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1

Dimpho:

Smarties I need to get smarties even if it kills me today. I think they remind me of my father that's why I love them so much. Anything sweet really that man gave me his sweet tooth, much to mom's annoyance. I get up from bed and glance at the watch even though I know what time it is. Three o'clock. Three hours before I have to sign in at work. I jump in the shower and wrap a gown over my naked body afterwards. I pick up the pjs I had on and put them in the basket. I lost my earphones recently so I resort to playing music loudly on my phone. I sing along to Doja Cat as I slice and dice making dinner. Pasta and mince. With the time and the resources it's the most decent meal I can make. I make extra for Linda even if I'm not sure he'll even make it back home tonight. Linda used to be my best friend. He recently

became my boyfriend and well he's taking care of me I guess. It's been two months of the relationship and he's already paid rent for me, helped with groceries and due to his previous post as best friend he knows I love sweet things so he buys me that too. We met in University. I was, still am a girl who did a course she wasn't really interested in, dropped out and now working as a cleaner at a hospital. Not what I want to do either but it brings in money I'm saving for a sound system. My dream is to be a music producer. It's all I want. I know nothing about it but I know I want to make songs with artists, don't ask me how I plan to do that without any knowledge of any software used by music producers, because I can't tell you but I will do it. Anyway Linda and I did the same course, BEd. He's finishing it but part time now. Says he found a job. I don't know where or what he does there but it's very dodgy how he sometimes doesn't go anywhere then other times he leaves for days without explaining anything about where he was or why he didn't answer calls. I don't ask him about it though. I'm very nonchalant about him, I think I like him but I'm not sure about loving him. Also, ever since he paid rent he lives here. Didn't even ask but hey, a girl is saving cash so I won't kick him out as yet.

We don't have an oven so when I'm done I just sprinkle cheese on top and I'll microwave it at work when it's time. I eat a bit as I get dressed still singing and dancing around the flat. Hopefully

nothing spills because I really need to be out in a few minutes if I'm to get those Smarties. I grab my bag with my work uniform in it and wash the dish, just as I'm brushing my teeth, I hear Linda open the door. He walks in the bathroom and smiles at me. I don't smile back but then he produces a KitKat from his back pocket and I run to him and grab it. We both laugh and I give him a kiss on his cheek. Not kissing his mouth till I know where he was exactly. I guess I won't get those Smarties today after all. I walk past him and open the door.

"I'm out, made dinner." I yell as I close the door and walk down the passage, then down the stairs. This building is a dump honestly. The elevator looks dodgy and it hasn't worked in the six months I've been here. Yes I stay on the first floor but I still want a working elevator. Don't judge. I take my walk to work. I prefer walking cause it's not that far, a twenty minute walk saves me taxi fare. I walk up the street, and buy a cold drink at the "my friend" up the street, it'll be for when I eat later so I bank it in my bag and get back to walking. Most the junkies in these streets know me now, but I still get skeptical about them so I walk closer to the street. Rather get hit by a car than stabbed for two rands. By the time I get to the hospital I'm panting a bit but hey, I'm alive. I sanitize at the door and greet Dolly the security lady. She's much older but she really doesn't want to be hence she made sure we all know not to call her sesi or mama or even aunty. A beautiful lady and clearly still holding

on to who she once was. I think I see myself in her, what I could become if I don't work on my dreams.

I walk past her and get to Gail at reception. She's cool, older than me too but nice.

"Beautiful even for the night." I say.

She smiles and gives me a defeated look before making a comment,

"What about you? Always making us breathe through it moghel." Gail compliments me.

I'm in black sneakers, jeans, t-shirt and jacket and a high ponytail of my quite long silky hair. Silky thanks to relaxers and not genes unfortunately.

"Thank you, I'll be seeing you in a few hours." I reply and walk to the cleaners changing room. Here I am able to lock, get dressed and wait for my partner Giana with a cup of coffee. Gigi works with me, we do the work together. This week we're only working at the very top, the offices. Others will be cleaning the wards and some the operating theaters, my least favorite thing to clean. The offices are easy, and normally empty. I get a text from Nandi, a lady I met here at work after she had a baby. She just liked me I guess and wanted to be friends. Now she's inviting me to her house for a visit. She's really nice so I say yes,

this weekend. When Gigi arrives I wait for her to change then we head up.

“Girl I’m not gonna lie, I hardly slept so I’ll probably sleep in the first office and actually do the work after we eat.”

I laugh and nod,

“Have it your way but I prefer working early so I can sleep after.”

“I taught you that trick, remember that day you were so tired.”

“Yeah, you really helped me that day. Now I’m helping you, work first.”

“You’re right kid. Thanks.”

I smile and we exit the elevator at the top.

I get into my first office as she goes to hers.

This office was vacant for a while, I haven’t worked here in a while too so I guess that’s why I didn’t know it was now occupied. Dr L. Graham. Wow so this doctor studied in some foreign University, I don’t think I wouldn’t recognize it if it was South African. Anyway I open the door with my key and get in. It still smells new here, like it’s not a part of the hospital, well this whole floor is like that. Like downstairs there isn’t children with leukemia or patients who’ve been in a comma for months or deaths even. It’s like whoever works here wants to forget

that too. There's a shower and clothes here. Whoever this is has an entire bathroom to themselves. The desk, chairs and couch is in all the offices I've cleaned so nothing to say much about except that the couch is quite nice, white leather. I like it. Let me get to cleaning up, there isn't much really but let me take the trash out first. I come back to the room, play music on my phone and start sweeping the floor. Megan Thee Stallion is helping me groove with the broom and duster in hand.

I feel a hand on my shoulder and scream a bit then I turn around and to my shock, it's someone I've met before but never thought I'd see again. I don't remember his name but he's Nandi's friend. He's in scrubs so I guess he's a doctor here. Is this his office?

I mean duh, obviously Dimpho.

"I'm sorry for scaring you, hey."

"Hey, I should've been more vigilant

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sorry."

"I don't know what you're apologizing for but okay. I'll wait outside while you finish, Dimpho."

He walks out.

He knows my name? Does he remember from that day? We only met once. I finish sweeping and walk out to find him, I'll mop after he showers.

I don't know his name so I look at his door. He's sitting on the floor outside his office, his head between his knees. Did he lose a patient?

I kneel next to him not knowing what else to do.

"Hey, Dr Graham?... You can go shower, I'll wait for you to finish then I can mop."

He looks up at me. He doesn't look sad or anything, but he has on a slight smile and he looks into my eyes.

I remember this. He did it when we first met at a parking lot, he looked into my eyes like this with his green set. Feeling a little too flustered I shake my head, close my eyes and he helps me stand.

"Come." He says and takes my hand.

He leads me to the couch and smiles. I guess that means sit. I do so quickly.

"Thank you." I say as he walks into the bathroom with his clothes and he smiles and nods only. Is he a man of a few words or what? Anyway what am I doing looking into his eyes?

Hey! He looked into my eyes, not the other way around. In any case what am I doing here? I could be cleaning another office but here I am, just sitting and waiting. I take my phone out from my pocket and play music. Then I close my eyes and sing along to H.E.R. A text from Nandi brings me back to life. She expresses her excitement about me coming over to her place and also let's me know she's feeding her son. The cutest baby I know by the way. We text for a while and one of the nurses walks in.

"Why are you here?" The nurse asks with some disgust laced in her question.

"Hi Refiloe, I'm waiting for the doctor so I can mop."

She blinks a couple of times before asking yet another question,

"Can't you go elsewhere for now?"

I furrow my eyebrows and give her a confused look. Are they together? Or she wants him? I mean he's new and doesn't know about her quest to be a doctor's wife.

"Why would she do that?" The doctor asks as he walks out from the bathroom.

"I was just asking doctor. I wanted to let you know the patient made it out of the theater." Refiloe replies, a completely

different woman from the one who just spoke to me. I'm a fan really, she should teach me how she does it.

"I had all the faith in Dr Hadebe. Is there anything else?" Dr Graham.

He's now in black pants and a white shirt with a black belt. Very different from the man in blue scrubs who was here. I like this look. That watch looks quite pricey though.

"No doctor, uh thanks. See you tomorrow." Refiloe replies.

She walks out with a frustrated smile on her face. I know she wishes he asked her out for coffee. Anyway let me get my nose out of it.

"I thought you lost a patient." I blurt out and immediately regret it.

He sits on the edge of his table so I get to see he has black formal shoes. He looks at me before parting his pink lips to talk,

"I've never lost a patient. The particular patient the nurse is talking about was stabbed and had glass in his eye somehow. All I did was remove the glass in his eye. I'm just an ophthalmologist. Dr Hadebe is the one who saved his life."

I cringe just thinking of glass in my eye and he smiles then goes to his side of the desk and packs up his things.

“I’m sure he’ll thank you for taking the glass out of his eyes.”
Me again, I don’t know why I keep talking but it just happens.

“Especially since he’ll see again, he might just.” He replies getting up and grabbing his bag. I also stand so I can go outside and grab my mop and bucket. He gets the door for me and I walk out. I don’t know what to say but the silence seems long so I just murmur a thank you.

He takes a few steps away from me, presses the elevator button and turns to look at me.

“When are you seeing Nandz again?”

Weird, but I answer, “Saturday.”

He smiles, nods and gets in the elevator. I don’t think I’ve ever spent so long with a white person before. Even on campus I didn’t have white friends. He is cool though. Doesn’t say much but he’s cool. Plus he answered all of my questions and smells great. Wait, what?

Let me just go back to work.

In the morning I make a last cup of coffee, put my bag down on the bench in our changing room and prepare to sleep after the coffee. I’m not the type that can’t fall asleep because I had coffee and I thank God for that superpower.

I check my WhatsApp and get a text from Nandi. She's checking on me and asks what I'm doing. I send her a text back saying I'm waiting for the sun so I can leave the hospital and take a picture of the bench. She then calls immediately.

"A bench Dimpho? Come over to my house rather. I'll Uber you and you'll get to sleep, wash your uniform and go to work from my place later."

Her offer is tempting especially the part where I don't have to hand-wash for the day.

"Okay, I mean why not?"

She squeals with excitement and tells me to hang ten and my Uber will be here. I grab my stuff and go wait out front. She texts me the link to the ride, it's just two minutes away.

I watch as an ambulance drives out with the sirens on. When I turn to look towards the gate I spot the car making it's way to me.

Nandi's place is gorgeous. That's just the way to explain it. Her husband spoils her rotten and it's a wonder she likes me because we're so different. I'm broke as hell while she's married to a millionaire business tycoon with his own company and a family farm business.

She gave me a room and a brand new set of pyjamas she's never worn before then she took my clothes and said she'd

have everything washed by the time I get up for work. To be honest she's a godsend. I'm sleeping before seven? That's a miracle. I set an alarm just incase I don't get up before four. Nandi's house isn't close to work but since I'll be driven it's just about fifteen minutes away.

I wake up at noon and even when I try to force sleep again, it doesn't work so I decide to get up and look for Nandi. I find her in the nursery feeding her Leeto.

"You're up! Hey."

"Hey, that bed is really comfy, I thought I'd sleep longer."

"I'm glad you slept well. I have my hands full with this one but please go ahead and make yourself a sandwich or take something from the fridge, I don't know. I've already packed you a lunchbox for work."

I smile at her. I wasn't exaggerating about her being a godsend.

"You're the best ever."

"Ugh please. You know I adore you! Now go, Leeto is getting sleepy."

I leave her with her baby and head down to the kitchen. Just as I'm about to spread mayonnaise on bread I hear a car park outside and another one after it, when I look up since you can see outside from the glass doors I see two figures coming

straight for the door and when it opens I realize it's Kgoši, Nandi's husband but the person he's with surprises me, it's the doctor.

Kgoši greets me and tells me he's going to check on his wife. I can only smile and nod. He's scary but I'd rather he stayed because now he's leaving me down here with Dr Graham.

"Hey" I greet the doc.

"We meet again Dimpho. I'll have whatever you're having."

I laugh because he's ballsy, but I take out more bread for him and put cheese on it like mine. He sits on the island chair opposite me while I cut the tomatoes.

"When are you going to work?"

"I have to be there at six."

"We can go together then. I have a surgery scheduled at six as well."

I nod, "If it's no trouble."

"It really isn't." He adds rather quickly before changing the topic to asking why I'm with Nandi.

I tell him about the morning and even show him the picture I sent Nandi and the texts between us.

“Is it normal for you to sleep on the bench and wait for the sun to come out?”

“Yeah. I can’t afford to waste money by using the staff transport when I can walk. So I let those coming in for their shift change and then when they leave, I go in and sleep on the bench.”

He looks equally appalled and fascinated with what I said.

“I’ll be right back.” He says and goes outside.

Weird. I’m almost done with our sandwiches and now making coffee while I wait to put the patties in the air fryer on the sandwiches.

I turn the kettle on, take out the patties and garnish the sandwiches and as the water goes off, I pour in the cups. Nandi has a coffee machine here but I know nothing about those things so I didn’t bother.

Dr Graham walks in a few moments after I put his sandwich where he was sitting and then I sit a chair away from him.

“This looks nice. There you go.” He says handing me a key.

I look at the key on the counter and then at him.

“Office spare key. Sleep there instead of on a bench.” He says.

I just stare at him. That can't be okay can it? A cleaner sleeping in a doctor's office? A doctor with an office has no business with a cleaner first of all, I'd get fired.

"Thank you but..."

"Don't even finish that sentence. There's no buts. No one will stop you. If they do, call me."

"Call you?"

He asks for my phone and I reluctantly hand it over to him. He dials a number and his phone rings before handing it back to me.

"Call me." He says and picks up his sandwich.

He's chewing before I can even say anything. I was wrong about him not talking much that's for sure. We hear Nandi and her husband giggling as they walk downstairs.

"Those look yummy. Let me make that for us too babe." Nandi says.

"I can make them for you guys..." I offer.

"In this house one thing we don't allow is being disturbed while eating. Relax Dimpho." Kgoši.

I nod and sip my coffee.

Dr Graham is driving us to work but he said we have to stop by his house so he can get his personal scrubs. I couldn't say anything because how do I say no? Not that I wanted to.

We park outside his beautiful place in Hazyview. I can see the hospital from here. He goes in and comes back out in three minutes. He gets in the car and we drive off in his white Ferrari. I'm in a fucking Ferrari. It hasn't sunk in actually. He's been making small talk, asking about me and I tell him because he's actually really nice. He drives into the doctors' underground parking instead of dropping me out front and I thank my lucky stars. I would've been asked all the questions you can imagine.

He steps out first and I grab my bag when he gets my door. I look up at him and smile when he offers his hand for me to take.

As I step out of the elevator I realize I didn't think this through. Coming out from the elevator without having been to reception is suspect. I greet Gail and she looks at me weirdly.

"I didn't see you walk in the door."

"You didn't? Oh." I reply and rush past her to go change.

I really appreciate Nandi man. Well she didn't do it but her helper got my uniform so crisp, not a wrinkle in sight.

I tie my hair and wait for Gigi. I check my lunchbox since Nandi put it in my bag while I was in the shower.

It's braai meat. I could literally cry right now. I haven't had any in years! I spot a juice in my bag and a snicker. That makes me tear up a bit. I love that woman. Officially.

When Gigi and I get upstairs I can't believe I have personal keys for Dr Graham's office. Gigi is cleaning it tonight and I'm cleaning another doctor's office, Dr Hadebe. Clearly she's around as well, her dress is in here. She's such a boss. One of my favorites in the hospital. Super nice and her half sleeve tattoo? Perfect for her.

There isn't much to do up here and that's why I like it. Mopping and vacuuming here and there and you're set, especially since the actual offices aren't thoroughly cleaned daily, today is my turn to clean their toilets. Which reminds me, Dr Graham's office has a private shower and bathroom. Far as I know it's just him and the Medical Director with such a privilege.

2

LUKE:

Surgery is easy, really easy compared to trying to court a woman you're already madly in love with. A girl you moved to another country for and used your money to buy shares at a hospital she works for. My grandmother would weep if she found out about this. She's South African, moved to England years ago and married my grandfather who was a merchant. She mentioned something about South Africa changing for the worst once and she moved away in the early nineties... She's definitely one of those and I am going to protect Dimpho from her as much as I can.

Look at me getting ahead of myself. Dimpho doesn't even know I love her yet. Heck she probably thinks I'm just an overly friendly person. Mpumalanga is hot as fuck and I love it! I don't even miss the rain and cold London one bit. I have a pool here, I can actually have a pool because it won't freeze over.

I finish sterilizing my hands and walk to the OR. Keratoplasty, let's do this. I walk out barely thirty minutes later and I have one more surgery scheduled in an hour so I can go to my office. Soon as I enter the elevator Nurse Mokoena joins me.

"Oh! Good evening Dr G."

“Good evening Nurse Mokoena.”

“Everyone who works here calls me Refiloe you know?”

“Is that your way of saying I should use your name?”

“Yes please.”

I nod, “Okay, Refiloe.”

She beams and gets off on one of the maternity floors as an intern walks in with Dr Ncube. We exchange greetings and luckily I get to my floor so I leave them after a few seconds.

I head straight into my office and it’s open. Maybe it’s Dimpho again. I walk in and I’m disappointed to find another lady in here.

“Oh! Sorry doctor, I can come back later.”

“No need, where’s Dimpho?”

She looks a bit taken aback but she responds,

“I’m sure somewhere on this floor Dr.”

I sigh in frustration but I quickly recover.

“Okay, thank you.” I reply and walk out.

Do I just go? Or hunt her down? Well I sound like a predator. Yeah no let me just go downstairs, buy coffee and go back to the OR when it’s time. The ophthalmology floor is never as busy

as the others and I am sure millions of people should come here but because of a lack of awareness people go to optometrists and hear about the options that involve contacts and glasses only. My next case is an old lady and...

“She ate doctor.” Nurse Selepe says as soon as I step into the floor. I turn to her,

“Who gave her food?”

“Her son came by and...”

I stop her by raising a hand.

“It’s fine... Would it be cruel to stop family from seeing their loved ones before a surgery?”

She gives me a look that says of course but she doesn’t say it.

“Nevermind. I’m leaving. I’ll be doing consultations tomorrow. Hopefully people who won’t eat before a surgery.”

She smiles, “No problem doctor, I’ll reschedule today’s surgery.”

“Thank you! I’ll see you later tomorrow right?”

“Yes doctor.”

I fist bump her and turn to the elevator, press the button and wait.

My best friend calls me as I'm sitting in my car contemplating whether I should leave without seeing Dimpho again.

"Justin Kgoši Kwena. What do you want?"

"I thought you said you'd be having office sex with Dimpho by now."

"I would never say that, first of all. Are you trying to get me in trouble with Nandi?" I ask when I suspect I'm on loud speaker.

"I knew you were lying!" Nandi says in the background as Justin laughs.

"She almost fell for it, she didn't know anything." Justin.

"Not true Luke!" I hear Nandi say and I laugh.

These two abuse me honestly. Today I only went to Justin's house with him because when I got to his office he was packing to go home to his baby and wife. Just because he missed them and I had to tag along. Part of me thinks it was an excuse on Justin's part to get me to see Dimpho, Nandi tells him everything anyway.

"You two need another child, you've got way too much time on your hands."

"If you're offering your babysitting skills, sure."

"That's my cue, bye." I reply hanging up immediately.

Babies scare me. I'm the youngest so I've never lived with a baby in my life.

I decide to just drive to the house, don't want to seem stalkerish to Dimpho, which is probably already the case.

When I get to work the next day it's earlier than yesterday because I need to do a couple of consultations. I enjoy those sometimes, gives me a chance to interact with people and potentially help them see better.

I get a call from Justin just before my next patient and I text him that I'll call back. A young guy walks in, probably early twenties and has keratoconus. We greet each other and I point him to the ophthalmometer. He knows the drill, clearly has done this many times. After I finish with the young man I call Justin back.

"Hey..."

"Nandi wasn't sure if you should be told but I am. Dimpho just moved into our place in the granny flat. She came here clearly beaten. We need to find whoever did this."

By the time he finishes I'm already by the elevator, I ran from the office as if something was chasing me. Who the fuck would hurt Dimpho? Why?

I don't even bother going up to leave my coat in the office. I'm going straight to my car and driving to Justin's now.

When I arrive I go into the house to speak to Justin and Nandi who are of no help. At least Justin is working on finding the guy, but they know nothing. They just took her in when she arrived battered and bruised. I want to march into that in-law suite and ask her for the guy's name.

"Who do you know her to be with? Any guy she's ever posted?" I ask Nandi.

"No but... Wait." She says and takes out her phone. "Linda, she mentioned a guy she's currently seeing a few weeks back."

"Linda, at least I can give my guys a name." Justin says grabbing his phone.

I run my hands through my hair. This is frustrating. I need to talk to her but I can't just go in there and ask her questions. Fuck it, I'm going there.

"Luke you can't just..." She stops speaking after a brief look at her husband.

I know it's wrong but I won't be stopped. No matter what these two say to me so I might as well go try and fail.

I knock on the door three times before she opens. She's covered herself with a fluffy long gown and the damn thing

even has a hoodie. She walks slowly towards the couch in the lounge and I follow her.

“What happened Dimpho?”

I think the shock from hearing my voice jerks her up, she hadn't looked at me once and I see the black eye. Rage! That's all I feel at this moment, pure unfiltered rage.

“Dr Graham? I thought it was... What are you doing here?”

“I'm checking up on you, and Nandi didn't want me to come here but I'm here already so please, talk to me.”

“I... I fell?” She says it like a question.

I give her a dubious look and she clears her throat

“My boyfriend. He hit me for not coming home.”

“Your boyfriend?”

“He takes care of me ..”

“I don't care! He's not your boyfriend if he puts his hands on you. He's your abuser!”

She takes a deep breath.

“I have nothing Dr Graham. I have nowhere to go but my flat and he knows me. He knows me well in a world where I have nobody. No family support. Nothing.”

“Then you can have my friendship. My support. On top of Nandi’s.”

She looks at me like she regrets not acknowledging Nandi.

“I’m going to lose my job for missing today without any explanation. I have savings but they’re supposed to pay for college. I’ll probably have to move back home and my mother would just love that.”

Something about how she speaks about her mother makes me think they don’t have a good relationship.

“Did you hear a word I said? I’m here for you. Nandi is here for you. You can stay here, study and we’ll support you. Heck I can make sure you get your job back.”

“No no no! Please don’t. I don’t want to go back only to be hated by my colleagues.”

“Then I’ll help you some other way

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pay for your studies.”

“What? No!”

“It’ll be a loan then.”

She seems to be thinking and I see the hesitation in her face so I say, “Think about it. In the meantime what’s your abuser’s name and surname?”

“Lindelihle Gumede. He studies at UMP.”

I wish I had Justin here for that name but I’ll definitely remember the surname, I have a patient with the same surname.

“Have you eaten anything?”

I look towards the kitchen and spot McDonald’s. It doesn’t seem to be touched.

“I can’t... Nandi got me food but I just want Smarties.”

I smile and nod, “Okay I’ll get you that and painkillers, only if you’ll eat.”

Her eyes look glossy and she’s not looking at me. I don’t know if she even heard me. She nods lightly. I don’t want to leave her alone but I can’t just stay in her space, I’ve already put myself in her life without asking her.

I walk to the door and she calls out my name, I stop and wait,

“Thank you. Thank you for checking on me when you barely know me.”

I smile, nod and exit.

I don't know if I can ever tell her the truth. She'll think I am only here for her because I want to date her. Scratch that, I want to marry her. However I'm here for her because no woman deserves to be used as a punching bag. No one deserves abuse really. Maybe except for that Linda Gumede guy.

I get in the house and find Nandi on her feet. She looks at me expectantly.

"His name is Linda Gumede. UMP student."

"That narrows it down at least." Justin says typing on his phone.

I turn to Nandi,

"She said she'll lose her job today, going home seems to not be an option she'd like to explore."

"She told me about her mother. I don't want her to go there either. Not like this." Nandi.

"I told her you didn't mind her staying here while she goes to college."

"Of course we don't. She's a young girl who just went through a traumatic experience. I wouldn't let her leave only to go back to abuse anyway." Justin.

When he refers to her as a young girl he makes me think about myself and feel shitty. Dimpho is only twenty-one. I'm a thirty-

six year old predator. I realize something I've been fighting not to acknowledge I have to forget about trying to date her. She's too young for me. I love her so much but to be honest she's a baby.

I dropped off a box of assorted chocolates and juice plus sweets for Dimpho and hoped she'd like it, the Smarties were on top. I left everything with Nandi as I followed Justin out to see Linda. Justin's people worked fast and found him, luckily he's in Dimpho's flat right now so we're going there before he can leave.

When we park people look at us like we're in the wrong place.

"You sure he's in there?" I ask Justin as we head up the stairs, apparently the elevator doesn't work, I'm not surprised nor would I have used it.

"I sent a guy over ahead of us. He has him in there." Justin.

I nod and follow him. We get to the apartment and it's upside down. We go into the bedroom and that's where the Linda guy is, half naked in bed. Justin's guy has him at gunpoint.

I spot Dimpho's uniform in the basket and it's bloody. It shouldn't be bloody, why is it bloody?

“Why is there blood on her uniform?” I ask picking it up. It’s torn.

I look at Linda when he doesn’t answer.

“If this is about Dimpho I don’t know what she’s involved in but she’s not here, I have no idea where she is please sir.”

“Don’t bloody annoy me! Where is she bleeding?”

He looks like he has no idea what to say, Justin nods at the guy and he punches his stomach. Linda cries out in pain.

“She shouldn’t have this much blood on this Justin.”

“We don’t have all day, answer his question and let me know why the fuck you hit a defenceless woman?” Justin.

“Defenceless? Mpho and I fought she’s not defenceless.”
Linda.

“Oh yeah? Where are your bruises?” I ask.

“I’m a man so I...”

This time I shut him up with an ap chagi to his chest, he flies off the bed and Justin’s guy looks at me like I’m crazy. Yeah well I may have discipline but there’s a reason I know Taekwondo. For idiots like Linda.

“I don’t think he’s conscious man.” Justin’s guy.

“Wake him up.” I say and go into the bathroom. There’s blood on the floor, barely wiped. This isn’t good.

“I don’t want to touch him yet because I’ll kill him. This guy is an idiot of note.” Justin says.

I too want to do more but I need to know where Dimpho is hurt. The guy pulls Linda onto the bed and slaps him a bit, he wakes up and immediately regrets it when he sees us.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I was just angry she didn’t come home. I didn’t mean for things to go that far. I love her. I love Mpho a lot.”

Justin gets annoyed punches his face multiple times asking if he’s stupid while at it.

The guy pulls Justin off him, “Bros, you don’t want to kill him.”

“Oh you know what I want to do with him now Ike?” Justin.

“Just tell me why she’s bleeding.”

Linda is already barely recognisable but he slowly tells me he was stabbing her but only grazed the side of her stomach. He used the word “grazed” and I couldn’t help it. I had to punch him myself but Ike stopped me. So I allowed it, then I paced around the room and as Justin and Ike were arguing about not killing him, I got the chance to kick him straight in the face and

it was lights out again. His teeth flew out and Ike is looking at me like I'm crazy, again.

"He's probably dead this time bro. I didn't want to clean up here, I could've taken him somewhere and..." Ike.

"I'm not interested Ike. If he's dead or alive doesn't concern me. I'm done here."

"Make sure it's squeaky clean if he's dead. If not, leave him as he is." Justin.

I've turned into my father. I've never had to be ruthless. Never understood my father and today his insistence that I learn Taekwondo might've just turned me into him. I never wanted this for myself but I regret nothing. Dimpho is worth it. We walk out leaving Ike to deal with this.

Justin knows how much I've never wanted to be violent, ever. In fact I've only been violent once in my life and it was to protect my sister from a stalker suitor she later married in her second marriage... It's currently lasting but with my sister you never know.

Justin pats my back as we make our way downstairs. He knows how I feel. Heck he went inside a jail cell to give a man who drugged Nandi the beating of his life. Justin boxes and his punches are lethal. He almost killed that guy.

"I know you hate having to fight bro." Justin.

“It was anything but a fight, we just hit him. But I understand.”

Justin laughs and calls me stupid as we go to the cars. Some young boys are admiring them outside. I get in, give one of them the only note I could find and drive out. They’ll probably fight him for the hundred Rands I know.

I’m going straight to Dimpho. I might not be able to ask her out because I’m old but I can be a friend, like a brother if you will. She’s definitely going with me to get stitches. I don’t care if we must find another hospital.

I can’t believe she hid the knife wound from us, I say us because if Nandi knew Dimpho would’ve gotten stitches hours ago.

I have a surgery at the hospital. I decide to call in another ophthalmologist to help me because I have to make sure Dimpho gets stitches today and a check up. It might even be infected.

I park in the streets by the smaller gate at Justin's house it’s closest to the little in-law suite Dimpho is in, Nandi buzzes me in and I go knock on Dimoho door... Again.

She doesn’t open. I knock for a while until I ask Nandi to come and open because there’s no response.

“I checked on her just an hour ag...” Nandi says opening the door and we find Dimpho on the floor.

No no no no! This isn't happening. I lift her jacket and I see the bloody wound tied with a cloth that's now drenched in her blood. I think I'm going to go crazy I came in a small car so I pick her up and take her to one of Justin's bigger cars, he jumps in the front seat and so I stay in the back with her.

I'm not very religious but I'm praying. I'm praying that God helps Dimpho. She still has dreams to fulfil and a life to live. She has to study whatever her heart desires.

3

Dimpho:

I should've known something would ruin that day. It was such a good day, something had to go wrong. A comfy bed, free food, free ride in a Ferrari to work and I found a new fleece blanket on Dr Graham's couch when I went there to wait for the sun outside. I even overslept. By the time I left my colleagues were confused how I was still at the hospital that long after my shift. I went home only to find the door unlocked. I got in and since I had slept a little longer at work, I decided to wash some clothes, just as I walked into the bedroom I found an angry Linda. Obviously I didn't think much of it and just asked him why he looks sour.

"Where were you?" He asked in a tone that ought to have frightened me but it didn't.

I just looked at him and folded my arms before saying "work."

"The whole day yesterday? Twenty-four hours Dimpho? Are you actually crazy?" Linda.

He never called me Dimpho, always Mpho.

I was confused why it mattered to him who always left me here, but just as I was about to answer him, he got up and

slapped me across the face. The shock made me stand still as he slapped the other side. I don't know what came over me after that but I tackled him to the floor and kicked and scratched and slapped and punched and did everything I could to fight him. He slapped me?! Sesi Joy's daughter?! Legwanye la Mmamethea Dikgoshi? Yes I might not know how to pronounce that properly or what it means but I'm still MaChiliza's daughter! Izipho zika mama. I was not about to take a beating lying down!

I tried but it infuriated him that I fought back so he started punching and kicking me so hard it got harder to fight back but I never gave up. Even as I thought I was losing sight in my eye, I tried. I don't know why he has a knife, I don't know when he decided to take it out but I fought even harder when I saw it. I didn't feel it slice my flesh but I fought him till it fell and as soon as I got to it he ran for his life. He left me and that's when I realised I was bleeding. I tried to clean the wound as best as I could, felt pain with the antiseptic liquid but put on a brave face. I cut my uniform to make a bandage and tried to wipe the blood on the floor with the rest of it. I then thought about Linda coming back so I packed a bag with everything that I need and left.

Walking out of the building I thought of going to my mother. Oh she would've been pissed, she would've wanted him locked up, after a sjambok to his body, but she also would've reminded me every second day how I wouldn't be in this situation if I had stayed in university. She would only be too happy to have me back in classes as soon as possible. My mother doesn't understand that I want to make beats. She thinks it's absurd. She's exactly why I need to go to a college that teaches music production or sound engineering so I can produce a certificate. Enough about my mom, I was in a dilemma about going home or going to Nandi. Obviously I didn't want to seem like I was taking advantage of that Nandi has a big house and spare rooms. She's my friend not my keeper. I ended up choosing her still, at least unlike my mom Nandi isn't going to drag me back to a place I don't want to be and tell me how it's my fault this happened.

Times like this I wish I knew where dad was exactly. He understood me better than mom. Nandi gave me an entire granny flat. She was kind and she didn't press me for information when she could tell I was just in pain. Well she didn't press me for information but her friend Dr Graham did. He came in here asking what happened like he was my father or something. To be honest I was scared a little and I didn't want to lie to him so I told him what had happened. I don't regret

that because it got me a box of sweet snacks. I'd take him interrogating me as long as it ends in sweet treats.

I get up to go pack my sweets in the fridge and some in the pantry. I feel a bit weak but I take another step and lights out...

I wake up and feel the unmistakable pain of a drip. I open my eyes slowly to a hospital ceiling. The hospital I work in. Well worked rather. My boss isn't going to let me keep on working when I never called to explain my absence, I've seen it happen to others.

"Why would you hide that wound?"

I almost jump at his voice. Dr Graham is sitting next to my bed, on his phone. He's not looking at me.

I'm in one of the fancy rooms. Why? I can't afford to pay for this. These rooms are for VIP patients. Heck I can't afford a mere consultation in this hospital.

"Dr Graham." I finally say when I realise I never answered his question. A question I don't remember.

"You could've bled to death Dimphe."

I look at the blood bag and the drip. I must've fainted from blood loss.

“I didn’t think it was that bad.”

“You didn’t even fear an infection?”

Infection? I’ve had cuts all my life, played in the mud with them and never got an infection. He frowns.

“I did... I just didn’t want to bother anyone.” I say lying through my teeth.

I didn’t think I’d faint, nor did I think it would be a big deal because I had bandaged it.

“This child will make me lose my fucking mind. Heck it’s already gone at this point...” Dr Graham says and I don’t hear the rest because he’s up pacing and talking to himself.

He keeps huffing and putting his hands on his waist. It’s the most white thing I’ve ever seen in my life. People actually pace around with their hands on their waist in real life?

I clear my throat, he looks at me like he’s waiting for me to say something stupid.

“Who’s paying for this hospital bill?”

He uses his fingers to touch the bridge of his sharp nose and looks up as if he’s saying a prayer. I must’ve actually said something stupid.

“Me Dimpho. Luke is paying it.”

I don't know how he senses that I'm about to protest because he says, "Out of the kindness of my heart. Think of it as a gift."

I don't really want the gift because it's expensive but I keep quiet because I'm already in the room.

"Thank you."

That seems to shock him because he actually stares at me. Then he sits on the chair again.

"I asked Nandi not to come here because the doctor said you can leave tomorrow. The nurses put you in a hospital gown already and I

will bring back your clothes washed tomorrow, okay?"

I nod, "Thank you Dr Graham."

"Luke."

I smile, his name suits him, "Luke."

His green eyes glisten with something unspoken. I don't know how to look at him and not see more. I don't know what more is exactly but I see it in his eyes. His hair is usually clean and combed towards the back, it's blonde and cut on the sides.

There's a beard, low cut and well groomed. He really takes care of himself. He's also quite tall, which is probably why though he has broad shoulders he's still lean. His pink lips move but I don't

hear him so I just nod and he walks out saying he'll be back soon.

I wonder what I nodded yes to.

I don't have my phone with me so it was very difficult last night and this morning, this room has free WiFi and I couldn't even take advantage of it. I got dressed in the bathroom because I didn't know if Dr... Luke was still in the room only to find he was waiting outside the room when I came out. I grab the flowers he brought, I think they're called hyacinths and head out. He looks at me and smiles.

"I knew hyacinths would complement you."

I don't understand how but I still smile and say thank you, the bouquet is quite gorgeous. I greet a colleague, Kamo, as we're waiting for the lift, she's probably going to clean the room I was in... Life neh?

"Wonders!! They weren't lying on your name Dimpho? Hehe!"

I knew there'd be gossip but I didn't think it had already started circulating.

"What are they saying Kamo? Dr Graham is just a good Samaritan who helped me."

She seems to remember he's next to me after I say this because her eyes fly to him and she quickly turns and walks away after saying she'll WhatsApp me.

"What's going on?" He asks.

Where do I begin to explain to him that the entire hospital probably thinks he's fucking a cleaner just because he's kind?

Sometimes God will purposely make your life hell. For me I know its because I haven't been to church since I moved out of my mom's house and I've been having premarital coitus. I'm in the elevator with a bouquet of flowers, Luke in casual clothes next to me and who joins us in the elevator? Refiloe Mokoena. Just my luck. She's looking at me like I killed her cat. Not just that, she's purposely making small talk with Luke. I don't remember her pressing any floor and we're almost at the underground parking. She doesn't budge until we get there. Holy Father may the lift go back up in an instant.

Luke follows me out and we head towards his parking spot. There's a Porsche today. The lift still hasn't closed and at this point I'm sure Refiloe is blocking it. Luke gets my door before going to the driver's side and reversing out of his spot.

Even if Mr Seloilwe offered my job back, at this point I wouldn't be able to work without being labelled a gold digger at work.

I'm not trying to be another Refiloe. She's enough for that place.

Instead of being taken straight home Luke takes me to Mugg and Bean for breakfast.

We have a nice conversation about our families. I learn about his big sister and his family dynasty he doesn't really care to be a part of. With the proper English with a British accent on top of it, I'd never have guessed he has issues with his father and grandmother for some reason. He just seems like the type of guy to have a "jolly" good family and love all around him. He definitely deserves it.

"What about you? What's your beef with your mom?"

"My mom is actually great... Just controlling. She wants me to become a teacher like she is. I don't love it. I don't want to be a teacher and she'd actually be okay with that if I wanted to study something she thinks is good enough, but I want to study sound engineering or music production and she hates the idea. Called it a hobby. She told me she wasn't spending her money on that so I found a job, she threw me out and so I found the flat."

I need to speak to my landlord about that place, let him know I'm out. Luckily that place is dodgy as fuck no lease agreements were signed.

“Well I wanted to do medicine but I was also told I’m wasting my time and my brains on stupid stuff. I don’t regret it. I love what I do. So if you want to do sound

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I will be your number one supporter. Heck I’ll get you in a room with whoever you respect in your field.”

“Finneas?” I ask teasingly.

“I don’t know who that is but done.”

I laugh at him, I really appreciate him being supportive. He might be the first person to ever fully support this. I stopped telling people what I left my degree in University for because of the judgement. Even Linda used to judge me at first...

I touch my eye when I think about Linda. I still can’t believe he gave me a blue eye. A blue fucking eye. My sweet friend Linda? That’s who he used to be to me before the relationship. Now I never wish to see him again.

“Don’t touch it Dimpho. Your hands aren’t even sterile.” He says and I remove my hand.

“I hope his age mates show him flames someday. I should’ve kicked his balls.” I say and Luke smiles at me.

“I trust you would’ve.”

“If the thought had came to me? Yes I would’ve! Only he ran when I got the knife because he knew I would’ve cut him.”

I still can’t believe a man put his hands on me. MaChiliza's one and only child? Mr Monama's first daughter? Yho!

“I believe you.” He says with a mischievous smile on his face. He probably doesn’t believe me.

When I lay on the bed at night I think about my life and what I’m going to do. NSFAS will still fund me if I go back to finish my degree. Finding a school for practicals without my mother’s help will be tricky but I’m ready to do it. I’ll become a teacher and work to fund my dreams. I may have wasted a year but it’s okay. I’ll make my mother proud and she won’t even know I’m back in University. Her unhappiness about my life might have caused me this bad luck. I’m not superstitious but surely your mother being angry at you is never a good omen. I know what Luke said but I wouldn’t be able to allow him to do that for me. I’ll fund my own dream. I am however grateful that he’s decided to ambush my life and appointed himself my new male bestie.

Nandi seemed a little concerned about it when he brought me back, we even had a talk and I assured her he has been a gentleman towards me, a little hard on me but still kind.

Besides, it only makes sense that we become friends, I'm awkward around Nandi's husband because he's a respectable and older man on top of being my friend's husband. Luke is his friend, clearly he's also significantly older but he's more forward and I like it. Us knowing the same people made him assume we were friends.

I'm unable to sleep so I get up to the kitchen. I want to make fresh fries. Nandi got me groceries while I was in hospital, I didn't want to seem ungrateful but I wish she hadn't done it. Only because I'm already living in her granny flat, a beautiful one at that, furnished and has an all white cabinet kitchen. I even have my own washing machine. Groceries just felt like too much. Heck all of it is too much if I'm being honest. I tune into the music channel while making the fries and take out the cheesy sauce. Where do you even buy the things in this Fridge? I'm either blind or ignorant because I've only ever seen pickles in movies.

I use the television to know the time because I have unfortunately been without a phone since the day I fought with Linda, I don't know where it is. I think it's smashed somewhere in that room or just under the bed.

I need to go back and look for it. I need to register to go back to university in the second semester.

Nandi knocks in the morning and I'm sleepy as fuck. I stayed up watching the music channel and stuffing my face with the fries and three packs of Smarties. I shouldn't have but then it's not my fault Luke got me a box full of snacks. I open the door and she hands me a box, it must be a joke. It has to be.

"That is from Justin. There's a new card in the phone already, you'll just do a sim swap." Nandi says walking past me to sit on one of the two kitchen peninsula high chairs.

I'm still standing where she left me. I feel dizzy so I go sit next to her. This is the latest iPhone. I slowly unbox it and just stare at it on the table.

"He got you AirPods as well." She says producing them from God knows where.

I can barely see them because the unshed tears in my eyes are making everything blurry.

"Oh and an Apple Watch." She adds with humour in her voice.

"I can't accept such." I say when I finally find my voice.

"Nonsense. You can accept it and you will accept it because my husband and I want you to have it. Besides, you're basically free babysitting since we don't have a permanent helper here yet." She says hugging me, I hug her back tightly.

“You can bring Leeto here even if all you need is a few hours to yourself.” I say smiling at her gorgeous face.

“Oh you are such a star! Let me go grab lunch with my friends in Joburg.” She says almost jumping off the chair. “Jokes, I’m taking him with today. Which brings me to that you’ll be alone for the next few hours. I’ll probably be in Joburg over the weekend which means Justin is sure to follow me so maybe you’ll have the entire yard to yourself for that long.”

“I’m sure I’ll be okay. I’ll probably spend the weekend locked in here.”

“Okay, Luke might visit because he doesn’t know that many people here and if he’s not at the hospital he’s volunteering at a public one sometimes.” She says and I nod.

“He’s never done anything to offend me Nandi.” I say because of her uneasiness yesterday.

“He wouldn’t intentionally offend you, I’m sure of it. I was just worried when you guys took a detour yesterday.”

“He was buying me breakfast.”

I just remembered I have to change my bandage, Luke bought me a first aid kit. I don’t know when but it’s sitting on the couch untouched right now.

“Okay, long as you were comfortable. I look at you like a little sister Dimpho. So don’t be confused if I’m a bit protective.”

“I’ve never known what it is to have a big sister, so thank you for caring Nandi.” I say hugging her again.

She hands me the remote for the gates and asks if I can drive, I say I have a license and she looks at me suspiciously. Obviously she doesn’t trust the authenticity but I earned it. I really did, even though I did have to buy a cold drink for it, she then hands me the keys to her old car and says I can use it in case I need to go somewhere. I’m not going anywhere but I reluctantly take the keys and thank her.

It feels like that’s all I’ve been doing lately. Saying thank you. Accepting gifts I really shouldn’t accept but with everything going on in my life, I’m a beggar, not a chooser. Which is why I need to get the degree for my mother, for Nandi, her husband and Luke. They deserve to see me become something. Even if that’s not end game for me, being a teacher will be a stepping stone and a way to make them proud.

I wasn’t enjoying being alone after seeing Nandi and baby Leeto off. I’ve been alone mostly in this granny flat since I first moved in, but I knew people were in the large main house. I knew Nandi was a scream away... That’s if she’d hear me if I

screamed in here, which I doubt given the size of the yard. I chill out by the pool, I'm still getting used to the iPhone. It's connected to the WiFi in the house and in my granny flat already, I've just been restoring whatever I could from my old phone. Especially WhatsApp. I'm afraid to check the texts there so I mize for now. I decide to take an Instagram story showing my view from outside the infinity pool.

I check my notifications and Luke followed me so I instantly follow back after squealing a little... I don't know why I did that really.

I check his feed and see him at the gym, him with friends in London, him and sister in Dubai, him hugging a dog and my skin immediately crawls. I hate dogs. Dogs chased me when I was a child and they barked at me, I was scared, I peed myself and I have never forgiven them since.

No. We're not going back to the point about the pee.

I finally grow balls and check the many WhatsApp texts. I find one from Mr Seloilwe asking me to see him as soon as possible. I decide to send him a text back saying I'll come to the hospital Monday morning. Then I find a text from Kamo, she says I am rumoured to be sleeping with a shareholder at the hospital, which doesn't surprise me. Then she sent a voice note. I listen to it and it's Gigi not Kamo speaking, "Kid? What are you doing? A doctor? You know he's just using you as the flavour of the

week. That man is older, he probably wants to settle down with another blonde white woman. You're going to get hurt."

I take a deep breath. No one asked about my injuries, they don't care about that. However they ask about Luke and warn me about him when I'm not even with him.

I send Kamo a voice note saying I'm not dating any doctor, he's a friend of a friend then I leave it at that. Just as I'm about to close the app I get a text from Linda. What the actual fuck?

4

LUKE:

I was at the public hospital on Friday, giving out my expertise for free and I usually enjoy it more. It feels more like why I did medicine and then ophthalmology. The lines are usually long and I spend the entire day doing that. Then only on the morning the next day Justin tells me he's in Joburg with the wife and kid. Obviously Dimpho is alone and I could've found a great activity for us to do if he had told me sooner. I got up immediately and got ready to go see Dimpho.

Now I'm in Justin's driveway wondering what I'll say to her. Why am I here exactly? Fuck it, I'll find the words. I knock twice and she opens the door in a towel, her hair is dripping. Her body has droplets of water and I swallow. The words aren't coming Luke. Now what? You look like an idiot.

"Hey Luke, it's washday and I had to throw my whole body in the shower. Come in, I'll be done soon." She says and walks back to her room leaving me still outside.

I walk in slowly and put the Chicken Licken wings on her counter. She mentioned them the day we had lunch.

I hear a hairdryer start and close the door I came in.

I settle on the couch and watch some EPL highlights.

The next time I see her she's sitting next to me with the hot wings and a hot sauce. She has a side plate with.

"I hope you weren't intending on having them with bread." She says as she pours sauce over them.

"I wasn't intending on having them at all, but since you're sharing, I'll try them."

"Try them? You've never had any?"

I shrug and nod. She looks at me like I'm insane.

"I think Nandi and Mr Kwena don't love you. How have they not introduced you to these?"

"I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't to be honest." I reply grabbing one.

They're actually nice, really spicy, but nice.

"If you don't say your soul is snatched, you don't pass the vibe check."

I chuckle and say my soul is snatched.

I don't know what I expected coming here, but the easy conversation and banter is more than I could've hoped for. I just need to keep reminding myself not to think of her in that

way. That way that had me moving my whole life to Mpumalanga. Not sunny Durban with the beach. Not Cape Town with Table Mountain or even Johannesburg with the hustle and bustle. Mbombela.

She eventually tells me about her excitement in having a new phone, we even exchange numbers and follow each other on Instagram only for her to then tell me she got a text from Linda.

Apparently he said he's sorry and he'd do anything to make it up to her.

"He even said something about me not needing sugar daddies. I don't even understand what he's talking about. I just mized."

"So you didn't think about listening to him."

"Honestly? A part of me did. I know it's hard for you to understand but it doesn't even make sense that Linda would be violent Luke. He is such a kind person."

"He pretends to be a kind person Dimpho. Don't you see that?"

She sighs and nods. "It's just out of character for him. Or at least the him I knew."

"The more we talk about this the less I trust you not to go back."

"I wouldn't dare. In fact if I try to, tie me to the bed."

I raise my eyebrows at that and she looks mortified. She quickly stands and clears the table.

“Your wish, my command.” I reply and help her with clearing up and she shakes her head while giggling.

“You know what? Let’s go.” I say randomly while we’re watching some chick flick she chose.

She looks at me like I’m crazy.

“Go where?”

“Anywhere. We’ll just drive. Bring a bag.”

She probably thinks I’m joking but she goes and packs a bag while I make some calls. I might not know a lot of places but I know money opens a lot of doors. When she’s done we drive to my place to get my bag, packed by my amazing housekeeper. We then drive together to a lodge. She doesn’t know where we’re going but she’s been taking pictures and laughing and singing along to her playlist and I love it. I want to keep her this happy always.

I sign us in at the lodge and take her to her room. It’s right next to mine.

“This is where you’re spending the night.” I say as she walks in looking around.

“You did this in two hours?”

“Yes and tomorrow we’re going on a game drive. For tonight, we wine and dine.”

“Thank you for this. I wish I looked better than this.”

“What do you mean?”

“My blue eye.”

“Oh! That explains the nasty look I was given by that lady at reception. She thinks I did that to you.” I say realizing with mortification.

She laughs and shakes her head.

“People like assuming. I don’t blame them though.”

“Me too. I really hope I’m helping you feel better. You don’t deserve what happened to you. Nobody does.”

She looks away and walks towards the sliding door, it’s getting dark outside but you can still see the beauty of this place. I leave her to explore while I go leave my bag in my room. I can see her walking around the jacuzzi, making a video probably for TikTok or Instagram or whatever. She then goes to sit on a swing and texts on her phone. The guys setting up our dinner table arrive shortly after and since they’re strangers I decide to go out to her using my door so she doesn’t become uncomfortable.

“This place is gorgeous. I can’t wait to see the sunrise.” She says as I settle next to her.

“It’s spectacular. I was lucky to get two rooms at such short notice.”

“I think this pick me up is slightly better than my dad giving me chocolate.”

“Oh that’s how someone bribes you?”

She laughs, a sweet musical sound.

“It works like a charm.”

No wonder she was having weird popcorn with Smarties.

“You don’t talk much about your dad.”

“My dad is my favourite human ever. He’s somewhere in Soweto for now working.”

“Is he still with your mom?”

“My mom ended things with him shortly before he left. I know she’s why he’s not here. She broke his heart.”

I want to ask why he’s not here for her though, but I feel like I don’t know enough about the situation. Maybe there’s another reason she’s not mentioning.

We had dinner surrounded by the stars and now we're back on that swinging bench, apparently it has the best lighting for selfies so we're swinging and covered in a fleece blanket from her room.

"When are you going to have kids? I mean no offence but I didn't think you were thirty-six." She says after I told her my age.

"I don't want kids."

She gets up fast and looks at me like I'm crazy or wild.

"You don't want kids?"

"Yes, I don't."

"Why not?"

"They just scare me."

"Kids? Why?"

"I guess because I'm the last born and I've never been around kids until Leeto. Not even my sister's kids."

"So because of not being around kids

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you decided not to ever bring life into this world? Or even use this, all the money you seem to hate from your father to help a child in need?"

“I...” I start speaking but stop because her face tells me she’s not happy with me right now.

“You know what? It’s your money. Sitting collecting dust in your accounts. Let me not impose my thoughts on you.” She says and walks to the room.

I’m left alone wondering if I’m a selfish person. I have millions of Pounds to my name, money I never worked for and money I never even think about. I make my own money, I’m an Ophthalmologist for crying out loud. I’ve never had to do anything with the Trust fund money.

That’s privilege, I know. The reason I can have so much through my profession is that I come from wealth. The reason I never had student loans is my family’s money. No matter how much I think I’m detaching from it, it’s still a part of my life.

I haven’t even gotten to the privilege of being a white heterosexual male in this world. The reason it was so easy for me to get two rooms in this place without ever booking prior. Probably the reason that lady at reception didn’t confront me when she thought I had hit Dimpho.

“Luke?” She calls my name and my head snaps to her direction. I give her a smile, or half a smile rather.

“Please go inside. It’s cold out here.” She says pulling my hand and I follow her.

She pushes my door and shudders when she enters my room.

“Why is the AC so cold in here? You want to get sick?” She asks me as she grabs the remote from my bedside table.

The temperature in here is just fine, I don’t know what she’s on about.

“There.” She says putting it back down. “I’m sorry I said all that stuff to you. Nobody should make you feel bad for deciding not to have kids. It’s your sperm at the end of the day.”

I chuckle at that and she smiles.

“No, maybe I do need to reconsider some things. I mean I could always build an orphanage or support one that already exists with the money.”

“Yes but it shouldn’t be something you’re coerced into. It should come from you... Goodnight Luke.” She says and kisses my cheek when I don’t expect it. She runs out after that, leaving me with a tingling sensation all over my face.

Being so close to her was a mistake. Everything in me wants her. I’ve been fighting to shut that side of me down. She’s a child. I’m not dating a child.

The safari was beautiful, we got to spot some wild animals and take pictures. There's a small shop here and Dimpho got herself a cute safari outfit there including a hat and sunglasses because she said she wanted to hide her face. Our ride was private but I guess the looks she was getting made her uncomfortable.

"Did you see the giraffes? Most beautiful animals by far!"

Yeah she came back a little giraffe obsessed.

"I agree. They're beautiful animals. Let's get you that stuffed giraffe toy." I say because I spot one at the gift shop.

She smiles widely so I take that as a yes and we go into the shop.

"Take anything you like." I say to her and she gets a stuffed lion and a stuffed giraffe.

"The lion is for Leeto." She says and I nod.

I should've thought of my godson but nope. We get the stuffed animals and go back to our rooms, lunch should be set up outside. We find one guy left and he's just placing the juice on the table.

"I have registered for the next semester. I'm going back to study."

I look at her and she doesn't seem happy about this.

"Didn't you want to make music?"

"I did... I do. I just decided I'll do it with my own money, after studying and becoming a qualified educator."

"Will that make you happy? Doing it yourself?"

She nods while swallowing her pasta. Then she looks at the rest of the food on the table.

"I wonder if they throw what we didn't eat away."

"I doubt it. I hope not at least. Are you ready to leave?"

"No. This place is gorgeous. We didn't even use the jacuzzi."
She says looking at the beautiful view.

"Reality needs us back. We can do everything someday when we have time."

"Yeah and besides, I want to welcome the Kwena's back from Joburg."

"Have you ever been to Joburg?"

"No. But someday I'll go look for my dad."

"You don't have his number?"

"Not for the last three months. Neither does mom."

"Do you speak to your mother?"

“Not much since I moved from her house. She’s angry at me.”

“What’s your dad’s name?”

“Cauiphus Monama. Why?” qq

I nod and she gets up so I follow. I need to grab my bag and check us out.

When we get back to Justin’s house they’re just arriving as well since we find Justin taking their bags out of the car. I stay behind with him while Dimpho goes in.

“Romantic getaway?”

“Torturous rather.”

He looks at me suspiciously.

“Getting over her is harder than you thought huh? “

“Harder than it should be.”

“Oh if Harper could see this.” Justin.

“You’d love that wouldn’t you?”

“Obviously.”

I want to pinch him but I have a feeling Nandi wouldn’t like that so I don’t. We get inside to find Nandi gushing over Leeto's stuffed lion.

“Babe look! Dimpho and Luke got Leeto a little stuffed animal. Isn’t it cute!” Nandi.

“Are you sure Luke had anything to do with this?” Justin.
I’m trying but Justin wants me to slap him.

“What do you mean? Luke is always spoiling Leeto.”

“With toys he can’t even play with yet.” Justin.

Okay. He’s asked for it. I try to jump him and he runs so I chase him. This guy is supposed to be my best friend. He is my best friend and he’s doing me like this, in front of the girl I love.

Yes, love. I love that girl and I hate myself for it.

The following day I go to the hospital with Dimpho because she apparently has to meet with her old boss. I dropped her off by the front entrance and drove into the underground parking. She said she wanted them to see that nothing is being hidden and they shouldn’t assume things about us. I don’t really care what people at work think but I let her be.

I have only three consultations today, I should be done by lunchtime so I asked Dimpho to wait in my office since I won’t be at work long either. As for tomorrow, that’s a few surgeries starting in the morning. I grab my coat in my office and head down.

I find my patient already waiting and the nurse hands me their file. Sixty-five year old male.

Three patients later I'm going back to my office. I order food for Dimpho and I while going up using the stairs. I have never had Nando's in South Africa and since she recommended I do, I decided to get us that in mild.

Isn't it just great that when I get to my floor I find Refiloe? She seems to always pop up.

"Oh hey Dr G, I tried catching you but I got to the ophthalmology floor too late."

I stop in the passage because there's probably something she wants to tell me.

"I see. What did you need?"

"I just wanted to let you know what kind of person you're associating yourself with in that cleaner."

"Okay, Nurse Mokoena we are not friends, just colleagues what I do or even who I do is none of your business. I don't care if she's a bloody murderer. Leave her and me alone." I say in the calmest tone I could use and leave her with her mouth hanging.

Why can't people just mind their business? Life would be so much simpler. Dimpho isn't even my girlfriend and already

people are trying to come between us. I'm already getting curious stares and yes, I notice all these things but that doesn't mean I should pay attention to them. I'm in this hospital to work only because I love what I do. I don't have to be here, I can make money off this very hospital without lifting an ophthalmoscope.

As soon as I enter my office I can tell something isn't right from the way she's laying on the couch. She looks up at me and sits up before wiping tears from her face. I take a deep breath.

“What happened?”

5

DIMPHO:

I have no idea how Luke managed to get us rooms in a beautiful lodge with nature all around us at short notice but he did it. He even had us served every meal by our rooms. The lights at night would make everything look magical, and in the morning it was truly a sight for sore eyes. The dew made the grass look like it's glistening. I loved everything about that place and I didn't want to leave when it was time to go. Also, giraffes are my new unicorns. There isn't a creature more majestic! Granted I was afraid of getting close to any of the animals, I still adored the beauty of them. I just also couldn't keep my eyes off him. It felt so wrong

"I'm glad he took you somewhere relaxing. You needed the break I'm sure." She says after ordering us food.

"I did and thank you, for everything Nandi."

Her husband is upstairs with Luke playing some FIFA game or something like that. They're apparently best friends and Luke probably moved here to be closer to him. I can't imagine having a best friend who would move cities for me, let alone countries.

"Of course! I'm the one who hounded you for your friendship, I have to always show you that I appreciate it."

I laugh and decide it's time she heard the story from me. She deserves that much. I've already told Luke but she'll get to understand why I even got there with Linda.

“He was my best friend you know. Linda, the guy that did this to me. We met on campus this one very hot day, he said he'd take me out for ice cream. My sweet tooth was excited. I told him if he won't ask me out, he has a deal. So he agreed and he didn't ask me out. Not once and I enjoyed that about him. He was there for me even at times when I didn't know how to be there for myself. He helped me with notes when I'd be absent for lectures just because my heart wasn't in it. He even supported me when I decided to leave university though he didn't understand why. He helped me out whenever he could and eventually he started coming by regularly. He'd bring me stuff and I appreciated it, I mean it was Linda, my best friend and he'd never asked me out. So on this one day when we somehow ended up on the same bed, I didn't question it, I didn't mind him being upgraded to boyfriend because he had respected me and been there for me without expectations for so long...”

We get disturbed by her phone when the delivery guy arrives and so we both go out to grab the food.

“I doubt he was just being your friend without any motives Dimpho. I think he was always waiting for his chance.”

I stop and think about it... For so many years? He couldn't have been playing me that long, right?

We put the food on the plates for the guys and take the food up. She hands a plate to her husband and so I give the other one to Luke. She earns a kiss, while Luke acts disgusted by the PDA.

I just want what they have with somebody's son one day. Lately though that has been Luke, in my dreams, in my thoughts, just looking at him now with a smile plastered on his face after acting disgusted makes my heart flutter and my body warm up all over. He's just also different from me not just skin colour but experiences and probably thinks of me like a little sister given our age difference.

"Alright Dimpho and I are going to eat downstairs in the PDA free zone." Luke says grabbing my arm and walks out with me.

Justin shouts something back at him but he doesn't even bother to look back. I grab my food and join him in the dining room. A bit too formal but I don't complain.

"Were you really that annoyed by them?"

"No. I'd just rather spend time with you than watch that."

"Spend time with me you say?" I ask with an arched brow and he looks at me.

“Sometimes I wonder what goes on in that head of yours.”

“Oh you don’t want to know.”

“Such a pretty girl to be so mysterious.”

“My beauty is in my mystery. It’s alluring and how I hold hearts captive.”

“That only makes sense. I’ve been so good to you though, please give mine back.”

I laugh at that, “Stop being silly. We both know I could never have that.”

He chuckles and slices into his salmon before forking a bite and enjoying it.

Oh he is handsome! In the way Disney told us handsome is. Beautiful jawline, beautiful smile, beautiful green eyes and blonde healthy hair. The only none classical thing about him is the tattoos and the ear piercings, he has four.

I know Luke will be here any moment to take me to work... Well now its not work for me but the hospital and I am regretting saying yes to him fetching me. I mean going with him only makes things worse. Or I can spin this and use it to show them he’s just a friend? I don’t know. Those people are probably

baking scones and having them with my name not even tea anymore.

I put on a brave face when he appears. I'll ask him to drop me off at the front. That way they'll see I'm not hiding anything.

Yeah I probably should've thought this through. I'm getting out of a damn Maserati where the front security can see me and tell everyone, plus others are arriving and being dropped off. You've really got yourself into the thick of it Dimpho Sbahle Chiliza. I swallow saliva, say goodbye to Luke and grab my handbag. I get out of the car and I'm grateful I have sunglasses on. My blue eye doesn't have to meet their eyes. Linda deserves hell on earth for doing this to my face. It's getting better though, I can probably hide it in makeup now but I'd rather heal.

I walk into the hospital, sanitise and greet every person I see. Maybe if I'm extra nice they'll stop gossiping about me. I'm lying to myself but it's an excuse to be kinder than ever. I sit on the couch and wait for my boss.

Mr Seloilwe arrives a few minutes later and sits opposite me on a couch. He's already sweaty and his belly seems to grow every time I see him.

“Good morning sir.”

“Morning Dimpho. I realised you weren’t able to make it to work for the last few days.”

“Yes. I’m sorry sir, but I had some issues at home and so I couldn’t make it.”

“You know, there’s a way you could get your job back.” He says and looks at my thighs in such a perverted way that I feel dirty. I get up quickly and so does he. He reaches out to touch me and I flinch then step back.

“I’m not coming back.”

“Come on, that white boy will go back to his home someday. You need a stable income.”

“White boy?” I’m shocked at his audacity.

Luke is a doctor here, for him to call him a boy is honestly shocking.

“What? Don’t act like you’re not opening your legs for his money.”

I grab my bag and walk away towards the lift. I get in only for him to walk in as well. God, why have you forsaken me so?

I press Luke's office floor and Mr Seloilwe looks at me.

“The offices? So this shareholder story was true? So that boy really owns part of this hospital?”

I don't say anything. I get off and go to Luke's office, open it with my key and lock after myself. I'll only open it after I'm sure he's left.

The tears come as soon as I sit on the couch.

What kind of whore am I to these people?

By the time Luke gets in the office I'm feeling better, still hurt but better. He frowns when he sees my face.

"What happened?"

I sigh and sit up. He sits next to me and waits. Just as I'm about to talk Mr Seloilwe knocks on his open office door.

"Hello Doctor, Miss Chiliza." He nods to my direction.

"Yes, what's going on?"

"Oh I'm Mr Seloilwe sir, I'm her boss here."

Luke turns to me,

"Didn't you say you're going back to university?"

"I am."

“How are you her boss?”

“Her old boss... I just wanted to talk about her conduct at work.”

“Okay, but she doesn’t work for you anymore. Besides that which other doctor did you bother with this?”

“I... You...” He clears his throat.

“Please leave us.” He says and turns back to me.

“Is that it?”

I nod because how do I explain the perverted behaviour as well? I don’t want him to know about that anyway. I already feel so filthy. He gives me a hug, for the first time ever his arms are around me and somehow everything fades away, he smells amazing, like I could stay in his arms forever.

“Let’s go. Our food will be delivered downstairs, we’ll grab that and go to my house.”

“Okay.” I reply in a voice I don’t know.

He gives me his white jacket and I put it on over my dress. It’s actually longer than the LBD I have on.

The hospital and a couple of buildings can be seen from here. My old flat is somewhere there but I can’t see it. I remember

the text from an unknown number earlier today. I archived and never looked at it. I open the text while still looking at the view Luke has. He hands me wine and a plate of the Nando's. I smile at him, he's just so wholesome to me.

The text reads, "I'm sorry for hitting you. I don't think I deserved those two MIB agents though. They knocked my teeth Dimpho. Is that how little I mean to you now? You send goons for me? Anyway for what it's worth I love you."

I'm left confused. Did Linda hit his head somewhere? MIB agents? Who is he even talking about? I decide to block him and move on.

"Do you like shopping?" He asks me as we're cuddled on the couch.

I don't know how we got here. A shared fleece here, a leg over another there and the next thing my head was on his shoulder.

"It depends. Grocery? Not so much. Clothes? Yes."

He tickles me a bit and says I know what he meant.

"I'll take you shopping tomorrow."

"Oh? You don't like my clothes?" I ask rather dramatically.

"No. I find them quite drab to be honest."

“Drab? That’s the most English word I’ve ever heard you use.” I say and laugh at him.

“I am English in case you forgot.” He says smiling back at me.

“How is London this time of the year?”

“Wet.” He says and shrugs.

I arch a brow and he laughs.

“You have a dirty mind Dimpho.”

“Healthy is the word I prefer.”

He tickles me again and I laugh trying to get away from him till I end up under him, his one hand has my arms held over my head. We’re both panting and staring at each other.

“You’re so beautiful.” He says staring at me in that way only he can.

“Why can’t I stop thinking of you?” I ask and he looks like he’s in pain.

“Please don’t encourage me.”

“What if I want to?” I ask and he takes a deep breath.

Before I can even consider what’s happening his lips land on mine. He kisses me like he’s hungry for me and I probably kiss him back just the same because my legs are open in an instant accommodating him in between them seems like second

nature. His lips feel fuller than I thought, his body is warm, I want to touch him but he still has my hands in his. His free arm goes under my waist and he pulls me to him, I wish these clothes could just disappear.

He pulls away and I want to scream.

“I need to take you to your place.” He says and softly kisses my forehead.

“What? Why?”

He chuckles and lets go of my wrists to caress my cheek.

“I don’t want you to regret me. If we’re going to fuck, we’ll do it as lovers.”

I almost yell we can be lovers after but I compose myself and allow my body to melt into his. He kisses me again, slowly this time, sensually and it just about drives me crazy... What is he doing to me?

I need to vent. I need to vent to someone who will understand and I’m sure Nandi will relate even if from her past, but she’s too close to Luke so I decide to call Dintle. She’s a bit wild but I haven’t seen her in months and I want to release some steam anyway. She’s perfect. I text her and invite her over, she’s responded immediately and I text security her picture so they

don't annoy Nandi. I then text Nandi that I'm having my friend over. She tells me I don't have to always let her know if I have someone over and as much as I know that, I'd still rather tell her.

I get the smaller gate as Dintle is dropped off by it. She runs to me and screams.

"You don't seriously live here right?"

I shake my head and get the gate.

"Shut up!". She says staring at the huge main house. I take my little walkway and she follows me into my granny flat.

"Okay maybe not the huge house but this flat is still impressive! How are you affording this? Is it the white dude?"

"I should've taken you out of my close friends." I say closing the door.

"So is he your man?"

I sigh and shake my head.

"I wish."

"Okay, come sit on my face while you're single. You'll tell me the story later."

Always loved being single at the same time as Dintle because we help each other, you know?

She's first in the bedroom and takes her clothes off as I do the same. She kisses me as soon as she's done pinning me against the door and taking the rest of my clothes off. She's on her knees and starts kissing my thighs slowly. She parts my folds with her fingers and slowly licks my clit causing me to moan.

"I want your full weight, on my face" She says looking up at me and I know what to do.

She takes my hand and lays on her back. I kneel over her face and hover at first teasing her, she attempts to lick and stuck, then she pulls me and begins her attack. I start to move riding her tongue and moaning while she moans under me as well, licking me up and down and pulling me down to her face so she can hungrily suck and tongue fuck me. I explode all over her face and she doesn't stop eating me through my orgasm before I get off her huffing.

I position myself at her gorgeous punani and start of with my middle fingers rubbing outside, starting from her pretty clit to her hole. She's so wet! I instert the fingers inside her and start sucking on her clit mercilessly as she moans out my name and moves with my fingers. She tastes as good as the last time I was with her...

“So, clearly this guy is here to stay, why aren’t you guys already together”

“I don’t know actually. I thought he didn’t like me like that at first.”

“Girl you told me this guy remembered your name from one meeting “

“Yeah yeah, that doesn’t mean anything.”

“Except he’s a white foreign man. It’s not an everyday name for him Mpho.”

I sigh and look to the ceiling.

“Well, he didn’t ask me out.”

“Instead he took you on a getaway? Girl please.”

“Maybe he thinks I’m a kid.”

“You are significantly younger, but he kissed you. All thoughts of you being a child must be vanished from his mind already and if not, show him you are no baby.”

“You’re right.” I reply and sit up.

“Did you grab anything sexy after leaving that pig?”

She wasn’t shocked when I told her about Linda. Apparently he isn’t even going to campus anymore.

“I just grabbed whatever I could unfortunately.”

“Okay then let it wait till he takes you shopping, buy something lacy, sexy and red. Then tell him you’re here for his pleasure. He’ll tear that tasty pussy up.” She says rubbing a hand on my thigh... I look at her and we laugh before kissing again. Every girl needs a friend like Dintle, I swear by it.

For the first time ever I was honest with someone about Dintle and our friendship. It’s normal long as we’re in relationships, if we’re single then it’s fun. Luke laughed at me when I told him. He asked if he can join and I said I couldn’t share him.

He probably thought it was a joke but it actually isn’t. I’m not planning on ever having a threesome, much less with him. I am looking after Leeto for the next few hours in the main house, Nandi went out to fetch her other child. Apparently her husband’s brother has a daughter he stays with, Aza so she’s grabbing that little girl and having her over while the brother has some girl over. It’s bath time for Leeto so I get him ready for that. When I take off his diaper he’s pooped again so I just wipe him, get rid of the diaper and bathe him after. He’s such a crier when you put him in water sometimes but I try to be as quick as possible and when I’m done I wrap him in a towel and get rid of his bathwater before coming back to put him in a cute

romper. He's stopped crying now but I know I have to feed him so I go down with him to grab a bottle.

Just as I sit down with him Mr Kwena enters first with a sleeping baby girl and Nandi follows with her bag. She puts it on the counter and comes to us.

"That one is a light sleeper. How are you and my big boy?" She asks and almost immediately Leeto starts fidgeting and crying.

"Well now he's seen you and hates me." I reply jokingly and handing him over.

"Thank you Dimpho. Can I ask you to please help out tomorrow as well? Just during bath time."

"Of course, I'll be here in the morning and later."

"Never become anyone's wife! It's fulfilling but a lot more work than you'd think. I should be working again by now but look where I am."

I laugh at her drama. Nandi has money, her husband has even more. She can definitely get help and go back to work anytime.

"One thing I know is that you enjoy being a mom and wife."

"I'm kind of good at it." She says and we laugh.

She's not lying.

6

LUKE:

I've never met a girl quite like Dimpho. I loved her without knowing her and in knowing her I'm getting pleasant little shock factors about her. Like her friend with benefits, some other girl she went to the same campus with. All I had to do was ask her what she was up to and she told me all about the girl.

Apparently she got called because I teased her. I don't regret it. Obviously I wanted to take her on the couch but I don't want her to regret anything. I want to make sure she's happy with us being together. I want her to fall in love with me and not have it just be lust. I don't want to end up just a friend she has fun with when she's single. I want to be her man.

When did we get here? When she showed me she was into me. I let go of the little self control I had with wanting her after that. Sue just fits into my life. Obviously I mean I moved all the way here to be with her so she'll fit. I want her to fit.

Tomorrow is our shopping date so I asked her to come to my place and spend the night, I'm fetching her later so I made sure everything is clean here. More like my housekeeper did that, then I called Ike to check on his progress finding her dad.

Depending on what I find I'm either going to help her reconnect

with the one parent she thinks would have her back or possibly find information that will break her heart.

I'm thinking of flying us to Johannesburg for the shopping but I'm also contemplating a drive. I just enjoy driving and since she said she can drive, I want to let her steer us even if it's just an hour.

She's wearing leggings like the first day I ever saw her, she did her hair and has on my jacket over her crop t-shirt. God only knows how her body looks so good without much gym in her life. In fact she confessed she only used to walk to work daily. She gets inside the car, kisses my cheek and puts her seat belt on. "You're very punctual."

"Thank you. That is a compliment right?" I ask because I'm not quite sure.

She just giggles and says, "I can't believe this is my official overnight visit to your place. It feels like it's normal somehow.

"It definitely will be. I love the new hair."

As we arrive to my place I get a text from Justin allowing me to borrow the company jet. That will definitely help us get back quicker, though we are already spending the whole night in Joburg tomorrow. I got us a five star hotel in Sandton – Justin's recommendation.

The next trip should be Durban or Cape Town and obviously Justin has asked me to come with him to his home again sometime so Limpopo is in the mix.

I unlock the car doors but we just sit in here staring at each other. She's just everything.

"You're gorgeous." I tell her within seconds of looking at her.

"Thank you. I'd complement you too but I have a feeling you already know you're fine."

"At least now I'm sure." I reply and smile because she's smiling.

I can't wait to ask her to be my girlfriend but if there's anything I've done for the past few months, it's wait. So I'll do it just as I planned and not hastily.

I drive us to our place, 'our' because obviously soon she'll be mine and I'll be hers. I park in the garage and she gets out by herself with her mouth hanging.

"You just moved here! How do you have four sports cars already?"

"My favourite cars are in Dubai with my sister, I had to get these after I moved here."

"All sports cars?"

"All but one, a Porsche Macan SUV... With my sister."

She shakes her head, “Can I put these on my story? No number plates obviously.”

“What’s mine, is yours.” I reply going into the house so she can do her thing.

“You give me mafia vibes with all this stuff sometimes. Am I on 365 DNI?” She asks finding me in the kitchen pouring wine for her. I hand her the glass.

“How am I giving Mafia vibes and not Justin?” I ask because even this house I bought from him. I pour myself some cognac and remain opposite her on the island. She’s so cute right now.

“He has a telecommunications company and a farm with his family. His money is accounted for.”

“I am a single ophthalmologist, with investments.”

She squints her eyes at me and I laugh. If I showed her the money from my trust, money I haven’t touched since becoming a medical doctor years ago, she’d faint.

“If we get arrested, I’m snitching.”

“What do you even have on me?”

“Linda said you’re a Man In Black agent.”

I would laugh but she said Linda. The same Linda she told me she blocked. What is this?

I walk out of the kitchen because I can feel my blood boil.

Dimpho can do whatever she likes and talk to whoever but to lie to me about blocking him? I'm not trying to hear anything about that.

She follows me into my bedroom and stands by the door as I undress. I want to take a shower and I won't stop because she's in here.

"Luke, let me explain."

I don't want to hear it right now. I'm not good with confrontations in a relationship. Granted for now she's not my girlfriend but this argument sure doesn't feel like it's between friends. I'm actually mad at myself because I shouldn't feel like I'm more than a friend to her. Not when I haven't asked her out yet.

"Whatever bro."

I go inside the bathroom and take off my boxers before getting in the shower. I'm washing my chest when I turn to see a figure outside the shower. She came in here?

She gets in, completely naked. I turn the water off because of her bandaged wound. Damn this girl is sexy!

"Bro?"

She's mad about that. I should've seen that one coming.

“You can’t get that bandage wet Dimpho.”

“Will you listen to me?”

“I don’t seem to have a choice.”

“Okay, I probably deserve all that for making a joke including Linda but he texted me with a different number and said something about MIB agents. I blocked him again obviously but I deduced he meant you and Justin. What did you do to him?” She asks looking at me squarely in the eyes. Her boobs are pointing right at me. Fuck!

“We kicked his ass. You should’ve told me he’s stalking you.”

She takes a deep breath. “You should’ve told me you’re some sort of Will Smith. What if he comes after you guys? Dintle said he’s doing dodgy things now.”

“Okay, how about I finish my shower, run you a bath and then we’ll talk?”

“Fine. I’ll go grab my wine.” She says and turns around. My dick literally brushes her back a little and she giggles. This girl is making me feel things I never thought possible for me. Besides my hunger for her body, something about her has me being somebody I’ve never been. Somebody better than I’ve ever been because the Luke I know, would’ve shut down and not spoken a word to her until he is ready.

According to Dimpho this house is too big for her to sleep alone so we're sharing my bed, with a wall of pillows between us because apparently I'm distracting which is ironic. We're laying side by side looking at the ceiling now.

"Should we go eat?" I ask.

"Not till you tell me why you're Bautista."

"I'm really not. I have only hit two people in my life. My sister's husband and that idiot of yours."

"Watch it"

"Okay, Linda. He's only the second person I've hit because I hate violence. It's my father's language. How he raised me. He has enemies because obviously what successful businessman doesn't? So he would sometimes take me with him to 'deal' with people. He made me watch him hurt people. Then he would hurt me if I didn't want to hurt them too. I never did it Dimpho. I never hurt anyone."

"I believe you. You were just a child."

"He didn't care."

"I'm sorry but I don't think I'd like your father very much."

“The feeling would probably be mutual. He thinks I’m marrying some American heiress I used to date.”

“Marriage? An heiress?”

I laugh at the high pitched way she asks that.

“Yes

marriage. You’re too young for that though. I need to look for a nurse at work...”

She smacks me with a pillow over my face and I break into a laugh.

“Are you trying to make me constantly shadow you at the hospital?”

“I wouldn’t get any work done with you next to me.” I say and pull her to my side.

She tries to wiggle away and hide her smile.

“I swear if you keep going over my wall you’ll sleep on that chaise lounge.” She says trying not to laugh.

“Me? Aren’t you the one who put a pillow on my face?” I ask.

Our faces are only inches apart, I’m holding her in a tight embrace and I lightly trace her neck with my lips pulling back and letting her go, earning myself her anger. I love it when she wants more of me.

“You see? This is why the wall exists. Now I’m not even sure what we were talking about.” She says sulking.

I laugh and get up,

“Let’s go eat, drink more wine and come back to sleep. Tomorrow we’re shopping.”

She half rolls her eyes but gets up anyway. That’s my girl.

“I’m not an heiress Luke.”

She says as she walks to me and wraps her arms around my neck. She’s staring at me intently.

“I know that. You’re not an heiress but you are Dimpho. That’s enough for me. It’s not like I need money. Besides, you’ll give birth to an heiress.” I say teasing her and she smiles.

I thought Dimpho only wanted to make beats and she couldn’t sing but she’s shown me just how talented she is. She always has a playlist and as soon as we got off the jet, she had it plugged in the car we’re being driven in. She sang some Secret Love song apparently by Little Mix that I was told I should know because they’re British. I don’t know them, but the lyrics were clearly meaningful and she sang from her soul while watching the buildings as we passed by. That’s when I decided I’ll build a

damn studio for her myself if I must. The world deserves to hear her sing.

“No way! Mall of Africa?” She asks as the driver parks.

I wouldn't know about it without Justin and thank him for that too because I would've taken her where Google showed me there's a Louis Vuitton shop in Sandton but he told me Mall of Africa, so here we are.

As we step out she takes a picture of the entrance and the car before turning to me and saying she's not trying to trend for getting lost here... Okay...

I should've let her go shopping on her own or with security. I would be relaxed in our hotel room right now and calling my sister to check on her and her kids. Instead I'm in the fifth shop, with nothing to show for it. I told her not to look at the price tag but she just can't help herself and ends up not taking anything. One thing I'm not doing though is going into a retailer. What the fuck is Mr Price? I stop her before she even enters.

“You liked some dress at that click store, we're going back to get it, and you looked at a lot of things at the Adidas shop. We're getting everything you decided you didn't deserve and more. After that were getting bags, shoes and jewellery before

we leave. You'll get retail clothes for when you go back to classes." I say and pull her away from that shop.

She grunts something but she's allowing me to lead her back to the stores she ran from.

I was able to get her to buy a dress for our date. The date she doesn't know about yet. There's a luxury salon not far from the hotel so I'll drop her off there, she's already expected and they'll do her makeup then she'll come up to change and we can have dinner. We spent the entire day at that bloody mall and if I hadn't planned it prior, I would've cancelled the date so we can rest.

The driver and I drop her off before going to the hotel. I need to sleep even if it's just an hour so I shower and get in bed.

It feels like a second later when I get a call from her saying she's done. I send the car over and get up. I get the door for her only a few minutes later.

"This hotel is unreal. What?!"

The view from here is gorgeous, I like the brass finishes in here as well. It really is nice but right now I'm stuck on her face. She looks so gorgeous.

"You are breathtaking."

She gives me a smile and rolls her eyes, “Thanks but how am I showering with this?”

“After dinner I guess. Please wear that new blue dress for me.”

“We’re going out for dinner?” She looks at me excitedly and I nod.

She kisses my cheek and rushes to her bags of clothes.

“I’ll be right back.” I tell her and go out to give her privacy.

I decide to go downstairs. As I sit with a cup of coffee, I check my phone and there’s a text from Ike.

“Bros, if I have the right man, he lives in Mpumalanga, Secunda. Not Johannesburg. He’s never left from the information I have.”

I take a deep breath. Do I tell Dimpho? It would crush her to know he’s been lying to her. I don’t want to be lying to her as well but this isn’t my place, I was out of line for even looking. I decide to text Ike that it’s okay, he can leave everything alone.

I go back to our room after coffee. I approach her with my mouth on the floor. She looks absolutely ravishing. I’m lost for words.

“I missed not having a blue eye on full display.” She says sheepishly grabbing her bag.

“You’re always gorgeous, this is just... You look stunning.”

“I would have to in head to toe Yves Saint Laurent!”

“I need to keep you as close to me as possible before any man makes the mistake of thinking about shooting their shot.”

“Now sir, don’t threaten me with a good time.” She replies with a chuckle as we link our arms together.

I feel whole walking down the passage. She makes me feel whole. Obviously eyes would be on us because I’m with a pretty lady.

We arrive at a restaurant on the top floor of some building almost an hour later. We’re taken to our table and given bread before anything else. A waitress takes our drink orders and Dimpho keeps stealing looks at me.

“This place is too fancy.” She finally says.

“You don’t like it?”

“It’s not that, I just didn’t expect it to have so many white people.”

I laugh because I didn’t expect that. There’s a table with a black family not far from us but she’s kind of right, it’s mostly Caucasians.

“You aren’t used to white people by now?”

“You’re not people, you’re Luke. The people here don’t know me. I feel like they’re staring.”

I sigh because she’s right. I noticed it too but I didn’t want to make her uncomfortable.

“We can definitely leave.”

“And waste that view? Never.” She says pulling out her phone for snaps.

“I’ll be your photographer.” I offer taking over.

She asks that we go take pictures by the balcony outside so that’s what we do. Anything for her to feel better.

7

DIMPHO:

In my entire life... Maybe that's not long enough... In my dreams for the future, when I see myself as an old grandmother, I never, ever thought that I would ever be in a private jet. I'm a big dreamer alright, but in my dreams, I was in first class, not an entire jet. However it happened to me and I don't even know what it cost. That's probably why it's my favourite part of my trip with Luke.

The clothes he bought me, I know how much those are. I actually have an idea how much I set him back and I feel queasy just thinking about it. I know what he said and things he has but what if someday if we have an argument he wants his money back? Even if I got a job as a teacher the day after graduation I would only be able to pay him back fully years later. Speaking of arguments, we had one about Linda and it wasn't nice. He literally shut me out for merely saying I got a text. I had to fight to get him to look at me and talk to me. That fight included getting naked in the shower with him and seeing his tool for the first time... Yeah whoever said white men have less down there must've not known this one existed.

Anyway this man had me taken to a salon and I got such a nice face beat, no one can see the scarring that's still healing from my blue eye. Granted the makeup artist was uneasy covering it until I told her the story. She probably thinks I was lying to cover my man's tracks because it's not uncommon. After the makeup I went to the hotel for the first time and Luke let me get dressed for a date he planned... I of course spent the first few minutes admiring my view of Sandton, taking videos of the view as well as the room.

We're in Kempton Park at a restaurant, it's fancy, a little fancier than I had anticipated and I'm not sure why because this man is everything fancy. The problem here is that we're being stared at. I'd like to think because I'm younger than him but I know it's because he's white and I'm black. He took pictures of me already, a lot of them and now he's taking more while I'm across him on the table.

"I better get those pictures." I say because he's using his phone.

"I'll Airdrop them, don't fret."

"You really said fret?"

"What's wrong with that?" He asks frowning and I just shake my head.

“Nothing.” I reply sipping my white wine as the waitress arrives with our food.

We have our meals lightly conversing about me going back to university. He still insists he could’ve paid for my studies but that’s a line I’m drawing. I can’t owe my education to him. He’s not happy I’ll spend another year not doing what I want to do but he has to just allow it like I am.

“Well then, I’ve never asked but will you be a primary school teacher?”

“No, high school. It won’t be for long though.”

“Okay, I wish I had a teacher as sexy as you.”

“You wouldn’t be an Ophthalmologist if you did.”

“Touché.” He replies and smirks at me.

I like everything about this man. His green eyes however seem to be my favourite part. How does someone have eyes that look like stained glass? He’s perfect!

“How old are you exactly?”

“Thirty-six.”

I almost choke on my food, he offers me a glass of water. I was expecting thirty-two at most.

“Are you okay?”

I nod and tell him, “My mother is thirty-seven.”

“Your mother, had you at sixteen?” He looks shocked.

“Not uncommon and yes.”

“So, I’m old enough to be your father?” He asks like he’s making calculations and I laugh.

“Well I’m turning twenty-two this year, so if a fourteen year old can have kids.. Then yes?”

He pushes his food away and just puts his palm on his face. I laugh because he looks so disturbed. I’m also very worried about my mother’s reaction to this if we get that far. I get up to go to the bathroom and leave him in his thoughts for a bit. After peeing and washing my hands I walk out of the bathroom and as I open the door he’s close by with my bag. He puts his coat over me and says we must leave. I’m a bit confused but I don’t protest. We were getting looks in this place anyway.

As we’re being driven back he’s well adjusted to our age difference and I want to, but I can’t keep my hands off him. We’ve been making out every few minutes or seconds or however long it takes for me to get lost in his eyes. We pull apart after a steamy kiss and he reaches over me and buckles my seat belt before doing that to his own. He says something about safety and I’m so frustrated I could scream. His hand

starts travelling up my dress and I look at the driver, he's oblivious luckily. Luke stops and takes his hand back just as it was getting closer to where I need him most. I swear he lives to tease me. By the time we get to the hotel I want him, and I want him now. When the door to the room opens I'm met by petals from red roses all over the floor and balloons on the ceiling. It looks like something out of a movie or something. I turn to him.

"What is this?" I ask because I'm surprised.

He's recording my reaction and smiling like a man who's very happy with himself.

"Just a little something." He says as I walk in looking at everything.

There's gifts on the couch and coffee table even on the small dining table. I can see Swarovski

Louis Vuitton, Gucci and all things expensive.

"You didn't!" I say turning to him for only a second.

I'm so shocked I keep looking at everything slowly and trying to understand when he got all this. I think there's something written with the petals on the bed and when I get close it's "Will you be my girlfriend?" I let out a scream and jump up and down saying yes before running into his arms and kissing him. He almost lost his balance but I don't care. I have tears running

down my eyes and I am the happiest I've ever been as far as I can remember. This man is a star and I never want to lose him.

I don't know how we've managed it but we finished showering together. At some point I was ready to put it inside me myself but then he turned the water off and kissed me senseless. Now we're brushing our teeth. He's standing behind me with his tall fine vanilla ass and we keep looking at each other through the mirror. The sexual chemistry? You can cut it with a knife.

As soon as we're done he picks me up and puts me on the sink counter all without moving his lips from mine. He starts kissing my neck, then my chest as then he undoes my towel and starts a beautiful torture on my perky set. He starts with my right boob before going to my left I'm left scrambling to touch him, feel him with my hands and moan from the electrifying torment. I want more!

He kisses me down to my navel piercing and the next thing, my legs are parted even wider and he smiles at my kitty before attacking my clit with his wet tongue. He puts a finger in my hole and curves it towards the top of the pussy while sucking gently on my clit and I feel like I'm really close so I grind towards his face and moan out his name when I release a waterfall that he catches with his mouth to my shock. This man is as nasty as I am!

"I love a squirter." He says giving me his finger to lick.

He picks me up and we move to the bedroom, he lays me on the bed slowly and I don't know where the condom was but he's on his knees on this bed putting it on. I pull him towards me as soon as it's on. He's kissing me when I gasp at the feeling of his entry. He stares at me in that way only he can, like there's something unspoken. Then he moves slowly watching me moan and gasp while he releases grunts just watching me while he moves with my body. There's something so sexy about the look of satisfaction on his face when I convulse and release all my juices again. I swear he said thank you before burying his face on my neck and riding me faster, rougher, grunting harder and then he releases with a shudder. He lifts his face up when his body relaxes and he kisses me again, slowly and passionately. Is it wrong that I want him to give me another round already?

The following day I was woken up by a call from Nandi. Luke wasn't in bed.

“Girl! Why didn't you call me as soon as you got a boyfriend?”

I laugh, “I haven't told anyone. Yesterday was just so hectic.”

“You and Luke deserve this!”

“Thank you! I wouldn't even know him without you so you're the reason we're here.”

“I’m really not. Anyway, are you going to move from my place now that you’re a big girl with a boyfriend? A real boyfriend not that other piece of shit.”

She never ceases to amaze me. I chuckle at that.

“No, not at all. I’m not moving in with him. I never wanted to move in with the piece of shit either. He just invaded my space.”

“Okay but even if you moved you’d always have a place with us. That’s your flat now.”

“What did I do to deserve you?”

“You’re pretty. That’s the only reason I asked you to be my friend.” She replies and I laugh.

It’s actually true, she told me before. We say our goodbyes and I promise to see her when I get back.

Luke walks in from the balcony looking like a Vogue cover in a white t-shirt and his messy hair. The only thing that probably wouldn’t be on Vogue is the Nike sweatpants in black.

“You are so gorgeous.” He says as he walks to me.

“Good morning boyfriend.” I reply and he grins.

“I can get used to that. Good morning girlfriend.” He says sitting on the bed and kissing my forehead.

My stomach chooses that moment to rumble and we laugh.

“I’ll have them send in breakfast ASAP.” He says grabbing the phone.

I peck his neck and get up to wash my face and brush my teeth.

As much as my eye is a lot better, I wish it was all gone. I hate that people who see us together think it’s Luke who did this to me. It’s unfair on him and at least they couldn’t see anything yesterday. I’ll cover up with concealer today when we’re leaving it’s healed a lot more so I don’t mind putting makeup on it

I’m still in disbelief over yesterday. The petals and confetti balloons are still all over the room but my gifts aren’t. I know he probably has them in the car or the jet that’s waiting to take us home.

“When did you even buy all that stuff?” I ask as we’re having breakfast.

“My sister bought it for you. Her husband made sure it was delivered and Justin's people made sure it got to you here.”

“Your sister knows about me?”

“Yes, and she can’t wait to meet you.”

“I’m still in awe.”

“Well someday when I am proposing to you, I’ll now have to outdo this.”

“I don’t envy you. This is going to be very hard to beat.” I reply chuckling..

“Don’t worry about me, I’ll always find a way.”

I don’t doubt it. This man made a trip happen in a few hours, I’m sure if we get to the point where marriage is on the cards, he’s going to make it memorable.

As we’re being driven to the airport I check my Instagram and this man posted a video from last night and tagged me. I guess there’s no private relationship here. Not that it’s what I wanted but I wonder what people from the hospital are going to say about all this. No wonder I have texts from multiple people I used to know. From old friends to people I went to high school with congratulating me. Dintle reckons they’re pretending just to try get more information about my relationship. Which actually makes sense. People love gossip, myself included.

“What are thinking about?” He asks bringing me back to earth.

“Why didn’t we get to discuss the privacy of our relationship?”

“Our relationship is private. Unless I’m missing something.”

“The Instagram reel?”

He shakes his head and takes the hand he was holding mine with away to scratch his head and my hand feels cold.

“Yes. I posted a reel. We’re private not secret. Or is that what you’d prefer? A secret relationship?”

“No, I just... I’m getting texts from people about it.”

“So am I. I don’t care. I am not going to hide my relationship because of people.”

“You’re right. You’re right. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t care about it. I guess I just got overwhelmed by the number of strangers as well suddenly following me.”

“I hardly care for social media like that, hence I didn’t think twice about posting the reel.”

“I don’t either.” I reply and then feel bad.

If I didn’t care about people online, I wouldn’t have brought this thing up. Nobody outside of me and him matters but I made him defend something as stupid as an Instagram post. I need to relax and let everything be because I don’t want to hide this man. I should show him off because I mean he’s stunning!

We’re finally back in Mbombela and I’m in his lounge with my gift bags all around me. I want to see each thing. I think I am a social media person given how I’m unboxing these with my

phone out for my stories. Luke got us dinner and went to the in-house gym. He told me this used to be Justin's house and so I wasn't surprised there's a gym.

His sister has taste I'll give her that. The sneakers? I can't even believe I'll wear these. The bags? Insane! Heels, perfume and jewellery too. People are already texting me that I'm lucky.

Justin's phone rings on the island. I get up to take it to him but he gets the call on the watch and I can't help but notice the name of the girl. I swear I've seen it before. Maybe while stalking his social media so I start going through his page and I find it, some girl who usually comments heart eyes on his pictures.

I already feel my heart beating fast. I check her profile and she has a picture of her and Luke on her grid, also just heart eyes.

I pace up and down the kitchen. What the fuck is this? Who the fuck is this girl? Has he been playing me? Maybe he's been making me a fool this entire time. This blonde hair blue eyed girl might be his end game.

I grab my bag and get an Uber. I'm leaving...

I cancel the Uber a minute before it gets her and sink to the floor.

I can't leave. Not after I was talking about being given the chance to explain just a few days ago.

His footsteps tell me he's coming. He stops.

"Dimpho? Babe?" He yells before running upstairs.

Probably going to check the bedroom. I wait. He comes back down a little later. He stops on the way to the door when he spots me sitting in on the other side of the island.

"Babe? What's going on?" He asks sitting next to me.

"Who is she?"

"Who is who?"

I give him the phone and he sighs.

"I can explain..."

Oh Jesus I'm going to kill a man and go to jail. Was this the plan? Is this how I go out Lord?

8

LUKE:

Dimpho and I are official and should be fucking celebrating but no. I'm in shit because of an ex. I don't even know an ex what because we never dated. At least not from my side. Jen and I used to fall back on each other. When we were between relationships or single at that point. Somehow I think she assumes we will end up together.

"Jen is a part of my past. We've never dated but we've been intimate whenever we were both single or just causally dating."

"She has a picture of you both on her fucking Instagram!"

"You have Dintle on your Instagram. I don't care because when you told me about your sexcapades with her, I understood it."

"You are not going to do that! Dintle and I are different."

"How? Because she's a woman as well?"

She takes a second before getting up. "I want to leave."

Oh wow. She's seriously not understanding?

"Are you kidding me?"

"No. You want to keep some hoe around. When you're ready to cut all your hoes off, you'll text me."

“Okay. I’ll cut Jen off. You have to cut Dintle off as well.”

I don’t really care about Dintle being in her life, I just want her to understand that the situationships are the same.

She stutters... “But she’s not just someone I’ve been intimate with as you put it. She’s my friend.”

I’m tired honestly. Jen is a friend to me as well but I’d rather just cut it now than keep arguing.

“Alright. Cool. I’ll cut Jen off for you. You can keep Dintle.” I decide and get up.

She watches me as I grab water from the fridge and run up the stairs after. I’m not fighting over stupid shit. Jen doesn’t mean more to me than Dimpho so the decision is easy. I decide to order food before showering. I’m getting Dimpho whatever I’m having. I don’t really give a fuck tonight.

After my shower I put on sweatpants only and my cologne. My watch follows and I go downstairs to grab a beer. I find her cleaning up from her unboxing session looking sad. Sigh.

“Do you really want me to take you to your place?”

She looks at me and shakes her head no before sitting on the couch. She’s on the verge of tears and my heart breaks. I go sit next to her.

“I’m sorry about Jen's call. I will block her right now and never talk to her again.” I say and take out my phone.

I block Jen and when I look at her again she’s seriously crying.

“I’m unfair aren’t I babe? You’re willing to cut off a friend for me and I can’t do the same for you. It’s not right.”

“Baby, listen to me, I don’t have an issue with Dintle in your life. You guys can still be friends, I don’t care baby. Really, I don’t.”

“That still doesn’t make it fair.”

I don’t know what to tell her anymore so I pull her to my chest and we snuggle up. My arm is brushing her shoulder. I just need her to be calm and forget the entire fight.

The driver arrives just as she’s stopped crying luckily and I go out to grab the food and I place it on the table and go back to cuddling my baby.

“Do you want to get a dog?” I ask randomly.

She gets up so quickly and looks at me like I’m nuts. I know it’s early but that look...

“No dogs ever! Whatever the phobia of dogs is? I have it.”

She doesn’t like dogs? I never knew this. Well I don’t like cats but that’s just because I find them disgusting.

“What happened?”

“The gist of the story is that they chased me as a kid, I fell at some point I remember but the worst part is that I peed myself.”

“What? How old were you?”

I feel bad for her. I can just imagine how scared she was at that moment.

“Six. If you are going to defend dogs by blaming their training from the owners, save your breath. I will always hate dogs.”

I laugh at how resolute she is about this. I mean I love dogs but with my lifestyle I couldn't keep a dog so they would barely see me. Now that I own part of two hospitals in two different countries I have started to slow down and that's probably why I thought of getting a dog with her. Seems that's a definite no.

“My sister has three dogs.” I say taking my phone out to show her.

“If she's not the type to bring them everywhere I guess it's okay.”

“She isn't luckily. Well she used to be but she lost that poodle and the three she has now are big and are mainly her kids' dogs.”

“Do you think if we had a child she'd buy them a dog?”

“Probably.”

She looks disgusted and I can't help but laugh. I love this. I love having silly conversations with my girlfriend. I'll never get bored with her and her funny questions and facial expressions.

I absolutely hated dropping her off in the morning, I wanted to bring her with to work funny enough, yes, the same guy who said he wouldn't be able to focus. However she has to go sort out things with her university apparently today and the new semester is about a week away so she'll probably be busy with that the whole week.

I am all smiles at work and luckily nurse Selepe is too and working is just seamless. I have to meet with the Medical Director so when Selepe and I are done early just in time for lunch I head up to his office.

Dr Venter has been in this hospital for years as far as I know. He came in as an intern and ended up as Head of Oncology before getting this post. Our offices up here feel like they're not in this hospital. It's refreshing in a way because you forget the chaos below.

I knock on his open door and he tells me to enter and offers me a seat. After pleasantries he gets down to why I'm here,

“Doctor I trust we won’t have any legal issues from your relationship .”

I chuckle. He’s worried about a lawsuit.

“No Dr Venter. Dimpho and I didn’t have any sexual relations while she was working in this building.”

He nods and takes off his glasses before leaning forward from his desk.

“I consider myself an open person but I cannot for the life of me understand why you would be with that girl.”

“Why not?” I ask waiting for him to be stupid as I swiftly put my phone on my lap and record. “Dimpho is a beautiful woman.”

“I suppose some of them are pretty but she’s... You know.”

I know what he wants to say and it makes my chest tighten and my palms sweat. It’s what made me tell an old lady to fuck off at the restaurant in Joburg before I decided to pay and have Dimpho and I leave. However I pretend not to understand.

“As a matter of fact, I don’t know Dr Venter.”

“I didn’t think coming from the UK you would be the woke kind.”

I want to hit him. I hate fighting and violence but this guy is asking for it.

“Woke kind? For loving a black woman?”

“Who is a cleaner!” Oh he just couldn’t wait to add that. “Beats me why you wouldn’t go for the more sophisticated and educated kind. Dr Hadebe is on this very floor and head of the ER.”

I take deep breaths to calm myself. If I don’t I’ll fuck this up by throwing him out the window.

“With the education you are still a backward old white lad. One who still thinks his skin colour makes him superior. Love, Dr Venter, doesn’t care if you’re not educated or sophisticated as you put it. It doesn’t give a fuck about race and certainly you do not know love or you wouldn’t be so miserable that you add your opinion on who I’m with. Goodbye.”

I leave him with his mouth open and looking appalled. I wanted to do and say so much more but I had to let him dig his own grave. He definitely will not be in that office much longer. The upcoming shareholders meeting will see him meet his demise.

According to my girlfriend I’m out to make her fat for offering to bring her the Chinese noodle soup she liked so much last night. She still wants the soup though so I go buy it and drive to

her campus. She drove Nandi's car to campus and I'm just here to give her food while she fights with the admissions department, those are her words. When I arrive I have no choice but to go inside the campus and the security guys don't ask any questions. I'm let in easily. Definitely white privilege, plus the car I parked by the side of the road.

I find the building she said she's in easily and walk in. There's a couple of them here busy with some forms. Didn't she say she registered online? I won't even try to understand. She almost jumps when she sees me but she quickly recovers and grins. She then gets up from her seat,

"Please sit here babe. I'll eat from your lap." She says and I just sigh.

If I ever wondered if I truly love this girl, I just got my answer by taking her place and allowing myself to be a table. She fills me in on how NSFAS and her university are trying to kill her her words.

We're in our own world though we obviously have eyes on us from the other students here. One of the ladies who is behind the counter approaches us.

"Good afternoon sir, mind if I ask if there's anything I can assist with?"

“It’s Doctor, and no, I don’t think there is, thank you though.” I reply being polite so they don’t take it out on Dimpho.

“Oh! A medical doctor or...?”

“Ophthalmologist.”

“I see... British?”

I grit my teeth. Why is she disturbing us?

“Quite.”

She smiles, nods and walks back to her station.

“And that?” I ask Dimpho.

“She just probably thought you were someone important.”

The ladies and gentleman working start calling numbers and students who were sitting start getting up and being helped.

“Turns out you are important Dr Graham.” Dimpho says eating some of her soup.

I have absolutely nothing to do with them calling the students. They’ve probably fixed whatever issue there was.

Dimpho and I walk out hand in hand about forty minutes later. She’s parked down the street because apparently there were more cars when she arrived so we both get into my car and drive down the street to hers. She gives me a kiss before going to the car. We’ll convoy all the way to my house from here.

She drives a bit slow but pretty well, I had no faith in her whatsoever and that's actually unfair because I barely drove before visiting my sister in Dubai and driving her husband's cats.

She parks outside my garage and I park next to her.

"If I had a car like yours we would've raced." She says getting out of the car and I laugh.

"That will never happen unless we're on a race track."

"Scared I'll win?"

"Nope, scared either of us might crash and die."

"Alright fair."

"Can I get a kiss?"

"Hmm, maybe."

"Oh?"

"Only if you're gonna fuck me, right here."

My semi becomes a hard on in a split second. I look around and the walls are high enough that whoever can see us from their house is being nosy anyway.

"We don't have to take our clothes off." She adds and I replying with a hungry kiss to her lips.

This girl is going to kill me but I'll definitely die a happy man. I kiss her neck while lifting the dress, I put my hand in her panties and play with her already wet mound. Her little moans motivate me. She pulls the panties down completely and lets them fall. My body has her hidden from view as her bottom half is naked. I turn her around quickly and lower my pants just enough that I can do what I have to do.

I enter slowly and she moans slowly, I then cover her mouth and start going faster, it needs to be a quick one so I have to get her there ASAP. I use my free hand to steady her hips and thrust in. She's barely holding on and if I didn't have her mouth she'd be screaming. She bites my fingers as she comes with a violent shake of her body and I don't stop chasing my own happy ending before coming undone a few moments later. She laughs as soon as she catches her breath.

"Oh baby you are wild!" I say kissing the back of her neck and fixing our clothes.

"That was epic." She says turning around to plant a kiss on my lips.

I didn't want her to leave so we're at Justin and Nandi's so she can grab some clothes. She'll come back the day before she has

to go to campus. I'm with Nandi and Justin waiting for her to finish packing a bag.

"I'm sure you wish you could move in with her." Nandi.

"I do. I mean I get that I can't yet but I wish it were possible."

"So does she know yet?" Justin.

I know what he's talking about and Nandi has been on my case about it too but I'm just not ready to share it.

"No. I don't know if I can tell her either."

"She likes you. She might just find it adorable even, you don't have to keep it from her." Nandi.

"I'll decide on it." I say when I spot Dimpho walking in with her bag.

"Well, you kids have fun. We, need to sleep since the mister of this house has finally allowed us." Nandi says before blowing kisses to Dimpho and walking upstairs.

"Dimpho if you need to be fetched you can call me or Nandi anytime okay?" Justin.

I never should've told him she tried to Uber at night.

"Thank you Mr Kwena." Dimpho.

"Alright. You kids have fun." Justin says and I roll my eyes.

I grab my girl's stuff and we walk out.

I've been with my girlfriend for almost a week now and I've never been this happy with any of my exes. I truly love this girl and all her drama. We're on the way to see Justin's koko and though she's not my grandmother she's like family to me, all of Justin's family to be honest. Which is why in a day we need to be back for his little sister's birthday.

"I hope Leeto is big enough for koko. She wasn't happy with his growth last time I saw her." Nandi.

"Baby, don't worry about my grandmother, she fancies herself perfect." Justin.

"Well if she didn't want to know my own weight as well, maybe I would be unbothered." Nandi.

"She sounds hard to please." Dimpho.

"You're naturally skinny, she'll love you from the jump. That woman is a weight watcher." Nandi.

"Is she skinny?" Dimpho.

"She has abs. She's seventy." Nandi says and Dimpho just laughs.

I'm waiting for her face when she meets koko.

DIMPHO:

Mama's new house is gorgeous, I can truly say her baby daddy is rich, really rich. The new house is two storeys but it's bigger because obviously, we're not in the hood anymore. I have my own room, very far from mom and the baby and I'm happy about that because I love my brother, but I'm not his mom to be waking up because he's crying at night.

My grandmother is apparently coming to visit because she wants to see this for herself.

I'm sure she's met my mom's baby daddy and I will definitely be asking her about him. I remember being five years old and meeting my grandmother for the first time because after she fell pregnant my mom ran to be with my dad. She never waited to be kicked out of the house but obviously my grandmother said she would never have done that, it was to scare her into not having sex. I was in love with my grandmother from day one. She was always on my side and obviously that made her my favourite. I've fixed up her room and gotten her the lavender candles she likes. I want everything to be perfect. I put some in her bathroom and light the one in her bedroom so when she arrives the room smells just the way she likes.

I go out to the poolside to take a call from my boyfriend.

“Daniel finally has a house and he’s moving next week.”

“I think Nandi showed me the one she wanted for him, it’s really nice in some gated community.”

“I didn’t even know that. I just remember he said he doesn’t want a huge house until he’s married.”

“So I’m guessing I can pull up next weekend?” I ask excitedly. I’ve missed being with him in his house. At this point I’m sure my scent isn’t on anything there.

“I will even fetch you. I can’t wait.”

I hear my grandmother’s voice and quickly say bye to Luke before rushing in to hug her.

“Oh my baby! I missed you so much! If you ever run from home, run from your mom and not me.” Gran.

“Ma! What do you mean?” Mama.

“I won’t even run from home ever again I promise.”

“Good! Now come read the bible for me in my room, Lindi bring my grandson downstairs to me.” Gran says and leave me behind to grab her bags.

Ndalo is now asleep between me and my grandmother. She told me she wants to tour Mama's new house tomorrow.

“Luthuli may have the money but he’s a very stupid man. He should marry my daughter now.”

“What if he doesn’t want to marry?”

“He’s already my age if not older. What is he waiting for?”

“I didn’t know he was old.”

“You’ve never met him? He’s one of those silver foxes. Very sexy.”

“Gogo!”

“What? He’s my age mate anyway. I can tell you if he’s hot or not.”

I shake my head. I could never filter her anyway.

“Gogo don’t you want tea?” I ask wanting to go gossip with my mom.

“Put three spoons and use that horrible vanilla chai with milk.”

“Three Gogo?”

“Yes and hide it from your nosy mother.”

I laugh and put on my shoes before going out to talk to mom.

I stop on my tracks when I hear her arguing with someone over the phone.

“No! You chose your wife. You chose her over your own daughter and now you suddenly want to see her? Not in my house Monama!” My breath hitches and I can’t control my breath. My dad? “Oh because the township gossips told you I sold my house and moved to the suburbs you suddenly want to see her? If you truly want to talk to your daughter, call her. I sent you her number... You don’t care about her! All you want is to spy at how my life is going... Save it. If you miss her like you say you do, call her.”

I stand rooted where I was and she turns around the corner to find tears streaming down my eyes. What does she mean he chose a wife over me?

My baby got me from school, and now we’re going to his place. Daniel is getting the last of his stuff today and moving into his new house. I’m trying to remain positive and happy but my current situation has me feeling hopeless.

My mother eventually had to tell me a girl I grew up friends with and playing with was my sister. My father had an affair with our neighbour and left me and my mother to move to another town with her and their children. He married her and

lied to me about being in Johannesburg for years. My father has been in Mpumalanga this entire time.

Luke looks at me through and takes my hand.

“You don’t have to worry about this babe. Your father will explain himself to you.”

“But that’s the problem babe, no matter what he says I could never understand why he chose to leave me. I could’ve been visiting him, or spending a day with him or something all these years. However he gave me nothing. Just lousy phone calls every other month and lies.”

“Okay, he is an ass. However it won’t help you to beat yourself up about that. You became such an amazing person and he’s kicking himself knowing he played no role in that.”

I smile at him. This man sees the best in me and I don’t even know how to ever thank him for it. He didn’t see a cleaner. He saw me, Dimpho when he looked at me. I will forever be grateful he never judged me by the first glance.

Daniel:

Southy isn't just beautiful, it has beautiful women too and I've wanted to move ever since both my friends made it here. I want to be close to them and luckily for me, I now am. I'm heading up Justin's office in this city.

Nandi, bless my brother's wife got me a new house and even got me furniture through a personal shopper. I'm moving in today after work. I need to listen in on the pitch our designers have for the new router. I'm sure Justin Will arrive in time for that too so I'm getting work done while waiting for the hour.

Justin arrives in my office with my new assistant for the meeting

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I dismiss her and my brother sits across me.

"Feels so weird being on the other side of the desk."

"I'm sure it does. Should we go to the boardroom before they arrive?"

"They'll think they're late and shit themselves. Let's do it."

I laugh and get up grabbing the file. Hopefully today we can decide on a design and start production.

I know I don't have to thank Luke but he's been nice to me, offered me his place and even had to visit his girl at her place because of me so now I'm buying him some nice bourbon. I find a bottle I like and get it for him. The most gorgeous girl passes in front of me and she sends a gorgeous smile my way.

She's already turning the corner and somehow I remain shocked just looking at her. I don't know if she's had a BBL or that ass is naturally like that, either way I don't care.

I look towards where she went and think of following her, when I finally decide to look for her she's already on her way out with some girl pushing the trolley. They probably started at the grocery store. I sigh and go pay for this drink. With my luck, I will never see her again.

There isn't much but taking my packed bags and driving to my place. I left the bottle on the counter. I know Luke will arrive at any moment. Hopefully before I leave because I'm packing some toiletries away. When I'm done I walk downstairs and find him with his tongue down Dimpho's throat.

"You guys just couldn't wait to celebrate my exit?" I ask feigning hurt.

"Obviously! We were counting down." Justin.

"Don't listen to him." Dimpho.

She's still a bit shy around me, worse with Justin but we're teaching her to pay us no mind like Nandi does.

"I know he's lying and he'll miss having me around."

"Morning workouts with a free personal trainer maybe." Luke.

"Ode! Anyway I got you that bourbon, use it to make that one next to you drunk, e go sup."

"I don't need it." Luke says winking and I scrunch my face.

"Oya come take this last bag, I want to hug my girlfriend goodbye."

"Don't make me slap you." Luke says shaking his head and grabbing my bag.

He goes outside and I give Dimpho a brief hug. I play with calling her my girlfriend and Nandi my wife but I make sure never to make them uncomfortable or overstepping.

"Thank you for allowing me in your space."

"It's not a problem. I can't wait to pull up to your party."

"You should. Bring a friend, the more the merrier."

She's about to reply when her phone rings and she asks to take it. I walk out to my car and find Luke texting on his phone.

"I'll see you bro, it's easier now anyway."

“Text the WhatsApp group when you get to the house.”

We shake hands and shoulder hug as I get in the car and drive myself to my new house. Luckily it's not far from here. I'd like to familiarise myself with the place. Luckily for me I have a daily who'll come in sometimes to clean up. I try to be clean but somehow things pile up and the next thing I am dealing with all my dishes being dirty in the dishwasher.

I'm going to the club with Justin today, Luke was excused because he's catching up with his girl. Justin is just playing wingman but I've met some girls since being here, if I don't pull, I'll call this other eager babe.

When it's time for us to go out we arrive in Justin's car, he's going to drink responsibly. We get a VIP table and Justin decides to welcome me back to SA by giving me bottles on bottles. This one just wants me to be hungover tomorrow but I don't care.

A few girls join our table, all beautiful even if I say so myself. We get up and dance, Justin takes videos as gigantic South African ass grinds on me. I like how they love afrobeats here, these ones are singing out loud.

My breath hitches when I spot the liquor store girl. I walk away leaving the girls dancing on their own towards the general

section. Just before I get to her some girl pulls her and kisses her.

Shit! She has a girlfriend. I watch as the girl pulls her out the club and turn back. I lost her again in one day. Oh what am I kidding? She's into girls.

"And then? What happened?" Justin says as I sit back down and pour a drink.

"Saw the most beautiful girl, and she's not into men."

Justin laughs and pats my back,

"Well, these girls here are definitely into men."

I nod and drink up before taking one of them to the side. I don't know any of these girl's here's names but I'll say I'd want to know this one. She's not as voluptuous as the others but she has undeniable sex appeal and I don't know man she's not even as loud as the others.

10

LUKE:

I've been missing my girlfriend like crazy so the next best thing was focusing on work. She's visiting her mom and new brother more and I can't even hate on that so we take whatever time we get together.

Justin is busy with his company things, even Daniel is coming around. I'm not sure why, all I could do was offer him to stay in my house because he is my friend and I'm happy to have him around.

I keep one eye on the clock and the other on my work. I have to fetch Daniel at the airport soon. There's quite a few surgeries to be done next week and I'm hoping to fit all of them in like three days. With Daniel around my girl and I will be chilling more at her in-law suite. I don't trust Dan with her after he tried to say he saw her first.

When the time comes I drive to pick up this idiot so we can go to the house. I'm sure he hates his life right now after flying and resting and flying again for so many hours.

Normally Justin would do this but I offered just to let him focus on work. This one has been here before so I told him he'll find me outside my car when he arrives. I had to borrow Justin's G

class because apparently Daniel packed the whole of Abuja in his bag.

It didn't take that long getting to the house and I helped Daniel with his bags before he went to the bedroom he'll be using and fell asleep. I ordered him food and there's plenty to drink so I'm sure he'll be okay.

Dimpho is back and I want to go see her as in now but I promised myself I wouldn't do that since she couldn't bring her books to her mom's place, she's studying.

It's agonising but I won't allow her to fail this. I want her to pass and get that degree before we take her to a school where she'll learn to become a music producer. She's also said she could learn if she got equipment because there is some software on her MacBook she sometimes uses. I can't wait for her to do what she loves.

Justin and Nandi arrive with baby Leeto and I know it's to see Dan. They get comfortable while I wake up sleeping beauty. We'll use the wings I got as starters now that Justin has meat to barbecue.

I decide to text my girl in case she can pull up with an Uber because the Kwena's will drive with her back. I'm hoping she

pulls up because I know Nandi is bored making salads alone but I'm also helping myself see her.

"I'm hoping you'll be heading up this office by the end of the week." Justin.

"Anything for you my brother. I left Abuja in good hands."
Daniel.

"Thank you for overseeing that. I need to focus on the family farming business for now." Justin.

"I got you. Besides the change of scenery is good for me. You know South African ass is my weakness." Daniel.

"You're forever an idiot."

"Me? I heard you stole my girlfriend." Daniel.

"Dimpho was never your girlfriend and please stay away from my girl. She's not just ass to me."

The door opens and my baby girl walks in looking gorgeous in a t-shirt and shorts. I want to take pictures of her, that's how gorgeous she is.

She comes to greet us politely before going to help Nandi. I want to pull her to the bedroom but these idiots will have a lot to say. I have to hold on till we've eaten.

“Since you’re moving here we should do a little welcome party for you.” I suggest to Justin and Daniel.

“That’s a good idea. We’ll invite people from work, make it casual and get you mingling with your staff.” Justin.

“I know I can’t stop you guys but let’s have it only after my wife has found me a house.” Daniel.

Isn’t Nandi helping him with that?

“Your wife? I’ll talk her into dropping your ass so fast!” Justin.

“Omo they say sharing is caring.” Daniel.

“Not my Mrs.” Justin replies and I just laugh because Daniel is naturally stupid.

Dimpho:

I spent yet another weekend with my mom and brother but I had to leave early Sunday so I can look at my books. I have an assignment this week so I’ve already apologised to mom for not making it for the next weekend, I’ll be seeing my baby because the date for submission is next Friday.

I got a text from Luke telling me there's a braai at his house and Nandi is bored, if I can I should come over. Obviously I agreed, I barely get to see him now and if I didn't want to do things differently from Linda, I would move in with him.

Nandi and I are done with the salads and she had already made the pap especially for the boys who work out. I'm showing Nandi my brother's pictures.

"He is so cute! A hundred percent your twin."

"Mom says his father says he looks like Sandile his other son and I don't agree with that. This one is my twin."

"You've met his dad?"

"No, not yet but she talks about him so I think they're still together though he stays in Durban and has other grown kids there."

"He's probably a divorcee or widower in that case."

"I never asked but I think one of the two."

The boys come to the table with our meat and Nandi and I have already set up on the outdoor dining table. Every man must dish for themselves today but obviously I dish for my baby and Nandi dishes for him and Daniel.

Daniel is a big man, he works out and all but he's not just tall but also wide. He looks good too even if I'm not attracted to

him and he speaks in this weird mix of London and Pidgin English.

After dinner Luke pulls me upstairs. I know exactly what's about to happen and I'm more than ready to jump him.

As soon as we close the door behind us we smile at each other

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"I missed you beautiful."

I flush, "I missed you too."

I give him a long, wet kiss before we pull apart.

"I need you."

I wonder if we'll ever lose this electricity between us.

"I want you."

He takes a deep breath right on my neck and places kisses, his hand moves from my ass and pulls up my dress a little bit. He pushes my thong to the side and I feel his fingers touch my nub and I moan to his touch,

"We have to be quick. I promise it'll still be a happy ending."

I giggle and nod as his fingers dig inside me and I gasp and moan.

MaChiliza:

I know she's spent more time with me in the past few weeks but am I greedy for wanting more? I missed my baby so much. I am just grateful for those two nights she sleeps here and hangs out with her brother.

Siyabonga calls me and I almost roll my eyes. I do love him but I'm not into his controlling nature with me. We fight about it a lot.

"Mama, how are you?"

"I'm alive Luthuli. Do you need anything?"

"I don't want to fight mama. I'm sorry I spoke to you that way. I just want what's best for you and Ndalo."

"I know that. What do you think I want?"

"Apologies mama. I'm sorry."

My heart melts and I'm sick of myself. I should've ended this relationship ages ago. Our son should be the only thing between us.

"Okay."

“Have you chosen a house?”

“Yes. I found a beautiful one. It’s recently updated and has a pool for Ndalo to learn how to swim, I know you want that.”

“Thank you mama, you’ll just send me the details on an email and I will work my magic to get you in soon.”

“Okay, thanks.”

“I love you.”

I sigh what’s the use of lying?

“I love you too.”

I don’t wait for a goodbye. My mind takes me back to that picture his company recently posted on Instagram. I wonder if my son would be accepted by his sons. I open the app again and stare at it.

“Dr Nsizwa Siyabonga Luthuli (founder of Luthuli Shipping), Mrs Nqobile Luthuli, Mr Siyanda Luthuli (founder and CEO of Luthuli Holdings) and Mr Sandile Luthuli (CEO of Luthuli Shipping)”

They all look alike. I can even see why Sandile is said to look like Ndalo more. I just can’t see a situation where they like me or accept my son and that just breaks my heart. Sometimes I stalk them.

Only my therapist knows this. Their white daughter in law has three children but obviously the first born daughter isn't hers. Sandile's wife's account is private and I can't stalk her but Sandile has two kids he posts sometimes. I think Siyanda is too busy to care for social media but sometimes a family selfie or portraits here and there.

My therapist says it's normal to be curious about his family. I told her I want to hate him. I don't know what she thinks about that because she just wrote something down on my file. He's turned me into his side chick and made me question myself and my worth.

I turn the cursed app off when the monitor goes off. I need to ask Dimpho for her Instagram. Maybe more will be filled in about her life without me.

I wanted to ask, I truly did but my therapist's voice reminded me not to. Apparently she'll share when she's ready. I'm going at her pace and I'm slowly becoming okay with that. She seems healthy and even gained a little weight so I'm guessing she's working somewhere.

I pick up my boy and take him downstairs. We're going to hang out and find something to watch as soon as I send his father the listing I found.

11

Dimpho:

Mama's new house is gorgeous, I can truly say her baby daddy is rich, really rich. The new house is two storeys but it's bigger because obviously, we're not in the hood anymore. I have my own room, very far from mom and the baby and I'm happy about that because I love my brother, but I'm not his mom to be waking up because he's crying at night.

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“So I’m guessing I can pull up next weekend?” I ask excitedly. I’ve missed being with him in his house. At this point I’m sure my scent isn’t on anything there.

“I will even fetch you. I can’t wait.”

I hear my grandmother’s voice and quickly say bye to Luke before rushing in to hug her.

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“Ma! What do you mean?” Mama.

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“What if he doesn’t want to marry?”

“He’s already my age if not older. What is he waiting for?”

“I didn’t know he was old.”

“You’ve never met him? He’s one of those silver foxes. Very sexy.”

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"Don't make me slap you." Luke says shaking his head and grabbing my bag.

He goes outside and I give Dimpho a brief hug. I play with calling her my girlfriend and Nandi my wife but I make sure never to make them uncomfortable or overstepping.

"Thank you for allowing me in your space."

"It's not a problem. I can't wait to pull up to your party."

"You should. Bring a friend, the more the merrier."

She's about to reply when her phone rings and she asks to take it. I walk out to my car and find Luke texting on his phone.

"I'll see you bro, it's easier now anyway."

“Text the WhatsApp group when you get to the house.”

We shake hands and shoulder hug as I get in the car and drive myself to my new house. Luckily it's not far from here. I'd like to familiarise myself with the place. Luckily for me I have a daily who'll come in sometimes to clean up. I try to be clean but somehow things pile up and the next thing I am dealing with all my dishes being dirty in the dishwasher.

I'm going to the club with Justin today, Luke was excused because he's catching up with his girl. Justin is just playing wingman but I've met some girls since being here, if I don't pull, I'll call this other eager babe.

When it's time for us to go out we arrive in Justin's car, he's going to drink responsibly. We get a VIP table and Justin decides to welcome me back to SA by giving me bottles on bottles. This one just wants me to be hungover tomorrow but I don't care.

A few girls join our table, all beautiful even if I say so myself. We get up and dance, Justin takes videos as gigantic South African ass grinds on me. I like how they love afrobeats here, these ones are singing out loud.

My breath hitches when I spot the liquor store girl. I walk away leaving the girls dancing on their own towards the general

section. Just before I get to her some girl pulls her and kisses her.

Shit! She has a girlfriend. I watch as the girl pulls her out the club and turn back. I lost her again in one day. Oh what am I kidding? She's into girls.

"And then? What happened?" Justin says as I sit back down and pour a drink.

"Saw the most beautiful girl, and she's not into men."

Justin laughs and pats my back,

"Well, these girls here are definitely into men."

I nod and drink up before taking one of them to the side. I don't know any of these girl's here's names but I'll say I'd want to know this one. She's not as voluptuous as the others but she has undeniable sex appeal and I don't know man she's not even as loud as the others.

12

Daniel:

I'm having drinks after work with my boys, also anticipating my party this weekend.

"So what is this new girl to you?" Luke.

"A friend with benefits. I'm tempted to wife her up."

"You like her that much?" Luke.

"That's the problem, I like her but I don't love her. However there's no reason I shouldn't try."

I kind of have to settle down. I'm way past the thirty I thought I'd have my own family by.

I actually have almost married someone but it didn't work out.

"Aren't you supposed to be fucking other people, at least for now?" Justin.

I mean I did wake up with another girl last night.

"Who said I'm not?"

"Then I employ you not to settle with this Warona. I think she's a good girl but she didn't give you that feeling you got from that lesbian." Justin.

“Who’s the lesbian?” Luke.

“No one. Let’s drop it.”

Justin starts laughing and I know he’ll tell Luke so I click my tongue and leave them to gossip.

“I’ll see you boys on Saturday.” I say and grab my keys.

I need to get some food, cooking, I’m very good at, but I hate. Living in London and putting myself through a prestigious school with a bursary that only covered tuition meant cooking Nigerian food and selling it with a woman who came from my village and gave me a job there. Her help meant I could make more money and get to at least look decent next to students like Luke and Justin who already had everything.

They were good to me, in fact eventually Justin convinced me to stop working and focus on school, he’ll help me out and I’ll pay him back in future... The payback was him hiring me to help with his company and I couldn’t be more grateful to work for him straight after Graduation.

As I get home with Spur, I’ve decided to do my work first and then I’ll work out before eating. I change and run to the gym we share here.

I don't need a spotter for lifting dumbbells so I get going on that first. I actually didn't realize I had these two girls looking at me and I almost chuckle thinking about how weird it has been for me getting older. As a young boy I'd say I was ugly. Growing up into someone ladies even look at is something that's still surreal.

One of them approaches me as I drink my water.

"You're the new guy right?"

"I am new."

"Oh a English boy?"

"Way too grown for being called a boy. I'm Nigerian."

"I'm sorry I just got a bit nervous. I didn't mean to call you a boy."

"It's not that deep but okay."

"Look, I think you're really cute, can I get your number?"

"Okay, give me your cell." I punch in my numbers before she leaves me to my workout.

It's my party today and I couldn't be more glad to be having breakfast with the Kwena's and Luke and Dimpho. They took me out of the house since the planner is busy there with her

people setting up. I think Nandi already wants to head over to my place to make sure everything is okay but we're not having it. She'll go after breakfast.

"Besides people from your office who else is coming?" Nandi.

"Babe, no, you can't stress like you're the planner. Everything is already set. The boys from work will Braai, there'll be finger foods and whatever else you asked for from the planner. Even excess guests will get fed." Justin.

"Fiiiine. What are you wearing Dimpho?" Nandi.

"It's chilled vibes so maybe a nice little sundress." Dimpho.

They have their fashion conversation and I decide to invite Warona. I still have the conversation with the boys in mind but I still want to spend time with her before deciding on things.

I got to the house just before guests arrive and quickly went to change so I can chill with the guests. I head downstairs to find Nandi and Dimpho already greeting and asking people to come inside. There's a temporary barman working the bar and some people from work are here. House is blasting through the speakers and I just know it's to get everyone in a party mood. I go around greeting the guests and grabbing drinks for the ladies especially.

I envy Luke and Justin who are already talking to some people from work and watching as two of the younger boys get the barbecue, no braai, stand ready.

I have to greet my guests make sure they're okay, show the gents the half bathroom and direct ladies to the shared bathroom for the kids rooms upstairs. My room is locked because ain't no way anyone is using my bathroom. Or bed even.

I open the door and it's Warona with her three friends from the club that other day. I smile and usher them in before walking them to the sitting room. Most my colleagues are on couches outside. I leave these girls here and go check on the party people under the temporary large pergola on the yard. There's even a little area they can take photos at with a "welcome" sign that lights up.

I check on the guys busy with the meat. I'm pretty sure most people from work who were going to make it are here. Even Justin's brother Austin made it. The finger foods are plenty and Nandi, Dimpho and some ladies from the office are making sure every new set of guests get the platter.

Fuck! I didn't give the girls in the sitting room a platter so I go back in and grab one then put it in front of them.

“You guys it’s an open bar. Grab drinks.” I say to them so they know they just have to talk to our barman for a quick fix.

I go back to the kitchen and pack some plates into the washer so they can quickly get washed before the food is rolled out.

“You don’t have to work so much you know? Nandi and I are here to help.” Dimpho says walking to the kitchen to get the door.

I’m about to answer that I’d feel bad letting them only take care of my guests but she’s already opened the door and talking to someone. I close the dishwasher and turn to find Dimpho standing with that girl... The lesbian.

“Dan

this is Dintle my friend, the one I told you I would bring?”

She’s as breath-taking as she was the first day I saw her, especially as she sends that gorgeous smile my way for the second time in my life. I think I’m sweating. Am I sweaty?

“Hi Dan.”

“Hi... Dintle right?”

She nods and Dimpho says something about Luke before leaving us in the kitchen, just staring at each other.

Dintle:

I can't believe I have to go back soon as early as next week. I'll now be awaiting graduation and job hunting and I couldn't be more grateful my parents left me money to get through school. I don't know what I would've done without it. My aunt didn't want me to go to school. Apparently I'm just wasting my time trying to do anything in life because she will make sure I never work anywhere. Oh and she can guarantee it. That woman wants me under her roof until the day I die because all I'm good for is a fuck and whenever I'm home, I'm her fuck.

I never even knew it was wrong until a short while back. I was young when my parents died. Young when my aunt made me lick her fat pussy and scissor her. I mean how was it wrong then if I enjoyed it?

How is it wrong now if I would still enjoy it?

Dimpho, who is some parts my best friend and other parts the only person who is closest to knowing me, the real me, asked me to come to q a party and I of course would do anything for her so I said yes. She's such a happy soul. Now a happy girlfriend to some white dude who actually loves her. He's hot

too even if I say so myself. I do have to say so not even because he is, hot, but because Dimpho has to believe I've been with men before. I mean her Landlord is hot as well, married but still and her ex looked good. I mean I like men as much as I like girls but my aunt would kill me if I was ever with a man. Yes, she checks my virginity herself.

So I tell Dimpho her landlord is hot and I would jump him just to make her think I've done it before.

I call Dimpho, "I'm outside babe."

"Okay I'm coming to the door now." She says and hangs up.

This house is really nice. I like the Estate. It seems to be young families and young professionals here.

The door opens and my bestie is behind it. I give her a quick hug and she pulls me inside, introduces me to this guy named Dan, apparently it's his party and then she rushes off to her man for something.

Now it's just me and Daniel standing awkwardly in the kitchen.

"Let me help you at least." I say and grab a wet cloth from the sink and then I start wiping down the dirty surfaces.

"Thank you. If that one gets too dirty there's a pack here." He says showing me the drawer.

I try to walk back to the sink but he turns to me and my heart stops, this man is too tall and too big and I'm watching his eyes just staring down on me.

I gulp air and he places his hand on my arm and moves to the side. The touch is electrifying and almost immediately wetness fills my panty liner. I quickly walk to the sink again and I'm afraid of setting my eyes on him again. Who is this Daniel guy? And why is he making my whole body tingle?

"You can check the others I'll just sweep in here to get rid of the crumbs and stuff." I say without turning. I hope he'll leave so I can breathe out.

I can feel the heat from his body next to me as he opens the top cupboard and takes out a cocktail glass. He places it next to me and I swear it feels like he's doing everything slowly.

"I'll personally make you a cocktail." He says and some girl speaks behind us,

"Dan can I please get a drink."

I don't even turn to see her but I walk past him to wipe the cutting board. His entire presence feels like heat to my body.

He attends the girl and they walk away.

Fuck! I need to pull myself together. I didn't sleep with a man all through University and I can't fail my aunt now.

Dimpho finally introduces me to her man, Justin and Nandi. Justin is the landlord guy I'd make jokes about to Dimpho. I still agree he's hot but after seeing Dan, he's no longer interesting. His wife however? Absolutely gorgeous.

I've been stealing looks at Daniel this entire day and now afternoon and luckily did my best to avoid him. It seems that he's with some girl who's here. Every little chance she sees him approach our couch, she'll appear asking for one thing or the other. I mean I don't blame her. I would want to brand his entire face so every girl stays away.

Dintle:

I'm helping Dimpho and Nandi with getting the place looking decent again. I'm just picking up glasses that people left out here, I can see Luke and Justin still relaxing enjoying a drink, but Dan is busy inside saying goodbye to the the last of the guests. Apparently HOA here allows parties to go on until eight but if you report your party early you can only get an extra hour before the music is turned off and everyone should leave by ten. Luckily most people left around seven to find other party spots.

I take the cups inside and pass Daniel having a discussion with the group of girls who were indoors throughout the party. I can hear them from the kitchen but I wish I didn't, the dining room between us does nothing.

"But Dan you could drop us off and we'll leave Warona here with you."

"Oh no she's not staying over and I'll call you girls an Uber."

"Daniel? Really?"

"As you can see my friends are still here, I think they're spending the night too because they're already drunk. So am I."

“But that girl is here as well mos so I can stay.”

“Warona please, I’ll call you if I need to talk to you. You’re Uber is almost here.”

I can here shuffling behind me and then footsteps. I can hear people clicking their tongues behind me and I will never even face them because I know I’m the “that girl” the Warona girl was referring to. I have put every cup into the dishwasher and then I close it. I’m sure there’s more dishes and stuff out there so I can run this washer. I can half hear yelling and an argument outside. I guess it’s Warona and Dan. I decide to ignore and keep doing what I was doing. I’m actively trying not to listen so I sing back the song stuck in my head from the party and head outside. When I make my way back to the kitchen Nandi is there fuming with Dimpho by her side. Their man get into the room and ask what is happening. I on the other hand will just focus on tidying up.

“Nandi almost beat up Warona's friends and Dimpho was ready to tussle as well.” Dan says half laughing.

“Where is that girl now?” Justin.

“They got in an Uber and left.” Dan.

“What happened?” Luke.

I can hear them as I pick up the glasses Warona and her people left in here. There’s also some cans.

“Obviously she was making noise outside yelling about not staying overnight or whatever, I go there only to innocently warn because of the Home Owners Association here and did her friends not say I’m a slut who talks too much?”

“Excuse me, they said what?” Justin.

I can feel from the way he asks that he’s fuming.

“The Uber arrived before it got bad but they started insulting us and Dan had to just pull us inside and close the door on her.” Dimpho.

“I’m just done with that whole situation. Her friends are nasty as shit. They don’t even know Nandi like that.” Daniel.

“Thanks for getting them out of that... Babe come.” Justin.

His wife was already on his chest tightly hugging him, they go to the couches. Luke fist bumps Dan and walks upstairs with Dimpho.

I’m left with Daniel. I can feel it only because the room is heavy with his aura. I don’t understand how I’m so aware of him.

“So will you be taking an Uber or staying with me?”

I chuckle at that and turn to him. I get flushed from how his eyes are digging into my soul. Maintaining eye contact is difficult but I soldier on.

“You mean stay over.” I correct.

“Yes, with me.” He says with a little smile playing on his lips.

The only language I speak, at least with women, is sex. Especially women I’m not in a relationship with. He must also want that and I can tell you for free, I want him too but I can’t have him.

“I’m not fucking you.” I see Dan frown at me.

I think I might have said that a little loud because the couple in the sitting room gets up and walks out, they even shut the stacking doors.

“I’m not a pervert you know. I meant we can hang out all night. We don’t even have to make it to bed. We can just talk. Especially as the only singles.”

“I’m sorry. I wasn’t saying you’re a pervert, I just assumed...”

“That I want you? Don’t worry, I do. I’m just not going to touch you.”

I stop breathing. Something about him saying he isn’t going to touch me makes me want him touch me. I think I want his touch all over. My body shivers a bit and I take a deep breath.

“Okay, we can, talk....”

I didn't even see Dimpho approach but she asks to talk to me from behind so I find the perfect opportunity to move my eyes away from Daniel. He sees right through me. At least that's how it feels.

I think Dimpho wants to ask to get me an Uber since I'm pretty certain she's spending the night here.

"Baby are you comfortable?"

I'm taken aback a little, "I'm okay, Daniel asked me to stay."

"Are you going to you know?"

Dimpho really knows me just as much as she can. Because no one really knows me.

"Fuck him? I would but I'm on my period." I whisper the last part to her.

I'm lying. I'd rather that honestly.

"Hmm, okay well if at any point you need me, call my cell. I'm going upstairs to fuck my man." Dimpho says and I laugh.

"Get it girl!"

I go back to Daniel and he has warmed up some meat from today and we go sit down next to each other in the dining room with the music channel playing on mute. Why does he make me

feel like I'm safe? He makes me feel like everything will work out in the end. It won't. I know it won't.

He tells me more about himself, Ikenna Daniel Okpara was born and raised in Igboland Nigeria and he says he had an "interesting" upbringing since he grew up in an a very poorly managed orphanage, at least before he could lend them a hand. However he says because he worked harder to get himself into good schools, he at least had that going for him, all up to his SS3 when he got a bursary to study in the UK. That's an opportunity he reckons his late parents hand delivered for him and his sister, he has a sister who lives in Houston Texas now and thirteen years younger than him. He had to protect her with his life after they lost their parents. According to him they just didn't know better and the okay life they lived left with his parents. They had left nothing for him and his sister. No relatives wanted the added burden of him and his sister... Hence the orphanage. Studying was hard because he had no money. He would work just to look decent but more of the money went to his sister who was growing up and needed cosmetics and uniform and all of that. Then he introduces how Justin and Luke came into his life and changed it especially Justin who even hired him straight after school.

The stacking doors open and the couple who earlier went out walks in. They decide to go warm up food too and Daniel asks if

I mind moving to his bedroom and he reiterates he won't touch me. Obviously I agree. Why? I'm not sure. I just want to stay in his presence. I can barely look him in the eyes, but I want to be in his presence, it doesn't make sense.

His bedroom is manly, but still looks really nice. I think I can pick up that some woman decorated it. As dark and moody as it is. I sit on the chaise lounge and he joins me with beer for himself and an ice coffee for me he's on the ottoman opposite me.

"Why are you sobering me up?"

"I don't want you getting too drunk."

"Ikenna, you're not my dad you know."

"Obviously not, but I want to be your daddy." He replies with a little smile and I can't help but laugh.

"Well, you probably will never be that."

"Ouch! Why is that?"

I sigh and stare at him. I've been afraid of sharing about myself. I'm afraid I can't lie to him.

"Well, the truth and no one knows this, I've never been with a man."

“The truth is that I knew that. I’ve seen you before. Some girl came and kissed you at the club.”

“Well, I do like men as well.”

“Oh you do?”

I nod and laugh. He looks so excited.

“I do. I just can’t sleep with a man. My aunt checks my virginity.”

“Strict home?”

I nod. It’s not a lie. My aunt is strict. She just wants me to herself.

Dimpho:

As soon as I finished exams, Luke told me we’re going to Cape Town for the weekend since he has to come back for work and go to Dan's party next Saturday. That’s why I’m having a little photo shoot with my boyfriend at the beach. He organised this because apparently I’ve mentioned that I’d like it before. I

mean I am having fun with this and all, but I just didn't think he listened to me in detail like that.

After this he said we're going to dinner with someone, and I'm tired of posing.

"Thank you so much babe. However I'm really tired of doing this. Can't we go get ready for dinner?"

He laughs at me, "Being a model is harder than you thought hey."

He gives me a kiss and the camera clicks on that moment. He pulls away and goes to tell the guy he can pack up, we're done. I put on the cute crochet see through dress and when my baby makes his way back and he scoops me up bridal style as we make our way back to the car and I'm a giggling mess by the time he puts me down.

I wasn't sure what to wear for this meeting but my baby got me this gorgeous purple powersuit. No shirt, black heels as well. I think it's going to be my first outfit at work. I was taken by this multiracial school to be a student teacher for English. It's the same school Dintle was at teaching maths. That girl's quite smart.

"Babe! You don't want to be late."

“I’m done, I’m done baby.”

He looks so good. Luke is a meal and a half. I can’t wait to get back and eat.

He pecks my lips and then takes my hand as we walk out. I’m still in the dark about this meeting but I trust him.

We get to another hotel and head to the restaurant, I guess whoever we’re meeting here is staying over here.

We get to a table and as soon as I see him I recognise this guy. It’s Clxrity!!! He’s one of the producers behind Elaine’s first ever tape. I look at Luke next to me and I’m crying. He knows exactly who I want to become and I know for sure this meeting is him getting me closer to that. I will love this man forever for this. Even if we don’t end up together.

I want to spend the entire week with my baby at his place when we get back to MP. Especially because I’m spending the next week with my mom and brother. Besides it would be very difficult to explain leaving home to go to Dan’s party. However for now I’m enjoying a young promenade with my Duke. Well, that’s how it feels. We’re both looking for a nice restaurant on the V&A Waterfront after bicycle rides. I need to find a way to spoil this one. Not sex but I’m sure I can afford one of his ridiculously expensive perfumes. Or find something at Dolce

and Gabbana. He deserves the entire world because of the kind of boyfriend he is to me. I wish I could give it to him.

“How about we get street food instead?”

“Nice idea babe! Where can we get hotdogs here?”

“I’ll Google.”

“Long as we grab ice cream after.”

He laughs and pulls me towards him as he looks for a stand and he finds there’s a place right here so we walk there.

Today is Daniel's party and I made it my mission to help Nandi. Now that she doesn't work, she enjoys doing all these things. That's why she offered to find Daniel a house and planned this party. Sure there isn't much to do but Dan is single, so obviously we'll help him out. He's been such a good person and his addition has been great even on Luke and Justin. I can tell they love him. Dintle too arrived and immediately became one of us, helping to make sure this party goes well for Dan and I appreciate her.

The only issue is these stinky ass comments I'm hearing from these girls inside the house. If I knew who they were talking about I would confront them. There's also some girl who keeps

calling Daniel to chill with them and it's annoying me only because he's the host, there's other guests.

Nandi is already over these girls and she told me she's staying away to save herself from kicking someone's ass. I laughed at that.

I grab drinks for Dintle and I then head back outside. Luke is still okay.

"Baby who is that girl in there to Dan?" Nandi.

"I guess a friend with benefits? He met her at the club that day." Justin.

"Which one is that one?" Nandi.

"The one with dreadlocks." Justin.

Nandi frowns, "Her friends have stinking attitudes and she's enabling them." Nandi.

"She's just a little bit insecure. I'm sure she thinks Daniel might have another friend with such benefits around." Luke says shrugging his shoulders.

"Ah babe. Those girls have been gossiping calling some girl names here talking about how she's fake. They don't know anyone here."

Justin and Luke give each other a look. I know I'm right and I know they know this is wrong of those girls.

Besides, I will have Nandi's back all through. It's basically her event too and I will ride for my girl. Those girls are annoying and that's that. We're all supposed to be having fun here.

I turn to Dintle, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, people are having fun and I guess the bad energy remains in there." Dintle.

"At least that much is true. Everyone is having fun out here." Nandi.

"Because of you my baby." Justin says and gives his wife a kiss.

Dintle and I say "Aaaawn" at the same time. These too are too cute.

Austin approaches us from the house and sits with Dintle.

Austin is Justin's little brother and they look so much alike. We all decide to just talk about different random things.

MaChiliza:

I have been having sleepless nights since Siyabonga told me he's sending a car to fetch me today and my son. He's introducing us to his family. He said he came clean to his wife and he has to now tell his children. I'm nervous. I don't want to go but I can't hide forever.

I'm praying he told her I didn't know anything about her. I hope he told his wife I never would've done that to her. I never would've been the other woman. Dimpho's father made me go through that, it was brutal.

I've packed my son's bags and my own. I'm now waiting for the car that will collect me and take me to the airport. My son is too young for a long drive so his father said he booked me a flight. I was a little glad when Dimpho said she wouldn't be making it next weekend as well. That way she won't be confused finding the house empty. I'm going to share the truth with her this weekend. About who my son's father is and our situation.

The driver arrives and I take out my bags. He runs to me from the car,

“I'll get all the bags mam, please.”

I roll my eyes and go back to grab my son in his car seat. I put fasten this thing to the car and sit next to him. I'm sure he'll fall asleep soon. That's usually the case when we get into the car.

The flight wasn't long and arriving in Durban I'm still with my driver, Siyabonga got us a jet for the flight so it was pretty easy.

He gets into a car that's pretty much identical to the one we left in Mpumalanga. I obviously have to be in the back as I always am whenever Siyabonga is around. You'll never find him driving himself.

I'm taken to a huge house, it could probably be turned into a hotel. I'd say it is a hotel but I saw the gate, it's Siya's house. I never dreamed he can afford so much. The information when you Google him never tells you his net worth or shows his home.

I'm sweating. I have no idea what I'll say to his wife. In fact I think she hates me so I'm really confused about what I'll do.

It's getting dark so I have to go inside. I grab my boy and the door opens before I get to it, a lady in uniform greets me and lets me know she'll show me to my room and bring refreshments. I just follow her lead.

I've been getting freaked out by every little noise wondering if it's not the wife coming to see who this unfortunate woman is.

The helper from before knocks and walks in, she takes the tray that had refreshments and walks out. I barely ate. Another knock and Siyabonga appears. He gives me a smile,

“Unjan mama? I just want to see my boy before dinner.”

I point at his son with my head in the crib and leave them together. I’m going to shower and put my pajamas on. When I get out of the bathroom I find him putting Ndalo down.

“Please wear something nice.”

I look at him and roll my eyes. What kind of people have dinner in ‘nice’ clothes? In my house Dimpho and I put on pajamas for dinner and cuddle watching television after.

I put on a loose fitting dress and leave Ndalo with pumped milk and a nanny given to me by Siyabonga.

I go downstairs and find his wife already seated next to him. She smiles at me. Weird.

“Hi MaChiliza right?”

I nod and stand awkwardly by the door way. Siya offers me a seat and I take it. His wife is older but she’s clearly not ready to be acting old too. I can tell she’s younger than Siya and still in shape. She looks elegant and sophisticated. The only thing I’ve got going for me is that I’m younger. That’s all.

“Well, you have to marry my husband and move to Durban. I’m
I my prime to be a full time mother now.”

“Marry him?”

“Yes. Nsizwa wanted to father another son at his age, I’m not
about to always be hands on for that so he needs you.”

“I don’t know if I want that... Marriage that is”

She looks at her husband and then back at me.

“He never told you he was married did he?”

“No, he didn’t.”

“I’m sorry but he needs to travel less. If you’re not marrying
him, please consider moving only.”

“I don’t know. My daughter is in Mpumalanga.”

I wonder if Siyabonga never mentioned her. He knows she’s
important to me and I’ll never leave her behind anymore.

“How old is she?”

“Twenty-one, she’ll be a year older soon.”

“Could you talk to her about it?”

Okay I can’t take this anymore.

“I’m sorry but why are you so calm? I was ready to apologise because I’ve been in your shoes and I would never do this to another woman but you’re so... calm.”

I finally ask because it’s been bugging me.

“I could divorce this one but he can’t survive without me. So we’re here now. Besides, he has his faults but he’s my first love. Father of my boys. I could never survive without him too.”

She’s in love with him. I can just tell he’s her whole world.

“I’ll consider everything you suggested and if it will work for me and my daughter. I know Ndalo will be fine with his family close, it’s just me and my daughter who need to decide if it’s good for us.”

“Take your time. You don’t have to move immediately.”

Siya finally clears his throat.

“The boys will be here tomorrow

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with their wives and we’ll tell them about Ndalo.”

I nod and watch as Mrs Luthuli takes his hand. She’s assuring him.

Luke:

I have a Durban meeting with Dr Ngubo, I think it might be the best deal ever if I can get this done with him. He's a king and used to practice medicine. He also has that old money and new money.

I obviously couldn't leave my girlfriend in Mpumalanga for the weekend so we're here. She had to spin some story to her mother. Next week she's starting her practicals at the school Dintle was teaching at as well. We're here to do shopping here as well. According to Dimpho she must look professional and confident in her clothes.

We're at the Ngubo home for the meeting. I have my girlfriend with me and the more time I spend with her, the more I want to make her my wife. I just don't want to be the reason she's not focusing on her dreams or stopping her from living her life.

She is welcomed and taken by one of the Dr Ngubo's daughters and his wife takes me to his office.

"Good afternoon Dr Graham." He smiles when he sees me.

"Dr Ngubo, good afternoon. Nice to meet you."

“Please sit. I know I probably should’ve taken you to the hospital but I had some work this side.”

I take a seat and he pours me a drink.

“I’ll go straight to the point, I need an ophthalmology wing for my hospital. I was told you’re the perfect man for the job.”

I’m not letting this opportunity pass me. I will even use the money from my father just to give his people eye care. I think this is a good use for it.

“What did you have in mind? I’m ready to pledge and build with you.”

He smiles and we get to business.

By the time we’re done and even have ideas on how to add the new wing we go downstairs for dinner with his family. He has two wives but only one is around with a younger girl he says is his sister and apparently it’s a long story how she’s even younger than his first born daughter. His youngest son and daughter are in a nursery with a nanny.

“Maka Khosi, you made dinner?” Dr Ngubo asks his wife and she laughs.

Something about his smile tells me he’s really pleased by this.

“Yes Ngubo. I wanted Dimpho and Dr Graham to eat our traditional food for a change.” Mrs Ngubo.

“Well fun fact, my mom was born in Mpumalanga but she’s a Zulu woman.” Dimpho.

“Really? I didn’t know that.” Mrs Ngubo.

I think she’s his second wife. He mentioned that his first wife couldn’t join us for dinner.

“She normally calls me Sbahle, the name she gave me.”
Dimpho.

I never knew her mom was Zulu. Not that I understand the difference in any of these languages yet.

“You chose well Graham and not because she’s half Zulu, but because she’s well mannered.” Dr Ngubo.

“Thank you Dr Ngubo.”

I look at my girl and grin. She’s smiles at me as well. A more sophisticated smile. Unlike my excited one.

Daniel:

Dintle wanted to stay at the school she was teaching at. She said it was about wanting to stay away from home so I asked Justin for help and now we have the principal of the school here in a meeting. We'll donate to the school for Dintle to stay and even get paid from the school's budget. She'll still be a student teacher hence she won't be earning as much as the others but she'll get something and Justin said he'll talk to Dimpho about sharing her place since most of the time she's with Luke.

“Okay, to get straight to the point we will donate to the school as a company and build a new Tech Lab, even provide school WiFi for the teachers. There is however a catch...” I tell her.

She looks at us suspiciously, “What’s the catch?”

“Hire and pay Dintle Selepe from the school fund so she can help your Grade 12s with maths.” I reply simply.

“Dintle, I remember that girl. Student teacher right? She’s very bright. I’m sure hiring her will be good for the school as well.”

The principal.

“Do we have a deal?” Justin.

“Yes. We have a deal Mr Kwena, Mr Okpara.”

I finally relax and we shake on it. Justin wanted to do this for schools who actually need it but he’s helping this one solely for me. I could never take that for granted. I need to find an

exclusive and give it to him because he really affords more than me.

We get in my car and Justin turns to me.

“There’s a reason she doesn’t want to be at home. I think you need to talk to your girl.”

I sigh and start the car. I need to find a way to get her to talk to me. I just know it’ll be better after she gets a call from her principal. She will work at that school and get to leave home again because I can’t even see her now. We only text. She said something about her aunt not letting her out of her sight. I just need to understand why that woman controls her life so much. Virginity testing is just extreme. She should be allowed to live a little.

I give her a call on the way back to the office.

“Dintle? Can you talk?”

“Uhhh... give me a second.”

I hear her moving and a door click. Justin looks over to me and I know. I can also tell it’s something.

“Okay, what’s going on?”

“You’re going back to teaching at the high school. The principal will call you soon.”

“Ikenna how did you do that? My aunt made sure no school hires me.”

Justin gives me another look and I just sigh. I want to ask more but it’s more important I tell her she needs to leave.

“After you get the call you’ll come stay with me before you speak to Dimpho about letting you stay with her. I want you out of the house as soon as possible.”

“I have to go.”

That’s the last thing she says before the lines goes quiet, but the phone is still on. I hear the door click open.

“Why is your bedroom door closed Dintle?”

“I’m sorry I wanted to change.”

“Don’t bother putting clothes on. You’re sharing the bed with me tonight.”

I hear footsteps and curses from Dimpho before the lime goes dead.

Justin looks at me for the umpteenth time.

“Something is weird in that house. I’m Googling that aunt. Do you know her name?”

He’s right. We need to know something.

“No but try to find her through Googling Dintle Selepe.”

I'm really worried now. Something is really going on.

“Her parents were both educators who died in a car crash, and more info on the crash... Oh here, her aunt Maude Selepe took her in at age ten. She's currently the director at the Department of Education. This entire article speaks about the aunt her kids and niece.”

“Why would she blackball her own niece?”

Justin shrugs and questions are already swirling around my head. Is it jealousy?

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Dintle:

I've done this many times before, but the more I understand how wrong it is, the more I don't want it. I find her on the bed reading some book. She watches as I walk into the room and she stops me before I get in bed,

“Lay on the bed and put your legs up.”

I sigh and do as she says making sure that she can see inside my pussy. I keep my eyes on the ceiling. I feel her hand on my clit she teases it lightly.

“You're a good girl Dinny. Four years in that cursed University and you stayed away from men for me. You deserve a reward.”

I feel her tongue circle my clit and I already know I'm going to enjoy this. I feel dirty but I can't stop myself from rocking my hips to meet her lips and tongue. She pulls my legs and starts eating it more hungrily and making me want to release all over her face. She's moaning, sucking, licking and working me like the pro she is at my body. I release and convulse all over her tongue. She smiles at me and I know it's my turn. She comes to my face and kisses me. I hate these. I've hated this since day one. I've never understood why my aunt is kissing me.

She moves to my face and understand this woman is huge. She usually gives me a few seconds of air but I know her body too now. It won't be long before I have her screaming and releasing.

“Lick it!” She instructs as she sits on my face.

My tongue is digging inside her. She gets up and smears baby oil on herself. Then it starts. I just have to keep my tongue out and she's gliding up and down my face, twerking in it and moving for her own pleasure. I'm now just a toy for her. I would've made her cum sooner but she wants to use me. I have to just take it.

I couldn't go to bed without a shower yesterday. I had to let her sleep before escaping to take a shower. My entire face smelt like pussy. I love girls. I never feel dirty after a good fuck with girls but my aunt? It's so disgusting after. I no longer know what to do. If I get the call today I want to leave. I'll lie to my aunt about being on my periods anyway.

My cousins are here, I don't know why but I guess they miss their mother. Bokang is with his husband Lefa, they've been together about ten years now and even had two kids, one is Bokang's seed the other is Lefa's and they use a hyphenated surname. It was always funny to me how my aunt judged and

even tried to force women on Bokang when she was keeping me all to herself.

Bassie is my favourite mainly because she decided to be a nurse. She didn't even care that Maude had positions waiting for her if she only became a teacher like her.

I get a call from the school and I almost scream but I calm myself. I purposely talk to the principal loudly and thank her before she cuts the call. I jump up and down and then tell my cousins and aunt about it.

There's no way my aunt can stop me now that I've told my cousins. Maude looks the most confused by my news.

"Are you sure you heard right Dinny?" Maude.

"Yes Aunty. They offered to pay me from the school fund because they can't hire me officially but my Grade 12's really need my help."

"I'm happy for you cous." Bokang.

"Congratulations cous. You can stay with me while you look for a place." Bassie.

Daniel offered his place but I think it will be better for me to be with Bassie anyway. She doesn't really have rules when you're with her. I can visit Daniel forever and ever.

My aunt gives me a tight lipped smile.

“I’ll go grab my bags.” I say excitedly.

My aunt rolls her eyes. “So you never unpacked?”

“I thought I had all the time.” I reply and walk away.

I don’t know how to thank Daniel. He did all of this because I needed an escape. He came through for me and he’s the first person I’m going to see on Friday. I’ll chill tomorrow and be nicer to Bassie so she can allow the visit. Clean her place and all that.

I grab my bags and take them with me to Bassie’s car, she borrowed me the keys so I put them at the back of her car and almost scream because I’m so excited. I go inside and I can’t wait to have the last lunch with this woman.

She’s turned very sour already, I go back to the table and our helper brings us food.

“When are you getting married sesi?” Maude.

“Yho mom. I don’t even have a man.” Bassie.

“Aw, what happened to the doctor?” Lefa, he’s a little closer to Bassie than Bokang, it should be the other way around.

“Katongo? He’s a man whore.” Bassie.

“You shouldn’t date at work.” Bokang.

“Well I did, I got burnt so you’re late.” Bassie.

“And why didn’t I know about all of this?” Maude.

“Yho mama. Imagine telling you about my mjolo problems? You’ll know if it’s serious.”

I had to clean the entire flat, and cook breakfast and dinner for Bassie yesterday to get to be here today. I called him and told him I will Uber to his place as soon as he’s back from work. Bassie is a daytime only nurse. She said she only works in ophthalmology and their surgeries are never that late unless someone comes in from an accident with glass in their eyes or stabbed eyes and all that scary stuff but even then an ophthalmologist will handle it with whatever nurse is scrubbed in for the surgery. I want to leave before she comes back. I got her permission

I just don’t want to make the trip after she’s already arrived.

Daniel texts me an address and tells me to come to his office. I grab my overnight bag and call an Uber. I hope he’ll be waiting outside for me. Imagine walking into a building with your overnight bag? It’s weird.

Daniel:

The graphics are ready and they're going to the printers. We're making banners for the visit to the school. I'll most likely be at the office for that but I know Dintle will just know that's the price I had to pay for her position at that school.

She's coming over today and it excites me. I can't wait to see her and hopefully get to hug her and maybe get a kiss if I'm lucky.

I laugh. I can't be this old and still getting excited over possibly kissing a girl.

I do however still need to ask about the weird aunt.

Melisa walks in with a report and she puts it in front of me.

"I went through it Daniel and I'd say it's all good, but please still check it out."

This one has become more of a sister now and she's getting bossier by the day.

"I will, but I'll have to take it home. My future wife is almost here."

I've told her about Dintle. Not everything but she understands I'm hopelessly in love with her, for no real reason.

“Will I meet her?”

“No. She’ll want to ask you out if she saw you.”

She laughs, “Bisexual people aren’t trying to sleep with anything on two legs Daniel. Anyway I need to go back to my station.”

I smile as she leaves. Maybe I am a bit unreasonably jealous when it comes to Dintle. Somehow I think I’d lose her to a beautiful woman. Which is funny because she’s not even mine if we’re being technical.

I had to meet her outside on the parking lot. She sent a text saying she won’t get inside because of a bag. I don’t understand but I just packed my bag and made my way out. She’s on the covered parking next to my car. My heart is already beating abnormally. This girl needs to stop affecting me this much.

She gives me her dazzling smile and I can’t help but give her a curious one. What is it about this girl?

I walk up to her and give her a hug, a long one. Her hands are wrapped around my neck and mine are on her waist. Could she be my missing piece?

We made it back to my place. She’s on my couch and we have food, everything she could think of in front of us. Now we’re

stuffing our faces and watching some weird series she suggested. It's called The Umbrella Academy and some kids were born from mother's who were never pregnant... Already weird... Then seven of them were adopted and became some weird dysfunctional crime fighters. I'm not as invested as she is but I'm watching it and stealing looks at her.

She eventually pauses it and takes care of the takeaway boxes in front of us before she makes it back. She frowns looking at how I'm now seated. I smile and pull her to sit between my legs. I let her relax on my body.

"So, are you ready to talk?"

I should've had her in front of me so I can see her face.

"Talk about..."

"You. I told you about myself."

"Ikenna, there isn't much to say."

I get up and allow her to take my position then I lift her legs and put them on my legs. Now I can see her.

"I'm sure you can say something about your upbringing."

She huffs and stares at me. I hold it and she eventually looks away.

“Okay. My parents were married and my dad had a son with another woman so there’s a brother I’ve never met, he moved with his mother to Johannesburg. My mom obviously stayed, she did love dad anyway. They had met at a school and fell in love. After years of trying they had me. They loved me. I remember that much, but I had barely known my mother’s family so after they died in a car crash, my aunt Maude took me in.” She’s breathing really heavily.

She shakes her head and gulps air.

“Should I get you water?”

She shakes her head again, then she nods. I don’t understand but I go grab water in fridge and an unopened box of tissues. I’m pretty sure Nandi bought this. I give her the water and she’s full on crying now, with hiccups and all. I pass the tissue and I want to hug her but now she has her feet up to her chest and hugging them.

“I didn’t know Ikenna. I didn’t know what it was. I just new it felt good. She touched me, she made me touch her, lick her and I just did it. I did what she wanted.”

I try to control my breathing but what is she saying to me?

“Dintle? Who touched you.”

I think my blood is boiling.

“Don’t look at me like that! She’s my aunt! I didn’t know it was rape. She told me she was helping me. She made us bumb clits and I enjoyed it then. I didn't know Ikenna. Nobody told me it was still rape when it’s a woman.”

I get up and grab my keys. I’ll kill her. I’ll kill that woman my damn self.

“Don’t go anywhere.”

She looks like just realised something and she looks at me.

“I shouldn’t have said that. Wait Ikenna!”

I grab the door and walk out. I don’t want her to take anything back because I know it’s true. She can’t lie to me now. I lock the door and open the garage. I start the car and drive out. The garage door opens but I’ve already pressed the roller door button.

I need to find Justin and Luke. Now.

Daniel:

It didn't take long for both Justin and Luke to arrive, I was already smoking my third cigarette. We chose to meet up at the office because it's the safest spot for us. The security were a bit alarmed but they didn't bother me. I gave the rest of my cigarette to one of the guards and walk in the building as these two follow me. We settle on the couches by reception. My phone again. It's Dintle. I put it on DND and left my hands over my face.

"Maude didn't just order a hit to stop her brother from a promotion. She's been raping Dintle since she was ten."

Luke laughs and looks at Justin but he's quiet.

"You two are playing an evil prank on me. Right?" Luke.

"We found out about the hit while you were in Durban. We knew there was something off about her but I didn't know it was this." Justin.

"You're not joking?" Luke, he's looking at me.

"I wouldn't joke like this. I want her dead. I'll do it my damn self too."

Luke stands up and goes to the water cooler. He pours a glass and drinks.

“She’s her aunt? Her father's sister. How do you do this to your own blood?” Luke.

“No reason she gives us will be enough.” Justin.

“I don’t want to know anyway.”

Luke is still shaking his head in disbelief.

“I think I have a plan.” Luke.

Justin and I turn to him. Once in a while that sweet London boy can be ruthless, I hope his plan ends with her dead.

I get in using the garage door and she’s not here. The lights are off except the LED’s along the upper cabinets and up the stairs. I walk up and find her in my room. I’m not sure she’s sleeping but she’s covered in bed. I start with a shower. I need it. I walk out of the bathroom naked and get shorts from the closet before getting in bed. I pull her towards me and try to fall asleep cuddling. It's difficult but me and my little guy need to forget about dipping in her.

“Why did you leave me?”

I sigh and there's nothing I can do but apologise. I thought she's sleeping and we'll see this tomorrow.

"I'm sorry Didi. I needed to get some air."

"You shouldn't have invited me if you're going to be leaving me by myself here."

Eh? Wetin dey worry dis one?

"Omo what is this now?"

"I tell you I was raped and your first instinct is to run?"

Run ke.

"Didn't you try to lie to me after you told me about it?"

She moves from me and sits on the floor next to the bed. I have no choice but to sit up. I can only see her through the moonlight outside.

"She's my aunt. I didn't mean time get her in trouble."

Wahala!

"Are you sure say your matter no get k-leg? Aunt ke. She's your abuser."

"So what? You want to go to jail now. You know the stereotypes against your countrymen in this country already."

I close my eyes. That one stings.

“Okay. I’m sorry. I’m sorry when I hear someone hurt you like that, my first instinct is to protect you.”

She buries her head between her knees.

“Why are you even worried about your so called aunt? Did she stop abusing you? Did she apologise?” I ask.

It won’t matter what her response is. That woman is going down.

“No. She still...”

She stops and doesn’t continue. It just hit me...

“Didi, is that why she checks if you’re still a virgin?”

She nods and this time I really lose it. I don’t know when I punched the wall but I feel it when the pain shoots through my arm. I grab a pack I kept on the table and walk outside to smoke on the balcony.

Olosho, ashewo, mumu! She she no get mates like dis? Small pikin she dey see wife. E be like film.

I crush the cigarette with my hand and put it on the metal railing. To think I hadn’t smoked in so long and this foolish woman brought me back here.

I get in bed and call her in. She's been on the floor since I went out. She gets on the bed and snuggles closer to me. Maybe she's tired of fighting too.

"I need you to start making decisions for yourself. Clearly your aunt's reasons were selfish but you're free from that now. She will never touch a single hair on you now."

"Did you really do it?"

"No. She's still alive. But you can't live for her now. We need to get you in therapy."

"Okay. I'll go."

I didn't think it would be that simple but I'm not complaining. I don't want to fight her, especially about that woman.

MaChiliza:

I'm back at my house and making preparations to see my child. She's coming back today. I've been back about three days from Durban. It was an interesting trip. We had to go do the meeting at Sandile's place. His wife is pregnant and ready to pop.

Siyanda came with the white makoti. I knew them. At least online and as soon as their father told them the news Siyanda laughed and told his wife he'd wait for her in the car. His mother ran after him. Sandile just shook his head and walked out, his dad went to him and the white makoti asked to hold him before her mother-in-law comes back and she has to go. I think only she and the other wife held him.

The brothers wanted nothing to do with it and I just had to accept it. I don't know if Dimpho and I can even still move there but it's my turn to tell her the truth. I bought her Chicken Licken, her favourite and a Watermelon McFizz. She loves that combo.

She's here. My baby really looks happy and she's growing up. I don't even care if she has a degree or not now. I just want her to be happy. She's indulging on her food and I clear my throat.

"Sbahle, there's something I need to talk to you about."

"Okay mama, sounds serious."

I sigh, "Well, Ndalo's father is married."

She drops her wing and looks at me. "I didn't know." I add quickly.

She frowns, "He lied?"

“Well he omitted the truth.”

“I see. Does the wife know?”

“Yes. I went to his home last week in Durban.”

“I’m on your side. If you want nothing to do with him, I support you mama.”

“His wife wants us to get married.”

“Excuse me?”

“She doesn’t want a divorce. Regardless of probably getting more money if she did. But she can’t be a full time mother anymore hence her suggestion.”

“Well

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all I can do is support your decision mom. Whatever you choose.”

“Will you still support it if we might move to Durban?”

“Ah mama. We?”

“Yes. I lost time with you. I’m not moving to another province without you. You don’t even have to stay in my house.”

“And work?”

“You’ll be fine baby, I promise you, you won’t suffer while looking. Or I can pay for your DJ school.”

She laughs at me.

“I want to be a producer, not a DJ mom.”

“Okay, I’ll take you to a school for that.”

She shakes her head,

“You don’t have to mommy. I appreciate that you support it though. As for Durban, you can move and I’ll follow you at the end of the year and I’ll try visiting some weekends.”

“Wait are you serious?”

She laughs and nods. “I’ll come.”

I don’t know how I managed to get her to agree. Did I even do it? I mean my baby's life has been in Mpumalanga from birth. I don’t know maybe the beach appealed to her.

The monitor reminds me I have a baby boy who wants to drink milk from my breasts.

Dimpho:

My mother asking me to move to Durban works for me and Luke He is a part of a hospital in Magobeni which is the Bundus of Richard's Bay. We have to be closer to that side when they break ground for the new hospital wing. I was quite happy when Luke told me he will use the funds his father gave him. At least those millions of pounds won't collect dust anymore.

I can't believe how many times my mother has moved in a year.

Mom walks into my room her eyes are red and tears are still falling from her face. I panic and get up.

"Mama what's wrong?"

"It's aunty Shirley. She's gone."

I put my hands on my mouth. Aunty Shirley was my mother's first ever work best friend. They were inseparable at school and eventually everywhere. I'm shocked to find out she's gone.

"I'm so sorry mama. What happened?"

"A headache. Just a headache and my best friend is gone. I have to take Koko from the hospital. She used her mom's phone and called me."

"I'll look after Ndalo. You can get Koko."

She nods and walks out. A headache is all it took for Aunt Shirley? I'm so sad. I go check on Ndalo.

My mom has been sorting out everything for auntie Shirley's cremation. She left strict instructions on what she wants and I know mom knew some of it, like how now she's legally adopting Koko and moving with us. I knew auntie Shirley had no family but I didn't know it was this bad. Her estranged sister passed on years ago and she tried to make contact with her niece but her aunt stopped her from making contact with her. Now I guess mom has to try to at least get the niece notified.

"I can check Facebook or Instagram. What's the niece's name?"

"Dintle Selepe."

I'm sorry, what?

"Are you sure mama?"

"That's how she's listed even in her policies."

"My friend Dintle was raised by her aunt since she was ten. Dintle Selepe."

"If her mother was Donna Williams, she's the one."

It can't be that much of a coincidence. I have to call my best friend her aunt, who she's never met is late. I didn't even know Dintle was half colored. I can't make a call. I need to go see her. Mom and I are at Shirley's house looking through her things and making sure we get everything we need. We're supposed to sell this house so my mother can put the money towards Koko's upbringing but I think mom is sorted with that, we'll add on her school fund.

"I'm going to drive to see her mom, what should I bring you? Those cakes they sell in twenty litre buckets. The neighbours need to be served."

I nod and walk out. I won't say anything because it's my mom but this woman has no family. These neighbours are really here to make aunt Shirley's food for themselves and serve themselves. Some are even dishing up for their homes. Nx.

I know Dintle is at Daniel's house, I think from yesterday. I drive to Dan's Estate with an old picture of aunt Shirley and Donna. I had to bring proof for what I'm about to tell this girl.

I park outside the house and exhale. I should've spoken to Luke about how to do this first. I'm already here though.

I knock and she opens the door rolling her eyes.

"You didn't have to knock you know."

She looks beautiful in a huge t-shirt and nothing else. She really is sex appeal personified even in Dan's shirt. Seeing her today I understand why she's this light skinned. Her mom looked almost white, just like Shirley with similar curly hair, but Shirley's was brown not black like Donna.

"And next time I find you in a compromising position with Dan? No thank you. Lets sit on the bar stools."

There's only two in Dan's kitchen. Granted he lives by himself. I don't know how to do this so I just take the picture out. She looks confused as she looks at it.

"Dimpho? What is this?"

"Your mother and her sister Shirley." She opens her eyes and stares at me. I have to keep going clearly. "Shirley did try to see you. Your aunt stopped her. Maybe she knew she wasn't talking to your mom or something."

"Where is she? Are you with her now?"

"We lost her last night. She just had a headache and went to the hospital with her little girl. She never made it home."

"No."

"I'm sorry Dintle."

“No!!! I never even met her!” She slides to the floor and hugs her legs.

She’s really breaking down. I call Daniel with my hand on her shoulder. I don’t really know what she and Dan are doing, but I know I’ve never seen her this serious with a man. I'm hoping he's just upstairs.

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Dintle:

I had to go to Bassie's place with Dan after Dintle left to get muffins for Shirley's neighbours. Obviously I left him outside and went to tell Bassie I need more clothes and had to go to Shirley's funeral. I asked her not to tell her mother and she just told me it's all good and she doesn't want to get involved anyway.

I'm currently still with Daniel and just going through grief. My Grade 12's could see I wasn't okay and they're behaving a lot. We had to go through Euclidean Geometry during the week and today it's Friday so I gave them a morning test during their study and now I'm marking on Mr Johnson's desk. He's the real Grade 12 teacher, I just help him with the class since he also has Grade 11's.

I spot Dimpho making her way to me. She's been the most fashionable person in this school since she came. She's in a hot pink coat, a shirt and blue jeans her belt is hot pink too. I really like how she's making all the female teachers here breathe through the wound. Most of them are annoying. I'm still dodging weird looks because of Mr Johnson, who by the way is married.

“Hey beautiful.”

I smile at that, I should be calling her that.

“What about you? You’re killing it everyday.”

She takes Mr Johnson’s chair and sighs, “Some of these things I never picked out. Luke's sister did. Especially the expensive bags.”

“Are you sad about that?”

We look at each other and laugh. She doesn’t really care about it, she looks good and she’s making quite the impression on the students. They like her.

“I wanted to check if you’re coming with Dan or should Luke and I pick you up tomorrow?”

“Don’t worry, Dan will be my transport.”

“I’m so glad he’s supporting you.”

“Me too. He’s been really amazing.”

She smiles and quickly gets up, “Miss Skosana and I have one more class after break. I’ll go prepare.”

I nod, “Okay, see you during break.”

I don’t want to think about tomorrow so I go back to the math that’s not mathing from these kids.

I don't want to do this. Without Dan pushing me I wouldn't do it because I'm not ready to say goodbye to a woman I never even got the chance to meet. I just know she would've loved me better than Maude. I can see with how she prepared to leave her seven year old with Dimpho's mom. She made sure her daughter never has to go through what I did.

Dan and I went shopping for the funeral and he got me a simple black classic dress. Heels and a bag. An expensive bag too. Maude would faint at this. She has a lot of money, but she would buy anything but clothes for me. I had to manage with the allowance from my bursary fund from my parents.

"Are you ready?"

I look up at my gentle giant. He still makes my heart want to jump out of my body and the flutters go all the way down there. I wish I wasn't this broken for him. He deserves someone who doesn't have any baggage.

"I'm ready."

I take his offered hand. He puts another on my back and we walk out.

There's a beautiful set up. You'd swear it's a classy party. There's a pastor but Dimpho's mom said it was going to be a bit unconventional. Right now her neighbours are talking about

her on the stage. It's so weird that there's no coffin but that was her wish. She wanted to make things easier for MaChiliza.

Some of her ashes were taken to a jeweller who is making a little necklace for Koko with the ashes inside.

As soon as she sees Dan and I Koko comes to sit on Dan's lap. I feel so overlooked as the long lost sister. She only hung out with Daniel once on Sunday last week but he's the best friend.

It's MaChiliza's turn to speak and I've been holding on but I know I'll cry now.

“Shirley was my best friend. We both taught Grade 2 and maybe it's part of why we were close, I don't know. She loved laughing, even in unfavourable situations she laughed. Hell she laughed at my problems and that always made me feel better. I always told her that if something is serious enough that she doesn't even laugh, I'll know it's going to kill us...”

I can't hear the rest. I'm crying. I can't even focus. I was her niece but I can't even say anything. Koko is crying on Dan's shoulder as well. My heart breaks for her.

After the pastor it's time for the neighbours to be served, MaChiliza, Dimpho, Koko and I have to drive to some mountain not too far from the township. We're releasing the ashes through four sky lanterns. That's what she wanted so we're going ahead with it.

On the way back the car is quiet until MaChiliza asks, “So you two are dating those big boys?”

I want to laugh at how she calls them big boys.

“Ah mama. There’s a child in the car.” Dimpho.

“Hhay wena Khloë is asleep. Tell me the truth.” MaChiliza

“Yes. Well for me, Luke’s my boyfriend.” Dimpho.

Well she’s brave.

“Dan likes me. We haven’t discussed the future. He’s just been supporting me.”

“Hmm...” MaChiliza.

“They’re good people Ma. Luke moved all the way to South Africa for Dimpho. If that’s not real love I don’t know what is.”

“He did?” Dimpho.

“Wait, you didn’t know?”

Oh shit! Dan will never share gossip with me again.

Luke:

The closest thing to family left here is Dan and I. Dimpho's mom, who I suspect is suspicious of me

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got caterers and they're doing everything in the garage, so Dan and I had to stay in the house and basically make sure no neighbours go into the bedroom. I didn't understand but Dimpho said she doesn't trust these neighbours, some are witches. I don't know how she knows that but I couldn't argue about it. They're back. I hear the door open and their voices.

"Dimpho, stay here. You too Dintle." That's definitely Dimpho's mom.

She walks in with a sleeping Koko and puts her down next to her on the couch.

"Good Afternoon." Dimpho's mom.

Dan looks at me.

"Afternoon Ma." Dan.

He called her Ma, I'll do the same.

"Good Afternoon Ma."

"What are you two doing with my daughters?" Dimpho's mom.

"I am in a relationship with Dimpho. I wish to marry her someday."

“Someday? Why not now?” Her mom.

“I don’t know if she’s ready. She’s very young.”

“She told me you two are my age mates. Why are you with children?” Her mom.

“Haah! Children Ma?” Dimpho comes out.

Her mom gives her a stern look.

“Ungafuni ngikthuke wena. Ekhishini!” Her mom.

We are left in silence after that.

Dan clears his throat, “Uhm, well I didn’t know Dintle's age when I saw her at the supermarket. My heart fell for her.”

She nods and looks at me.

“Well, She made me believe in love at first sight. She made me do a lot of things just for her. Without even being guaranteed she would ever love me”

She looks at me a little longer then she nods.

“Okay. Make honest women out of my children. I know they’ll be judged for loving you two, but the love they receive at home should make them ignore all of that. I like you two. Don’t disappoint me, and if they’re not ready wait or move on. Don’t force my kids.” Dimpho’s mom.

Dan and I nod.

“Sbahle! Letha ukudla. Dintle letha iDrink nghlale nabakhwenyana.” She yells.

Dan and I are just looking at each other unsure what’s happening or what she’s saying.

Dimpho and Dintle come with food for us. Then Dintle gives us a cola. It seems like the three of us are sharing a meal. Okay...

I can already sense she’s not happy. I’m going to hear about it as soon as we get into the house. One thing about Dimpho is that she won’t bite her tongue at least when we’re alone.

She gets out of the car first and storms inside. Okay. I sigh and follow her in.

I grab water and sit on the couch.

“Why did you lie to me?”

Okay. It’s started.

“Lie about...”

“You moved here for me. You didn’t tell me that.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Why? Because you pretended you felt for me after Linda? You just wanted me with you?”

“Woaaah wait. I just wanted you with me? You really think I didn’t care that he hit you?”

“It doesn’t matter. It wasn’t genuine! You had an agenda.”

I chuckle.

“You’re mad, because I looked at you, fell in love with you and moved my entire life to be close to you?”

“No. I’m mad I didn’t know.”

“Okay so if you knew you would’ve done something different?”

She staggers back a little. She opens and closes her mouth.

Granted, I should’ve told her but nothing warrants her anger.

What did she really want to do differently? Not love me?

She’s crying. What? This is manipulation if I’ve ever experienced it. I get up and give her a hug.

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you.”

She’s crying even louder. Oh my goodness what is wrong with Dimpho today?

Dimpho:

I feel weird this morning. Also embarrassed. I'm not really sure why I fought with Luke. He's also always apologising me and I feel bad. He's down at the gym. I should make him breakfast. I'm sure he's already had a shake. I pee, take a quick shower and brush before dashing downstairs to make food. Okay that running made me a little dizzy.

I grab a pan and put some oil on it. Okay I'm gonna gag. Did Luke's oil expire? I decide to boil eggs, toast bread and spread some avos. I hope this is as nice as it usually us with fried eggs. Before I forget. I put all the olive oil in the dust bin. We'll buy some later. He walks in just as I putting the eggs in the guacamole.

"Oh, hey baby." He gives me a kiss.

"Your cologne smells horrible mixed with sweat. Stay away from me."

"Ouch!"

"You know I love you. Here's the toast." I give him two and take my own.

We sit in the kitchen.

"How did you find out about my move?"

I look at him, "We're not fighting." He says.

“Well Dan told Dintle.”

He nods. I can feel it turning in my throat. Why do I have the feeling I’m going to throw this food up?

Okay no... I run to the bathroom and puke everything out.

Luke is now behind me. He looks at me weirdly.

“We’re going to the doctor. Get dressed.” He walks away.

I was about to tell him I’m not doing that but the food just came back up when my invasive thoughts reminded me I just puked.

I’m getting car sick now. I had to open my window and take deep breath throughout this trip. We’re at the doctors and I don’t even get to sit.

“I’m only allowing you in because it’s you Dr Graham. I don’t open today.” Dr.

I look at Luke. I feel so bad about this but he just smiles and makes small talk with the doctor.

We sit down and I explain this morning to the doctor. He asked me to pee in a cup and I go do it. Luke is wasting our time.

He puts something in it.

“Babe you really didn’t have to get your friend to work for me.”

“I just needed to check something out. Don’t worry.”

“I’m not worried...”

“Congratulations, you’re pregnant Miss Monama.” Dr.

I look at him, then Luke who’s grinning and I just look at both of them weirdly. “Who told you that?”

“The test babe.” Luke.

I roll my eyes. “Those things are always wrong.”

“Well, we can do an ultrasound.” Dr.

I nod. I’m not pregnant. I understand why he’d think that because of his faulty tests. However its not true.

I’m on the bed laying on my back and Luke and I have our eyes on the screen.

“There you are!” Dr.

The sound. I hear a heart beat and my own heart almost stops.

“You’re around fourteen weeks. Congratulations again Miss Monama, Dr Graham.” Dr.

Luke is holding my hand and his eyes are watering.

“Is the baby healthy? We didn’t know till today.” Luke.

I look back at the doctor.

“The baby is just fine. I’ll give Miss Monama iron sulphate and she needs to see her gynaecologist ASAP.” Dr.

I’m still not grasping this. I tap the doctor, “Excuse me, I’m pregnant??” I yell at him.

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Daniel:

From what I hear, aunty Maude is not doing well. It was all good as well until I came home to Dintle asking to be driven to that house because her cousins called to let her know their mother isn't okay.

"Daniel please, Lefa said she seems to be going crazy. Bokang and Bassie aren't understanding it."

"That's wild. I just don't want you close to her."

"Okay and I understand, but Bassie and Bokang are home already and worried about her."

I shake my head but obviously she feels some sort of loyalty to her aunt regardless of everything.

"Fine."

"Thank you and I'm sorry for asking all this from you."

"It's fine Dintle. Let's go."

I get up first and go in the car. She follows me with her bag only. I guess she's not staying over meaning I'll have to wait outside. The drive is silent. She's listening to Omah Lay and silently singing along. God knows I want to protect her so much.

I wish it was that easy doing it without her knowing. I don't like keeping things from her.

We arrive and she turns to me, "Sometimes I feel like I take advantage of you. I don't like how I feel afterwards because it's not who I am. Because I do love you and I just don't know how to uncare about anyone. Even you."

I almost didn't hear her and my heart is beating loudly in my throat. She said she loves me? How? We haven't even had that talk. She's already walking into the house. Fuck. I couldn't even reply.

I call Luke, "Dr Graham sir."

"Yes Mr Okpara, wey una dey?"

"Never attempt Pidgin again. I thought I was bad."

We both laugh loudly.

"Okay whatever, what's up?"

"I'm at the witches house, how long before she's completely crazy?"

"It depends. She needs more triggers. Lerato has been using pictures of her brother, obviously pretending she's seeing things. Plus the pills, it's going a little slower but losing Dintle might do it. Find a way to go inside. Show Maude she's losing the person she tried to oppress for so long."

“I’ll try to get invited in. Thanks man.”

“Sure bro.”

We get off the call and I decide to call Dintle.

“Hey, I’ll try to be out soon okay, I’m sorry you have to wait.”

“Haibo who are you keeping waiting?” someone says in the background.

She cuts the call. Well this might work. I’m hoping someone comes to get me. Maude did quiet well through being cunning. Hillcrest is a pretty nice place to stay at this side of Mbombela.

I see someone walking from the house to my car. He’s swaying those hips like his life depends on it. He knocks on my window and I lower it.

“Oh you are sexy! I’m Bokang. That evil girl who left you here is my cousin. Come inside.”

Didi has told me about him. She said he’s gay and a square. I know him though. I had to know everyone in the family to get Lerato in this house under the guise of being a friend to their sick helper.

“Okay, thank you.”

I open the door and he’s waiting for me. Okay. He looks up at me.

“How tall are you? Damn.”

I laugh

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“I’m 6’5”

“You’re from the UK? Oh I knew someone would bring me something from the land of The Queen. I just wish you had been my husband instead.”

I’m pretty sure the Lefa guy wouldn’t like this but I’m not saying anything as we walk into the house.

“What’s your name?”

“Ikenna.”

His eyes open, “Nigerian AND English? God it should’ve been me.”

He opens the door without waiting for a reply.

“Everyone this here is Dinny’s boyfriend, Ikenna.” Bokang.

“Oh Ikenna! I’ve seen pictures. Hey.” Bassie.

“Shut up! He’s hot babe!” Lefa.

“Good evening everyone.”

I sit on the couch next to Didi. She’s mouths ‘sorry’. If only she knew I wanted to be here. I put my hand on her thigh and smile

back. The person I came here for appears right on time with Lerato tailing her. I wonder if she's been tasked with protecting her from suicide.

"Who is this?" Maude.

I look at Bokang.

"Oh, that's Dinny's boyfriend Ikenna." Bokang.

Maude rushes to Dintle and I get up and keep her behind me.

"I WILL KILL YOU! Don't you see that this man will change you! He doesn't love you! WAKE UP!" Maude.

She wants to hit her. I can see it in her eyes. She's ready to put her hands on Didi and I'm not allowing I but she's pushing me. I won't budge.

"Haibo mama!" Bassie.

"What's wrong with you ma? Leave her alone." Bokang.

They're both trying to pull her away.

I look behind me and my heart breaks. Dintle is by the corner, hugging her legs and looking at her aunt with fear on her face.

"I didn't kill your idiot of a father and mother for this!" Maude.

It's taking everything in me not to put my hands on her. The kids have stopped trying to hold her.

“Ma what did you say?” Bassie.

She turns to look at them.

“What? I killed your uncle because he wanted my promotion. It was mine. Getting to sleep with Dintle was just icing on the cake.” Maude.

Bokang is crying. He’s using the back of his hand to stop himself from screaming.

“Ma???” Bassie sits on the couch.

“What? What?” Maude.

Maybe I triggered her a bit too well. Dintle wasn’t ready for this. I turn to her and pick her up. I’m taking her away from this house.

“I HATE YOU!” That scream is Bokang.

Lefa's eyes are just short of jumping outside his sockets. He hasn’t even said anything.

I open the door and walk with Dintle to the car. I put her on her seat and buckle her in.

I go to my side and drive out. Fuck!

Luke:

“It depends. She needs more triggers. Lerato has been using pictures of her brother, obviously pretending she’s seeing things. Plus the pills, it’s going a little slower but losing Dintle might do it. Find a way to go inside. Show Maude she’s losing the person she tried to oppress for so long.”

“I’ll try to get invited in. Thanks man.”

“Sure bro.”

I get off the call with Daniel only to find Dimpho behind me. Ah shit.

“Luke? What are you doing to Dintle? Because I swear to God if you are hurting her, I will abort this child so fast!”

“Are you fucking crazy? You’re fighting me over something you aren’t sure about and using our child?”

“Do you want to see crazy?”

She’s acting crazy. I have to be calm because I don’t know if this thing is real. I’m fuming but I calm myself down.

“Woah! Calm down. No. There’s things. Things I’m not supposed to know. I guess you don’t know either. Things Daniel needs to take her out of.”

“What are those things?”

I walk with her to the sitting room and she sits next to me. I tell her about the rape, skip the Lerato part and the pills, and tell her Daniel has to show her aunt that she’s losing her.

“She never told me any of this. It was always boy talk, her sexcapades and relationships she’s mostly ever had with women.”

“It was hard for her to talk about it. Please, don’t even try asking her. I shouldn’t be involved in it either but Daniel needed me and Justin.”

She nods and lays her head on my shoulder.

“I’m still sorry I said that about our baby.”

I kiss the top of her head. It’s scary to me how she’s not connecting with our child. Hell it hurts.

“I don’t like what you’re doing. You know I can’t do anything for my child while he or she is in you. I can’t protect them and using them to fight is low Dimpho.”

She sighs and sits ontop of me. She hugs me tightly.

“I’m afraid. I’ve been feeling like I’m losing my mind since finding out.”

“What are you afraid of?”

She's breathing heavy.

“You’ll leave. Leave us like my dad did.”

I wish I could see her eyes but she's buried on the side of my neck.

“Dimpho I can’t suffer because of your father’s mistakes. I love you. Even if I didn’t anymore, which isn’t likely, I’ll always love my child. They’ll always be in my life.”

“I know. I love you too. I’m just so scared baby.”

I feel the wetness in my t-shirt.

I can’t allow her to get this afraid. It would be so easy for her to have a high blood pressure.

“I’m here. I’ll always be here for both of you. Together or not.”

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MaChiliza:

I have to stay in Mpumalanga for the rest of the year because Koko is in Grade 2 and though Siyabonga's wife offered to get her in another school I asked to just let her finish here. Her life is changing a lot next year. I just want her to keep something the same for now, we'll move to Durban in December there are updates to the house being done right now anyway. Siyabonga will come here to see Ndalo.

Dimpho said she's coming over today and I went and bought us braai meat, wors and wings. She said she'll pick Koko up from school since she's coming back a little late from a zoo trip with the kids from her class.

I'm making a salad and some salsa for us watching Ndalo sleep in the lounge. I need to bathe him after they come home.

I hear the gate opening and leave the salad in the fridge. I grab my boy and take him upstairs so we can take a bath.

I come out with a clean Ndalo and walk back downstairs only to see my mother and Dimpho talking talking to Khloë about her trip.

“No greeting for me?” I question and Koko runs to me.

“I’m sorry Aunty Sbo. I was too excited.”

“It’s okay baby... Hi Mama.” I say after hugging Koko back and Dimpho has already taken her brother from me.

“I’m here too Ma.” Dimpho.

“Hi mntanami, come sit down.” My mom.

I side hug Dimpho before going to sit down opposite my mother. Dimpho disappeared with the babies upstairs.

“I need to talk to you.” Ma.

“Okay, I’m listening.”

“Dimpno came to tell me she’s pregnant. Two and a half months.”

My face falls. Why would she got to mom and not me? I'm hurt. I even accepted Luke and trust me, it was hard for me finding out he's that much older, even though he looks young. I now know how my mother felt when she met Siyabonga.

“Why didn’t she tell me?”

“You know she’s afraid of you. Besides, you needed me here. Her boyfriend is coming over to pay damages next week. I think he’ll also pay Lobola though she doubt that.”

I take a deep breath. I can't be angry over this. I made my baby afraid of me. I may have been trying and being different now but it doesn't mean I wasn't different to her as a child.

The door opens and another daughter of mine appears, Dintle. I told Dintle I'll be there for her as much as I can be. It would be weird if I mothered her sister and treated her differently. Even though she didn't even know she had another sister in Koko.

She walks in with shopping bags and comes to greet us, I let her know the girls are upstairs. With this many sisters I'm sure it would be great if Sbahle is having a son for Ndalo to play with.

"Anyway, Sbahle is a Monama. Her father did pay her damages and though he never even started paying for me, he is my ex husband at least at home affairs. Luke can't pay here, he needs to go to Monama."

My mom frowns, "Monama? The same son of a bitch who hasn't seen her since she was what? Ten?"

I hate this as much as she does but Dimpho is not a Chiliza, no matter how much I want her to be. The best that can be done is that the money for her Lobola is paid back to me. However I don't know if Monama will agree. His wife will surely give us trouble.

"I'll call him now, see how he reacts."

Mom clicks her tongue.

“Of all the men. You fell for that idiot mntanami.”

I would laugh normally but now it’s serious. Monama did nothing for Dimpho but it seems he’ll get all the money for her as if he was here. He left before she was even a teenager for his other woman.

The phone rings twice and he answers sounding breathy.

“MaChiliza. Are you ready to let me see my daughter?”

My mom is rolling her eyes.

“Listen, there’s a man who wants to come show face for my daughter. Will you be available next week Saturday?”

“Dimpho is a baby MaChiliza.”

I chuckle. This one is crazy.

“Yeah well your baby will have a baby, now please answer me or I’ll find any other Monama to help.”

“She’s pregnant? Look how you raised my daughter! She’s too young for a child!”

I huff a breath and try to keep calm.

“Oh Nkulunkulu! Monama can you help us na?”

“Yes. I’ll negotiate for my child!”

Mxxxxm.

“Okay good. She’ll arrive there with a friend on Friday. She has work during the week.”

I still wonder what she even does. I’m still waiting to be told.

“And you better pay every cent to my daughter after. You can keep your cow and a few thousands.” Ma.

I gasp in shock.

“I wasn’t there for most her life. I understand why you feel that way Mrs Chiliza and I’ll do just that.” Monama.

“Good.” Ma.

“Okay, bye.” I reply and cut him off before he can say anything.

My mom is still looking sour but I think the call went well.

Dintle:

I haven't been home since Maude told the entire family she killed my parents and raped me. I've ignored my cousin's texts since that day. Even when they told me they had to move her to a mental hospital after she snuck out the house naked making noise in the neighbourhood. Lerato the new helper tried but couldn't get close because she threatened to kill her.

I just read all these things from Lefa's texts. Bokang and Bassie have been apologising since that day. I don't see the need for it. They didn't kill my parents, their mother did. To think my dad loved his niece and nephew so much. They used to visit his house every Summer. My dad, and my mom always showed her children love. However she didn't see it. She just wanted to kill them for a bloody promotion.

To say I've felt dirtier since that day would be an understatement. I slept with a woman who killed my parents.

It may be categorised as rape, but there were days I enjoyed it. Days I looked forward to it as a child. That's exactly why I feel dirty.

Why I've been under Ikenna's care and selfish by staying there when I can't love him the way he deserves. He deserves someone who never wanted to sleep with their aunt, no matter how young they were at that point. Someone who has never sexualised a killer. Someone pure and easier to love

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but unfortunately I can't bring myself to leave the protection and comfort of his embrace, the way he brushes his leg over mine until I sleep, the food he cooks us, the food he orders, the drives to work, his mischievous smile, everything that makes me want to stay in his care. I love that man. I don't know when I decided that but I think between the day he wanted to stay talking to me instead of a girl he could've easily fucked that night and when I decided to share my pain with him after keeping quiet my entire life.

"I'm sorry I never told you the truth. I wanted to, but... I just couldn't."

Dimpho has tears streaming down her face.

"I hate her. I hate Maude. Killing your parents wasn't enough?"

"I don't even want to understand how her mind works. Can we please move on from her. Aren't you excited? You're having your first baby."

She cries again, even more and shakes her head.

"It's hard. I threatened abortion a few days ago and though he acts like he's okay, Luke harbours a little resentment towards

me for it. I don't even blame him. I have been panicking since finding out. Now I'm afraid I'm driving him away myself."

I frown, "Why would you do that though?"

"My mind convinces me he will leave me. The way my dad left me."

"So you hurt him?"

She sighs and starts sobbing a little louder. I put my hand on her back and rub it,

"I didn't want to hurt him but I did. He told me he can't protect his child while they're inside me and that hurt him. What hurt me, was that he meant my child would need to be protected from me. I'm a monster Dintle. A bad mother before I've even started."

She's crying loudly now. The door opens and her mother looks at us with a frown on her face.

"Haibo are you okay Sbahle?" MaChiliza.

She sits on the otherside of the bed and takes her hand.

Dimpho shakes her head and cries and holds on to her mother.

I get up and walk out of her room. I'm sleeping with Koko

today, and though I'd want to speak with Dintle and let her

know she would be a good mom, I'll let her talk to her mother.

I get in the room and find Koko playing Candy Crush on her phone.

“You should be in bed you know.”

I get in next to her.

“I know. Candy crush on my mom’s phone reminds me of her. She used to shout so much when I finish her battery with it. She still gave me her phone.”

I smile and hug her tightly. She’s crying softly.

“I miss her so much. Aunt Sbo said I look like her and I don’t even need pictures to see her, even though she is blowing up one and putting it in my room at the new house.”

I love her so much. She’s a smart little girl.

“Are you excited about Durban?”

“I am, Aunt Sbo said we’ll have the Ocean a throw stone away.” She laughs knowing she didn’t say it right, “A stone away? I don’t remember.”

We both laugh and I snuggle with her listening to her stories on how she'll be different in Durban.

“When in Durban, I’ll have a mother. Kids won’t look at me with pity anymore.”

I freeze and and lift my face to look at her.

“Is that how you feel here?”

She nods. “All the kids are pitying me. Others told me they also don’t have mom’s and I will be okay.”

She shakes her head obviously frustrated at the whole thing.

“Kids can either be mean, or nice. It seems like your classmates are trying. Maybe the wrong way because they’re too young, but they aren’t hurting you with what they know about your mom.”

She shrugs, “You’re right. At least now I have two older sisters and a baby brother. I just wish my mom was also still here.”

“Well, she loved you. Look at how she fought so you could get a good guardian after she was gone. She knew MaChiliza will love you like her own. My mom had no such plan for me. I can’t blame her though, she didn’t know how I would end up.”

No answer. I check her and she’s already asleep. I kiss the top of her head and try to fall asleep.

Luke:

I'm having a conversation with Justin and asking him for help. As a South African man I'm sure he has understanding for Lobola negotiations and cleansing ceremonies.

"So can you help me out with a team to collect my wife?"

"Anyday but my father will know more than me. You'll have to come home with me to his house and ask him."

"Okay. I asked Alex to fill in for my side of the family, though he's as clueless as me."

"Alexander Graham is coming here?"

I nod, "Tomorrow."

He grins back and I shake my head.

"If you're thinking you'll be partying with him I'll tell Nandi so fast!"

"Who said that? I just can't wait to see our favourite cousin."

I roll my eyes and drink the whiskey in the glass. Justin used to be wilder than normal when Alex was around. I guess he appealed to his dare devil side. Skiing, sky diving, mountain climbing, parties, girls every night.

I wanted my sister to be here but it's short notice for her and she has kids.

Daniel arrives with more alcohol and flowers for Nandi who grins when she spots them.

"See now Daniel is just trying to take over from you."

"Please. Nandi loves me way too much to even notice his gigantic ass." Justin.

"When last did you even get her flowers."

"Three days ago motherfucker. No man can spoil my wife more than me." Justin.

Daniel walks to us with the beers and sits opposite us.

"Brothers." Daniel.

"Why are you spoiling my wife?" Justin.

I laugh because of his earlier comment.

"I'm a born gentleman." Daniel.

Justin and I both roll our eyes. I agree with him but I'd never admit it outloud. Dan is just one of those nice people, but you'd rather keep him nice because he can be bad and it turns out ugly.

Alex is here and I got him from the airport, and my baby has served us dinner. Store bought dinner, only because she has lesson plans to make for work.

"I'm going to do some work, it's been really nice meeting you Alex." Dimpho.

I get up and give her a kiss.

"Thanks Dimpho. I see why he's so in love." Alex.

"Ignore him babe."

Dimpho laughs and leaves us to our discussion.

"You, stop it if you still like your head on your body."

"Come on cous. I'm just appreciating that she's fine. You know I'll end up with Amaka."

"Dan will kill you. Besides, she's busy getting ready for Berkley now. That girl has no time for dating."

"Hmm Berkley? Maybe I'll coincidentally go to Cali."

"Don't you dare provoke Dan. You know he still doesn't know you like her."

"Well neither does she. I just keep eyes on her."

"Are you stalking her?"

"That's a harsh word. I'm protecting her."

“From what? Other guys?”

“Maybe.”

“Jesus Alex. I don’t even know what to say.”

I always knew he was a little obsessed with Amaka but I never knew he was in the literal sense of the word, obsessed. He seems like your normal business person

he’s a data analyst and used to work for Justin before he started his own thing. Part of me thinks he’s more than ready to hire Amaka as soon as she’s done with school.

Daniel:

I smile when I arrive home and smell Egusi. Didi might not be able to cook any yet, but she sure knows how to order for me. I appreciate everything because it shows me she listens to me and knows Egusi is my favourite.

I go upstairs and find the bedroom empty. She’s probably studying in the other room. I take a quick shower and go knock

once and open the door to find her working on the desk in the room.

“Didi.”

I walk to her and she gets up to give me a long hug. Those hugs that make me never want to let her go. I don’t know if she even feels the electricity I feel whenever she’s in my arms.

“Ikenna.” She says and sighs.

We let go and I sit on the bed while she sits on the chair facing me. My arms are on either side of her thighs and I’m just looking at her pretty face.

“Staring is rude Mr.”

“Unless you’re staring at someone beautiful.”

“Who told you that?”

“I did.”

She laughs and looks at me. I just can’t tear my eyes from hers and I think she’s as affected as I am. She clears her throat and looks down,

“I got you Egusi. You’ll make your own semo or pouno.”

“Thank you. I appreciate it.”

“Well. I have to get back to these books.”

“Really?”

She nods, “I’m almost done. I’ll be down before you finish.”

“Okay. Come here.”

She smiles but keeps her eyes down and shakes her head.

“I’m afraid.”

“Of me?”

“No... I’m afraid of what may happen.”

I laugh and put two fingers under her chin and make her face me.

“What do you want.”

She keeps her eyes away from me.

“You.”

“I’m right here baby.”

Her breathing becomes loud.

“I don’t know how to be with a man.”

“Okay. I’ll teach you. After dinner.”

I let her go and leave her in the room looking shocked.

During dinner she’s sitting opposite me. Her legs are crossed and I keep my eyes away from her. I just know she’s stealing

looks at me and eating slower than normal. I almost want to laugh.

I finish my food and out everything in the dishwasher before coming back to wait for her. I keep my eyes on the football game. She gets up a little later and comes back after running the washer.

She sits on the edge of the couch and I turn the TV off, get up and offer her my hand.

She looks at it and takes it reluctantly.

We go upstairs to my room. I already know I'm not allowing her to have sex with me yet. As painful as it's been for me and my little guy, I'll have to wait. I just want her to enjoy being intimate with me without any pressure to lose her virginity.

I help her out of her pyjamas slowly watching the goosebumps all over her body. I smile to myself.

I finally take off her panties while on my knees and she's soaked. It takes everything in me not to kiss her there first.

I get up and start kissing the back of her neck, before turning her head only to kiss her and I feels like electricity between us. Like there's a literall current traveling from her to me and back to her.

I think she's going to drive me crazy. My hands are roaming all over her body, a little squeeze at her boobs and she moans in my mouth. I reach around her wet mound and slowly touch her erect clit. Fuck.

I release her mouth and kiss her neck while playing with her slowly. I part her lips and slowly try to enter her wet little hole and one hand is all I can use. She's too small for another finger. Her moans are making it so hard for me to keep the promise I made to myself. I have to do it though. She needs to get used to me before I even enter her tight little hole. Yeah I'll definitely have trouble keeping her from feeling pain if wanted to have sex.

I push her on the bed and she lays with her belly, her legs hanging. I get on my knees and pull them apart and take my finger out of her. I pull her pussy lips apart and start from her clit with my tongue making her scream on the covers to muffle the sound. I keep at it, sucking, tongue fucking, eating, licking her pussy and when I'm ready to watch her come undone I use my tongue to put pressure on her clit, it doesn't take that long and she cries out my name as her juices explode in my mouth.

Dimpho:

My man loving up on me throughout the night should've made today's trip be a lot easier but I can't lie, I'm still tense. Knowing my own father would've rather stayed away from me hurts. This man was a hero in my eyes for years. I thought he loved me more than my mother. That part still hurts me.

Nobody can love me more than my mother. She might not have been the best mother always to me, however she's never stopped loving me. Even when I ran from her, she loved me. She didn't even move because she hoped I would make it back home.

My father however lives in a house I didn't even know exists with his other children. Happily married to our old neighbour.

I curl my hands around my bag's strap. Luke's hand touches me and I smile facing him.

“Your dad should be nervous. Not you.”

“Well I can only hope he is. Mom said she already dropped groceries there and apparently the wife was looking her like she was here for my dad.”

Luke laughs at that.

“With the way your mother bossed up? I doubt she’d even look at him again.”

“Old me would’ve been hurt at that. Now I actually would rather she married Ndalo's dad than go back to mine.”

“She doesn’t even need a man at this point.”

I smile because he’s right. My mom really bossed up. Her own very nice Mercedes, her own nice house and maybe some of it is her baby daddy’s money but it’s all in her name. Besides, mom has that lucky coochie like me.

If she ever heard that I'm dead.

I look behind us and Daniel is still driving behind Luke with Dintle. I don’t know who else would’ve been by my side through this if not Dintle. She can look out for me in this place that’s my father’s but I’m no more than a guest in.

They left us a house away from my dad’s new house with some snacks since Dintle and I both agreed we’re spending most if not all our time in the bedroom.

Amogelang is the first person to spot us. She comes to us and gives us hugs. Dintle and I just look at each other and chuckle.

“Sesi! I’m so happy to see you! Who’s this?” Amo.

I don't have the energy for this. I ignore. I know Amo didn't send her parents to have an affair but I'm still unable to pretend we're cool.

"I'm Dintle. Her best friend." Dintle.

I walk inside the house to find my father praising me with my clan names. I would roll my eyes at this but my heart is beating out of my chest.

I can't believe I'm finally seeing him after so many years. Almost an entire decade of my life I spent pining after his love and he's been right here. Playing happy families with his other kids. He looks older, but he's still skinny.

Somethings never change I guess.

"How are you my beautiful daughter." Caiphus.

"I'm alive tate."

He sighs and hugs me and I step away from his embrace. I can't grant him that anymore. He's my father because of DNA. That's all.

"I should've known you are a rude child like your mother."

Mme Monama.

"Okay don't you dare talk about my mother!"

“I am the one who failed my daughter...” Caiphus says as he takes his wife away from me explaining himself to her. Nx.

I don't want to fight anyone this weekend and this woman is already trying me.

“Where will we sleep Amo?” Dintle.

“My room. I'll show you.” Amo.

Dintle takes my hand, “Let's just get through tomorrow. We can even leave early.”

I nod and squeeze her hand back as we go to Amo's room.

Mme Monama:

This child thinks she's better than my children only because she managed to catch one hungry lowlife white man who doesn't even know beauty. Mxxxm.

She's just like her evil mother who came here trying to impress with her stockvel groceries packed in that second hand Mercedes. Maybe it's even third hand.

Everyone back in KaNyamazane knows she's broke and forcing things. Pretending to have bought a house in the suburbs. As if she can afford such. Someone should tell her living in debt to impress people never works.

What can we say? She's trying to pretend she's no longer hurt by losing Monama to me when I know it still pains her.

"Teboho go and tell your sister I want to talk to her." I tell my youngest baby.

"Okay Mma."

I need to speak sense into that little idiot. She's far more beautiful and lighter than Dimpho but where's her husband?

She comes to me and sighs.

"Are you finding out anything about this supposed husband of your half-sisters?"

"Yho Mma. I told you I don't care about him. I just missed my sister."

I slap her and she looks at me with a hand over where I hit her.

"Nyister nyister. She's getting married and you're here entertaining her instead of looking for ways to get her man."

"Mma you said he's a hungry white boy. What do you want to know now?"

The eye on the side I hit her on is crying and I can already see she's bruising. Being a mother to a light skin child can be annoying.

"I'm sorry Amo. I shouldn't have hit you my beautiful girl. Let me put that on ice."

She doesn't say anything but follows me to the kitchen.

"I want the information because I might be wrong. If he is really rich

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wouldn't you want him for yourself?"

She shakes her head and I almost slap her with the ice pack. She flinches and nods.

Good. Now we need to make her the most beautiful girl in this yard tomorrow. My daughter can't waste away at home while that good for nothing MaChiliza's child gets a wedding. She's not even educated like my daughter. I'm sure she doesn't even understand the English her boyfriend speaks.

As for my husband I need to talk to him and convince him we need to keep that bride price. He's the girl's father and he paid for her.

This one is a little slow sometimes but I'll keep convincing her to take this white boy from Dimpho.

MaChiliza:

I am leaving Ndalo with his grandmother so I can go all the way to Monama's house before the delegates arrive. I might no longer be Monama's wife but it's my daughter's day and I can't miss it. Especially when part of me suspect that woman he married is a witch. I need to protect my child and grandchild.

“Nothing gives me joy like knowing Monama married a crazy woman.” Ma.

“I don't like it only because I wouldn't be surprised if she tried to hurt my child.”

“Then she will know us. Nobody is touching my grandbaby.”

“I'll go just to make sure of that. Will you and Ndalo be okay?”

“I raised you and your brother, I can definitely take care of my grandchild. You should leave Khloë as well. It's still dark outside.”

I look over at Khloë and she's already fallen back to sleep regardless of the shower we took. I just smile kiss my babies'

faces and leave them alone. I would kiss my mom but she's likely to shove my face off. Only Sbahle gets to do that. She'll have her hands full with both of them but who am I?

I find my daughter's chopping and hug them both.

"You should go shower and change. I'll cook."

"We're almost done Ma. Besides Amo's mom said she's not touching a single pot." Dimpho.

I see Amo is uncomfortable. I don't know maybe she feels bad we're talking about her mom.

"Okay you're only permitted to chop then. I'll cook. Starting with breakfast."

"Yho thanks Ma. I had started boiling the eggs. Frying would take forever." Dintle.

"It's fine. I'll cook some beans and grill the wors. By the time you're done showering, you'll get breakfast and tea for Dimpho."

"Ma said no one should touch her wors." Teboho says laughing by the corner of the kitchen.

He's about Koko's age and I would've bought her so they could play if Ma didn't say no.

“Luckily I’ll only use the wors I bought.”

“MaChiliza you are testing me? Why are you touching my food and cooking in my house?” Mme Monama.

“You don’t have to eat yazi. Besides, I’m only using the ingredients I bought. Speaking of, where are the spices?”

“My husband won’t eat food cooked by you.” Mme Monama.

“And I am here to take care of my daughter’s delegates not your cheating man.”

“I knew it! You’re still bitter MaChiliza?”

“I don’t have time for this. Dintle, please take my car and buy the spices I’ll text to you. Take Amo.”

I give Dintle my keys and they walk out.

“Oh so you want to beat me with your daughter?”

“I would never ruin my daughter’s day like that. If you do want me to beat you up, come to me later. Ngizokunenebula ngesbhaxu ntombazane.”

“Heh! Let me go and tell my loving husband you’re threatening me in Zulu.”

Sbahle looks at me and we both laugh at the same time.

“Ma! Your Mnakwenu! Ke segafi.”

I give her the look.

“The closest thing I have to Mnakwethu is Luthuli's wife. Not this deranged woman. Me? Crying over her man? Imagine.”

Sbahle laughs just as her father enters the kitchen.

“Mma'Dimpho, how are you?” Caiphus.

“As you can see Monama.”

“My wife tells me you are threatening her.”

“And vele ngizomubhonya loyo. Its nothing Monama she’s dramatic.”

Sbahle next to me laughs out loud because she knows her father never got to learn any IsiZulu. I stare at him.

“I don’t understand but I’m sure you understand you need to get along with her. If anything just for today.”

I laugh, a real loud laugh and shake my head before continuing with my cooking.

I will never like Amo's mom. She kept quiet about the paternity of her daughter knowing very well I was married to Caiphus at the time. Pretending to be my friend. I don’t even care about him anymore. It’s her principles I’ll never forgive.

MaChiliza:

May God help me to not touch this woman. She's been parading up and down this kitchen while her husband and his brother are talking to the delegates.

One thing she won't get is the chance to see me out of this kitchen. I don't trust her as far as I could throw her so I'm keeping my eye on this kitchen.

In this house you can't get to the kitchen without being seen in the dining room hence Sbahle can't come talk to me anymore so she sends Dintle or Amo.

They're finally asking for her and I exhale. Finally, progress!

Oh my baby looks beautiful. I didn't even know Amo was such a good makeup artist. Something she was modest about, which makes me wonder if that woman she calls mother is really her mother.

At this point I can start dishing up. There's already laughter in the dining room. I start ululating when my baby finally comes back from the dining room. Mme Monama overtakes me and does it louder outside.

I can't believe she's stunting on her neighbours using my child.
Sies!

I get Amo and Dintle to serve the guests. Sbahle is helping me with the salads and looking sad that Luke isn't even waiting outside. Graham has spoiled this girl thoroughly.

I'm packing the food in containers and the girls are eating. When they're done they'll help me with the clean up.

"Yho mama, thank you for cooking for me, thank you for making sure they're taken care of. I don't know how today would've went without you."

"I'll always be here for you Sbahle, you don't have to thank me for being your mother."

"I love the relationship you have with my sister ma." Amo.

We smile at her, "So do I and I get to see it alot." Dintle.

"Did you see the Viano outside Amo? Come here." Mme Monama says by the door.

Amo all but rolls her eyes as she goes to her. She's such a sweet girl but unfortunately she's literally the devil's spawn. Even if she's not evil.

After the delegates have left and we've washed all the pots and plates I'm ready to grab my daughter and leave but I have to wait for Monama to report that she's leaving to her ancestors.

Monama's brother Gideon comes to me and smiles, "Oh the beautiful MaChiliza. You'll never change sesi, always glowing."

"You were always the charmer in the family. It's good to see you Gideon."

"Now I wish I begged my wife to come more so she can meet the original Mrs Monama."

"I didn't know you had a wife?"

Mme Monama passes us in the kitchen with aloud "Mxm" and it seems her brother in law doesn't care.

It's finally time to leave and I have to deliver the new Mrs Graham to her surprise engagement party. Dintle had to ask Amo's mom if she could join us and she agreed almost immediately because in her crazy head Luke will fall in love with Amo.

Amo told me everything her mother has been saying and trying to do since before the girls arrived. She even told me she gave her a love potion we got rid off right outside the gate. I'm

grateful Amo spoke to me and not Sbahle because she is pregnant and I don't know how much this would stress her.

The party is a surprise for Amo so Dintle and I told her we're taking her to dinner to celebrate and she should put on a nice dress.

She didn't want to do it but we're practically forcing her to come to the restaurant with us.

Dintle:

It's been the longest day already but the night is obviously going to be longer. Luke is hosting an engagement party for his bride to be, my best friend Dimps. To say she was shocked when she arrived at the restaurant and was surprised by Luke would be an understatement. The girl already hated me and her mom for making her go out. Now, she can't stay away from his side and smiling from ear to ear.

Ikenna kisses my neck and says, "I've missed you so much beautiful."

I turn to him and give him a kiss, “Hopefully enough to stop teasing me. Start giving it to me.”

He laughs, “Tell me baby, what is it?”

I look around even though we’re speaking softly.

“Dick.”

He laughs, “Should we ditch the party.”

“Oh you’re doing this on purpose you know I can’t leave Dimpho yet.”

“Don’t worry baby, your dick will still be hear at the end of the night.”

I giggle and look around for Amo. I find her among a sea of suitors. I think those are the doctors from Luke's hospital and even Austin. It’s so funny how oblivious she is at how some of these men want her. I spot Alex going to her and they make it out of the swarm of men.

I’m grateful he saved her

however I don’t trust Luke's cousin. He’s got this air of unavailability around him. I think he’s either gay or he’s one of those guys who want to always be a bachelor.

“Should I be jealous of Alex?”

I laugh and shake my head, “Never. I just don’t trust him with Amo.”

“I’ve known Alex almost as long as I’ve known Justin and Luke, never trust him.”

I laugh because I saw this coming.

“Aren’t you friends?”

“In a way that he’s friends with one of my best friends and a cousin to the other. Otherwise not really. Something about the way he stared at my sister Amaka made me uneasy.”

“Is it how he’s looking at Amo now?”

He looks at them and shakes his head, “No. He seemed more enthralled. Unable to look away. Only for him to turn around and entertain other women. The look in his eyes that day, I almost believed he had fallen in love and I was going to kill him. My sister was only seventeen. But no it wasn’t love.”

“Yeah he seems incapable of love.”

“Maybe he’ll grow up. He’s only twenty-nine.”

I know I’m his sister’s age so it was a seven year difference that made Ikenna see red. Which is funny because he’s thirteen years older than me, but I won’t point that out.

“So that’s all it took to make you unlike him?”

“No Didi I don’t unlike him. I just don’t trust him.”

I’m having a conversation with Nandi while the guests are dancing. Including her own husband and my... boyfriend I guess? Funny Ikenna and I haven’t defined anything.

“He’s been convincing me to go bungee jumping with him and Alex. I don’t see it happening.”

“He probably just wants to enjoy something with you.”

“Well this daredevil side of his, I’m unfamiliar with. I can tell it’s his thing with Alex though and they can go right ahead.”

“You sure you don’t want to do what he likes?”

“You don’t understand, I don’t do heights.”

I laugh at that. If she’s afraid then Justin will have a hard time convincing her to do it.

I’ve waited long enough for this and I want to go home now so I grab Ikenna, let Luke and Dimpho know we’re going and go wait for the car from the valet. Ikenna had a little more to drink so I have to drive. Which I think is just an excuse to have me drive more.

This man will get me used to his huge car.

We get to the house and suddenly he seems quite fine. I roll my eyes. Gosh Ikenna thinks he's so sly.

I scream when he picks me up and kisses the side of my face before laying me softly on the couch.

“God you're beautiful”

That's the last thing I hear before he takes my lips and kisses me roughly, our tongues fighting. My fingers are itching to explore all of him but he's holding my arms down and kissing the daylights out of me.

When he moves and stares at me we're both panting. He flips me over and pushes my dress up, then he moves my panties to the side while he kisses up on the back of my neck.

“You're absolutely beautiful baby.”

I moan when his finger sinks into me and his thumb plays with my sensitive spot. I don't know how he did it but this man can get me an orgasm at the drop of a hat. I quickly use my hand to stop him,

“Ikenna I want you.”

He curses a bit.

“Okay. Upstairs.”

I get up as soon as he moves from me and start taking off the dress as he follows me from behind cursing as he watches each item of clothing drop.

I'm trying my best not to look behind me but I know his eyes are on me.

As soon as I enter the bedroom I turn to find him fully naked. My mouth opens and closes only staring at him from the V pointing to his impressive dick and right at it. I can see the precum. It takes him a step to get to me and he kisses me nipping and tugging at my lips. He picks me up and I rap my legs around him. I can feel his hardness right on my ass. Fuck!

He lays me on the bed and reaches over before coming back with a condom wrapper. Okay this is really happening. I help him roll it with shaky hands and he decides to stop and watch me. I almost stop but I want this and I'll show him I'm serious by helping him put it on.

He starts kissing me as soon as I finish and laying me back down.

I feel something pushing at my pussy and he curses.

"Babe, I might have to hurt you."

I nod and hold on to him. I did my research, I know the first time isn't always good.

I can feel it stretch I hold on to him even tighter.

“Relax baby, please.” He says and patiently waits for me.

After he’s satisfied he inches in closer and I wince. He tries moving and I hold on to him.

“Please don’t stop.”

“I’m hurting you baby.”

“Don’t. Stop.”

He huffs a breath and starts again. I close my eyes and feel excruciating pain just before I realize he’s inside me.

“You’re crying Didi.”

I nod, “Just give me a minute.”

I think I hear him say that’s torturous but he waits with me before I nod for him to try moving.

He starts off slowly still cursing all through, before picking up his pace. I can see why people enjoy this but most of it for me right now is pain! The pleasure is so faint the rest is excruciating pain! I don’t understand why he’s cursing and I want to ask him but I’m just in pain.

“You’re too fucking tight babe. I can’t last.”

I nod because I can’t speak and I kind of want him to be quick as well. It doesn’t take long before he let’s out a loud “fuck!”

and literally vibrates before his body relaxes but he's still panting. He gives me a forehead kiss as he finally takes himself out of me.

Well they said you need to keep doing it to get to the pleasure, I'm currently too sore to have that happening tonight.

Daniel:

When your girl calls you big it's usually a compliment. It makes you feel good. Unless your girl is now afraid of having sex with you again because she thinks I broke something in her.

I don't know what to say to her. It's not that I'd want to have sex while she's sore, but with the way she's speaking? Sex is cancelled for her. I had to torture myself by icing her pussy. Which I'm pretty sure only had an issue because it was her first time. Even she knows she has to try again before it closes up and becomes as painful to open up again.

However I'm not going to convince her to change her mind because it might be the start of an argument.

"Babe?"

"Yes Didi?"

"I'm ready to discuss our future srx life."

I sit up straight and look at her, I hope she's not going to suggest other women. I move her small foot from my face and listen.

"Okay, I'm listening babe."

“I’m done whining. We can try again tonight.”

She puts her foot on my face again. Okay, I give up.

“Are you sure you won’t complain about walking again?”

“Well, no. I’ll probably whine everyday but don’t worry, with the patience you show me, it motivates me to want us to try again.”

I love Didi. I do, but she has this new thing of fighting herself, which she refers to as whining, then when she realizes she was fighting alone, she backtracks.

“Okay, before we get to sex, are you ready for Monday?”

“School? No. I love those kids but they are struggling even with the easiest math.”

“All of them?”

She smiles and sits up therefore moving her foot from my face.

“No. Not all of them. I just don’t want to embarrass them by making them have extra work. You know how mean kids are.”

“Well, I personally think you should forget about embarrassment and at least try to help them out with extra work or extra attention. What mark do they get on average?”

She shrugs, “Like fifties and sixties.”

“Mxxxm. You’re whining me? You’re worried about people who still pass?”

She laughs at my reaction, “With their school fees being that expensive? Yes I worry.”

“Mxm. Abeg stop.”

She laughs even louder.

I stand up so I can go pee. This one is worried about people who get to the average? I used to have classmates who would get no marks at all from maths, or one mark. Her class is doing well. She should be celebrating.

I get a call from Luke, “Brother.”

“Bros.”

I grunt. Did I not tell him to stop attempting Pidgin?

“Lucas Graham, what’s up?”

He laughs at me, “You’re pretty pissed when I just helped you. My sister’s husband sent your two cars over to SA. They’ll be delivered to you tomorrow.”

“Finally! Thanks man. I can finally take Justin's car back to him. I’ll send you the payment for the cars.”

“Got it. Oh and Maude is inching closer to death.”

“I need her to finally die not get closer.”

“Patience Okpara. I don’t know sometimes I feel bad for my nurse Selepe. She pretends she’s okay at work.”

“She said she hates her.”

“She’s her mother. We may resent our parents but at the end of the day we all have a small part that believes we’re wrong about them.”

“Your father?”

“Yeah. Anyway, soon you’ll be playing the supportive boyfriend role at her house.”

I shake my head. Maude is really suicidal. The pills were stopped, she came back to her senses but then she remembered how crazy she had acted and started really going crazy. Her kids put her in some care center.

I go back to Dintle and she’s on the phone.

“Okay, but do you trust Alex?... Are you sure?... Okay. Bye girl.”

She looks at me

“Alex helped Amo get a job at NMV.”

“Alex helped someone?”

She laughs, “Babe are you sure you don’t hate him?”

I shrug. “No. You’ve met him though. He’s a cold man.”

“Looks can be deceiving.”

“Okay. Forget Alex. Isn’t it bed time already?”

“Hmm, I guess it is.”

I smile, “Then let’s go to bed.”

She lifts her arms. That means pick me up.

I think I’m baby’ing her too much.

Dintle:

Sometimes Ikenna's silence bothers me. I'll try provoke him so he can say something but instead he'll listen to me and barely comment back. I thought saying I'm not having sex again would've made him stop me or something but no. He listened attentively which made me feel like I was being silly for trying to get a reaction.

We're finally in bed. I got on his back and he became my ride all the way to my room.

I turn to him and look into his eyes. His beard makes him look so good. I don't know why he used to be beardless when it actually connects. I like the way his eyes become Chinese when he laughs.

"Ikenna, you know I still don't know what we are."

"You're my girlfriend Didi."

"Since when?"

"When you told me you love me, what did you think would happen? I'm also deeply in love and invested now. You're my girlfriend."

"Because I told you how I feel about you?"

"Yes. No woman has ever done that. It shocked me, in a good way and I knew I'd never let you go."

"You know Dimpho got a whole trip just to become someone's girlfriend?"

"Good for her. Want to know what you're getting?"

"What?"

"Wait for tomorrow."

"Well that's not fair. You shouldn't have said anything."

"And if I wanted you to anticipate it?"

“Ikenna please.”

“Come here, I have something to make you forget about it.”

He kisses me and moves to my neck my night dress is barely covering anything and it’s already moved. His hand squeezes my ass before he turns me around.

He pulls my waist towards him and his other hand reaches my pussy to play with my pussy. He’s purposely making me horny so I can ask for...

I feel him sink inside me without warning and I let out a moan. It’s a little painful but his distraction by playing with my clit worked because it really wasn’t as painful in fact...

He starts moving and, “fuuuck, baby?”

“Yes baby?”

I moan again, he’s moving in me, slowly and it’s making me say things I don’t know or even understand. What the hell is he doing to me? It’s not like it’s now pain free, it’s both pain and pleasure and an agonising feeling that I need to release from what he’s doing to my clit.

“Don’t hold it baby. Cum for me.”

I arch my back more and follow his command. What fuck? He starts increasing his pace, “I’m going to need it again baby. No clitoral stimulation. Just your sweet pussy.”

He says to my ear and I'm barely even back from the high of the first climax.

You know something? Today' a good day. I don't think anyone can tell me otherwise. My students are happy, and no one can change my mood today no matter how hard they try. I'm done with the morning class with the Grade 11s.

“Okay students, homework on page 134 and please stop copying from each other.”

They all laugh. I grab my stuff and walk out. One of the girls from the class follows me out, “Miss Selepe, can I come see you with Cleo tomorrow?”

I furrow my eyebrows. Cleo is one of my best students and I did notice she's not in class today but didn't think much of it.

“No problem Khauhelo. I don't m, just make sure it's break. Now go back before Miss Monama finds you outside of class.”

She nods and rushes back inside the class. I see Dimpho walking on the other side of the school coming to the class. I blow a kiss to her and she blows one back as I go to the Grade 12s.

Ikenna looks so happy as he's picking me up.

“Hey baby.”

“Hey babe. You look happy.”

He smiles and puts his hand on my thigh.

“How was work?”

“It was okay, I had a good day. How was your work day?”

“Just fine. Its your turn to pick the music.”

I get to it and start finding songs for the car ride.

When we get back home there are two cars parked in the house. Why didn't he tell me we have guests?

I side eye him, “You could've warned me we had guests.”

He parks and shrugs at me.

“I'm sorry?”

I know what I said about my mood but maybe he's getting to me just a bit. We didn't even buy enough dinner for these people.

I get out on my side. He also gets out.

“Oh babe, catch.”

I almost get hit by whatever he threw at me in the face but I ducked.

“BABE!! You should’ve waited for me to be ready. You’re n even supposed to throw things at me.” I stomp to the grass and spot Range Rover keys. I pick them up and turn to him.

“And then?”

He points at the black Range Rover in the yard. I look at the keys and then the car. No... He didn’t.

“Wait, are you joking?”

He shakes his head, “I did ask you to wait for today.”

“OMG!”

I scream out loud and run into his arms. He got me a car? He got me a car!!!

Luke:

I'm at the hospital getting some eyes fixed when I'm called to the ER to attend a lady who was stabbed in her eye by her boyfriend. The story made my insides cold. I cannot imagine myself ever hurting Dimpho. I don't understand why anyone would do this to someone he claims to love. I need to quickly saw it back together while other surgeons try to save her life. I don't even know if she'll survive but I need to make sure she doesn't lose her eye in case she survives, even if it will never focus again. She was stabbed multiple times.

After I'm done with the eye I unscrub and hopefully my own patient's haven't eaten anything so u can get done with them today.

I call Dimpho because I'm sure she's back from school now.

"Hey baby, I might be at work till late okay?"

"Can I come over? I'll go straight to your office, with dinner for you."

"Sure, no problem babe. I haven't gotten the chance to eat anyway."

"Okay I'll be there in plus minus forty minutes."

Well at least I'm sorted for dinner. I find Nurse Selepe still waiting for me.

"Has anyone eaten?"

"One, the other two waited. Okay, fit that one patient in tomorrow. Let's get this show on the road for the others."

She nods and walks away to get the first patient.

Luckily I finished and told the nurse she can go home. I know Dimpho is waiting in my office. I open the door and find her sleeping on the couch, she has Spur paper bags on the table.

I close the door safely and go take my scrubs off. I need to shower.

After the shower I wear my clothes and find Dimpho munching on riblets.

"Hey baby. I couldn't wait."

I smile, "No problem babe. I don't mind."

I sit next to her and kiss her cheek.

"The ladies told me Seloilwe was fired."

I nod and look for the fries. "Good riddance."

I already made sure he was fired. Him and the Medical Director. Who was replaced with Dr Hadebe who used to be head of the ER. She's doing a good job too.

Which reminds me now that we're breaking ground in January at Magobeni, I need to find my own replacement here.

"Babe, did you have anything to do with it?"

"Yes. I reported his inappropriate behaviour. The hospital took the decision to fire him."

She stops eating and looks at me, "If I wasn't going to dirty your closes with these riblets, I'd jump you right now. I appreciate it so much baby."

I smile, "Don't worry. We'll have a quick one in this office after dinner."

She grins at me.

Daniel:

When I bought the car, it wasn't for Dintle but I'll make sure she never knows that. I bought both cars for myself but when she mentioned how Luke did it, I felt guilty. I mean she may not have been jealous of Dimpho and Luke but she's a girl. Of

course she wanted the nice proposal and whatever else. We've upgraded to posting online now and the first post was the car I got her. I'm glad she appreciated it. Now I'll have to get a bigger truck again from Luke's brother in law. He gets us discounts even though he flies the cars from Dubai.

Now I have to change the ownership of the vehicle.

I get back home and it's dark as if no one is home but I saw the car in the garage.

I turn on the light and I see her silhouette on the couch. I turn all the lights on before making my way to her.

She's facing the other side. "Baby?"

She turns to look at me and her eyes are swollen and red rimmed. She's been crying.

"What's wrong Didi?"

I sit next to her and she pushes herself to put her face on my lap.

"I... My student, Cleo. She had the most, evil and vile recording of her... Her step father raping her. She said she's tired and she needed to do something about it... Her, mom... She doesn't believe her. What kind of mother is she?"

My heart breaks. I know she's also thinking about her own situation and her being unable to do anything about Maude.

“It doesn’t matter. Your student will get justice. No one will even have to know she was involved in getting the recording to the police. You just need to talk to her. If she agrees to involve Nandi, I’ll ask Justin to help her out in the background. I don’t know much about cops in this country. They’re not reliable where I’m from depending on how much money you have.”

“I’ll speak to her. I want to help her out, I really do but it’s breaking me so much already I don’t know if I can.”

“You don’t have to do it if you can’t. That small role of letting her speak to Nandi will be more than enough.”

She nods and closes her eyes. Fuck! I wish I could’ve protected her from this. I need her to see the therapist as soon as possible.

I’m driving her to the appointment. It didn’t take much to convince her that she needs to go. The only thing she wouldn’t do was go in without me. We’re the first one’s in.

“Hey, Mr Okpara, Miss Selepe. I’m Thabo, your therapist. As you can tell, I like to keep things casual, it helps most of my clients.”

serif; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman";color:#231F20;mso-ansi-language:EN-GB"> “Hi Thabo, I’m just Miss Selepe’s moral support.”

She smiles and squeezes my hand. "Hi Thabo."

He sits on the couch opposite us.

"Are you sure you're going to speak openly with Mr Okpara here?"

"I trust Ikenna. He's the first person I was openly honest to about everything."

"No problem then. Can you tell me about yourself?"

"My name is Dintle Selepe. I'm graduating in September, officially a teacher like my parents. I do hope I made them proud. Sorry that's not about me, I am in love with Ikenna? I have a few friends, but I haven't seen them in a while. Does that make me a bad person?"

Thabo shakes his head, "Are you avoiding them?"

"No. Maybe. I don't know."

She looks at me and takes a deep breath, "I'm afraid of their reactions. I used to, you know, have sex with them in the past. They knew I was bisexual but they've never actually seen me with a guy."

"So, is it an issue if they don't like your boyfriend?"

“No. Not really. Dimpho is all the friend’s I need. She’s the only one who has met Ikenna and is supportive. I just don’t want to feel judged.”

“Do you hate being judged?”

“Maude used to do it. She judged my hair, she never wanted me in braids or weaves. My body, she liked me bigger...”

She looks down and grabs the tissue.

“Who is Maude?”

Dintle looks at me and I nod. She lays her head back on the couch.

“Maude is my aunt. She took me in after my parents passed. Then she started raping me and checking if I’m still a virgin. I’m still ashamed to say it felt good. I knew it was wrong and dirty, but it didn’t stop me from enjoying it.”

“You’re not to blame for that. She was the adult. She is a predator and you didn’t do anything to deserve that type of treatment.”

“I hear that, I just don’t know if I actually understand it.”

“Do you think it’s the guilt stopping that?”

“Probably. Maybe the anger as well. I didn’t know she killed my parents. If I did, I would’ve gotten out of the situation sooner. I would’ve gotten the confession sooner.”

Our time is up. I wish I had gotten her two hours.

“No one can blame you for things you didn’t know Dintle.”

“Thabo I slept with my parent’s killer. I don’t care about others, I blame myself.”

Thabo looks at me. I can tell it’s hard for him to stop the session here. It’s such a bad point. Dintle stands up.

“Ikenna, please take me home.”

I nod and get up. I take her hand.

“We’ll be back next weekend Thabo.” I say and we walk out.

She’s not saying anything. I won’t push either. I’ll wait.

MaChiliza:

I’m in Durban to check on the progress of my house. When I knew I had to spend the rest of the year in Mpumalanga, Siyabonga decided to remodel the home we had bought. I’m here with Khloë, we left Ndalo with a nanny at Siya's house.

“Auntie, will I have my own room?” Koko asks looking at the exterior of the house.

“Obviously! You’ll have your own space.”

She nods and looks around again. I turn back to Siyabonga.

“You know I’ve never had a daughter. This will be interesting.”

“You don’t have to do anything you know. I’m adopting her, you don’t have to.”

“Mama, that doesn’t even make sense. I’m sure you don’t want her being left out when Ndalo visits my house. Even my wife is excited about being a step-mother to her. “

He’s making sense so I don’t argue. I just didn’t want him to feel obligated to be a part of Koko’s life. She’s my responsibility now. Shirley trusted me with her and I can’t ever let her down.

We’re back at the house and the white makoti has my baby in her arms. Her daughter is with her husband apparently. She trusted him with a newborn. I could never leave Ndalo with his father even now.

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t resist. He’s so adorable!”

“It’s not a problem. He is your kids’ uncle at the end of the day.”

“Good luck convincing Nami or Slandiso to say that.”

“Was it easy? Being a step-mother to Namelwa?”

“It came naturally to me. I don’t know, maybe it was easier because my husband never cheated. Or maybe it was because I had recently had a miscarriage with my ex. Anyway, I accepted her. Besides, her mom wasn’t hung up on my husband which made it easy.”

I nod. “I’m afraid for Khloë. She’s not a Luthuli like Ndalo. I don’t know how I would feel finding out she’s being mistreated for it.”

“My mamezala doesn’t have an evil bone in her body. She’s a little extra, almost always dressed to the nines but she’s not an evil woman. She’s one of the soft ones. You don’t have to worry about her. She is really excited about Khloë. I think you know she’s never had a daughter before she got daughter’s in-law.”

I nod. Maybe I’m worried for nothing.

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Dimpho:

Besides morning sickness and a few annoying smells, I've been okay lately. Except maybe that I want Luke next to me all the time.

I'm showing a bit more now but I'm hiding my belly. Those orders were from my mom. I really don't care who sees or who knows. It's not like my engagement pictures aren't online already.

"Koko liked the house so I'm happy about that. All of you have rooms there."

"Luke and I are moving to Durban as well so I guess I will use the room sometimes."

“About that, what about work?”

I’m pretty sure she’s worried about me leaving the job she thinks I do for Nandi.

“Don’t worry about it mom, I’ll be just fine.”

“I hear you. Just don’t think I’m not happy you and Luke are going to be closer to me. I never want to be away from you Sbahle. Not knowing where you were or if you had eaten was very hard for me. You spent Christmas away from me Everything hurt at that point in my life.”

“I’m sorry mama. I’m here now and I promise you, no more running.”

“Good. I love you my child.”

She gives me a tight hug.

"I love you mama."

I haven't spent much time with Nandi and Leeto since my pregnancy and everything else. So I made time for them today. We're having lunch, just us three.

"You know Alex left for USA and not the UK?"

"Well Luke just told me he left."

"Kgoši said he's in love with someone in Cali."

"Alex in love? Please. He was here entertaining my sister a few weeks ago."

"Before helping her get a job in Durban. I think he was just being nice to her."

“Then she’ll be hurt. I could tell she liked him.”

“If you had known before you should’ve told her he’d break her heart. Anyway, how is Amo settling in Durban?”

“We’re not that close because I still don’t trust her mom. However far as I know she’s doing well. She tries with me but I don’t respond well. Am I a bad person Nandi?”

“Absolutely not. Hurt person? Yes. Bad person? Never.”

“I love her, by the way. Since before I knew we were sisters. She was a huge part of my childhood and we used to be super tight.”

“Then don’t allow her mom to come between that. Give her a chance again, but keep your eyes peeled. Don’t blindly trust.”

“Anyway, how’s Austin and the little one?”

She gives me a huge smile and starts updating me about Azania and her new collaboration with some MP event and her wine, Zaria. I couldn't be more proud of her. She's way more than just a housewife. That's for sure.

I should've went to my fiancé's place. I just thought I missed being home. I really didn't. My mom is on the phone with Chelsea and her sister wife to be planning Christmas's already for their kids already. I'm definitely bored. I decide to go hangout with Khloè and watch cartoons with her. It's better than this boredom. In fact I'll text Luke that I'm coming home in the morning. Mom walks downstairs to me trying to make a frustrated Koko understand why Cat Noir and Ladybug can't know each others identities.

“But they can still save Paris together. It's not fair that Marinett doesn't know! She loves Adrian and he loves Ladybug not knowing they are the same.”

“But you know Hawk-moth is also Adrian’s so and can steal his miraculous if he finds out.”

“It’s just not fair!”

I hide my smile and give a side hug,

“Life isn’t fair my Ladybug, but I assure you someday you’ll find your own Cat Noir.”

Luke:

“Now tell me, why is your sister calling me Cat Noir?” I ask sitting next to her.

She laughs, “Khloë is a qlittle bit obsessed with some cartoons lately.”

I nod, “Dintle’s student only wanted her help. She had to help Cleo with everything. Tomorrow Cleo's stepdad will be charged.”

“I need to check on her. I’m sure it was hard for her.”

“Daniel has her in therapy. It won’t change her past but it’ll help.”

“I’m so glad she met him.”

“Would you ever go to therapy. Work through your issues with your mom?”

“I don’t know. I mean she’s changed for the better. It would probably be for my inner child. My mom could yell yho babe. I lived life her way for long because of it.”

I almost ask about the issues involving her dad but I actually don’t want to stress her.

“At least you lived long enough to see her do better. I doubt that would happen for my dad, even less likely for my grandmother. Sometimes I think mom might have been like them and I’m a little bit glad she died before I could see it.”

“No babe! Take that back. You’re not glad your mom died!”

“But it’s true. I’d rather keep the good memories I have of her. Or I’d hate her today.”

“Babe aren’t you heir to the dynasty?”

“They can give it to Alex. Or my sister. Heck if they give it to me, I’m letting Alex and Jessie handle it.”

“You know I never asked why you don’t like them or their money.”

I don’t like talking about it. It’s not a nice topic to start and even as I know it’s should be discussed and work through, it makes me hate myself for having Graham blood in my veins.

“They owned slaves. They aren’t apologetic about it and my dad is a cruel man. I’ve seen him deal with people who stole from him.”

Her eyes are out.

“Your family, owned what now? That’s why you didn’t use the trust fund money?”

I nod, “Yes. I’ve felt guilty since I found out. They don’t care.”

“Do they know you’re marrying a black woman?”

“Yes. I let them know through my sister. I don’t talk to them and I promise you, we don’t need their approval. I even asked Jessie not to tell me what they said if anything. They never had issues with my friends but that’s different...”

“So I’m assuming they loathe the idea of a black grandchild?”

“Baby, I don’t care what they...”

“I know you don’t care babe, neither do I but imagine telling our child that their grandfather and great grandmother have a problem with the colour of their skin?”

“I’m hoping they’ll be dead by then.”

Her mouth drops and we laugh.

Maude is gone, it’s a happy day. To top it all off, Dintle's student got help. Her stepdad is in jail and hopefully will never come out. Dan was told about Maude by her son who asked him to tell her and she can consent to going to the house or not. Lerato has already been paid heavily for her assistance and my job is done.

Dintle:

I know I should celebrate, Maude is dead. But I'm too empty and numb to care. I want to be there for my cousins I really do but I can't do it. I won't be there for her funeral and I'm grateful my cousins are understanding. Funny how Maude raised good people while fucking up my childhood.

Ikenna walks in the bedroom with a tray of food. I can't help but smile, especially since I know he cooked. I can smell the egusi from here.

"It's not the best meal I've ever made but I'm hoping you enjoy it and the fufu."

"If it was made with love, I'll enjoy it. Let's eat together."

"You do know I'll have a super size meal straight after this before the gym?"

My man can eat. I mean he has too because he's so damn big and works out like crazy.

"Yes. I want to join you though. I've heard people say the gym is their therapy. It might work for me."

“Of course you can. Maybe you can keep Mbali away from me.”

My face turns sour, “Mbali?”

He laughs at me, “Yeah some girl I met at the gym here. She’s nice enough, she just asks too many questions.”

“Nice enough? I’m definitely going to the gym now.” I say grabbing the fufu and he laughs at me.

I can’t help but smile. I’m grateful for Ikenna, seeing him laugh so much makes me happy.

I love my job, trust me I do but these kids can be a menace sometimes they were busy asking questions about my car instead of focusing on the problems I gave them to solve. These kids forget I need them to do well so the school continues to employ me. Now I’m marking half finished work. The school clerk makes her way to me and I hold my breath. I like her but she’s the type that never stops talking and I personally have no time for that.

“Dintle, the principal is asking for you in her office.”

Oh God. I hope I haven’t done anything wrong.

“Thanks, I’m right behind you.”

He's already waiting outside his car as I park next to him. Okay... Ikenna is up to something. I jump out of the car and jump into his arms.

"Welcome home baby. Let's get in my car."

"What are you up to Ikenna."

"Nothing much. I just planned something for you."

I'm confused but never say no to being spoiled so I give him a peck and slide in the passenger seat of his car.

He gets in and smiles at me, "Congratulations for officially being a hired educator my Didi."

He kisses my hand and I finally understand, he's taking me out because I called him in excitement about my employment.

"Thank you baby, I appreciate you! So, where are you taking me?"

"Oh no. You'll just have to wait and see."

I pout and give him a look but he just ignores me and starts his car.

Do I need to work on my puppy eyes or what??

It's a restaurant dinner. With a special private table for us. It has decorations with flowers and everything. When the hell did he do this?

"Ikenna! Thank you for this! I can't believe you didn't let me change my dress!"

"That's because you take hours to get ready babe."

"You're shading me? There's no way."

"I love you."

He said it so randomly I almost missed it.

"Of course you do. I'm an awesome girl. Now my plan is working. You're getting obsessed with me."

He laughs, "My plan to make you mine is working."

"Ain't no way." I smile his cute face, "I love you too."

MaChiliza:

Since Sbahle and her husband decided on a small wedding I've been busy helping my son-in-law get her a few of the things she wanted to have before the move to Durban, which is the main

reason they're getting married so soon. There's also legal things my son-in-law's lawyers need to deal with money for my daughter to be given as soon as she's Mrs Graham.

"Mom, can I take Koko with me and Ikenna for the day after the bridal and baby shower?" Dintle asks at the cake tasting session with the bakers.

I nod

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"Of course. You're the only family Koko really has any blood relation to. If you can handle her she can spend weekends even. The only thing I want is for you to be sure about Ikenna. She really likes him. If you too aren't sure, I'd rather she didn't see you guys share a bedroom."

She sighs, "I don't know what I'd do if he's not my person. He has literally saved me from myself. Not to mention my aunt."

"Is that why you love him?"

"No. It's not about his help. I love him because being with him is easy in a time when I don't need difficult. He's consistent and transparent and I need that."

"Good. Because I didn't want you to commit to him just because he's helping you get better."

"Well no. It's not that mom."

“Do you think you’d visit your aunt’s grave?”

“Oh I will. I just won’t be kind.”

“Anything to help you release those emotions is good. You can tell her to go fuck herself now.”

She laughs, “Mom!”

I shrug and go back to deciding between chocolate and red velvet.

Dimpho:

I’m honestly annoyed. It’s a damn Saturday, I should be relaxing but no, my fiancé has me out of the house for a damn photoshoot. I don’t want to do this. I already have to get married with this bump, why must I have a professional photoshoot? It’s all too much and I’m bored as my sister is making small talk with me. I don’t know why he’d fly Amo from Johannesburg to Mpumalanga for a photo shoot but I appreciate him.

“You’re very lucky you know, not many men would do this for their baby Mama’s.”

I give her a small smile.

“I appreciate him and the gesture but truly I’m tired and want to catch up on sleep.”

“The shoot is an hour tops. I promise we’ll have you back home to your sleep in no time.”

Sigh. I’m sure she thinks I’m a spoiled bitch but honestly since I fell pregnant, I don’t want to do much. Heck the tiniest inconvenience irks me. She puts down her brush and sprays my face with the setting spray.

“Okay, I’ll turn you around and you can see yourself.”

I nod and keep my eyes closed. She turns my chair and I open my eyes.

Okay wow! She knows her damn stuff. I look so beautiful.

“No! No! Please don’t cry and ruin it.” She says fanning my face and I laugh.

“Sorry, its just so beautiful. Can you do this for my wedding Amo? I’d appreciate it and I’ll pay.”

She smiles, “Yes! Obviously I will do it. For free even. You’re my sister Dimpho, you didn’t even have to ask.”

I get up and offer her a hug. I don't know when or how my heart melted towards her but we're really doing better now and I couldn't be happier.

The photo shoot did last about an hour, I took solo pictures and some with Luke. We can't post them yet but as soon as they're available we're getting album done for our baby and the pictures can go on Instagram after the delivery.

I look too nice with my makeup hence I don't take it off, I must enjoy it for a little bit.

"Would you like anything to drink or eat babe?" Luke asks on our way home. "No. I'm okay love."

"Okay, I'll go to the gas station for some ice cream." He says taking a detour. "Okay now I want ice cream."

He laughs and nods, "Anything for my baby."

He parks and I opt to remain in the car. I don't feel like parading around really.

When he wakes me up we're in the garage. I yawn and look at him. I wonder why he didn't wake me when he got back in the car. "Where's my ice cream?"

"I had to give it to this other little kid with her parents because you were asleep."

"That's cute, I want my ice cream though."

“I’ll buy you a pack of Magnum.”

“You know mom will say it’ll make me sick if I eat it frequently.”

He laughs at me, “you’ll have to resist the urge.”

I give him a disgusted look and get out of the car first. I’d never ignore ice cream I know is there. He gets out of the car laughing, “I love you.”

He says as I open the door to a huge surprise.

“Welcome to your Bridal Party and Baby Shower!”

I release tears as soon as everyone shouts that. He organised all of this for me? Oh my goodness I love this man! I ball my eyes out even more when I spot his sister. She came over for something this small? I thought he said since we’ll have another wedding shed attend that one and not this small intimate one. Oh my goodness Luke is a sly dog and I love him.

Daniel:

I'm sitting in the car and watching her by Maude's grave. I have no idea what she's saying but I've seen her cry, laugh and now she's doing both at once. I want to go out and check on her but I don't want to disturb anything. She needs to say everything she needs to say and let it all go.

I get a call from my sister it's three in the morning in Cali.

"IK I almost got shot!"

My world stops I can hear her panting on the other side. "A man tried to rob me outside the club and he took out a gun! I don't know where the guy who saved me came from but he literally came and disarmed him."

"Wait, Amaka are you okay? I'm coming there on the next available flight."

"No! I'm already coming for the wedding that's too much. I'll stay in my residence hall. I promise you."

"Text me updates daily. Did you speak to the guy who helped you?"

“No, another one came in and attacked the guy who pulled a gun on me. Everything was a mess. The first guy just took me and walked me to my residence... IK?”

“Yes, Amaka.”

“Did you put these people here to guard me? How would they know where I stay.”

“I don’t have enough money to do that.. But I think I know who does. Are you going go be okay?”

“I’m fine IK. Please if you find out who it is, tell me. I need to thank them.”

“Try to get some sleep princess. I love you and I’ll see you soon.”

“IK promise me.”

I huff out a breath, “Only if I'm right.”

“I love you too.” She says before hanging up.

The only man capable of this is Alex Graham.

The passenger door opens and I look at Didi. I didn’t even notice she was walking back to the car.

“Babe? You don’t look okay.”

I give her a lopsided smile.

“You too.”

Her eyes are red rimmed and visibly swollen.

“Well it makes sense for me. Not you.”

Sigh. “My sister had a gun pulled out on her and she says she was almost shot.”

“Is she okay?”

“I don’t think so. We’ll call her later though. Let’s go grab food so we can call her at eight.”

She nods, “I’ll send her a text just to check on her.”

I smile and start the car. I like that they can talk. I can’t really say they’re best friends but them being nice to each other is more than I could ever ask for.

Didi is taking a shower upstairs and I get the chance to call Alexander Graham. The biggest pain in my ass.

“Ah Daniel, to what do I owe the pleasure?”

“Alex, I’ll only ask you once, are you creeping on my sister?”

“What gives you that impression?”

It’s the arrogance in his tone. It’s exactly why I don’t like him.

“Alex. You’re the only man I know with enough money to hire people to do the stalking for you. Now, did your people protect my sister this morning in Cali?”

“What are you talking about? Something happened to Amaka?”

I swear to God, “Alex I’m not joking. Is it you?”

“I’m not joking either. No one has reported anything to me.”

God must help this boy because I’m personally going to kill him.

“So it is you... Just stop being weird and approach her. What you’re doing is scary and she has every right to want nothing to do with you. I personally will punch you the next time I see you

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but thank you. I don’t know what I would’ve done if I lost her.”

“I have to go Daniel. Nice talk.”

No man rubs me up the wrong way like Alexander Graham. I hope my sister tells him where to get off.

“So Alex had something to do with today?”

I turn to find Didi looking at me. Sigh.

“Yes. He has people watching her. I don’t know why.”

“Amo will be hurt. Her crush is literally protecting someone else.”

She sits next to me and lays her head on my shoulder.

“I’d rather he was into her honestly.”

“Because you think you know better for Amaka who is an adult and should make her own mistakes. I’m just glad he didn’t approach her while she was younger.”

“He’s so cold. I don’t like him for her.”

Didi laughs at me and gives me a kiss on my cheek.

Luke:

I’m not dealing with this new Alex and Daniel drama. They’re my groomsmen and they’ll punch each other after the wedding. Today is the gift giving ceremony and they’re both behaving after my wife read them the riot act for almost getting into a fight before her wedding. Tomorrow I’m getting married to the love of my life and I couldn’t possibly be happier. Having my sister and her family with me means the world. Justin's family is my family as well and even Daniel who only has Amaka with

him are all the family I have and need. Everyone looks beautiful in their Tswana outfits and being treated like royalty by the Monama family led by Dimpho's mom. The wedding planner is keeping me updated about everything that's happening at my place and even pictures of the progress. Dimpho and I have been texting non-stop and mostly it's her worrying and me calming her down.

At the end of the day I get the chance to say goodnight through a window to my own fiancé. Amo is making sure no family members spot us.

“Everything is ready and waiting for you tomorrow babe, I promise you by this time you'll be Mrs Graham.”

She leans in over the window and we share a kiss,

“You truly tried to make sure this thing doesn't stress me and I'd say you've been as successful as one would expect. Thank you my love.”

Someone knocks on the door and exchanges a few words I can't understand with her. She turns back into the room and gives me a plate of food.

“I really don't feel like beef stew but I couldn't argue my way out of it with Amo's mom. She's been trying to get along with me since last time.”

I grab the plate, “Baby I’m full.”

“The neighbours dog will eat it, just get rid of it and give me the plate.”

I nod and do as she says before giving her the plate.

“Thanks babe. All I want is some ribs and Dintle went to get them. Not beef curry and salads.”

“I enjoyed it.”

“I wish I felt like having it but for the first time I just didn’t feel like my mother’s cooking.”

“Okay babe, I have to go. Let me know if you need anything okay?”

“Dintle is here as well as mom and Amo, don’t worry about me babe. Take your people back to the hotel. I love you, okay?”

“I love you too stunner. One last kiss?”

She smiles and obliges. I can’t wait to officially marry her.

I drop my sister and her family at their hotel. Alex is staying at Justin's place and Daniel is taking Amaka home. My place is barely recognizable with the decorations setup outside and inside. Justin’s mother took care of everything while we went to the event and now it’s my turn to be here with some security

in case someone decides to steal the decorations or something. It's not like I'll sleep much the caterers will wake me up soon followed by the groomsmen.

I get a call from my baby,

“Hey baby.”

“She tried to kill me. Amo's mom tried to kill me!”

“What? What happened? How do you know?”

“One of the neighbour's dogs is literally dead after feet away from my window. The food is gone.”

“What the hell? You all better stay away from anything she serves.”

“Stay away? Mom said we're only eating ordered food.”

“Good because she's actually really crazy I want her in jail for almost killing you and my child.”

“Babe you know we can't prove anything, just let it go please she's not worth it. I want her to live miserably knowing very well she can't do anything about my happiness.”

I take a deep breath, “Just be careful. All of you. How is Amo taking it?”

“She's livid and hasn't left side. She's not taking it well at all.”

“I’m sure she feels bad because you two have been doing so well.”

“Yes and unfortunately this means I’m never making it back here after tomorrow.”

“No one can blame you I can’t blame you for that.”

“Anyway how us it looking?”

“I had to take pictures before humans mess everything up. They did everything you asked babe. I’m sure you’ll love it.”

“Well even if it’s horrible, I’ll cry and marry you through it because I love you more than anything in this world Dr Graham.”

I can’t help but smile,

“I love you a little bit more but you try shame babe.”

We both laugh at each other.

MaChiliza:

I can't believe Monama's wife almost killed my child over her marriage. She is crazy and I immediately banned her and her husband if he's supporting her. He said he isn't and she'll stay home or whatever and I didn't care long as she's nowhere near my child. How evil could one person be?

I'm just glad we still got to enjoy the wedding. My baby looked very beautiful and her belly is making her glow. My age-mate son-in-law looked good as well. The best thing about him is that you can't tell I'm only a year older than me because I am bigger.

I have a huge smile on my face watching my children taking pictures together Khlöe is holding the phone with on top of a chair, Dimpho is right behind her to make sure she doesn't fall and Dintle has Ndalo in her arms. I'm so grateful for my family and I couldn't even be more happier because Siyabonga's children and their wives made it to my baby's wedding and they got to be introduced for the first time. I know it's still a bit weird but it warmed my heart to have them try. I'm even excited to move to Durban in December since I've seen effort from the Luthulis.

Dintle: Nandi and I swapped partners for the wedding. She was with her husband for the traditional part of the wedding for the

handover ceremony. Now I'm the maid of honour while her husband Justin is the best man. Therefore obviously Ikenna is with Nandi and Alex with Amo. It's funny how today I saw the same thing Ikenna told me about in Alex, he's charmingly sweet with Amo but obviously his heart belongs to Amaka. Anybody who sees him looking at Amaka can easily tell.

But then again those who are seeing Ikenna look at me know we know each other naked. He's been stealing looks at me and making me feel like I'm on fire and every guest here can spot it. I even caught a disapproving look from my new mother, MaChiliza. I couldn't appreciate my best friend more than I do now for sharing her mother with me and my sister.

My cousin Bassie is here as well, I was surprised to find she works with Luke at the hospital. I was pleasantly surprised to see her, especially since I had grabbed lunch with her and Bokang. An awkward lunch but we got the chance to talk and realize we're all we have left now. Our extended family is almost as toxic as my aunt. They tried to scold me for missing Maude's funeral even when they knew she killed my parents and raped me repeatedly. I was happy that Bassie and Bokang had my back fully on that matter.

“Now, if and when I want to marry you, who gets my letter?”

I turn to find him right behind me with a smile dancing on his lips. “Well we still have some family elders I'm the rurals.”

“So I can draft that letter?”

“Nope. You know how I feel about enjoying us without any pressure.” We agreed that we’ll make it marriage official in a few years.

“And I agree you with you but when you’re looking this fine, I just wanna wife you up quickly.” I laugh and give him a little kiss. “Have I ever told you, you’re my hero?”

“I don’t think I am. All I did was push you to the right direction, you pulled yourself out of certain situations because you were brave and wanted to do it.”

I nod because if I tell him I did it to make it back to him he’d feel some type of way. I am in therapy for myself now but there’s no shame in admitting I initially wanted to give him a better version of me. Before therapy made me realize I’m the main character here and he’s m dashing supporting actor.

“I love you okay, more and more every day.”

I smile as he kisses me again. “I love you too always.”

Dimpho:

I thought being married with my pregnancy this far along would hinder my happiness but clearly I was playing myself. I’m so happy with my dress. I look like I’m wearing a princesses ball gown. You can’t even tell I’m pregnant really. Nothing made me

happier than the few tears that fell from Luke's eyes when I walked down the Isle. Which in turn made me cry a little. Thankfully it didn't ruin my makeup or Amo would've has me for breakfast. Speaking of Amo I couldn't be more happier with the amount of work she put into my wedding weekend. She woke up extra early to do our makeup and her own. I missed having a sister in my life because I was the only child for so long buy om very grateful for having Amo and Dintle as sisters now. It's still hilarious for me to think of Dintle and I's sexual history because at this point in our relationship it's become a fuzzy old memory.

I see my dad approach me and my husband while we're talking to King Ngubo's wives who made it to the wedding but the King apologised for his absence. We excuse ourselves and turn to him,

"My beautiful daughter and new son-in-law, I'm so proud of you two." Dad says.

"Well you should thank mom for how I turned out."

He looks down, "I'm sorry for being a bad dad. I just never knew how to tell you the truth."

"It's okay, I'm grateful I had the good memories of you from my mother. She never bashed you in front of me. She let me keep the good memories of you."

He looks down, I think he's embarrassed but that's my truth.

"Please, excuse us father-in-law, we have to say something."

Luke and I walk up to stand in front of our table and I let him start.

"Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate us and our love, we truly appreciate it. From my birth family, Jessie, Alex, and the families who have adopted me. Jessie, you were my mother's first born and as much as you're only a few years older than me you made me your first child after we lost her. I love you and your beautiful family. Justin and the Kwena family you guys gave me and Daniel our second home and accepted us with open arms. Thank you. Today wouldn't have been possible without your support, thank you. To my beautiful wife, brand new next of kin, I love you forever my love."

Applause follows his speech while we sneak in a kiss and it's my turn to talk as per the plan I had with Luke to surprise my mother.

"I love you most my love, thank you so today. I don't have much to say except thank you to the Kwena family especially Nandi for being an amazing friend. Thank you to my best friend Dintle and my sister Amo. Thank you to my beautiful mother, I love you MaChiliza and I appreciate you for not putting

pressure on me again about the degree, but just so you know, we are attending my graduation on October the 5th.”

My mom starts ululating and crying and coming to give me a hug while everybody claps. Today is really the best day of my life, just until my baby girl is born.

.....**The End**.....

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