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1

Beauty in her brokenness

"I am sorry aunt I will never do it again" I said as I cried bitterly on the cold floor.

Anyway I was used to her beatings and at times I was becoming more used to the pain that was caused by the long stick. But the pain inside my heart was becoming more intense each time I took a breath. I thought as time goes on I will get used to it but her words pierce my heart every day.

"Don't say sorry to me, get up and go to the garden. When I come back I need it done" she said.

"Okay aunt" I said as I was getting up from the floor.

I am Atarah Abijah King; I am the only child from my mother and dad. They passed away when I was still young and I lived with my grandma. She also passed away 3 years after my parent's funeral. I am living with my aunt, her husband and her two girls which are studying in university. We are of the same age but I was denied to go and study after grade 12. I am 20 years old and I have nothing to show but wounds and scars.

Life isn't good at all, and pain is what I feel every day. Aunt Nokubonga isn't fond of me at all. I used to think that she was going to like me after sometime but the hate just grew stronger. I am still here because I don't know where to go; she is the only family I have. Sometime I would think of running away but where. I don't have friends here and I don't go out; I am always inside the house busy with household chores.

I went to the garden and plant all her flowers and I tried my best to do the right way but there is never a good thing I do.

"Who said you can relax inside my house stupid thing?" she said as she was getting inside the house.

"No one aunt" I said as I was getting up the chair. I was really tired and hungry. I am not allowed to eat food without her permission. I only eat at night after she finished eating with her husband. Uncle Zerah only comes home late and most the time he always drunk.

“Go and start cooking” she said and made her way to her room.

I went to start cooking and after I was done, I took a bath and called her to eat. She came and sat down as I was serving her food.

“Tomorrow your cousins are coming back; you need to clean their rooms before you sleep”

“Can I please clean them in the morning?”

“When did you have the audacity to have suggestions?”

“I will clean just now aunt”

“Very good

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you are nothing but a stupid orphan”

I went to their rooms and they were clean because I cleaned them two days ago. I didn't have a choice I had to do as I was told because she was the only person that took me under roof. Maybe now I wouldn't be alive.

I am Azariah Nkosi, I am from the small town flagstaff but we moved to Sandton 3 years ago. I live with my parents and younger sister. I am studying law at the University of Wits. My life is boring; like I have everything I need but I still have the emptiness inside my heart. I tried all to soothe the pain I feel but it doesn't go away. My parents are rich and they called all the top psychologists to help me but I wasn't helped. I then started to drown myself in drugs, in a hope of drowning the pain but it dived. I am always with sister and the maids inside this huge house. My parents are always busy and out of the country. I tried to talk to them but it came to deaf ears. I am so scared that my sister will look for love everywhere. I don't want her to feel the way I feel. I am trying by all means to be the older brother to her; even though my love isn't enough.

Mom loves money and luxury life. That's all she cares about. Sometimes I doubt if she loves my father; I think she is with him because of his money. She isn't a mother all. Dad is being controlled by her, he does by her word.

"When are you going to be mother?"

'Don't talk to me like Azariah!'

"What?"

"I am still your mother; you need to show me respect"

“Respect? Don’t amaze me because you act like a cheap woman; who loves money more than her kids.”

“Azariah”

“Why didn’t just abort us; when you knew you don’t want kids; you hate us that much to cause us this pain, when was the last time you talk to your daughter?. Do you know that she was the top achiever in her school? You weren’t there to celebrate her hard work. All you do is going all over the world”

“I am busy Azariah, she need to understand”

“Busy with what? You don’t work but always not home”

“That’s none of your business young man”

‘Do you love dad or you are just after his money?’”

I was kissed by a hot slap on my face and I couldn’t care because I was very angry at her. I need to have a plan of getting out here. Anyway I am doing my final year and soon I will be working.

“Don’t you dare ask me that boy”

“Whatever gold digger”

I went to my room and took shower; I was going to hit the club.

2

Beauty in her brokenness

Azariah

“ arg this headache is painful” I said as I was getting up in the morning. I went to the bathroom and did my business.

“ oh I am going to die with this headache” I said; going to the balcony. I love the view and it brings hope. The hangover was really killing me but I wasn't going to go to the kitchen; I didn't want to face my mom.

As I was still deep in thought; a knock came. I knew it must be my little sister. I didn't see her yesterday.

“ ngena “ (come in)”

“ hello Azariah” that's my dad and I knew that mom told him about our incident.

‘ molo tata” (hello dad”

“ we have been waiting for you”

“ I am not hungry”

“ ok then but I need to talk to you before we leave”

“ where are you going? “

“ I am a business man Azariah”

“ it’s not like I don’t know that, I will be downstairs in a sec”

“Okay”

I sighed, I was really angry and my anger was growing each time. If I was the only child; I was going to leave and stay alone. It is still the same thing; all they do give us money as if we don’t need their love.

I went to take a shower and went to join the most broken family in the world.

“ hello my only son”

“ hi”

“you don’t sound okay”

“ oh you noticed; that’s a first”

“ Azariah, I called here not to disrespect your mom.”

“ I am sorry mother but I am perfectly fine”

“ okay” she said as she was busy with her phone as always.

“ where is my angel?”

“ Katty is out with her friend” dad responded.

“ mm okay”

“ listen Azariah, we love so much, both of you and we would like to spend some time with you but you know we are busy

with work. I promise I will take some time off at work and be with you”

“ I do get dad that you are busy but we should be your first priority and work shouldn't be more important than us. You give us all the materialistic things but not love. We need to support emotionally dad, I don't know ; I have this emptiness inside me and instead of you of talking to me you call all those strangers. I need you to be our dad”

“ son I am sorry but I will try my best”

“ can I go now because this isn't the first time saying this”

“ listen to your dad”

“ I am out” I took my car keys and left to buy myself some alcohol. I really wanted to get drunk and forget all of my troubles.

Atarah

I woke up feeling so tired and my back was very painful but I had to wake up and start with the chores.

“ aunt breakfast is ready”

“ okay I am coming”

I went to start with cleaning the floor in every room except mine. I am not allowed to clean my room because I am will be wasting. I started with the dinnig room while she was still eating in the kitchen.

“ this is awful Atarah!” she shouted and I knew that I was going to get some beatings.

I ran to her as she was throwing all my efforts on the floor.

“ I am sorry aunt”

“ don't sorry me. Do you want me to die?”

“ no aunt”

“ then what did you make there?’

“ it was eggs aunt”

“ oh you are trying to bewitch me, you little witch like your mother”

“ no aunt”

She always says my mom bewitched dad so that she can take all his money which now she is spending. She took everything my parents left for me even the house we are living in is mine.

Can you imagine when you are being told that you can't eat but the money that buys that food is yours?

“ don't say no aunt, I don't want you here ever in my house”

“ please aunt don't chase me away”

“ wipe those tears and go”

“ please us forgive me, I am begging you” I was now in my knees.

She slapped me hard to a point that I collided with the floor and I bled from the nose

“ I won't repeat myself leave now” she was shouting and I stood up crying my lungs out silently.

I didn't know where to go and scared for my life. I kept going and people were looking at me with pity eyes because my face was full of tears. I went to the nearest forest and lied down just to gain strength and be alone. I must have stolen by sleep, I woke up but late than I expected. I went out of the forest and continued with my unknown journey and I ended up in front of pastor's gate.

I was scared since aunt comes here every Sunday. As I was busy battling with my mind, an old woman called me.

“ hey you girl come here”

I went to her, she was driving an expensive car, eh I don't know cars but that car was really expensive by just looking at it.

“ molo mah”

“ hello sis” she had a beautiful smile and that soothed my heart. It has been a while since I had a person smile for me. I think; the last time was when my grandma was taking her last breath in my arms.

“ why are standing there? Is the pastor available?”

“ I don't know Mah”

“ okay it is already late

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are you from around?”

“ not exactly mah”

“ okay do you mind if I take you home?”

“ you don't have worry yourself about me, it isn't far from here.”

“ get inside and let me take you home little girl”

I get inside the car and she drove to the main road. I didn't know what to say because I was afraid to say I am homeless. She went to KFC and bought some wings and twister. She gave me all I thought we were going to share but she said she was okay, I should eat. I thought she was going to ask me for directions but she continued driving and stopped in front of a beautiful huge house with lots of cars. Those sports cars I only saw them once when I was still staying with my parents.

“ we are home now my angel”

“ mah what are we doing here?”

“ stop asking questions and take my bag at the back sit”

I went to take her bag and we got inside, eh I thought I was in heaven. This house was really beautiful and huge.

“ stop looking around and come meet my husband”

“ I am sorry ma”

“ molo Nkosazana” (hello Princess)

“ hello dad”

“I am the father of this house, and now you are home”

“ I don't understand”

“You will as time goes on my angel” the old woman said; she wasn’t that old but older than my mom. Maybe they are in their 60s.

“ come let me go and show you, your room. You need to freshen up first and come for the supper”

“ okay mah thank you so much”

She led the way upstairs and she was always smiling. I followed her as confused as I was. Maybe these people are selling young girls.

“ we don’t do that angel, feel safe”

“ oh I am sorry but I am confused. You are showing me love but you don’t even know me”

“ we don’t have to know you, in order for us to show you love. You deserve the entire love angel. I am Mrs Karin and that old and handsome chocolate man is my husband” she was smiling as always.

“ I am Atarah Abijah King.”

“ okay I guess we will know each other as time goes on”

“ I guess mah”

“ take your bath my angel and everything is here”

I took my time inside this beautiful bathroom and I was really enjoying it. Until; a knock came in.

“ I am coming”

“ ma said I should come to check on you” oh this voice is very deep.

“ I am fine, I will be down in a second. Thank you.

There was a dress on the bed and it was a black short casual dress. I wore it and went to join them downstairs. They were busy having a nice conversation.

“ no ma, stop lying; I didn't do that”

“ you were so naughty and I thought God gave me the wrong boy”

“ I thought maybe we took the wrong kid at the hospital”

“ yhhuu dad stop it please” they were laughing.

I cleared my throat so that I can get their attention.

“ oh you are done my angel”

“ come sit next to me” Mr Karin said.

I went to sit next to him.

“ this is my last born, Ayabulela.”

“hello Ayabulela”

“ hello Atarah, beautiful name just like you” he smiled.

“ Aya this is your sister not those girls out there” Mrs Karin said

“ oh ma, It was just a compliment”

“ yeah right” Mr Kari said.

They laughed at him as if there was a story they just reminisced

“ okay lets go and eat.” Aya said.

We went to eat and there was an extra plate.

“ I wonder where is your brother?” Mrs Karin said as looking at her watch.

“ I am here my lovely woman in the world” a tall and dark chocolate guy said. He looked like his father.

“ I would like soon to have grandchildren, I don't think I will soon when you come home this late”

“ tell him mother”

“ Aya you are still young” Mr Karin.

“ come and sit with us. There is someone I would like you to meet”

He came and took a sit next to me. She stared at me for some time.

“ don't stare at her son” Mr Karin said.

“ oh I am sorry”

“ introduce yourself then” Mrs Karin said.

“ I am Bongani”

“ I am Atarah”

“ that was cold Bongani” Mr Karin said.

“ I am sorry” he said and left.

3

Doesn't matter if others welcome you; but if there is a soul who doesn't open his arms for you, it pains a lot and I thought why would he welcome me. Like I am nothing; I got nothing to offer and he is good with a loving family and for sure a good job which pains him good. The way he was staring me; it seems as if I opened a grave which has wounds that weren't healed. He stares were of like "do I know you from somewhere?" But I told myself that I will stay here as long as the parents are good with my stay. And I didn't ask them to take me in which is something I still need to figure it out. Why would they want me to stay with them, they don't know me.

We continued with our food without Bongani. Mr Karin tried to go and talk to him but Mrs Karin said he must give him some space. It was like there is something, she noticed too about his reaction. It seems as if there is something deeper.

"Don't worry Atarah about him, he will come around soon."

Mrs Karin.

This woman is always smiling like I don't even have a picture of her sad or crying.

I focused on my food." Okay ma"

Mr Karin and Mrs Karin went to their bedroom, saying there are tired. I was left with Aya. This one is very talkative and I don't

want to lie, I enjoyed his company. He told me about their childhood and Bongani seems as if he isn't the uptight guy he seems to be. I guess I will know him as time goes on.

I felt drowsy " Aya I am drowsy now"

"Sure, I will go and sleep too"

Aya is younger than me; he is 17 years old and he is doing his matric.

I tried to sleep but I was really occupied by everything that was happening in my life. I felt like, I was still young to face such challenges but I believe in God. My mother believed in God with her whole self. At night she would sing hymns before we sleep.

In the morning, I woke up with little of headache and I took a shower and wear the same I was wearing yesterday. I don't have clothes; maybe I should look for job. I will Mrs Karin about it; I just hope she will not be against it because I can't stay here doing nothing.

"You are awake, I thought you weren't going to wake" Aya said busy taking his books on the counter.

“Good morning, how did you sleep?”

“Good morning ma. I slept good thank you”

“Come take a sit”

I went to stand beside her because the empty sit was next to Bongani who was very focused on his food.

“Come sit next to me, I don’t bite” he said with his deep voice eating his food.

I went to sit next to him uncomfortable

“ I am out, have a good day family and please Bhuti Bongani don’t scare Tara away.” He shouted going out followed by Mr Karin

Mrs Karin looked at his husband “babe you are forgetting something”

“I am sorry” he came and kissed his wife and then brushes Bongani’s hair with his hands.

“ hai tata ndimdala” (I am old dad) he said

“Angel have a good day

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I hope my son will be good to you”

“mmh okay dad”

I then realised that Bongani was still in his pyjama.

Mom gave me my food and I thanked her.

“ I am going to work, please Bongani keep Tara safe and take her for shopping”

“ I heard you mom”

Mom left, did you notice that I am calling them mom and dad. What? Yes they are my parents now.

It was really awkward to be in a room with Bongani alone and the quietness was really thick.

“ I am going to take a shower and we can go for your shopping” he said without even looking at me

I nodded.

“ I am talking Atarah”

“ I heard you Bongani” I said leaving him to my bedroom.

I was really annoyed by his behaviour and I don't understand why he is being mean as if I did something to him.

I waited for him to call me so that we can go. I needed something bit longer than what I was wearing.

I dozed off as I was still waiting for him because he was taking his time to finish up.

“I said I am coming Bongani”

“ I have been knocking here”

“ I am sorry, I was sleeping”

“Okay”

“And stop shouting at me as if I am your child”

He just stared at me and walked away. I went to the bathroom and did my business. I joined him downstairs and he was talking with the helper.

“ hello ma”

“ hello sis”

“ Bongani we can go now”

“ bye Sis Buhle”

He took his car keys and led the way outside. He drove off and it was very quiet and I was really tired of this tension. I think it is better if someone just tell me what I did wrong so that I can make things right.

“ Bongani”

“ mmmh”

“ never mind”

We went to Legit and Identity. He was following me around as I was looking.

“ don’t you have anything to do than following me around ?”

“ I am not going anywhere “

He went to take a dress and showed. It was really beautiful and simple. My pride wanted me to say it isn’t my style but I really loved it.

“ mmh not bad”

“Are you taking it?”

“ I don’t know, what do you know about dresses?”

“Swallow your pride and take the dress.

We spent time being clod to each other and I was tired because honestly I was exhausted emotionally and he was adding more salts to my wounds.

We got into the car after an argument and he was really rude, I decided to shut my mouth because I was the one who was being hurt.

He noticed that I was really hurting.

“ Atarah”

I kept quiet and looked away from him.

He parked the car in front of the garage and I took my staff and went straight to my room. Aya was already back and I didn't greet him.

I jumped into my bed and cried out my pain. I don't know if I was crying because Bangani offended but I offended him too. Why am I crying now? but I continued with my sobbing. He came to my room without even knocking.

"Tara I am sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you"

"go away Bongani. I see you don't want me here.

"its not like that"

"then why are you being mean?"

"I am sorry, I will change"

"you aren't answering me"

"I can't tell you now, but that doesn't justify what I did,"

He left after that, and I wiped my tears. I changed what I was wearing to my pyjama. I know it was still early but I felt like sleeping.

I was woken up by a noise downstairs.

I went to look what was going on.

“ why did you bring her here ma?”

“ she has nothing to do with Lorna; Bongani. Learn to forgive yourself”

“But you took her knowing that she looks exactly like her. You know how hurting it is ma. Why ma”?

“I didn’t mean to hurt you son, I was taking her in because she needs us”

“I will move out tomorrow, because as much as I am hurting. I am hurting her more”

“Don’t go, I will” I said. They looked at me in a shock.

“No one is going, Bongani go to your room and you too Atarah.”

“I am sorry ma”

“you did nothing wrong. We will talk about it after supper”

Bongani took his car keys and went out. Mom sighed and went to her room.

4

Bongani

You must be asking yourselves what kind of a person I am. I don't know want to lie; I lost my true self the day I was forced to marry someone I don't like. And I fell in love with her after some time. Then boom we had a small argument in the morning and I left for work. When I returned from work I found her lifeless body lying down on cold tiles. She poisoned herself and left a letter saying that she couldn't live all her life with guilty. A month ago before she took her life, I found out that she was cheating on me and already pregnant. I really loved her and I told her that we can work things out and I was going to raise the child as mine. I think she couldn't forgive herself.

It still pains me that she left me so soon, and I still blame myself if I didn't fight with her on the morning. She would be still alive.

So this day I am coming from work and I just saw her copy sitting with my family. I really don't understand why mom took her in. maybe she didn't notice that she looks like Lorna. The way she talks, the colour of her hair, skin and how she smiles.

Atarah really opened up wounds of the past and I hate that I am hurting her because she is innocent. I don't think they are related in any way but I will look into her just to be sure.

I am Bongani Karin and you will get to know me as time goes on.

2 months later

After everything that happened I decided to move out and Karin family supported me all the way. They gave me money and also helped me to find a job. It wasn't easy but I did for Bongani's sake. He was really hurting and he needed time to heal. I couldn't let him go and stay back to his house because there was a reason why he moved in with his parents. I didn't want him to be separated with his family because he needed them more than anything.

I was working as a waitress on a new restaurant and people were coming in numbers so we were always busy. I don't want to talk about month ends. It was really hard but I had to do what I was supposed to do.

"See you all tomorrow" I said as I was leaving.

“Sure Tara”

I went to my apartment, and I don't want to lie it was good and I couldn't afford the rent but Karin's insisted of paying it for me until I am earning much which is something I don't think I will anytime soon but we never know.

I decided to call Aya and it has been long time since I talked to him; he was mad that I moved out.

“Oh you still remember that I am alive” he said

“Hello to you too Ayabulela”

“Hello Tara, I miss you so much”

“I miss you too, come by after school tomorrow.”

“Will you get me that burger first?”

“I will see”

“I am not coming then”

“Okay, I will. How’s everyone?”

“They are all good, except bhuti Bongani”

“mmh I so wish he can agree to go for counselling”

“Mom and dad tried to talk to him but he said he is fine”

“That’s bad because he isn’t fine”

“Maybe you should talk to him”

“Me? No no I cant.”

“Yes you can “

“Bye Aya. It was nice hearing your voice”

“Bye and think about it”

I hanged up, and decided to watch television. A light was starting to shine up my life and I knew that one day I will become a better person. My background isn't me but my everyday choices determine my future.

Next year I was going to school and I told myself that I will work hard there so that I can be whatever God intended me to be in the first place. I can't let my dream to fade away because of the challenges I am facing right now. They should bring me more strength to press on.

The following day

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I went to work as usually. What Aya said yesterday was troubling my soul and I don't know why. I really wanted to help Bongani but how. I am not God so I don't know his heart. During my lunch time, Aya came with his friends. I served and stayed with them for some time. His friends decided to leave him behind because he wanted to discuss something with me. And I knew it was about his brother. Sometimes I feel like there

is a reason for me to look alike with his ex-wife and then met him after sometime. If I was that spiritually minded I would say God sent me there not for my own benefit only but for his also. I guess I will know as time goes about it.

“You know God brought you in our lives for a reason”

“Aya” he cut me

“Listen Tara I know, you don’t know us but the least I am asking for my brother is to convince him that needs some help”

“How am I going to talk to him when my sight hurts him?”

“You know, there was this day, he came home drunk and we were astonished by that. He never drank before and he kept asking where you are”

“He is even drinking?”

I didn't want to mention the part of him, asking about me. Why would he ask about me though?

"Yes Tara he is drinking now and we don't know what to do about him"

"yoh I will give him a call after my shift"

"Thank you Tara, this means a lot to us"

"I have to go"

"Sure"

I got up and went to serve the customers. As busy as I was; Bongani's issue was still troubling my soul. It was like; I was feeling the pain he was feeling.

I knocked off very late that day and I went to my lonely home but I am getting used to it. I took a shower then made something to eat.

I remembered that I promised Aya to call his brother, eh Bongani is really intimidating.

I took my phone from the coffee table and dialled Aya's number to for Bongani's number.

"Give me your brother's number"

"Okay, I will text you now"

"Sure ke"

Then a text came through immediately; that showed he was really desperate for my help.

I dialled his number and he took his time to answer it.

"Hi" he said with his deep voice, sometimes it scares me off.

“Hey, you are speaking with Atarah” I said nervously.

“I know”

There was silence and I didn't know what to say next. Why do am I even scared of this guy? I don't know too.

“Atarah”

“I am here; can we please tomorrow grab a lunch?” I said biting my lips as if he was with me.

“Okay what time?”

“12 o'clock “

“Sure I have to go “he then dropped the call with even saying goodbye.

I am only doing this because Aya asked me otherwise I don't think I will survive even in that lunch.

I decided to log in on Facebook account just to stalk my cousin sisters because wow they are living life with my parent's money. I wonder how aunt sleeps knowing that I might be homeless but I do have a house. I don't even know how she got everything which was left for me and I don't want to know.

Once asked my grand mom about it and she said we shouldn't be worried about it. We should put all of our problems to the Lord. My grand mom was a peaceful woman; even if you did something wrong to her she will apologize first just for the sake of peace.

Oh really they came back and they are a happy family without me, I wonder who does the chores now.

5

I woke up early in the morning because my shift was starting at 6:30 sharp but ends at 11:45 which was very good.

I did all my morning deeds and went for work. I don't like to eat in the morning; I guess I am not the only one.

"Good morning Zess?"

"Hey Tara-ma" she said laughing because she knew I hate to be called like that.

"Don't call me that wena" I said pushing her aside.

"I am not feeling today, sometimes I wish I was coming from a rich family" she said with a sad face

"What's going on Zess?"

"Family issues but things will get better with time"

“That’s true, hang on one day you will accomplish all your dreams”

Yeah Tara”

Zess is my colleague we are of the same age; she lives with her mother and her child. She got pregnant when she was doing matric and her mother couldn’t take care of the baby due to health issues. The father of the baby is living his life out there as if he got no child. She is the breadwinner now.

Time went fast and I had to meet with Bongani.

I knocked off and waited for him outside the restaurant. There is a spot which I really love and it gives me peace of mind. I guess it is my secret spot because I never saw anyone there.

He called me, telling that he is here.

I went to him and I must say he looked good than I thought.

“Hello, sorry for keeping you waiting”

“Hi, no need for sorry”

“How are you doing?”

“Are we going to eat our lunch standing?”

“um I am sorry” I said leading the way in the restaurant.

We got in and I asked for Zess to serve us.

“I am better, nothing to complain about. How are you?” he said looking me straight into my soul.

“I am good”

“mmh lunch with a mean dude like me?” he smiled for the first time. I guess we are getting somewhere.

“yeah why not?”

“I am not complaining but I was astonished you know after what happened between us”

“Let’s not go there please”

“Tell me the reason you called me here”

“I want us to talk but not here”

“Okay I guess we will eat then leave”

“yeah”

I didn’t want him to shout at me in front of my colleagues and customers. So he suggested we should go to his office.

Otherwise Bongani is a busy man; he is a lecturer and owns a law firm.

After our lunch which wasn't bad at all we went to his firm.

It was my first time going there and he really did work for himself.

I guess his personal assistant, if I am allowed to say that came to us as we getting out of the lift.

"Lisa what can I do for you?" He asked as he was walking to his office.

"Wait; are you Lorna's sister because you are her copy?"

"She isn't" he responded with an attitude.

"Okay, let me leave you then" she winked at me and then left.

"You can take a sit"

“Thank you”

“I am sorry about what just happened, Lisa and I have been friends since varsity”

“No problem

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I can see I am the only one is afraid of you”

“Do I scare you?”

“Very much with that deep voice, maybe you should consider fixing our vocal cords”

I said laughing

“ Asoze, kumnandi ukukubona uhleka nontombi ka mamaKarin”

“She is your mother though”

“She loves you; after you left she kept complaining about it to my father”

“I will give her a call later then”

“Yeah you should”

“Look, I wanted to talk to you and I know it isn’t my place but I felt like I should give it a try”

“I am listening”

“I know I am the reason you are hurting now and if I was able to erase the pain I would but I can’t and I can’t even imagine how you feel. Bongani please do it for your parents and brother, don’t shut everyone out. We do know that you are hurting and keeping your pain inside isn’t helping at all. Your family want the old you back, and if you don’t want to talk to them then go for counselling. Say how you feel or talk to someone you trust.”

He stared at me with teary eyes then suddenly he broke down like a 5 year old boy crying for his toys.

I went to him to calm him down. After like a thousand of hours he looked at me and then smiled.

“Then a smile bhuti?”

“Thank you for being a shoulder to cry on”

“Anytime” I went to my sit

“I will go for counselling but I want to try with you first”

“Me?”

“Yes, I want to talk to you then for counselling if you fail to help”

“I never failed before”

“Eh Tara”

“Bongani”

“hai ndingu bhuti kuwe”

“yhuu khame”

“Tell me about your names”

“What do you want to know?”

“Their meaning”

“Oh Atarah means the “crown” and Abijah means my father is God”. I guess my mother knew that after sometime, they will leave me and my father would be God.

“Very good though, I love them”

“Thanks, I should go now”

“Let me give you a lift”

“No don’t worry yourself, I will take a taxi”

“I am not asking you Abijah”

6

Azariah

It has been two months and I thought things were going to be good but no my parents didn't work things with us.

They became more distant and I tried my best to talk to them but I failed I guess.

Now I was living with Katty because dad surprisingly bought a house out of the country so they went there, I don't know if they are coming back or what but it has been a month now. They just call Katty because they knew I won't take their calls.

I went for a jog in the morning just to clear my mind. Sometimes I would cry out my heart while I am bathing. I don't know how to be a parent to Katty and she keeps asking questions which I don't have answers.

" you went for jogging without me" Katty said as she was rubbing her eyes.

“ I am sorry, I didn't want to disturb you in your sleep”

“okay, I miss mom and dad” she said with a breaking voice

“ we will call them today after school”

“ why they left us all alone?”

“They will come back , don't feel sad; they truly love you”

“I don't think they love us enough”

“Let's not talk about them, let's go and take a shower” I said
lifting her up; kissing her forehead

Katty is 7 years old and she needs her mother but she acts like a
teenager

I asked our helper to help because I was having a class. I left them and went to campus.

Sometimes I felt better when I was around my friends because we would joke and laugh all day but that scape of mine wasn't working at all and they could see through me that I was deeply hurting.

My friend Buntu asked as we were heading to the lecture halls. "bro are you okay?"

" yeah ntwana; kuhambani?"

"nothing ntwana

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but you aren't yourself and it has been days"

" I am good; don't worry yourself"

" then it's good to hear that. Any plans for this weekend?"

“ yeah, I will go out with Katty for movies”

“ okay”

We went inside our venue and our class wasn't long. We went to join our friends outside since we don't do the same course. Don't ask me how we met.

We chilled outside until our next classes.

I went home; around 5 o'clock that day due to lot of work I had. At home it is hard to study alone. I need that distraction from thoughts.

I found Katty watching her cartoons and she came to give me a hug.

“How are you?”

“I am good Aza”

“How was your day at school?”

“School was good and I have a new friend” she said excitedly showing her dimples.

“ mmmh what is her name”

“ her name is Rose”

“nice name”

“ do you want to meet her?”

“ yes; I would love that”

“ okay.”

I went to my room just to rest. As I was getting inside my room, there was this hard feeling which was really crushing my heart. I closed the door and I couldn't continue to walk to my bed.

I went down through the door and tears were flowing uncontrollable. I tried to wipe them but they kept coming with no hesitation.

“what is going?” I asked myself.

I couldn't stop the feeling, the pain was overwhelming me. I cried there for hours and sleep caught me on that floor.

I woke up around 9 o'clock at night as cold as I was. I went to take a shower and got to bed.

I kept thinking about the life I have now and I thought overdosing pills will make me sleep. I took just 4 tablets and yeah it really worked.

The following day, was like other days with a heart full of misery. I tried to hide the pain to Katty because she was too feeling it.

Katty didn't want to go to school that day, she said she wasn't feeling okay and I knew she was lying but I let her be.

I went to school as usual and stayed with my friends. We went to the nearest bar and we got drunk.

I went home, it was like every time I take a step inside my room; there is something that is welcoming me to reveal the pain inside. I cried as usual.

7

“Zenkosi wakhetha ukuzala yakutshiya nalo nkwenkwe (you chose to have a baby and her father left you)” she snapped and the baby started crying

“mama uzohlala undikhumbuza lonto oko” (are you going to remind me that all the time)

“ ndikhathele Zenkosi kukuhlala nomntwana wakho “(I am tired to baby sit your child)

“ I will make a plan about it” she said and kissed her child before going to work with a breaking heart.

I am Zenkosi, and I live with my mother and child. I don't know what happened to my father but my mom told me that I am fine without a father.

I got pregnant while I was doing matric and I thought it was love what we had but no he wanted to sleep with me and show the whole world that he took my virginity. I was trending on social media because he made a sex tape. I was really

embarrassed and ashamed. I was called with names and it still pains me a lot. After that I found out I was pregnant which was the worst news to my mother after all the scandal of a sex tape. He told me; I should do abortion but I didn't want to kill my baby.

My mom forgave me after sometime but I think she hasn't totally because in every argument she includes it.

I love my baby with all I have.

Narrated

Azariah woke up and received the good news that he passed his project which was really hard for him.

He couldn't afford to fail even a single module because his plan was to graduate and find a job; so that he can move out and live his life knowing that he got no family except Katty.

He was so excited about it and went out with his friends because they did work hard on that project.

They drank the whole night and he couldn't even walk and he was crying so his friends decided to take him home.

He was lying there in bed with a heart full of pain. He decided to take a blade that was in his dressing table's drawers and cut his wrists many times. He didn't do it to die but he wanted to ease the pain that he was feeling inside.

He bled on those white sheets for hours.

Around 5 am Katty had a nightmare and she always go to Azariah when she can't sleep. But that day Aza wasn't responding at all and she kept crying on the door until she noticed that it wasn't locked.

She got in and realised that Aza was bleeding; fortunately the helper was around that night since she couldn't leave Katty alone as Aza went out with his friends.

Katty ran to call Sis Lungi for help and they took him to hospital using Aza's car.

After a week he was good to go back home even though he was so exhausted emotionally. He was hurting more because of Katty. She witnessed his older brother taking his life.

Things weren't normal at all, he tried to cheer Katty but she was always sad and didn't want to talk about what happened.

So this other day she asked Aza about their grand mom and told him that she misses her. Her grandmother loved her so much.

Atarah

It has been weeks after I talked with Bongani and his parents called saying that they see a huge difference in his life.

He would call and come visit me sometimes. He was no longer that up tight guy.

I was off that day and decided just to stay indoors because my demons were really consuming me that day.

Most people think I am that strong person but no I am drowning too in sadness. I haven't been happy I just do what I need to do.

I stayed in bed almost the whole day and I didn't want to talk to anyone. My phone kept ringing and I ignored it.

There was a knock and I went to open after a while.

"What's wrong Atarah?" That's what he said without even greeting.

"Nothing

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what do you want?" I responded already annoyed because I felt like no one can understand the pain inside me.

"Can I come in?"

"Yeah sure"

Bongani came with takeaways and I don't why he was here.

"Go and take a shower, I will make something for you to eat"

"I want to be alone Bongani"

"I am not going anywhere. Just do as I say"

He went to the kitchen and start warming up the food while I was heading to the bathroom to take a shower. When I was done; I went to join him on the couch.

“Let me go and take your food” he said standing up to take my food. He came back with it and I thanked him.

“Do you want to talk about it?” he asked looking at me straight into my soul,

“There is nothing to talk about Bongani”

“Okay, I won’t force but know that we all care about you” he then concentrated on the book that he was reading.

I was in edge of crying my lungs out that moment but he wasn’t aware of that so I went to my bedroom just to release those itching tears.

8

Azariah

I tried my best to make Katty talk and I was thinking of taking her for a therapy. Sis Lungi called my parents after the incident and I thought they will come back but no they said they are busy.

I was watching television and Katty went out with Sis Lungi to do their shopping. They came back with some food, my favourite thing in this cruel world.

“You must be hungry” Sis Lungi said as she was taking things out of the shopping bag

“Not that much Sis” I responded.

“ bhuti Aza can I use your phone?”

“Okay but please don’t play games”

“Okay” she took it and went to her room.

She is always in her room and I tried to talk to her about it but failed.

“There is something strange about Katty” Sis Lungi said as she giving food

“What do you mean?”

“She keeps asking me about death”

“Oh I think it is because of I what did that day”

“Yeah”

“I am thinking of taking her for counselling “

“Yeah that might help”

I ate my food and then went to rest in my room. I haven't been outside since that day.

Katty came in to give me my phone.

"My grandmom is at peace, isn't that so?" she asked

"Yes she is my angel; do you miss her that much?"

"I do, my friend told me that her mother is in heaven and there is no pain. She is always happy and one day he going to join her"

"One day you will go to heaven, when father God came to take you with angels"

"Ok, I love you so much"

I noticed too that Katty wasn't good at all, so I looked at my phone on the recent. So she was searching about cutting

yourself and I thought it was because I once did it. But it was disturbing because she asked Sis Lungi about death

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like how to do people take their lives if God don't take them. 2 days later, I went to knock in her room so that she can wake up for school.

“ Katty wake up, you will be late for school”

No answer and then I decided to break the door.

She was lying there lifeless; in a pool of blood. I checked her pulse but she was gone.

I thought I was dreaming but I wasn't. I called Sis Lungi because she wasn't going to come in that day since I had no classes.

As I was waiting for her, I found a letter on her bed.

“ Aza I am sorry to leave you all alone but I couldn't take the pain anymore. I will miss you every day and I hope you will be fine without me.

I am so happy that I will meet my grandmom in heaven and be happy always”

Azariah

Broken wasn't describing the pain that I was feeling inside. It was beyond any word you can describe.

Sis Lungi came after an hour and I was hoping that Katty was going to wake up and say " bhuti Aza" but she didn't.

" Azariah" sis Lungi shouted as she was going up the stairs.

I couldn't even respond; my voice was gone and tears were falling like a rain from the cry.

I was resting by the wall, staring at her and I think I lost my mind for a moment. My senses weren't functioning at all.

"Oh Azariah" she said as she was entering the room

She started crying and I stood there watching her putting her on her chest.

She kept crying and I couldn't even utter a word. I decided to give her time because she was really fond of her; I don't know if it was pity because she abandoned by her parents or what.

I went to my room and laid on my back staring at the ceiling. I remembered that my grand mom used to say "God will never leave nor forsake us" I wondered if God was still with us or

what because we were really surrounded by a gigantic dark cloud that kept piercing my heart with a sword which was very sharpen and I believe it wasn't made of a fake steel or silver but with gold.

As I was in deep thoughts; a knock came in.

"Come in" I responded

"I think we should call the hearse and your parents now"

"Please do that" I said trying to push back tears because the thought of parents is just putting more salts on my wounded heart.

"Okay"

She exited the room and I cried out the pain; I thought I was going to feel better but it was like suppressing the sword in my heart even much more.

I tried to sleep and I didn't know what to do. I closed myself in my room .

Zenkosi

I was coming from work and I left my baby with my mom as always but that needed to change.

I didn't understand why she was mean towards us and I think the drama that I had with the father of my child is something that happened between her and my father but I guess I will know about it as time goes on because she is a closed book that blast flames of negative words

"molo mama" I said as I was taking my child on the floor.

"molo" she responded not even looking at me. She was busy with her pots.

So I went to my room with my child and I think soon I need to start looking for a nanny even though I won't manage all the expenses but I need to try.

I decided to give my child a bath, so I was just chatting with my angel.

"Do you know how much I love you baby girl?"

She kept smiling showing her small teeth and I wished they stayed like that because they were so cute.

“I love you so much with all I have. I want you to have a brighter future than mine and never do the same mistakes I did.”

She kept smiling and she really loves to smile. So it was time to take her out of the water and it was a struggle.

“Tori now it’s time to come out”

I took her out and she cried with her loudest voice, you swear that it’s a boy.

“I am sorry big voice” I kissed her small lips which are very pink.

I lotioned her and then put her in her pyjamas. She then dozed off.

I went to the kitchen to join mom even though I wasn’t looking forward to it because she was going to ask me about the nanny issue.

“Your food is on the table”

“Thank you mom”

I went to take my food and it was really nice.

“This is nice mom”

“ enkosi”

“I have been thinking about finding Tori a nanny but it means that some of the things, I won't be able to do around the house since I don't earn much”

She kept quiet as if I was talking alone. I decided to go and sleep because tomorrow I need to wake up early.

“Goodnight mom” I said as I taking my plate to the sink.

9

Bongani

It has been tough weeks but with good outcomes. I am so grateful that I met Atarah she made me to realise that bottling up the pain isn't helping at all.

I still go for therapy though and I am healing day by day; I see progress.

So yesterday I went to visit Atarah, and I found her not in a good condition and she didn't want to talk about it.

Deep down I know that she is in pain but she doesn't want to be seen vulnerable. She has been all by herself; no one to embrace her and I need to do something about it.

So I will talk with Aya since they are close and I am sure maybe she can open up to him even just a bit.

I took a bath and wore my casual jeans with a golf t-shirt. I wasn't going to work that day.

I went downstairs and everyone was already eating.

“Why are you wearing like that?” mom asked

“I am not going to work”

“Ok; come and join us “

I went to sit with them and started eating.

“ Aya want you to do something for me”

“Like what?” he asked

“We will talk about it”

“Sure”

“I hope it’s not about bringing a girl in my house” mom said

“It’s not about that mom; I am too old for those things “

“Yes you are and you can’t stay single forever” that’s my dad reminding me that I am single

“Please dad not now”

“But I would love to have grandchildren” dad again urgh!

“Leave the child alone Nkosiyakhe” that’s my mom in my rescue

“Okay my love but you are getting old Bongani” he said as he was leaving for work

“Don’t mind him; when you are ready take a wife”

“Okay mom”

They left after sometime and I was left with the helper.

I was really bored and I thought of calling Tara. She became a friend now.

“Are you busy on your lunch time?”

“No why?”

“I will see you at 12 o’clock sharp”

I dropped the call before she could say anything.

Bongani

I waited for 12 o'clock so that I can go and meet Tara.

I went to the garage and drove off, I parked and waited for her outside because I know every time she is on her lunch she would come out and stay behind the restaurant. I still don't understand why she likes to stay there alone

I watched her as she was coming out; going to her spot. She is very beautiful and a dark skinned with slim body.

"It is rude to keep a gentleman waiting" I shouted as I looked at her out of the window.

She then turned and hides her face with her hands.

She came to the car and I opened the door for her.

“How long have you been waiting?”

“Not even five minutes”

“You are such a bully”

“I know”

“Where are you taking me?”

“Where do you want to go?”

“I would like to go in a quiet place and eat ice cream”

“Let’s go to my house”

“Okay then”

I drove off to my house; I only come here when I don't feel okay. I never sold it because it is the only thing that reminds me of my late wife.

The drive was bit quiet but not awkward. We firstly stopped at Spar to buy the ice cream because I don't have it in my house but I do have food.

We went to my house; she was surprised to see it; I don't know because it's huge or what.

“Is this really your house?”

“Yes it is” I said as I was going to kitchen to take the spoons.

“It is very beautiful for a guy so rude like you” I looked at her and she smiled looking around

“Let's go and stop looking around”

“Are you staying here now because you can see?” she said brushing her small finger on the coffee table.

“It is clean; I know that. I only come here when I don’t feel okay. There is a helper who comes once a week”

“Okay when are you planning of moving in?”

“I am not sure” we settled down on the couch and started eating the ice cream.

“Did you miss me?” She asked while devouring the ice cream as if it isn’t cold at all.

“A bit. Is that a bad thing?”

“I don’t know”

“I can see you love ice cream”

“Yes I do Bongani” she rolled her brown eyes.

“I want to apologise about coming in your house unannounced”

“Don’t be sorry; I was wrong for being so cold”

“Are we cool now?”

“Yes Mr Karin”

“Have you applied for school next year?”

“No, I am still waiting for the month end”

“I will transfer you money so that you can start with your applications”

“Okay

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I should get going unless I want to be jobless”

“Okay let’s leave, how many minutes left” I said as I taking the empty ice cream container and the spoons on the coffee table.

“10 minutes, please hurry up” she as she was by the door now.

We went to the car and I must say I always enjoy her company.

“Bye Bongani and thank you for the ice cream”

“Sharp, I will call you later”

She then went inside the restaurant.

Azariah

Sis Lungi came back with some food and I wasn't even hungry; I wanted my sister back; her calling my name and smiling at me.

"You need eat something Aza"

"I am not hungry" I said as blocking tears from coming

"Take one bite then please. Do this for her"

I sat up and took the food. It was really good but it didn't take away the pain.

"Thank you" I smile faintly

"Your parents said they are coming back tomorrow"

"Okay. Thank you for everything."

“I am always here for you and your friends have been calling you none stop”

“I need time alone. Please don't let them in yet”

“I understand”

She took the plate and walked away.

I stared at the ceiling and remembered my phone; I went downstairs to take my phone. I just need to tell my friends that I need time alone. I don't want them to feel like i don't need them anymore. They have been with me from day one.

I took my phone and I had a lot of missed calls and messages. I just sent them all text messages which said the same thing.

“I am going to my room Sis Lungi”

“No problem, I will just watch a movie”

“Okay sharp”

I headed to my room and lay on my bed. I didn't know what to do next but I guess once my parents get here we will get into the process of the funeral.

10

Zenkosi

I woke up and took a bath while mom was busy in the kitchen as usual. She doesn't sleep at all.

She always wake up to make a sour porridge and I think she can't sleep because I told her that she can wake up around 8 o'clock when the coldness ceased.

"Good morning "I said I was taking a sit waiting for my porridge.

"Good morning "she said with a smile. Eh I guess she slept well

" ulale njani?"

" kakuhle mntana wam wena ulale njani?" she was now giving me my porridge.

"I slept well ma, enkosi"

" Zenkosi, I am sorry that I have been rude towards you and kept all the secrets about what happened between me and

your father. I am sorry; I heard that he is back and that opened up my old wounds. I am sorry that I put all my frustrations on you. You had nothing to do with what happened in the past. Just know that I love you and Tori with all of my heart”

“Don’t cry ma; I get you.”

“Please don’t look for a nanny, Tori is my grandchild”

“Okay mom enkosi kakhulu”

I then finished up my porridge while she was telling me about dad but only the good side of him.

Zenkosi

I went to work and it was bit cold, I found Tara already attending her tables and I was bit late.

I hurried up to serve too.

“Why are you late?”

“Don’t start Tara but I have good news”

“You will tell me during lunch time” she said taking the tray to her table

We continued working and I don’t want to lie; people were really fond of that restaurant

It was lunch time and we were settled outside on the table just chatting about girl’s staff.

Tara is a closed book but able to make you an opened one

“So what were you going to tell me?”

“Oh remember about what I told you about the issue of a nanny; so today my mother said I should worry not about it”

“That’s great news Zess, you can save some money for school”

“Yeah I need to; I can’t live my whole being a waitress”

‘You are destined for greatness ‘

“Thank you Tara”

“When am I meeting the Tori?”

“Soon you will; don’t worry about that”

“Ok, I will keep waiting”

So we ate our lunch talking nothing serious. What I noticed is that I don’t know anything about her. She just embraces you

with all her strength; I don't even think there is someone out there for her.

Atarah

Yesterday Bongani called and sometimes I find it too much. Really I don't like people to be there for me. I wanted that while I was still young but that chance was robbed from me roughly so I prefer to be on my own.

He really cares but I will never be vulnerable to him; I guess I am that hard core girl who drowns in her own pain.

So today I had lunch with Zess and I love how she is, sometimes I wished I had her as a sister or whatsoever. She is very open and cares for her feelings.

Honestly I don't care anymore about how I feel as long it won't affect another person then I am cool with it.

I noticed she wanted to know about me but she should just give up because there is nothing fascinating about my life.

We went back to do our jobs and I needed to make an extra money because I don't want to depend on the Karin's money. I know they mean good but I am old enough now to hustle for myself.

After work I went to buy airtime so that I can look for jobs online which I can work during the night since during the day I am at the restaurant.

As I was going off the garage, I bumped into this guy

"You should watch where you going" he said with an sticking attitude

"Sorry" I said taking my phone on the floor.

I looked at him and walked away.

I went to take a taxi to my apartment and started cooking something simple.

As I was cooking

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my phone rang and I took it without reading the caller.

“ Abijah speaking” I said

“Hey Tara”

“Hello”

“Are you good?”

“I am good you”

“I am good”

Then it went quiet and he sniffed a bit. Is he crying now?

“Where are you?”

“I am home”

“Is mother there?”

“No they went for vacation”

“Okay, its late now; I can’t take a taxi but you can come over”

“Okay thank you”

I dropped the call and continued with my cooking, honestly speaking I can cook and one day I would like to own a restaurant and hotels.

He came while I was cleaning up at the kitchen.

“Don’t stood there” he was standing by the door

He stood there and stared at me. I used the dish cloth to dry hands.

I went to stand in front of him and stared at each other for some time. What I realised is that he was really hurting.

He smile faintly and I opened my arms for him.

“I am here now” I said while hugging him.

He just broke down and didn't know what to do next but just to hold him tight.

After like a whole thousands of hours he calmed and I led the way to the couch.

“Let me go and dish up for us”

He nodded.

I went to the kitchen and took the plates which I bought myself last month. They were mom's favourite; so just to have something to remind me of her.

I took our plates and went back to take the juice.

“Please take your plate; I believe you aren’t allergic to red meat”

“I am not thank you so much”

“Ok then”

We ate in silence and it was awkward this time around but I told myself I wasn’t going force him to tell me what happened.

He cleaned his plates and then put on the table. I looked at him and he smiled revealing his dimples.

“Don’t smile at me”

“Your food was very good thank you”

“My pleasure Mr Karin”

“I am sorry that I keep coming here with my baggage but I don’t know where to go or talk to”

“You know; I am always here for you”

“Thank you for being my crying shoulder”

“Okay now, Bongani. Can we please stop being emotional unless you want to talk about what happened”

“Let’s clear the table first and then we can talk about everything”

He took the plates and put them on the sink; while I was cleaning up the table.

“Do you want ice cream?”

“A bit”

“Okay” I took it out of the fridge and we settled down on the pillows that we were on the floor.

He sat opposite me. We always sit like that; I believe we both like to look straight at each other on the soul

“Look Tara everything has been quiet okay in the last few months and I thought I was okay with everything but I can say that I am okay. The only thing that hurts me is to see her family because they still blame. So today after work; I got a call from her mother insulting me that I killed her only child then now I am having another girl. Why did I married her in the first if I didn't love her at all; I didn't even mourn for her which is something I do every day. Remember our marriage was forced and we didn't love each other at first but as time passed by we fell in love. These insults and accusations are hurting more because I loved her with all of my heart. She was the queen that was able to soothe my heart and she understood me more than anyone else. I am tired to live my life being held back by someone which will never come back. I am losing the really me in this thing and I don't know how to move on because every time and I am trying. There is always something that draws me back to the hole of hell. I have been there and it is not nice all Atarah”

Tears were streaming down his cheeks

He wiped his tears with the back of his hand

“You know I tried to talk about it to my parents; so that we can go there and make peace but my parents are against it. They say I have nothing to do with her death; I should move on with my life but I can’t Atarah. It pains a lot.”

He said with a smile but tears are saying the opposite.

“You don’t to believe on what other people are saying; you know that you aren’t guilty. You had an argument like normal couples and it was her decision to take her life. You didn’t take any part of it. I know it sounds bit rude but you shouldn’t worry yourself about the decisions that people make; because you aren’t control of them; because each and everyone has a control over his or her life. Even if you tried to talking to her, if it what she wanted; you wouldn’t have stopped her.

Sometimes we blame people for mistreating us and we should but we shouldn’t blame them for our healing. It is your responsibility to heal even though your wound wasn’t your responsibility. If you continue taking in whatever your mother-in-law says you will end up being a dead soul with hat faintly smile and God didn’t create you for that. You are still alive for reason and I am so certain that reason isn’t you to be jailed in the past which you didn’t have control over it. Even if you had, you are supposed to forgive yourself and live your life.

Bongani life is very special and many people would love to live again but they can’t please don’t waste that because of some accusations which are ridiculous. Mark your territory when it comes to your emotions, you are in control of that. Don’t ever let anyone put his or dirty foot on your heart.”

He looked at me and smiled

“I think I like that smile now; why are you always smiling even if you crying”

“That’s how I am Miss King”

“Let’s go and sleep; the guest room is on that side” I said showing him.

“Okay thank you”

“Don’t worry we talk tomorrow; we have talked so much today” we stood up and went to our rooms.

I sat on the bed and cried my lungs out; as much as I am trying to be strong but I am failing at times to hold on.

I wished to have someone to embrace me and say what I say to people to me. Not always your medicine will heal you but it heals more strangers. Its effectiveness is more powerful to other people.

The following morning; I did my morning routine and went to make breakfast for Bongani.

When I was done; he came down all sleepy.

“Good morning”

“Good morning; how was your night?”

“It was good thank you so much”

“Come and eat”

We settled on the high chairs in the kitchen, we ate in silence.

He decided to break the silence with his torn heart.

“You know every time; I breath I become more resentful”

“Do you understand that your resentment brings nothing to your healing rather than making your wounds deeper and hurting?”

“I hate how that woman makes me feel like it was my entire fault. Tell me how to love myself while on forehead is labelled a murder?”

“It’s you who decided to put that label on your forehead. Otherwise whenever I see you; I see a gentleman with lots of love and I don’t believe a living guy like you can murder his wife. You need to stop labelling you with that, don’t ever do that again”

“I get you. Let me take the dishes to the sink”

He cleared the table and gave me a lift to work.

“Good bye; promise me to be good with that buddy you have inside you”

“I will try my best Miss King”

We shared a hug and went to the restaurant to start working.

11

Azariah

So yesterday; I bumped to a girl and I was surprised how she carried herself after I did that to her. Honestly I was rude and if I can get another to meet her I would apologise.

My parents came back yesterday at night and I didn't even went to welcome them; I was just tired because if they were here in her life we wouldn't have be in this situation.

I woke up and went downstairs for a change I was feeling hungry.

I find them all dressed up and ready to leave.

“Good morning”

“Oh my baby boy” mom said

I just looked at her and then went to dish up for me.

“ Aza I am sorry my child” dad said with teary eyes.

“You should have said that to Katty but you are too late now; so your sorry won’t bring her back. Guess what she is gone, like gone forever and you will never see her smile” a soft laughter escaped as tears streamed down.

“We didn’t mean this to happen” she responded defensive

“That day; you delivered us it was the day you planned all of this; but guess what I will live until it is my time to die. The resentment you had that we made our first cries won’t bring us to the hole of hell. Continue pretending as if you love us while you don’t. All you care about is money and this luxurious life.”

I took a bite on the bacon looking straight at them.

“I know you hate us now but we never intended it to happen”

“The word “hate” isn’t describing how I feel towards you and soon in enough I will make your life a living hell like you have made Katty’s life. She didn’t deserve to die like that.

Can you imagine; dying alone surrounded by a cloud of coldness. I hate you. Go and pretend as if you are hurting while you are joyful because one of your burdens has been taken off your shoulders. I so wish you took us to an orphanage or aborted us than this life nxa!”

Tears were streaming down.

“ Aza go to your room, please” sis Lungi said with pity eyes.

“Do you call yourselves as parents? Huh; do your rich friends know that you are cruel more than the devil? How did you sleep at night knowing you left a 7 year old girl behind? Did you ever thought about us, never mind about me but Katty?

You are such hypocrites and soon enough your wrong deeds will come and consume you. Mom; should I call you like that? No I don't think so. You endured for a whole 9 months carrying Katty in your womb. You managed all those craziest cravings and morning sickness. You didn't live your life for those months and you even conquered birth pains and you even told us that you aren't going to have another child. Then you decided that luxurious was more important than her. What kind of a mother are you? You are such a selfish and useless woman.

You, yes you the father of the house. You were supposed to protect us from the cruel world. You were supposed to stand your grounds but no you decided that your wife is important more than the life of your only baby girl. I can't wait to see you suffer and I will make sure of it."

"Aza please this isn't the right time" Sis Lungi interfered again

"You should be proud of yourselves; mission accomplished"

I clapped my hands and laughed out loud.

I wiped my tears and went to my room.

Zenkosi

Things at home were much better but I wanted to know more about my father and that was troubling my soul because mom never spoke about what happened between them.

She said he came back and I would love to meet my father.

I went to work with a heavy heart.

“You are always late these days” the manager said

“I am sorry; that won’t happening again”

I went to serve my table and Tara was already there with a smile as always.

“Good morning Zess”

“Good morning Tara”

She looked at me with those eyes of hers that says “what’s wrong?”

“Don’t look at me like that” I said passing her to my table

We went for lunch as usual and I wasn't looking forward to it because Tara was going to ask what is wrong.

"What's wrong with you today?" she said eating her fried chips and now I have realised that she loves meat

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ice cream and friend chips

"Nothing much" I said dressing my green salad

She lifted her eyebrow.

"Okay; I want to know my father and I don't know how to tell mom"

"Zess you know that you have power of what is going on your life. You should sometimes make yourself come first. It is your right to know your father and your mom will be wrong if she

deprived you that chance. Regardless of what happened between them; you still have the right to know him. Ask her politely and then take it from there. You lived your whole life without him now that you stand a chance don't let it slip away even if it going to open wounds but that means those wounds weren't healed and will never heal until the truth is known so that you can make peace."

"I just want to see and ask him these questions that have been tormenting me in my sleep"

"Then you have to do what you need to do, because it is you who is suffering from all of this"

"I will try my best, thank you"

"Sure, let's go back inside"

Atarah

I knocked off and went straight home; I was really tired and needed a sleep.

I got inside my apartment and went straight to bed. As I was dozing off; a call came through.

I answered without reading the caller.

“Hello”

“Don’t tell me you are already in bed”

“I am tired”

“it’s okay, I wanted to take you out”

“I am sorry; next time”

“Yeah I guess”

“Don’t be like that Bongani”

“Sleep, see you tomorrow”

He hanged up.

I tried to sleep and I couldn't so I decided to cook a simple meal.

I remembered that I needed to look for job since I couldn't do it yesterday.

I looked for job but nothing was promising.

I went back to bed and tried to sleep. As I was forcing myself to sleep thoughts robbed me and tears streamed down my dark chocolate cheeks.

I was taken back where I would sleep with no food in my stomach but expected to do all chores with a smile on my face. As much as I was trying to bury all those incidents of my life but it seems they become in each day alive and a flesh grows with strong muscles that's the reason I would cry myself to sleep.

Sometimes I so wish my parents were still alive because I know they truly loved me even though they left me so soon. Their death still haunts me even now and I don't know how to deal with it.

I finally dozed off with my wet pillow.

12

Zenkosi

I came back from work, with a mission of asking my other about my father. As much as I am scared that mother will freak out and burst flames as usual but I needed to do it for my sake. I don't want to live my whole life wondering about my father.

"Mom I am back" I shouted as I was entering in the kitchen and she was not there

"Okay; I am still giving Tori a bath" she shouted back

"Okay ma"

I was pacing up and down the kitchen.

"Zenkosi what is wrong with you?" She startled me

"Oh nothing mom" I snapped

“ mmmh”

“Can we please sit down?”

“Oh okay”

We sat down and she looked worried and I was so nervous

“Mom I know what I am going to say will hurt you but I need answers. I have been thinking about my father. I really want to meet him; it’s not like I will build a relationship with him

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it is too late for that now. But I would like to see him just once
ma”

She kept quiet for some time and tears started flowing.

“Ma I am sorry”

She didn't say anything but left me just like that.

Azariah

As much as I was still angry with my parents; I needed to man up and be part of the funeral processes.

The date was already set which will be next week and relatives were coming this side. I thought Katty was going to be laid next to my grandmother but the family agreed to be buried here.

So today I was coming from town with my cousins; we aren't close because they think I am that spoilt brat cheesy boy which I am not.

"You are back early than I thought" Sis Lungi said as she was collecting plates from the table. Seems we were late for lunch.

"Yeah and I am tired" I said putting the shopping bags on the floor

"You are such a lazy young man Aza"

"Don't blame me; you always do the chores so I am not used" I said shrugging my shoulders

“uteketisiwe wethu lona (he is just spoilt)” that’s my cousin Ayakha

“Aren’t you hungry?” Sis Lungi said ignoring Ayakha

“He can’t even make his own food. I wonder what kind of a man you will be. These rich kids know nothing than spending their parent’s money “she said

“No, thanks; I ate something while I was at town”

I left them in the kitchen.

I so wish people can understand that coming from a rich family doesn’t mean you are spoilt or what. We are all different and we are bound to do things differently.

And I will always spend the money because I have it; I won’t try to fit in. appreciate me as I am and correct me when I am wrong. We are rich but there is no happiness which means we are the poorest people in the universe.

I went to take a nap because we were told that in the evening we were going to have guests from church. Church is something I hate with all of my heart because my mother goes to church every Sunday but still the cruellest woman in this entire world. So I don't see its importance.

I was woken up by a noise.

“uthi usalele lomntwana nangku?” (You say; this child is still sleeping even now?)”

That's my aunt; she never loved us and I don't know why.

“Ewe aunt (yes aunt)” Ayakha responded

A knock came in and I wasn't looking forward to open for them but knowing this was going to be a huge case.

“ngena (come in)” I shouted

“Who do you think you are; are you the man of this house or a child?” Aunt asked

“I am a child aunt”

“Then why are you sleeping?”

“There is nothing to be done aunt and I am not feeling okay” I stood up and went to the bath room to do the hygiene.

I came back to Ayakha and aunt busy inspecting my room

“Can I help you with something?”

They got startled and I was shocked and mad but I remained calm as much as possible

“ hayi(no)” aunt said.

“You have expensive things here; you are living nice while back at home we aren’t”

“Is that my problem?” I asked coldly

“I didn’t say it’s yours. You are full of pride you know”

“Is that your problem or you’re just jealous?” I asked very irritated as I was wearing my shoes

“I am not jealous” she responded defensively

“You can’t say Aya is jealous, in front of me. Do you understand that it is your mother that made us to suffer? My brother was providing for us before she met your mother”

“So you are telling me that for what reason? I was really annoyed and I have learnt that she doesn’t love my mom at all. She was hoping that my father would marry her friend but he chose mom

“Your mother is cruel”

“I know and I think you are made from the same feathers”

“Don’t insult me” she shouted.

“Leave my room now!” I shouted because I was really angry. I don’t understand her at all. We are hurting and all she cares about is that she is suffering as if it wasn’t her choices that drew her to that situation.

We really need to learn not put blame on people when we experiences failures and she didn’t fail but she was too good to go to school and get a career. She was busy with men that would cascade her with flashy life. Now all those men are gone I guess her daughter is the one hustling.

13

Zenkosi

As much as I was shocked, I was really hurt to see my mother so broken. I wondered the whole night about what happened between them but I told myself that I was going to find out; not because I want to know him but what he did to my mother.

“Why he came back after so many years” I asked myself as I was a taking bath.

I really hated to leave my child behind with my mother when she isn't well but I had no choice.

As thoughts kept came coming through; tears streamed and I needed to collect myself because I had work to do.

I collected myself and went to the kitchen, in a hope that I will find her cooking sour porridge as usual but that day she wasn't there.

I went to knock to her room just to tell her that I am going.

“Come in” she responded

“I am going to work; see you later” I said as I was standing by the door frame

“Okay” she wasn’t even looking at me.

I went to work as hurt as I was but I told myself that I was going to be a strong girl and face my problems.

Atarah wasn’t at work that day; she was off so it was going to be boring.

Atarah

I was just chilling in my apartment very bored. I don't like to watch TV so I had nothing to do.

I decided to call Bongani in a hope that I still stand a chance of being taken out.

“ Atarah”

“ Bongani” I said.

“How are you doing?”

“I am good. You?”

“I am good too”

There was silence; he then decided to break it.

“How can I help you?”

“Nothing; I was just checking you”

“mmmh okay but that’s not true”

“Can you please visit me or take me out?”

“ andifuni” (I don’t want to)

“ andizukucenga “ (I won’t beg you)

“ andifucengwa”(I don’t want to be begged)

“Whatever”

I dropped the call; I really wasn’t going to beg him. Eh I need to make friends here. Aya is always busy with school and I don’t want to disturb him; otherwise I prefer his company than his brother.

After about 30 minutes my phone rang as I was about to doze off.

“Bongani”

“Come outside”

“mmh?”

“I am here, please hurry up”

“oh ok”

I went to the bath room just to wash my face and teeth. I went to him; he is always looking good; I never saw it before that he is handsome but he is and very handsome.

He was in his black jeans, polo neck and leather jacket and with sneakers.

“And then?” He asked puzzled

“What?” I was confused by his unclear question

“unxibe ntoni Atarah?” (What are you wearing?” He was bit irritated and I didn’t understand why.

“I am wearing my shorts with a vest; if you didn’t see” I responded

“ I thought you wanted me to take you out”

“You said; you don’t want to”

“it’s cold ; why aren’t wearing something warm?”

“I was sleeping”

“What do we do now because you aren’t ready?”

He said drooling over me

“ I don’t know. Maybe I should go back and sleep”

“ I am sorry”

“For what?”

“For not being honest with you”

“ mmh okay, maybe next time”

“let’s go inside, you are going to catch a flue”

I led the way; I went to my bedroom to look for something to wear. I took my truck pants and a jersey.

I went downstairs and he was busy on his phone.

I cleared my throat to get his attention.

“Oh you are done?”

“Yeah, should I make you something to eat?”

“No, I have already ordered a pizza, I hope you don’t mind”

“No its okay”

“I am feeling cold”

“Let me go and take a fleece blanket.

I went to take it for him and we settled on the sofa, he was still busy smiling and focused on the phone and it was bit irritating me.

“You shouldn’t have come here; if you are going to here by your body but mind miles away”

“I am sorry” he put it on the coffee table

“Sure”

“How are you, be honest with me?” He asked with so concerned eyes.

“ I am okay and I am glad that you came; I was really bored”

Honestly, I wanted to be disturbed from my thoughts. It was like I was going to blow up my mind.

“Be honest with me” his voice wasn’t high but you would get the message that he was tired of my lies

“ I am good Bongani”

“Okay. I am leaving; tell me when you want to talk” he took his car keys and looked at me then shook his head

“ Bongani please don’t do this”

“What Atarah?!” He shouted

“Don’t leave me “ I said pleadingly

“You shut me out all the time; can’t you see that I care about you?”

“Can you please calm down?”

“I think, I am done here, really you don’t see how I value you”

“Please” tears betrayed me and I really hate to break down in someone’s presence

I was really scared that he was going to leave me just like my parents. I became fond of him and he is the only person I can say; really care for me. I couldn’t afford to go through what I went through when my parents died. I was really tired of be left

alone that's why I always built some walls and pretend to be strong.

He looked at me and then looked away

"Stop crying please

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I won't leave you"

He opened his arms for me.

"Please stand up and come to me" he said with pity eyes.

It was bit weird; I have never hugged anyone and by a man was bit extra.

I stood up slowly and he embraced me.

I broke down as never before. I felt safe and loved after so many years.

“ I am here for you. Don’t cry “he kept saying that until I was done with my show

‘ stay here, I am going to make you a strong coffee”

I nodded and it was really weird for me, the last time I cried and being embraced was the time my grandma passed away.

He came back with it and sat next to me

“ thank you” he nodded and a knock came through .

“ it must be the delivery” he said standing to attend the door.

Yes it was actually pizza delivery.

He went to dish up for us and I really enjoyed like being served and taken care of.

“ I am here for you Tara, please stop shutting me out. That breaks my heart”

“ I am sorry, it just I am not used to be taken care of”

‘ I understand but know that I am always here for you”

I nodded and ate my pizza.

We stayed there having conversations and I really enjoyed his presence.

He left very late.

“ it’s late now, I should get going” he said looking at his watch

“ ok”

I walked him out.

“ see you tomorrow”

“ are you telling me or asking?”

“ I am telling Atarah”

“ mmmh “

“ come , give me a hug”

I hugged him and he got inside his car and told me to walk back inside.

“ go first” I said

“ no go, its late. I want to make sure that you are safe”

“ I am too old for that Bongani”

“can you please let me be?”

“ okay, good night” I went back inside and waved at him

Zenkosi

After work, I went home and my mother was feeling much better than when I left in the morning.

“ ma”

“ my child”

“ I am so hungry”

“ food will be ready in few minutes”

“ is Tori sleeping?”

“ yes”

“ okay, let me go freshen up. I am so cold maybe I will be warm”

I went to take a bath .

“ food is ready” that’s mom shouting after few minutes.

“okay ma, I am coming”

I went to eat and it was really awkward. I wanted to apologise about what happened yesterday but I was bit scared; so I let it be.

“ Zenkosi, I really do understand why you want to know your father. Can you please give me some time and when I am ready I will tell you everything that you want to know about him”

She said as I was collecting the plates from the table.

“ its okay ma, and I am sorry that I brought you pain”

“ no don't worry about me, just focus on you and Tori”

She said that and went to her bedroom.

14

A week later

Azariah

So it was the final day to say goodbye to my only sister Katty and it was really painful but had to do it.

We were all wearing black and really sobbing our hearts silently.

I was in the front row with my parents and aunt. And behind us were family members and friends.

My mother stood up to say her heart.

“I don’t know what to say but I am so hurting and I don’t think I will ever heal. Maybe it was going to be better if she was sick physically but she was emotionally because of me. I blame myself for everything that happened. I chose myself more often than my little daughter. I wasn’t even there when she took her life. She wanted a mother but I was so selfish with my luxurious life.

I am sorry my child, if I was able to turn back time; I would but I can't my angel. I am sorry that I missed to see your smile and hear your endless talks.

You were going to be a great young beautiful woman and I took that chance from you and that will always haunt me alive. I am a dead soul without you.”

She was really hurting and it was my first time seeing her like that. Her death was a shock to all of us.

“ Aza my child I am so sorry that I wasn't a mother to both of you and I am looking forward to have a better relationship with you. I love you son”

She wiped her tears and took a sit next to my father. My father couldn't even talk about her daughter because he was really blaming himself about everything that happened and I still do blame them.

I stood up and went to the podium

“I don’t know what to say first but I have many things that I would like to say about her. Firstly I cried myself out because of her death and today I told myself it was enough. She is in a better place full of joy and peace unlike here on earth. Katty was really talkative and she was loved by many. She was the strongest person I know; even though she became exhausted after sometime. She endured sufferings and able to wear a smile like she wasn’t hurting. She would come to my room at times just to check on me but I was the older one. She was my best friend and without her I am incomplete. She was there with me all the time as young as she was. She became my shoulder to cry on. I will always miss her and how naïve she was.

Today I can finally say I am alone in this world, I will face all the challenges alone.. Parents love your children with all you have; you brought them in this world. They didn’t choose to be born so don’t be selfish and love them genuinely. Materialist things mean nothing without love. I will love Keturah Thingo Nkosi always “

The funeral was short; I believe it is because she was still a child.

We went home and other relatives were already leaving. My only cruel aunt and her child didn't go and I don't understand why.

"Azariah" that's my mom calling me

"mama"

"I am sorry about everything and I know it won't be easy for you to forgive but please do"

"I need time with everything. I need to process the death of Katty first" I said honestly.

"I do understand my son"

I went to my room to take a nap before we gather for supper.

I wasn't looking forward to it but I was avoiding arguments of being called as a spoiled child.

I was woken up by Sis Lungi for the supper.

I went downstairs and they were all gathered in the table ready to eat.

I joined them and sat next to sis Lungi. She is the only person I truly love.

“You decided to take your time” aunt started

“I am sorry if I kept you waiting” I said

“Can we please say grace?” That’s my dad; a man of few words

Aunt graced the food and we started eating in silence which was really something I was looking forward to because I didn’t want to talk to them.

“We have decided to come back home permanently “that’s my mother making me to choke on my food.

“What?” I said very surprised

“We were wrong and now we want to do things the right way”
dad responded

“mmmh but that’s too late. I am moving out” I said taking a bite
on the meat.

“But why?” Mother asked in a lower voice and you wouldn’t
miss that she was hurting.

“Nothing but I am moving out.”

“You don’t work, where are you going to get money?”

“I will make a plan; I have always been on my own and so I will
hustle like a man”

“Don’t beg him; let him go and suffer out there” aunt
intervened

“ you can’t move out Azariah” mom said pleadingly but I wasn’t going to change that. I told myself that I will move out once I have a job because I had to take Katty with me. But Katty is no more so I will hustle like a man, maybe find a job as a cashier.

“ I won’t change my decision mom”

“ Aza please think about this” Sis Lungi said

“you know Sis Lungi, I can’t and i am going to miss you”

“He loves attention this one. You have everything a child would love to have. A stable home and parents but you act so selfish”

That’s Aya.

“ Aya can you please shut up?” I said calmly.

“Or what Aza, because you are really the most selfish person I ever met. You should be grateful that your parents give you everything that you want”

There was silence in the table and I was really infuriated by her words as if she knows me.

“ Aya please keep quiet “ that’s my dad. He knew that Aya’s words weren’t true. They weren’t good parents.

“You are right Aya and you are the reason that my brother is no longer taking care of us back at home.” She said pointing to my mother.

“What did I do to you Aunt Lizzy?”

“You should just move out with your nothing son” she said and tears streamed down on my mother’s face. Even though I was angry at her but seeing her mistreated by aunt made me to feel sorry for her.

“You never loved me from the first place, I am mourning for my child; instead of you to embrace and support me you are throwing hate at me. Can’t you see that we are still dealing with lots of problems in this family? I am tired of your hatred and I don’t know why you hate me this much”

Mom said and stood up and disappeared to her room.

I went to mine; leaving them there.

Atarah

To be honest it was really good to have Bongani in my life. He was my best friend; we would spend time together and we did more often.

So it was Friday, he was going to a closing function in his school. He asked me to go with him.

I didn’t know what to wear because; eh wow people were going to be stunning. I called Zess to company for shopping.

I got myself a black dress with black shoes. I really love black.

We grab a lunch after were done shopping.

“Aren’t you going to do your hair?” Zess asked as we were settling down on the restaurant.

“No I will do my afro”

“Okay and it looks good“

“Thank you Zess”

“So tell me what’s going between you too?”

“ Zess you have been asking this for very long time now”

“I want to know the truth”

“We are just friends nothing more and he isn’t my type”

“ mmmh tell me your type”

“I don’t have anything to show Zess and Bongani is the opposite”

“Do you love him?”

“I don’t know Zess. Can we please stop talking about this?”

“mmh ok. Let’s order then”

We ordered our food while having a light conversation.

Zess is very bubbly and I don’t think she can run out of words.

As we were still joking around a call came through

“Hey stranger” I last talked to him yesterday in the morning.

“Ouch, I am a stranger now”

“Yes, you have been scarce”

“I sent you a whatsapp text in the morning and you didn’t respond”

“Oh sorry, I didn’t check my whatsapp”

“ mmh

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do you miss me?”

“Not exactly” I half laughed

“Mmm I miss you “

I blushed, a whole me blushing for Bongani.

Zess looked at me and smiled

“I am at town now”

“Should I pick you up?”

“No I am fine. I am with my friend”

“Oh ok. Have a good time then”

“Ok, talk later then”

“Sure”

I looked at Zess who was looking at me with questioning eyes.

“What?”

“For sure that was Bongani”

“How do you know?”

“That smile says it all”

“Whatever”

We finished up our food as she was still on my case that I love Bongani.

40 minutes later I was in my apartment.

I was really tired so I decided to take a nap before I get ready for the function.

To tell you I overslept and I was woken up by a knock.

“I am coming” I said in my sleepy voice

I went to open and boom is all looking handsome as always but today no smile. He looked at me then shook his head.

“Bongani” I then remembered that we were supposed to be attending the function.

“You should have told me that you didn’t want to go with me”

“I am sorry I overslept”

“I turned down one of my close friends just to go with you but you are telling me that you overslept. I am a joke now”

“I am sorry” that friend thing really made me to blush. He chose me.

“I will call her to see if she is ready to go”

“Oh ok” I was jealous to be honest.

“She is just a friend and I don’t want to go alone”

“Sure”

“ Atarah don’t do that”

“What?”

“Why are you mad now?”

“ I am not mad. Have a lovely evening with your friend”

“She is just a friend”

“But you are choosing her” why am I mad now, Bogani can choose anyone he likes

“Is it my fault that you overslept?”

“Fine Bongani go. Anyway I wasn't going to meet your standards so I get it”

“Don't do this Atarah”

“I am sorry” I said honestly and went to my room. He followed me.

‘You should be leaving ‘

“I am not leaving without you.”

“But I am not going”

“I am not going too”

“Don’t do that please”

“I want to see you happy all the time”

“Whatever”

“ I missed you”

“ I missed you too”

I took a fleece blanket because Bongani is always complaining that my house is cold.

“ take here” I gave him the fleece.

“ thank you”

We went to the kitchen to make something to eat.

“ are you going to be sitting and looking at every move I make”

“Cook Atarah, I am hungry”

“ yoh go and find a wife then”

“ I am looking at right now”

“ mmh”

“Do you see yourself married?”

“I don’t know. I never dated before so I don’t know what love honestly is”

‘How old are you?’

‘I am 20’ I gave him my irritably look

“Never been kissed?”

“yes Bongani”

“Next year you are going to school right?”

“ I am working on that”

“What does that supposed to mean?”

“I will go if I have a funding”

“ I will be your blesser” he said with his mischievous look

“I pass”

“Honestly don’t worry about that. Just apply and tell me what you need”

“ I don’t want to be a burden”

“ who said you are a burden?”

“ no one”

“ then stop that nonsense”

“ I am sorry”

“ Atarah”

“ mmh”

“ I lo--- I care about you”

“ I know”

Is Bongani in love with me, oh no that can't be happening.

We stayed up for some time and he left very late.

The next morning, I prepared myself for work

I went to work and Zess was already there.

“you are too early today” I said as I was getting to start my shift.

“don’t be like that” she said chuckling

“ how are you?”

“ I am good Tara, how was your night?” she asked excitedly

“you like news too much, let’s go and serve people”

“Tara don’t be like that”

I left her to attend my tables.

During lunch time, Zess asked again about my yesterday’s night.

“ Zess please stop asking me that”

“ answer me girl then”

“ ok. We didn’t go”

“ what?” she was shocked

“ I overslept and he wasn't pleased”

“ oh Atarah”

“ yeah I disappointed him but we are cool”

“ Bongani is a good guy”

“ I know”

“ today my mother said she will tell me about my father after my shift”

“ that's good, you have been waiting for this day”

“ yeah but I am scared though”

“ don't be, all will be alright with time”

“ I guess so”

We finished our lunch talking about our future goals and I noticed that Zess put her child first in everything and I love that so much.

15

Zenkosi

I went home and found mom done cooking. Tori was playing with her toys on the floor.

I was really nervous that mom would tell me something that might hurt me and I am so vulnerable. But I had no choice rather than facing the reality of my life.

“Mom I am back” I said as I was putting the shopping bags on the table.

“Ok my child, I will be with you in few minutes. Let me first take a bath” she said with smile

“Ok mom, I will go and wear something comfortable”

I went to my room to wear something comfortable. I went back to the kitchen and dish up for me because I was really hungry.

My mom came back when I was about to finish my food.

“Can we talk now?”

“We can mom”

“I don’t know where to start but let me first ask for your forgiveness, for denying you the right to know about your father. I shouldn’t done have that

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I thought I was protecting you but no I was really damaging the innocent girl in you. So today I will tell you everything about your father and it will always be your choice on what you going to do with the information. I was coming from work as I used to work at a tavern in the townships. So that day I was walking alone back home; my best friend didn’t come to work. As I was walking in the darkness, I met this guy and he called me but I ignored for several times until he catches with me. He asked for my name and I told him and he asked to go with him to his car. I normally used to see him with my best friend at the tavern and he was really creeping me.so I refused to go with him; he then forced me roughly to go with him. We got in the car and he drove off to his house and he was very rich. He told me to strip off all of my clothes and if I refuse he was going to kill me. I did as told; I was only left with undies. He touched me in an

uncomfortable way and I tried to protest but he was very strong. I failed to protect myself. I found out after sometime that my so called best friend told him about me and when I was going to knock off at work. So it was planned by both of them. I lost myself and it was really difficult because my parents didn't believe me. I was a joke in the community; because they said I was after his money. He never got arrested because my parents couldn't believe me and he was feared by the whole community. Thing became worse when I found out that I was pregnant; I was chased out and I had to find my way through all those difficulties. I couldn't abort my only hope and I told myself that I was going to hustle for my child. I moved here after so many years living as a street kid. My child was taken by one of the vendors and she took take care of her. I was able to find my stand after a year and I went to take my baby girl. It was very hard but I couldn't let my sufferings haunt my baby girl. I went home after two years of healing and I wanted to take down the burden of resentment on my shoulders. Even though I regret what happened but I am more grateful because it gave me a special and precious soul. It moulded me to be a better person and know that struggle isn't the end. There is always a light in every darkness. There is always a star even if it is so little but eventually it will cover the whole sky. Zenkosi I love with all of my heart."

Tears were streaming down.

“So I am a product of rape?” I asked with a breaking voice, I couldn’t hold the sharp pain in my heart and it really did pierce it.

“You aren’t product of rape but a blessing from God”

“Where is he?”

“If you want to see him I will arrange everything”

“I want to see his face and murder him with my own hands”

“Go and sleep. We will talk tomorrow”

I was really angry more than being hurt. My mom had been through a lot and I didn’t want to stress her with anything. So I decided that I will find him on my own and kill him.

I went to sleep but I couldn’t because; I was thinking if something like that can happen to Tori would be the day of my death.

I don't understand why a person would do something so painful to other person. Her best friend out of all people sold her out and she experienced all the pain alone. Her family was against her too and I couldn't even imagine the pain she felt mostly emotionally. She dealt with so many thorns on her own.

It is true that we should love them all but trust no one. I don't think I would be able to forgive such betrayal. She thought she had a best friend and family that truly love her but no; they decided to show their true colours in a cruel manner.

I so wish parents could be alert about these things which are really happening in our lives. We lost so many innocent people because we don't believe them when they tell us their problems. We are easily to jump into conclusion without finding the truth.

Many people are dead emotionally not because they are weak but they just needed a shoulder to cry on and someone to believe them. You will find many people drowning themselves in drugs, sex and partying; destroying their future not because they dreamt of that but because they can't live with so much burden.

Even if you won't say anything but listening to someone will eventually help; it doesn't matter if it won't be the permanent healing but it will surely bring a difference. Let your love ones and all people know that they are valuable and enough.

We were created for each other and we can't live without each other; meaning we need each other no matter what. Let us all open our arms for broken people, let's not criticise them but love them because there is no one which is perfect. We all have marks that we don't want and regrets so who are we to judge.

I couldn't believe that I was a product of rape and I told myself that I will make sure each and every child gets help including their mothers. I wanted to teach and make our communities more aware that rape isn't right and we shouldn't sugar coat by disbelieving the innocent kids.

16

Chapter 2

5 years later

Narrated

Life is so unpredictable and sometimes we may think that when we are facing challenges that's the end of our lives or dreams. Sometimes the shortest route that we want to take isn't going to get us to our destination. And the long process wearies us down at times but we need to have a mentality that says we should trust the process and there is no standard formula to success. We shouldn't limit time but be determined in every way, doesn't matter if it fails or works out.

Personally, I don't take failure lightly and it had led me to a point that I saw myself as a failure not knowing that I can't be perfect in everything but perfection is gained through lessoning yourself by via failures. I realised that sometimes I will fail and I won't get what I desire on the record time of my plan.

But who am I to decide? I believe it is very wise to trust the one that created you. In every plan acknowledge him so that you

don't get frustrated when things don't happen the way you want. The Bible says we should trust him and not rely on our own understanding.

It was very difficult for Zenkosi to forgive her father about what happened but her mother and Tara were with her in every step of the way.

As time went by she became more insecure which was really affecting her child so Tara suggested that she should seek help and she agreed to go for counselling.

She was better after a year and she went to school to study psychology because it was her passion. 2 years later she opened an organisation called "I AM THE STORM". In this organisation; she was helping young girls with every need, which they might need. She was doing awareness about abuse mostly sexual abuse. She shared her story and people were really healed by her words.

She wasn't going to be where she was without the help of her best friend Tara. She stood by her side.

Tara went to school the following unlike Zess since she was still dealing with her issues, she didn't want to be more occupied.

She did her fashion designer course and she really loved it with her all heart. Bongani helped her with everything from paying the fees and finding her a job. Bongani was willing to help in starting her own boutique but she wanted to do something for herself without his help.

Tara was slowly losing herself because the hatred she had towards her aunt. So this other day she went to church and she accepted Jesus Christ as her saviour but it was difficult for her to separate herself from the bitterness. One of the things that made that; Tara doesn't want to be seen vulnerable and don't want to share her feelings. It was difficult for her but with the help of the Holy Spirit made her to open up her heart to the pastor's wife and she was delivered from the bitterness. She went to visit her aunt after so many years; things weren't looking good at all for them. Her cousins dropped out of school and their father died in a car accident which it was said that her aunt had a hand on that accident.

She forgave them and helped her cousins to step up again in life. They are all working now. She gave them the house because they had nowhere to go. She said God will provide for her. She was still staying in her apartment.

Two years after finishing school, she got married with Bongani and they are happily married. Bongani was the best husband to Tara because he understood her wife.

Tara became more like a magnet to broken souls

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they always came to her mostly after church and in her work place and some she would take them to Zess since she was familiar with their problems. Tara and Zess became closer than before.

Azariah struggled a lot to accept the death of her sister and really he moved out after the funeral. He was staying alone and his parent provided for him until he was working. Azariah was a lawyer and he became friends with Bongani through work.

He forgave his parents after sometime and they are now a happy family.

Azariah

“You need to have a wife now; I want to have grandchildren”
that’s my dad

“Not now dad” I wasn’t really looking forward to commitment.

“ I am getting old “

“ you are still so young dad, give me 4 years”

“ yoh that’s very long Aza”

“ haike’

Honestly I don’t think I am the type to settle down, I really love to play around and I don’t want to hurt someone’s child. I went back to stay with my parents and I am really happy to be with them.

Azariah

So today I was going to work as usual, I am working for my best friend Bongani. I met him just after my degree and he really helped me in the law industry. He is always motivating me that

I should work hard in order to fulfil my dream which is to own a law firm.

I got into my office and started working. A knock came in as I was busy going through a rape case which is something I deal with most of the time.

“Come in” I said still looking at my work.

“Good morning sir, I am sorry to disturb you but Mr Karin is asking for you” that’s my p.a. he is much disciplined with a humble spirit.

“Ok, thanks Khaya. I will go just now”

“Okay sir thank you” he then left my office.

I wondered why Bongani would ask for me early in the morning but I needed to hear him out.

I went to his office and he was with a woman and it was my first time seeing him with a woman. He is married though but never met his wife.

I knocked and I was welcomed in.

“Good morning “I greeted them

“Hey Aza”

“ yha man”

“I would like you to meet my wife Atarah”

“oh this is the woman that keeps you happy” we shared a hand shake with Atarah and she was looking at me as if she was trying to remember something about me but unfortunately I never met her before.

“Baby my friend Aza; he works here at the firm”

“Nice to meet you again” she said and we were shocked.

“Babe do you know Aza?” Bongani asked surprised

“Yeah babe at least today he isn’t rude”

“Okay”

“Babe let me leave you” she kissed her husband as if I was not there. I didn’t even mind them; I was thinking where we met.

“Where did we meet?” I asked as she was leaving

“Not today” she then left me confused.

“I wonder what you did to my wife” Bongani asked as he was settling down in his chair

“I don’t know man; I should leave I have an important case”

“sure man” I left with my mind full of questions about Tara.

17

Zenkosi

My child was now 6 years old and we are living our best life because now I am working and I believe in the few years to come I will be able to practice as a psychologist. It wasn't an easy road but I needed to step up for my child, me and mom. They are all I have now and I am working hard for them.

I was really stressed this day because Tori asked about his father. She said her friends have fathers why she doesn't have one. I had to tell her the truth that her father left long time ago and he never came back.

Honestly I don't know if he is still alive or what so I can't be sure of anything.

Tori didn't take the news well; she was sad but I couldn't change the situation she needed the truth before it's too late.

On my side; I can finally say I am healed about what happened in the past. I decided to focus in improving myself and be a good mother to my only daughter.

“Tori please wake up; you are going to be late for school” I said as I waking up my sleepy child. She really loves her sleep.

“Oh ma”

She woke up and my mother bathed her as I was ironing her uniform. She was in grade 1.

I gave my mother her uniform and went to make breakfast and her lunchbox. They came down stairs; we no longer staying in that old house. We sold it and bought a better one.

“Eat my angel so that you can be big like me” she doesn’t love food so it is work to feed her.

“But you said that yesterday” oh my child

“Yes you need to eat everyday then you will be big”

She took a bite; even though she didn’t believe me.

We all ate our breakfast and I went to work. Mom took her to school.

During the day I planned a lunch with my best friend; it has been two weeks without seeing each other and I missed her so much.

So I sent her a text reminding her about our lunch date.

In no time it was our lunch; so I went to nearest restaurant which I am in a process of buying it.

She was late; something I am used to these days and I think it's her work. She is always busy, starting your boutique and being a wife isn't a game at all.

"I am sorry; I am late my friend"

"Something I am used to"

"Don't be like that"

“Eh come here stop sulking” we hugged and I really missed my friend.

“I missed you so much Zess”

“I missed you too”

“I am sorry that I have been busy a lot these days”

“I understand my friend; how is Bongani?”

“He is good friend and you should visit us for dinner with Tori and mom; I missed them a lot”

“We will but not now; I still want you to settle down first because you are so busy”

“ yeah work but in few weeks we will be done with the building”

“That’s good, lets order”

We ordered our food and continued with our conversation.

“ Tara I have good news to tell you”

“ mmh tell me please”

“this place will soon be mine” I said excitedly

“ Zess” she came and hugged me which made some people to look at us.

“ I am so happy for you my friend; this deserves a celebration”

“ not now; when all things are settled then we can celebrate”

“ I am so happy “

“ I know”

Tara was the only person who knew about my plan and dreams and it felt good to share with her.

Atarah

I came back from work very late and as I was driving in there was a loud noise meaning that he was with his friends.

I parked in and went inside the house. The rude dude was comfortably sitting on my couch with a glass of a juice in his hand. The music was very loud and they didn't see me when getting in.

I went to lower the music and it was then that they noticed me.

“oh baby you are back” Bongani said with a guilty face because he knew that he must tell me first when he is inviting his friends over.

“ewe sthandwa sam; how was your day?”

I said as I was taking off my shoes.

“it was good but busy”

“oh ey Aza” he wasn’t comfortable

“hey Atarah. Man I should leave now”

“you are not going anywhere” that’s Bongani.

“I will go and take a shower before I make something to eat”

“I have already cooked my wife”

“ ok thank you” I kissed him and went to take a shower.

Bongani came to our room as I was finishing up wearing my pyjamas. It was really cold that day.

“ babe”

“my heart”

“ where is your friend?” I asked as I was putting on my doek

“ he left”

“ oh”

“What really happened because he seemed confused that he met you”

“ I was coming from the engen garage

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when I was still a waitress. So I was busy recharging my airtime and I bumped into him. My phone fell and it was broken. He then told me that I should watch where I am going. I know I was wrong but he didn't have to so rude after my phone was broken”

“Are you still mad at him?”

“ no babe I am not; it just feels nice to see someone shaking in my presence”

“ oh babe please stop this, he is my friend” we were laughing

“ please don't tell him” I laughed at my imagination

“I will if you continue to scare my friend”

“Why didn't tell me that you invited him”

“ I am sorry; I didn’t plan it”

“ ok, if he is your best friend then he is always welcome here but not all those young boys you hang out with “

“ oh babe”

“ I am serious, he looks so matured than those boys”

Bongani is loved by many people and they would come in my house and turn my house into a mess so I talked to him about his friends.

“ Aza will come anytime then”

“ he can”

We went to the kitchen to eat and then we called it a night.

18

Atarah

In the morning I woke up and took a shower while Bongani was still snoring as if he has nothing to do for the day.

I came back and he was still asleep; I tried waking him up but I failed. I went downstairs to make breakfast.

I finished and went to wake him up again. It was like I have a kid.

“baby wake up please” I said putting the tray with food on the other side of the headboard.

“ what time is it?” he asked with eyes half closed

“ it’s almost 8 o’clock; you are going to be late for work”

“Ok; thank you”

He woke up and pecked my lips before going to take a shower. He was done in a minute. I still wonder how he does because he always has a nice odour.

“So fast” I said as I was putting down his suit

“Don’t start please babe”

“ I love you so much; do you know that?”

“ I know Mrs Bongani” he came closer to me and kissed my forehead.

“ just know that I will always choose you; no matter what” I blushed as usual

“ get dressed Mr Atarah” I laughed

“ no ndiyalobola andilotyolwa” we laughed

He got dressed as I was fixing myself in the mirror.

“ babe; thank you for the food”

“you are welcome my love”

Azariah

To be honest; I am still asking myself about what really did I do to Atarah. I don't remember meeting her but she seemed to be sure about it. I really need to find out about it.

I woke up and prepare myself for work. I went downstairs and my parents were having breakfast.

Sis Lungi is still working for us but she comes three times a week, mom took care of everything. I told Sis Lungi to further her studies and be what she wanted to be before she became a maid. I am currently paying for her fees and it is our secret. She is doing education part time

“ good morning family”

“ good morning son” that’s my mother

“ how are you doing?” That is dad

“ I am doing good and you?”

“ we are doing good”

I settled down and joined them for breakfast. I can say that i have moved on and being at home with my parents feels good.

I went to work and started getting busy; I was going to meet with Bongani for lunch.

As I was busy working Bongani barged in my office.

“ you don’t knock now?”

“ eh whatever man; how are you?”

“ I am good man; you?”

“ I am good. Can we not do the lunch but come to my house for dinner?”

“ oh no no no” I can't deal with his wife

“Don't worry just come”

“ you are late; do you know that?”

“ I know; this is my company” we laughed because he is always late. He loves to sleep too much.

“ I wonder where all of all this come from?”

“Dedication and passion my boy” he smiled and left the office.

Oh having a dinner with Atarah but let me go for the sake of my friend.

Zenkosi

I was busy talking to one of my colleagues in my office and a call came through. It was my best friend should I say

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my sister from another mother? but whatever man I love that woman with all of my heart.

“ sorry Lira; I need to take this call” I said picking up my ringing phone

“ my love” I smiled at Lira in a way that I need privacy.

“ hey makoti” she can call you all sort of words; I believe she calls you the first thing that came to her head

“ how are you doing in this morning?”

“ I am good love you?”

“ I am good too; can you please do me a favour?”

“ anything my friend”

“ Bongani just called and asked me to invite you for dinner tonight and please don't say no. I know it is a short notice but please friend. “

“ yhuu Tara; I have plans for tonight” that was a lie and she knew it

“ 7 o'clock my friend” she laughed at me

“whatever Tara” I joined her

“thank you lil sister”

“ I am older than you so stop with that act sis”

“ bye; love you so much” she dropped the call without waiting for me to respond.

I really don't want to go for dinner but for the sake of my friend I will go.

It was time for me to go home and the time was 5: 30 meaning I still have time to cook and prepare myself to go.

I went home and found my mother with Tori reading a book.

“ hello everyone”

Tori ran to me and gave a warm hug. That's what makes me to want to go home.

“ hello angel”

“ mommy; gogo is reading me a story” she said excitedly.

“ are you going to share the story with me after you done reading?”

“ mmm no mommy; you will read it by yourself”

“ yoh baby girl”

“ that’s my girl” mom said laughing at me

“ you are so unfair” I pretended to be hurt by all of this but my angel wasn’t paying attention

“Nothing is fair mommy” she said; then went to sit next to her grandmom.

“ hai andizalanga apha mama” we laughed

“ how are you doing sis?” mom asked as I was taking off my shoes

“ I am good mom; you?”

“ I am good”

“ mom; I am going to have a dinner with Tara.”

“ ok no problem”

“ thank you. Let me first prepare you something for supper”

“ okay” she then continued with their boring story. I cooked a simple meal.

At 6:30 I was done cooking; so I went to take a quick shower and wore my simple outfit which was my torn jean with a white printed shirt. I really love my shirt because it has Tori picture in front. I put on my leather jacket. No make-up just me and weave.

I was done in 30 minutes meaning that I was late. Tara lives bit far from our house.

I told mom that I was leaving and the time was 7: 15.

I parked in as Tara came to me.

“ you are late” she said giving me a hug

“ I know and I am sorry”

We walked in and there was this guy; I don't know but I told myself that it might be Bongani's friend.

“ finally” Bongani said coming to us. He gave me a warm hug.

“Hello Bongani” I smiled at him. He is such a good guy and I am happy for my friend.

“Hey; you became a stranger now”

“ I am sorry but I have been busy”

“ ok, come meet my friend; this is Azariah”

We shook hands.

“ Azariah; this is my wife’s friend Zenkosi”

“ nice to meet you” he said.

“ me too”

Tara was busy in the kitchen and I went to join her. We had our dinner and it was very nice just to be with my friend and her family.

It was already late so I needed to go home.

“ thank you for having me here; this means a lot. But I should leave now”

“ why so early?” Aza asked

It was 8:30

“ I have a kid, so I must read for her before she sleeps”

“ oh okay” he looked bit shocked

Tara walked me out and we shared a hug. I drove off to my house.

Atarah

“I know and I really get it, you have been fighting endless battles. It seems as if your goals and dreams are fading away like the sunset. It seems as if your abilities are becoming your disabilities. Your dreams are your impossibilities.

Yes I know you tried your best and you are in deep pain. Even those you love are gone and those promised you the whole world disappeared in thin air. Yes you are asking yourself questions but no answers. Yes you tried hurting and killing yourself many times. You even doubt the existence of God.”

“Let me take this time and greet the pastor and elders in the name of Jesus. I greet all the mothers, fathers, youth and children in the wonderful name of our Lord. I am Mrs Karen and I love the Lord with all of my heart. The Lord saw me when I was deep drowning in pain; I couldn't open my heart to him that's why I was suffering but he came to my life and saved me from myself. I would like to pass my gratefulness to my husband for coming here for the first time; thank you my love for coming and you too mom and Zess. It is really wonderful to

have you here. Without wasting time can we please read our Bibles on the book of 1 Peter 5:7. “

“Pour out all your worries and stress upon him and leave them there, for he always tenderly cares for you”

Sister Zonke read for us.

“Can we please bow down our heads?” I prayed for the word

“The scriptures says we should pour out all our worries not some but all. There must be nothing left behind when we are pouring our worries to him even those worries that scare you. Those you cannot talk about to your love ones. I am talking about those worries that keep you awake the whole night. Those worries that trouble your heart and you cry yourself to sleep. God is telling us today that we should pour out all our worries to him and after pouring out all those worries, we must leave them there. Pouring out your worries to him means that you are saying to God take control over me; I tried to make all things to work but I failed. I thought I had everything under control but I can't deal with all of these problems. After pouring out doesn't mean everything will work out instantly no; and that's where faith comes from. You pour out and leave them

there for God to take control. Don't take them back. Hannah trusted God even though the situation didn't change instantly, she kept pouring out her worries to God. She was suffering from all the troubles because of her husband's wife but she kept faith that God is able to do things that are seemed impossible. I am here today to tell you that cast all your cares to the one that created you. Don't cast your worries to people because they don't know anything about you. But the one that knew you growing in the secret knows you very well even more than you know yourself. I don't know what is going on in your life but I am solemnly sure that the one that created heaven and earth knows everything about you. Just allow his touch in this morning. Open your heart for him; he can heal that wound and he will surely restore you. Cry to the father that cares for you. He is here to embrace you. Don't fight him just allow him wholeheartedly."

People came to the alter crying and shouting to their father. God did his wonderful work. It took us about an hour, before we stop praying out to God; giving him our hearts.

"Can we please clap hands for God and Holy Spirit?" that's
Pastor Lusheke

We all clapped hands in the presence of God. I went to take a sit next to my husband.

“We are honoured to have you Mrs Karin today and thank God for such wonderful sermon. I am blessed and I am sure everyone is blessed. “

The service was over in no time and it was time for us to go home. We all greeted and went to our cars and drove off.

“Babe you were incredible; I couldn’t even stop crying” bongani said as we were getting inside our house

“yhu why were you crying ?” I laughed at him and Bongani is very soft

“Leave me alone” we laughed

“Thank you love but all the praises are for God. I did nothing there” We ordered food and went to freshen up because we were really tired.

Chapter 3

You know when you are old; sometimes you tend to regret decisions that you made when you were still young. I was really a naughty boy while I was still young and I did made many mistakes.

I am Khaya Lingani and I live with my mother and younger brother. I work at Karin's firm as p,a for Mr Nkosi. It really nice to work there and it is very a good opportunity for me because I really wasted my time in varsity; through partying and using girls. I got a scholarship to further my studies in law but I ruined all of that. They are many mistakes that I made and I regret every decision I made.

I am still studying part time though. I stepped up to correct all those mistakes I made while I was still young and I am still correcting them even now. I don't want to lie it is not easy but I have no choice to correct each and every mistake.

You will know more about me.

2 weeks later

Zenkosi

It seems as if I wasn't sad few years back when life was very sour on my side. It wasn't easy but God kept me through all the storms that I was facing with my family and I am so grateful that now we are a good family with love.

So I met with my father few days ago, and I wasn't really mad at him but I thought after meeting with him I was going to be at peace completely. We met at a restaurant and he was really remorseful of his deeds. I don't think I will be able to make a relationship with him even though my mother isn't against it but he wasn't there for many years and I don't need him now. I needed him while back but he was a beast under those expensive suits. Making peace with him is what I need and we are really good that he isn't in our lives.

Bongani and Atarah invited us for a braai and these two loves eat so much

I was wearing my black jeans with black shirt and black jacket. Guys I really love black so you will forgive me and Tori always complains that I look like a ghost. Wow I am so beautiful to be compared with a ghost but my angel is too forward to acknowledge that.

To tell you a little about my pride; Tori is so grown up and now I don't wake her up for school which is a big progress.

I had good news to tell my friends; you must be asking yourselves which friends. But ke Bongani isn't my friend but a husband of my best friend, then Azariah , Siya bongani's brother; he is working as electrical engineer now and Lira, I met her at work.

I was with Tara preparing the salads while she was making the pap and Lira done with marinating meat.

"Where are the guys?" Lira asked and we noticed that she was eyeing Azariah but the boy isn't into it

" Azariah is still on his way" Tara answered

Bongani got in the kitchen and greet us.

" I am here for the meat" he said taking it and kissed his blushing wife and went out.

" you are always blushing in his presence" I said

“I am in love Zess and I love that man so much”

“ yeah we know, can we please change the topic?”

We laughed because she was going to preach at me that I should settled down now and I am too old for dating which is true. But I am not looking forward to any relationship.

We continued talking about random staff. Bongani came to tell us that meat was ready we should dish up now and everyone is here.

They all settled in the dining room and we dished up for everyone. I was the one taking plate to them and my eyes met with someone I thought I will never see again.

The tray fell down and the food was scattered all over the floor.

Azariah came to me but I wasn't hearing anything he was saying.

Atarah took me to one of the guestrooms and I stayed there for a while not talking to anyone. I thought I was dreaming but no it was the reality.

“ Zess please don't cry” Atarah said with pity eyes.

“ why now?” I asked and she was confused because she knew nothing about what was going on

“ Zess please don't do this, calm down and tell me what is going on”

“ how can you invite him here after what he put me through?” I was mad now

“ who are you talking about?”

“ that bastard in your dining room!” I shouted and I think they all heard the noise that we were making because they came following each other, except that one.

“what's wrong?” Aza asked worried walking towards me.

“ Azariah don't ; you are all betrayers.” Tears streamed down my face and I was really hurting.

“ Zess please don’t do this” Aza said and I looked at him and went out.

Atarah was following me behind and he wasn’t in the dining room maybe he left.

“ Please don’t leave like this”

“ no you betrayed me, you brought him here while you all know that he made my life a living hell”

“ I am sorry, let me take you home”

“ I will drive myself”

I took my bag and went out. I drove off and I noticed a car following me behind. I stopped after sometime because I was familiar with the car. He came out of the car and came to me.

I came out too and lean against my car.

“ Azariah what the hell?”

“Zess please don’t do this”

Azariah has a way of making me just to breakdown.

I looked at him and tears betrayed me.

“Come here” he opened his arms for me

He hugged me and I cried my lungs out.

“I am sorry, I am here now” he kept saying it.

After sometime we broke the hug.

“You are cold” I left my jacket on the car.

“ yeah I should get going “

“ I will call you before I sleep”

“ okay” I went to my car and drove off.

I get into my house and everyone was already sleeping.

I went straight to my bed and I tried to doze off but I couldn't. I was really taken back to where I was insulted and laughed at because I was pregnant and the father left.

As many thoughts came in I received a call from Azariah.

“ Azariah”

“ hey are you home safe?”

“ yeah thank you”

“ okay sleep well, I will call you tomorrow”

“ okay goodnight”

I dropped the call and I dozed off.

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Atarah

I was really confused by Zess's behaviour and I didn't understand how I betrayed her.

The only person who was with us for the first time is Aza's p.a and he came with him because Bongani asked him to. I don't think he has a past with Zess I will have to pay a visit so that she can open to me about this betrayal thing.

" Bongani do you know Khaya that much?"

" no babe, he is just a colleague and we hang out sometimes"

" mmh ok"

" why are you asking, do you think he is the reason for Zess behaviour?"

" I don't know but he was the only first time guest"

“ yoh I will ask him tomorrow about it”

“ better do that because I don't want to see my friend so broken”

“ I am sorry about what happened”

“ you didn't do anything wrong”

“Come here” I was really hurting when Zess isn't okay and I couldn't even hide it.

“ babe please don't cry she will be fine”

I nodded and we hugged.

We went to our bedroom to sleep. Everyone left after Zess left. All the food was lonely on the table.

The following day I went to work and I planned to go and visit Zess.

I called Bongani telling that I was going to check on Zess and she didn't go work that day, Lira called.

I took my bag and went to the parking lot and drove off to Zess's place. I found her sitting on the couch with red eyes; meaning that she has been crying.

"Zess" I said as I was putting my bag down.

"What are you doing here?"

"I am here for you Zess"

"I need to be alone Atarah"

"I am not leaving you here alone like this. Where is mom?"

“ she went to get some groceries”

“ ok, come and have a bath. I will make you something to eat”

we went to the bathroom; I prepared her a bath and then went to make food for her.

she came back bit better now.

I gave her food and we settled on down on high chairs in the kitchen.

“ thank you”

“ you welcome”

She ate her food in complete silence.

Once she was done I asked her about what happened.

“ Zess tell me where did I go wrong?”

“ I am sorry that I said those bad words to you. I don't know what to believe because in the first place I don't know how you know each other”

“ Zess speak out please”

“ Khaya is Tori's father” she said with a breaking voice.

“ Oh Zess I didn't know that, and it was first time meeting him, I am so sorry about that.”

“ yeah seeing him opened wounds that I thought I buried them long time ago. It seems as if happiness is very short for me and I am tired”

“ you deserve all the happiness in the universe.

“ why he was in your house?”

“ he is Azariah’s p.a and I asked Bongani about him; he said he doesn’t know that much about him but they hang out sometimes.”

“ mmmh ok, I am sorry I reacted very immaturely”

“ no you didn’t and I will sort him out”

“ as if you can” we laughed because truly I cant even kill a fly.

“ you will alright, you aren’t alone”

“ thank you so much Tara. I am not ready for this because now I am sure he will want to know his child”

“ don’t worry in every step I will be with you”

“ thank you sis”

We continued chatting until it was time for me to go.

Zenkosi

Have you ever been so embarrassed by someone you thought loved you? We were still young and I was in love. Khaya was the only guy whom I opened my heart to and I thought his love was enough for me. I never thought one day he was going to rob the really me. He took everything from me and honestly I lived my life with a soul full of emptiness and I couldn't do what I wanted to do because I did many sacrifices in the name of love. If I knew that it wasn't love I would have be alert by his actions. He wanted to boost his self-esteem through robbing mine. He left a mark which I will never forget in my life.

How can a person claimed to love you then make a sex tape? Khaya made my life a living hell.

I am sure that he will want to meet his child after so many years. I have various questions to ask him but what is the point because even if he answers my questions wont changed that he used me for his own benefits.

I told myself that I will let him know his child; Tori deserve to know him no matter what happened between us.

I was going to work and Tori already left with mom to school.

I got into my office and I settled down to start working.

A knock came in while I was busy working.

“ come in”

“ hey Zess” that was Lira

“hey Lira”

“ how are doing today?”

“ I am doing good thank you and I am sorry about other day”

“No problem; I am just glad that you are okay”

“Thank you so much”

Me and Lira we aren't that close we only share few things with each other. The only person I share my personal stuff is Atarah.

“let me leave you then”

“sure see you during the lunch time”

“ I don't think so

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I am going out” she said with a smile

“ mmmmh”

“ I asked Azariah to have a lunch with me”

“ oh ok enjoy then”

“ I will “ she said closing the door

This isn't good at all, Azariah is using Lira but it's none of own business they are old enough to make their decisions.

I continued working until it was lunch time and I decided to order in since Lira ditched me out on the last minute.

As I was busy eating my lunch a knock came through and I wondered who doesn't know that its lunch time now.

“ come in”

“ hey I am sorry to disturb you but there is a guy looking for you” that was the receptionist

“ a guy? Oh okay let him in “

“ okay” and she went out few minutes someone badged in without knocking. I lifted my eyes to see who must be this hell of guy who doesn’t knock.

My eyes met with Azariah with his biggest smile ever.

“ go out and knock” I said looking straight at him

“ I am not doing that”

“ I didn’t ask you”

“ ok Miss Zenkosi” he went out and knock

“ come in” I laughed and I couldn’t hold myself

“ that’s how you welcome visitors in your office?”

“ hello Azariah”

“ don’t just stay there” I stood up and gave him a hug

“ how are you doing Zenkosi?”

“ I am good and you?”

“ I am good too”

“Aren’t you supposed to be with Lira?

“ I am here with you Zenkosi”

“ don’t be rude with me Aza”

“ I am sorry; your friend is forcing things and I don’t know what to do because she is going to ruin things for me”

“ tell her how you feel; stop this immature behaviour”

“ I told her several times. Who gave her my number?”

“ I did”

“ you did what? Yoh she keeps calling me all the time”

“I am sorry yoh”

“It’s cool but she is your friend please talk to her”

“ no I can’t you are old Azariah to put a stop on something you don’t like”

“ I don’t to hurt her because she is really in love with me and I am in love with someone else”

“ it means that you don’t love that person enough if you don’t want hurt her in a way of saving your hidden relationship” I rolled my eyes.

“ don’t roll your eyes on me”

“whatever. I have been thinking of going to church next Sunday. Do you want to go with me because I don’t want to go with Tara. She sits in the front I want to sit at the back”

“ is that the only reason?”

“ I want to go church but not alone Aza” I rolled my eyes again just to annoy him

“ I will go with you if you stop rolling your eyes”

“ okay thank you womaniser, maybe the pastor will pray for you so that you can be delivered from this womanising thing of yours” I laughed at him because Aza loves woman only for sexual intercourse nothing more.

“ mxm, why am I even here?”

“Because you love skirts” I continued laughing at him.

“ but I changed my actions, it has been a while since you saw me with a girl and I even turned off your friend”

“ yeah that’s true but you still need deliverance”

‘ whatever. Mind to tell me about the braai day?’

“ Aza please let’s not talk about that”

“ mmm ok but I am sorry that I brought Khaya there”

“ you didn’t know that he is Tori’s father so no sweat” oh my tongue

“what?”

I told Aza a bit about Tori’s father and he promised me that he was going to make his life bad if ever he comes back.

“ yeah and please don’t do anything stupid”

“ but Zess he doesn’t deserve to be happy, he has to pay for the pain he put you through”

“ can we please let it be; I am happy and I have already decided that if he wants to be part of Tori’s life I will allow him. I am not doing it for him but for my daughter. I know the pain of growing up fatherless and I don’t want my daughter to experience that pain.”

“ ok, I will fire him” he was so angry and I didn’t know why because he wasn’t the one who went through it.

“ please don’t. Can we please leave the past in the past?”

“ okay but if ever he tries doing something bad to you. He will know me very well”

“ Hero Azariah” we laughed.

It was very nice to stay with Aza.

Days passed by quickly and it was Sunday. I told Tara I wasn't going to church because she was going to blackmail me to go with her and Bongani.

I woke up Tori for church and I made breakfast while she was taking her bath with the help of mom.

We were all going to church as a family, oh Aza said he wasn't feeling well and I thought it was a hangover.

We ate breakfast and Tori was busy telling us about her friends from school.

“ mmh when am I meeting your friends?”

“ soon mommy soon”

“ okay my angel”

We finished and I took our bags and headed to the car. As we were about to get in; Aza’s car stopped on the drive way. Did he say that he wasn’t feeling okay?

“ Azariah”

“ Zenkosi” mom was looking at me as Aza was approaching

“ hello Mam Vuzane” he extended his hand

“ hello” they shared a hand shake

“ mom this is my friend Azariah”

“Nice to meet you Azariah”

“And this is my mom and daughter Tori”

“Hello angel” she smiled at Aza and it was the first time she welcomes someone with that kind of love.

“Can I have a hug?” Tori sometimes can be too forward

“With me?” Aza asked looking at me for approval and I nodded.

He kneeled down to hug her properly and it was a warm hug and my heart broke because it was supposed to his father.

“are you going to church with us” Tori can you please shut up

“ yes your mom said I need deliverance” I couldn’t hold myself but laugh.

“ a deliverance? Are you demonic possessed?” my daughter

“ we are going to be late; let’s go” mom said getting in the car

Church was really good and I must say Tara wasn’t happy that I lied but she was going to get over it. To tell you something I accepted Jesus Christ as my saviour even though Aza was teasing me about it but I felt God’s touch and I understood where he was coming from. After church we went to eat out and it was Aza’s idea and I told him that I wasn’t going to pay. His idea, his money.

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Atarah

I was so glad that my only sis in this world got saved and now we were going to talk the same language. She was too close with Aza and it wasn't sitting with me well since Aza is a womaniser.

So Bongani talked to Khaya about everything and he was really regretting his deeds and he was looking forward to make things right with Zenkosi.

I was given a task by Bongani to tell Zenkosi that Khaya would like to make things right even though he can't take the pain away but he is willing to change for his daughter and pay for the damages.

So I needed to talk to Zess about it.

I called her to tell her that the following day we should meet up for lunch and she agreed.

We have been trying for a baby with Bongani but it was very difficult for us and we ended up taking a break from sexual intercourse because it was draining us. I really needed a shoulder to cry on but his mother was no longer that loving

mom that took me in. she complained that I took his son from him like Lorna.

“ baby don’t forget about the doctor’s appointment tomorrow” I said as we were busy cooking

“ I wont babe, I will come and pick you up”

“ okay thank you baby and I know how hard this must be but we shouldn’t give up. I know one day God will bless us with a child”

“ I know babe and don’t stress about it” he kissed me and we continued cooking.

Atarah

I decided not to go to work since I was having a doctor's appointment and it always left me drained so I didn't want to work at all.

My appointment was at 10 o'clock and Bongani went to work just to deliver some files and he was going to come back and pick me up.

Honestly it has been a long journey even though we act strong but we are hurting inside and it is very hard for me because I need to be strong for both of us.

It was now 8 o'clock and I was done making the bed, I went to take a bath.

I was really down because I was tired of this and I wished God could just hear my prayers or tell me to stop praying about it if it won't happen.

Bongani came and we went to the doctor and it was like we were going to hear the most bad news.

The doctor attended me and I was told that I had a disease called endometriosis which means that I can't bear children.

It has been while since I was suffering from pelvic pain and I was in treatment but it wasn't really working for me. Until it was confirmed that I had endometriosis and for me not to experience more pain my womb needed to be removed.

We were so devastated and nothing was going to change the way I felt that day. I called Zess to cancel our lunch because I really needed time alone. Bongani was trying to be strong but he couldn't hold it up.

We went home and I went straight to our bedroom to cry my lungs out. I needed the pain to go away from me but it was too much to know that I am a barren woman.

Days passed by and I asked for a leave because I needed time to process everything that was going on. Bongani asked me to do the surgery but I needed time to think about everything. I was confused why it was discovered after so long that I had this kind of disease. I have been through doctors about the pain that I was having but none of them realised that I had a disease.

I was always in my room and I pushed everyone away. I felt like not as a woman enough; I wasn't a good wife for Bongani and his mother was really true. I was like Lorna to bring him pain nothing more. I cried on the floor and Bongani came in.

“ atarah please don't do this, I heard your sobbing from down stairs”

“ I am not woman Bongani!” I shouted at him as he was picking me up. I lost so much weight and I wasn’t eating anything.

“ you are my love and I don’t love you less”

“ I cant even bear you children” I cried

“ that doesn’t change anything. We are in this together”

He put me on bed.

“ I am going to prepare a bath for you” Bongani was always helping me with everything.

He went to the bathroom and came back to undressed me. He picked me up and took me to the bathroom. He bathed me and wrapped me with the towel. He put me on bed and started lotioning me.

“I love you okay?” he kept saying that. I felt sorry for him because it was hard for him too but I guess I have been strong for too long and I couldn’t stand pain anymore.

He put me in my pyjamas and picked me up to downstairs.

“Today we are going to sit here on the couch. I am going to make you a soup” I nodded. He was really supportive which I found it so special because most men run away if a woman can’t conceive but mine was there all the way and I will always be grateful for that.

I rested on the couch whilst he was busy in the kitchen. He came back and fed me like a baby.

“ I am sorry” I whispered

“ love please don’t do this. Eat and we will rest” Bongani was working at home now.

We cuddled on the couch and I felt safe around his arms. A little hope came back.

The following day we spent the whole day in our bedroom.

“ I will do the surgery” I said looking straight into his eyes.

“ are you sure?” he asked because I have been refusing to do it.

“ yeah I am sure”

“ okay love tell me when you are ready so that we can make an appointment with the doctor”

I nodded.

“ I love you Atarah with all of my heart and this will pass. We are in this together.”

‘ I love you too”

He pulled me closer to him and I rested my head on his chest. He didn't mind sleeping the whole day with me. He will just go downstairs to make some food for us and the fed me.

Narrated

Atarah surgery was successful and she was really barren physically but she conceived and birthed many souls. She helped a lot of people through sharing her story from her up growing until the marriage.

Bongani's parents weren't happy about the issue and they didn't like Atarah anymore but Bongani as her husband supported her all the way. It wasn't easy but final light came to their lives.

They decided to adopt two children and they were so beautiful. Now they are really a happy family. There is no storm that stays permanently. All their friends supported them in every way.

Zenkosi was really worried about her friend but eventually Tara opened up to her about everything and she supported her in every step.

Zenkosi introduced Khaya to his daughter and told her mother about Khaya even though it was a struggle to accept that he became back after what he did to her daughter. Zenkosi was still close with Azariah and Lira wasn't taking it good because she thought Aza was into her unfortunately he wasn't.

Lira became an enemy of Zenkosi because of Azariah and Zess tried to talk to Lira that she doesn't want Aza.

Zenkosi tried to fight for her friendship with Lira but she couldn't be friends with a betrayer Lira said to Zess and Zess decided to let her be if that's the case even though she was hurting.

Azariah was really ready to settle down but he didn't know how to approach Zess because she was only seeing him as a friend nothing more. And the Khaya thing was bit stressing Aza because he was the father of Tori and they were spending more time with him.

6 month later.

Azariah

I have a bad past with girls and now I am too old to be playing games with them. I need to have my own family.

I went through my contacts and dialled Zess. It has been a while since we saw each other. She is always busy with Khaya and when I asked her she said she doesn't trust him with her baby alone. So whenever he wants to take Tori she must be there or ask Tara.

She picked up on the third ring.

"Hey stranger" am I a stranger now, I think I last saw her last month?

" hey Zess"

"how have you been?"

" I have been good, you?"

“ I am good Aza” I missed being called like that by her though.

“can we meet?”

“ when?”

“ you decide”

“ later today; I am still busy now”

“ no problem I will wait from you then”

“ ok. Are you okay?” I didn't know that my nervousness was so obvious.

“ ye... yeah”

“ Azariah”

“ Zenkosi”

“ we will talk in the next few hours.”

“ I know that big head”

“ Azariah Nkosi I will beat the hell out of you”

“you wish my dark bone”

“ unlike you yellow bone”

“ I am a snack sis”

“ rotten snack “

“ uyahlanya”

“ bye cute face”

“ I am handsome Zenkosi”

“ no you are cute”

“ mxm bye”

She laughed and I missed being teased by her and I needed to make my move sooner because she is a good woman and any man would want someone like her. They need to know that she is off limits as soon as possible.

I bought a ring last month and I showed Bongani and my big brother to say gave me his blessing with Atarah now it's up to me to make a move.

I will do according to the principles of church but I need first to ask her before I proceed with the whole process of going to church and that entire staff which I don't understand but I will do whatever to have my queen.

I wasn't working that day, so I went to town just to buy her some flowers and that entire staff. Eh I am not a romantic guy

and I got all those tips from Atarah because her husband was laughing at me.

I booked her restaurant with fake identity, and I asked everything to be according to her wishes and I got all the information from Tara and she deserves all the credits.

Around 5 o'clock I went to check if everything is settled and I made sure that she wasn't there.

I sent her a text message " I DON'T LIKE TO WAIT MISS VUZANE"

She replied with a smiley emoticon.

I was really impatient and Zess wasn't talking to me. It was now 7 o'clock and no sign of her.

My phone rang as I was in bedroom ready to call it a night.

" yha" I responded without reading the caller

" I am sorry I am late"

“ Zess where are you?”

“ home

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maybe we should do it tomorrow”

“ we still have time”

“ okay”

“ I will pick you up”

“ sure”

I wore my shoes and took my car keys. Everything was on the car. And I told myself that I will do according to my plan. I will propose her right now.

I drove off and nervousness was consuming me but I needed to do it now or never.

I parked on the drive way and I texted her to come out. Zenkosi is always beautiful and I don't understand how she does it.

As she was approaching the car smiling, I got out with the red roses. And her smile widen and that's smile is my weakness.

“ and then “ she said looking at the roses

“ they are yours Miss Vuzane”

“ mmh thank you Cutie”

“ do you like them?”

“ yes thank you so much” I opened my arms for her and we shared a hug.

I went to open the door for her

“ eh you are too nice today” she was raising her eye lashes.

“ I am always nice. Can we go before it’s too late?”

“ yes.

“ you look beautiful as always”

“ thank you, you aren’t bad ‘

“ mmmh “

I drove off and we were talking about Tori as always. She loves her daughter more than anything in this world.

I stopped in front of the restaurant and she looked at me with questionable eyes

“What?”

“The restaurant is booked Aza”

“ I know. Just do as I say only for today”

“ oh ok.”

I went to open the door for her. I locked the car and took her hand as we were heading to the entrance.

Everything was perfect I can say. All red, white and black theme.

As we were at the entrance, the waiter came to us.

Zenkosi was teary and I knew that my chances of getting a yes were high.

“ eh don't cry, come” we went to our table as we were instructed.

“ Azariah what is going on here?” she asked looking around.

“ can we please enjoy the night?”

She nodded and we ordered our food and drinks. I started a conversation and it wasn't serious but to break the silence. It wasn't awkward silence though but we always had something to say to each other but that day we ran out of words.

We finished eating and the dessert came and she ate a bit of it. I am sure she was nervous too. She kept stealing glances and I would just smile because that talkative Zess was gone and told myself once we were done with this. I was going to tease her.

“ look Zess I am scared but I need to do this”

“ what?”

“I am not romantic and good with words” I said as I went down and took the ring out of my pocket

“ will you marry me Zenkosi Vuzane?”

She looked at me with glassy eyes and nodded. I put the ring on her finger and I shouted

“ she said yes!” the workers came to congratulate us and I texted Bongani that I am off limits.

I was so happy and she kept looking at her ring.

I drove her home.

“ goodnight my wife”

“ goodnight fiancé “

“ mmmh I don't like that and we have to do things faster”

“ I will have to talk to mom first”

“yeah, kiss Tori for me”

“ I wont do that,and she has been asking about you”

“ oh I didn’t want to intrude”

“ she loves you too much though, maybe you can just call her and say hi”

“ I will see what to do”

I opened for her and watched as she goes inside the gate.

Narrated

Zenkosi told her mother about the proposal and she was really happy for her daughter and since she once saw Azariah it was better because she knew him a bit.

It wasn’t easy for her to tell Tori about getting marriage. She was afraid that she might not take it good but she had to tell her because they agreed on not having a white wedding but just traditional which was going to be small.

Tori kept asking her mother about the ring and she had to lie about it until it was time that Tori noticed that her mother was lying. Zenkosi had no choice but to disclose the news even though she wasn't ready. She was afraid that she was going to be confused since she introduced her to Khaya as her dad and now there is Azariah.

Azariah told his parents about the engagement and they were so happy to hear the good news. They wanted to see her before they finalised everything since their wedding won't be big so it was going to be soon.

The Lobola negotiations were done few days back but not finalised

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Azariah

“ I would like to meet her properly son before we finalise everything” Mr Nkosi said as we were having a lunch

“ I will ask her to come for dinner”

“ that’s good, what does she like to eat?” Mrs Nkosi asked

“ Zess loves food that’s it”

They all laughed

“ don’t be like that otherwise I will tell her” Mrs Nkosi replied

“ cook anything mom; Zess is simple”

“ ok I will”

She stood up to collect the plates as they were done eating. Mr Nkosi was left with his son.

“ I am proud of you Aza, you have been through a lot and I thought after everything you weren't going to love again but look now you are in love with this woman. Please treat her good and your children. Don't repeat my mistakes and now you are a man.”

“ thank you dad”

As we were talking my phone rang, I looked at dad before picking it up walking away.

“ future wife”

“ hey Aza”

“ are you okay?”

“ yeah, I think I am having a flue”

“ are you at work?”

“ no I am home, I couldn't go to work”

“ can I come to check you? Did you drink any medication?”

“ yeah mom bought them from the pharmacy. I am sure tomorrow I will be okay”

“ but I will come later to check on you”

“ are you allowed to do that though”

“ I don't care, I need to see you”

“ mm ok”

“ soon you are going to be mine officially”

“ you too Cutie” we laughed

“ I am not going to be yours “

“ me too”

“ where is Tori?”

“ she is at school?”

“ how did she take the news?”

“ not that bad, I think she is still confused”

“ yeah I get it but she will get used to the change”

“ I guess so, when is family coming to finalise the lobola thing because I need to tell mom so that she can alert my uncles since they live far away”

“ I will tell you tonight about it. I am just tired about this whole thing; I need to you here with me”

“ eh what are doing ?”

“ nothing, you?”

“ I am still in bed”

“ Zenkosi”

“ I am sick Azariah”

“ but you need to wake up and take a bath”

“ I did that in the morning”

“ ohk, what should I bring?”

“ when?”

“ I am on my way to my car now, I want to see your face”

“ you are crazy do you know that?”

“ I know”

“ can you please buy me medication”

“ did you say you have medication?”

“ I don't , I lied”

“ eh hai usis apha. Bye”

I dropped the call and drove off, I didn't even tell mom that I was going to see Zenkosi and I should tell her not to worry about the dinner because Zess isn't feeling okay.

I went straight to pharmacy and bought everything that I know is for fever. Then went to buy her hot wings, she loves them.

I drove to her after 30 minutes. I parked on the drive way and I called her to come out because I felt like it is disrespecting to go inside even though I already paid for the lobola. She came out wearing morning gown and she looked sick.

I got out of the car as she was approaching.

“ oh look at you” I felt bad that my queen was sick

“ hey”

“ how are you feeling?”

“ I am good. Can we please get inside the car; I am feeling cold?”

“ give me a hug first”

She rolled her eyes.

We shared a hug and got inside the car. I gave her my jacket because her gown wasn't that warm.

“ why aren't you wearing something warm?”

“ I was in bed “

“ ok but you should have put something on”

“ I am sorry.

“ did you eat?”

She shook her head

“ ok I got you hot wings”

“ thank you”

She took few bites and she said she was good. It means that Zess wasn't really feeling well.

“Tomorrow if you still feel like this; you will see a doctor”

“ I will be okay. Please I hate needles”

“ take your medication then. “

“ thank you husband”

“ I love you so much” it was the first time saying these words to her and she looked at me before she looked away.

“ Zenkosi I love you

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do you think I would marry someone I don't love?"

She kept quiet and I let her be. I pulled her closer to me and brushed her hair with my fingers.

"what are our plans from now on?"

"Plans?"

"Yeah, I want us to have our own house. Just after the wedding we aren't going to stay with parents"

"oh ok. What do you say then?"

"We need to look for a house"

Zenkosi

To be honest it was one of the best weeks of my life because I was going to marry the love of life. Aza was really the man, God gave me as a blessing even though we started as friends and to be honest never thought we could be a couple but God decides for us, all we do is just ask our desires and he provides. As much as I had a bad past with men starting from my father to the father of my first child I told myself that this man I was looking at was going to bring me new experience about man's love.

I thanked God for providing me with a man with his words. He kept his promises of making me a happiest woman. We aren't yet married but he does make me happy and I fall in love with him every second that I breathe.

Two days ago, we were looking for house in Constantia Park in Pretoria. We needed to start afresh with our lives and honestly I really needed a change for some time.

Our parents and friends were not pleased about moving to Pretoria but they understood after sometime that we can't always be together at some point we need to go everywhere we would like to go.

"Stop starring Zenkosi" that's my future husband all yummy looking at me with that cuteness.

“I am just admiring the work of God”

“ do you like the house?” we were in Pretoria and the house was really good and comfortable for me and Tori.

“yes; it is beautiful “

“you are free to look around” the agent said smiling at Aza

“oh ok” Aza said and he noticed that ever since we came here, the girl have been eyeing him and I don’t think I will survive if every girl is going to be eyeing my husband.

I led the way and she was trying to make a conversation with him and he allowed it so I had nothing to do rather than do what I came here to do.

“ it was nice working with you Mr Nkosi”

“ thank you so much for your help”

I went into the car and waited for him to finish up with Miss Agent Grace.

We got inside the car and I was already worked up because he even allowed her to hug him and left red lipstick on his shirt.

“Where to go now; I am hungry?” he said after getting inside the car

“can we just go home, I miss my child”

“but I am hungry”

“ok. Can you please eat on the car; I will drive”

“Are you mad or having second thought about coming here?”

“I am not having second thoughts. Can you please just drive” I really hate to be seen vulnerable and all worked up.

“talk to me Zenkosi” he took my hand and I yanked it away. He looked at me and tears just streamed. It was only because he saw nothing wrong with his actions. I was scared to be in a marriage full of adultery. I once gave someone my whole heart and I can't go what I went through with Aza and he doing the same thing which Khaya did.

We were having a school lunch break and everyone knew that I was with Khaya. So Khaya was the most popular guy and good looking. So that day he started not to mind with girls flirting with him even in my presence. I decided not to let it go even though it was painful. After all those flirting episodes he then cheated on me with every girl in the school. I was really blinded with love; I continued to love him more until he broke things with me after all the pain he put me through.

He got me pregnant and made a sex clip which everyone saw. I was very luckily because the principal understood me and I wasn't expelled.

“can you please drive me home?”

“okay”

He focused on the road and the drive was very silent with so much tension.

He took me home and once he was on the drive way he stopped the car and locked all doors.

“we are going to talk like adults Zenkosi. Tell me my wrongs so that I can correct them”

“I don’t want to talk Aza”

“but we have to talk”

He looked at me and then looked away.

“ I am scared that I am going to lose you after sometime” my tears betrayed me.

“what made you to feel like that?”

“you allowed her to flirt with you in my presence”

“are you jealousy? “ he smirked

“I am not Azariah; if it’s what makes you sleep at night then do it again. You even have a red lipstick on shirt. You smell like her and you think this is all jealous.”

“ woah my love, I was joking”

I looked away though the window as tears streamed down my face. He tried to make me face him but he knew that he has touched the wrong button. He knew all about my past and all the insecurities I had with men.

He went out of the car and he was angry with himself and every time he made something that hurts me, he would be angry at himself even when we were still friends.

He came to open my side and cupped my face with his hands.

“I am sorry; I didn’t mean to hurt you or show no respect. I am truly sorry”

I looked at him and freed myself from him. I took my bag and push him gently to make a way for me.

I went inside and mom was cooking while Tori was watching cartoons.

“afternoon everyone”

“mommy did you bring me my doll?”

Oh I have forgotten her doll all because of Aza.”

“I am sorry munchies but I couldn’t go to the shops; I wanted to be around you”

“did you miss me that much?”

I nodded

“Ok come and give me a hug then” that’s why I love her so much. She is able to soothe my heart.

“how was your trip?”

“it was good mom we bought the house.”

“that’s good to hear, I will be done now go and freshen up”

“okay thank you mom, but I need a sleep right now”

“ok then”

I went to my room and took a shower. I went inside my bed covers naked; I was really tired and not in the mood for anything.

I switched off my phone because I really didn’t want to contact anyone.

I was woken up by Tori after about 3 hours of my sleep.

“mom this is for you” she gave me her phone.

“hi” I responded to the caller because I knew it was Aza

“hey. Tori told me that you are already asleep”

“yeah I am tired”

“I am sorry to wake you up but I need to see you before I sleep”

“can we meet tomorrow?”

“please my love”

I rolled my eyes.

“sure”

I dropped the call and gave Tori her phone back. It was around 8 o'clock. I wonder why Tori isn't asleep because tomorrow its school day.

I wore my pyjamas and morning gown. I went to tell mom that I was going to see Aza. She was drinking her tea busy crocheting.

It was really cold, I am scared of cold. I was already shivering with a runny nose. I am glad that I am not white skinned because I was going to have red chills and nose.

He was leaning on his Jangaur F- type coupé, busy pressing his phone. He was wearing a big hoodie with black torn jeans and boots.

He lifted his head and smiled at me as I was approaching him. I stood in front of him and we stared at each other for some time. And the connection wouldn't be missed

He opened his arms for me. We hugged for the very longest time and he kept whispering

"I love you so much okay?"

I said nothing because I was still angry at him or not ready to pronounce that word love.

We broke the hug.

"I am cold "

"let's get inside the car"

We got in and we stayed there in silence.

" its late now, you saw me. Can I please go and sleep?"

“Zenkosi you know that you can’t always run away when we have a problem. I know I messed up but I am trying here. I am sorry for my actions and I promise I will never do it again. I can’t survive with you being mad at me. “

“you did it Aza after I told you about my past and you didn’t even consider my feelings; that’s why it hurts so much.

“I am sorry. Please forgive me”

“It’s okay”

“I am sorry dark bone”

“Okay Cutie”

What I love about Aza is that he understands me more than I understand myself. Yes at times we wrong each other but we made a decision that we can’t sleep still mad at each other. If it is a matter that is beyond us, we will have to talk then ask for help.

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Atarah

I was really confused by Zess's behaviour and I didn't understand how I betrayed her.

The only person who was with us for the first time is Aza's p.a and he came with him because Bongani asked him to. I don't think he has a past with Zess I will have to pay a visit so that she can open to me about this betrayal thing.

" Bongani do you know Khaya that much?"

" no babe, he is just a colleague and we hang out sometimes"

" mmh ok"

" why are you asking, do you think he is the reason for Zess behaviour?"

" I don't know but he was the only first time guest"

“ yoh I will ask him tomorrow about it”

“ better do that because I don't want to see my friend so broken”

“ I am sorry about what happened”

“ you didn't do anything wrong”

“Come here” I was really hurting when Zess isn't okay and I couldn't even hide it.

“ babe please don't cry she will be fine”

I nodded and we hugged.

We went to our bedroom to sleep. Everyone left after Zess left. All the food was lonely on the table.

The following day I went to work and I planned to go and visit Zess.

I called Bongani telling that I was going to check on Zess and she didn't go work that day, Lira called.

I took my bag and went to the parking lot and drove off to Zess's place. I found her sitting on the couch with red eyes; meaning that she has been crying.

"Zess" I said as I was putting my bag down.

"What are you doing here?"

"I am here for you Zess"

"I need to be alone Atarah"

"I am not leaving you here alone like this. Where is mom?"

“ she went to get some groceries”

“ ok, come and have a bath. I will make you something to eat”

we went to the bathroom; I prepared her a bath and then went to make food for her.

she came back bit better now.

I gave her food and we settled on down on high chairs in the kitchen.

“ thank you”

“ you welcome”

She ate her food in complete silence.

Once she was done I asked her about what happened.

“ Zess tell me where did I go wrong?”

“ I am sorry that I said those bad words to you. I don't know what to believe because in the first place I don't know how you know each other”

“ Zess speak out please”

“ Khaya is Tori's father” she said with a breaking voice.

“ Oh Zess I didn't know that, and it was first time meeting him, I am so sorry about that.”

“ yeah seeing him opened wounds that I thought I buried them long time ago. It seems as if happiness is very short for me and I am tired”

“ you deserve all the happiness in the universe.

“ why he was in your house?”

“ he is Azariah’s p.a and I asked Bongani about him; he said he doesn’t know that much about him but they hang out sometimes.”

“ mmmh ok, I am sorry I reacted very immaturely”

“ no you didn’t and I will sort him out”

“ as if you can” we laughed because truly I cant even kill a fly.

“ you will alright, you aren’t alone”

“ thank you so much Tara. I am not ready for this because now I am sure he will want to know his child”

“ don’t worry in every step I will be with you”

“ thank you sis”

We continued chatting until it was time for me to go.

Zenkosi

Have you ever been so embarrassed by someone you thought loved you? We were still young and I was in love. Khaya was the only guy whom I opened my heart to and I thought his love was enough for me. I never thought one day he was going to rob the really me. He took everything from me and honestly I lived my life with a soul full of emptiness and I couldn't do what I wanted to do because I did many sacrifices in the name of love. If I knew that it wasn't love I would have be alert by his actions. He wanted to boost his self-esteem through robbing mine. He left a mark which I will never forget in my life.

How can a person claimed to love you then make a sex tape? Khaya made my life a living hell.

I am sure that he will want to meet his child after so many years. I have various questions to ask him but what is the point because even if he answers my questions wont changed that he used me for his own benefits.

I told myself that I will let him know his child; Tori deserve to know him no matter what happened between us.

I was going to work and Tori already left with mom to school.

I got into my office and I settled down to start working.

A knock came in while I was busy working.

“ come in”

“ hey Zess” that was Lira

“hey Lira”

“ how are doing today?”

“ I am doing good thank you and I am sorry about other day”

“No problem; I am just glad that you are okay”

“Thank you so much”

Me and Lira we aren't that close we only share few things with each other. The only person I share my personal stuff is Atarah.

“let me leave you then”

“sure see you during the lunch time”

“ I don't think so

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I am going out” she said with a smile

“ mmmmh”

“ I asked Azariah to have a lunch with me”

“ oh ok enjoy then”

“ I will “ she said closing the door

This isn't good at all, Azariah is using Lira but it's none of own business they are old enough to make their decisions.

I continued working until it was lunch time and I decided to order in since Lira ditched me out on the last minute.

As I was busy eating my lunch a knock came through and I wondered who doesn't know that its lunch time now.

“ come in”

“ hey I am sorry to disturb you but there is a guy looking for you” that was the receptionist

“ a guy? Oh okay let him in “

“ okay” and she went out few minutes someone badged in without knocking. I lifted my eyes to see who must be this hell of guy who doesn’t knock.

My eyes met with Azariah with his biggest smile ever.

“ go out and knock” I said looking straight at him

“ I am not doing that”

“ I didn’t ask you”

“ ok Miss Zenkosi” he went out and knock

“ come in” I laughed and I couldn’t hold myself

“ that’s how you welcome visitors in your office?”

“ hello Azariah”

“ don’t just stay there” I stood up and gave him a hug

“ how are you doing Zenkosi?”

“ I am good and you?”

“ I am good too”

“Aren’t you supposed to be with Lira?

“ I am here with you Zenkosi”

“ don’t be rude with me Aza”

“ I am sorry; your friend is forcing things and I don’t know what to do because she is going to ruin things for me”

“ tell her how you feel; stop this immature behaviour”

“ I told her several times. Who gave her my number?”

“ I did”

“ you did what? Yoh she keeps calling me all the time”

“I am sorry yoh”

“It’s cool but she is your friend please talk to her”

“ no I can’t you are old Azariah to put a stop on something you don’t like”

“ I don’t to hurt her because she is really in love with me and I am in love with someone else”

“ it means that you don’t love that person enough if you don’t want hurt her in a way of saving your hidden relationship” I rolled my eyes.

“ don’t roll your eyes on me”

“whatever. I have been thinking of going to church next Sunday. Do you want to go with me because I don’t want to go with Tara. She sits in the front I want to sit at the back”

“ is that the only reason?”

“ I want to go church but not alone Aza” I rolled my eyes again just to annoy him

“ I will go with you if you stop rolling your eyes”

“ okay thank you womaniser, maybe the pastor will pray for you so that you can be delivered from this womanising thing of yours” I laughed at him because Aza loves woman only for sexual intercourse nothing more.

“ mxm, why am I even here?”

“Because you love skirts” I continued laughing at him.

“ but I changed my actions, it has been a while since you saw me with a girl and I even turned off your friend”

“ yeah that’s true but you still need deliverance”

‘ whatever. Mind to tell me about the braai day?’

“ Aza please let’s not talk about that”

“ mmm ok but I am sorry that I brought Khaya there”

“ you didn’t know that he is Tori’s father so no sweat” oh my tongue

“what?”

I told Aza a bit about Tori’s father and he promised me that he was going to make his life bad if ever he comes back.

“ yeah and please don’t do anything stupid”

“ but Zess he doesn’t deserve to be happy, he has to pay for the pain he put you through”

“ can we please let it be; I am happy and I have already decided that if he wants to be part of Tori’s life I will allow him. I am not doing it for him but for my daughter. I know the pain of growing up fatherless and I don’t want my daughter to experience that pain.”

“ ok, I will fire him” he was so angry and I didn’t know why because he wasn’t the one who went through it.

“ please don’t. Can we please leave the past in the past?”

“ okay but if ever he tries doing something bad to you. He will know me very well”

“ Hero Azariah” we laughed.

It was very nice to stay with Aza.

Days passed by quickly and it was Sunday. I told Tara I wasn't going to church because she was going to blackmail me to go with her and Bongani.

I woke up Tori for church and I made breakfast while she was taking her bath with the help of mom.

We were all going to church as a family, oh Aza said he wasn't feeling well and I thought it was a hangover.

We ate breakfast and Tori was busy telling us about her friends from school.

“ mmh when am I meeting your friends?”

“ soon mommy soon”

“ okay my angel”

We finished and I took our bags and headed to the car. As we were about to get in; Aza’s car stopped on the drive way. Did he say that he wasn’t feeling okay?

“ Azariah”

“ Zenkosi” mom was looking at me as Aza was approaching

“ hello Mam Vuzane” he extended his hand

“ hello” they shared a hand shake

“ mom this is my friend Azariah”

“Nice to meet you Azariah”

“And this is my mom and daughter Tori”

“Hello angel” she smiled at Aza and it was the first time she welcomes someone with that kind of love.

“Can I have a hug?” Tori sometimes can be too forward

“With me?” Aza asked looking at me for approval and I nodded.

He kneeled down to hug her properly and it was a warm hug and my heart broke because it was supposed to his father.

“are you going to church with us” Tori can you please shut up

“ yes your mom said I need deliverance” I couldn’t hold myself but laugh.

“ a deliverance? Are you demonic possessed?” my daughter

“ we are going to be late; let’s go” mom said getting in the car

Church was really good and I must say Tara wasn’t happy that I lied but she was going to get over it. To tell you something I accepted Jesus Christ as my saviour even though Aza was teasing me about it but I felt God’s touch and I understood where he was coming from. After church we went to eat out and it was Aza’s idea and I told him that I wasn’t going to pay. His idea, his money.

21

Atarah

I was so glad that my only sis in this world got saved and now we were going to talk the same language. She was too close with Aza and it wasn't sitting with me well since Aza is a womaniser.

So Bongani talked to Khaya about everything and he was really regretting his deeds and he was looking forward to make things right with Zenkosi.

I was given a task by Bongani to tell Zenkosi that Khaya would like to make things right even though he can't take the pain away but he is willing to change for his daughter and pay for the damages.

So I needed to talk to Zess about it.

I called her to tell her that the following day we should meet up for lunch and she agreed.

We have been trying for a baby with Bongani but it was very difficult for us and we ended up taking a break from sexual intercourse because it was draining us. I really needed a shoulder to cry on but his mother was no longer that loving

mom that took me in. she complained that I took his son from him like Lorna.

“ baby don’t forget about the doctor’s appointment tomorrow” I said as we were busy cooking

“ I wont babe, I will come and pick you up”

“ okay thank you baby and I know how hard this must be but we shouldn’t give up. I know one day God will bless us with a child”

“ I know babe and don’t stress about it” he kissed me and we continued cooking.

Atarah

I decided not to go to work since I was having a doctor's appointment and it always left me drained so I didn't want to work at all.

My appointment was at 10 o'clock and Bongani went to work just to deliver some files and he was going to come back and pick me up.

Honestly it has been a long journey even though we act strong but we are hurting inside and it is very hard for me because I need to be strong for both of us.

It was now 8 o'clock and I was done making the bed, I went to take a bath.

I was really down because I was tired of this and I wished God could just hear my prayers or tell me to stop praying about it if it won't happen.

Bongani came and we went to the doctor and it was like we were going to hear the most bad news.

The doctor attended me and I was told that I had a disease called endometriosis which means that I can't bear children.

It has been while since I was suffering from pelvic pain and I was in treatment but it wasn't really working for me. Until it was confirmed that I had endometriosis and for me not to experience more pain my womb needed to be removed.

We were so devastated and nothing was going to change the way I felt that day. I called Zess to cancel our lunch because I really needed time alone. Bongani was trying to be strong but he couldn't hold it up.

We went home and I went straight to our bedroom to cry my lungs out. I needed the pain to go away from me but it was too much to know that I am a barren woman.

Days passed by and I asked for a leave because I needed time to process everything that was going on. Bongani asked me to do the surgery but I needed time to think about everything. I was confused why it was discovered after so long that I had this kind of disease. I have been through doctors about the pain that I was having but none of them realised that I had a disease.

I was always in my room and I pushed everyone away. I felt like not as a woman enough; I wasn't a good wife for Bongani and his mother was really true. I was like Lorna to bring him pain nothing more. I cried on the floor and Bongani came in.

“ atarah please don't do this, I heard your sobbing from down stairs”

“ I am not woman Bongani!” I shouted at him as he was picking me up. I lost so much weight and I wasn’t eating anything.

“ you are my love and I don’t love you less”

“ I cant even bear you children” I cried

“ that doesn’t change anything. We are in this together”

He put me on bed.

“ I am going to prepare a bath for you” Bongani was always helping me with everything.

He went to the bathroom and came back to undressed me. He picked me up and took me to the bathroom. He bathed me and wrapped me with the towel. He put me on bed and started lotioning me.

“I love you okay?” he kept saying that. I felt sorry for him because it was hard for him too but I guess I have been strong for too long and I couldn’t stand pain anymore.

He put me in my pyjamas and picked me up to downstairs.

“Today we are going to sit here on the couch. I am going to make you a soup” I nodded. He was really supportive which I found it so special because most men run away if a woman can’t conceive but mine was there all the way and I will always be grateful for that.

I rested on the couch whilst he was busy in the kitchen. He came back and fed me like a baby.

“ I am sorry” I whispered

“ love please don’t do this. Eat and we will rest” Bongani was working at home now.

We cuddled on the couch and I felt safe around his arms. A little hope came back.

The following day we spent the whole day in our bedroom.

“ I will do the surgery” I said looking straight into his eyes.

“ are you sure?” he asked because I have been refusing to do it.

“ yeah I am sure”

“ okay love tell me when you are ready so that we can make an appointment with the doctor”

I nodded.

“ I love you Atarah with all of my heart and this will pass. We are in this together.”

‘ I love you too”

He pulled me closer to him and I rested my head on his chest. He didn't mind sleeping the whole day with me. He will just go downstairs to make some food for us and the fed me.

Narrated

Atarah surgery was successful and she was really barren physically but she conceived and birthed many souls. She helped a lot of people through sharing her story from her up growing until the marriage.

Bongani's parents weren't happy about the issue and they didn't like Atarah anymore but Bongani as her husband supported her all the way. It wasn't easy but final light came to their lives.

They decided to adopt two children and they were so beautiful. Now they are really a happy family. There is no storm that stays permanently. All their friends supported them in every way.

Zenkosi was really worried about her friend but eventually Tara opened up to her about everything and she supported her in every step.

Zenkosi introduced Khaya to his daughter and told her mother about Khaya even though it was a struggle to accept that he became back after what he did to her daughter. Zenkosi was still close with Azariah and Lira wasn't taking it good because she thought Aza was into her unfortunately he wasn't.

Lira became an enemy of Zenkosi because of Azariah and Zess tried to talk to Lira that she doesn't want Aza.

Zenkosi tried to fight for her friendship with Lira but she couldn't be friends with a betrayer Lira said to Zess and Zess decided to let her be if that's the case even though she was hurting.

Azariah was really ready to settle down but he didn't know how to approach Zess because she was only seeing him as a friend nothing more. And the Khaya thing was bit stressing Aza because he was the father of Tori and they were spending more time with him.

6 month later.

Azariah

I have a bad past with girls and now I am too old to be playing games with them. I need to have my own family.

I went through my contacts and dialled Zess. It has been a while since we saw each other. She is always busy with Khaya and when I asked her she said she doesn't trust him with her baby alone. So whenever he wants to take Tori she must be there or ask Tara.

She picked up on the third ring.

"Hey stranger" am I a stranger now, I think I last saw her last month?

" hey Zess"

"how have you been?"

" I have been good, you?"

“ I am good Aza” I missed being called like that by her though.

“can we meet?”

“ when?”

“ you decide”

“ later today; I am still busy now”

“ no problem I will wait from you then”

“ ok. Are you okay?” I didn't know that my nervousness was so obvious.

“ ye... yeah”

“ Azariah”

“ Zenkosi”

“ we will talk in the next few hours.”

“ I know that big head”

“ Azariah Nkosi I will beat the hell out of you”

“you wish my dark bone”

“ unlike you yellow bone”

“ I am a snack sis”

“ rotten snack “

“ uyahlanya”

“ bye cute face”

“ I am handsome Zenkosi”

“ no you are cute”

“ mxm bye”

She laughed and I missed being teased by her and I needed to make my move sooner because she is a good woman and any man would want someone like her. They need to know that she is off limits as soon as possible.

I bought a ring last month and I showed Bongani and my big brother to say gave me his blessing with Atarah now it's up to me to make a move.

I will do according to the principles of church but I need first to ask her before I proceed with the whole process of going to church and that entire staff which I don't understand but I will do whatever to have my queen.

I wasn't working that day, so I went to town just to buy her some flowers and that entire staff. Eh I am not a romantic guy

and I got all those tips from Atarah because her husband was laughing at me.

I booked her restaurant with fake identity, and I asked everything to be according to her wishes and I got all the information from Tara and she deserves all the credits.

Around 5 o'clock I went to check if everything is settled and I made sure that she wasn't there.

I sent her a text message " I DON'T LIKE TO WAIT MISS VUZANE"

She replied with a smiley emoticon.

I was really impatient and Zess wasn't talking to me. It was now 7 o'clock and no sign of her.

My phone rang as I was in bedroom ready to call it a night.

" yha" I responded without reading the caller

" I am sorry I am late"

“ Zess where are you?”

“ home

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maybe we should do it tomorrow”

“ we still have time”

“ okay”

“ I will pick you up”

“ sure”

I wore my shoes and took my car keys. Everything was on the car. And I told myself that I will do according to my plan. I will propose her right now.

I drove off and nervousness was consuming me but I needed to do it now or never.

I parked on the drive way and I texted her to come out. Zenkosi is always beautiful and I don't understand how she does it.

As she was approaching the car smiling, I got out with the red roses. And her smile widen and that's smile is my weakness.

“ and then “ she said looking at the roses

“ they are yours Miss Vuzane”

“ mmh thank you Cutie”

“ do you like them?”

“ yes thank you so much” I opened my arms for her and we shared a hug.

I went to open the door for her

“ eh you are too nice today” she was raising her eye lashes.

“ I am always nice. Can we go before it’s too late?”

“ yes.

“ you look beautiful as always”

“ thank you, you aren’t bad ‘

“ mmmh “

I drove off and we were talking about Tori as always. She loves her daughter more than anything in this world.

I stopped in front of the restaurant and she looked at me with questionable eyes

“What?”

“The restaurant is booked Aza”

“ I know. Just do as I say only for today”

“ oh ok.”

I went to open the door for her. I locked the car and took her hand as we were heading to the entrance.

Everything was perfect I can say. All red, white and black theme.

As we were at the entrance, the waiter came to us.

Zenkosi was teary and I knew that my chances of getting a yes were high.

“ eh don't cry, come” we went to our table as we were instructed.

“ Azariah what is going on here?” she asked looking around.

“ can we please enjoy the night?”

She nodded and we ordered our food and drinks. I started a conversation and it wasn't serious but to break the silence. It wasn't awkward silence though but we always had something to say to each other but that day we ran out of words.

We finished eating and the dessert came and she ate a bit of it. I am sure she was nervous too. She kept stealing glances and I would just smile because that talkative Zess was gone and told myself once we were done with this. I was going to tease her.

“ look Zess I am scared but I need to do this”

“ what?”

“I am not romantic and good with words” I said as I went down and took the ring out of my pocket

“ will you marry me Zenkosi Vuzane?”

She looked at me with glassy eyes and nodded. I put the ring on her finger and I shouted

“ she said yes!” the workers came to congratulate us and I texted Bongani that I am off limits.

I was so happy and she kept looking at her ring.

I drove her home.

“ goodnight my wife”

“ goodnight fiancé “

“ mmmh I don't like that and we have to do things faster”

“ I will have to talk to mom first”

“yeah, kiss Tori for me”

“ I wont do that,and she has been asking about you”

“ oh I didn’t want to intrude”

“ she loves you too much though, maybe you can just call her and say hi”

“ I will see what to do”

I opened for her and watched as she goes inside the gate.

Narrated

Zenkosi told her mother about the proposal and she was really happy for her daughter and since she once saw Azariah it was better because she knew him a bit.

It wasn’t easy for her to tell Tori about getting marriage. She was afraid that she might not take it good but she had to tell her because they agreed on not having a white wedding but just traditional which was going to be small.

Tori kept asking her mother about the ring and she had to lie about it until it was time that Tori noticed that her mother was lying. Zenkosi had no choice but to disclose the news even though she wasn't ready. She was afraid that she was going to be confused since she introduced her to Khaya as her dad and now there is Azariah.

Azariah told his parents about the engagement and they were so happy to hear the good news. They wanted to see her before they finalised everything since their wedding won't be big so it was going to be soon.

The Lobola negotiations were done few days back but not finalised

22

Azariah

“ I would like to meet her properly son before we finalise everything” Mr Nkosi said as we were having a lunch

“ I will ask her to come for dinner”

“ that’s good, what does she like to eat?” Mrs Nkosi asked

“ Zess loves food that’s it”

They all laughed

“ don’t be like that otherwise I will tell her” Mrs Nkosi replied

“ cook anything mom; Zess is simple”

“ ok I will”

She stood up to collect the plates as they were done eating. Mr Nkosi was left with his son.

“ I am proud of you Aza, you have been through a lot and I thought after everything you weren't going to love again but look now you are in love with this woman. Please treat her good and your children. Don't repeat my mistakes and now you are a man.”

“ thank you dad”

As we were talking my phone rang, I looked at dad before picking it up walking away.

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“ hey Aza”

“ are you okay?”

“ yeah, I think I am having a flue”

“ are you at work?”

“ no I am home, I couldn't go to work”

“ can I come to check you? Did you drink any medication?”

“ yeah mom bought them from the pharmacy. I am sure tomorrow I will be okay”

“ but I will come later to check on you”

“ are you allowed to do that though”

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“ I guess so, when is family coming to finalise the lobola thing because I need to tell mom so that she can alert my uncles since they live far away”

“ I will tell you tonight about it. I am just tired about this whole thing; I need to you here with me”

“ eh what are doing ?”

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“ but you need to wake up and take a bath”

“ I did that in the morning”

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“ I am on my way to my car now, I want to see your face”

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“ I don't , I lied”

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I drove to her after 30 minutes. I parked on the drive way and I called her to come out because I felt like it is disrespecting to go inside even though I already paid for the lobola. She came out wearing morning gown and she looked sick.

I got out of the car as she was approaching.

“ oh look at you” I felt bad that my queen was sick

“ hey”

“ how are you feeling?”

“ I am good. Can we please get inside the car; I am feeling cold?”

“ give me a hug first”

She rolled her eyes.

We shared a hug and got inside the car. I gave her my jacket because her gown wasn't that warm.

“ why aren't you wearing something warm?”

“ I was in bed “

“ ok but you should have put something on”

“ I am sorry.

“ did you eat?”

She shook her head

“ ok I got you hot wings”

“ thank you”

She took few bites and she said she was good. It means that Zess wasn't really feeling well.

“Tomorrow if you still feel like this; you will see a doctor”

“ I will be okay. Please I hate needles”

“ take your medication then. “

“ thank you husband”

“ I love you so much” it was the first time saying these words to her and she looked at me before she looked away.

“ Zenkosi I love you

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She kept quiet and I let her be. I pulled her closer to me and brushed her hair with my fingers.

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"Plans?"

"Yeah, I want us to have our own house. Just after the wedding we aren't going to stay with parents"

"oh ok. What do you say then?"

"We need to look for a house"

Zenkosi

To be honest it was one of the best weeks of my life because I was going to marry the love of life. Aza was really the man, God gave me as a blessing even though we started as friends and to be honest never thought we could be a couple but God decides for us, all we do is just ask our desires and he provides. As much as I had a bad past with men starting from my father to the father of my first child I told myself that this man I was looking at was going to bring me new experience about man's love.

I thanked God for providing me with a man with his words. He kept his promises of making me a happiest woman. We aren't yet married but he does make me happy and I fall in love with him every second that I breathe.

Two days ago, we were looking for house in Constantia Park in Pretoria. We needed to start afresh with our lives and honestly I really needed a change for some time.

Our parents and friends were not pleased about moving to Pretoria but they understood after sometime that we can't always be together at some point we need to go everywhere we would like to go.

"Stop starring Zenkosi" that's my future husband all yummy looking at me with that cuteness.

“I am just admiring the work of God”

“ do you like the house?” we were in Pretoria and the house was really good and comfortable for me and Tori.

“yes; it is beautiful “

“you are free to look around” the agent said smiling at Aza

“oh ok” Aza said and he noticed that ever since we came here, the girl have been eyeing him and I don’t think I will survive if every girl is going to be eyeing my husband.

I led the way and she was trying to make a conversation with him and he allowed it so I had nothing to do rather than do what I came here to do.

“ it was nice working with you Mr Nkosi”

“ thank you so much for your help”

I went into the car and waited for him to finish up with Miss Agent Grace.

We got inside the car and I was already worked up because he even allowed her to hug him and left red lipstick on his shirt.

“Where to go now; I am hungry?” he said after getting inside the car

“can we just go home, I miss my child”

“but I am hungry”

“ok. Can you please eat on the car; I will drive”

“Are you mad or having second thought about coming here?”

“I am not having second thoughts. Can you please just drive” I really hate to be seen vulnerable and all worked up.

“talk to me Zenkosi” he took my hand and I yanked it away. He looked at me and tears just streamed. It was only because he saw nothing wrong with his actions. I was scared to be in a marriage full of adultery. I once gave someone my whole heart and I can’t go what I went through with Aza and he doing the same thing which Khaya did.

We were having a school lunch break and everyone knew that I was with Khaya. So Khaya was the most popular guy and good looking. So that day he started not to mind with girls flirting with him even in my presence. I decided not to let it go even though it was painful. After all those flirting episodes he then cheated on me with every girl in the school. I was really blinded with love; I continued to love him more until he broke things with me after all the pain he put me through.

He got me pregnant and made a sex clip which everyone saw. I was very luckily because the principal understood me and I wasn’t expelled.

“can you please drive me home?”

“okay”

He focused on the road and the drive was very silent with so much tension.

He took me home and once he was on the drive way he stopped the car and locked all doors.

“we are going to talk like adults Zenkosi. Tell me my wrongs so that I can correct them”

“I don’t want to talk Aza”

“but we have to talk”

He looked at me and then looked away.

“ I am scared that I am going to lose you after sometime” my tears betrayed me.

“what made you to feel like that?”

“you allowed her to flirt with you in my presence”

“are you jealousy? “ he smirked

“I am not Azariah; if it’s what makes you sleep at night then do it again. You even have a red lipstick on shirt. You smell like her and you think this is all jealous.”

“ woah my love, I was joking”

I looked away though the window as tears streamed down my face. He tried to make me face him but he knew that he has touched the wrong button. He knew all about my past and all the insecurities I had with men.

He went out of the car and he was angry with himself and every time he made something that hurts me, he would be angry at himself even when we were still friends.

He came to open my side and cupped my face with his hands.

“I am sorry; I didn’t mean to hurt you or show no respect. I am truly sorry”

I looked at him and freed myself from him. I took my bag and push him gently to make a way for me.

I went inside and mom was cooking while Tori was watching cartoons.

“afternoon everyone”

“mommy did you bring me my doll?”

Oh I have forgotten her doll all because of Aza.”

“I am sorry munchies but I couldn’t go to the shops; I wanted to be around you”

“did you miss me that much?”

I nodded

“Ok come and give me a hug then” that’s why I love her so much. She is able to soothe my heart.

“how was your trip?”

“it was good mom we bought the house.”

“that’s good to hear, I will be done now go and freshen up”

“okay thank you mom, but I need a sleep right now”

“ok then”

I went to my room and took a shower. I went inside my bed covers naked; I was really tired and not in the mood for anything.

I switched off my phone because I really didn’t want to contact anyone.

I was woken up by Tori after about 3 hours of my sleep.

“mom this is for you” she gave me her phone.

“hi” I responded to the caller because I knew it was Aza

“hey. Tori told me that you are already asleep”

“yeah I am tired”

“I am sorry to wake you up but I need to see you before I sleep”

“can we meet tomorrow?”

“please my love”

I rolled my eyes.

“sure”

I dropped the call and gave Tori her phone back. It was around 8 o'clock. I wonder why Tori isn't asleep because tomorrow its school day.

I wore my pyjamas and morning gown. I went to tell mom that I was going to see Aza. She was drinking her tea busy crocheting.

It was really cold, I am scared of cold. I was already shivering with a runny nose. I am glad that I am not white skinned because I was going to have red chills and nose.

He was leaning on his Jangaur F- type coupé, busy pressing his phone. He was wearing a big hoodie with black torn jeans and boots.

He lifted his head and smiled at me as I was approaching him. I stood in front of him and we stared at each other for some time. And the connection wouldn't be missed

He opened his arms for me. We hugged for the very longest time and he kept whispering

"I love you so much okay?"

I said nothing because I was still angry at him or not ready to pronounce that word love.

We broke the hug.

"I am cold "

"let's get inside the car"

We got in and we stayed there in silence.

" it's late now, you saw me. Can I please go and sleep?"

“Zenkosi you know that you can’t always run away when we have a problem. I know I messed up but I am trying here. I am sorry for my actions and I promise I will never do it again. I can’t survive with you being mad at me. “

“you did it Aza after I told you about my past and you didn’t even consider my feelings; that’s why it hurts so much.

“I am sorry. Please forgive me”

“It’s okay”

“I am sorry dark bone”

“Okay Cutie”

What I love about Aza is that he understands me more than I understand myself. Yes at times we wrong each other but we made a decision that we can’t sleep still mad at each other. If it is a matter that is beyond us, we will have to talk then ask for help.

23

Azariah

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“ I will ask her to come for dinner”

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I rolled my eyes.

“sure”

I dropped the call and gave Tori her phone back. It was around 8 o'clock. I wonder why Tori isn't asleep because tomorrow its school day.

I wore my pyjamas and morning gown. I went to tell mom that I was going to see Aza. She was drinking her tea busy crocheting.

It was really cold, I am scared of cold. I was already shivering with a runny nose. I am glad that I am not white skinned because I was going to have red chills and nose.

He was leaning on his Jangaur F- type coupé, busy pressing his phone. He was wearing a big hoodie with black torn jeans and boots.

He lifted his head and smiled at me as I was approaching him. I stood in front of him and we stared at each other for some time. And the connection wouldn't be missed

He opened his arms for me. We hugged for the very longest time and he kept whispering

"I love you so much okay?"

I said nothing because I was still angry at him or not ready to pronounce that word love.

We broke the hug.

"I am cold "

"let's get inside the car"

We got in and we stayed there in silence.

" its late now

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you saw me. Can I please go and sleep?"

"Zenkosi you know that you can't always run away when we have a problem. I know I messed up but I am trying here. I am sorry for my actions and I promise I will never do it again. I can't survive with you being mad at me. "

"you did it Aza after I told you about my past and you didn't even consider my feelings; that's why it hurts so much.

"I am sorry. Please forgive me"

"It's okay"

"I am sorry dark bone"

"Okay Cutie"

What I love about Aza is that he understands me more than I understand myself. Yes at times we wrong each other but we made a decision that we can't sleep still mad at each other. If it is a matter that is beyond us, we will have to talk then ask for help.

Chapter 4

Atarah

It is not easy to have a mother in law who once loved you like hers then when things became sour in your life; she decided to turn her back on you. I thought I had a mother that I was yearning for very long time not knowing that she was going to be my enemy.

I tried my best to work things out between us but it was a waste of time because she didn't want to have a barren daughter in law and Lorna was much better than me. Every time I went to their house I was going to be reminded that I can't conceive.

We adopted a boy and girl, they are twins and I must say I am very blessed to have them.

Soon they will be turning 6. To lighten up with their story, a farmer was going to his farm in the morning and that day it was really cold; winter season. As he was driving by he saw a woman carrying babies and he looked at her then continued with his journey. He wasn't free about that woman and there was something telling him to drive back because it was still in the morning for a woman to carry babies in such weather.

He decided to erase off those instincts and continued with his plan. The time was around 6 am and it was bit dark. He worked on his farm until 7 am then decided to go home because he was tired due to his health issues. He drove back home; as he was driving he stopped the car on the spot he once saw the woman. He got out of his car and heard baby cries; he followed those cries until he reached for them. He took them and went to his car. Fortunately their mother left their birth certificates and all details. She wrote a letter saying that she couldn't continue raising them because she was only left with 1 week to live

because of cancer and their father abandoned them once she was discovered that she was pregnant.

That's how I got my blessing and I am grateful. I love them with my whole heart.

Ayakha and Chuma are very troublesome and we shout at them all the time but they bring joy in our hearts.

I was working at home since the nanny wasn't feeling well so I decided to give her a day off.

I went to fetch them from school and I really don't like to do that because they take advantage of me.

"How was your day at school?" I asked as I was taking their bags.

" it was really cool, I was asked what I want to be in future" Chuma she is so bubbly.

" and ?"

“ I want to be a doctor mom, I heard you when you were talking to daddy that you were sick that’s why you couldn’t have your own kids” pain was written on her face.

I swallowed hard the lump in my throat as I was blocking tears. It still pains me a lot because it is very hard to accept it.

“ Ayakha why are you so quiet boy; is everything okay?”

“ yes mom, I am tired and I would like to have some ice cream”

“ no ice cream, do you want daddy to be mad at me?”

“ no one will tell him, isn’t that so Chuma?”

“ no ice cream today” every time I went to pick them up at school, they would want ice cream and Bongani doesn’t like that at all and it’s not good for them.

I decided why not surprise daddy in his office and I missed him so much and I wanted to be around his arms after what Chuma said. It was their first time coming to see their daddy at work.

Their facial expression was priceless and I was really happy to see my kids happy.

I knocked in his office and it was like he had a company and we decided to wait.

“ I am tired mom; can we just go home?” Chuma said

“Let’s go my babies, we will come back tomorrow.”

As we were about to go, the receptionist came out of his office fixing her skirt and she gave me a look before taking her seat.

“ it seems as if daddy is free now, come lets go” they smiled and ran to his office.

I followed them smiling.

“ daddy surprise” Chuma screamed and I am sure everyone on the building heard her.

“ princess and prince” he picked them up and kissed their foreheads.

“we have been waiting outside for you; and that woman outside came out of your office and gave mom a bad look”
Chuma always talking.

“ I am sorry for keeping you waiting; I will make it up to you”

He put them down and I was just standing by the door; my heart was bit breaking because he was avoiding eye contact with me but happy because he loves his kids.

“ we thought we should surprise you” I said still standing

“ I am glad you did”

“ we should get going, kids lets go’

“ but mom” Ayakha loves his dad so much

“ no Ayakha, let’s go” I was bit angry not because of Ayakha but Bongani pretending as if everything is okay.

“ leave them behind; I will finish this up and go home in less than an hour”

“ okay, please behave. Come to mom” I gave those hugs and went out.

I went home and prepared supper, after I was done with everything I went to bed. They came back after an hour and making noise as always

Bongani came to our bedroom and took a shower; changed to his casual clothes.

“ baby why are you sleeping this early, are you okay?”

“ I am okay” I looked the way as tears screamed down my face.

“ Atarah talk to me”

“ and say what Bongani? I went to your work because I really wanted to around your arms and telling me that I will be okay. Chuma knows that I can't bear children and she wants to be a doctor because of that. I saw pain in her eyes and I wanted you to be my pillar but my pillar was busy with his receptionist while I was waiting outside. I know I am not woman enough but it still pains me because not matter what I can do, nothing will change. “

“ I am sorry babe, believe there is nothing going on between me and her”

“ I don't want to hear it Bongani; do whatever makes you happy. If bringing me sorrow makes you sleep peacefully at night then do it. I have been though a lot and I am sure this will pass too”

I wiped my tears and got out of bed.

“Believe me; there is nothing going on between us”

“ I don’t care anymore Bongani, I have been there for everyone. I put people’s feelings first and I am tired of fighting endless battles. Starting from today, I have two beautiful children and myself that I will be taking care of.”

1 month later.

Zenkosi

We planned to have very and intimate wedding not because of finances but I really don’t like gathering with full of people. I am not shy but I hate parked places. Our parents were against it and we had so many challenges before our wedding day but God was with us through all of those challenges.

Let me take you back a month back.

“ good morning my love ; I hope I was around you right now because my bed feels so empty without you as if” I rolled my eyes as I was reading the text message. Azariah likes to write long messages and I don't know why.

“ as if you were once in this bed but in few weeks you will sleep on it every day and I should tell you that it's no longer comfortable and we won't change it. I love it. babe I love you so much please don't let the day runs you but all the minutes and seconds of this day must bow at your command. I love you I love you. Have a good day MaFaku.”

I called him instead

“ my future”

“ I love your long texts and don't ever stop showering me with those words”

“ I am your husband and forever will be”

“ I love you for that, how was your night without me”

We chuckled because we knew he was going to start complaining about everything.

“ we will discuss that during our lunch time and please don't bring anything but yourself my love. 12 o'clock sharp in our normal spot.”

“Ok I will my love. I love you so much”

“I love you more, bye” he dropped the call and I woke up to prepare myself for work and Tori was already taking a bath with the help of mom. It pains me that I will leave my mom behind but I have to do it because I can't stay here forever. We will visit her as much as possible.

“I will be making breakfast mom”

“ okay, aren't going to be late for work?”

“ no mom; I still have time”

“ ok then”

I prepare for us a simple breakfast and went to bath before eating. I found Tori ready to go to school, she has been grumpy since I didn't bring her something from Pretoria and I am tired of begging her so whenever she wants to talk to her mom she will find me waiting for her.

“ have a good day at school my baby”

“ you too” she took her bag from the sofa and went out followed by mom.

I texted Aza “ Tori is breaking my heart”

“ what did you do my daughter?”

“ I couldn't bring her something on our trip to Pretoria now she is mad at me”

“ oh I am sorry my love”

“ bye see you soon”

My heart was bit breaking because Tori is my life, I can't live without my angel and all I needed was her smile.

I went to work as usually and things were looking good, I really loved psychology and I was a student part time because I really wanted to be psychologist. Helping people was one of my goals and dreams. It has been long since I last talked to Tara and I need to check up on her. I have been glued with Aza and I love that man with all of my heart.

I called Tara just to see how she is doing.

“ hey stranger”

“ hey my love”

“ how are doing; I miss you so much”

“ I am doing good my love you?”

“ I am good too. I miss you so much”

“ I miss you too my babe but you still busy now. When you have time just text me I will be all yours.

“ okay babe; have a god day” I dropped the call and continued with my work. I only go to check on the restaurant on weekends.

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Atarah

My marriage has been going through some rocks and thorns. We are told that before you get yourself into marriage you need to know that there will be things that you won't like about your partner and you need to accept them as they are. Bongani is very friendly and he doesn't know when to stop.

He wasn't cheating with his receptionist and I couldn't care because I was really tired by his action towards her. He needed to know that there should be limits because of my reputation as his wife. Who can respect me if my husband doesn't respect me?

“ you know my love; I still don't like that she is still working there not because that I don't trust you but for my own respect”

“ I know my love and I am working on it”

“ okay, I am going to church today after work”

“ oh I will see you later”

“ ok have a good day”

“Atarah”

“ mmh” I turned and looked him.

He came closer to me and all the love for this guy is still there and put his forehead on mine and we looked at each other until Chuma disturbed us.

“ what are you doing ?”

“ go away Chuma” Bongani shouted and we heard foot step disappearing .

“ you shouldn't have shouted” I said in a whisper.

“ I love you so much please don't doubt that

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you are everything to me and I will make sure that you are happy.”

“ I love you so much love”

“ can I get now my kiss?”

We kissed passionately and our kids came chasing each other as always and stopped once noticed

“ owh dad and mom this is gross”

We busted in laughter because Chuma is always has something to say.

“I told you to stop watching tv too much”

“Come to daddy” he picked them up and put them on the kitchen counter.

“Pick mom too dad” Aya said

“ mmmh no I am going now”

“ baby come” he picked me up and put on the kitchen counter,

“ look you all; I just want to tell you that I love this woman” he looked at me and smiled. “ I love her with my whole heart and please treat her good always. She deserves all the love and good things in this world”

“ but dad; Zine’s father said he hates her because she is not his daughter” Chuma please take this child

“ who is Zine?”

“ she is my friend” she said with a smile

“oh how many friends do you have?”

“ just a bunch daddy”

“ we will have a talk later about that”

“ baby I love you too. Kids mom loves you so much. Please behave at school”

I jumped off and took my bag and ran outside because I wasn't going to leave with them including in their conversation.

Atarah

What I have been doing these past months is to be closer to God than anything. I believe being closer to him is very important because it makes things easier. I have learnt to cast all my worries to the one that created me because I can't solve even a single problem with my own power but the one who created me can.

It has been good and bad at times but having my firm faith is what kept me going even through storms. I once asked God if will I ever be happy in my life and he didn't respond because I already knew the answer. My joy was to do the will of God and one of the duties that I was given was to cast all of my cares to him. I didn't do according to his way for so many years mostly during my childhood stages. I took everything on my own; but he was waiting for me to allow him to take charge of my life. Happiness is not what God offers but joy which will always be there for you. It doesn't matter if things aren't going well but his eternal joy is always there to supersede everything.

Have you ever been so torn apart and feels like you could just end your life because you can't continue living as a ghost? It is not because God doesn't care about you or you were cast out when he created good things. God is a gentle man; he doesn't force anyone to give him or her problems. He just tell you what you need to do; doesn't matter if you believe it or not and the consequences will be yours; either bad or good but the fruits will be ripen by you.

Love is such a beautiful thing and being married to someone whom you truly love is adding more taste to love. I love my

husband with all of my heart and I don't see myself without him.

I came back from work very exhausted since I went to church after work. It was really good to talk to other married ladies and whom have been in this marriage thing for very longest time. I really believe that I should always be surrounded by people who know more than me

I parked my car on the drive way because I was so tired to put it inside the garage. I opened the door and it was really quiet and dark. I called them but none responded.

I only saw red petals as I was going upstairs to check on them and music started playing.

I was really surprised because my husband is not that romantic.

“ babe” I called out as I was stacked on the stairs.

Chuma and Ayakha came out of the passage holding red rose.

“ we were asked to escort you mam” Aya said taking my hand, Chuma led the way inside our bedroom.

It was really beautiful and I loved it.

“Babe” I said as tears were threatening to embarrass me.

“Don’t say a word; just take your sit” I did with his help.

“ thank you for help my angels but now you are excused” he said looking at Chuma and Ayakha.

They went outside; leaving me with my husband.

“ babe this is too much; you didn’t have to do this”

“ you deserve more than this my love; can we please enjoy this moment?”

“ yes my love. Thank you so much”

Everything was settled down and we had a little picnic inside our bedroom. We ate but it was more like he was feeding me from his plate and he always does that even when we are eating out.

“ I am full now babe”

“ okay my love”

He stood up to clean everything that we were using and then settled down with me as we were enjoying ice cream. We all love it and we always eat it from the container and I think that's the reason also my babies love it.

“ babe; look I am really sorry for everything that I have put you through. You don't deserve it and I am truly sorry my love. I have been so careless mostly about your feelings and I shouldn't have done that. Starting from today; I will be the husband that you deserve. Thank you for being the best partner and even if I was asked to marry; I would marry you again. I love you so much miss King and you have made me the best king in this house. You gave me two beautiful kids and I am a father now because of you.”

“ I love you too my husband and I don't see my life without you.

“ come here now and give me my kiss”

We kissed and he wiped my tears.

2 weeks later

Zenkosi

I was really nervous about this day and it finally happened. it wasn't big and only friends and family who attended.

" I am so happy for you my friend" Tara all teary as she was helping me dressing up.

"Thank you so much; this means a lot to me"

Tori came with Chuma all looking good.

"Look mom" Tori said as she busy modelling for us and Chuma laughed at her.

"You look very good my princess"

"Thank you mom"

We finished dressing up and mom came in and asked everyone to give us a space.

“ look Zenkosi; this is another step you are taking in your life. I want to make you sure that getting married doesn't change that you are still my child. If things aren't the way you wanted them and you aren't happy know that your home is always your home. I am very proud of you and all the best in your marriage.”

“ thank you mom”

“ now wipe all those tears and come. Your husband is waiting for you”

Tara came and fixed myself once more

“ you really gorgeous Zess and I am so proud of you”

“ ok enough now” we laughed.

The wedding was really good and I must say I was tired because wow Azariah loves to dance that one.

“ come here you lazy wife” that’s Aza already on the dance floor

“ no I am tired and these shoes are killing me”

He came and kneeled in front of me and people were taking pictures.

“ okay do you want to go home?”

“ yeah I would love that”

He took my shoes off and took my hand and led the way to the car.

“ I am so tired”

“ I wanted to do something special today but we can still everything tomorrow.”

“ I just need a massage from my husband” he smiled.

“ I will give you that my love”

“ thank you”

“ Tori will be sleeping at Tara’s for tonight”

“ ok thank you for that arrangement; she is fond of you”

“ I love her too but not much as I love you”

We really didn’t go home but to a hotel and I didn’t know about this.

“ babe”

“ love”

“ and then”

“ I told you we were going to go to my parents’ house after our wedding”

“ mmm ok”

We settled in and I took a bath while he was busy on his phone. He took a shower after me.

“ sit down so that I can give you that massage”

“ ok”

“ do you know that I love you so much”

“ I love you more Aza”

We kissed for the second time and I should say I was failing for the guy each time I laid my eyes on him.

“ your lips are so soft”

“ I guess you never had one like these”

“ whatever nkosikazi”

“ I love you MR Nkosi”

“ I love you more Mrs Nkosi; let’s call it a night “

we cuddled and slept.

.....**The end**.....

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