, she squeezes my hands and I look into her eyes.

There is still that glimpse of pain. This must be opening wounds in her.

“I am sorry”, I say softly

“I have you babies so do not be sorry”, She smiles.

I sigh and close my eyes for a moment before I open them to glance to her.

“Do you still love dad?”, I ask.

“I am trying not to”, I bite my bottom lip.

“He does not deserve you mom”

“He is your father Lethi. As much as he has his mistakes but he loves you guys. At some point in life I believe he did love me.”, I can hear the longing in her voice.

I hate it, I hate how my dad made my mother like this.

Our drinks came saving is from yet another somber conversation that we would've indulged in.

We start another conversation talking about anything else that comes to mind.

PALESA MOKOENA

The cold gel is wiped off my belly and I get to sit up. I couldn't move off the spot for a full minute. It was sinking in, it sunk in when I heard the heartbeat. I am going to be a mother to someone I never expected to fall pregnant for. My mother, the fear of telling her was creeping me. This is not what she wished for me. She installed sex before marriage in me but no, I had to open my legs for this man who looks more happy than he should be about this pregnancy. I get off the bed and soon enough we are out of the doctor's office.

He is talking but I cannot hear him for a moment. I am thinking of ways to break this down to my mother. I feel like not going home until I give birth. Yes my stomach is not noticable right now but it is growing and soon she will realise that I am pregnant. All of these thoughts are running in my mind.

“We should get you a transfer to Guateng so you can live with me”, I quickly look at this man.

Has he maybe lost his mind for a moment?

“I am not married to you, I will not be doing that”, I say.

“It is the best Palesa we get to raise the bay together”, He must be delusional.

“No Luphelo. That is not happening co-parenting works well for distant parents as well. You will get to visit us as much as you want”, I mention that.

We walk out of the practice and go to his car. He is silent but the frown on his face shows that he is disapproving the idea of him visiting us. We get inside the car and I buckle up before he starts the car and drives like he wants us to die.

“That is not going to work well Palesa”

“It is the best decision. We are not together Ndimase”

“How can you say we are not together when we have a proof inside of you that we are”.

“That is it! That is the problem. I do not know what forest you come from but I will not accept that Luphelo. You have to take me out and ask me to be your girlfriend do not make demands. I am not one of those girls you are used to and I will not take it”, I shoot him a look and fold my arms before I turn to the window.

“I want some peaches. Please pass by the supermarket so I can get some”

“Sure”, Silence prevails the whole car.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I dropped my mother off after our little day out. I really missed having this with my mother and it was quiet fun. She really did find a way to

comfort me and I am happy that I feel a bit better now than I was before when I went to meet up with her. I got to the house and I parked the car inside the garage and got out and made my way to the inside of the house and I find Tshepo watching some TV while in shorts standing on the fluffy carpet. I thought that Tshepo before I got to see him naked that he has tattoos but he does not even have one. I have never really asked him if he has ever considered getting one or not. I got to him and I wrap my arms around his waist standing in front of him and he shifts his attention from the TV to me.

“How was your day with your mother?”, He asks and I give him a perk.

“It was good. I had fun. What were you doing today?”

“Watching the latest news”, I just nod my head.

“I feel tired at the moment. I just want to shower. How about we shower together?”, I wiggle my eye brows.

“I would love that Nana”, I smile.

He kisses my forehead.

“This weekend aunt called us to her house. The four of us”, he mentions and I knew then he meant including His brother and his wife.

“Did she mention what is the occasion?”

“No”

I nod my head.

“Okay let me go and prepare our shower then”, I spank his butt and he jumps.

“Lethi”,I laugh.

“What? It is not a crime. You do that to me”

“Nana it is not okay.”,He sulks.

I walk away going up the stairs. I am really tired. I just need to bath and cuddle with my husband of which he will do. He will record the news and watch them later if he has too.

Chapter 29

I woke up to the next morning from the coldness. I could feel that my husband is not in bed anymore as I am not sleeping on top of him like I was when we closed our eyes to get to some sleep. I remove the covers that are covering my body and I get out of the bed. My weave falls to my face. I did not put it in a protective manner so that it does not get ruined. I was stuck in the moment of being craddled and cuddled by my husband that I did not think for one second to put that on. I slip on my comfortable slippers and make my way out of the door and go downstairs. The house seems empty but his raspy voice I can hear it so I follow to where it is. He seems to be on call when I reach near the door and get there. He is standing over his desk in his study and his fist is on the desk seemingly not resting well. He looks up to me and sees me cawing by the door as I watch him.

“I will get the quickest flight coming there. She does not know me.”,He mentions through to the person on the other end of the phone and he hangs up.

“Good morning, are you okay?” ,I ask.

“No, I am killing Nobuhle today.”,Yes she moved back to Johannesburg and the only reason we have not poked her eyes out it is because of Buyi.

Buyi is like an older sister to me and seeing her hurt is something I would not love to see. She has been supportive and there for me all those years since I have known her and she has never stopped. Even when her sister was trying to sink her claws on my husband she stood by what is right.

“What did she do?”, I have to ask because this does not seem like it is about the matter from last time.

“She is tempering with the business. She stole information from the company and now is selling to the highest bidder to take us out”, He mentions.

The frustration visible on his face. I hate seeing him like this.

Yes being in the office is not what he likes or maybe envisioned for himself as he loves the streets but he cleaned up just to good for once and not hurt people in being in the life of crime. That fast life could take anyone quickly. Your death is as fast as the money you are chasing. His brother and himself started this company in order for them to be there for us, their wives and live an honest life despite their fingers being slippery and could steal what they can but they are not doing it survive anymore. I presume, he hated the cooperate life but he is slowly liking it. The feeling of being important and being recognised in the business industry. He likes it. It is the respect that they have and the aura they present when entering the room, that is what he loves about all of this and ofcause money.

It is an ongoing legacy for the Phakade’s that cannot fade in just a flash like their crime life would have .

“You are going to Johburg?”, I ask.

“Yes, I have to.”, I nod.

I understand. I just feel for Buyi at this moment but her sister does not know when to stop.

“Let me go and pack for you”

“It is fine, I won't need clothes. I will be back tonight I promise”,He mentions.

“This could stretch Tshepo”.

He comes towards me and pulls me to his arms. I look up to him in the eyes.

“I promise I will be back”,I nod my head.

He gives me a light perk and I feel him relax a bit.

“I wish I can stuff you in my pocket and carry you everywhere with me”,I giggle at his little fable.

“Well that is impossible”,I get out his arms and move away from him.

“Let me go and wear something then brush my teeth before I make breakfast for you”

He nods and I move to the door. I walk out and I hear him talk.

“Nana”,I turn around and look at him.

“I-I love you”,I feel my heart sooth as he mentions that and feel flutters in my stomach.

I feel emotional a bit there ,falling in love with him all over again.

“I love you more”,He smiles and nods.

I turn and quickly walk out of the room going up the stairs.

It feels rare to hear him say that and he gathered courage to do so. I understand him now that something's he does not like them because of his father and the reason it is hard for him to say I love you it is because

his father said that to his mother all the time while causing her pain than joy. He feared those words meant nothing if the actions do not correspond to what you are saying but hearing him say it.

Makes...makes me feel happy. That I can do all things with him by my side.

I get upstairs and I quickly make the bed and clean up the room before I go and brush my teeth and wash my face. I take my silk robe and wrap it around my body before I go down the stairs to the kitchen to make some breakfast for him. I take out some of the ingredients. I should go grocery shopping. I charged my phone in the kitchen and I start with making breakfast,. I get some juice from the fridge and pour some for myself while I am frying in here. After I am done making breakfast I set everything up for us and then I get a glass from the cupboards and then I take it. My phone rings and I quickly attend to it and it is Palesa. I smile and quickly answer it.

“Palesa! How are you?”,I ask.

“I am good Lethi,I miss you”,She mentions.

“I miss you so much more”,Yes we have lived apart for a year and a few months now but still we have never been apart since we started being friends”

“How is work? I might visit soon. I will ask Tshepo”,I say.

“That would be wonderful, please do”,she then heaves a sigh.

“Lethi I am pregnant”

“What?!”

“I am pregnant”,She mentions, the glass slips from my fingers and hits the ground.

“Oh my God when did this happen?”,I feel joy engulf me inside.

“Four months ago. It is Luphelo,he is the father”,I frown upon confusion of who that is.

“The guy you were arguing with the last time”

“Yes Ndimase, it's him”,Shock comes knocking on me again.

“Wow, I...Wow I do not know what to say”

“I am scared of telling mom”,She mentions.

“Don't be, your mom loves you. We are all here”

“Okay, I will call her. I have to go I feel like vomiting. I will call”,I nod my head and smile.

“Okay, I love you”

“I love you more”,she hangs up and Tshepo comes in the kitchen.

As soon as I see him my short joy is replaced with sadness, realization that my friend is pregnant with her first ever child.

“Nana what happened?”,He is looking at the floor in front of me and I do the same.

I did not realise that my legs have some blood coming out. Must be from the glass particles. It is not bad.

He comes towards me and picks me up before placing me on the counter and stares at me. Sadness cowers me much more at the

moment. I am happy for my friend. She would make a lovely mother that I know.

“What is wrong?”

He asks concerned and I mask a smile.

“It is nothing. Palesa is pregnant, they are expecting with Ndimase”, I mention.

“He told me last night”

“Hawu and you didn't tell me?”

“I felt like Palesa should tell you”, I nod in understanding.

“We should do something nice for them”

“Like what?”, I shrug.

“I do not know yet”, He nods.

“Please hold me”, my voice is breaking.

He does that immediately and tears fall from my eyes. I am scared a part of me is scared for her. I do not want her to go through what I went through. I feel fear and the fear in her voice earlier scared me.

Tshepo picks me up and walks out of the kitchen going up the stairs with me in his arms.

PALESA MOKOENA

After talking to Lethi it helped but I did not know where to start. I do not even know where aluphelo went off too but he mentioned that he will be back just to see me as we need to talk about a way forward. I really do want to know what is the way forward from here onwards because I need to know where I stand. Yes my mother loves me so much. I am her only child but also in that sense I am scared and I have disappointed my mother. It is not like I was not enjoying when that man was on top of me flipping me like a pancake on a hot pan. I was enjoying it and quiet frankly I do not regret sleeping with him the process of it. A knock surfaces from my door as I am seated on the couch in front of the TV. I stand up and make my way to the door and I open it. He is leaning against the door frame as he looks at me from the bottom going upwards with his eyes until they meet mine. I swallow. This man after so long he still has an effect on me. I do not like it that is why I fight him all the time. I am actually fighting what I feel for him most especially when I am in his presence.

“Hello”

“Hi”, I greet back.

“Should I wait for you here?”, he asks and I can hear a hint of sarcasm.

He wants me to let him in so I move out of the way and let him in. He comes in and I close the door before turning to him. He looks at me.

“How are you?”, He asks genuinely.

“I am okay”, He nodded his head.

“We need to talk”, He mentions and I nod.

“Please sit down. I will get some drinks.”

“No thank you”, Oh. We stare at each other.

“Since you are not moving, I thought it would be best if my mother comes this side to stay near you”, He says and I frown.

“That is extreme”, I mention.

“I do not want anything to happen to the child”, My heart feels daggers.

He cares about his tender offspring alone and it is hard to swallow. Palesa you kept on reminding him that he is nothing but a sperm dish to you.

“I would never be reckless like that Luphelo”, I say

“I know but anything can happen. You know what happened to your friend years back and I do not want that happening”, He mentions.

“Do not drag my friends pain in this and no nothing will happen. Lethi was going through a hard time during that time”, He nods.

Here I was thinking he was coming with something tangible.

“I do not know Palesa. I have never done this before”

“Me too but if we try we will figure something out together”, He smiles.

“Am I allowed to touch you?”, I frown. What absurd question is that?

He laughs at my facial expression and comes closer to me before he pulls me to him and I land on his chest. He looks into my eyes before he lays a perk on my lips.

“You taste good”

“I had some pineapples”

He bites his bottom lip.

I still feel it. The stampede in my stomach doing what it does best when it is around him, he Dips his head to my neck and I can feel his warm breath against my neck which sends shivers over my body to my toes.

“Forgive me for not knowing what to do properly to be in your life”, I slightly gasp as he softly kisses my neck.

“Forgive me for making you the mother of my child before making you mine”

He places his hands around my shoulders.

“Breathe Palesa”, He says.

I did not realise that I had held my breath.

“I want you so badly Palesa”, he mentions.

“I want the good girl that is you. You fit well for a bad boy like me”, He says and I feel breathless already as he kisses my neck softly.

“Luphelo”

“Khuluma nami mama(talk to me mama)”

“I...I...”, He does not stop kissing my neck.

I feel so weak at the moment. This man will be the death of me!

TSHEPO PHAKADE

I landed here an hour ago and I have just met with my P.I. I had hired one to keep an eye on Nobuhle. You cannot trust anything and anyone at the moment and her movements we quiet suspicious. I knew it when I got the call this morning. Today I am going to make her pay for even trying to cause pain to Lethi.

I am rather also bothered at the moment. Lethi is in my mind since I left Durban coming here and I wish I had stayed behind and tried to figure out how she is feeling. She usually displays her feelings just as they are and it is not hard to read them off but today it was different. Today she turned to a little version of me that could not express how they are feeling when they are bothered. I have been bothered alot of times but I am not one to express how I feel unless I feel like it is necessary to raise it.

I look at my phone and my wallpaper is her and I on our wedding day back home at the Phakade yards. Well she is the one who changed it and out it there. I never had a wallpaper either than the one that came with the phone. I am not interested in those things or even social media but Lethi is and she has set up WhatsApp for me just so I can communicate with her easily but I hardly ever use it and she has gotten into the habit to. I look at the picture and she looks happy, so happy and it gives me peace that I am doing something right. I have done something right in my life and that is to make her happy as I can.

“Grootman”, I look up and my P.I has already finished his drink and has ordered another one to down his food with.

“I need to call my wife”, I stand up as the tugging urge to call her and check if she is okay is there.

I get off the chair and leave him there. I get out of the restaurant and I swiftly dial her numbers off by head even though they are saved on my phone as “Lethinjabulo Phakade”. The name upgraded when we got married and Nkosi was replaced with mine. “From king to forever”, she would mention in her soft voice.

It rings a couple of times and I tap the side of my thigh with my hand that is tuck in my pocket. I am a bit unsettled at the moment. Nobuhle is the least of my worries at the moment.

“Phakade Lami”, I could not help but fix a smile on my face when I hear her voice.

I wish my mother was here. To see the woman that makes her son smile like he has lot his damn mind! A 34 year old me is wrapped around a finger of the smallest woman I could find.

“Nana, are you okay?”, That is all I ask.

“Yes, I was just a bit emotional. Nothing serious I am good”, Frustration creeps in and I keep on tapping the side of my thigh and I press my lips.

She is not being truthfully honest at the moment. I hear her heave a sigh as there is silence.

“I want nothing to happen to Palesa during her pregnancy”

“What will happen?”

“Nothing, I just pray she enjoys it so well until the baby is delivered”,She mentions.

“She will do not worry”

“Okay. I am cooking what do you want to eat?”,she asks shifting from the conversation at hand.

“You”

“Haibo Phakade real food”,She giggles at that.

My heart skips a beat like it is enveloped by fear when in actual fact it is reacting to the sound that I am hearing. I let out my breath.

“You are real”,She lets out a laugh.

I love it! I love her.

“Well I will see what I will make then since you have no suggestions”,She mentions.

“Anything is fine”

“Okay, You are coming back right?”,I promise this morning and I intend on keeping my promise.

“Yes, I promised”

“Good. Okay bye”

“Bye”,I hang up and I send a text to Nathi after that.

It gets to him as he answers immediately.

I had told him and Buyi what I am going to do to her sister. She did not have much to say but I am going to teach Nobuhle a lesson she would not forget.

Suddenly my anger is back and replaced back to the way it was when I was in the urge to fly here and get my hands on her.

Chapter 30

Have you ever wondered how things would turn out if some things never happened or maybe some situations have never happened? Would you be in the position that are you currently in or you would be in another position that you have never thought that you would be. Well that runs in my mind these days and I cannot bring myself to hold it together in the part of my life. I love it do not get me wrong. I love my husband and the little family that he has provided for me of which are his sister in law and his brothers. I do love them all as they play different but yet most important roles in our lives.

My heart is beating quiet fast and I am nervous though at the moment. I took an impulsive decision of taking a pregnancy test. I think I am obsessed with trying to have atleast one child to show for my marriage but it is not happening. It is 3 am and I got off the bed having an urge to just take one. I couldn't sleep until I held one in my arms and saw the results that they displayed. I pace up and down the bathroom. Tshepo came back last night like he had promised but he was dead tired. His shirt had blood stains on it and I did not dare to ask what happened. All I know is that something happened to Nobuhle and she brought it all to herself.

“Calm down Lethi”, I say to my reflection in the bathroom mirror.

I breathe in and out and the time is up for the wait on the pregnancy test. I take it in my hand and breathe in and out. Tears stream down my cheeks and I quickly wipe them from my face and I breathe in and out but a lump forms in my throat feeling painful than it should be. My heart heavy as if it is cemented to the bottom of my stomach. I breathe

in and out and close my eyes looking up trying to fight my tears but they stream more than they should.

“God why me?”, I am asking myself that question.

I do not know what happened? I would understand if maybe I had an abortion before but the pain of feeling like that child was my one and only child and that is gone. I was not ready for him but he did not have to go the way he did and now I fail to get pregnant. I quickly wipe my tears and I take the pregnancy test and I go to take some toilet paper and wrap it around. It came back negative stating that I am not pregnant. I do not understand this at all. I go out of the bedroom and to my bag. Tshepo is lightly snoring and I know that he is dead tired. He is a light sleeper but at times he does fall deep into sleep when his body needs some proper sleep. I go to my handbag and I shove the test inside and zip it up. I go to bed and I sleep next to my husband looking up to the ceiling. Fresh tears start to fall down my face all over again and I softly sob making sure that I do not disturb him in his sleep. I then turn to him and Snuggle closer to him.

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The speakers are blasting one of my grandmother's favourite songs from her gospel collection. I prayed this morning that I felt like my soul is leaving my body while crying and I feel tired. I bathed and dressed leaving my husband in bed before I went downstairs to clean before preparing him for work. I made breakfast with much of a variety. I had my iPad in the kitchen and I placed it where I can see it. I looked up some new dishes that I can make for Tshepo before he goes to work and also some lunch ideas and they had popped up on YouTube and I am trying them out right now. I hum along to the music while moving

swiftly around the kitchen with a bit of a heavy heart but I am trying to ignore my somber mood as it is.

I feel him stand behind me. His perfume sold him out before he can utter a word. He wraps his arms around me and I relax in his arms before I turn around to face him and help him fix his tie. He looks at me with a slight frown on his face while I plaster a smile on mine. I finish with fixing him and I run my fingers over his shoulders to his chest straightening his suit well before I give him a perk on the lips.

“Morning Phakade lami”

He stares at me and it is quiet intense. I swallow as he carries on starrng at me as he is looking at me before he releases a sigh.

“Morning MaNkosi”,I smile and I turn around and finish up what I am doing.

“I made a special breakfast today and I have packed your lunch. I hope you like it”,I mention.

“Oh I also signed up to take some baking classes but only later during the day that way it does not clash with my timetable”,He is still quiet.

I turn to him and look at him concerned.

“Baby are you okay?”,I ask.

“I should be ask you that Nana”

I giggle.

“I am fine baby”,I say.

“Lethi...”,I hold his hands.

“I promise you, do not worry, take a seat and food will be ready in a minute”,I mention.

He holds my shoulders in place and I cannot move for a moment. He stares into my eyes.

“Nana talk to me. Please”,He is begging. I hate the tone in his voice right now. It is too soft and carries some worry of which I do not want from him. He should be happy not worrying about me.

“Tshe...”

“Please”,I sigh.

“I want to deal with this on my own. I do not want to bother you...”,He frowns,I feel a lump forming but I do not want to cry.

He might find this childish or maybe that I am being crazy for wanting a child now.

“We are married for a reason Nana, so that we can share the load together”,He mentions.

“I am just sad”,I say

“About?”

“The baby we lost. We never touched up on the issue”,I see him shift uncomfortably and stiffen.

“It is bothering you?”,I nod my head and tears stream down my cheeks.

“I am sorry Nana”,He says while pulling me to his chest.

I am now wetting his shirt while he holds me tightly in his arms. He brushes my back.

“I am so sorry”, He mentions once more.

“I wonder how he would've looked. How grown he would be now”, I mention.

He heaves a sigh.

“I know baby”

I did not mean to break down like this to him.

He comforts me in his arms. Something that used to be difficult for him in the past but now he does with so much ease.

TSHEPO PHAKADE

I called in the office, well to Nathi to let him know that I will be working from home. I could not leave Lethi in the state that she was in. I did not for once think that this has impacted her so much about the past but she is right with one thing. We buried the whole thing and moved on not revisiting it to try and make an understanding of what happened though we will never understand what happened. I look at her as she is sleeping on the bed peacefully. My woman is beautiful, I knew it then when I first saw her with Mfanele. I liked her innocence and I wanted to explore that with her. I was attracted to her surely but I never thought I would be in this position where my heart pulsates differently at the

sound of her giggle or voice that I would lay my whole world for a woman and dare to harm anyone who is trying to harm her. She still posses it. That innocence that is why I never told her that we never really left the life of crime. She never figured how we could grow our business this quickly and get more trucks which costs millions so quickly. Yes we have not been there at the position of being that financially free but we are getting there we are a nano second close.

My phone rings as I am staring at my sleeping wife who's eyes looked puffy from crying. Yes I knew she was crying when I laid my eyes upon her when I entered the kitchen. I take it and I answer the phone while walking out of the sliding door in our room that leads to a young balcony that overlooks the part of this township and looks upon the road where some people are up and down and in some streets cars are moving. I can see the head of where Max Lifestyle is situated at where I am but nothing more from that.

"What is wrong? Enhle told me that you are not coming in today",Nathi's voice booms through the other side of the phone.

I sigh. I want to take a smoke so I pull out the cigarette that I have been fighting to smoke since Lethi laid her head on the bed.

"It is Lethi",I mention and then place the cigarette between my lips before I retrieve a lighter and light it up.

"What is wrong?",He asks again.

"She..she is not over the loss of our son",Yes the gender could've been known at the stage when she was pregnant.

"Have you considered those shrinks or what not they are?"

"I have. Her parents took her there a few years back", He sighs.

"Maybe she should go again"

"I think she wants a child"

I say and silence prevails between us.

I take a puff and then release the smoke through my nose and mouth before a take a breath in after.

"What makes you say that?"

"She has told me before. I think she is longing for one. I saw one test in the trash last week and it was negative", I hear him sigh.

"Do you want a child now?"

"I do not mind but I want us to have a child when we have one"

"She doesn't understand that.", I nod my head like he can see me.

"This is difficult"

"Can Buyi talk to her?"

"I will talk to her"

"Thank you"

"I am proud of you", he mentions before he hangs up.

We grew up very tight and we always knew we had no one else but the three of us. As the oldest he has always had my back like I had his. I knew when he uttered those words that he really was. I wish I could hear them from my mother too. She was taken away from me when I was at a tender age and I needed her the most right now. I need her to

be there for my wife and help her through this the best way she knows how. I am trying but I am failing at it.

PALESA MOKOENA

Luphelo, what is this man doing to a girl like me? I ask myself that question and now that there is a child involved there is no separating us. We will be in each other's lives for a very long time, as long as our child lives. I woke up this morning feeling better. I have gathered some courage from Lethi's speech and I have made up my mind on telling my mother. Tomorrow I am going to work so that is what I am not looking forward to doing at all. Those kids are a horror movie if you ask me. I got out of the bedroom and went to pee before washing my face and brushing my teeth. I then walk to the living room and I find him moving around my kitchen doing what God knows what in his boxers.

He is half naked.

I swallow at the sight of him. He is fit and the way his back is sculptured really is pressing buttons in me that should not be pressed. He feels my presence and turns around to face me and I see his boxers are a bit low exposing his bold V-line that napes in front of me. I swallow and look up to him and he smiles while looking at me. .

"My flower", Oh we have gained a new version to say my name.

"Luphelo"

“You kicked me out of your room”,I just locked him out so he would not come inside my room.

I did not trust myself around him. I would've ended under him screaming his name forgetting that I am a young Christian girl that shouldn't be scratching the back of a thirty something year old who should be married like his peers.

He flashes his weakling smile once more and comes towards me.

“You are drifting off, what are you thinking of?”,I look at him.

“Nothing”,He wraps his arms around my body and kisses my forehead.

“How did you sleep?”,He whispers that as he rests his forehead on mine.

“I slept okay”,I swallow.

He holds both my cheeks and he plants a young kiss on my lips and I find my self closing my eyes and ignite a further than just this small kiss and take in his full lips. His is surprised by my move but he takes it in as he returns the kiss. After a while he breaks it and breaks into a smile.

“Fuck Flower I want to have you so bad”,He mentions and I squirm as my body reacts.

“I am hungry”,I say.

“For what?”,his low tone comes seductive to me.

“Food”,He breaks into a short laugh.

“Okay let me feed you”,I nod my head as he pulls me further into the kitchen.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I opened my eyes after some time as they felt heavy. I found Tshepo seated on the bed while on his laptop. As soon as he sees that I am awake he discards the laptop aside and pulls me into his arms and I get closer to him.

“How are you feeling now?” ,He asks.

“I am feeling okay.” ,I mention.

He brushes his hands through my weave. It feels good and it is the first time he has ever done that.

“Would you like for us to take our honeymoon trip?” ,I sit up and look at him.

We have never really went away for our honeymoon. We were busy renovating and extending the house.

“Yes” ,I say.

“Where would you love to go?” ,He asks.

“Let us both decide that”

“I am not good with locations”

“Well we will learn it” ,he just nods and pulls me to his lap and I sit on him.

“Or we can get someone to do it for us”,he mentions.

“They are costly”

“Money is not a problem”,I smile and kiss his lips.

“Thank you Phakade”

“Do you want us to take therapy together?”,he asks.

Oh Therapy?

“We can, You need to be looked after as well”,He nods

I know he doesn't like the idea but he is doing to to please me.

“Thank you, for loving me”,I perk his lips a couple of times.

“I will until I take my last breath”,I believe him. I trust him.

I cannot believe this is my husband. He is so beautiful inside and out.

Chapter 31

I stood by the poolside and looked at Buyi who was keeping afloat in the water. We are in a hotel in Umhlanga. She wanted us to take a some sort of night away together and she has invited me even though it is in the middle of the week but I do not really mind at all being here. I love her company and she is an easy person to talk to.

I just came from my hotel room and I had just went to change into a bikini and also call Tshepo to let him know that we had arrived safely. Our husbands really are out here doing this husband thing for us. I go closer to the poolside and she turns to face me and makes her way towards me. I sit down by the edge and dip my legs inside the water and shift my glasses to be above my forehead and watch her as she reaches me and stands next to my legs.

“Why don't you get inside the water?”,she asks.

“I have not swam in a really long time”,She giggles.

“It is not that deep,I also cannot swim”,She shyly says.

I look at her and smile before I stand up and then discard the shoal around my body. She quickly comes out of the water and she goes to grab her phone.

“Wait before you jump in let me take a photo of you”,She smiles.

“Okay”,She quickly takes a few before she tells me that I can get in water.

I dive inside the water making my weave wet and I know already that I will be itching the whole night. I need to take it off and get a new one

soon. Maybe when I go back home. She gets inside the water and I sink in my body making sure to just get my head out of the water.

"I would have never dive in that manner", She jumps in and comes towards me.

"I have not been in a pool since I moved", I mention and move around. She comes towards me and she looks at me.

"Lethi, I want us to talk", I look at her.

"About?"

"No do not worry it is not about my sister", She says.

"How is she?", She was on her death bed the last time I checked in the hospital. Tshepo really made sure to teach her a lesson. I just felt sorry for Buyi but she has not changed the way she is towards me.

"She is okay I guess. My mother says she has woken up so that is good", She smiles.

"I am sorry", I felt the need to put it out there.

"Do not worry yourself. She put herself in that position. I do not blame Tshepo for fighting her", I just nod my head.

I am glad then. I would not want our sister relationship to be rocky because of her sister.

"Have you ever wondered or asked yourself why Nathi and I do not have children?", Yes I have!

I wondered why they do not have children. I mean they have been together for years but I guess they are just not ready to have children as off yet.

“Yes I have”,I reply.

“Well I cannot have children,that is why we do not have children”,my mouth opens agape for a moment and I close it.

I feel my heart wrenching in these news.

“I am sorry”,I softly say.

“Why are you sorry? It is no one's fault”,She smiles and I look into her eyes.

There is no inch of sadness displayed there or pain of knowing that you cannot have children.

“I do not know,I...I”,I keep quiet.

I do not know what to say.

“I was once sad you know Lethi. Longed to have one just like every other woman but I knew that would not happen. My husband accepted it and I thought maybe he would leave me one day or impregnant someone out of our relationship because he needs a legacy but he assured me and he has never cheated on me. What keeps me going is that he loves me just as I am. He accepted my situation just as it is and his words to me were that he has brothers that will carry on the Phakade name not his children alone. So that gave me some comfort.”

“I cannot get pregnant. I have been trying”,I say and sigh.

She places her hands on my shoulders as I come up the pool.

“Pray about it. You do not have to rush to have children Lethi. You are young. I am in my middle 30s and you are 23 years. You still have years ahead of you. As much as you are married but you are also young and you need to live. Travel with your husband and have sex anywhere you want to. Be free and feel free and then one day you will have a child when God is ready to hand you guys one.”

“I know I am young but I really would love a child”

“Are you mentally and emotionally prepared for one? Raising a child is not easy. Believe me, having PND after birth is not easy and one of the most difficult things. Please enjoy your youth.”

“Tshepo is not young. He will be in his 40s soon”, I mention.

“Does he want a child now?”, She asks.

“He will accept what comes.”

“Tshepo loves you Lethi. Whethere you have a child together now or ten years from now he still will love you the same or more than that. You having a child together will not change his love for you and how he values having you as his wife. Talk to him about everything that you want and fear as well.”, I sigh.

“Maybe I should go back onto the contraceptive and forget about a baby for now”, She smiles.

“Anything you feel comfortable with”

“I guess I am afraid of what happened to my mother to happen to me”

“It won't, trust you husband”

I smile.

"I will",I mention.

"Well come on now let's swim",she then paddles away.

Maybe I should focus on being an aunt. My best friend is having a baby soon and I should be that and be the best aunt that I can be. I will be a mom one day. If Buyi can survive with her husband not having a child then I can with my husband and wait for when we will be blessed with one.

I swim around the pool and let my body relax while at that. My husband loves me, he never gave me a reason to doubt him and he would do anything for me. I should not worry myself about this because it will drive me crazy. Buyi is right

she really is.

PALESA MOKOENA

It is my lunch break today at work. Ndimase went back to Gauteng after this weekend and now I have my place all to myself. This weekend I am planning on going home and breaking the news to my mother. I know that she will be disappointed in me. She has always expected more from me more than anything and how will I explain who Ndimase is. What he does and where he is from? It clicks that I do not know much of this man yet I am pregnant with his child. All I know is that he is Xhosa man originally from the Eastern Cape but he grew up in Gauteng most of his life hence why sometimes I cannot tell when he is speaking his home language or not. Kholeka does have a Xhosa accent when

speaking her Isizulu sometimes but then again that is all I know from this man. I have never met anyone from his family beside his little sister of which he lives with and takes care off. I know nothing of his family.

I press my head against the palm of my hands as I feel frustrated this morning. I told Mr Shezi that I have alot of work and I do not need disturbances. I know that he is starting to get ideas of us being together. Well that will not happen because I am pregnant now to the man I hardly know. A man I found attractive when I first fully glanced him on my best friend's wedding. The best friend of my girl's husband.

This Xhosa freak has me on a chokehold that I cannot comprehend. Instead of trying to not think of him at the moment and think of ways to break these news to my mother without causing a heart attack upon her, I am thinking of this man who is miles away. How he is not who I thought he is. I thought he was Mr tough serious guy who never laughs but he laughs and smiles like his life depends on it. He does not try too much but does it so effortlessly. He is laid back and relaxed but does command to be atleast respected in a way. He wants to be respected and he hates being shouted at, that I have noticed. I find myself having an image of his caramel face that has a nicely trimmed moustache that is just above his dark lips mixed with being a bit of pink at the bottom. It does show that he smokes from time to time from his lips. I find myself having an image of how his eyebrows look crooked yet bushy at the same time. His teeth that seem perfect yet over his canines there are two more teeth on top of each other that makes it look like a crooked like of teeth. His parished dimples on the side of his cheeks that are not noticable at first glance until you look at him.

He is beautiful, perfect I may say in my defence. I ask myself how is he bothering me this much? Does he not have a girlfriend back home or something along those lines? I sigh at that moment when I feel like a bit of a headache is coming on because of the way I am thinking of this man. He is invading my mind way too much and I do not like it.

I take my phone from my bag and go to my contacts and dial a number and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Mawomntanami(Mother of my child)”,I suddenly miss him.

Much to me chasing him away now I miss him.

“Where are you?”

“I am somewhere in Braam”,He mentions.

“I miss you”,I say and I am taken aback by my response.

“You miss me?”,I hear the question in his voice.

He is surprised as well with my statement.

“Y-Yes”,I say lowly embarresed that I had just made a fool of myself.

“I miss you too My flower”,I blush.

I bite my bottom lip and keep my silence.

“How is my baby treating you?”

“Fine, not so bad”

“Can you come up this side this weekend?”,He asks.

“I have to go home and break the news to my mother”

“You are not supposed to do that”

“Why?”

“My family is the one who should break the news to your mother and I acknowledge that I tainted her daughter and made her pregnant.”

“You mean pay for the damages?”

“Yes”

“Ohw”

“So you are going to come up?”

“I will think about it”

“I promise not to stress you out”, I laugh as I throw my head back a little.

He chuckles at the other end of this phone as I am laughing. Yes we do fight alot.

“Okay”, I say.

“Okay, I will book a flight for you”

“I will take a bus. Do not worry”

“Palesa please let us not fight”

“Okay Luphelo”

“Mmmmh. I will call you after you knock off”

“Okay”, We hang up after the call and I press the phone against my chest.

TSHEPO PHAKADE

I take the mug off the table and I stand up from my desk. I have taken off my suit jacket and placed it on my chair when I got into the office. I have a lot of work to get through today, sometimes I feel like quitting this and going back to the life that I knew best but then I think of how far my brother and I have come and the main reason for us doing this. It is to protect our wives and for them to be proud of us in that process.

Buyi too Lethi away just so that she will talk to her and I am worried about Lethi and have hope that everything will go well just then. I make my way to the coffee machine and I make some coffee. It is my second one today and I want it black and strong with no milk in it. I turn after my cup is filled and I go back to the desk and sit down and pull my chair in and go back to the papers in front of me. My phone pings and I take it from my pants and I open it.

It is a WhatsApp message from my wife.

We hardly use it, we usually just call each other to make things much more easier for the both of us. I swipe through and click into her message and it is a photo. It loads quite quickly and I see she has sent a picture of her in a bikini. I shift in discomfort as I see that my thighs are all put there and probably other men are cowering over her at the moment. I breathe in and out for a moment while closing my eyes and I send a message.

“You look beautiful”,I say.

She send another one and I see the behind of this thing and it gives me utmost discomfort. Men are look at her bums wherever they are. I am uncomfortable with that. I want to be the one to see those things. She is really on a mission to kill me. The work in front of me is forgotten for a moment.

“Kodwa MaNkosi uthi angithini mese labafana bebuka lah engidla khona(But MaNkosi what do you want me to say when these boys see where I feast)”,I send the message.

She replies quickly.

“They can look but they cannot touch sthandwa sami”,She sends a heart after that.

I am not comfortable with this. I love the bikini, I will build a pool for her but only I can watch her dress like this. I make a call and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Phakade lami”

“Nana what are you doing to me?”

“Hawu baby I was just showing you what I bought and what I used to swim in”,I feel my chest move up and down.

“I am coming Nana”

“I am still having fun Tshepo”

“I am coming. I am going to spend the night there with you”

“We are coming”, I hang up and quickly I grab my keys and suit jacket before I walk out of the office heading to Nathi’s office.

I find him staring at his phone and his chest moves slowly up and down with a frown on his face.

“Did you see the girls?”, He asks as soon as he sees me.

“I am going to the hotel”

“I am coming with you. I do not want this small boys having a chance to talk to my wife because I will kill them”, He mentions.

The feeling is mutual.

He grabs his things and we both walk out. We tell Enhle to postpone our meetings before we left and got into our cars and left.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I open the door to my hotel room and there he stands with a small night bag in his hands. His perfume sticks to my nostrils and he looks at me as I am wearing a short with my bikini top on. I have not changed since I got out of the pool. I thought he was joking when he said that he was coming but knowing my husband I am not surprised. I like this jealous him. It is written all over his face that the green monster has came out and is fiesty in the process of it. I jump in his arms and he carries me while my legs wrap around his waist. He kisses my neck in the process of it all.

"I cannot believe you came over a bikini",I mention.

"I want to protect you from these prying men",Well there were men who tried their luck on us earlier by the pool.

"Well I told them that I am married to the love of my life",He smiles at me and carries me to the bed and gives me a light perk.

I love his cologne. It smells too darn good.

"They did not touch my thighs?",he mentions.

"They would never",He seems happy and satisfied with that response.

"I have not showered. Let us go and shower together",I pull him and he drops the bag and follows me.

I have missed him honestly. I have gotten used to seeing him everyday and having him by my side most of the time that I am used to it and I love it. I go and open the shower and I take off my shorts and I strip naked. He takes off his watch and places it on the toilet seat and then he undresses. I watch him as he undresses until he is naked. I make my way to him and run my fingers over his torso and then stare at him in the eyes before I give him a light perk. He places his hands around my waist and pulls me closer to him.

"You look beautiful Nana"

"You too baby",He doesn't protest like he always does. I move away from him and open the shower and get inside. He follows after me and gets inside as well. He presses me on the shower wall and goes to kissing my shoulders.

"I love you Nana",He says it effortlessly this time .

“I love you Phakade”

Chapter 32

I hold the camera quiet steadily in my hands as I wait in anticipation. There is silence amongst us, the family and friends. This was all new as we have never celebrated the birth of this man and the years that he has been provided in life but he gave me the go ahead to do it and I did my very best to make it a special occasion for him. I snap a photo as he stands in front of his cake and the candle lights up. He stares at the two layer cake and he swallows before he shoves his shaking hands in his pocket. I notice and lower my camera and make my way to him and wrap my arm around his waist. He takes a glance at me and then gives off a nervous smile.

He is scared. He seems scared at that very moment and I want nothing than to hold his hand. It is an emotional day. I hope that he is not thinking of his father but rather thinking of himself and being selfish of his day.

“Make a wish Phakade”, I encourage.

Everyone is silent. He glances at me once more and I see his chest move up and down slowly before he bends a bit and he blows out the candles. His family releases a breath and everyone is now in a cheer mood and all the silence is gone now replaced with a bit of music. He turns to look at me and I see his eyes glistening. I place my hand on his cheek.

“Are you okay?”, I am worried.

Maybe I should've not forced a birthday celebration down his throat.

“I am, thank you”, He gives off a proper smile now and I relax a bit.

“Cut the cake”, I mention.

“Do it for me”, he says and takes out one of his hands from the pocket and takes the camera.

I gladly take the knife and I cut the cake while at that.

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Today is Tshepo's birthday. I have been waiting for years to celebrate his birthday with friends and family and today it is happening. We decided on having a great decor done and making him Mr Party while ofcause Lethi being the second center of attention. People are now indulging on their food and all the great festivities are now done. Tshepo and I are sharing a table being the center of attention. He has been holding my hand throughout the whole thing and has not let go and quiet frankly I am not about to let go to. I see Nathi standing up and he gets everyone's attention. His family is here and so as mine, my dad could not make it because of work but the rest of my family is here and Bayanda squeezed us in his busy schedule of life.

“I do not know where to start. I am not a man of many words, us Phakade men are not men of many words but I want to say that I am happy that my brother has got a chance to have such a celebration just for him. We never had it easy ever since we lost our mother and things changed drastically in our lives. It took time for us to get where we are but it took more time for my brother to be where he is. I am happy Phakade and Sisi omncane wenza umsebenzi omuhle(Little sister you are doing great work) carry on forth and hold his hand. We may be dramatic at times but we love you guys and as our wives we thank you

for showing the same effort and love unto us. It does not get better than the both of you”, I smile and look over to Tshepo.

“Happy 35th birthday Mfwethu. Ukhule ujabulise umkakho, nekhaya lizofudumala(Carry one making your wife happy and your home will be warm)”, Tshepo squeezes my hand.

He raises a glass and makes a toast while everyone joins in and then after Nathi sits down. I look over to Tshepo and he has a smile plastered on his face. I smile too.

“Are you okay?”

“I love this”, I felt like jumping and dancing.

I was scared. Scared that he would say he hated every moment of it.

“But next year can we do something else. I do not like people looking at me”, I giggle at what he mentions.

Yes I know that Tshepo hates attention.

“Do not worry baby, It will just be the both of us from now on”, He nods and smiles.

“After eating everyone is leaving? I want to be in our space”, I laugh.

“Hawu baby be patient. The event will come to an end. Do you like it though?”, I ask.

“Yes, besides the attention I love it Nana”, I am satisfied with myself.

He turns and stares at me before he leans to whisper in my ear.

“And the cake too, I want to eat it on top of you”, I cross my legs quickly as my breathing hitched.

“There are people here Phakade”,I say.

“Don’t you want us to be naughty?”,I swallow.

“I am going to the bathroom”,I say and look at him.

He smirks and nods. I stand up and rush off from the front going inside the house. I ran upstairs to our bedroom and I closed the door. I checked my underwear and it is starting to be soaked. God what is this man doing to me? I quickly take it off and the bedroom door opens. His scent invades the room once more.

I turn around to face him and he locks the door. I swallow.

“Tshepo there are guests we should attend”

“I did not say they should overstay their welcome”,This man of mine hates guests.

“Ha.a Phakade”

“MaNkosi”,He comes towards me and holds me by my waist.

“I want to make love to you”,He kisses my neck and I gasp softly.

“Baby”,I softly say.

Knowing Tshepo he never finishes quickly and we have high chances of being disturbed.

“We should be quick”,I say.

He slowly runs his hands under my dress and lifts it up. He moves his hands to my valve and goes to my clit and slides his finger there before it slowly slips inside my Virgina. He thrusts it slowly as his other hand moves to my waist. His warm breath hits my neck.

“I want to devour properly Nana. I cannot be fast”,He mentions.

Oh my God this man. Can't he not get the memo that we have guests especially elders. What will they say?

“Tshepo”,He starts to increase the pace of his thrusts and slips in another finger. They slide in and out of my Virgina and I feel him release a low groan.

He seperates my folds and he circulates his thumb on my clitoris. I hold onto him, he starts to kiss my neck leaving trails of neck kisses there.

“You feel good?”,He asks and I nod my head.

“Yes Baby”,I feel my knees failing me at the moment.

He slips his fingers out of my kookie and he stares at me and gives me a kiss. I return it with the same amount of energy give. The slowly tender kiss, it feels heated as I suck his dark lips tenderly. I love them. He swiftly helps me off my dress and then removes it and discard it away from us. I help undo his pants. I am now aroused and ready to be devoured anyway he wishes to devour me. I drop his pants down with all that is under them and his shaft springs out and touched his torso. I lift his top up a bit and he pulls it off him. I crouch and I take his shaft into my hands, he stops me when I am about to take my first lick.

“Come here”,He mentions and pulls me up. He gets on the bed and lays there.

“Come and sit on my face”,He mentions and I go and sit on his face.

I have my back facing the headboard and I lean down to his shaft and put it in my mouth. His tongue navigates past my folds and slips into my

hole. He is holding my waist as he eats me up. I go onto sucking and licking twirling on his shaft. I release a moan as he eats me up and plays with my clit and goes to thrusting his tongue in my hole.

“Ohw baby”

I softly moan and pinch my nipples hard in the process.

His shaft only forgotten and now I am distracted and focused on the pleasure that my husband is giving to me. I feel my insides twisting at the pleasure.

“Baby I am....I am...Ohw Tshepo I am cumming”,I warn him.

He does not stop and I feel my legs shake as I explode on his face. I gasp and take deep breaths in. He swiftly moves me from his face and lays me on his torso facing him. I lean in to kiss him tasting myself in the process.

“Fuck you taste nice Nana”,He mentions.

I move from his torso and I slowly navigate his shaft and find it then I take it inside of me and I slowly get it inside of me and I go up a bit before I fully slip it in. Tshepo grabs my waist and groans.

“Fuck!”,He curses without any care who would hear him.

I place my hands on my nipples and I start doing up and down on him. Slipping in and out of me as he stares at me. His eyes are small at the moment and I knew then that I am not leaving this room until he is satisfied and has thoroughly devoured me. I pinch my nipples hard and throw my head back as I increased my pace and go up and down circulating my waist at that moment.

“Nana you are killing me”,he says softly in his raspy voice.

“I like it Phakade”, I mention.

He pulls me to lower myself on him and he captures one of my nipples with his mouth. He starts sucking there and I moan. He stops sucking and I see white trails of liquid on his lips going to his chest as it starts to drip. I stop moving.

“Where did that come from?”,I ask as I look at my nipples covered in white liquid.

He turns us around and I am under him.

“It comes from inside of your nipple”,Funny.

He slips in going deeper and I close my eyes and gasp.

“Tshepo”

“Nana”

“Please, please...”,He pulls out and then slams into me and starts picking up his pace.

“Harder baby”,I say spreading my legs wider for him.

He holds my legs apart and goes harder on me and I scream. He lends me his shoulder and I bite on it.

“I love you do much Nana”

He says near my ear whispering it before he kisses my neck.

“I love you more Phakade lami”,The orgasm hits me and shake. I hold him tighter and run my fingers on his back and reach his butt and squeeze it before pushing him deeper inside of me and I let out a cry.

Tears stream down my cheeks as I hold him tighter and closer to me. I love this man, I love him so much.

After some time he starts to pick up his pace and he groans from the depth of his throat, I feel warm liquid in me and I knew then he has shoot his load inside.

We do not let go of each other that moment. We go through the moment of hearing each other's heart beats and feeling him twitch inside of me. He kisses my sweaty forehead and I smile. He lifts his chest off me and there is milk on my chest. He slowly gets off me.

“What is happening to me?”,I wonder.

“We will go to the doctor and get you checked out”,I nod and he gives me one last kiss before he goes to the bathroom and open bath water.

I lay there on the bed waiting for him to take me away.

PALESA MOKOENA

I am stuffing my face with food and this has to be about my second plate if not third plate of food. Luphelo is sitting next to me and my stomach is very heavy on me. My mother was quiet disappointed when she learnt that I am pregnant but gave me a benefit of a doubt when

she mentioned that I can take care of my own child now. Now she does not go a day without calling me and asking me how the baby and I are.

I do not think she is the only person excited about this child even Luphelo and his mother are happy. His mother is so sweet and we met once when I was visiting him in Johburg. His family paid the damages so I am happy about that. I am now 8 months pregnant and I cannot wait to pop this child out of me. Mr Shezi and I are co- workers and I got to understand my position and he said he will respect my decision.

Luphelo comes back and his plate has some samoosa's and ribs on top. I look at my plate that has some rice and salads and some curry on top. It is almost done, where did he get this food?.

"Are you okay?",He asks when he sees me salivating over his plate.

"Where did you get that?",I ask.

"At the bar. There is plenty of it",I look at him.

"Hayi Palesa",He mentions.

"Please can I have some. I won't bother you, the baby is hungry",He scoffs.

"But you have had 2 whole plates of food Palesa",tears near my eyes and I blink before they stream down.

"Don't cry please. Okay I will share with you",I shake my head while covering my face with my hands.

He huffs and he tries to remove them and holds my cheeks.

"Baby please do not cry, you will upset the baby"

“You do not want me to eat”

“I did not say that”

“It is fine. Eat alone and the baby and I will remain starved”,He sighs.

“Take my plate and I will get another one”,I smile.

“Really?”

“Yes”,I smile and kiss his lips and quickly grab his plate and stuff my mouth with food.

He looks at me while smiling then shakes his head. The baby kicks and I rub my stomach. I know that she is happy.

“Did she kick?”,I nod my head.

He places his hand on my stomach and the baby keeps on kicking. He smiles even wider and bends to kiss my stomach before he looks at me.

“I don't regret knocking you up. We should do it again”

“Ayi ima kancane. I am tired”

He chuckled.

“Kuzoba mandi xa sinabantwana abaninzi awuboni wena?(it will be nice to have alot of kids. Can't you see that?)”

“,Not yet Buuti",He chuckled.

I take a samoosa and feed him and he obliged.

We end up eating on my plate.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

We joined everyone and from the looks from some I know they know what we have been up to and the way we are smelling fresh as well. After a few hours people start to leave. My in laws will be staying at Nathi's house and Khalipha too will be there. Tshepo and I will be getting our space back. I am worried about this milk that is coming out of my breasts. I hope that I am not sick or anything. I last took a test a few months ago and It cannot be that I am pregnant. After everyone has left I rushed up to the bathroom and quickly got the pregnancy test that was left in my closet. I rush to the bathroom and pee on it and then I am done. I wait for a few minutes and I hear Tshepo calling me.

"Nana"

"Bathroom"

He walks in the bathroom and sees that I have a pregnancy test in front of me. I turns to him.

"It is the only logical explanation", he wraps his arms around me.

"How long should we wait?", He asks as he rests his chin on my shoulder.

"A few more minutes", He nods.

We wait a few minutes until the time is up then I grab the test and look at it.

I swallow as I feel tears burning my eyes.

“I am sorry Nana”, Tshepo says and I turn around and cry on his chest. My heart aches, I thought that maybe finally I am pregnant but it does not make any sense. These tests are very accurate so I know what is displayed here is true. I am not pregnant and how could I possibly be pregnant. I had just a glimpse of faith that I could be.

“Don’t worry we will have one soon”, Tshepo says.

“I am tired of longing to be a mother”, I mention.

Honestly I am tired.

He holds me tightly close to him as he hushes me.

“We should still go to the doctor tomorrow”, What is the point?

I just nod my head as he comforts me. I cannot explain how I am feeling right now.

Chapter 33

It is the following day and Tshepo is adamant of taking me to the doctor. We should be going for him as well because what if it was some sort of bacteria or disease in my boobs and he sucked it and swallowed. He also needs to get checked. He will go to work later on after my doctor's appointment. We are in the car and I am looking outside the window as he is driving to the doctor. I stare back inside and I sigh. We have not talked much on yesterday. I just cried myself to sleep and he stayed with me. Shame my husband tolerates a lot from me, I do not know how he does it. He has really improved in knowing how to comfort and he does it so well too.

"What is wrong?", He asks as he finds me staring at him.

"Nothing", he nods.

"Do we really have to go to the doctor?"

"Yes Lethi, we do not know what is wrong and why your boobs are leaking", He says and I scoff.

"How will we explain to the doctor about how I found out my boobs are leaking?", I raise my brow.

"We will be honest", Eh. Is this man hearing himself?

"That would be embarrassing to discuss our sex life with the doctor"

"It is not like he or she does not know what sex is", He argues his point.

True but still though.

"But still"

“We have to be honest Nana. That is the only way to know the truth.”

I keep quiet and just look at this man who is about to hang all our bedroom business to the doctor when we get there. He steals a glance off me and he speaks once more:

“Your top is stained”, He mentions.

I look at my top and where my nipples are it is wet. Surprised as I am. I take off the top and take off the bra that I am wearing. It is itching me at the moment. After that I then grab his hoodie from the backseat and sit properly after. I take out some wipes from my bag and I wipe my chest.

“Smells like a baby”, I give him a look.

“How do babies smell?”

“Like mini vomit”, I hit his shoulder.

“Tshepo!”

“What?!”, He asks.

“You are saying I smell like mini vomit.”, he frowns.

“I did not say you smell like mini vomit. I said that liquid smells like a baby”

“Of which smells like mini vomit.”, he just shrugs his shoulders and I roll my eyes.

“By the way where do you know how a baby smells like?”, I ask.

“From some child at home. One of my cousin's child. She always popping babies. We tried arguing that we should stitch her Virgina with the family but they said that is extreme”,I gasp.

“You would do that?”

“Yes. She has 7 kids at the age of 30”,Wow.

“When are we going to visit your extended family”,I ask.

“When Gogo is dead”,I gasp.

“Don’t say that”

“You remember what she did to you. She can do worse”,I swallow.

“I am sure it is not that bad”,He chuckles.

“Trust me it is baby Nana”,I just shake my head.

I am glad we left early then if that is the case. I finish wiping myself and I throw the hoodie on and place my top at the back. I sit properly and we arrive at the surgery and we hope out of the car. I take my bag and close the door before Tshepo locks the car and we walk inside. We get to the reception lady and she assists us and she tells us to sit down we are next. Good thing we had an appointment. We sit down and wait for the doctor. Now I am becoming nervous. What if I am dying? What if I have a non curable disease. I cannot die yet and if I am dying atleast I am dying with Tshepo. That makes me ease up a bit and no I do not want him to be happy with another woman while I am dead. Okay maybe I am being dramatic but I cannot die now.

“Nana let's go in”,Tshepo brings me back to life.

I stand up with him and we walk into the doctor's office. He has our file with him as we walk inside. He sits on his chair and gestures for us to sit in front of him.

“Good day, how may I help you?”, He asks.

“Uhm...I have liquids leaking out of my boobs”, The doctor lays back on his chair clicking his pen once.

“When did this start happening?”, He asks.

“We noticed much of it yesterday and today it is getting worse because Yesterday one boob was leaking the most”, I mention in discomfort.

“Please go and climb on the bed I will be right there to check you up”, I nod and stand up placing my bag on my chair.

“Do something to her and I will chop your fingers Doc”, Haibo Tshepo.

The doctor chuckles.

“Do not worry, I will be extra careful around your wife”, I give Tshepo a look and he is being nonchalant about it.

He does not care that he just threatened someone about chopping their fingers and did not even throw a laugh to indicate he was joking. I get on the bed as the doctor follows me and he starts with checking me up before he places all his instruments away.

“Can you lift your top”, I do so and I see Tshepo shift in discomfort. His chest moving up and down ready to pounce at this man.

“Your husband is overprotective”, The doctor whispers and laughs.

“He is”, I mention.

He probes my boobs.

“Do they usually look this size?”,The doctor asks.

“No, they were a bit smaller than this before. They grew as I gained weight of which I gained after getting married”

“Mmh”,he touches them and pokes them.

“Is this sore?”,He asks.

“Not really bad”,He nods.

“So the liquid comes out when what happens?”

“I was sucking her nipples when that happened”,Tshepo mentions.

“Phakade!”

“What?!”,He shrugs his shoulders. The doctor laughs, I thought we spoke about this in the car.

“What colour is the liquid”,He asks.

“Whitish. Milky”,I mention.

He raises his brow.

“May you lie down and you can drop your top”,I do that.

I lie down and he brings forth the sonogram machine. He brings my top up a bit and soils cold gel on my abdomen .

“I am not pregnant. I took a test yesterday”,I mention.

“I just want to be sure with what I am looking for. I will draw your blood after it could be caused by something else”,I nod my head.

I look at Tshepo and he is not happy that a male is probing and poking his wife like this. The doctor runs the scanner on my stomach and he looks at the screen carefully. We hear a slow thud erupting from his machine and another one too.

I look at the screen.

“What is happening Doctor?”, I ask.

“I cannot see what I am looking for. It seems hidden”, He mentions.

“What now?”

“I need to do a 3D scan to get a better look?”, He removes the scanner and removes the cold gel.

“What does that mean?”, I ask.

“It means I have to shove something up your Virgina to your cervix to get a better look”, Tshepo stands up from his chair.

“That is not happening. I told you to not try anything funny and you are testing me now”, He is breathing fire ready to attack the doctor.

“Can we have a female doctor do it?”

I ask.

“Sure”, He walks away and I look at Tshepo.

I get where it is coming from. I also would not be happy if a female doctor was touching what is mine.

“Hold my hand”, He comes and stands by me and holds my hand.

“Are you scared?”, I ask.

He shakes his head.

“No”

“What...what will happen if maybe I am dying?”,I ask.

“You are not dying Nana”,He kisses my forehead.

I nod my head and the doctor comes back.

“I called the hospital and I transferred you there. They have better resources to help find what is wrong with you”,He mentions.

“Thank you doc”,I get off the bed with the help of Tshepo and we got a transfer letter from the doctor.

We walked out of the surgery after that with fear lingering in me.

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We got to the hospital and immediately a female doctor attended to me. I was taken to her office within the hospital so she could do a 3D scan on me and get what is wrong with me.

Here I am laying in another bed in this doctor's office. She is white and her hair is tied into a bun. She looks beautiful and I have never met such a beautiful white woman. It is mesmerizing to be quiet honest. I look at her as she has pulled my pants off me and poking her way inside my vagina with her machine. The thud is back but a bit louder now. She navigates around and all I see is just a blob of peach inside of me. She squints her eyes for a moment and then takes out her phone from her coat.

“Daniels I need you in my office quickly”,She mentions and hangs up.

“Is there something wrong?”,I ask lifting my head a bit up to look at her.

“Do not worry”,I nod my head then lay it back down.

Within a few minutes another Doctor walks in the office and greets. My poor husband just nods and watches in silence.

“Can you check if my husband is okay too. He drank the liquid too”,I say since it is out there now that we were at it.

“He will be fine”,The lady says.

Now both of these doctors are talking to each other while squinting their eyes on the screen.

“Wait there it is”,The doctor mentions pointing at the screen.

I keep quiet for a moment.

“How far along is she?”,the other one asks.

“Past 40 weeks.”

“Lets take her to surgery then”,My heart thuds.

“Haibo surgery for what?”,I ask now the two scoentis infront of me.

My heart is beating rapidly and Tshepo is near by as well.

“We just found out why you a leaking.”

“And?”,I ask waiting for an answer.

“You are a experiencing what is called Cryptic pregnancy. You were supposed to give birth already”,What?

I hear my ears burning as I hear that.

“I am not pregnant. Baby tell them what we saw yesterday”,Tshepo comes close to me and holds my hand.

“Calm down Nana”

“We are going to break your water. Would you like a c-section or natural birth?”,The doctor asks.

My heart feels like it is going to beat right out of my mouth.

“Calm down Nana”

“Didn’t you just hear what they said Bonginkosi?”,I ask frustrated.

“We will book you in a ward now”,the other doctor mentions and leaves us.

“Everything will be okay. It is an uncommon thing to happen and sometimes doctors cannot detect it as well. We are lucky we were able to see the child. It is hiding in there”,What behind what? My heart organs? Really?!

“My best friend is having a baby not me”,I say shaking my head.

“Well you are too”,The doctor says and leaves.

I swallow and look at Tshepo. This has to be some sort of a prank.

TSHEPO PHAKADE

It has been two hours since they have got Lethi a ward and broke her 'water'. I have been asked if I want to be in the room when she gives birth and as surprised and as in as much as I do not know what is really going on at the moment but I agreed. I want to be the first thing my wife looks at when she is in there and finds assurance in.

I look at myself through the bathroom mirror and I can hear Lethi crying on the other side of these walls and my heart thuds more painfully. I hate that sound honestly. I hate hearing my wife cry and I cannot do much on it. I look like a hospital dummy dressed in this attire that they handed over to me. I hear a knock on the bathroom door.

"Mr Phakade, your wife is about to give birth", I hear a voice call out.

I turn away from the mirror. I walk out of the room and find nurses and doctors huddled up around Lethi. They spray a sanitizer on my hands and I rub it through my rough hands before I hold onto Lethi. Her eyes are red from the tears that she had been releasing since finding out that she is pregnant.

"Okay the baby is near. On three I will need you to push", The doctor says and she counts to three.

Lethi tightens her hold on me and she bites her bottom lip as she tries to push, her upper body goes slightly up. I am tongue tied and my throat feels dry. She lays back down onto the bed when she feels her strength gone that moment.

"Another push on three", The doctor slightly slaps her thighs and she pushes on three.

“You can do this Nana”,I gather those words as a form of encouragement.

She holds me tightly and she the smiles after and lays her body back.

“The baby is out”,I see the doctor holding the baby and I am in utter shock. I cannot believe this. Why were there no signs and why was she not showing just like any pregnant woman does.

“Why...why is the baby silent? Don't they cry?”,Lethi asks in panick and and my heart drums badly to that.

Could it be?

The doctor holds the baby with one legs upside down and Lethi is already in a pool of tears. I try to comfort her by holding her.

“No...No...Tshepo it can't happen again!” her cries Peirce through my heart.

Again. Happen again, she means loosing another child.

“I am sorry Nana”,I feel like I am failing her.

The doctor spanks the child three times on the butt and there is silence in the room.

Pity is within the eyes of others so I shy away from them and comfort my wife.

“I am sorry”,I say as I feel pain engulf me but I have to be strong for her.

A loud cry erupts in the room and Lethi lifts her head and quickly wipes her tears.

It is the baby's loud painful cry.

"Go and get him cleaned up", The doctor mentions to one of the Nurses.

"I want to hold him", My wife quickly says and they bring the baby to her.

She opens her arms and tears stream down her cheeks. She smiles removing the sadness that was cowering over her face.

"Hello baby, You are my baby. ", She looks up to me as the baby keeps on crying.

I feel an emotion creep in me and dominating the rest.

Happiness is the word for it and much accompanied with being emotional. He has a lot of hair around his face taking after my mother. She has a lot of hair if I remember well.

"It is our baby", Lethi says and I kiss her lips.

"I am happy nana", I say feeling a tear drop from my eyes.

I turn away and walk to the bathroom. I close the door and feel like my chest is closing in on me. I cannot breathe for a moment and I try to catch my breath but I cannot. I find myself gripping onto the sink and blink away the tears as they are about to surface.

"I cannot cry. Tshepo do not cry", I promised myself to never cry once. I had seen my mother cry too many times.

"Sir?", A knock surfaces on the door.

I look at myself through the mirror and all is blurry. I find myself letting go of the sink and banging my head against the tiled floor before the door is opened and I see people surrounding me but I cannot make them out to be.

“Get a stretcher fast we need to take him!”, The feeling of air being deprived off me is still there. I have my hand on my chest trying to gain will to breathe properly. I groan as I feel like I am failing. I cannot die like this.

“Lethinjabulo”, That is the last thing I said before I felt some darkness consume me.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I felt the pit of my stomach bubbling very badly. Seeing Tshepo being taken away after all that happened got me worried. I am scared, really scared. The nurses took my child away and for now I could not even think of a new but the face that my husband is stuck in some ward unable to breathe. I got cleaned up after being stitched. I wanted to see him. I wanted to see how Tshepo is doing. I asked the hospital to call Buyi and Nathi over to the hospital. We need some sort of support structure at the moment.

The nurse who has helped me clean up is about to help me into bed.

“Can I go and see my husband?”, I ask.

“You need to rest”,The nurse mentions.

“I want to see how he is doing”

“He is under good care. They provided oxygen for him he will okay”,I feel my knees getting weak.

“Can I go after resting?”,She smiles and nods.

“Yes. Do not worry, your husband is in good hands”,I nod.

“I cannot loose him”,Sadness whisks over me and I feel like crying my I cannot cry anymore.

She helps me to bed and leave me once she is done. I lay on the bed and pray there for the first time after some months. May God keep my husband for me, I cannot live without Tshepo. What would I be?

Chapter 34

TSHEPO PHAKADE

I opened my eyes that felt a bit too heavy to open that very moment but I pushed to open them and my vision was a bit blurred. Light rays shining too brightly that they stung my eyes for a moment causing me to shut my eyes for a moment then I feel someone slightly pushing me on my shoulder and I open my eyes once again. This time my vision was a bit better than it was before.

“I never thought I would see the day where you lay in a hospital bed got fainting”,Khalipha mentions and I hear Nathi laughing.

“He saw something that he has never seen before”,I turn to look at Nathi and he stands there as he keeps on laughing.

I can feel something steaming like on my nose and I remove the mask from my face and stare at these two who are clearly enjoying seeing me in this hospital bed. From the way the curtains are closed and the way the lights are on so well I knew then that it was night.

“Where is Lethi?”

“She is with Buyi and aunty. Awusho uqulekiswa yini? (tell me what was causing you to faint?)”,Nathi asks and shares a chuckle in between.

I sit up from the bed and look at him.

“I want to get out of here”

“You will, Khalipha call someone”,He nods and walks out.

I stay with this one in the same room. He does not give his laughing a break instead he carries on until he is satisfied and I just stare at him. He places his hand on his knees and looks at me.

“Were you overwhelmed?”, He asks now serious as his tone does not have a hint of amusement in it.

“Yes”

“I understand. It was really unexpected or you guys knew?”

“We did not know she was pregnant.”

“Damn, those things happen?”

“I guess so”, Khalipha comes back with a doctor following after him.

“Mr Phakade. You gave your wife a fright there”, The white woman smiles.

“Can I leave this room?”

“Yes, we wanted to monitor you for a few hours. You were experiencing a panick attack”, She mentions.

“Could he have died?”, Nathi asks now seemingly concerned.

“No, a panick attack does not kill.”, She answers him.

“I want to leave”

“We have to discharge you”, The doctor mentions and walks out after that

I do not want to be here anymore. I want to be with Lethi at the moment and check if she is fine.

PALESA MOKOENA

I was drawn into the kitchen by a salivating smell that made me feel more hungry than I should be. I have a big nose and my face looks like a Balloon. Being pregnant is not as easy and nice as some people make it seem, it is actually a horror movie one that I do not want to watch again. I find this man moving around the kitchen. One thing that came as shocking to me was the fact that he could cook and he seemed to quietly enjoy it. I have become lazy ever since my belly became heavy on me so I started being a whole lazy plus to my advantage the child's father is supportive of my movement of being lazy.

"Good morning", he says as soon as he sees me walking in the kitchen.

"Morning", I rub my eyes and move around him and grab a chair before I sit on it.

"You slept in today", He mentions and I frown.

"I am early", Yes. I know I am.

"It is night Baby", I frown as I look at him and realise the lights are on.

"I slept in from yesterday?", what?

"Yes", He says.

"Why did you not wake me up and why did you say good morning?", he laughs.

“I wanted to see how your brain functions when you wake up and also I knew you would bite my head off if I woke you up”,I scoff.

I grab a plate from the counter and start to eat.

“You won't even wait for a spoon?”,he asks.

“No, I am hungry. You decided to starve me”

“I have never encountered someone who talks for food like you”,I frown.

“That is mean Luphelo”

“Don't tell me you are about to cry”,I ignore him.

He comes and crouches infront of me.

“I am sorry Baby. ”,I look at him.

“You are being mean to me and I do not like it”,Tears prickle my eyes.

“Please don't cry”

“Why? So that you can say I am a cry baby?”,He sighs.

“Okay I am sorry”

“Are you?”,I say with a bit of a tone behind it.

“Ufun'ba ndithini ke kuwe Palesa. Ndiyaxolisa nje(What do you want me to say Palesa? I am apologising)”

“That apology has some attitude behind it”,He sighs and closes his eyes for a moment before he opens his eyes.

“Uxolo Bhabha(sorry Baby)”

“I forgive you because you cook nicely”

“Kumandi?(is it nice?)”

“Thata(very much)”

He then touches my belly and runs his hands over my top .

“I cannot believe that it has really grown”,he mentions.

“I can't wait to give birth”

“And meet our baby”,I smile as he mentions that.

“Yes”,He stands up and towers over me and gives me a kiss on my lips.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I look at him as he looks yellow and his little fingers fascinate me in the process. I could not rest properly because I could not believe that I just had a child. Why did he hide? Why couldn't he be known or he wanted to play hide and seek in my body. I wish I knew about him earlier but I am happy that he is alive. His little knuckles look so fragile. One who pulls a bit hard on his hands might break him. I do not want to let him go. He has hair all over his head and some towering over and proceeding onto his forehead and stops above his eye brows. The baby hairs. His hair is pitch black and his iris. Well I have not see his eyes but I wonder how they look. His nose does not resemble mine but Tshepo's.

His little lips shaped just like his father's, his little plump cheeks are too cute that you can gobble him all over.

"You have been staring at him for over 20 minutes since he came back",Buyi brings me back into life and I look at her.

"I cannot believe that I have birth",I say.

I feel some warmth engulf me.

"He is too cute

I wish to gobble him up",She says.

I look at her and smile.

"You can hold him",I say and I see her eyes shine in joy.

"Really?"

She stands up and quickly goes to wash her hands before she comes back and I hold the baby well and hand it to her.

"Hey boy boy",She says softly and placed her finger in his hand and he tries to hold it fully.

"He looks like you and Tshepo",she says.

Well I saw more of Tshepo or was it because I was staring at him too much.

"He looks like Tshepo more",she smiles and looks at me.

"He looks beautiful",I look at them.

"Sisi",she lifts her head to look at me.

“Thank you for always being there with your husband”

“We are family Lethi.”,she mentions and I nod.

Really a great family. Tshepo's aunt walks into the ward carrying a bag and she has some formula and has a baby bag. Tshepo's uncle follows carrying diapers and blankets with a car seat too.

“We did not get much but we got the emergency things”,The aunt says.

“Thank you mah”

“Come let us get you your night bath and start with strapping your stomach so it can be in shape.”,she says.

“But she hardly had a baby belly”,Buyi mentions.

“It might grow”,we laugh.

She quickly comes and helps me out of the bed and we go to the bathroom. She baths me and she tells me that I do not have to strain myself from bathing. I had just given birth and I should relax. After we were done and went out of the bathroom and got the bag she came with and it had my clothes and cosmetics. I thank her and I get dressed in my pyjamas after lotioning. After that we walked out of the bathroom and she got me back in bed.

The uncle was gone and Buyi was talking to the baby.

“Have you named the baby?”

“Not yet, I am waiting for Tshepo”,I mention.

I do not even know what to name the child.

The baby starts crying and Buyi brings her to me.

“He is hungry”,The aunt mentions.

“They showed me how to feed him during the day”,I say.

“Let me help you”,The aunty places the baby well in my arms and then she covers my chest and the baby’s face and I pull out my nipples and feed the baby while at that. He pulls and suckles on my nipple. I laugh lightly as I think of how his father was suckling on the same nipple the day before.

“We are here? Where is the baby?”,Khalipha asks first as he walks in followed by Nathi.

They had went to check on their brother.

“He is feeding and don't make noise”,The aunt scolds.

The baby feeds for some time and I pull him off and then the aunt takes him before he is passed around the ward. I wipe my nipple with a towel and then pull my top down. Tshepo walks in the ward there after and I never felt so happy to see him.

He quickly gets to the side of my bed and I wrap my arms around him.

“You scared me”,I say holding onto him.

I am happy, happy that he is okay. I was stressed as I was forbidden to go and see him until tomorrow.

“I am okay, I am sorry”

“Do not apologize. I am just glad you are okay”,We break the hug and he kisses my forehead.

“Here is your child man. He looks like you”,Nathi says as he holds the baby in his arms.

He hands him over to Tshepo and he hesitantly takes him.

“He feels light”,he mentions.

“He weighs 2.4kg”,I say.

He gets lost in looking at him, I see a crack of a smile on his face and he sits on edge of the bed and looks at me and breaks into a smile once more.

“This is the best birthday gift MaNkosi”,My heart warms as soon as he mentions that.

Tears stream down my cheeks as I feel emotional.

“Don’t cry”

“I am..Just happy.”,I say.

“Have you informed your family Lethi?”,The uncle asks.

“I will inform them tomorrow Baba”,I say.

“You have to inform them. They are family too”,The aunt says.

“I will I promise”,I look back at Tshepo and he is not focusing on anyone else but his son.

It has been 3 days since I have birth. Much to people's shock that I was even pregnant. Palesa was flabbergasted when she learnt that I had

given birth and she had the craziest thing in her head after. She said, I quote. Her words not mine.

“Our kids will be best friends and get married to each other
Mlingani(Her daughter's mother in law)”

I could not stop laughing at that. She was most excited than anyone else that I have told that I have a miracle baby. Well his father named him because I was blank as ever. I did not know what to name him so he named him Ntokozo, if you ask me we are going to add a name after we have done critical thinking but so far that is the name he came up with as he said that he will bring joy just like I bring joy in his life. Well it was a sweet short essay but you know what I mean.

We got discharged and we are going home today.

The car parks in the driveway and Tshepo jumps rather too quickly out of the car and goes to the back where his aunt is holding the baby. He grabs his child and leave us forgotten about.

“Ngathi inhliziyo isthathwe omunye manje Makoto(Looks like his heart is captured by someone else)",The aunt jokes.

“Nami ngiyabona auntie(I also see it aunty)",we laugh and get out of the car.

We get some bags and walk inside the house. Tshepo is no where to be seen. I go to the bedroom upstairs and aunty said she will cook. She will stay with us for a week before she has to move back to Capetown.

I get inside the bedroom and find my dear husband laying on the bed facing upside down while the baby is on his chest suckling nothing but air and making sucking noises.

“I did not know how I should put him. He wants to sleep”,Tshepo says.

“Let me place him properly next to you.”,I suggest.

“No, he likes sleeping here”

3 days in this world and already Tshepo knows his sleeping position .

“Ayi Okay then”

I look at them and smile. My little family.

Chapter 35

Obsession is the new word. I do not know how can be wrapped around the finger of this little creature in just a week but already we are. If it is not me it is Tshepo, if it is not Tshepo it is his babomdala and Malumekazi, if it is not them then it is my family obsessing over him. My father was the most shocked out of all of them. I guess he is now realising that his little girl is not so little anymore at that I am not just married anymore but also a parent now just like him. It is sinking in that I am really growing. That is what is happening to him. Realisation is knocking in him and he has let his guards down around Tshepo but still he does not let me not know that he still dislikes him. My grandmother has been telling me the does and don't of what to do with the baby. Who and who shouldn't see the baby. She suggested that per culture and tradition I am supposed to be away from Tshepo for 3 months and his aunt could not agree more and only after 3 months the baby can be seen by everyone.

Obvious to my husband's hot head he did not agree to that but I am glad there were no unpleasant verbal exchanges between both families so I am happy about that.

Oh another horror movie that I am experiencing is the fact that this child is such a sweetheart during the day. You wouldn't even think he is in the house until the sun sets and he starts crying the whole damn night. That is one thing I am not enjoying about being a parent. Tshepo does not mind. He does well except for nappy changing. I think he is just fascinated by the whole experience. If we talk about a miracle baby, baby Ntokozo sure is a miracle baby and the apple of everyone in

the family. In the end of 3 months we should be going to Tshepo's home as they want to do a ceremony for the baby and only then will it happen. My body is still the same. No changes had occurred just that I was gaining some weight but not drastically and Tshepo loves my gain so I will try and maintain that for now.

I am in our bedroom and it is a bit of a mess. I am new at this mom thing and I am trying to adjust to everything. Also we are trying to fix an area in our bedroom solely for the baby. A nursery room would be far away from us so we would rather fix a space for the baby for the time being.

Tshepo is showering and preparing for work much to his dismay, I collect the little baby bottles for me to wash and then I take my breast pump as well.

I clean up the baby station and take all his things and nappies and place them in the open built in wardrobe and then I close it and open the windows and curtains properly so there is fresh air coming in.

We bought a baby cot recently so it comes in handy. Having a baby unexpectedly is costly because we did not prepare for it well but we are getting the hang of things that we need to get the hang of.

After clearing the cot I got on the bed and went on my knees and took the baby from the middle of the bed and he squirmed and opened his eyes and stares at me for a moment with his big eyes before he closed them and went to fisting his little hand and yawned after that. I squeeze the side of his cheeks lightly and kiss his little forehead before I grab his blanket and take him to the little cot and place him inside. After seeing that he is well rested I clean up the bedroom by doing the

bed and collecting everything that needs to be put away. Tshepo walks out of the bathroom butt naked with a towel in his hands as he wipes his neck and face with it.

“The breakfast is in the kitchen. What are you wearing today?”, I ask.

“I do not want to be too formal but I will see”, He mentions

“Aren't you having a meeting in Pinetown?”

“Yes I have one”, Heh ayi okay.

“Is he still asleep?”

“Yes but I will wake him up to bath him and feed him after I am done here”, I mention.

He comes closer to me and holds my waist.

“Baby get dressed”

“But I am just going to kiss you. There is nothing I will do”, He mentions.

“Please.”, He groans.

Another disadvantage for us. We cannot be intimate until my stitches have healed. I hold his face and I give him a kiss on his lips.

“Should I dress you up today?”, I ask.

“Yes baby”, I smile and move away from him.

I like it when I choose what to wear for him. I go to the walk in closet and go to his side of the closet and I pull whatever I like and take his shoes as well after and walk out of the closet. I place everything on the bed and he is already done with moisturizing.

“Thank you Nana”

He kisses my cheek. The baby starts making noise and I quickly go to him and take him into my arms.

“Bring him here while you get his bath water prepared”, Tshepo suggest.

I give him the baby and rush to get some bath water. I keep it warm and then I go back to him and I find him already seated on the bed staring at his child that is in his arms. I get to him and he looks up to me and gives the child over to me.

“He really likes you”, I say.

“Phela ufana nami(he looks like me)”, Ayi I do not know anymore.

I just laugh and shake my head. I take the baby to the bathroom and I place him on the nappy changing table and I undress him. He starts with squirming and he makes little noises while his lips quiver in a sense that he wants to cry.

“No baby, I will be done in no time”, I see tears form in his eyes and after I undressed him I took him to his bathtub and got to washing him and that is when he broke into a cry.

He has his days. Sometimes he behaves and does not even make a sound, usually that is when he is asleep or drowsy and sometimes he cries his lungs out until I am done. I get done with bathing him and I quickly take a towel and wrap him with it before I rush out of the bathroom and get in the bedroom. I lay him on the bed and I quickly get his nappy and some powder and Baby Vaseline.

I lotion him and quickly put on his nappy and cover him with a fleece and I go and get his clothes out. I then go and dress him up. After that I get done and I take him and leave him in his cot before I go and discard his water and put his clothes in his washing basket. I get out of the bathroom and take him and see that the little bottles and breast pump are gone. Tshepo must have taken them to the kitchen with him. I take the wipes and walk out with the baby going downstairs. I find Tshepo on his feet watching TV while eating.

He has a tendency of sometimes watching TV while standing. Well it happens alot often than you can think. I do not know if he hears and sees properly when he is on his feet or what? I get to the lounge and sit down on the couch and pull out my breast and take the wipe and wipe my breast. I have to clean them out so that he does not get bacteria when he is feeding.

“There are formulas. Does he really have to feed where I was feeding?”,I shoot a look at Tshepo.

“Hayi Tshepo.”

“I am just asking”,He says.

“Well yes. He is priority and it is his now”

He goes back to staring at the TV

“It would not be his if it was not for me”

“Akumona lah kuwe(You are so jealous)”

“I am... Nana”,I just laugh and shake my head.

I slowly shove the nipple in the baby's mouth and he instantly latches on it sucking the milk for him to feed rather too quickly. He is hungry and he wants to be fed and full in no time. I look at him as his tiny lips are attached to my nipple. His pulls are a little aggressive but they give me joy to feel and see this creature being fed.

Tshepo finishes his food and goes to the kitchen and after a while he comes back out and kisses my neck.

"I am off. I will swing by during lunch", He is not just saying he might.

He does that everyday since this one has been home. He has a new obsession and it is this big eyed creature that looks just like him.

"Please bring some Nando's. I am craving it"

"What else?"

"And some fruits. You will see", I smile.

"Okay I will", There is a knock on the door before it is opened.

Buyi walks in the house carrying a big plastic and her bag. She drops it on the couch near her and she comes towards me.

"He is awake today. Hello Bhuti.", Another person who is obsessed with Ntokozo.

"He is feeding. He will be done in no time."

She cowers over us watching the baby and all is forgotten about. Nathi follows inside the house as well. He greets and I reply to him.

"I am here to drop of the aunty. She couldn't wait to come here today. I had to stop her yesterday"

“I bought new things for him. I couldn't stop myself when I was at the mall”,Buyi mentions.

“Thank you so much”

He finishes feeding and I hand him to Buyi who gladly takes him in her arms. She helps burp him.

“Tshepo we are leaving together”

Nathi mentions and Tshepo does not mind.

The couple is now cowering over the baby. I could not feel any happy that my son is this loved, it takes them 20 minutes being in their little bubble before the husband's say their goodbyes and leave us. I stay with Buyi and she helps me with the baby while I get to clean the house and go and bath before I make some food for us.

PALESA MOKOENA

My feet hurt and I cannot take it anymore. I wish the baby can just be popped out of me so that I can feel some sort of relief once more. I am on early maintance leave now and since I am close to giving birth soon, Lumphelo thought it is best that I move to Johannesburg with him and his mother will leave the Eastern Cape and come to sit with me. My mother would have taken care of me but she is working and cannot take leave as yet. His mother is a house wife, those typical rural house

wives. I thought that she will judge me or not like me but she is a very nice person. Just like Kholeka. I guess she took from her mother.

So here I am waking up in my baby daddy's house while he left me last night going to his schemes. I have learnt to just accept what he does and hope that we do not get killed one day for the life that he is living.

I hear a knock on the bedroom door while I was on the bathroom just right after I have taken a shower. I cannot get in the bath tub anymore because it is hard for me to get out alone. I only do bath in there when Lumphelo is around but beside that I do not when he is not here. I wrap a towel around my body and go to the bedroom door and I open it and Mrs Ndimase is in front of the door with a smile on her face.

"Molo ntombami, ulale njani?(Hello my girl, how did you sleep?)" ,she asks.

"Ngilale Kahle mah Wena?(I slept well Mah and yourself?)" ,I do not know how to speak IsiXhosa but I do hear it when it is spoken.

"I slept well. Ndenze into yokutya, awulambanga?(I made something to eat, are you not hungry?)" ,She asks.

"I am. I will be out when I am dressed."

"Okay ke sisi" ,She walks away and I close the door.

I go and get dressed really quickly and I make my way out of the bedroom. I get downstairs and already I can smell the food from where I am. My stomach growls crying in hunger. I get to the kitchen and she is humming a hymn. She turns to me and smiles.

"Sit down. I will dish up for you"

“Thank you so much”,She dishes up for me.

“Umhle, ndiyazisa uba uLuphelo uzawu tshata nini toho umhle kangaka bazo Kuba Wena kuye Xa engajongile kakuhle(You are beautiful, I wonder when Luphelo will marry , this beautiful they will steal you from him if he does not guard you properly)”,She mentions and I just laugh.

“Asijahile.(we are in no rush)I am still young”

“Still”

She hands the food over to me.

“Thank you”

“Feed my granddaughter.Thank you for giving me my first grandchild. With the way Luphelo is like, I never thought he will grow up and have a child but he proved me wrong.”,She mentions.

I do not know how to feel. Emotional I guess. I look down to my food and eat just to avoid crying for no reason at this moment.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

It is lunch time now and I have already cooked just incase we are hungry before Tshepo comes back but I do not want to get my hopes up as he left with his brother. I go back to the living room and I find Buyi seated on the couch with the baby sleeping in her arms. She is watching the TV. She really makes a great Malumekazi and I do not

doubt for a second that she makes a good mother. Yes she is Ntokozo's second mother so as Palesa.

"He is really behaving today", I mention.

She smiles and stares at the baby.

"He is beautiful.", She says running her finger on his little plump cheek.

"Aren't babies all cute though?"

She giggles.

"Well they all look the same at first", We both laugh.

"Lethi", She calls out for me.

"Sisi"

"Thank you for giving me an opportunity to experience this. It is beautiful", I feel my heart warming.

"You are his mom too", I smile and I see her wipe her tears.

"You are going to make me cry and run my Mascara", She says and we both laugh.

"I am sorry"

"I am happy. You have a beautiful heart Nana", She says and goes back to staring at the baby.

Chapter 36

SEASON FINALE

It has been a little over 3 months since I started being a mom and a God mother for that matter. I do not know what other people do to raise their children but I know that it is might different from my skills and ways. I also do not know how young married couples do it but I am sure that it is very much different from what we do with my husband.

It has been over years since I met Tshepo and became the woman in his life. If anyone told me that I would be one day married and having a little family with Tshepo then I would've said that I am going to be his wife one day and have a little family with him. I would have laughed at your face and probably told that person that it is all lies and would never happen but it happened despite how I felt about him towards me. If I knew from the get go that he would be such a great partner for me I would've dropped Ntando like a hot potato way before even finding out that he had moved on.

We are on our way going to the Phakade homestead and I am getting nervous. In my family it has been a rare thing for such traditional ceremonies being done. My grandmother wants to take Ntokozo to church once he turns one so that he can get baptized. When my mother was married to dad we hardly even went to church because well. I do not know but I know that dad used to work alot so that is the reason why it was never bothered about going to church and all of that. I am still adjusting to this family's customs and I think I am adjusting quiet well but I am not there yet. Some things I do not understand why they

are done but as Tshepo's wife I have to support his beliefs even though I do not understand why some things are done but I guess along the way I will get to understand quiet better.

Tshepo enters the family yard and soon we see cars already parked in the yard meaning that people arrived way before we did. My baby is sleeping on his car seat. Tshepo was sceptical with that but we were assured that it is fine for him to rest there and nothing will harm him or happen to him in any way.

Tshepo parks his car behind one car and hops out and I take off my seat belt as soon as the car has come to a halt. He goes to the back and opens the boot. I close the front door and look around the yard. The last time I was here was when I was introduced in the family as their wife which was a year ago. I quickly go to the backseat and get the baby out of the car seat and cover his face from the sun before I close the door and move away from the car. Tshepo follows after me and we get to the main house. I knock before I enter and the aunt is the first one to be in front of me looking for the baby.

“Lilili nize nifike bese ngithi abanibheke, uphi umfana ka Gogo?(finally you have arrived. I thought they should look for you. Where is granny’s boy?)”, I remove the blanket from the baby's face and he has his big eyes out looking out.

I hold him in a cradle manner and he starts kicking his little feet when the aunt starts her baby talk with him.

“He seems quiet excited hearing your voice”

We laugh and watch him kicking his little feet before I hand him over so that he can be thrown around by the family and be passed around. I

need some rest from him. In these three months I have learnt that being a new mom is not all sugar and spice and everything nice. It is not easy but hey it does get better with time. Palesa is stuck in Johannesburg and seems like she will spend most of her leave there. The fact that her mother is okay with it really shook me. Knowing her mother she is against anything that is against the Bible of which co-habiting is too but I am not a Christian so I would not know much about the bible in any way.

“Some of the family members will arrive tomorrow”,The uncle announces and Tshepo's facial expression changes.

“I hope your aunt will stay away from us”,Tshepo mentions with much irritation not to be missed in his voice.

“She will behave.”

He nods there after.

“We need to settle a bit”,Tshepo announces before he takes my hand and we walk out.

“We have not even stayed and sit down 30 minutes with the family before we disappeared”

“It is not like we won't find them here when we wake up. I am a bit tired”,He mentions and I feel sorry for him.

“Okay then rest”,We get to the room we usually use and then I quickly drop my body on the bed and heave a heavy sigh.

“This day drained me”,I mention now all of a sudden feeling tired.

Tshepo quickly undressed and I do the same and I get on the bed almost naked and sleep. It is also hot so I need my body to cool down a bit.

PALESA MOKOENA

My body right now has never felt so drained. I have heard cases where women give birth after 9 months has passed and I read up more in pregnancy stories when I was in my pregnant phase but I did not know that this child will not pop out of me until the tenth month. I was drained really the last two months took a toll on me and I was also an emotional mess that Luphelo could not keep up at times. I was cranky and would just switch moods in less than a second which drove him crazy. He would not entertain me when that happened and even when I cried he would not because well his words were "I am tired", I did not understand how could he be tired when I am the one who was carrying a human in my body and succumbed to major changes on my body but yena he was tired. I got to give birth at final long last and the relief I had. I felt like my body was all mine once again and I was not sharing it with anyone else but keeping it with myself. I love my daughter to be quiet honest but hayi I was really drained by her.

I am in the nursery. Luphelo's sister Kholeka was the one who got it all set up and she was quiet excited being a newly aunt. She said she feels blessed to be an aunt twice in a year of which she refers to her brother's child and also Ntokozo.

I was seated on the rocking chair and I had my baby girl in my arms while rocking the chair slowly back and forth just a little bit. She was going off with crying. She cries all the time. There is no formula or schedule of when she cries. She could cry for anything at any time even when she has been bathed, fed and had a great rest. One thing she loves is being in people's arms, I think that is the main reason why she goes off with her wailing the most it is when she is put down. It is like she has something whispering in her ear telling her that no one is holding her anymore.

“Mommy”, I look up and Kholeka walks inside the nursery already in her work clothes.

“Wuuuh your eyes look red”, She says.

“I didn't sleep properly, she started crying last night”, I mention.

“Where is Luphelo and mah?”, She asks.

Well Mah takes care of the baby during the day and that gives me enough time to rest and get proper sleep.

“Mah is asleep. I don't want to bother her at night. She does so much during the day”, I mention.

“And Luphelo?”, She raises her brow.

I look down to my baby's face and Bute my bottom lip at that.

“Palesa?”, She says.

“I do not know where he went. You know your brother's life. He left and told me not to stay up and wait for him”, She scoffs.

“I sure will kill that boy”, I sigh.

“Please do not fight”

“He should be here helping you and not galavanting the whole of Johannesburg”, I am just tired. I cannot handle this. I just want to rest and the rest will be seen when I wake up.

“Kholeka”

“I won't take this on your behalf Palesa”

“He likes this life. What should I do Kholeka? I have to accept it”

“Not this bullshit even if it is from my own brother, uLuphelo uk'qhela ikaka Palesa!(Luphelo is sitting on you Palesa)”

“What are you saying about me?”, I look up and see him behind her by the door. Still in yesterday's clothes. I cast my eyes away as I hear my little one quiver and I know she is about to cry.

“Where were you?”

“I don't report to you”

“Get your shit together Luphelo. You are father now think like one and not a small boy!”, Kholeka is going off her older brother not caring that he is older than her.

“Uthetha nami olohlobo Kholeka?(You are talking to me that way Kholeka?)”

“Ewe mfondini ucinga bandithetha nabani? Umoya?(Yes, who do you think I am talking to?)”

“Kholeka I am warning you...”, Their mother appears behind his son.

“What is going on here? What is with all of this noise?”,The baby goes off and goes about her crying moment.

I try to hush her and their mother pushes past them and gets inside. Luphelo giving off his deadly stare to his little sister.

“Kuqhubeka ntoni apha? Luphelo? Kholeka? Nakhwaza kangaka ekuseni nje?(What is going on here? Luphelo? Kholeka? Why are you making such noise so early in the morning?)”.

“Your son needs to grow up mama. He needs to step up as a father and stop being ikhwenkwe ayiyo(A boy that he is)”,I see Luphelo fuming.

Kholeka clicks her tongue and walks away pushing past his brother.

“Kholaka No!”,The mother says.

She is out in no time.

“Luphelo where do you come from because it looks like you did not sleep here?”,The mother asks.

“I had to take care of some business”

“Ebusuku? Uyathakatha mfana wami?(At night? Are you a witch my boy?)”

“Hayi mama, why ucinga lonto ngami?(Why would you think of such about me?)”

“What can I say? Tell me so that I can take you to church and stop this going out at night nonsense. You will bring bad spirits for the baby”,She takes the baby and walks out.

I stand up from the chair in attempt to follow behind his mother but he stops me.

“Your eyes look red”

“I didn't sleep”

“I am sorry”

“It is your life Luphelo. Do not apologize, I know where my daughter stands now”

“Don't say that Palesa”

“What do you want me to think?”, I ask looking at him.

Actually I am annoyed and I just want to bath and sleep there after.

“I am sorry I was not here last night when you needed me”

“What about other night? What is so important really that you cannot spare some time for your daughter and actually be there. If you are failing to be a present dad Luphelo tell me so I can take my daughter away and go home in peace and find a step father for her who will step up”, I see him clench his jaw.

“Don't fuck with me Palesa. No one will father my daughter, ever!”

“Then step up for her. I do not care how you treat me. I am tired, I want to sleep”, I push past him.

“Palesa!”, He calls out for me and I ignore him.

I cannot wait for my leave to end so I can move back home. I cannot take this honestly. I am risking our lives here. Basically gambling with it.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I opened my eyes and the room was totally dark which means that it is now night time. I move my hand around the bed and I can feel Tshepo next to me. I snuggle closer to and wrap my arms around him and he holds me closer to him before he kisses my forehead.

“You are awake?”

“You woke me up”,he mentions.

“Sorry about that”

“I am sure you are hungry now”,He mentions.

“Yes but we haven't had this peace in a long time”,He chuckles. I cannot see his facial expression well.

“Already annoyed Mama?”

“Not really but it is nice having time to your self you know?”

“Mmmh”,He kisses my forehead again.

“We should go to Johannesburg soon to see our God baby”,I say.

“Are we allowed to go there now?”,He asks.

“I do not know”,I say.

“Mmh”

I trial my fingers over his upper body just tracing it there. I am happy that Tshepo and his brother left the life they lived because at this point his disappearing acts is something I wouldn't be able to handle well.

.

We joined everyone for dinner last night and I was relieved and happy to not see that granny yesterday. Really she gave me a hard time and I will never forget that day where she did that to me but this time I will be on high alert of her. It is morning and the yard is quiet busy today. The goat will be slaughtered and also the extended family is coming to share the festivities with us. I decided to call Palesa and check how she is and how she is handling being a new mother. I am in the main house kitchen helping out with making the steam bread when I am calling my best friend.

"Hello", I can hear the tiredness in her voice just by saying that.

"Hey, are you okay?", I ask while now feeling concerned about her.

"Its alot. I am good. This baby is draining me. I miss being just me with no child no drama", She sighs after.

"Is everything alright?", I ask.

She sighs and there is a bit of silence.

"I don't know. Honestly I want to be back home now but I cannot travel with the baby", She says.

"Do you want me to come down there and maybe visit"

"You have your own problems and the baby is still young Lethi"

"It doesn't matter. He is three months now and he can travel around"

"I don't want him catching my bad aura while here. I am okay really. I am so sorry I couldn't be there for you", She mentions.

“It is no problem. I know you are with me in spirit”

She giggles.

“I will buy something for the little boy though”

“It is not his birthday and it is not like he will know”.

“Well still you will tell him one day”, Tshepo's grandmother enters the kitchen followed by another girl holding a 3 year old if I assume in her arms.

“I have to go, I will call you later”, I mention.

“Okay”, We end the call and then the granny claps her hands.

“I have never seen this before. A wife on her phone while cooking”

“Sanibonani”, I greet. She shakes her head and walks out of the kitchen.

I sigh of relief and this girl walks further into the kitchen and put her child down before she pulls me into a hug.

“You smell so nice. Hash Gogo never mentioned that you look this beautiful”, I don't even know her.

She breaks the hug and smiles.

“I am Tshepo's cousin. Distant cousin

the incubator of the family”, She mentions and laughs.

“Why do you say that?”, I wonder why she calls herself the incubator? Is she a surrogate?

“Oh I have alot of children. Above 5”,She says casually and then goes to wash her hands in the sink.

“What should I help with?”,she mentions.

“I am almost done with this dough so nothing really”,I mention.

“Oh okay. I am so happy that finally there is a child for these boys. Yoh they can get off my back now”,She mentions.

She grabs a sealed coke and opens it and finds a glass. The child is looking around while sticking her fingers in her mouth.

“Yoh kuyashisha Lana(It is hot here)”,She continues and pours a glass of coke for herself and one for me.

“Skwiza Bamba lah”,She hands the glass to me and I take it.

“So where are you from?”,She asks.

“Durban”

“No man Wena no Sisi Buyi nibahle. Nitholwaphi? Unaye ubhuti nami ngibambe?(You and sis Buyi are beautiful. Where are you guys found? Do you have a brother that I can get?)”,she asks.

“He is 5”

“My daughter is available for him”,I laugh at that.

This lady does not know when to tone down the talking.

“Don’t mind Gogo. She is always like this she just waiting for her grave date”,I gasp and she takes a sip off her coke.

“Let’s go and find something else to drink. This cold drink is a bit warm for me. I need something cold”

“I do not drink”,I mention.

She looks at me.

“You are breast feeding?”

“Yes”,Plus I do not want to drink here.

“Whoo, I wouldn't torture myself with that. These ladies are for my man”,She mentions.

“Lucky him I guess”,She slaps her boobs and then she goes to finishing her warm drink and picks up her child.

“Lets go”,We walk outside with me listening to Tshepo's cousin while she is yapping away about things.

I have no doubt that she is a radio once she is drunk because I have never encountered a human that speaks this much in my life.

We get outside and she rushes up to her other cousins telling me she will be back. Sisi Buyi comes towards me and stands next to me.

“I see you have met Ze”,She mentions with a hint of a giggle behind it.

“Does she talk that much?”

“You have not heard anything yet. Wait until she airs the family laundry especially her grandmother's evil deeds”,she laughs after.

“She can do that?”,I ask while looking at Buyi shocked.

“Yes and she does not care that she lives with her.”,Wow.

“Tshepo has been looking for you”

“I do not even know where Ntokozo is and I miss him”

“She is with aunty inside the house. She is hogging him, we can't even have a second to see him”,I laugh.

“I am sure she will fight us when we leave”

“She might move in with you guys”,we laugh and we see the brothers coming towards us.

Nathi reaches his wife and kisses her cheek and she flushes in blushing there after.

“Wozani, I will introduce you to my new sister”,It is Ze behind them followed by a few people that I do not know.

“Tshepo please move you are blocking your wife's view. I want to introduce her”,Buyi giggles.

“Good luck”,Buyi says to me and I shake my head.

Tshepo moves and instead of standing infront of me he stands beside me.

“Where are the other children Ze?”,Nathi asks.

“The ones that have an active father are with their father. The rest are making noise inside Nathi you are disturbing me bhuti”,She says hinting some respect nyana in her sentence.

“This is Lethi, Tshepo's wife”,She says like she is flaunting me.

“We need to go”

“Hau but I thought Thina as ladies will sit together right Sisi?”, This girl looks a bit older than me yet she is calling me Sisi.

I look at Tshepo.

“I know you Zenzile. You tend to misbehave”, Tshepo mentions.

“Mina? Haibo Tshepo since when?”, She says placing her hand dramatically on her chest.

The ones behind her laugh.

“Ze”, Nathi warns and she sighs.

“Sorry”, She turns and leaves with her crew.

Buyi laughs after that.

“Your cousin is the character of the family”, Buyi says.

“And she sure is expanding it”, Khalipha mentions as he passes.

“Yeyi Wena!”, Nathi shouts after him as he runs away laughing.

A vein pops on his forehead that moment.

PALESA MOKOENA

I am scrolling through my texts and messages that I have received from my students. They seem to be having a hard time adjusting to their substitute teacher so I help there wherever that I can when I am free.

My little girl is with her grandmother and she is growing bigger and bigger everyday. I didn't mean that I don't wish I had my daughter. I love her and I feel like I am complete to have her in my life but it is the father that I am not sure at the moment. I do not know what is wrong with Lophelo. During the pregnancy he was the most present person in my life and now I do not know if maybe he does not want his daughter or what?

I am seated outside the house by the garden side in the back yard and no there is no pool here or whatsoever. I have been avoiding him since yesterday and hardly spoke to him. I just want some peace in my life and no drama at all.

"Palesa", He is behind me.

I can smell his fresh shower gel from where I am and the same effect he had on me a year ago is still there. I hear him heave a sigh when I do not turn to look at him and he settles next to me and holds my hand.

"Please look at me", I turn to look at him.

"I am sorry about the way I have been misbehaving lately and not being the best partner and father there can be", He mentions.

"It is okay. You are doing what you see fit in your life", I turn away from him.

"Palesa please don't say that."

"Lophelo honestly are you realising that you are not ready for what is happening now or?"

"I am, I really am and I will change to prove it", He mentions.

“Mmmh”,I say.

“I love you both Palesa and I wouldn't want to loose the both of you. I promise to change”

“Fine”

We stay in silence. I really am just not in the mood for this conversation at the moment. Words do not mean anything right now.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

Finally I got to get my son back and he cried when we were in the rondaval to introduce him to the ancestors as the goat was making noise and soon after he kept quiet. I have bathed him for the second time today and the meat has been slaughtered and now the little festivities are on. I am changing him and I have just finished dressing him up. He blinks his big eyes on me and I smile and softly kiss his plump cheeks.

He is getting heavier and heavier with time.

“Mmmh? You feel better now that you are fresh?”,He blinks his eyes away.

I sit on the bed and the reach for the bedside and grab the wipes and I wipe my nipples before I start to feed him and he sucks on for dear life. I slowly caress him as he is sucking just watching him. I cannot believe that he is mine. That he is my son. It still feels surreal. The door opens

and Tshepo walks into the room and stands by the door watching us as I am feeding him.

“Why are you not outside with everyone?”, I ask.

“They bore me”, I slightly gasp.

“Tshepo that is not nice to say”, He ignores me and comes inside the room and he grabs a chair and sits in front of me.

He takes the little man's hand and he softly caresses it with his rough hands.

“He seems sleepy, he is flapping his eyes too frequently”, I look at the baby and he is right.

“Do you want to rock him?”, He opens his arms and I hand the baby over to him.

He lays him on his shoulder and chest then he runs his back in a circular motion focusing on what he is doing. I look at my husband and in that moment I knew that I loved this man beyond my own understanding of loving him.

The baby burps and he checks him and he is asleep already.

“That was quick”, I say taking the little one.

“We can have a quickie”, Tshepo says.

“Phakade”, I warn.

“Nana”, I tilt my head to the side and look at him.

I cannot even say no to him. I sigh.

“Lets go and shower together. We cannot do it infront of the baby”,He smiles and it is wide.

He deserves it. I mean he was patient enough to wait 3 months. He scoops me up and rushes to the bathroom with me in his arms. He kisses my neck.

“I love you Nana”,I smile.

“I love you Phakade”

Chapter 37

SEASON FINALE

Fear, it is something that is felt by anyone even the toughest and strongest people you can find feel fearful and now I feel fearful as well too. I have never felt like this before, this type of fear where it feels like you are in a close range of losing someone who is close to your heart. That is the case with me at the moment. I feel like I am fearful to lose someone that I love and hold dear in my life.

My grandmother has been sick lately. Very sick to a point where she had to be admitted to the hospital all thanks to my father's method of convincing her to go and get admitted to the hospital. It has been 3 days since she has been admitted and her sickly situation has not changed as yet. It gets to me that if we lose my grandmother what would be of our little dysfunctional family. Her weird first born son, her divorcee second born daughter and also her trying to find his feet in the world last born son.

Me, Mfanele and lastly my little brother.

She is the glue to our family, the holding stick of bringing peace and some type of tranquility within the family. She never judges us instead she tried to understand us all as we are all her children and now she is very sick.

My father hasn't reported back what may be the cause of her sickness even though they have ran numerous tests since she got on that hospital bed. I wonder, wonder if God would spare her for us a little

longer. I know we have grown now but I also know that my mother still needs her mother in this road of healing.

I'm at the hospital. I woke up early today and cleaned the house and made sure that I leave everything that Tshepo will need. He is working from home and chose that he will babysit the child for me as I cannot leave with him and come here. I am seated at the waiting room before I see my father appearing with a smile on his face.

"My pride and joy", He says and I stand up.

He pulls me into a hug and then we hug everything out that moment before we break the embrace.

"How are you?", He asks.

"Worried. How is Gogo?", I ask.

"She is responding to the medication"

"What is wrong with her?", I ask.

"She has Pneumonia but she will be fine I promise", I breath out.

"Thank you dad for convincing her to come. I know she can be stubborn at times"

"Do you want to see her?"

"Yes please", He leads the way and I follow after him.

We get to the ward that my grandmother is admitted in and I walk inside holding onto my bag. There are treats and flowers around her just to make her feel better. I get to her and she turns to look at me and she smiles.

“Lethi”

“Gogo”,I grab a chair and sit down.

“Uohi umkhwenyana?(Where is my grand son in law?)”,I swear my grandmother has not spent time with Tshepo alot but she always asks me about him.

“He is home with the baby”,I say.

“Mmmmh”

“How are you feeling today?”,I ask her concerned.

“Ayi I am feeling a bit better than I was a couple of days ago”

“Kodwa gogo uyayibona lenkani yakho cishe yenzani?(but Gogo do you see what your stubbornness almost did?)”

“Nxayi bengeke ngife(I wouldn't have died)”, Doesn't this woman know Pneumonia.

“You should dress up more to feel warm”,I say

“I will be better if I see my great grand son”,I just sigh and smile.

“He is growing. Fat too”,She smiles.

“I am sure he will be everywhere once he knows how to crawl”

That is true. Ntokozo cries for attention. He cries if things do not go his way. This other day he was playing with my phone and he was wetting it with his saliva and I took it away from him. He sure did cry until he fell asleep.I cannot keep up with him now that he is growing and it is like he develops a new mind and strategies to make my day hard when things

do not go his way. Tshepo can deal with him today because I need a break from his little devil.

“He has started misbehaving already”,She laughs as I sigh before she coughs and then grabs some water and drinks.

“The child is not even 9 months yet Lethi”

“But he behaves like a 1 year old. I am glad Tshepo is going to deal with him now”,She smiles.

“I am happy for you my child. The family was worried about you and getting married but so far you seem happy and have not complained about anything”

“I am happy Gogo.That man loves me”

“I am happy for you Mntanami”

We chatted together some more before visiting time ended and I had to leave the hospital. I was dreading the drive home to that little thing. It has drained me so much and honestly I should ship Ntokozo to Buyi. She will be very pleased with him being there I know and I would get a break from that little Phakade thing.

I get inside my car and I drive off. I pass by Mc Donald's and I get some breakfast. I left without eating and then I drive back home. I eat while I am driving and I finish my food. I get home and I hop out of the car and make my way inside. I find Tshepo seated on the couch with Ntokozo between his legs and they are watching news. They seem so interested in what they are watching even the little one. They seem comfortable and I think I now know who Ntokozo's favourite is and it is not me at all.

“Hello baby”,I say to Tshepo and lean to perk his lips.

This little one grabs my top pulling me off making noise. He is unhappy about me kissing my husband.

“He does not want me here.”,I say.

“I don't think so”,I try to take him but he cries so I leave him.

“You think?”,this child is backstabbing me at the moment.

I move away from infront of them and he goes back to watching the boring news infront of him. It is not like he can even register what is being said anyway there.

“How is your grandmother Nana?”,Tshepo asks.

“She is good. She is getting better”

“That is good”,It really is.

“Have you guys eaten?”

“We had some food”

“Okay let me go and make some lunch then I will take him away so you can work”,Tshepo nods.

I rush up the stairs and I go and change to comfortable shoes before I go back down stairs to start with the cooking.

PALESA MOKOENA

We are in a better space now. I wouldn't say the best space but I would say a better space than we were in. Luphelo is trying to prove that he is a present father in our daughter's life and that makes me feel okay and Happy. I want my daughter to have what I never have and that is good father figure in her life. Things were a still bit rocky between us but we are trying to get past our little issues and resolve things for our little family.

I got down stairs just after 12 p.m and I am feeling tired already for the day. I know my daughter is somewhere around the house with her grandmother. It has become a normality that they born with each other from the early hours of morning.

I get downstairs and find them both in the living room and they are playing with each other. I can hear her little giggles.

"Hello",Luphelo's mother turns and looks at me.

"Molo Mntanami, how are you?"

"I am well Mama, how are you?"

"I am well. There is food in the kitchen. Luphelo left some for you in the oven",She mentions.

I start to drool over the food that I have not tasted.

I have never met a man who can cook as good as Luphelo does and he does it without any mercy. I myself cannot even cook as good as he can.

"Where is he mah?",I ask.

“He went outside the kitchen door. I think the back yard”, I nod and I thank her.

I go to the kitchen and I see him the backyard through the window. I make my way towards him and he turns around to face me before he throws his cigarette away.

“You smoke weed?”, I know weed when I smell it.

“Sometimes. It has been a long time since I did”, He says and I just nod.

“What are you doing outside?”, I ask. Well besides smoking.

“I just was clearing my mind”

“Problems?”, I tilt my head a bit to the side.

He walks closer to me and I do not push him. He does not smell as bad as I thought.

“And solutions”

He says and holds my waist and looks at me.

“I love you Palesa”, He says.

“I love you too Lophelo”

He hugs me and I hold onto him and I sigh. I hope we get better but with the pace we are now going in it seems like we are going to head to a different direction than the one set before and we are learning too in the process of all of this.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

The baby fell asleep right after I fed him and changed him and I put him in the car seat because we were all seated in the living room. Tshepo wasn't working anymore instead he was now stuck on watching movies with me here and bonding with me too.

I am in the same spot that Ntokozo was in but laying on my husband's chest. He is playing with my hands in the process of us watching the movie. The movie ends in no time and I remove the popcorn bowl that is between my legs and I sit up.

"I am thirsty, Should I get you a drink?", I ask.

"How about I go and get us a drink?", He offers.

"Okay then", He stands up and he disappears to the kitchen and I check if there is any movie available that we can watch for the last time since we still have some pop corn left of which Tshepo only ate two and he didn't during the rest of the movie. He comes back and he has wine in a glass and a beer in his hand.

He hands the wine to me and I thank him. He sits next to me.

"Nana"

"Phakade lami?", I say.

He smiles at me and I just laugh.

"You look just like Ntokozo. Cute", He does more especially when he laughs.

"A baby is Cute Nana", there we go.

I will not argue with him but simply nod in agreement though he looks just like his son a minute ago.

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TSHEPO PHAKADE

I look at my wife coming out of the bathroom wearing a black silk gown. She has a variety of them and anything that is related to clothing she does not shy away from. She runs her hands over her face. Her cheeks have become a bit plump but I love them and I do not think that there is nothing that I do not find perfect about my wife.

She goes and stands in front of the long mirror and looks at herself and fixes her head wrap that moment.

My mother would've loved her just like how she would've loved Buyi. I never understood how can my brother love a female to that extent to do anything for her and even become the latest psychopath ever found but now I do. Love does that because when you love someone you do everything to protect them and keep them content.

I am already in bed, waiting for Lethi to join me in bed before we retire to it. She turns around from the mirror and she looks at me.

"Why are you staring at me that much? Is there something wrong with my gown?", She tries to turn it around to see if there is something wrong.

"No, come here", Ntokozo has been long out and he is sleeping in his cot. I love my son yes but I am tired of him sleeping in bed with us.

Those first few months were enough he is grown now and I want to sleep next to my wife properly.

“Okay...” ,She moves away from the mirror and comes towards me. She takes off the gown and climbs over onto the bed.

“What is wrong Babakhe?” ,She calls me that for the first time and I smile.

I pull her closer to me and kiss her forehead in the process of it.

“I love you Nana” ,I mean it. I love this woman.

“Phakade are you sick?” ,she mocks me and laughs in between.

“Baby I know.” ,She lays a perk on my lips.

I run my fingers over her thighs and groan pulling her closer to me.

“Usuqalile (you have started)” ,She mentions with a hint of amusement.

“How can I not when your night clothes look like this?” ,I mention.

“It is called a lingerie Tshepo”

“Whatever that is”

“Well they are nice right?” ,She asks running her fingers over her chest.

I capture one of her boobs and I kiss her neck then whisper in her ear.

“I want to eat you out” ,Her breathing patterns change. I move my hands from her thighs to her back going down to her butt and squeezing it.

“Tshepo don't do that” ,She says.

“Please MaNkosi. I won't do anything further”,I say to her.

She shivers slightly in my hold. I lay her down and get on her then kiss her lips. She responds to the kiss before I break it and lay soft kisses on her body going down to her stomach. I reach the bottom, this piece looks nice but it has to go. I don't want it at the moment.

I rip her thing off and she gasps.

“Tshepo these things cost money”,I open her legs and level myself between her thighs.

I bury my face and my warm breath hits the surface of her valve.

“I will buy new ones for you Nana”,I stick my tongue through her folds and she gasps and moans holding my head.

I take the first lick on her clitoris moving my tongue around before I slipped it in her hole and out again going back to playing with her clitoris.

“I won't use my hands Nana”,I warn her.

I want to taste her until she explodes over my face. I love it, hearing her moan and throw her head back in satisfaction to what I am doing to her and that is pleasuring her.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

It is morning and I woke up with the bed empty and the little one not even in his cot. I am a mess more messy and Tshepo did not touch me beside him eating me out yesterday of which left me in a shaking moment and craving for more of it. I get off the bed and remember he ripped my lingerie off and now I am naked.

I take the ripped thing and quickly move to the bathroom and brush my teeth and wash my face

I hate bathing too early in the morning maybe in the middle of the morning closer to brunch that is when I give myself time to take a well deserved bath. I get out of the shower and wear a gown before I rush out of my room and I go downstairs and I find Buyi with Ntokozo and they are watching cartoons. He looks clean and all fed too.

“Good morning Sisi”, I say and she turns to look at me.

“Good morning Nana, I am sure you are tired from a hectic night”, She winks.

Oh my Soul I am flushed at the moment.

“He did not bother?”

“Not at all”, She says and brushes his little arm.

He starts making some noise pointing to the TV and Buyi nods.

“He can be problematic lately”, She giggles.

“He is growing now. Right boy?”, He rests his head on her lap.

They are seated on the floor.

“Let me go and make some food for the both of you”

“He already ate and do not worry about me. You can go and rest or change”, I nod and take this as an opportunity to have some me time. Buyi is being a life saver at the moment and I do not know what I would be without her shame.

I quickly rush upstairs and decide to call my husband and check how he went. I didn't wake up today and make breakfast for him like I usually do.

The phone rings and he answers after the second ring.

“Phakade. You left without saying good bye”, I sulk.

Honestly he gave me the most mind blowing orgasms yesterday that put me to sleep and this morning I wake up and he is not there.

“I did not want to disturb you. You seemed out of it”

“Well who wouldn't be?”

“No one but you. Baby I have a meeting in the next minute. Can I hang up or you need to....”

“No go to that meeting. We need that money your child is expensive”, He laughs.

“he learnt from his mom”

“Haibo I am not a spender”, Well I am but it cannot be that bad honesty right?

“Mmmh but I like it though”, See he does not complain.

“Okay bye Baby”

“Bye Nana”, We hang up.

I go and get dressed before I move to go and join Buyi at the lounge.

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Chapter 38

SEASON FINALE

TSHEPO PHAKADE

Stressing is the word that I would use to feel right now about my life. Well not entirely it but the position that I am with work and my personal life but I have got the hang of actually juggling everything that occurs in my life right now and it is going okay and all thanks to my sister in law too.

I have something planned mainly because I want to do something nice for my wife. I am not good with surprises and planning but Buyi helps me alot when I need the help to do something nice for my wife.

I am at the office and it is almost lunch time. I have been staring at this laptop for over an hour now blank. I am worried, how everything that I have spent the shortest time planning would turn out and surprises that need to be executed in a short space of time cost alot of money but I would not mind giving up an arm and a leg just to see my wife happy. A knock comes in from the door and it opens. My brother walks in holding a blue folder and he places it on the desk infront of me.

“You look lost”,He mentions.

“I am worried. Do you think that everything will go well with what I am planning?”,He sits down on the edge of my table and looks at me.

“What are you really planning? All I know is that it is related to your anniversary”,He mentions.

Yes our wedding anniversary is just a pinky in the door now. It is close and I heard that they are well celebrated. We have never celebrated one before and I would like to do something nice for her and celebrate it with her. Buyi said it is a special day for lovers to reminisce and think back on how they fell in love,why they love each other and how they are with each other. I didn't understand what she meant but I think I have an idea of what she means.

“I do not want to say much because I do not want to jinx it”,I say.

He laughs throws his head back and his deep irritating voice vibrates through the room, he throws his head back forth and looks at me.

“What could I possibly do? Tell your wife or you are scared she might run away from your gift”,He mentions.

“Don’t say that”,I mention.

“Well fine. I guess I will find out some how”, he says.

He gets off the table and turns around.

“Before you walk out”,He turns back to look at me.

“Can you take Ntokozo for a while?”,I say.

“What did MaZwane say?”,He asks.

“She was delighted to do the duty”,He smiles widely as his eyes sparkle at that.

“You don't have to ask. He is our son too”

I just nod and he turns and walks out of the room and I rest my head on the desk when I feel a slight headache coming on.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

I am with my sister in law and we are at the mall getting some things and also just wondering instead of being home. Being outside can also be good for Ntokozo as he becomes jumpy when he sets his eyes on other people that are passing by us as I am pushing him as he is inside the stroller.

“Let’s get inside this shop”,Buyi points and we walk inside.

It's a clothing store. We get inside and follow after Buyi and she grabs a dress.

“This looks so beautiful”,She mentions running her hands on the dress.

“It is, it will suite you”

“You think?”,I nod my head.

She takes it and I also scout around and I see a few items that I also like too.

“I am going to the changing room to fit these items”,Buyi says and I nod.

She walks away and leaves me with her bag. I keep on looking around. This shop has really nice clothes and I cannot even decided what I really want because everything seems to be calling my name.

“Lethi?”, I hear a manly voice call out for me.

It cannot be Tshepo I know his voice. I turn around and I meet this man I haven't seen on years.

“Ntando?”, He walks towards me and looks at the little Ntokozo who is in the stroller sticking his hands out in the air and kicking his legs. He reaches me, he looks. Different but hey I cannot forget how this man made me a mocking thing at school. He embarrassed and disrespected me.

He reaches me.

“Wow! I haven't seen you in so long”, He says and tries to come in for a hug but I step back.

“Ntando what do you want from me?”, I ask.

“I just came to greet. You look beautiful as ever. Who is the little guy? Is he your cousin's child?”, He asks.

“He is my son, I am married”, I raise my left hand to show him my ring. His eyes pop out of his socket.

“Married? When did that happen?”, He frowns after that.

“Years ago. My husband and I have been together for 7 years now”, I mention.

“Wow! You did not waste time right after me”, He seems displeased.

“Why should I have wasted my time?”, I ask.

“I was young and dumb Lethi that I know but to get married that is extreme.”, Haibo nangu umfana engihlanyela (This boy is being crazy)

“I don't care honestly now”,I say. I just want him to go and let me be with my shopping.

“You are so young to be tired down Lethi like this. You are 24”

“So?”

“Lethi”,Buyi comes behind me and she grabs her bag.

“Hi”,She greets.

“Hi”,Ntando says a bit uninterested in the greeting.

“We should go,Nathi called and they want us to meet at the Terrance”,She takes out her phone from her Jean pockets.

I turn to Ntando.

“Bye”

“Lethi wait”,I push the stroller and walk away. Buyi follows after me.

“Who is that?”,she asks.

If it was anyone else, I would have not told her but I trust Buyi and she is a person I can confined in as Palesa is kilometres away now.

“An Ex boyfriend from highschool.”

“He did not seem pleased in being in your presence”

“I told him I am married and he became sour”,She laughs.

“Wow men!”,She says.

“Tell me about it but I thank him for saying the rubbish he said and dumped me because I wouldn't be with Tshepo if he didn't”,I say.

“Even so, Tshepo would've gotten you with him in the picture. Giving up is not in the Phakade blood”, She mentions.

We get to the pay place and we pay for the clothes we were taking before we left the shop going to the parking lot to the car. Ntokozo was still wide awake and I did not understand why he was not asleep but he did not make some noise so he is behaving namhlanje(today).

We get to the car and I take the baby out of the stroller and try to buckle him up on the car seat but he fists on my top and starts crying.

“Ah baby what is wrong now?”, I pull him closer to my chest and he stops crying.

I try again and he cries once more when I try to place him down.

“Okay legs leave the car seat and get inside”, I get inside the car and Buyi is already on the driver's seat.

He does not cry instead he lies on my chest and I rub his back. He must be sleepy. He throws tantrums when he is about to sleep. I hush him and Buyi is driving to where Nathi said we are all going to meet.

“Did he mention what the occasion is?”, I ask.

“For lunch he said it is a surprise for the both of us”, Now I really wonder what it is.

I rock this one who is in my arms back and forth gently and soon he is out and has his mouth slightly open with his eyes not completely closed. It is these big eyes of his and I wonder where he gets them from because Tshepo doesn't have big eyes and so as I but I have heard a couple of times from the family saying that he has physical features

that are similar to Tshepo's mother and he might have gotten the big eyes from her.

We reach The Terrance and Buyi parks and we then get out of the car. I place the little one in a stroller that Buyi helped me take out. I then push him inside and we get to find our husbands there and they are seated waiting for us. We reach them and they both stand at the same time. I really wonder what is happening.

“Hello”, I greet.

“MaNkosi”, Nathi greets and goes to the stroller us being forgotten.

I look at Buyi in a So what is happening now face? She shrugs.

“We have a surprise for you”, Tshepo says.

He is getting a bit frequent in these surprises but I am not complaining though. It is a once in a blue moon thing.

“What are they?”, I ask now feeling a bit excited.

They chuckle.

“It wouldn't be a surprise Nana if we told you”

That line.

I wonder who told Tshepo that line because he uses it when I want to know what is the surprise.

Soon we are blindfolded and this man takes my hand and leads the way.

“Wait Tshepo Ntokozo”, I say concerned.

“He is okay, don't worry”,I nod.

He decides to carry me in a bridal manner and goes with me to wherever. He put me down and he gets me inside the car and by the smell of his perfume I can tell we are in his car. He starts the car and drives off. I have an itch to remove this blindfold and see where he is taking me but I have to have faith on my husband.

“Phakade will you not give me a hint or something related to the surprise?”,I ask.

“No Nana",Well I give up.

PALESA MOKOENA

My mother is coming and she will be seeing our daughter for the first time. I am so happy to be with her when she is here. It has been so long since we sat down and chatted and actually got down to unpqkcing things that were going on in our lives. Lumphelo's mother, bless her soul. She is a really amazing person and has been and is a person who has helped me very tremendously these past few months since I have given birth. I do not know what I would have done without her in our lives so I am really grateful that she was here to lend out a helping hand without complaint.

I am taking a shower just so that I can be fresh when my mother comes here. I run my fingers through my body before I grab the bathing sponge and soak it with body wash before I scrub my body.

“Can I join you?”, I turn around and through the class I can see Luphelo’s figure. The water is warm causing the little steam.

“Uhm. Sure”, There is silence for a while until the shower door opens and he gets inside.

“It is hot in here”, He touches the shower water.

“Ah Palesa this is too hot”, Awoa it is not even hot.

“You are such a baby”, I turn down the level of hot water and more of cold water.

He test it out and then he sighs of relief.

“It is much better now”, I shake my head and he takes my sponge from my hands.

“Let me scrub your back”, He says and I turn around and give him my back.

He starts running the scrub on my back and then he runs his fingers on my shoulders and kisses my neck.

“Luphelo focus”, I say.

“It is hard”, He whispers.

Lord please do not lead me into temptation.

“You have to try because I will kick you out”, I say.

“Okay Mama”, he goes back to scrubbing my back until he finishes and rinses it off then he gives me the sponge.

“Now scrub mine”, He turns around and I squeeze the bath wash on the sponge and I scrub his back.

I hear him groan and I stop.

“Did I hurt you or something?”, he might have a wound I didn't see properly.

“No, I am just imagining you against this glass wall”, I throw the sponge on his back.

“Sies”, He laughs and turns around to look at me.

He is semi hard even.

“You are so dirty minded”, I mention.

“Can I show you how my mind functions?”, He picks me up and turns around to have me against the shower glass.

He kisses my neck and licks it.

“Luphelo...”, my words cannot be found the moment he started running his thumb over my clitoris circulating on it.

“You look so perfect. Just like how I imagined”, This man will be the death of me.

LETHINJABULO PHAKADE

We have been on the road for some time and I wonder where this man is taking me and what the surprise really is. This is the first time Tshepo has blindfolded me for a surprise and I guess he really does not want me to see.

“Are we getting there?”, I ask.

I have been asking this question over 5 times and now I am getting impatient.

“Just a few more minutes Nana”, He says.

He can tell that I am starting to get really impatient. The car finally stops and I hear him get out of the car. The side of my door opens and he gets me out of the car.

“Can I take off my blindfold?”, I ask.

“No Nana”, I really do not want this thing around my eyes right now.

We walk for some time before we come to a halt and he takes off the blindfold around my eyes, finally.

I look around and it looks like we are in some sort of a garden and it looks lovely.

“What? What is this?”, I ask softly.

“Come”, He pulls me further and we go down the little stairs and we go down as we are walking I notice a man wearing like a bishop.

Standing over a beautifully decorated place. Over an arch that he is under and there is an orchestra playing music in there next to him. A

little pond behind the pastor is noticable as we get closer and I notice white petals inside with little white swarns. I have never seen them with my own naked two eyes.

“Phakade what is going on? Is this the surprise?”,I ask.

“Yes Nana”,I look at him.

“What for?”

“It is our wedding anniversary tomorrow”,He says and I feel my heart engulfed by warmth.

“You remembered?”,He nods.

“I will always remember marrying you”,I feel tears prickle my eyes.

“I want us to do it again. Say our own vows this time”,He mentions.

“But I am in jeans. I am not dressed properly for this”,I say.

“It does not matter Nana. What matter is standing infront of you and telling you how I really feel”,I sigh and close my eyes before wiping the tears.

I open my eyes and I jump into hugging him.

“Thank you Phakade,I love it”,I feel him relax then I giggle.

I do not understand why he gets agitated when he has a surprise for me. He kisses my neck before we break the hug.

“Lets get married again I guess”,I know he also has been behind of no guests being here but I am happy despite anything else. Tshepo doesn't like being infront of people alot.

We get to the pastor and greet him and he greets back.

We stand in front of him and he starts praying for us first before he starts with his formalities. After some time he gives us a platform to speak and Tshepo is the one to speak first. He stares at me for a while and rubs his thumbs over the back of my hands.

“Nana”, He slightly smiles.

“There is a lot that I wish over the years I have said to you just so you would know just how much I really love you but I couldn't. I never believed in being able to emit your feelings from your mouth as they never meant a thing to me but now I know. The power of being assured not just by actions but also by words. I love you Nana. Never for once doubt that, I plan on protecting us and what we have with all that is in me if I have you by me. I do not give a fuck what anyone says...”, the pastor interrupts him with clearing his throat.

“Phakade you are swearing”, I mention.

He smiles and I do too.

“You get what I mean?”, I nod my head.

“I love you Nana”, I love him more.

I hug him and he does the same with me kissing the corner of my forehead. I break the hug and look at him.

“Phakade, you are my forever and I intend on keeping our little family going. Please do not hurt me. I love you and I don't see any other man for me beside you. I will stand by you through all the good and bad and

the thickness too.”,He holds my head before the pastor could say anything and pulls me in for a kiss.

We share a kiss in the mist of that moment forgetting anything and anyone beside us. It starts pouring with rain and we break the kiss. I laugh.

Everyone else packs up and rushes to the nearest veranda. I look at Tshepo.

“Let's go before you get a cold”,He mentions.

“These are considered blessings”,I say

“For?”,He asks and I laugh. My clueless husband but I love him despite that.

I am now soaking wet and so as he. I wrap my arms around his neck and pull him in a kiss and he kisses me back as well. Our lips intertwining. He pulls me closer to his wet body and groans through the kiss.

I love this man and I never regret being a Kasi wife to him.

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The end

Thank you for reading this book. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

