

Chapter 1.

I stood up and looked around the room, I didn't need to be here but my lawyer suggested it and I had no choice but to say yes and come here.

"My name is Zandiswa Mzulwini. I've been in prison for a year and I was released two weeks ago" I pause and cleared my throat.

"Why were you in prison?" asked a coloured lady who looked like she was in her early 30's.

"Because I killed my husband" I responded and their reaction was exactly what I expected. People had this shocked reaction each time I told them why I was in jail for a year.

"Wow, I didn't expect that. I know we are here because of different reasons but we all have a common goal and that is to adjust in our lives even after prison" said Megan who was the founder of the support group.

"As you know that we went to prison for different reason and this is my reason. I killed a man and I have no regrets whatsoever. I did what I did to save my life and lots of other women who were in danger" I explained.

"I would like to hear your story" said Juby sitting back in her chair. She reminded of my friend Saana whom I left in prison. She had a face that said 'I don't take any nonsense'

"If it's okay with everybody I would like to tell you my story" I looked at Megan and she nodded.

"Thank you. Here is my story...." I began.

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"There's a guy wanting to see Miss Mthethwa. He says it's urgent" said my P.A standing between the door and it's frame.

"But I said I don't want to be disturbed" I complained.

"I know but he insist" said Dudu blinking quickly.

"Okay let him in" I stood up and fixed my clothes. She turned and walked out.

Two minutes passed and then a tall, dark and fine looking man walked in. The smell of English Blazer filled the room.

"Miss Mthethwa, my name is Joseph Mzulwini" he offered a hand shake.

"Well you already know me. So ngingakusiza ngani Mr Mzulwini?" I asked pulling my hand away.

"I heard that you are taking your staff for team building this coming weekend so I'm here to give you a great offer" he beamed from ear to ear.

"About what?" I sat down and pointed the chair for him to sit as well.

"What if I tell you that everything has already been finalised. We can't change things on last minute" I looked at him.

"I know but you can still take my offer. I'll provide everything from the sleeping bags and tents up to back packs and food" he opened his bag and took out a file.

"Tell me Mr Mzulwini. Do you ambush all your clients?" I took the file.

"No. Just those who have potential and Miss Mthethwa you are number one on my list" he smiled.

"I will look into it and then let you know" I offered.

"That's all I ask" he stood up and I stood up too.

"Thank you Mr Mzulwini" I offered a handshake.

Before Mr. Mzulwini could walk out, the door opened and my daughter Anita walked in from school.

"Mum I'm here" she spoke her eyes fixed on her phone and her headsets hanging in her ears. I waved my hand between her face and her phone to attract her attention.

"Gosh I'm so sorry" she removed the headsets and tugged the hair behind her ear.

"Say hai to Mr. Mzulwini first" I reminded her the manners.

"Hai Mr. Mzulwini, I'm sorry I thought mum was alone" she smiled.

"It's okay dear. It's nice to meet you" said Mr. Mzulwini offering her a handshake.

"I will send you an email Mr. Mzulwini" I told him when he stepped outside.

"Thank you Miss Mthethwa" he walked away. I closed the door and went back to my daughter.

"How was school?" I asked.

"Boring" she answered taking off her blazer.

"School is suppose to be boring. If it's no longer boring means anisafundi seniyadlala and that's not on" I collected my things.

"Aw mama akumele kube ijele. We won't learn if sihlushwa" she complained.

"Aw mtanami ngiyakwazi phela wena. Uma ungadlala kuphela konke kunga-right kuwe. Asambe" I took her school bag and she took my bag.

"Shall we go for pizza? I know you are tired to cook" she asked.

"You just want Pizza. Okay I will buy you pizza but I will still cook because I want real food" I locked my office and said goodbye to my staff who were working late.

Building Silver Platters, which was an events organizing company from nothing was no child's play and I respected my staff because they were there when I began and we were like family. We did all events from Graduations to Weddings and we gave our best on each events. I gave my all at work and at home too because I was a single mother to my 15 year old daughter Anita. Her father died when I was 8 months pregnant and doing my matric. His death was a huge blow on me because I had a single mother and his parents wanted nothing to do with a black pregnant girl. Raising Anita was tough but I wanted to give her everything that I never got in my life while growing up. I never met my father because my mother wanted nothing to do with him and I saw how hurt she was each time I mentioned him. As the result I stopped bothering with her with questions because she did her best for me and that was enough. I never met my dad.

Chapter 2.

Anita and I lived in a flat near Pinetown. It wasn't exactly a perfect place to raise kids but it was safe and Anita wasn't that young anymore. She was very smart and I was a proud single mother. Raising her was hard but knowing that her father left because God decided it was time was a bit comforting. At least he wasn't a coward jerk that decided to run away from responsibility. I wanted to give Anita the best to make up for her father not being there.

Anita: "Maybe the pizza isn't a good idea anymore. I'll eat your cooking"

Me: "Yini?"

Anita: "Sihlala sobabili mama. Uma upheka kumele ngidle" I took a moment and looked at my daughter, surprised by her reasons for a sudden change of heart.

Me: "But you like pizza. I really don't mind"

Anita: "I love you more mama" she smiled and her smile warmed my heart.

Me: "I love you more dear" I held her hand.

Anita: "Do you miss dad?"

Me: "A lot and it's been years. You have his eyes and his dimples. When you were born you looked exactly like him but when you grew older you changed"

Anita: "And I look like a woman now" she giggled.

Me: "Just my little girl and I know your father is so proud of you where ever he is"

Anita: "I miss him even though we never met"

When we got home I showered quickly while Anita washed her uniform. When I was done I began cooking.

Anita: "Mum nangu uncane uNceba"

Me: "Let her in"

Nceba was my best friend since childhood. She was a lawyer.

Nceba: "Uyapheka? Ngiyalala namhlanje" she walked in and went straight to my pots.

Me: "Ngabe ngikuganile" we both laughed.

Nceba: "Speaking of umgano, umbonile uMzulwini?"

Me: "Yes. He came to my office with an offer for our team building weekend. Something tell me ukuthi ubethunywe wuwe"

Nceba: "That's why kumele ungikhokhele. Ngikufunele i-offer enhle plus a handsome man"

Me: "And you have such a good eye for great man but usashimile my friend" we laughed some more sathula ngoba sekuvela u-Anita emnyango.

Anita: "Ngisaya kuLisa mama"

Me: "Okay but ubuye ngingaze ngizokubheka"

Anita: "Thanks mum" she walked out.

Nceba: "Usehambile u-Anita. So are you going to let Mr. Mzulwini exercise your muscles?"

Me: "Aw come on. We are just doing business"

Nceba: "But vuma oe, yinhle indoda"

Me: "And I am a mother. Should I remind you what happened with Mzamo?" I looked at her. Mzamo was the guy I dated few years ago. We were so in love until he introduced me to his family. They had a problem with my daughter. Baqala bakhala ngokuthi iwumlungu and I explained that her father was white. Then bathi kumele ngiyise kubo ngoba kwaKhoza angeke ikwazi ukuzohlala khona if mina noMzamo decided to get married. I knew that there was no way I was ever going to choose a man over my own daughter. Mzamo had 2 kids from different mothers and I loved his kids but there was no way I was going to mother someone else's kids and dump my own. Anita was my only family and I was never ever going to let someone make me choose.

Nceba: "I know girl but amadoda awafani. May be yena won't mind that you have a kid"

Me: "Even if he does it doesn't matter because we are not dating" I reminded her.

Nceba: "But you could be if you only allow yourself to look with the eyes of a woman not business eyes"

Me: "You want me to be a slut?"

Nceba: "No but let your guards down for a minute. When he asks you out please say yes"

Me: "If he does I will think about it"

Nceba: "He will, I know he will"

We both laughed. Nceba was always looking for a man that she thought I should date while her department of love was upside down as well.

Chapter 3.

After Nceba was gone Anita did the dishes while I looked at Mr Mzulwini's proposal. It was exactly what I need so I made a note to call him the next day.

Anita: "Usakhumbula kodwa ukuthi ngiyadlala kusasa"

Me: "Yebo ngiyakhumbula. Konje udlala ngaskhathi sini?"

Anita: "Aw mama ubusukhohliwe" she sulked.

Me: "I'm sorry sthandwa sami. Ukuth yazi umsebenzi mningi kulezinsuku" her sad face made me feel guilty.

Anita: "It's just try outs mama. It's fine if you can't make it"

Me: "I will be there. Just tell me what time is it"

Anita: "At 2. Please try not to be late" she warned.

Me: "I'll be there at 1:30. Goodnight my love" I kissed her cheek.

Anita: "Night mum" she went to her room and I switched the lights off and went to my room.

The next day I woke up early and showered before waking Anita up. She was excited about the try outs she didn't even argue like she normally does. While she showered I made her something to eat and packed her lunchbox.

Anita: "Even on Sport day ngiphathiswa iskhafutini" she complained while fixing her tie.

Me: "Yebo even on Sport Day angifuni udle ukudla okungenampilo"

Anita: "Mother hen" she mumbled.

Me: "Ngikuzwile. Dlana sizohamba" I went to my room and collected my things before we left.

When I got to work I asked my P.A to remind me to leave at 1:30. I did not want to miss my daughter's biggest day. She loved playing netball and I was happy because that meant she didn't have time to mess around with boys. I got pregnant at 17 and I did not want that to happen to her. I wasn't a wild child and Jonathan was my first boyfriend. Sadly I got pregnant and Jonty died 8 months later. He was involved in a car accident even though Jonty hated driving at night but his car was found slammed in a tree and his body few feet away from it. The police said he died while trying to crawl to the road. My mother did not allow me to go see him because she thought I wasn't going to be able to handle it. I never understood why he drove alone at night in the middle of nowhere. Jonthy was a good guy. When I say a good guy I mean a wimp. He was good looking but he came last in so many things so him being in a car accident at night alone was strange but nobody looked into.

"Miss Mthethwa" a voice brought me back to reality. It was my P.A

Me: "Sorry I was just thinking"

P.A: "Mr. Mzulwini is here to see you"

Me: "Please let him in" I sat up straight. She disappeared and Mr. Mzulwini appeared. He was wearing a grey suit and a white shirt without a tie.

Joseph: "Morning"

Me: "Good Morning. You can have a sit sir. Would you like some thing to drink?"

Joseph: "No thank you" he sat down and I sat down too.

Me: "I took a look at your proposal and I am impressed"

Joseph: "I'm glad you are. Does that mean I get the deal?" he smiled.

Me: "Yes, I will email you the list of the things we will need for the trip"

Joseph: "Thank you Miss Mthethwa" he offered a handshake.

Me: "No, thank you Mr. Mzulwini"

We said our goodbyes and I went back to work. I managed to cover a lot before 1:30. When I left the office I drove to Anita's school. I got there just in time before the games began.

Me: "Break a leg" I gave her a hug.

Anita: "I have some great news. Miss Jameson said there is a company that wants me to model for their advert" she sounded excited.

Me: "Really. What company is that?" I wasn't impressed because as a teacher, she was suppose to tell me first.

Anita: "It M&M. The biggest shop in KZN" M&M was the shop that was owned by Joseph Mzulwini and Musa Mdluli. I was surprised because Joseph did not say anything about them wanting my daughter to appear in their sport magazine.

Me: "We will talk about it at home"

Anita: "Please don't say no" she begged.

Me: "At home Anita"

Anita: "Okay" she went to join her team.

I went to sit in the stands and watched her play. The fear of being a single parent crept in and reminded me that Anita was not going to be my little girl for ever. She was going to grow up and become something and sometimes I wasn't going to be able to protect her but for now I wanted to protect her with everything I had.

The games lasted for two hours and then we went home.

Anita: "Did you think about it?"

Me: "Yes and as your mother I expect your teacher to inform me formally not to send you"

Anita: "So you will say yes when she sends you a letter?"

Me: "I will think about it"

Anita: "You are going to say no, I can see"

Me: "Don't be smart. How about we go out for pizza?"

Anita: "Okay" she smiled and I knew I had changed the topic.

Chapter 4.

I woke up in a cold sweat. I was dreaming Jonathan. It was like he was trying to tell me something but engezwakali. The dream bothered me because I hardly ever dream him, in fact mhla ngigcina ukumphupha uAnita wayephukile esandleni. That day ngamphupha engathi uyamlula ingalo.

Anita: "Mama" she knocked and then walked in.

Me: "Morning. Waze washesha ukuvuka"

Anita: "I heard you cry. Were you having a nightmare?"

Me: "No dear. I was just dreaming. Nothing serious"

Anita: "In that case ngisabuyela embhedeni. Wake me up when it's time"

Me: "Hau usalalelani ngoba it's after 5 already. Hamba uyogeza wena" I got out off bed ngawendlula ukuze ezobona ukthi akusalalwa.

Anita: "Okay fine" she complained but waphuma and after few minutes I heard the shower running. After she showered I showered as well sagqoka sadla and left.

When I got to work my P.A was already there.

Me: "Morning dear"

P.A: "Morning Miss Mthethwa" she looked really troubled.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

P.A: "I found these in my desk this morning" she pointed the old newspapers on her desk.

Me: "And you didn't forget them yesterday?"

P.A: "They are 15 years old. I never searched for such old papers"

Me: "Did you ask the security? Maybe uyena obewaphethe"

P.A: "I did and uthi akawazi and he said the lights were on last night and he thought someone was working late but when he came to check wafica kungekho muntu. I was the last one to leave and I switched the lights off. I remember because I noticed ukuthi i-light switch yase boardroom is stuck"

Me: "Okay. Please take those papers uwalahle. Maybe someone is playing a joke and we have no time to deal with them" I was annoyed by this.

P.A: "I will. Can I get you some coffee?"

Me: "Yes, thank you dear" I went to my office.

When I got to my office I also had a stack of old papers. I called my P.A and asked her to throw them away. After she was done we began our daily work.

Before lunch Miss Jameson called and told me about Anita doing a photo shoot. She explained that it was going to be in the afternoon and only for few days so yayingeke imphazamise eskoleni. I asked to see the contract because I did not want my daughter to do something she didn't like. The contract was going to be delivered by Mr. Mzulwini. I thanked her and called Mr. Mzulwini. He told me that the contract was ready so I offered to pick it up after lunch because I was having lunch with my friend Nceba.

At lunch time I left the office and went to M&M offices. Mr. Mzulwini was in a meeting but his secretary let me into his office to wait because he wasn't going to be long. I waited for 10 minutes before someone walked in and left the envelope that had huge confidential written on it. The guy did not even

greet me. He looked like he was angry about something and he wasn't paying attention to anything. After few minutes Mr. Mzulwini walked in.

Mr. Mzulwini: "I'm so sorry to keep you waiting"

Me: "It's okay sir"

Mr. Mzulwini: "Would you like some coffee?"

Me: "No thank you. I have a lunch meeting with a friend"

Mr. Mzulwini: "Okay. I think this is it. You can check it out and if there's something you don't like please let me know" he took the envelope and gave it to me.

Me: "Thank you" I stood up and got ready to leave.

Mr. Mzulwini: "Thank you" I took my bag and left.

The moment I got into my car I opened the envelope but it wasn't the contract that I saw. I was still in shock when I heard someone call my name. I managed to put everything back in the envelope and seal it again.

Mr. Mzulwini: "I think I gave you a wrong envelope"

Me: "Really? I haven't checked it out." I lied.

Mr. Mzulwini: "This is the contract" he gave another envelope.

Me: "Thank you. You are lucky that I was still fixing my make up. Ngabe ungifice sengihambile"

Mr. Mzulwini: "Sengibonga lokho. Have a good day Miss Mthethwa"

Me: "You too Mr. Mzulwini" I started the car and drove away.

I texted Nceba and told her that I have a headache so I won't make it to lunch. She wasn't pleased but she understood. I drove back to my office and asked not to be disturbed.

I called Miss Jameson and told her that my daughter will not do the shoot anymore. She asked for a reason and I told her that I didn't want my daughter to do it and if she felt so strongly about it then she should let her own daughter do it, after that I hung up. My mind was still disturbed about what I saw in that envelope. When I thought about Anita my eyes filled with tears but I blinked them away.

After I managed to calm down I took my laptop and googled Gloria Watson. Her picture popped up and she was beautiful. I checked her age and she was only 21 when she died in what the police ruled out as suicide. The article said she was in and out of rehab for drug use. Her family didn't know why she was hooked on drugs and destroyed her bright looking modeling future. I looked at her pictures and she was beautiful just like my daughter.

My heart sank when I thought about the content of envelope.

Chapter 5.

I couldn't focus on anything at work. My mind was filled with the pictures and documents in that envelope. I imagined my daughter's lifeless body and tears started streaming down my face. I couldn't imagine the pain the parents went through. It took me a while to calm down but when I did I googled the second girl. Her name was Elizabeth Middleton and she was only 16 when her body was found in a bathtub. The police ruled her death as suicide as well. The third girl was Monica Bhengu. She was 18 when she went missing and until this day she was never found. The article said her parents gave up the search when 10 years passed and there was still nothing about her disappearance. The article was 5 years old so that meant it was now 15 years since she was last seen. I didn't want to assume the worst about Mr. Mzulwini because 15 years ago he somewhere in his teen but I didn't want to risk my daughter. The fact that he had such info in his office meant he knew something or someone who was more dangerous.

"Miss Mthethwa" my P.A knocked.

Me: "Come in dear" she walked in with a bunch of flowers.

P.A: "They just came for you"

Me: "From who" I took them while she read the card.

P.A: "It says For a beautiful lady from Joseph Mzulwini"

The moment she said that I felt the hair stand at the back of my neck and everything else go cold in my body.

Me: "Thank you Judy" I managed to say.

P.A: "It looks like you have a secret admirer" she giggle before walking out. The moment she closed the door I threw them in the bin along with the card. When my phone rang my heart almost stopped. I did some breathing exercises before answering.

Me: "Hello"

Male Voice: "It's Joseph Mzulwini. Did you get the flowers?"

Me: "Yes I did. Thank you sir"

Mr. Mzulwini: "I just talked to Miss Jameson and she says you turned down the offer for your daughter to model for us. I understand that I should have talked to you first before approaching the school. It's just that my partner loved your daughter and he thinks she will be great for our magazine"

Me: "I'm sorry sir. It's just that I realised that Anita will be busy since the exams are about to kick off and there are other family matters that she needs to attend to. I'm really sorry"

Mr. Mzulwini: "I won't say I'm not disappointed but you are the mother so I have to respect that"

Me: "Thank you Mr. Mzulwini"

Mr. Mzulwini: "Call me Joseph Miss Mthethwa. Have a good day"

Me: "Thank you Joseph. You too" I hung up first even though he was the one who called.

After that call I checked the time and realised it was after 3 and Anita's school was out, I called her cellphone. It rang for a while and then it went to voicemail. I tried again and same thing happened. I tried Lisa's phone and she answered on a second ring.

Lisa: "Hello Miss Mthethwa"

Me: "Hello Lisa, is Anita with you?"

Lisa: "No. I'm already at home and Anita left before me"

Me: "Don't you girls have practise today?"

Lisa: "No. Miss Jameson left early today"

Me: "Can you go and check if Anita isn't home yet. Maybe she left her phone in her back pack"

Lisa: "Hold on, I will check just now" I could hear the sound of her shoes going up the stairs. I waited for few minutes before asking.

Me: "Is she there?"

Lisa: "No. She is not back yet"

Me: "Okay. Thank you Lisa" I hung up and tried Anita's phone again. It rang until voicemail again. I took my bag and left the office telling my P.A to call me if Anita pick up. When I got into my car my head was spinning. I was praying to God to keep her safe. The school wasn't far from the office and Anita had many options. She sometimes walked with Lisa to home or they take a taxi or she came to my office.

I was about to reach the school when my phone rang.

Me: "Yes"

F/Voice: "Is that Miss Mthethwa?"

Me: "Yes. Who wants to know?"

F/Voice: "It's sergeant Miller from Hillcrest Police station. We need you to come to the station, it's about your daughter Anita Mthethwa"

Me: "Did something happen to her? Is she okay?"

Sgt Miller: "She is fine but we need you to come down to the station"

Me: "I will be there" I hung up the phone and turned around. I kept repeating the police speech in my head. Telling myself that if she was injured she would be at the hospital not the station and if she was dead the police would come and tell me face to face. The police wouldn't say she is fine if she wasn't. I kept telling myself all those positive things as I drove to the police station. My daughter was fine. She had to be fine because she was my everything.

The drive took longer than it should have but I did get there.

Me: "Hai. I'm Zandiswa Mthethwa. Sergeant Miller called about my daughter" I told a lazy looking female cop.

F/Cop: "Your daughter is Anita Mthethwa?"

Me: "Yes. Where is she?"

F/Cop: "She is not here. Anita is at the hospital. I will get sergeant Mbatha to take you there"

Me: "Why is she at the hospital? Did something happen to her?"

The police did not respond instead she picked up the phone and made a call.

Chapter 6.

When we got to the hospital Anita was okay but the doctors were treating her for shock.

Me: "What happened?"

Anita: "It came out of nowhere mum. I was walking on the pavement and this car just came out of nowhere and drove straight to me. I thought I was going to die but then the police car came and that's when the car stopped chasing me" I could hear her voice shaking.

Me: "What did this car look like?"

Anita: "It was a black BMW with personalised plates. They said MJAY03. I told the police" when she said that I had to hold the bed for support because I knew who it was. He didn't even try to hide it.

Me: "You did good my love. I'll be back just now" I went to talk to the police man. He was busy flirting with the nurses.

Me: "Excuse me. Can I have a word with Sergeant Mbatha?"

S/Mbatha: "No problem miss. Shoot" the nurses went on with what they get paid to do.

Me: "Why are you not arresting Mr. Joseph Mzulwini? My daughter just told me that it was him"

S/Mbatha: "It was his car not him. Mr. Mzulwini reported his car few hours ago. So it wasn't him" I looked at the guy as he spoke. It was people like him that gave the police force a bad name.

Me: "So you just took his words without even checking it out? He could be lying"

S/Mbatha: "Or you could be bitter. Did he lead you on or something?"

I didn't respond to that because I could see that I was going to end up in jail and orange wasn't my colour, so instead I went back to my daughter.

Anita: "We can go home"

Me: "Really?" I looked at the doctor.

Doctor: "Yes. She is fine"

Me: "In that case, thank you doctor"

After we left the hospital we drove back to the police station to get my car and Anita's backpack. I asked the female police if they caught the guy and she gave me a bitch speech about her job. It was obvious that the police weren't going to help so we left and I didn't go back to the office I drove us straight home.

Mum: "From now on I will drive and pick you up from school myself. No walking or taking taxis. No talking to strangers"

Anita: "Okay but I think they were just playing. Maybe it's some jerks who stole someone's car"

Me: "I don't want to find out whether they were playing or not. Just do what I ask"

Anita: "Okay mum"

When we got home I called Nceba and asked her to come over. Anita went to take a nap. I knew she thought I was overreacting but I wasn't and I couldn't tell her why I was afraid.

I was cooking when Nceba buzzed. I went to open for her.

Nceba: "What's wrong?"

Me: "Come in and sit down" I closed the door.

Nceba: "You look pale like you just heard something terrible"

Me: "How do you know Mr. Mzulwini?"

Nceba: "You are not pale and freaked out because he asked you out? I know it's been a while but there's nothing to be freaked about"

Me: "No. Will you focus? Not everything is about me getting laid. I want to know how you know him. It's important"

Nceba: "Now you are scaring me. I met him at the club. He plays golf with my boss. Why are you asking?"

Me: "I'm going to tell you something. Please promise that you will keep it a secret"

Nceba: "You know me. I can be crazy but I can keep a secret" and I knew she was right.

Me: "I think he is a rapist" I whispered.

Nceba: "Why do you think that?"

I told her about Anita's modeling offer and the contract mix up.

Me: "There were pictures of naked girls. Some tied up and some doing drugs. There was a list with names. I googled a few and those girls killed themselves after battling with drug addiction. If he isn't the rapist then why would he have things like that in his office" Nceba was so shock she wasn't even blinking.

Me: "And he wanted my daughter to model for them"

Nceba: "God No. I hope you said no"

Me: "I did but now she was chased by his car after school"

Nceba: "What do you mean his car?"

Me: "He reported it missing"

Nceba: "Does he know you saw the photos?"

Me: "I think he does and he is going after my daughter to shut me up"

Nceba: "Did you tell the police Zandi?"

Me: "So they can tell him and then he comes and kill us? No."

Nceba: "You think the police are in on it?"

Me: "They weren't even interested in checking it out"

Nceba: "I don't understand. Joseph is good looking and women throw themselves at him. Why would he do this?"

Me: "I don't know. But I know he is not getting my daughter. If he thinks he can scare me into handing him my daughter then he doesn't know me at all"

Nceba: "What are you going to do?"

Me: "I'm going to kill him"

Nceba: "How? You don't even own a gun"

Me: "Don't worry about that" I got up and went to dish up the food. I gave Nceba hers and took Anita's to the bedroom. She was up and busy on her phone.

Me: "Something to eat"

Anita: "Thanks mum" she took the plate and began eating. I nodded and stood up to get back to Nceba, but before I could walk out I looked at her again.

Me: "You know I love you Anita"

Anita: "I know mum and I love you too" she smiled.

When I closed the door I knew that I would never let Joseph or anyone else hurt my daughter.

Chapter 7

Nceba slept over. We didn't bother waking up early the next day, I had no desire to go to the office and I wanted Anita to rest for a day. Just thinking about what could have happened made my blood want to clot.

Nceba: "Morning"

Me: "Morning, how did you slept?"

Nceba: "I swear I had a wet dream"

Me: "Wet dream? Why would you have a wet dream? I think you have enough sexual experience you don't need dreams"

Nceba: "That's because you didn't see him. Gosh that guy is sex on two legs"

Me: "Who are you talking about?"

Nceba: "Thabo's fine girly looking friend"

Me: "What do you mean girly looking? As in gay?"

Nceba: "He is not gay"

Me: "But you said he is girly looking"

Nceba: "He has long dreadlocks. You know I like my man with short or no hair at all"

Me: "Owja and this guy is not yours" I hid my face with a pillow before she had a chance to attack me.

Nceba: "You know I can't break the guy code" she hit me with a pillow.

Me: "What guy code? You are not a guy unless you are trying to tell me something" I whispered the last part.

Nceba: "I'm a woman but I can't fuck my brother's friend"

Me: "Then I guess wet dreams are your only resort"

Nceba: "It sucks, but I'll be fine. You should see his body. Gosh that man is a sin" she hugged the pillow.

Me: "I think this part right here is twisted. You get more action than me but here you are still craving for more. Shouldn't I be the one going crazy since it's been a while?"

Nceba: "That's why I think you should go for him" I looked at her in disbelief.

Me: "Don't start" I warned her and got off the bed.

Nceba: "I don't mean right now but after we sorted out this fiasco with Joseph"

Me: "I'm not talking to you about that. I'm going to shower"

Nceba: "Come on Zandi. Joshua is fine and I know he will totally like you"

Me: "Who is Joshua?"

Nceba: "His name is Joshua Cebekhulu"

Me: "Thank you very much. We both know that I don't do well with "J"" I went to shower.

After showering I went to make breakfast. Anita was up as well.

Me: "Breakfast?"

Anita: "I had corn flakes earlier"

Me: "Okay. Is there something worrying?"

Anita: "I thought about what happened yesterday and I'm scared mum. Yesterday I was fine but now I realise that I'm scared" her eyes filled with tears.

Me: "Maybe I should organise for you to see someone"

Anita: "Doctor Wales?"

Me: "Yes. We can go this afternoon"

Anita: "Okay mum. Did you put somethings in my room?"

Me: "Things like what?"

Anita: "Old news paper"

Me: "No. What kind of papers?"

Anita: "News papers. Really old papers. Some dated 15 years ago"

Me: "Lets go see them" she got off the chair and we went to her bedroom.

Anita: "There" she pointed under her bed. I pulled them out and looked at them. This was starting to scare me because I had no idea where they came from. Did someone break into my house and left them? But why would someone go through so much trouble.

Nceba: "What are you guys doing here?"

Me: "Anita found these here and I don't know where they came from"

Nceba: "Kimberly Davis" she picked one up.

Me: "You know her?"

Nceba: "Yes. She went missing 5 years ago. She was 15 when she disappeared"

Me: "And she was never found?"

Nceba: "Yep and her parents gave up hope. They said she was a sweet kid who did modelling as a part time thing to earn cash"

The moment Nceba explained that I picked up another paper and began searching.

Anita: "What are you looking for?"

Me: "I don't know but I will...." I stopped talking when I saw the article about a 18 year old who was found dead. Just like all the others, she did modeling and M&M was listed in the companies she worked for.

Nceba: "Oh my God" she gasped.

Me: "What?"

Nceba: "Kimberly Davis worked for M&M"

Me: "So did all the other girls"

Nceba: "He is a killer"

Me: "Who ever that left this papers was trying to tell me this"

Nceba: "Joseph is sick"

Me: "I know but who put them there and how?"

Nceba: "I don't know but they are trying to show you how dangerous is this. We have to stay away from Joseph"

Me: "If he comes near my family. I swear to God I will kill him"

Nceba: "And I will help you"

Someone rang the bell. I Pushed the papers back under the bed and made a mental note to check them later.

When I opened the door I almost fainted when he stood there and smiled like there was nothing wrong.

Me: "Can I help you?" I could hear my voice shaking.

Mr. Mzulwini: "Can I come in?"

Me: "Sadly no. I'm actually on my way out"

Mr Mzulwini: "Where are you going? Maybe I can chill with Anita while you go out" It happened so fast, the next thing I had slapt him across the face.

Chapter 8.

Joseph: "So you opened the envilope?" he held his cheek.

Me: "You think? What kind of a mental case are you?"

Joseph: "Can we talk in private?" he looked behind me.

Me: "Why would I allow a sick basterd like you into my house?"

Joseph: "Calling me names won't help. Give me a chance to explain"

Me: "You want to explain your killings? I'm not even blonde"

Joseph: "I know you are angry and reacting to the shock but you have to hear me out. Your daughter is in danger and I am your only solution"

Me: "Your problems are way bigger than mine. Can you go before I call the cops?" he paced up and down like he was trying to figure out something.

Joseph: "You put so much faith on the cops" he laughed.

Me: "You may pay some of them but I know you can't bribe everyone"

Joseph: "You are smart but sadly all that can't save your girl. They want her and they will get her"

Me: "Who?"

Joseph: "Now you want to listen?"

Me: "You can't stop talking so I might as well listen" he went quiet for a moment and looked at me. I stood there and prayed that Anita and Nceba weren't listening on the other side of the door.

Joseph: "I'm not a bad person Zandiswa"

Me: "Yeah, right"

Joseph: "I'm into deep shit and I can't even get out but I want to save what's important to you. Anita"

Me: "Why would you suddenly want to save my daughter? You didn't save the other girls"

Joseph: "Because I know that if Jonathan was alive he would protect her" When he mentioned Jonathan It felt like a stab from a spear into my stomach.

Me: "Just go Joseph"

Joseph: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that"

Me: "Just go. Please" he hesitated a bit before walking away.

I collected myself before opening the door. Luckily Anita and Nceba were watching TV.

Me: "Do you guys want to do something?"

Anita: "Shopping" she shouted.

Nceba: "Great idea. We can have our hair done"

Me: "Okay. Let me go change" I went to the bedroom and Nceba followed.

Nceba: "What did he say?"

Me: "He didn't deny it"

Nceba: "So he is a killer?"

Me: "Yes and it's not his fault. Can you believe that crap?"

Nceba: "You are not freaking?"

Me: "I am but bouncing through the walls won't help me. I need to be careful"

Nceba: "Going shopping is not a good idea. We should be indoors"

Me: "That's what they want. They want us to hide so they can get my daughter when nobody is watching"

Nceba: "Maybe we should talk to my brother. Maybe he can help us"

Me: "Joseph said he can help me"

Nceba: "Help you how? Isn't he the bad guy?"

Me: "I didn't give him a chance to explain. Maybe I should have"

Nceba: "That's crazy. If your house is on fire you don't burn yourself and say you were preparing for the blaze"

Me: "I don't know. I'm confused"

Nceba: "Joseph is guilty"

Me: "What if he is just a middle man?"

Nceba: "That's stupid and you know it. Why would he cover up this if he is not guilty?"

Me: "I don't know Nceba. All I know is that my daughter's life could be in danger"

Nceba: "And you want to call Joseph and find out his offer?"

Me: "Maybe I should"

She didn't answer. Instead she picked up the phone and handed it to me. I hesitated a bit before dialing the number. It rang for few minutes before he answered.

Joseph: "I was waiting for your call"

Me: "You said you can protect us"

Joseph: "Yes and I'm willing to do it"

Me: "How?"

Joseph: "It's going to sound crazy but please listen and think about it before you say no"

Me: "Just say it"

Joseph: "You have to marry me and let me adopt Anita. You and Anita need to be a Mzulwini"

Chapter 9

I didn't answer Joseph because he was crazy and I didn't want to deal with a mad man.

Nceba: "And?"

Me: "He is crazy" I opened my closet and took out my summer dress.

Nceba: "Just tell me what he said"

Me: "He wants me to marry him and then let him adopt Anita. That's like handing him my daughter" I was pissed off even my nose began sweating. My phone rang and Nceba checked the screen.

Nceba: "I think it's him"

Me: "Ignore him" I changed quickly and brushed my hair. I didn't put any make up because I was feeling hot. The phone kept ringing but we didn't answer. When I was done I went to check on Anita. She was sitting in front of the mirror brushing her long hair.

Anita: "Almost done. Can you braid it?"

Me: "Sure" I stepped closer and held the hair together before braiding it.

Anita: "Thanks mum" she stood up and put on her shoes.

Me: "Remind me to call your school later"

Anita: "Okay. Let's go" she took her hand bag and we followed each other out.

We took my car and drove to Nceba's house. There was a car in her drive way so we parked outside and went inside. When we walked in there was a guy sitting on the couch and the moment he saw us he got up and left.

Nceba: "Did you see?"

Me: "See what?"

Nceba: "Damn you Zandiswa. We just saw a Greek god and you are asking me what?. You need an extra pair of eyes"

Me: "I thought you liked them with no hair"

Nceba: "I know but for him I can bend my rule"

Me: "Yeah what ever. Can you go change so we can get go?"

Nceba: "Two minutes tops" she went into her bedroom. Anita and I sat down.

The man walked in again and sat down opposite Anita.

Me: "Hai, I'm Zandiswa and this is my daughter Anita" I introduced us.

Him: "I'm Joshua, nice to meet you" he looked at Anita and then looked down.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

Joshua: "No, I'm just thinking that my granddaughter will look like your daughter"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "Her mother is black and her father is white"

Me: "Okay" he nodded and smiled a bit before turning to the TV. The room went quiet until Nceba came back.

Nceba: "I'm done. Let's go"

Joshua: "Have fun ladies"

Me: "Thank you" I took my car keys and walked out. We got into the car and drove to the mall. We started at the salon. Anita washed her hair and I asked the lady to take off the Brazilian hair I had. Nceba said she changed her mind about doing her hair. When we finished we went to Ocean Basket and had lunch. I couldn't eat but I forced few bites down my throats. I was stressed and wished we could go back home. Being in public made me feel uneasy.

When we finished eating we paid and left. I went to Woolworths to pay and Anita said she needed new jeans. We looked for the pair she wanted and found them. After that we went to pay.

Anita: "I forgot to get a bikini"

Me: "Your bikini at home is fine"

Anita: "Yeah except it almost cover the nipple on and I hate that. I need something that will cover the whole breast"

Nceba: "Good thinking. Go get one" she nodded and left.

Me: "Maybe coming here was a bad I dea"

Nceba: "We are almost done. I hate myself Zandi"

Me: "Why?"

Nceba: "Because I am the one who brought Joseph into your life"

Me: "I think he was after Anita way before you introduced us. I think him acting like he wanted to do business with me is just a cover up"

Nceba: "Still. I gave him a free pass. I'm sorry my friend"

Me: "It's okay my friend. We will be fine. Lets just go home"

Nceba: "I'm sure Anita is having a hard time choosing the colour"

Me: "Between blue and orange"

Nceba: "Let me check on her" she walked away. I stood there and waited. 5 minutes passed, I waited and 10 minutes passed. I was getting nervous now, what was keeping them. I noticed Nceba coming toward me alone and I felt my heart sink.

Me: "Where is she?"

Nceba: "I can't find her"

I looked at her hoping she will say she was joking but the tears in her eyes told me she wasn't joking.

Me: "Where is my daughter?" I shouted and began calling her name and looking around. The security came to us and asked what's wrong. Nceba explained. The guy asked to see her photo and I showed him my phone.

Security: "She left with a man. The guy was wearing a leather jacked and a navy cap"

I didn't wait for the guy to explain further I ran out not knowing exactly where I was going. I kept calling her name hoping I would hear her scream but I heard nothing except people who thought I was crazy.

Security: "We have called the police. They will meet us at the shop" when he mentioned the police I thought about Joseph. He made it clear that the police won't help me.

Me: "I need to make a phone call" I dialed the number and it rang for a while before he answered.

Me: "My daughter" that's all I could say between the sobs.

Joseph: "Where are you?"

Me: "We were paying at Woolworth and then she went to take something"

Joseph: "I will be there right now. Did you call the police?"

Me: "They did"

Joseph: "Are they there yet?"

Me: "Not yet"

Joseph: "I'll be there just now" he hung up.

Chapter 10.

Joseph took Nceba and I to his home. It was obvious that he knew who had my daughter. When we got there he made an angry phone call and demanded they bring her back home.

Joseph: "I'm sorry Zandiswa"

Me: "Why would they take my daughter?"

Joseph: "I don't know. Those above me give out the orders"

Me: "The point me to them. I want to know who took her and why"

Joseph: "I can't do that. They will kill us both and where will that leave Anita? She needs you"

Me: "Surely you don't expect me to trust you"

Joseph: "I know you don't but right now I'm the only one who can help you" when he said that I went quiet because he was right.

Joseph: "Maria" he called out and an elderly woman appeared wiping her hands on the apron she was wearing.

Maria: "Yes sir"

Joseph: "I need you to fix two bedrooms for me. One of them should be girly looking and make sure it's okay for a teenager. The other one should be warm and welcoming"

Maria: "Yes sir" she turned and walked away.

The door bell rung and then an old man walked in.

Joseph: "Mr Daniels"

Mr Daniels: "Joseph and the ladies" he looked at us.

Joseph: "This is my fiance and her friend"

Mr Daniel: "I didn't know you are engage. Congratulations"

Joseph: "Thank you sir. It's just that my step daughter is missing and I need your help"

Mr Daniels: "Anything"

Joseph: "Can we talk in private?"

Mr Daniels: "Okay" they followed each other out.

Nceba: "I know that man"

Me: "From where?"

Nceba: "I don't remember but I have seen him before"

Me: "I just hope he can help bring Anita back. She must be so scared" I wiped the tears away.

Nceba: "So you will marry him?" she whispered.

I didn't want to think about it but if I had to do this to save my daughters' life then I was going to do it.

Me: "If it will save Anita then I have to" I whispered back.

Nceba: "I understand my friend"

We went quiet until Mr Daniels and Joseph appeared.

Mr Daniels: "Do as I told you and then I will take it from there"

Joseph: "Thank you sir" he opened the door for him.

When Mr Daniels left Joseph came back to us.

Me: "When am I getting my daughter back?"

Joseph: "It's a little bit complicated"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joseph: "We need a marriage certificate to prove that we are married. I need to prove that Anita is my step daughter before they can release her"

Us: "What" Nceba and I said at the same time.

Joseph: "It's the only way"

Me: "How do I know that it's not just a scam for me to marry you?"

Joseph: "I sink but not that low. I would never hurt a kid for my own agenda"

Me: "But you were willing to take Anita when you wanted her to model for your magazine"

Joseph: "I told you that this is deeper than you assume. I am tired and I want out but I can't. At least I can help save your daughter" when he said that I realised that he could be right.

Me: "Where can we get the pastor?"

Joseph: "You are going to do it?"

Me: "You said it's the only way we can save my daughter"

Joseph: "We can have a contract drawn up"

Me: "Won't that take longer?"

Joseph: "It will but we have time"

Me: "I do not have time. I need my daughter. She must be so scared"

Joseph: "I know but they will only release her when they have proof that she is family"

Nceba: "They don't take family?"

Joseph: "No they don't. A family member is off limit"

Me: "Why would you suddenly want to help me?"

Joseph: "Because I never met my father, he died when my mother was pregnant and when my sister went missing I saw what that did to my mother. Maybe if we had a father he would have done more and we would have found my sister"

Nceba: "So you never found her?"

Joseph: "Till this day nobody knows what happened to her"

Me: "Where is your mother now?"

Joseph: "She passed away few years ago"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joseph: "It's okay. At least we can get Anita back unlike those I couldn't save"

Me: "Thank you for doing this. I just wish I knew why someone would just target my daughter"

Joseph: "I don't know why her because you are the only family she has. With the other girls, the parents sometimes have a hand in it"

Nceba: "What do you mean?"

Joseph: "I think I have said to much already. Lets save Anita"

Me: "If you want us to trust you, you have to trust us too"

Joseph: "And I do but it's best like this"

Chapter 11.

Joseph and I got married the next day. We signed a contract and agreed that we were only married outdoors and indoors we were two adults just living together. We agreed that we were allowed to date

other people but not allowed to bring them at home because we had to appear like a married couple. I went to my place and packed our things because I had to lease the flat. My fake marriage was going to take 5 years before we could get a divorce. It was going to be hard but I was desperate to save my daughter so I had to do it. Joseph hired the truck and they came and collected my things. I was missing out at work but I knew that my team was doing well so I wasn't worried.

Me: "When can I expect my daughter?" I asked Joseph when 3 days passed and there was no Anita.

Joseph: "I gave Mr. Daniels the proof and he said anytime"

Me: "It's been days already. I can't take this waiting anymore"

Joseph: "Maria said you are not eating. You have to eat Zandi"

Me: "How can I eat when I don't even know if Anita is being fed where she is. I need my daughter Joseph" tears began streaming down my face.

Joseph: "We are going to get her back but you need to keep your strength up. At least eat the fruits" I took the bowl of fruit and began eating. Joseph got up and went to make a call. I put the bowl down because it felt like my throat was close and I couldn't swallow. I went to the bathroom to spit it out and then rinsed my mouth. When I went back to the lounge there were two policemen talking to Joseph. They all looked at me when I appeared.

Me: "Have you found my daughter?"

P/Man: "Miss Mthethwa we need you to come with us"

Me: "To where? Just tell me if you have found my daughter. Please"

P/Man: "A teenager that fit Anita's discription was admitted at City Hospital. We need you do see her and check if it her"

Me: "Let's go" I took my coat.

The drive to the hospital wasn't fast enough but when we got there they showed us the room she was in. My knees were shaking when I approach the door. I was praying that it was her. It was better finding her fighting for her life instead of not finding her at all. I saw the hands first and then I looked at her face, her head was shaved. She had dark circles around her eyes. I couldn't even speak I just held her hand and cried.

Joseph: "It's her" he informed the police men. The doctor explained that she was dropped by an unknown car that speed of before the security guard could check it out. He also explained that she was drugged but she was going to be fine. When the doctor left I turned to Joseph.

Me: "I thought you said they wouldn't hurt her?"

Joseph: "I don't know why they did that. Maybe she was fighting them. I don't know what happens

there"

Me: "What if she becomes an addict?"

Joseph: "Then we will get her the best help money can buy. At least we found her Zandi" I didn't respond after that. I sat down next to my daughter and held her hand.

We stayed for hours on her bed side before we had to leave because Joseph needed to release a statement to the media and I needed to be there as well. We went home to change before making the first public appearance as Mr and Mrs Mzulwini.

Joseph: "Are you okay?"

Me: "Will she be okay?"

Joseph: "I have security watching her room. She will be fine. Let's go do this and then go back to her" he took my hand and led me to the car.

Few journalists were there and it didn't take long. The hospital called and said she was awake. I told Joseph and he said I can go see my daughter. The driver took me to the hospital and when I got there she was sitting up. The nurse was helping her drink water from the glass. The moment she saw me she began crying.

Me: "You are safe now" I hugged her.

Anita: "It was horrible mum. There were so many, they locked us in an under ground basement" she sobbed. I held her and brushed her bare head.

Me: "I am glad you are back my love"

Anita: "I saw Miss Jameson mum. She was there. She is part of those bad men. When I recognized her she told the guy there to drug me and then put me into the next ship out" explained Anita her body shaking.

Me: "That's why she approached you about the modeling job. What ship was she talking about?"

"A ship to Europe. They are trafficking teenagers" said a voice behind me. When I turned around I saw Joshua Cebekhulu standing on the doorway and Joseph appeared behind him.

Chapter 12.

Joseph: "Shouldn't you be in a plane flying out of the country to get your ex-wife"

Joshua: "In two hours yes. I just thought I should come and check them. Nceba told me that she was admitted"

Joseph: "How did you get past the security? Only family is allowed in here"

Joshua: "You are not family, so you are in no position to remind me about family"

Joseph: "Get out or I am calling the police"

Joshua: "Go ahead. While you call them, I will be talking to the ladies" he turned his attention back to me. I watched Joseph waiting to see if he was going to do it but he didn't. He just stood there and looked at him.

Me: "How do you know about that?"

Joshua: "I got bored and then became curious. Your fake husband knows" he looked at Joseph.

Me: "Is it true Joseph? Are you trafficking the girls?"

Joseph: "I am not directly involved. I told you that I am too deep and I can't get out"

Joshua: "The only way he could get out is by a coffin"

Me: "What about us? I married you. Does that mean I am involved too?"

Joshua: "No but if it does come out then you will be known as that lady who married the killer"

Joseph: "Fuck you"

Joshua: "I don't roll like that. Sorry buddy"

Me: "The fact that I know now means I am guilty of not doing anything about it"

Joshua: "You had to protect your daughter but now you can do something about it"

Joseph: "Don't"

Joshua: "You are a woman nobody suspect a woman so it will be easier for you to get some info and then we will strike"

Joseph: "Don't listen to him Zandi. Get out Joshua. I will not let you risk my wife's life for your own agenda"

Me: "What did they do to you?"

Joshua: "It's a long story. I have to go, take care of them Joseph"

Joseph didn't answer instead he opened the door for him.

Me: "Why didn't you tell me?"

Joseph: "What good was that going to do?"

Anita: "Is it true mum?"

Me: "What's true?"

Anita: "That you are now married to him?"

Me: "I had to do it. They released you because he is your father now" Anita didn't respond instead her eyes filled with tears.

Me: "I'm sorry my love. I had to save you"

Anita: "You love me that much mum? You sold your soul to him just for me?"

Joseph: "I am not the devil Anita. We are going to be fine you will see"

Anita: "It's a fake marriage"

Joseph: "I know but I will not give you guys a fake life"

Anita: "I have a headache mum"

Joseph: "Let me call a doctor for you" he walked out.

Anita: "I love you mum"

Me: "I love you too my heart. I need you to do this for me Anita. I need you to respect Mr. Mzulwini as your father. They let you go because we said we are married and you are now Anita Mzulwini"

Anita: "Okay mum, do we live with him now?"

Me: "We live with him now. It's a big house so you will hardly see him"

Anita: "And school? Miss Jameson is still there and she might hurt me"

Me: "I will make a plan with that. For now focus of getting better and leave that to me. I will deal with Miss Jameson"

We stopped talking when Joseph walked in.

Anita had to stay at the hospital and we had to go home. I was worried but Joseph assured me that she was going to be fine because the guys watching her were in his payroll.

Me: "Tell me about Joshua"

Joseph: "Why?"

Me: "What's his story? Why is he chasing his ex-wife?"

Joseph: "That's because he still loves her and his kids adore her. His boys went to live with her in New

York"

Me: "Why do you say his kids like he made them on his own?"

Joseph: "She doesn't have kids. She is a stepmother to them"

Me: "His kids went to live with thier stepmother? Wow"

Joseph: "She raised them and even after their divorce she never stopped loving them"

Me: "Why would he divorce a woman who love his kids like that?"

Joseph: "Because Joshua is an abusive criminal. He use to abuse that woman until she couldn't take it anymore"

Me: "Even after all that she still love the kids"

Joseph: "And Joshua still loves her. He is a bad man Zandi"

Me: "You are into human trafficking Joseph. I think you are the last person to talk about bad people"

Joseph: "Maybe you are right, but I will never teach you to kill like he did to that poor woman"

Me: "You don't have to. I am going to teach myself because I am going to kill some people, starting with that bitch who shaved my daughter's hair. Goodnight Joseph" I went to my room before he tried to talk me out of it. My mind was made up, I was going to take them down one by one.

Joseph: "Zandiswa" he knocked.

Me: "Go to bed Joseph"

Joseph: "Please don't do this to me. They will kill you. Do you want Anita to be an orphan?"

Me: "No but Anita has a right to be safe. How will she be safe if there are women out there who are selling her friends? If they take her best friend are we going to marry her parents to save her as well? No they need to be stopped"

Joseph: "You are angry and tomorrow you will see things differently. Goodnight"

Me: "Goodnight"

Chapter 13.

The next day I woke up early and went to the office. My team was going camping so I needed to see them off. They understood that I couldn't come with them so when they left I went to see my daughter. She was up and Joshua was feeding her breakfast.

Me: "What are you doing here?"

Joshua: "I didn't leave last night. My ex-wife is flying in tonight"

Me: "I meant, why are you in my daughter's room?"

Anita: "Relax mum. He is just helping me eat"

Me: "And you hardly know him. Mr Cebekhulu I would really appreciate it if you keep your distance from my daughter"

Joshua: "No problem. I wanted to talk to you and I couldn't come into your house so I came to wait here"

Me: "What do you want from me?"

Joshua: "Can we talk in private?"

Me: "I just got here to see my daughter, make it quick"

Joshua: "It's fine you can stay with your daughter. We will talk later. Can I have your number?" I didn't trust him 100% but I gave him the number and he left.

Anita and I stayed for hours together. Joseph organized counselling for her and I left when the doctor asked to speak to her alone. I called Joshua and told him we can talk. He asked if we could meet for lunch. I said okay and texted him the place. He came 15 minutes late.

Joshua: "Thank you for meeting me"

Me: "You didn't give me much choice"

Joshua: "I'm sorry for ambushing you, it's just that I thought you want to keep Anita safe"

Me: "She is safe"

Joshua: "Yeah but don't you want to know why her?"

Me: "Why are you interested in this?"

Joshua: "You won't believe me even if I tell you"

The waiter came and took our orders.

Me: "Try me"

Joshua: "My ex-wife doesn't have kids"

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "She had an accident"

Me: "That's so sad"

Joshua: "Yeah. She never got to have her biological kids"

Me: "What does her not having a kid have anything to do with my daughter almost being a human trafficking victim?"

Joshua: "I am going to show you something" he stood up and took out his wallet and his phone. The waiter brought our meal and we waited until he left before we went on with our conversation.

Joshua: "This is my wife" he showed me the photo on his wallet.

Me: "Ex wife and she is beautiful"

Joshua: "Okay, ex-wife. Then look at this" he showed me another photo on his cell phone.

Me: "You ex wife in her late teen years. What is your point?"

Joshua: "This is not my wife" he pointed the photo on the cell phone.

Me: "What do you mean that's not her?" I took the cell phone and compared the pictures. They were almost identical. Except the fact that the wife looked older and the other looked younger.

Joshua: "The girl is 23 years old and my ex-wife is 43 years old"

Me: "Maybe she is a cousin or something"

Joshua: "She is not. I've met her family and her twin sister died at birth so I know for sure that, that's not my wife's twin sister"

Me: "Then who is she and where did you find her?"

Joshua: "I was feeling lonely so I decided to hire some company. So they deliver the girl and I pay extra because I wanted her to stay the night. Anyway she sits on the couch wearing a hood covering her head. They said she hardly speaks and that's fine by me. I ask her to take the hood off so we could have a drink or two and she takes it off. The glass I had in my hand slipped and broke. You can imagine how shocked I was when I saw her"

Me: "You thought she was your wife?"

Joshua: "I thought I had finally lost it. That I was seeing things because my wife was overseas with my kids"

Me: "Did she tell you who she was?"

Joshua: "That's the interesting part. She doesn't have a name. They call her TM and she is 23 years old"

Me: "That's interesting because?"

Joshua: "My wife's name is Thandeka Myeza and she had a miscarriage 23 years ago. She was 7 months pregnant when she went into a coma and woke up with a miscarriage" when Joshua said that I looked at the pictures again and I couldn't believe it. Was it possible that this TM was Joshua's ex-wife's baby? Did they steal her direct from her womb and raised her for their agenda?

Me: "Is it possible for someone to steal an unborn baby?"

Joshua: "You see the photos. What do they tell you?"

Me: "That who ever is calling the shots doesn't have kids" I looked at the cell phone again. The girl looked sad and empty. Her eyes told a heartbreaking story.

Me: "Where is she now?"

Joshua: "I hid her in a basement in your house Mrs Mzulwini"

Me: "What?" I was shocked.

Joshua: "Joseph knows. I didn't tell him why she is there. It's the last place they would look. I am waiting for Thandeka to get here and then I will get them out of the country"

Me: "What if she isn't her daughter?" It was impossible but I had to ask.

Joshua: "She is someone's daughter and I have kids too."

I nodded, hearing about this gave me more motivation to hunt them down one by one.

Joshua: "What are you thinking?"

Me: "You need to teach me how to be a killer" I looked at him straight in the eyes.

Chapter 14.

Joseph: "No"

Me: "I wasn't asking for your permission. I was just telling you that my plan"

Joseph: "Joshua is using you. He wants to get Thandeka back into his arms"

Me: "So, there is no girl in the basement?"

Joseph: "There is. But that's not the point"

Me: "There's a kid who is being sold for sex Joseph and her mother is alive. Don't you think they deserve to have a chance like Anita and I?"

Joseph: "They do but I don't want you to get hurt"

Me: "That's why I need training. Show me the girl, please"

Joseph: "Follow me"

We went to the basement. It was empty except for boxes in the corner.

Me: "TM" I called out and waited for few seconds for her to come out. When she did Joseph gasped out loud and that freaked her out.

Joseph: "You look like her"

Me: "You have met Thandeka?"

Joseph: "Yes and she looks exactly like her"

I stepped closer to the girl.

Me: "You are safe now. Did they give you food?"

TM: "Not hungry"

Me: "Something to drink?"

TM: "Not thirsty" I nodded and checked the boxes. They were filled with food and water. The other had clothes and blankets.

Me: "Joshua is smart"

Joseph: "He should be. He is a criminal after all"

Me: "Can you get Anita home tonight?"

Joseph: "Why?"

Me: "Because TM needs some company"

Joseph: "Okay" he walked out.

I went to sit near TM.

Me: "Are you cold?"

TM: "No"

Me: "My name is Zandiswa Mthethwa but I married Mr. Mzulwini so now I am Zandiswa Mzulwini. I have a daughter, she is 15 years old. Tell me about yourself" she went quiet like she was thinking first.

TM: "They call me TM but I don't know what that means"

Me: "Who is they?"

TM: "The women who raised us. We were raised by different women"

Me: "How many of you?"

TM: "A lot. Maybe 45"

Me: "Wow, where do you come from?"

TM: "I don't know. Many have died and some left the country"

Me: "Have you been into a ship?"

TM: "Yes and Mellisa escaped, she never made it to the dry sand"

Me: "Why didn't you try to escape in the house?"

TM: "They give you to the guards and...." she began shaking and the tears just rolled down her eyes.

Me: "It's okay, don't tell me anymore but I will tell that you are never going back there again"

TM: "They will hurt you and your family"

Me: "I don't care if they hurt me but I am not handing you to those cruel man again"

TM: "Do you know my mother? Mr. Cebekhulu and Mr. Mzulwini say I look like her. Have you seen her?"

Me: "Mr. Cebekhulu showed me her photo and you look like her"

TM: "Sometimes you do look like someone you are not related to. Just like you"

Me: "Me?"

TM: "There was a new coloured girl they brought in and she had your eyes. She looked like you even though she is a coloured"

Me: "This girl?" I showed her the pictures.

TM: "That's her. She cried non stop and Jenny had her drugged"

Me: "Jenny Jameson?"

TM: "You know her?"

Me: "I thought I did. That's my daughter Anita"

TM: "They took your daughter?"

Me: "Yes but I have her back"

TM: "It's nice to have a mother"

Me: "Yeah. What do you think TM means?"

TM: "I don't know about T but M means Memela"

Me: "Okay. Can I make a call?" she nodded.

I dialed Joshua's number and it rang once before he answered.

Joshua: "MaMthethwa"

Me: "It's not Myeza it's Memela"

Joshua: "She told you?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Then it's her. Thandeka was a Memela before we found her real parents"

Me: "When can we start with training?"

Joshua: "Thandeka lands in 5 hours. When she gets here, I am all yours"

Me: "Good because I need it fast"

Joshua: "I understand"

Me: "Sharp" I hung up the phone.

TM: "Why did she sell me to those people?"

Me: "Who?"

TM: "My mother"

Me: "She didn't sell you"

TM: "They said they paid 8 million for me. Everytime I had to go to work they reminded me that I am worth millions"

Me: "She didn't sell you to them. Your mother thought you died when she woke up in the coma they told her that you died"

TM: "Why was she in the coma?"

Me: "I don't know but she truly thought you died"

TM: "Does she have kids?"

Me: "No. After losing you she couldn't have kids"

TM: "That man said she is overseas with the kids"

Me: "That man is her ex-husband and the kids are his"

TM: "She loves her ex-step kids?"

Me: "She love kids and that's why she will love you"

TM: "You don't know that. Maybe she thought 8 Million is better than waking up at 3am checking the baby"

Me: "She didn't sell you"

TM: "You will never know. Kim was sold by her own mother for 15 million and she has to make 17 million in 6 months"

Me: "Doing what?"

TM: "It's up to the client. What ever they want you do it"

Me: "How much have you made?"

TM: "Maybe 45 Million. Sometimes I get sick and stay in bed for weeks"

Me: "How much do you get paid?"

TM: "Nothing"

Me: "You make millions and get paid nothing?"

TM: "Yes. Some get the snow"

Me: "Snow?"

TM: "Drugs. They help" my heart broke but I didn't want to cry in front of her. I wondered what other things she had to do for these selfish people.

TM: "Sometimes I prayed not to wake up but I always did"

Me: "I am glad you did. Your mother will be too."

Chapter 15.

We went to bed late in fact we slept in the basement with TM because Anita wouldn't not leave her alone. The next day they were still asleep when I woke up and went upstairs.

Joseph: "Morning"

Me: "Morning"

Joseph: "Thandeka arrived last night. She is in the kitchen"

Me: "And Joshua?"

Joseph: "This is not a halfway house. He went home"

Me: "Don't do that"

Joseph: "Do what? I hate how Joshua is involved in this. That man is a monster"

Me: "Isn't that calling kettle black" I went to the kitchen to see the famous Thandeka. When I got in she was doing something on the sink and had her back towards me but she turned around so quickly like she knew I was there. Joshua was right about TM being the her image.

Thandeka: "I don't like that"

Me: "Like what?"

Thandeka: "The way you look at me. The last time someone looked at me like this I was on a sex tape. I hope it's nothing like that"

Me: "It's not. I'm Zandiswa Mzulwini by the way"

Thandeka: "I am Thandeka Myeza. My ex husband brought us here last night"

Me: "You are welcome. So you have your kids with you?"

Thandeka: "Yes but only the boys. Julia is in Brazil with her baby daddy and their daughter"

Me: "Ow so you are a grandma too. A hot grandma" we both laughed.

Thandeka: "You have a daughter as well?"

Me: "Yes, she is still asleep with your daugh...." I stopped talking when I realised what I almost revealed.

Thandeka: "My what?"

Me: "Excuse me, I need to check if Joseph needs" I mumbled and walked away almost bumping to Joshua and two men I didn't recognize.

Joshua: "Morning"

Me: "Morning" I walked past them.

Joshua: "Is there something wrong?"

Thandeka: "That's what I would like to know. I swear you said my daughter"

Joshua: "You told her?" he shouted. I was yet to answer when Joseph walked in with Anita and TM.

Joseph: "Look who is up"

Man1: "What the fuck is this?"

Man2: "Oh My God. So it's true?"

I looked at Thandeka and she was just standing there staring at Joshua.

Joseph: "Well? Is anybody going to say something? Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" he pointed the two guys Joshua came with.

Man1: "I am Njabulo Mbatha"

Man2: "I am Ntokozo Mdluli"

Joseph: "You are the killer?" he pointed Ntokozo.

Njabulo: "Actually Sheila and her kids do the killing. We just point them on the right direction"

Joseph: "That's it. I want you and your friends out of my house" he pointed Joshua who was still staring at Thandeka and she was looking at him. TM was staring at them.

Joshua: "Say something"

Joseph: "I said get out"

Ntokozo: "He wasn't talking to you"

Joshua: "MaMyeza please talk to me" he begged and stepped closer to her. The moment he did that she began hitting him with her fist.

Thandeka: "How could you hurt me like this. 10 years of abuse wasn't enough? I gave you everything and still you want to hurt me like this?" she shouted and went on hitting him.

TM: "Stop hitting him" her voice sounded stronger than last night. Thandeka stop hitting Joshua and turned to her.

Thandeka: "How much is he paying you for this?"

Joshua: "I am not paying her. I swear to God I am not paying her. I was shocked as you are when I saw her" explained Joshua.

Ntokozo: "But how?"

Joshua: "She never miscarried. She was 7 months pregnant when she went into the coma and the baby

survived. She survived" he pointed TM. Thandeka screamed and covered her ears. That was heartbreaking. Joshua looked at Njabulo and nodded.

Ntokoza stepped closer to her and held her into his arms while Njabulo opened a small bag and took out an injection.

TM: "Please don't hurt my mother" she begged as tears streamed down her face.

Joshua: "We won't. She will be fine"

Njabulo injected her arm she didn't even flinch.

Joshua: "I know I said we will never do this but you need to rest so you can take everything in" he picked her up and laid her on the couch.

Anita: "Mum look" I had forgot that she was even in the room. As much as I had protected my daughter from life but it seemed like I wasn't going to be able to shield her from things like these.

Me: "What is it Anita"

Anita: "They are talking about aunt Nceba on TV" we all turned to the TV and Joseph turned up the volume.

News: ".....she was found dead this morning in her house. It's not clear why Miss Ngubane would take her own life and this left a huge shock to those who were close to her. The family asked the media to respect their privacy as they mourn their daughters passing" I was so shocked I didn't even feel Joseph sitting me down and Anita giving me a glass of water. Why would Nceba kill herself? If she was in trouble she should have come to me. I would have helped her.

TM: "I know her"

Joshua: "Who?"

TM: "That dead lady. She use to do our make up when we had overseas clients. Her name is Nonceba Ngubane"

Joshua and I looked at Joseph who looked down.

Chapter 16.

When I woke up my head was dizzy. I checked the time and it was almost 3pm. Everything that happened felt like an imagination but I knew it wasn't. My hand hurt after punching my husband. I got out of bed and went to shower before going downstairs. When I finished I went to get dressed and Joseph was sitting on the bed.

Joseph: "I didn't know she was involved"

Me: "Because you are not directly involved?"

Joseph: "Yes"

Me: "Okay. Can you get out so I can finish getting dressed?" he nodded and left.

After getting dressed I went downstairs. Anita and TM weren't there. Thandeka was sitting on the couch and Joshua was sitting in front of her on the coffee table. Ntokozo was standing behind Joshua and Njabulo was standing behind Thandeka.

Me: "What are you doing to here?"

Joseph: "They are drugging her"

Me: "Why are you drugging her?" I went to sit next to her and she didn't even move. Her eyes were fixed on Joshua.

Ntokozo: "I just don't get it"

Me: "Get what?" I looked at Joshua and he wasn't even blinking.

Ntokozo: "You are a fine woman. Sexy and smart but you end up with him. Why?" he looked at Joseph.

Njabulo: "You could better. If I wasn't married already I would snatch you up and take you to Canada with me"

Ntokozo: "Me too. Joseph doesn't even look like he can put it down. Women like you need a man not just any guy but a man"

Joshua: "Gents stop insulting a man in his own house"

Me: "For the record, he knows how to put it down" I looked at Joseph and he seemed surprised that I was diffending him.

Joshua: "How would you know? He is just your fake husband"

Me: "Not everything is fake. From what I know you can't fake a good fuck"

Joshua: "But you haven't fuck yet"

Me: "How do you know? It's not like I will report to you"

Ntokozo: "That explains the anger. Chill buddy, we are married so your fake wife is safe"

Joshua: "But I am not married" when he said that I looked at Thandeka and she looked back at me.

Me: "Are you okay"

Thandeka: "I don't know. How does one feel after this?"

Me: "I understand, how can people be so cruel?"

Thandeka: "They need to pay. Someone needs to pay for hurting my daughter. You can't heal rape scars. It something you can never shake it off. God knows what else they did to her" she began crying.

Me: "Where are the kids?"

Joseph: "Upstairs. After he drugged you. They went upstairs in Anita's room" I nodded and turned my attention to Njabulo.

Me: "Why did you drug me?"

Njabulo: "I was helping you to calm down. I just don't understand why you are not like Thandeka"

Me: "You thought I was going to turn into a zombie? Look at her. You are harming the poor woman"

Joshua: "No, I am helping her cope. Thandeka's life hasn't been easy. She has been to hell and back"

Me: "So you drugging her helps her how?"

Joshua: "You will see. Maybe you need it too. It takes the frustration out, especially the sexual frustration."

Me: "Fuck you"

Joshua: "And I am pretty damn good too. An hour with me will leave you feeling like you own the world"

Me: "Then keep dreaming"

Joshua: "You have no idea"

Me: "I don't remember having breakfast"

Joseph: "Maria cooked lunch. Maybe she can set the table for all of us"

Me: "I will go help her" I went to the kitchen.

Maria and I set the table quickly.

Maria: "We never had so many guests before"

Me: "So it always just you and Joseph? Doesn't he bring girlfriends over?"

Maria: "Mr Mzulwini never brings a girl over. Most girls he liked they hurt him, they turn out to be goldiggers so he stopped liking the girls"

Me: "He likes men now?"

Maria: "No, he likes you and Anita. He says Anita reminds him his sister"

Me: "He told me"

Maria: "He has a good heart, I know because I have worked for him for years now"

Me: "Just involved with wrong people" I mumbled quietly.

When we finished we called everybody to eat. Joseph went to get the kids upstairs.

Thandeka: "I want to know"

Me: "Know what?"

Thandeka: "Who sold my daughter and why?"

Me: "I know a place we can start"

Ntokozo: "Not yet"

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "You need proper training first"

Thandeka: "Ntokozo will show us the ropes"

Joseph: "Kids alert" he came down and two boys followed behind him and then Anita and TM followed. Thandeka stood up when she saw her.

Thandeka: "Nosipho" she opened her hands and TM hesitated a bit before walking to her. They held each other and cried silently. Almost everyone was wiping the tears away.

They hugged for a long time and when they finally let go Joshua went to Thandeka and hugged her. They didn't hug like a divorced couple, they hugged like a married couple. I looked at Joseph and realized what he meant when he said Joshua wanted Thandeka back into his arms. By the look of things she was already back into them and it was only a matter of time before she was in his bed too.

Ntokozo: "We are back in business"

Njabulo: "No. We are sitting this one out and letting the ladies deal with things. The kids need to fly to Canada. We are about to paint the city red"

Me: "You mean we"

Chapter 17.

After that late lunch we cleared the table and then went to wash the dishes.

Me: "Can I ask you something"

Thandeka: "Sure"

Me: "Why do you just trust Joshua?"

Thandeka: "What do you mean?"

Me: "He drugs you just like that and then say you can't handle things. He is your ex husband and the last time I checked ex meant the past that has passed"

Thandeka: "You wouldn't understand"

Me: "Try me"

Thandeka: "Some other time" She turned around and went on with the dishes. I decided to shut up and mind my own business. When we finished I went to change because we had to go to Nceba's house to pay some respect. I wasn't sure about her deserving my respect but I had to go and show my face.

Joseph: "Are you ready to go?"

Me: "Yeah. I will meet you downstairs" I put on the jacket and followed him downstairs.

Joseph: "Someone will be watching Nceba's house. I don't think you guys should come" he looked at Thandeka.

Joshua: "Why not?"

Joseph: "For a world class criminal, you are really slow. If they see Thandeka they will start suspecting all of us"

Ntokozo: "He is right. We should stay and let them go"

Njabulo: "Don't you need protection? Just in case"

Joseph didn't answer instead he lifted his jacket and showed him the gun.

Joshua: "Armed and dangerous" he rolled his eyes.

Me: "That's just gay. Never roll your eyes again"

Joshua: "And you must be dying to find out"

Joseph: "I know you boys are used to caves so please don't destroy my house" he looked at Ntokozo.

Njabulo: "Just go guys. We need to discuss something when you get back"

Joseph: "See you just now"

Me: "Oh, before I forget. Mr Mbatha never ever drug me again otherwise I will not be responsible for my actions" I warned before we left.

Me: "Can you tell me the truth?" I asked as we got into the car.

Joseph: "About what?"

Me: "You and Joshua. I would like the truth"

Joseph: "I hate him"

Me: "Why?"

Joseph: "He is a criminal"

Me: "You keep saying that but you are not exactly a saint"

Joseph: "But I am not turning you into a killing machine. I don't drug you and claim you can't cope. That man destroyed Thandeka and he wants to destroy you too"

Me: "But I can take care of myself"

Joseph: "But you are going to let men you don't even know train you to be a killer. I know I am your fake husband but I thought we were going....." he paused.

Me: "But I am doing it to protect my daughter"

Joseph: "I promised to protect you. Joshua isn't interested in saving the kids. He wants Thandeka and if you keep this up you are handing her right into his arms"

Me: "You make it sound like she is crazy and she can't think for herself"

Joseph: "Surely you don't believe she can. Did you see her when you came downstairs. She was just sitting there and Joshua acting like a hero"

Me: "Am I missing something?"

Joseph: "Something like what?"

Me: "Your obsession with Joshua and Thandeka. I am not stupid Joseph"

He took a deep breath first before answering.

Joseph: "Thando is my nephew"

Me: "Who is Thando?"

Joseph: "Their oldest son. His mother was my sister"

Me: "But you said your sister went missing at a young age"

Joseph: "I had 3 sisters. Veronica was few years younger than me. She dated Joshua and he abused her just like he abuse Thandeka. Watching him act like a hero makes me sick because I know what he can do while claiming to love"

Me: "You said was. Did she pass away?"

Joseph: "She was killed by men who were after Thandeka"

Me: "Why were they after her?"

Joseph: "Promise me that you will keep this between us"

Me: "I promise"

Joseph: "Thandeka was meant to be the original girl. The first girl to be exchanged for cash and favors. Her mother sold her. But when she got pregnant at 18 the bosses back out and demanded their money back. Mrs. Memela couldn't pay it back so she offered the baby. Unlike Thandeka who was almost an adult, the kid was going to be raised their way and then later be sold for sex to wealthy men of this world. She was going to grow up knowing nothing but those who raised her. When she began showing strong resemblance, her grandmother ordered a hit on Thandeka but Joshua began killing everybody who come close to her. Fearing that Joshua would finish everybody she called it off since Joshua didn't catch on and thought they were after the will that Mr. Memela left for Thandeka"

Me: "How do you know all this?"

Joseph: "That's because my father was the founder of the human trafficking business. He used the sport shop as the cover up. Now you see why I tell that I am so deep I can't get out. As much as I am not direct involved but I am still involved and I can't get out because if I do they will kill my family" explained Joseph. I was so shocked I couldn't even speak.

Joseph stopped the car and we both got out. My ears were ringing. I couldn't believe just how cruel some people were. If Thandeka's stepmother hated her so much she should have taken her to an orphanage instead of abusing her like that. Who sells an unborn baby.

Me: "Then who sold my daughter?"

Chapter 18.

Joseph: "I know you probably don't believe me when I say I am not the one in control. But I swear to you, I had nothing to do with selling your daughter or any other kid out there"

Me: "Okay. I believe you. I don't know why but I do believe you" he looked at me and we stood there for a while.

Joseph: "Shit" he hissed.

Me: "And now?"

Joseph: "That car is following us. It Mike and I am sure they sent him to check up on us. Play along"

Me: "To what?" he didn't respond instead he stepped in front of me and smashed his lips against mine. It was meant to be a pretending kiss but his lips made my knees weak. It didn't help that I could feel him rising against my stomach. I found myself relaxing in his touch and melting as his tongue intertwined with mine. We kissed for a while until he pulled away and cleared his throat.

Joseph: "We should go"

Me: "Yeah" I opened the door and got into the car.

The rest of the journey was awkward. When we got into Nceba's house there were police car and nobody was allowed in. Even when we asked to talk someone they refused and said it was a crime scene. I was annoyed because they were acting like they were doing their jobs while we knew they were covering loose ends of their crimes just in case Nceba left something.

After being turned away we had no choice but to go back.

Joseph: "Should we talk about it" I pretended not to hear because I knew what he was talking about.

Joseph: "Zandi" he tried again.

Me: "Sorry, my mind is somewhere else. You were saying something?"

Joseph: "What are you thinking about?"

Me: "I need to get into Nceba's house"

Joseph: "You heard the police. Nobody is allowed"

Me: "Since when do police investigate like that when someone decided to end their own lives?"

Joseph: "I don't know" he sounded annoyed.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

Joseph: "No" I decided to shut up.

When we got home he went straight upstairs. I went to check our guests and they were playing some game. Joshua looked up first.

Joshua: "That was quick"

Me: "It a crime scene so nobody is allowed in"

Ntokozo: "We need to get into that house. Where is your husband?"

Me: "Upstairs"

Joshua: "We need to start. The sooner we start, the sooner we can all get on with our lives"

Njabulo: "And I can go to my wife. There's another Shandu to be created"

Ntokozo: "So the doctor gave you the go ahead?"

Njabulo: "Yeah and I can't wait"

Joshua: "That's good. So when is Phelisa leaving with the kids?"

Ntokozo: "Tomorrow evening. Have you told Thandeka?"

Joshua: "Not really. I will do it tonight"

Me: "Do you think she will agree?"

Ntokozo: "I don't see her saying yes. She just found her daughter and letting her go will be harder"

Joshua: "Don't worry. I will talk to her"

Me: "Okay. Let me go check on them" I went upstairs. They were in Anita's room.

Me: "Hey guys"

Anita: "Mum you should see the photo's Aunt Thandeka took"

Me: "That's great. Are you guys okay?" I looked at TM and her mother.

Thandeka: "I haven't felt like this in years" she looked at TM.

Me: "Happy?"

Thandeka: "I think so. I've been happy before but today I feel like totally different. Don't get me wrong, I love Joshua's kids because they are mine even though I didn't give birth to them. I watched them grow and they gave me that sense of motherhood but nothing beat knowing that I am someone's biological mother. But I am angry because I wasn't there to protect her" her voice changed and I realized she was crying.

Me: "You didn't know"

Thandeka: "There is so much I want to do for her"

Me: "And you will. I can't wait for our kids to be safe"

Thandeka: "So we can take them shopping"

Me: "And have our hair done" we looked at our girls. TM was like a child. She may have been 23 but it was clear that she missed that part of being a kid.

Thandeka: "Do you know what's worse?"

Me: "No. What?"

Thandeka: "I still love Joshua and I don't know how to stop loving him" she whispered as tears streamed down her face.

Chapter 19.

I woke up in Joseph's bed the next day and he wasn't there. I didn't really expect to wake up on his chest but I thought he would still be in bed. With the house full I had no choice but to give Thandeka my bedroom and then share with my fake husband. We slept well but used different blankets.

The time is almost 7 am so I got out of bed and stripped down to my birth suit before heading to the shower. When I opened the sliding door I was shocked to find Joseph standing still with his hands on the wall and blood dripping somewhere on his face.

Me: "Joseph" he turned and looked at me. His nose was bleeding.

Joseph: "It happens once in a while" he turned on the water.

Me: "You need to have it checked out"

Joseph: "I will, step in. The water is hot" I hesitated a bit but we were both naked and Joseph had bigger problems than nudity so I stepped in.

Joseph: "Fake marriage" he mumbled.

Me: "What about it?" I looked at him.

Joseph: "It's like being in prison"

Me: "Am I that bad?"

Joseph: "You can't be bad even if you try. I like how you handled the guys"

Me: "We might be fake but you deserve some respect"

Joseph: "Respect is earned dear and I haven't earned that yet"

Me: "You can still earn it"

Joseph: "How? Anything to earn your respect"

Me: "Tell me the truth. That's all I need"

Joseph: "I didn't sell your daughter"

Me: "Then who did?"

Joseph: "I don't know. I want nothing to do with that but I just can't get out"

Me: "That's why Nceba killed herself. She couldn't get out?"

Joseph: "I think so"

Me: "I just can't believe that she couldn't tell me"

Joseph: "It's not exactly something you would want to share with friends"

Me: "But if your best friend's daughter is in danger. You warn your best friend"

Joseph: "And if you think your fake wife is in danger, you warn her"

Me: "You think I am in danger?"

Joseph: "You are planning on going on a killing spree Zandi. With criminals and I may be a fake husband but I care about you. I risked my life to protect you. If they find out that I lied about our marriage we are dead"

Me: "That's why we need to fight them"

Joseph: "What about Anita and I. Does it matter that we love you?" he raised his voice.

Me: "I fucken love you too but how are we suppose to live when there will be people watching us?"

After that he didn't respond, instead he stepped out of the shower and walked out.

I turned of the water and followed him.

Me: "Do you enjoy living in fear?"

Joseph: "No, I want to have my wife and daughter"

Me: "Fake wife" I reminded him. He came towards me and grabbed my arm roughly.

Me: "What the hell are y...." I couldn't finish because he kissed my lips. I wanted to fight him but I found myself melting against him. Being a single mother made dating a complicated business and getting some was almost impossible. We kissed for a while until he grabbed my butt and lifted me up while we walked towards the bed. We continued kissing until he pulled away from me.

Joseph: "We should stop" I nodded unable to breath.

Joseph: "But I can't" we kissed again and this time he began fingering my honey pot. It felt so good I had to guide him touch where I was craving him more. He went further down and gave me a mind blowing oral sex until I climaxed on his face.

Joseph: "I don't have condoms" he spoke on a low tone voice.

Me: "I really want this" I whispered as he positioned himself between my legs.

Joseph: "Please remind me to purchase the morning after" I nodded rested my palms on his upper arms. He pushed himself in. It felt so good I held my breath as he slowly moved, rotating his hips in a gentle motion. I moved as well gentle meeting his thrust.

Joseph: "You are tight" he whispered on my ear.

Me: "I think I am about to come" I wrapped my arm around him and a low moan escaped my lips as a wave of pleasure washed over me. He pulled out and turned me around. I went on all four as he came from behind. He slammed inside me and thrust harder and faster until we both came. We both collapsed on the bed breathing hard.

Joseph: "I love you"

Chapter 20

I dozed off after that steamy sex with Joseph. When I woke up he wasn't there so I woke up and went to take a quick shower before going downstairs. The problem with such sexual encounter is having to face them afterwards like I had to face Joseph as well. When he said he loves me I didn't respond because I knew that men usually say anything that they think we women want to hear.

Thandeka: "Great you are up. These are my friends. Bongeka Hadebe and Phelisa Mdluli" she pointed the two ladies I didn't know.

Me: "Nice to meet you ladies" I smiled and looked at Joseph. He was staring at me and that made me feel worse than I already felt.

Phelisa: "You have a beautiful house" she looked around.

Me: "Thank you Mrs. Mdluli"

Phelisa: "Please call me Lisa, only my husband calls me that" she smiled and I saw Ntokozo smile too. it was obvious that they loved each other.

Me: "Well, have you guys had breakfast yet? And where are the kids?" the house was too quiet and ever since TM arrived I felt like I hardly saw my daughter.

Thandeka: "Upstairs. They are leaving the country today with Bongeka so they must be packing"

Me: "Going where?" that was new to my ears. I knew they had to go into hiding but out of the country was another story.

Bongeka: "Canada, Joshua organized the flight and all. Don't worry they will be safe"

Me: "How come I am the last to know about this?" I looked at my fake husband.

Joseph: "They have to go Zandiswa, you know it for their safety" his voice had such authority everybody went quiet at the same time.

Joshua: "Wow, that was different"

Ntokozo: "Confirmed. I told you" he looked at Njabulo who pulled out his wallet and paid him.

Thandeka: "I want to ask but knowing that you guys didn't finish growing up so it's best left it like that"

Phelisa: "I am staying to kick some ass too" she sounded really excited.

Me: "I am sure you are well trained"

Joseph: "Well if you marry the killer you should learn a thing or two about killing" he walked upstairs after that. I went to the kitchen to check on something to eat.

I made myself a bowl of cereal and sat down to eat. Maria was busy preparing lunch.

Me: "Do you ever take a leave or something?" I asked her,

Maria: "During the Easter weekend and December holidays"

Me: "How would you like to go on leave?" she paused and looked at me in surprise.

Maria: "Mr. Mzulwini won't be angry?"

Me: "Leave him to me. As of right now you are officially on leave" I looked at her.

Maria: "Thank you Madam" she took off her apron.

Me: "I will pay you a full salary and maybe something extra just until you come back" I offered and she nodded before walking out. I ate my breakfast and washed my bowl before going back to my guest.

Me: "Well, Maria is going on leave so I think we all have to work together to keep this house standing. Ladies what do you say?" I looked at the ladies and they nodded in agreement.

Joshua: "You are really angry"

Me: "No, I am just keeping her safe. Maybe we should send her to Canada as well just to ensure her safety"

Njabulo: "You knew that it was going to happen Zandiswa. The kids have to go"

Me: "Well she has to be safe too. We should draw up some sort of a schedule for to keep thing going"

Joseph: "Zandi, can we chat in private?" he stood on top of the stairs. I went up to him and we went to the bedroom.

Joseph: "And now? Why is Maria leaving?"

Me: "We are keeping people safe, she needs to be safe" I answered without even looking at him.

Joseph: "You are angry that the kids are leaving?"

Me: "No, I just with someone had told me. Anita is the only family I have Joseph and you are taking her to Canada with a woman I don't even know"

Joseph: "She is their friends, Thandeka trust her with her long lost daughter"

Me: "I am not Thandeka, am I?"

Joseph: "You are not and right now you are acting like someone I don't know and she is very annoying" after that he opened the door and left. I sat on the edge of the bed and rested my head on my hands. Why was I angry? It wasn't just about Anita but it was about me allowing myself to be that weak for Joseph.

"Can I come in?" said Thandeka standing at the door way.

Me: "Sure"

Thandeka: "I know how you feel. Hearing that Anita is not just going into hiding but she is leaving the country must hurt and I'm sorry"

Me: "It's not your fault, I should apologize for acting like I am crazy"

Thandeka: "You are protecting your daughter and that's totally fine. I would do the same for my kids too"

Me: "You such a kind woman. I wonder how you ended up with Joshua" I looked at her.

Thandeka: "Love I guess. Joshua was the best, beside the abuse everything else was perfect. He made me feel special and treated me like I was the only woman in the world. The problem was the jealous and controlling that's why it ended up a mess"

Me: "What were you doing in New York?"

Thandeka: "I left with Roy and he helped me adjust to life after Joshua but then things didn't work out between us and then I ended things" she turned her head to the door and I did the same. Phelisa and Bongeka were about to knock.

Phelisa: "Why are you guys hiding here?"

Thandeka: "We are just talking lets go to your room and leave your husband's room" she extended a hand pulling me up.

We left the room and went to mine. I expected to find the girls there but the noise was coming in the other room down the hall.

Thandeka: "Video games"

Me: "That explains the noise plus Anita loves them"

Thandeka: "Just like Kevin. Sometimes I end up pulling the main switch just to get him to bed" we all laughed.

Me: "You are good with kids"

Phelisa: "Not just kids but she is good in everything. Has a gold heart too"

Thandeka: "You make it sound like I am about to accept a Nobel Prize"

Bongeka: "You both deserve it. Taking on the bad guys just to save our kids, that's brave"

Thandeka: "But we are not going to fight this one. I heard Ntokozo and Joseph say there's no way they are letting you girls risk your lives"

Me: "My fake husband said that?"

Bongeka: "Why do you guys call him fake? I heard Joshua say that as well"

Me: "We are not married. It's a fake marriage"

Phelisa: "Yeah right" the way she said it made it obvious that she didn't believe me.

Me: "For real. We are not married"

Bongeka: "So you guys have fake sex too?"

Me: "Excuse me?"

Phelisa: "That huge hickey did not leave itself on your neck" when she said that, my hand automatically flew to my neck and tried to cover it.

Thandeka: "That was the bet. Njabulo paid Ntokozo because they saw it"

Me: "I don't know what's worse, being married to him or having them around. It was mistake and we were both caught up in a moment"

Thandeka: "You don't have to explain"

Me: "I know but I hate myself for letting him have me just like that. Did you hear how he spoke to me?"

Already he thinks he owns me”

Bongeka: “Tell me the truth. The real truth”

Me: “About what?”

Bongeka: “You have no feelings for him at all? Not even a little bit? Look deep down and tell me that you don’t have feelings for him at all”

Chapter 21

Me: “How can you ask me that? I just slept with a man and the last thing I needed was to catch a feeling”

Thandeka: “So you do like him?” she looked at me.

Me: “I did not say that. I am not used to one night stands and it’s been a while since I last had some so that’s why I am feeling like this” I explained trying to avoid their stare.

Phelisa: “If you love Joseph I will advise you to go for it. Sometimes in life you have to take a chance”

Thandeka: “And don’t be afraid to get hurt. You will never know unless you try”

Me: “I hear you guys. I need to focus on what’s important”

Phelisa: “Don’t miss out on real love while you are busy chasing what looks important. If there’s one thing that I have learned in life is that life doesn’t follow a script. Sometimes you just have to go for something totally different to what you really think you desire. When I first came here I was here to seduce Joshua but today I married the most loving man and I am so happy”

Me: “What do you mean you came to seduce Joshua?” I looked at Thandeka and she just laughed.

Phelisa: “I was hired by this guy to seduce Joshua so that he will end his marriage to Thandeka, instead I fell in love Ntokozo”

Me: “And your mission wasn’t successful?”

Phelisa: “Ntokozo made me choose and I didn’t hesitate. That man out there showed me that you can love someone for real even when you know their real story. He never looked at me like that, instead he gave me the love that I deserve”

Me: “And he fucked you good” we all laughed.

Phelisa: “He is into bondage, so you can image just how good he is”

Bongeka: “Isn’t that scary?”

Phelisa: "I was scared at first but after we did it once I realized that it was not scary or even painful at all. He is so gentle"

Me: "Gentle how when you are all tied up?"

Phelisa: "He doesn't tie me up to hurt me. It's gentle, you and Joseph should try it once and see"

Me: "Thank you very much" I raised my hands.

Bongeka: "My husband would never agree to that. He will be like 'what if I hurt you? Porn is not real Bongeka. I cannot do that to my wife'" we laughed at her mimicking her husband.

Phelisa: "It's not for everyone. If he satisfies you without going to the extremes there's nothing wrong with that"

Me: "You are quiet" I looked at Thandeka. She looked far away Bongeka had to snap her fingers on her face before she paid attention to us again.

Thandeka: "Sorry I was thinking about something"

Me: "Share"

Thandeka: "I think Joshua was into bondage too" she whispered.

Bongeka: "Why do you say that?"

Thandeka: "He used to hold me down when we made love. Almost like he didn't want me move or something but he didn't tie me up"

Me: "Because of your history. Obviously being tied up during sex would have done things to you"

Thandeka: "I guess so, I miss him a lot sometimes. When I was married to him he was controlling and abusive at times but he made up for it. There are things that he did that I can't forget" she sounded really sad.

"Mum" a voice called and Anita was standing at the door.

Me: "Hey, I feel like I hardly see you lately"

Anita: "But we live in the same house. Dad said we are going to Canada tonight"

Me: "Are you scared?"

Anita: "TM said it will keep us safe from those bad men"

Thandeka: "And aunt Lindiwe will be there to take you guys anywhere you want to go"

Bongeka: "I am coming with you guys as well. We will have fun"

Me: "I'm going to miss you" I hugged her.

Phelisa: "There's something familiar about you though"

Me: "Who?"

Phelisa: "Your daughter. I've seen someone who looks like her before"

Me: "Where? Maybe it's a relative because Jonathan's parents are still alive"

Bongeka: "For real? Why didn't they help you?"

Me: "They want nothing to do with us. After Jonathan's death they told me that they never wanted to see us again"

Thandeka: "They are real cruel, almost like my step mother who sold my daughter"

Me: "You know about that?"

Thandeka: "Joshua told me"

Phelisa: "Maybe they sold your daughter"

Me: "I doubt it. They are evil but not that evil. Their daughter was brutally murdered so they would never do something like this when they knew that pain first hand"

Phelisa: "Yeah you right. I don't know what I would do if someone were to take my daughter. I swear to god I would kill them with my bare hands"

Anita: "You have a daughter too?"

Phelisa: "Yes, you will meet her in Canada"

Me: "What is it with you guys and Canada?"

Bongeka: "Lindiwe and Njabulo moved there after she was diagnosed with cancer. They got help but they decided to stay until she was stronger. She is fine now but since things are a bit upside down it's best that they stay there for a while"

Thandeka: "And they are safe so the kids will be safe"

"Well since you decided to let Maria go, I made lunch. Come join us" said Joseph walking in.

Me: "You cooked?"

Joseph: "We cooked, Mdluli actually did the cooking. I made desert" he took Anita's hand and they walked out.

Bongeka: "He is definitely for keeps" she whispered. We all laughed and followed each other

downstairs. The kids were already sitting in the lounge eating.

Joseph: "Come sit ladies" he pulled out chairs.

Thandeka: "What are you up to?" she went to sit first.

Joshua: "Exactly where you are sitting there's a gun. It's not loaded, act fast. All of you act fast"

Me: "And do what?" Joseph pulled out a gun and pointed me.

Phelisa: "Drop it!" she pointed a gun at Joseph" I stood there shocked because I didn't understand what was happening.

Joseph: "Well done Lisa. You have to act fast Zandi. Always be ready to defend yourself"

Me: "Maybe I would if someone had bothered to explain things to me" I took a glass of wine and took a large sip but before I could swallow, my mouth began burning. I spit it out and Ntokozo handed me a glass of water.

Joshua: "Never drink wine you didn't pour yourself"

Me: "What the fuck was that? Are you trying to kill me?" I shouted.

Joseph: "Always be careful Zandi. Simple things like wine could be dangerous"

Njabulo: "Don't worry. It's not harmful at all"

Me: "Can we eat now? Or there's another 'let's humiliate Zandiswa stunt left'"

Joseph: "We are not trying to humiliate you. It's just that you take everything with anger, sometimes you just need to open your eyes and be careful"

Me: "Okay, I heard you" the door bell rung and Joseph went to open. The security gave him flowers and then left.

Joshua: "Is there something we should know?"

Joseph: "Says a man with long hair. There are for Zandiswa" he handed them to me.

Me: "Who could send me flowers?"

Joseph: "Read the card. The guard signed for them because there's nobody allowed in the house" I took the card and read it out loud.

"An empty vase I left for you. It's empty but it's also half full, put them inside. Love Nceba

Chapter 22

Me: "What the hell?" I looked at the flowers. It didn't make sense at all. Nceba was dead.

Ntokozo: "Any idea what that could mean?"

Joshua: "Maybe she ordered the flowers and arranged for them to be delivered today"

Me: "But why? And what vase is she talking about?"

Ntokozo: "She never gave you a vase?"

Me: "She did give me a vase like 5 years ago when she came back from Abu Dhabi. It's an huge ugly vase that I pretended to like because she brought it in the country just for me"

Joseph: "Where is it now?"

Me: "In the basement. Why would she give me a vase, years ago and then leave flowers now?"

Joseph: "Let me go get it" he went downstairs.

Joshua: "How well did you know her?"

Me: "I met her more than 10 years ago"

Njabulo: "The answer is in the vase"

Joseph came back with two vases because he didn't know which one was it. I took the one that Nceba gave me and looked at it. There was nothing written on it.

Njabulo: "Give it here" I gave it to him and then with one move he broke it into two pieces.

Me: "You didn't have to destroy it" I complained and kneeled down to pick up the pieces. When I looked at it there was a number written on the inner side.

Thandeka: "Looks like a phone number"

Me: "Yeah but who?"

Ntokozo: "Let's find out" he took out his phone and dialed the number. It rang for a while before a female voice answered.

"Qalakahle place of safety, MaDlamini speaking how can I help you" said the lady on the other side. Ntokozo hung up the phone before I could even talk to the lady.

Me: "And then?" I looked at him, pissed to the max.

Ntokozo: "We wanted to hear what the number belongs to, not to talk to the lady"

Joshua: "I know Qalakahle place of safety. It's an orphanage. We use to go there to donate for the winter campaign at work"

Ntokozo: "It is run by a woman. Her name is Madeline Dlamini. It is near Montclair"

Joseph: "How do you know?"

Ntokozo: "Google. Do you know this woman?" he turned his phone to me and I looked at the screen. It was Miss Jameson and Nceba.

Me: "Anita's teacher. That's the slut who is selling our kids"

Bongeka picked up another broken piece and looked at it closely.

Thandeka: "What is it?"

Bongeka: "It's a number. 5732" she showed me. I stepped closer to her and looked at it. It was indeed a number but what was it for?

Njabulo: "It's a date of birth. May 1973 02"

Me: "How do you know?"

Njabulo: "Because it's my birthday" he looked really destructed.

Things seemed to be getting deeper and each discovery led to another confusion. Njabulo was convinced that it was his birthday but I wasn't. it could have been any number. Why would Nceba write Njabulo's birthday on the vase?

Njabulo: "I grew up in that orphanage. My sister and I in fact but she disappeared after she went to this singing competition. At first we thought she was with her boyfriend because she was wild and crazy but later we discovered that she never even made it to the competition. Her body was discovered near the rail tracks"

Me: "Gosh, I'm sorry. But it still doesn't explain why she would write your birthday"

Njabulo: "We are about to find out, but it's about my sister now and they messed with a wrong man" he was already sweating.

Phelisa: "Can we eat? I am starving" she complained. Joseph began serving us lunch. I wasn't hungry anymore. My mind was working over time. This was deeper than I had previously assumed and it was going to be very dangerous.

Chapter 23

The kids left after 5pm. It hurt to see them go but I had to be strong and not let Anita see that I was hurting because that was going to make her cry to and I didn't want to see my daughter's tears. Njabulo drove them to the airport where they took a private jet. Not to see them off was also hard but when

Njabulo came back he said they were okay and they weren't sad at all. Thandeka's boys were very wise and they didn't even look worried that they were flying out of the country without their parents, but I did see their mum cry after they left.

Me: "Shall we order dinner because I am not cooking"

Joseph: "I think you should. What do you guys feel like eating?" he asked the gents.

Njabulo: "Count me out. I am not hungry" he looked really pissed.

Ntokozo: "Anything as long it's not pork"

Me: "You don't eat pork?"

Ntokozo: "I do but not today"

Joshua: "Maybe you should just buy pizza"

Joseph: "Pizza, it is" he went to make a call. I went to the kitchen and poured myself a glass of wine.

Phelisa: "Planning to get drunk?" she walked in.

Me: "If it will help" I took few sips and refilled my glass again.

Joseph: "Whiskey is in garage, just in case you are planning to get drunk quickly"

Me: "That's the plan" I looked at him.

Joseph: "I am kidding. It's best that you don't drink. Come ladies let's see if we can figure out what Nceba was saying"

We followed him to the lounge and the broken vase was still there. It had other numbers too.

Me: "How did she write inside a vase?"

Ntokozo: "She probably used a short pencil and maybe a lighter. If you look at the way it's written it shows that she wrote the number and then checked later if it came out right"

Me: "And what do these numbers even mean"

Phelisa: "Princess Diaries" she spoke out loud.

Me: "Excuse me?" we all looked at her.

Phelisa: "It's written here" she pointed the piece of the vase.

Joshua: "does it mean anything to you?"

Me: "No, I don't even know what that is"

Joseph: "Worse you just drank" he complained.

Me: "So?" I looked at him.

Joseph: "Well even if you remember something it will be hard for your brain to process that since you are now almost drunk" he raised his voice.

Me: "Shut the fuck up Jo" I shouted feeling really annoyed by him calling me a drunk.

Joshua: "Can we not fuck each other just yet? You guys behave like a couple for real"

Ntokozo: "You need to fuck and get it out of your system"

Me: "Mxm. I'm out of here" I walked back to the kitchen and poured myself another glass of wine. I was missing my daughter already. I was angry at Nceba for being a snake and then doing this. Why didn't she just write a letter like all other cowards who decide to quit this world? That would have been really easier.

"I know it's not easy to be in your shoes right now but I get where you come from. Finding out that your best friend was fake, marrying a man for safety, sending your daughter to a foreign country with people you don't know and then having to engage yourself into fights with people you don't even know. I've been there, where you sit and wonder how you got there because you are feeling lost and deep into something you don't even know. I've been there and those men in that room are the reason why I am alive today. They can be childish and annoying but I know that their hearts are in the right place" said Thandeka walking in.

Me: "I'm not angry at their childish behavior. I am angry at Nceba. How can she betray me like this? We were best friends Thandeka. I told her all my secrets"

Thandeka: "I can't answer for her but I would encourage you to hold on and look at the things she gave you. Maybe the answer is in there"

Me: "The things she gave" I looked at her when I suddenly remembered the things she gave me.

Thandeka: "You are having a light bulb moment"

Me: "The things she gave me. She gave me a princess diary novel"

Thandeka: "Maybe we should start there" we both went to the lounge. Phelisa and her husband were whispering things to each other's ears.

Me: "We found the clue"

Joseph: "What clue?"

Me: "She gave me the princess diary novel a while back. I even told her that I don't have time to read kids stories and she said it wasn't for reading but never explained what she meant by that"

Joshua: "Do you have it?"

Me: "Yeah, let me go get it" I went upstairs to look for the book. I found it because I never really took it out of the gift bag. I went back downstairs with it.

Phelisa: "What are we looking for?"

Joshua: "Try page 3, 2nd paragraph and then count two words"

Joseph: "How do you know that?"

Joshua: "The numbers. I'm not sure but it's a start"

Ntokozo: "Write them down. Each word we will write it down and see" he took out a pen in his pocket. Joseph went to get a writing pad.

We began writing each word down and it didn't make sense at all. When we finished I was tired and feeling really stupid because the words did not make any sense to me.

Me: "Wine anyone?" I went to the kitchen.

Joseph: "the pizza should be here now. You should eat before drinking" I pretended not to hear him and poured myself another glass.

By the time the pizza came I was feeling hot. Njabulo and Thandeka were still trying to crack the words.

Joseph: "You need to eat Zandiswa"

Me: "Leave me alone Jo"

Joseph: "How can I leave you alone when you are obviously drunk" he shouted.

Me: "Stop shouting at me. I am not your kids" I warned.

Joseph: "You should be grateful. No kid of mine would ever behave like this"

Me: "How would you know? Who knows, maybe you sell yours for cash" I heard loud gasp from the others.

Joshua: "Zandiswa" his voice was firm yet gentle.

Me: "What? He is a criminal who traffic kids for money. Maybe even this house was bought with that money"

Ntokozo: "Take her upstairs dude" he looked at Joseph.

Me: "Don't you dare touch me. You are a killer. A low life criminal in a suit" I stood up and walked upstairs. He followed behind me.

Ntokozo: "It's either you do it good or you don't do it at all" I heard his shout.

When I got to my room I turned to close the door but Joseph blocked it with his foot and then walked in.

Me: "Get out" I screamed at him. With one move he pushed me against the door and held my hands above my head.

Joseph: "You listen and you listen good. You are hurt and I get that but if you ever talk to me like this I will smack you to the next two centuries. You hear me" he hissed and I almost talked back but held my mouth when I noticed the dark look in his eyes"

Me: "I'm sorry" I whispered. He let go off my hands but didn't move at all.

Joseph: "I am not a bad person Zandi. I'm paying for my father's sins" he walked to the closet and walked in. I stood there paralyzed in fear. My wrists were burning. I've seen anger but I've never seen him like that. Yes, I didn't know well but what I saw was something else. When he came out he said nothing and I moved away from the door.

Joseph: "Get some sleep" he ordered. I nodded and went towards the bed. I waited for him to close the door before changing but he didn't. I wasn't looking at him but I knew he was still there. I stood another seconds and then heard him move but instead of the sound of the door opening, I felt his hand touch my neck. When I turned around I was met by his hungry lips. His touch was rough but the kiss was gentle. It made me wet real quickly and I responded by kissing him back. We kissed and began taking our clothes off. When we were both naked he gentle laid me down in bed and went to kissing me.

He picked something on the floor and then I felt something bind my wrist together above my head.

Me: "What are you doing?" I looked at my hands and it was my underwear.

Joseph: "Keep still. It won't hurt" he kissed my nipples. I twisted and closed my legs. He looked at me with disapproving eyes and kissed another nipple. It was too much and being tied like that made keeping still even harder. He went further down and then without any warning he pulled my legs down the bed and then flipped me over. My feet were hardly touching the floor and my knees were slightly bend and I used them and the elbows to balance myself. I felt his lips touch my butt cheek and I moved forward. He pulled me back to him and then his tongue came into contact with my butt crack. He started at the top and went down the clitoris. I began moaning louder as he repeated his assault with his tongue. I felt his fingers part the lips and then his tongue poked inside me. That was enough to send me over the edge.

Me: "I am going to come" I warned as he used his fingers together with the tongue. It felts so good even when my panties began biting into my flesh it didn't even hurt. Stopped for a second and then I heard his hand push my spine down a little bit.

Joseph: "We may have a fake marriage Zandi but I am not a fake man" he hissed and then smacked my butt cheek so hard I couldn't help but scream and try to get up but he slammed inside me with such force I came and my body began trembling. He kept going harder and faster. My butt burned, my wrists

burned as well and I began contracting the pubococcygeus muscles.

Joseph: "Shit" he yanked a handful of hair and began gentle pulling. Another orgasm washed over me leaving me trembling harder than before. My knees began giving in and then I felt my pubococcygeus muscles contract again. I was going to come again and I was exhausted.

Me: "I'm coming" I cried out and then he held my hair tighter. His body went stiff as he slammed inside me harder and then held my butt cheek in place as another powerful orgasm hit me.

Joseph: "Keep still" he ordered as he planted light kisses on my spine. I couldn't do anything at all. I was so tired I didn't even feel him pull out all I felt was my hands being freed and then I felt into deep sleep.

Chapter 24

Joseph: "Wake up dear" I heard him whisper in my ear but I didn't want to wake up just yet. I was exhausted and wasn't even ready to face him yet. Last night things got really heated during that sexing marathon he was on. He hit me 3 times and it wasn't spanking, it was slapping someone to make them feel pain and I did. I cried real tears and apologized for making him feel like he wasn't a man enough. Even though our contract said nothing about me showing affection at home when we have close guests but I admitted my mistake of insulting in front of the guys.

Joseph: "If you don't get up right now, I will pick you up myself and put you into that hot bath I just ran for you" he pulled back the blankets.

Me: "Okay, I am up" I sat up and yeah my behind was sore.

Joseph: "Come have a bath" I noticed that he was already dressed. Wearing black jeans and a black v neck muscle hugging top.

Me: "You look great" I mumbled quietly praying he didn't hear and I think he didn't because he said nothing. I went to get into that hot bath and eased myself down slowly. My honey pot was on fire so was my butt.

Joseph: "Are you okay? Maybe I should call the doctor and have him check you out"

Me: "Why did you do it?"

Joseph: "I was angry, feel like you treat me like an idiot or something. You insult me like that in front of those guys who never miss a chance to insult me. I opened my home to them and I get nothing but disrespect from them and then you make it worse by actually calling me a bitch. I took enough abuse growing up. People calling me gay because I wasn't interested in guns and hijacking cars. I am a man Zandiswa. I am not Joshua or Ntokozo but I am a man and I want you to look at me and see a man. Now finish up so we can get to work. You wanted to kill someone, so let's get you into that killing machine" after that he closed the door and left.

Joseph's words found a space into my head and heart. He was right about not having a deserved respect and I wasn't helping when I threw such hurtful words to him in front of the guests. When I finished showering I told myself that I was going to start treating him like a man that he is. My mind told me that Ntokozo had something to do with Joseph's actions. He didn't appear like he controlled his wife but Phelisa didn't argue with her husband. They didn't seem like a 50/50 sort of people but rather Ntokozo being the man and Phelisa being below him.

I finished bathing and went to get dressed. The bed was already made so I went downstairs to join the others for breakfast.

Ntokozo: "Morning Mrs. Mzulwini"

Me: "Morning Mr. Mdluli, morning guys" I sat down.

Joshua: "Morning, you look exhausted"

Me: "I had a long night. Where are the ladies?"

Joseph: "In the kitchen making breakfast"

Me: "Let me go help them" I stood up but Ntokozo held my hand. I looked at him in surprise.

Ntokozo: "A private word" he stood up and walked towards the dining room. I looked at Joseph and he nodded so I followed him.

Me: "Is there something wrong?" I stood few feet away from him.

Ntokozo: "Why are you in this?"

Me: "In what?"

Ntokozo: "This mission? Already Joseph is protecting you and your daughter. So why do you want to continue with the hunting and killing those involved?"

Me: "So because Joseph married me means I should let people continue hurting the kids because mine is safe?"

Ntokozo: "So you are doing it to help the other kids?"

Me: "Yes and I want to know who sold my daughter"

Ntokozo: "What if it was someone close to you?"

Me: "Like who? My mother is dead, Nceba is dead and Anita is the only close person I have"

Ntokozo: "I don't know, but Zandiswa you have to know that battles are not won by anger and a desire to seek revenge"

Me: "Are you saying I can't fight this because I am angry?"

Ntokozo: "I am saying anger will be the reason you fail this. You need to let it go so that your mind will focus on the strategy. When you are angry, the only thing you think about is how to hurt someone instead of thinking about how to survive. You have a daughter that needs you. Think about her coming home and finding you alive. Don't let the anger drive you"

Me: "I can't stop being angry. I am angry that someone sold my daughter. Who does that to a kid?"

Ntokozo: "Thandeka's daughter was sold for sex for years but you don't see Thandeka cursing at Joseph. The poor man has been telling you that he is not directly involved at this but you still resent him and you continue to disrespect him. That's wrong and you need to control yourself"

Me: "Or what? Are you going to tell him to beat me up?"

Ntokozo: "No, I can do that by myself right here, right now. Raise that tone with me again and I will show you how women should speak to a man"

Me: "Did you just threaten to beat me up?"

Ntokozo: "That wasn't a threat, it was a promise and I keep my promises. So you dare raise that tone with me again" the look on his face told me he wasn't playing.

Me: "So you and Joshua are cut from the same pattern?"

Ntokozo: "I believe I look good than him. You need to calm down Mrs. Mzulwini so we can use our heads to plan this not our hearts. Shall we?" he walked back to the lounge and I followed.

Thandeka and Phelisa served breakfast. I didn't even feel like speaking at the table. I was thinking about my conversation with Ntokozo. He was right about me acting in anger. Thandeka didn't show any anger signs but then again she didn't show much except tears and Joshua was always ready to comfort her.

Me: "How do you do it?" I looked at her.

Thandeka: "Do what?"

Me: "To control yourself and not act out what you are feeling?"

Joshua: "Should we be talking about this right now?"

Ntokozo: "Let them talk. Maybe she will learn a thing or two about control"

Thandeka: "Actually Joshua taught me. I used to act first and think later" she laughed and looked at Joshua.

Me: "Can you teach me?" I looked at Joshua.

Joseph: "Not a chance. You are not touching my wife" shouted Joseph.

Me: "What are you on about? Who said anything about touching?" I looked at Joseph. Ntokozo laughed.

Joshua: "I can't teach you. At least not the same way I taught MaMyeza"

Me: "Why not? Look at her. She is not going crazy with anger?"

Joshua: "yeah but I did things to her. Thing I can never do to another woman"

Joseph: "Things no man should ever do to someone else's wife"

Me: "I am not following guys"

Njabulo: "Oh fuck this, they mean. Joshua fucked Thandeka every time she did something without thinking the same way Joseph acted on you last night. So Joshua can't teach you because he can't fuck you. Now can we get back to the business at hand? I think I cracked the words"

Thandeka: "What do they say?"

Njabulo: "Look to the world I gave you. The best kept secrets are those hidden in plain sight yet not available to the naked eye. A key to your heart is the key to my world. Use it to unlock my diary"

Phelisa: "What does that even mean?"

Njabulo: "Nceba's world would be her house, Her diary would be her walls and the secrets are written on the wall because it's right there in front of your eyes but yet you can't see it"

Me: "Then what are we waiting for? Let's go to her house" I stood up.

Ntokozo: "Sit down Zandiswa. Again you are acting without thinking. Thandeka can't leave this house looking like that, she needs a disguise and we don't have a key to Nceba's house" he explained. I sat down feeling really embarrassed.

Joseph: "A key to your heart could be something close to you that she hid her keys in"

Joshua: "Look to the world she gave you. Did she give you anything beside that diary?"

Me: "She bought me this hideous thing that she said it was a key holder. It's in my car keys" I stood up and went to get them. Joseph cracked it open and a key was hidden inside.

Phelisa gave Thandeka a makeover. When she was done you could hardly tell it was her.

Me: "Maybe you were a spy in your past life"

Phelisa: "And I kick ass too" we both laughed.

Joshua: "Can we go now?" he complained. I thought I was the only one with impatient problems.

We followed him out. Joshua drove with Me and Phelisa. While Thandeka left with Joseph and Njabulo. Ntokozo drove on his own. We parked few houses away from her house and continued the journey by

foot. When we got there. Only one car was parked there and Ntokozo walked as well.

Me: "So what are we looking for?"

Joshua: "Wear this and you will see" he gave me glasses. The moment I put them on everything went dark.

Me: "I can't see"

Joseph: "Close your eyes and let them adjust to the darkness" I did as told and when I opened them a minute later it was not that dark anymore.

Me: "Where did you guys get these?"

Joshua: "I wasn't given the title of being a hardcore criminal for hacking the system dear. I get things done" Ntokozo laughed.

Joseph: "Can we focus so we can leave"

We began looking through the wall. The glasses showed even smaller stain on the wall. 30 minutes later I was ready to give up when Phelisa said she found something. We all went to her and yes it was written on the wall. When you took the glasses off there was nothing but clean wall.

Ntokozo: "You lose a friend and gain two men who would give everything to protect you. Be alert, the world as you know it is about to shake. The man with your husband's name holds your real name. I'm sorry I never told you the truth but I will help you get a kick start. Find the copy of my diaries. Both on line and handwritten. The password is in the vase I gave you. Njabulo, all was not lost. Look harder and what you yearn for is closer than you think. Like Harpo for Oprah. The clue is backwards to Alan...."

"I don't think you should be here" said a voice behind us. We all turned and looked at the man pointing a gun at us.

Ntokozo: "Your biggest mistake was thinking" he pulled out a gun and pointed the man.

Man: "Drop it or I will shoot her" he pointed his gun at me.

Joseph: "I doubt it" he pulled out his gun and pointed the man.

Joshua: "You don't want me to pull mine because I won't point it for nothing"

Njabulo: "And I don't have time for games" he pulled out another gun and fired a shot but not to the man instead he fired to the wall. I saw the man go down and then blood coming out in his nose and mouth.

Joshua: "Perfect shoot MaMyeza" I looked at her and she was holding a gun.

Thandeka: "Can we go. We have to find Nala"

Me: "Who is Nala?"

Joseph: "It's Alan backwards"

Me: "Wow, so I guess I am the only one who doesn't crack anything. Great"

Joshua: "It a long way to go. Relax and take notes"

Ntokozo: "We leave him here. Let's go" we left.

Nceba's words didn't make sense to me at all. A man with my husband name, who was that. It didn't make sense instead it made me angry and I wanted to control my anger. Seeing Thandeka holding a gun like that showed me a side of her I didn't think she had. The woman who showed nothing but sadness was a killer, not just a killer by mistake but a trained killing machine that showed no remorse.

Joseph: "We are home"

Me: "What does it mean? What real name is she talking about?"

Joseph: "You said you never knew your father so she could mean someone with the same name as me is your brother or you guys share the same last name"

Me: "How am I going to find that person?"

Joseph: "Let's go inside we will figure it out" he opened the door. The others were already home. We went inside and went to sit on couch.

Ntokozo: "We need to find the diaries. Finding Nceba's laptop will be a great start"

Joshua: "Finding her brother will be a great start"

Me: "Wasn't he your friend?" I asked Joshua because I first met him in Nceba's house.

Joshua: "Nope, I hung out with him because he wanted help with something him and his gang were working on"

Ntokozo: "What would that be Joseph? I know you don't just help out without a certain agenda"

Joshua: "A bank job. They needed a getaway and I was their driver.

Me: "You called him Joseph?" I looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "Thanks to my father. He named me Joseph but Joshua sounds better but my brother won't let me forget"

Me: "No, It can't be" I looked at Joseph.

Thandeka: "What's wrong?"

Me: "The writing on that wall said. The man with my husband's name has my real name. I lost Nceba and gained a husband and Joseph Cebekhulu" I looked at Joshua.

Chapter 25

Me: "You can't be my brother" I looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "You make it sound like being related to me is a curse"

Me: "You think, look at you and then look at me. We are nothing alike"

Ntokozo: "Do you know your father?"

Me: "No but I know that he is not his father. Look at Joshua. He is a criminal for crying out loud"

Joshua: "And our father was a criminal too. Sorry sis but you are not a saint"

Me: "I want a DNA test done" I demanded.

Thandeka: "She is definitely your sister" I threw her a dead stare when she said that.

Joshua: "If I turn out to be your brother you own me a cow and two goats"

Me: "why?"

Joshua: "For calling me a criminal when I have never stole from you" Ntokozo laughed.

Me: "You don't even have to steal. We both know that you are a damn criminal. I need some air" I stood up.

Phelisa: "Can she go out?" she looked at her husband.

Joseph: "She is married to me so she can go" I walked out and decided to take a walk in the garden.

I thought about a lot of things. I wondered if I really knew Nceba, by the look of things it was clear that I didn't. If Joshua was real my brother then Nceba knew my mother's secret and she knew about Njabulo's sister. She knew a lot of things and her mission began years ago. I wasn't even sure if I still wanted to go along with this plan of taking down the bosses. What if I discover that I was born into that filth too? Joshua was bad and him being bad had nothing to do with the street. The guy was natural at being bad and that meant I was horrible too. Maybe even wanting to be part of this mission was the way my natural colors were coming out. How does one even reverse from being a good woman to a killer and then reverse again to a good woman?

"Hey"

I turned around and saw Njabulo standing few feet away from me. He was the last person I expected to

see coming after me.

Njabulo: "Your lips are moving"

Me: "Will I ever go back?" I looked at him ignoring his statement about my lips.

Njabulo: "back where?"

Me: "when I turn into a killer. Will I be able to change or will I become like Thandeka?"

Njabulo: "I don't know. Thandeka's story isn't the same as yours"

Me: "She has no emotions except tears"

Njabulo: "No, she is angry. It's scary because I've seen her anger before and I know what she can do"

Me: "I don't want to be like her"

Njabulo: "I think you are perfect the way you are Zandiswa. I don't want you to change"

Me: "Thank you"

Njabulo: "You can still call things off and get on with your life being Mrs. Mzulwini"

Me: "How about you? Your sister?"

Njabulo: "I will find the truth but I don't want Anita to lose her mother because she was helping me find the truth"

Me: "But you are going to need help"

Njabulo: "Yes but if I have to choose between you and finding my sister I would choose keeping you safe and okay"

Me: "Why? You hardly know me"

Njabulo: "Yeah but it's enough time for me to see that you are kind and loving and you don't need all this"

Me: "But I am angry, I need to know who sold my daughter"

Njabulo: "yeah but what will that achieve? You find him or her and then you kill that person. You became the killer too"

Me: "You think I should stop?"

Njabulo: "If you were mine I would tell you to stop but you are not and I can't make that decision for you" I nodded and looked at him. He was right that it was my decision.

Me: "Can we go back inside?"

Njabulo: "Sure" we went back inside.

Joshua: "When do you want to go for a DNA?" he looked at me.

Me: "I don't and I've decided that I don't want to be part of this mission anymore. I'm sorry"

Joseph: "Why not?"

Me: "I thought you would be pleased since you have been against this mission from the word go"

Joseph: "I am but I'm surprised by this sudden change of heart"

Joshua: "Is it because we could be family?"

Me: "No but I don't think I want to be a killer anymore"

Thandeka: "So you are a coward?"

Me: "No but I don't want to be like you"

Thandeka: "What is that suppose to mean?" her eyes filled with tears.

Me: "You shoot and killed a man Thandeka and you didn't even react to it. I don't want to be like that. I'm sorry but please count me out now"

Thandeka: "The man had a gun pointed to you, I thought I was helping a friend" tears rolled down her face.

Me: "And I am grateful but I think our daughters deserve mothers. Not female gangsters"

Thandeka: "Yeah because your haven't been raped, your daughter isn't a money making machine for selfish men and you haven't lived in fear not knowing where the bullet that will take your life will come from. I don't blame you. Your life is perfect and Anita will have a good life unlike my daughter who can't even sleep because of the nightmares"

Me: "I'm sorry Thandeka; I know I sound selfish because my daughter is okay but I want you and your daughter to be fine too. You need to deal with things and fix yourself up"

Thandeka: "There's nothing wrong with me" she shouted.

Me: "There's something wrong with you and you know it but..." before I could finish I heard a glass break and then something smoking rolled to my feet.

Joshua: "Go down" I heard him shout and then someone jump to me knocking me out as we hit the floor.

Chapter 26

I woke in bed in a different place and I knew it wasn't Joseph's house. I sat up because I wanted to pee so badly.

Njabulo: "hey, how are you feeling?" he walked in with a tray of food.

Me: "I really need to pee"

Njabulo: "The opposite door is the toilet" he put the tray down next to the bed. I went to the toilet and relieved myself. When I stood in the sink washing my hands I looked in the mirror, I looked different somehow. It showed that the last few days felt like my life was on fast forward even the lines on my face showed.

Njabulo: "Are you okay in there?" he knocked and I turned off the tap before replying.

Me: "I will be right out"

Njabulo: "If you want to shower I can give you the towels but you need to talk to me first because you fell and I need to make sure that you didn't hurt yourself" I went to the door and opened it.

Me: "Showering would be a great idea. what are you going to check?" I looked at him.

Njabulo: "How many fingers am I holding up" he held two fingers.

Me: "Two, duh. I'm okay but thanks for worrying" I laughed and he gave me a sad look for a moment before composing himself.

Njabulo: "I like the way you laugh. It's girly and childish like but I like it"

Me: "You are acting weird, are you sure you are not the one with a head injury?"

Njabulo: "I am sure that I am not because I am the one you feel on"

Me: "where are the others and where are we?"

Njabulo: "My house in Westville. They took Thandeka so the others went after them" my heart fell, Thandeka was a mess but she didn't deserve to be hurt like that.

Me: "And Lisa?"

Njabulo: "She went with them"

Me: "I don't understand, Joseph's house is secure and there's a security guard. How can someone walk in undetected? And then just take her?"

Njabulo: "They killed the guard. Shower so you can eat. You slept for 13 hours already"

Me: "What?" I was shocked because that meant it was the new day.

Njabulo: "Yeah, that's why I was worried thinking maybe you hit your head somewhere but I see that you are fine. Let me get those towels for you" he turned and walked away. When he brought the towels I showered quickly because I was starving for real.

When I finished I went back to the bed room there was dress on the bed. It was clear that Njabulo was lending me his wife's clothes. I put it on and then went to the lounge taking the food with me.

Njabulo: "You look great" he looked up from his laptop.

Me: "Thanks, have you heard anything from them?"

Njabulo: "They haven't found her but they will"

Me: "I haven't talked to the girls since they left. Can we call them?"

Njabulo: "yeah sure. Let me call Lindi" he took out his phone and dialed the number before putting it on loud speaker. It took a while to ring but she answered after a fourth ring.

Lindiwe: "Hello"

Njabulo: "MaMyeza, how are you?"

Lindiwe: "I'm okay and you?"

Njabulo: "Fine, I'm with Zandiswa here and she wanted to talk to the girls"

Lindiwe: "Sorry, I'm actually not at home right now. I will let you know when you can call"

Njabulo: "where are you?"

Lindiwe: "Phil and I decided to go watch this lovely play, Her Anger"

Njabulo: "Sharp" he hung up the phone.

Me: "Phil Is her brother?" I took a bite on the toast.

Njabulo: "A man who will replace me" he sounded like he wasn't sure whether to say this or not so I decided to let it go and focus on eating. I wondered if Thandeka had eaten where she was. I didn't want to think about her dead somewhere.

When I finished eating I took the tray to the kitchen and washed the plate before going back to Njabulo.

Me: "So what are we suppose to do in the mean time while we wait for them to find her?"

Njabulo: "It's up to you" he didn't even look at me when he said that.

Me: "She is cheating?" I asked because I was curious.

Njabulo: "I don't know. She could be" he stood up and took out a gun.

Me: "What are you going to do about it?"

Njabulo: "Nothing, if she wants to cheat then it's okay. Can you come and stand here for me please"

Me: "Why?" I stood up and went to stand in front of him"

Njabulo: "I hate doing this but I have to since the lines have been drawn" he handed me the gun after taking all the bullets off.

Me: "What lines?" I took the gun and it was heavy>

Njabulo: "We are being hunted Zandi and we have to protect ourselves. There should be a space between your legs" I stood with my legs apart.

Me: "Like this?"

Njabulo: "Yes like that. Do you know why?"

Me: "No but I know that you will tell me" I laughed a bit. He went quiet and looked at me. I pulled the trigger and the gun went off leaving my ears ringing. I was so shocked because I thought it was empty.

Njabulo: "I didn't tell you to pull the trigger" he gave me a disapproving look and took the gun from my shaking hands.

Me: "I'm sorry I thought it was empty"

Njabulo: "It is, so you haven't handled the gun before?"

Me: "No"

Njabulo: "And you shouldn't but sadly it either you eat or be eaten out there"

Me: "What do you mean? I said I quit"

Njabulo: "You don't quit things like this Zandiswa"

Me: "meaning?"

Njabulo: "meaning you are now part of us"

Me: "But I don't want to be like Thandeka. Her emotions are damaged"

Njabulo: "She wasn't damaged by guns. Bad things happened to her when she was younger and she never dealt with anything at all"

Me: "She needs counseling"

Njabulo: "She won't go. Maybe you can get her to go. Her friends failed to get her to go"

Me: "Maybe having her daughter home will help her"

Njabulo: "I hope so"

Chapter 27

Njabulo: "Try this" he stood between my legs because I was sitting on the counter watching him bake some muffins. I took a bite and chewed slowly and I could see that he was dying to find out if it was good or not.

Me: "Wow it's, how do I say this?" I laughed.

Njabulo: "quit playing and tell me if it's good or not" he begged.

Me: "Okay, it's good. So good I need another one" I took another bite and chewed.

Njabulo: "I like this" he looked at me.

Me: "baking? You are good too"

Njabulo: "No, being silly with you in my kitchen. I wish my wife was like this"

Me: "She is not?"

Njabulo: "She isn't interested in being silly, at least not with me"

Me: "You said she had cancer?"

Njabulo: "yes and as a survivor you would think she would spend time with me since she got a second chance but no, Philemon is the only man she would rather get silly with"

Me: "Have you talked to her about this?"

Njabulo: "And say what? Because when I say something about anything she flips and say she is enjoying life"

Me: "She can enjoy life with you"

Njabulo: "Nope she wants Phil because Phil knows what she went through since he is a survivor too"

Me: "I'm sorry to say this but your wife is one selfish woman. What about your kid?"

Njabulo: "I'm thinking about bringing him home so he can spend time with me"

Me: "Don't you live with them in Canada?"

Njabulo: "I've been back for a while now. And I think I should come back for good" he looked straight

into my eyes I had to look away first.

Me: "I'm sorry"

Njabulo: "Me too" he held my chin and brought his lips to mine. They were soft and tasted like mint.

Me: "We shouldn't do this" I pulled away.

Njabulo: "Give me a good enough reason and don't say that we are married. We both know that we are not, at least not you" he kissed me again. I was tempted to continue but my senses told me so I pushed him away.

Me: "You are hurt because she is being selfish"

Njabulo: "No, I want you because I wanted you the moment I saw you in your husband's house"

Me: "Why?" he didn't respond instead he kissed me again. His hands brushing my tights and his tongue exploring my mouth.

I found myself in the cross road with this, my heart said it's wrong but my head said go ahead and do it. After staying for so long without sex the feeling was too much.

Njabulo: "Not here" he stopped and stepped away from me.

Me: "what?" I pulled the dress down.

Njabulo: "I didn't say I want to get freaky with you. I want to make love" he took my hand and helped me down the counter. I thought about it and it was a chance for me to change my mind but I took his hand as he led me to the bedroom.

Me: "We will regret this"

Njabulo: "I won't" he unzipped the dress and let it drop from my shoulders. When I tried to rush it he stopped me and slowly pulled it down until it was on the floor leaving me with his wife's string bikini. He stopped and stared at me.

Me: "You gave it to me"

Njabulo: "And it's perfect" he kissed my lips and lifted me up until I straddled his waist. He walked us to the bed and gently put me down. I closed my eyes when he took the bikini off. I couldn't believe it, after playing it safe for years I was letting things happen like I was a kid again.

Me: "Protection" I whispered.

Njabulo: "Sorted" he showed me a pocket of condoms.

Me: "You were prepared?"

Njabulo: "I bought them when I saw your pictures. When you hope for something you have to have faith on it taking place so I bought them"

Me: "That is just scary" I laughed.

Njabulo: "And then you go and do that. I like it when you laugh like that" he kissed my nose.

Me: "I am going to hate myself after this"

Njabulo: "You are not allowed to do that" he kissed me slowly but deep. We kissed while he fingered me.

We didn't just have sex but we make love. Passionate love and then just cuddled before dozing off. I woke up when I heard voices. The others were back so I went to shower quickly because I could smell Njabulo on my skin. When I finished showering I wore the dress again and went to the others. Joshua and Thandeka were sitting in the lounge. She was sitting on the floor between his legs.

Me: "Hey guys" I greeted and sat opposite them.

Thandeka: "Hey, how are you feeling?"

Me: "I'm okay and you? Njabulo told me that you were kidnapped"

Thandeka: "I'm okay" she looked at me like she knew what I had done.

Me: "Where is my husband?"

Joshua: "He went shopping with Njabulo. You guys will need clothes and other stuff"

Thandeka: "So you won't have to wear my sister's clothes"

Me: "Njabulo gave them to me"

Thandeka: "Whatever" she rolled her eyes.

Joshua: "Don't you need to lie down?" he asked Thandeka.

Thandeka: "I'm starving"

Joshua: "I will make you something to eat" he stood up and went to the kitchen

Thandeka: "So you slept with him"

Me: "Excuse me?"

Thandeka: "I can see guilt all over your face, how could you sleep with your brother's best friend?"

Me: "You don't know what you talking about"

Thandeka: "Njabulo is married to my sister. If you think he will leave his wife for you then you are more stupid than you look"

Me: "Thank you" I rolled my eyes, not that I didn't want to respond but I didn't feel like arguing with her about this.

Thandeka: "An undercover slut"

Me: "Okay" I took a magazine that was on the table and paged it. She was working on my nerves but I didn't want thing to get out of hand.

Thandeka: "Joshua is safe because he is your brother. If he wasn't you would jump him too"

Me: "What is it dear? Trying to make yourself feel better by insulting me?"

Thandeka: "I don't have too. I know I am better than you"

Me: "Then why are you trying so hard to put us in the same level?"

Thandeka: "I am not, I'm trying to show you that you are nothing but a whore"

Ntokozo: "Whoa, ladies please" he sat down next to me.

Me: "Please call me when they come back, I don't have time for childish behavior" I stood up and walked away.

Thandeka: "You should. I feel for Anita. Not having a father and then having a slut for a mother. Poor kid" she shouted. When she said that I didn't hesitate I turn back and walked to her and awarded her with a slap across the face. Ntokozo grabbed me while she stood up.

Ntokozo: "what the hell is wrong with you?" he shouted. Thandeka pushed him away and then jumped to me. We went crushing on the floor.

By the time they managed to pull us apart I had few hits in and she received a few as well. Her nose was bleeding while my lip was swollen.

Phelisa: "What the hell is going on?" she appeared on the passage looking alarmed.

Ntokozo: "Go back to bed dear, they are being childish"

Joshua: "We have to deal with killers and then deal with this? What's your problem?" he looked at me.

Me: "What makes you think I'm the one with a problem? She insulted me"

Thandeka: "I told you the truth. You are a slut, a common cheap slut. Nx"

Joshua: "Since when do you talk like that?" he looked at her.

Thandeka: "Let go of me Joshua"

Joshua: "Not until you tell me when did you start behaving like a street trash. What happened to walking away Thandeka?"

Ntokozo: "Joshua, cool it"

Joshua: "No, when did she start behaving like this?" he shouted.

Thandeka: "I'm sorry, I need to lie down"

Joshua: "Don't apologize to me. You insulted her"

Thandeka: "You are taking her side because she is your sister?"

Joshua: "No, I'm shocked because you are not the woman that I know" he let go of her and walked out. Ntokozo also released me and I went to sit on the couch.

Phelisa: "You are wearing Lindiwe's dress"

Me: "I know, her husband gave it to me"

Thandeka: "And more" she mumbled out loud and Phelisa looked at me with those judging eyes. The door opened and Joseph walked in followed by Njabulo and then Joshua. I stood up and went to the kitchen.

Joseph: "Are you okay?" he touched my forehead.

Me: "I'm fine, you should be resting" I looked at him and then looked at Njabulo, he was staring at me and Joshua was looking at Njabulo.

Joseph: "I'm fine. Beside we have no time to rest. We have Nceba's laptop"

Me: "Really? How?"

Joshua: "The less you know the better" he looked at Njabulo and then looked back at me.

Joseph: "And that's not all, tonight you are going to see Miss Jameson"

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Because she has a list of those involved and you ladies need that list"

Njabulo: "Zandiswa stays" he spoke in a tight voice that surprised us all.

Ntokozo: "Why?"

Njabulo: "Because she is not ready yet"

Joseph: "But Thandeka and Lisa are here so she should be fine"

Njabulo: "She wants to quit. We should let her stay"

Joshua: "Are we missing something?"

Thandeka: "Yeah, are we missing something Zandiswa?" she looked at me.

Njabulo: "She is not ready yet. She can't even handle an empty gun"

Joseph: "We have few hours to teach her. Let's get started then"

Phelisa: "Can I cook dinner?"

Njabulo: "Thank you Lisa. Come Zandi" he sounded defeated.

Njabulo went to a locked door, opened it and we all went in. It was a window less room with different guns. It looked like a shooting room.

Me: "You have a shooting room in your house?"

Joshua: "I have one as well"

Njabulo: "Joshua's idea. Talk about an expensive idea"

Me: "Wow" that's all I could say. Deep down I was wondering what I have got myself into.

Ntokozo: "Don't freak out. Pick one gun that you can handle"

Njabulo: "This one" pointed a small one that I was already looking at.

Joshua: "Legs apart so you can balance. Put this on your ears and wear these for the eyes. The gun is loaded so it will go off pretty loud and you will fall if you are not balanced" he instructed.

Ntokozo: "Both hands on the gun and you aim before you pull the trigger"

me: "Like this?" I brought the gun closer to my eye to aim.

Ntokozo: "You won't have time to aim like that and people will kill you while you are still aiming" the others laughed.

Me: "Gee thanks, that makes me feel better"

Ntokozo: "Sorry but for real. You are not going to the Sandlwana battle so you have no time to do all that"

Njabulo: "This is a bad idea. she needs time to learn all this"

Joseph: "You guys taught Lisa and Thandeka"

Joshua: "And they are good now. Zandiswa will learn"

Njabulo: "You didn't teach them like this. You guys had time, there was no rush"

Ntokozo: "You are right. Zandiswa just think of a man holding your daughter by the neck. This is the man hurting Anita. Shoot him" he instructed. I held the gun firm in my hands and then pulled the trigger. It went off and I went on the floor too landing on my butt.

Me: "Did I hit him?" Ntokozo did not respond instead he helped me up and I was disappointed to see that the bullet did not even go where it was suppose to go.

Joshua: "Try again and this time try to be left standing" I held the gun again and repeated the procedure. It went off twice this time and again I went on the floor. I heard Thandeka scream and Joseph was on the floor laying so still.

Chapter 28

Me: "No, no Joseph" I rushed to him and turned him over.

Njabulo: "Don't touch him" he kneeled next to me and felt his pulse.

Me: "Please don't die baby, please. I didn't mean to hurt you" I begged and then I heard someone laugh. When I looked up Thandeka was in tears with laughter.

Joshua: "It's a joke. Wake up dude" I looked at Joseph in disbelief as he opened his eyes.

Joseph: "Got you" he laughed too. I couldn't laugh because I didn't see anything funny at all. Instead I stood up and walked out in tears.

Njabulo: "what the hell is wrong with you guys?" I heard him shout because the door was open. I leaned against the wall and wept. Everything in my body was shaking out of anger and shock.

Joshua: "Aw come on, it was a joke"

Joseph: "A damn good joke. Zandiswa needs to relax"

Njabulo: "Grow up" I head the footsteps approaching the door. I moved away from it and walked down the hallway to the room I woke up in. The idea was to lock myself in but it had no key on the key hole. I sat down on the bed and cried. It wasn't just a shok but it was also guilt. Seeing Joseph laying there made me regret what I did with Njabulo.

Njabulo: "Can I come in?" I heard him ask on the other side of the door and I didn't respond. I wiped the tears but they kept coming. The more I wiped the harder they came.

Joseph: "It was a joke. I'm sorry baby"

Njabulo: "A bad joke. You guys are wrong and you know it"

Joseph: "We were trying to get her to relax. You said it yourself that she is uptight and it's annoying. Come out Zandi" he knocked on the door and then opened the handle. I stood up and went to the door before he came in. I couldn't face him.

Me: "I need some air" I walked out and went to the kitchen.

Phelisa was busy cooking. By the look of things she knew what she was doing.

Phelisa: "Why are you crying?" she put down her pots and pulled out a chair for me.

Me: "I don't want to be here. I shouldn't have involved myself in this at all"

Phelisa: "You sound like me when I first came. I said the exact same words when I was in deep shit"

me: "I just ruined my life Lisa. Years of hard work trying to be a good role model to my daughter ruined by a weakness moment.

Lisa: "You slept with Njabulo?" she looked at me in shock her hand covering her mouth.

Me: "You might as well tell the whole city" I looked at her.

Phelisa: "Sorry girl, I'm just shocked because I don't see Njabulo cheating on Lindiwe. Damn girl, you sure know your story"

Me: "I don't need complements Lisa, What I did was wrong and we all know. Thandeka was right, I'm a hoe"

Phelisa: "why are you feeling guilty? You are not married"

Me: "I know but It's still doesn't make it okay"

Phelisa: "Unless you have feeling for Joseph"

Me: "Don't start. I'm feeling guilty because he is Joshua's best friend"

Phelisa: "And his wife is Thandeka's sister. Damn girl"

Me: "I wish I never asked to be turned into a killer. What was I thinking?"

Phelisa: "You were angry dear. It's life Zandiswa and you are allowed to make mistakes"

Me: "Yeah, you are right. I need to forgive myself and forget it"

I went back to the lounge. Joseph was typing something on his phone while Joshua was smiling at Thandeka while she was making silly faces. Ntokozo was laughing at them.

Me: "Why are you guys sitting here when you have me to teach?" I looked at them.

Njabulo: "No"

Joshua: "She wants to learn"

Njabulo: "She can't learn"

Me: "I want to. Please follow me" I walked to the room and it was locked. Njabulo followed with the key.

Njabulo: "What are you trying to prove?"

Me: "I want to finish what I started"

Njabulo: "Why? So you could show the world that you are strong? You are a woman for a reason Zandiswa. Your job is to stay home and keep it warm not to go crazy and hunt down the low lives"

Me: "Excuse me? What are you trying to say?"

Njabulo: "All I'm saying is that you can stay home and be a woman"

Me: "I guess we just figured out why Lindiwe prefers Phil than you" I walked inside.

Njabulo: "Don't even try to be a bitch. It doesn't suit you" he walked after me and handed me a gun. I took it and aimed at the dummy. It didn't go off like I expected and I didn't fall.

Me: "And then?"

Njabulo: "It's empty. More reason you shouldn't get involved in this"

The others joined us and we stopped arguing. Ntokozo loaded the bullets on the gun and I put the protecting staff before trying again. Just like before I kept going down with each bullet.

Thandeka: "This is not going to work guys. Look at her. She is shaking" she complained.

Joshua: "You didn't get it on the word go. Give her time"

Thandeka: "But I wasn't like this. Zandiswa will not crack this in this century"

Ntokozo: "People are different. Maybe she just doesn't have a mean bone in her"

Thandeka: "She is Joshua's sister. Of course she is mean in more ways than one" when she said that I knew she was referring to my sex with her sister's husband.

Joshua: "MaMyeza, cool it" warned Joshua.

Thandeka: "Oh please, she is a slut and she knows it. Why else would she fuck Njabulo? Your best friend" I wanted to blow her head off at that very moment.

Joseph: "What did you just say?" I heard Joseph ask and then I pulled the trigger. For the first time I hit the target and I stood still, my grip tight around the gun.

Njabulo: "Wow. Right in the mouth" he cheered.

Joshua: "You are definitely my sister"

Me: "Well it seems like now I can aim and hit the target. I can't wait to shoot bitches that are spreading rumors about me. Don't you agree Thandeka?" I looked at her straight in the face like I was saying I dare you.

Thandeka: "It could have been a lucky shot. Try again"

Joseph: "Can everybody hold up for a moment. Why are we ignoring what Thandeka just said. Did you sleep with my wife?" he looked at Njabulo.

Njabulo: "Did you hear me speak about that? Why don't you ask her?" he pointed Thandeka.

Me: "Yeah why don't you question her since she is now my keeper"

Thandeka: "I'm sorry guys I lied" she shrugged.

Joshua: "MaMyeza, I don't like this. You changed"

Ntokozo: "Can we focus on Zandiswa?" he handed me another loaded gun. Stepped closer to my ear and then whispered.

"She didn't lie. We both know you did sleep with him" I went cold.

Chapter 29

Me: "It was a mistake" I whispered.

Ntokozo: "For who? Maybe for you but I know that it wasn't for Njabulo. He doesn't make those mistakes at all. Pull the trigger and aim for the chest"

Me: "What do you mean?" I pulled the trigger and the bullet hit the face.

Ntokozo: "I mean just that. Try again until you hit the target. The chest" he ordered. I did as told because it was clear that Ntokozo wasn't going to tell me more but it bothered me that he said that.

Joshua: "What are you guys whispering about?" he came closer.

Ntokozo: "Nothing" I nodded in agreement with Ntokozo and focus on hitting the target. Phelisa came to call us and said dinner was served.

Njabulo: "Isn't it a bit early?"

Phelisa: "We are going to the party so we need to get ready"

Me: "What party?"

Thandeka: "Miss Jameson is hosting a party and there is a list that we need"

Me: "So we going to the party we are not invited into?"

Phelisa: "Yes dear. Mlungisi will bring us the dresses"

Joshua: "Don't ask who he is. please"

Me: "I wasn't" I fired the last shot and it hit the target this time.

Ntokozo: "So anger fires you up. Nice MaCebekhulu"

Me: "Don't call me that. We are not sure if he is really my brother. I haven't seen Nceba's laptop yet"

Joshua: "We are having it hacked"

Me: "Why? She gave us the passwords"

Joshua: "You ask lots of questions Zandiswa. Sometimes it's best not to ask"

Joseph: "The diary was deleted so we have an IT guy trying to recover it"

Me: "That wasn't so hard" I rolled my eyes at Joshua before walking out.

We ate while we worked out the details of the plan. We were going to the party with Mlungisi and Thizo and I was yet to meet them. Joshua and Ntokozo were going to break into Jenna's room and look for the list while we mingled with the others.

Me: "Why was I trained if we are not going to use guns?"

Thandeka: "So you can fight if needed. You can never be careful" she rolled her eyes and I was about to say something about it when Njabulo nudged me and I decided to ignore her.

Joseph: "Don't drink anything that you did not pour yourself. Maybe they will have waitresses so make sure that you take a glass on a tray that has many glasses and don't let the waiter hand it to you. Pick it yourself. They know that we are now fighting against them so there's no need to hide but they won't attack in front of the guests. Keep your eyes open"

Me: "Where will you be while we are playing bait?"

Joseph: "I will be with Joshua and Ntokozo. It's not bait Zandiswa. We are trying to get them to focus on you while we get things done"

Njabulo: "I will be with you guys, relax and I'm hoping you never get to use a gun"

Ntokozo: "Me too. she has the ability but sometimes it's best not to test the universe"

Phelisa: "It's not that hard. We go in and enjoy ourselves while being careful. You guys do what you do best and then we get out. Simple enough"

Thandeka: "Very simple" there was a knock and two gentlemen walked in. they had our dresses.

Joshua: "Zandi and Joe, this is Thizo and Mlungisi. They will come with us as Zandi and Lisa's dates"

Mlungisi: "I pick you" he pointed at me.

Njabulo: "No funny ideas dude"

Ntokozo: "That's Joseph's job Njabulo"

Joseph: "And I agree, no funny ideas with my wife"

Mlungisi: "Alright, no funny ideas" he gave him a mocking salute sign.

Phelisa: "Let's go change ladies" We followed her to the bedroom and took the dresses with us.

Thandeka's dress was peach in color and it showed her curves. Mine was deep blue with glitter and it was long but had an opening going straight to the thigh. It was sleeveless so it showed cleavage.

Phelisa's dress was short and it showed her long legs.

Phelisa: "My husband won't be pleased" she complained.

Me: "If I were him I wouldn't as well. It almost showing your butt cheeks"

Thandeka: "Maybe you should exchange with Zandiswa. She has nothing to hide since Njabulo knows her goodies as well"

Me: "What's your problem? You've been on my case for so long and I don't know what's really bothering you. Njabulo is not your husband. Stop fighting for him"

Thandeka: "he is my sister's husband"

Me: "So what? That doesn't make him your husband. I suggest you shut up or I will help you shut your trap"

Thandeka: "I wonder what Joseph would say when he finds out that he married a whore"

Me: "If you are hoping that I will beg you not to say anything then I'm sorry because I won't. If you want to tell him, then go ahead and tell him"

Phelisa: "Thandeka maybe you should let it go. What Lindiwe doesn't know won't hurt her"

Thandeka: "To late, I sent her a text message already"

Me: "Then congratulations, you just ended your sister's marriage. I'm not the one she married. If she wants to fight she could fight with him not me. Now I suggest you get off my case and focus on yourself"

I took my clutch bag and walked out.

Mlungisi and I drove together to the hotel. Ntokozo drove Phelisa and he kept complaining about the shortness of the dress.

Me: "Maybe we should give you guys some privacy" I suggested because we all could hear them in the ear pieces we had on.

Njabulo: "Don't you dare take that off Zandiswa. We need to communicate. Just ignore them"

Phelisa: "I offered to stay home and you refused"

Ntokozo: "For good reason. Who was going to protect you on your own? We could have left Zandiswa if we are not worried about protection"

Me: "Gee thanks, I'm not here because I am needed but because I wasn't going to stay alone"

Joshua: "You didn't think we trust your gun handling skills, did you?"

Mlungisi: "Is she that bad?"

Ntokozo: "Worse, she goes down with each bullet"

Thizo: "Reminds me of Zaza. I love my wife but her skills are suicide. By the time she pulls the trigger she is almost covering her face with those hands that are holding the gun. I keep them away from her" we all laughed.

Joseph: "I think we are being followed"

Ntokozo: "By who? I don't see anything" I looked out the window and saw Joshua's car behind us.

Joseph: "I'm supposed to be the last person but there's someone behind me. Actually there are two cars behind me" he sounded panicking.

Joshua: "Turn the lights off and take the following left. Ntokozo keep going"

Mlungisi: "Let's sandwich them and see how they like the game" he took the right turn and Joshua followed us. I didn't see the other cars because it was dark with the street lights so far apart and dimmed.

Me: "And then?" I asked after Mlungisi turned.

Ntokozo: "They are still on my tail"

Joshua: Let's go guys. Joseph you can meet us on the following turn"

Joseph: "Guys, we have a problem" he whispered.

Ntokozo: "What is it?" Joseph didn't answer instead we had guns being fired repeatedly. I was about to

scream when Mlungisi covered my mouth with the palm of his hand.

We heard the sound of the car driving off in speed and then some fiddling sound before we heard someone breathing.

Joseph: "Are you guys there?" he sounded like he was running.

Joseph: "yes, where are you?"

Joseph: "In the car. I've been hit"

Njabulo: "Hang in there. I am coming now"

Ntokozo: "I lost the tail or maybe he turned. I'll be there just now"

Mlungisi: "Are you okay?" he looked at me. I nodded.

Thizo: "I'm surprised she didn't scream"

Mlungisi: "She did but quick thinking saved us"

Joshua: "Sorry sis, you will get use to it"

We drove back to Joseph. The bullet hit him on the leg and another on his upper arm. Njabulo checked him and said it was a flesh wound so he was going to be fine. I was no longer there. I thought about Anita in Canada. I was the only family she had and if something happened to me she was going to be left alone in this cruel world.

Thandeka: "Are you cold?"

Me: "leave me alone please" I snapped at her.

Thandeka: "I meant are you feeling cold?"

Me: "I'm sorry. I thought you were being mean again. I don't know if I'm cold or freaked out" I looked at Joseph wincing in pain.

Thandeka: "It gets easier"

Me: "I'm not sure if I can survive till then" tears escaped my eyes.

Thandeka: "You are strong Zandi. You just need to stop doubting yourself"

Me: "You had a change of heart"

Thandeka: "let's just say I just realized that life is precious and it can be lost so quick"

Me: "I know"

Joshua: "Okay guys we are going ahead with a plan. Joseph will ride with us. Let's go"

Me: "What? My husband is bleeding and all you care about is some stupid plan?"

Joseph: "It's okay Zandi"

Me: "No, it's not okay. He needs some medical attention"

Njabulo: "What do you suggest we do?"

Me: " We go home and fix him up" Ntokozo's car stopped next to us.

Ntokozo: "I agree with Zandiswa. Let's go home guys. We have a snake"

Me: "Meaning?"

Ntokozo: "someone is working with the opposite team and it's a set up"

Joshua: "meaning they know that we found Nceba's diary?"

Ntokozo: "Yes and we would have walked right into it"

Chapter 30

We didn't drive home instead we drove to Mount Edgecombe into Joshua's house. I was shocked to find out that the man lived in a mansion, a huge mansion. It was clear that they were loaded but Joshua's house made me wonder just how rich he really was.

Joshua: "welcome to my house guys. Pick any room but locked rooms are off limit. Be warned that the wall is too thin so someone who is sleeping next door can hear you fart, fuck, suck etc"

Thandeka: "No need to be disgusting about it"

Joshua: "I'm not, I'm just being clear so that when we give you the stare tomorrow you don't wonder how we know"

Ntokozo: "Quit playing and help us get Joseph upstairs. Njabulo please put on your coat"

Njabulo: "He only needs some pain killers. He will be fine" they helped Joseph up the stairs. I followed them and helped them pick a room. We picked a large room.

Ntokozo: "Mlungisi and I we will go check the house and see if we find anything"

Joshua: "Anything like what?"

Ntokozo: "I'm starting to think maybe the snake isn't a person but a planted device. They knew that if we leave Joseph's house we are likely to come to Njabulo's house so they planted the device in the

house”

Me: “Is there such device?”

Njabulo: “That’s nothing, technology these days is totally out of this world”

Joshua: “But Njabulo’s house it totally secured”

Njabulo: “Yeah but anyone can get into my yard unseen. Unlike yours”

Me: “You know when someone set foot in your garden without authority?”

Joshua: “I’m a trained criminal Zandiswa. Not a common street thug”

Me: “Wow and you are a trained Doctor?” I asked Njabulo.

Njabulo: “Sort of, Ntokozo is a trained killer”

Joseph: “And I am a man in pain. Can you guys stop yapping and help me?” complained Joseph. We laughed at him while Njabulo began working on him.

Ntokozo and Mlungisi left and I went to join others in the lounge because I couldn’t stand the smell of blood. Phelisa and Thandeka were sitting on the couch talking and they went quiet when they saw me walk down the stairs.

Me: “Gossiping about me?”

Phelisa: “Why would you think that?”

Me: “Going quiet when I approach. Just tell me in my face ladies because I know I will”

Thandeka: “if you must know I was telling Lisa that I miss this house sometimes”

Me: “Okay, sorry” I sat down next to Lisa.

Thandeka: “You are not exactly a hot topic right now dear”

Me: “I would never know” I took a magazine on the table and paged through. I was still paging when I came across a familiar name. Monica Bhengu. I didn’t remember where I’ve seen that name before but it was familiar. I read the article and it talked about her daughter who opened a place of safety for the kids who were abused at home. The girl talked about her mother who grew up in an orphanage and also said that she was abused in that orphanage which resulted with her escaping and became a prostitute. When her mother got pregnant while on the job she decided to quit and built a life for the kid. Most women would abort the kid but her mother didn’t and that’s why she was honoring her memory. She might have been born by a whore but she certainly became something and I’m sure her mother was proud where she was. Her place of safety was going to accommodate even the kids who are from abusive orphanages. I admired her strength and admired her mother for being a woman even when the world was against her. Something about the pictures and the names were familiar but I didn’t

remember when I've seen it.

Phelisa: "What are you reading?"

Me: "An old magazine. Joshua needs to chunk garbage out" I looked at the cover and it was almost two months old.

Ntokozo and Mlungisi came back with a small device that they said it was tracking us. Mlungisi suggested they destroy it but Ntokozo said it was connected to the phone and one of us was being tracked while unaware.

Ntokozo: "We need to keep them busy using their own device"

Me: "How?"

Ntokozo: "all phone's must be off. Go get Njabulo's phone and switch Joseph's phone off" he instructed and I went upstairs. Joseph was already asleep so I took his phone downstairs. We switched our phone off and switched them on again.

Mlungisi: "This is a tracking phone" he pointed Joseph's phone.

Joshua: "So Joseph is trying to get us killed?"

Ntokozo: "He doesn't know that they are tracking him"

Njabulo: "so what do we do now?"

Ntokozo: "let them track all they want"

Joshua: "We can send them to Russia"

Ntokozo: "If the tracker leaves the country they will know that we know. I need this phone to stay busy. Up and down like a car"

Thizo: "let us hide it in a taxi and then switch the phone on"

Ntokozo: "Yes but we will do it tomorrow. For now I am tired and I need to be with my wife. Good night guys. Come baby" he took Lisa's hand and they walked upstairs.

I followed soon after them because I was tired too. Njabulo followed behind me.

Njabulo: "We need to talk"

Me: "We don't"

Njabulo: "So what happened between us is not worth talking about?"

Me: "It was a mistake and we both know it"

Njabulo: "So we will not talk about it at all?"

Me: "No, you are married Njabulo and I need to respect that. Joseph needs me so I can't complicate things further" I walked away towards the handle but he caught my arm before I could open the door.

Njabulo: "What if I want more?"

me: "I don't have more to offer. Forget everything that happened and focus on your wife"

Njabulo: "Are you serious Zandiswa. You don't want to hear me out?"

me: "Yes I am hundred percent sure" I saw him look above me and turned around to check what he was seeing and it was Thandeka staring at us.

Thandeka: "Maybe you should listen to her and forget it. This will hurt my sister"

Njabulo: "No offense Thandeka but this has nothing to do with you"

Thandeka: "Surely you don't expect me to turn a blind eye when I see you about to ruin your marriage to my sister"

Njabulo: "before you start fighting other people's battle at least make sure that you get your facts straight. Your sister doesn't even cuddle with me. All she cares about is Phil. What I do is not your business. Nx" he turned and walked away. I opened the door and walked in.

Joseph: "So it's true? You really did sleep with Njabulo?"

Chapter 31

Me: "It was a mistake, I'm sorry"

Joseph: "You slipped and fell on his dick? I'm not stupid Zandiswa. Get out" he shouted.

Me: "where am I supposed to sleep?"

Joseph: "Are you asking me that question?"

Me: "You are injured and you can't sleep on your own. I know what I did is a huge disappointment but you can't kick me out Joseph"

Joseph: "I just did. Take you whoring ass out of this damn room. Thandeka was right about you. You are nothing but an undercover slut" after he said that I took my sleeping wear and walked out before I could close the door I poked my head in and looked at him.

Zandiswa: "For the record Joseph, you are not really my husband. I married you for one reason and one reason only. If I want to fuck someone I'm allowed to do so without feeling guilty. I suggest you check

the contract again Mr. Mzulwini” I slammed the door shut. After that I went back downstairs bumping to Joshua in the stairs.

Joshua: “What’s wrong?”

Me: “Nothing. Goodnight” I walked past him and went to sit on the couch. I sat there and felt the tears coming. Joseph’s words rang in my head. Yes what I did was wrong but did he have to insult me like that?

“What’s wrong?” I heard someone ask. I looked up and saw Njabulo standing on top of the stairs. I knew that Joshua was the one who told him.

Me: “Nothing I’m just missing my daughter” I lied.

Njabulo: “Lying doesn’t even suit you. Tell me what happened” he came down.

Me: “He knows”

Njabulo: “Okay so?”

Me: “What do you mean so?”

Njabulo: “The way you are going on one would swear that you actually love the man. He is your fake husband and we all know unless there’s something you are not sharing with us”

Me: “He called me a whore. Thandeka did as well. Maybe they are right. Maybe I am a whore I just didn’t know it”

Njabulo: “Do you run the streets chasing men?”

Me: “Of cause not”

Njabulo: “I’m the man you slept with and I don’t think you are a whore so forget what Thandeka or someone else is saying” he stood up and pulled me up.

Me: “What are you doing?”

Njabulo: “Come to bed with me. Before you refuse, not for sex but we will just talk and sleep”

Me: “I think that would be a bad idea”

Njabulo: “You sleeping on the couch while I am sleeping on my own would be so wrong. No sex I promise” he gave me a begging look.

I went to Njabulo’s room. He gave me his shirt to sleep in and we got under the covers.

Njabulo: “Can I at least have my arms around you?”

Me: “No. Goodnight Mr. Mbatha”

Njabulo: "You are soft and cuddly"

Me: "You mean I'm fat?"

Njabulo: "No but I really can't feel your bones and I love it. It's nice to touch a woman who has meat on her bones"

Me: "I wonder how you got married. The moment you open your mouth you say all the wrong things"

Njabulo: "Like what?"

Me: "That I should stay home and keep the house clean instead of fighting the bad men"

Njabulo: "I wasn't lying about that. I like women who know that they are women. You can own a business and earn millions but when you come home be a woman"

Me: "Meaning?"

Njabulo: "Cook for me, clean my bedroom; don't hire someone to clean my bedroom. I need you to do it just like I need to eat your food. Be the boss at the office and my wife at home"

Me: "That woman will be over worked. Being a business woman is hard, where will she find time to do all that?"

Njabulo: "One; you can never find time. Time is created by those who need it. Two; God created you for the man. Your job is to respect the man and praise him. In return he will love you and treat you like a queen that you are"

Me: "You should have been born during those old times. The world has changed"

Njabulo: "No, people change things. The world is still the same. Nowadays people think it's fancy when a woman is running a huge company but she can't cook. What kind of crap is that?"

Me: "It's not crap. Some women can't cook"

Njabulo: "They want to get married though. You marry them and then they jump to birth control because falling pregnant will put the career on hold"

Me: "So you think I should just keep on having kids year after year? How will I work when I'm swollen and heavy?"

Njabulo: "You stay home and allow me to take care of you. That's what we men are supposed to do"

Me: "You have a strange way of thinking. Let's make an example with me. I own my own business so what should I do if I were to marry you?"

Njabulo: "well because you already own it so you will keep it but then you will need to leave the office early and come home to me. Cook for me, clean my bedroom and screw me more often"

Me: "You have high demands. In return what do I get?"

Njabulo: "A good and faithful man who will worship your grounds"

Me: "men can't be faithful. It's in their nature"

Njabulo: "There's no such thing. I never cheated on my wife until I met you. Things changed when she started behaving strange and decided to keep Phil instead of keeping me happy. Joshua didn't cheat on Thandeka after they got married. Ten years of being faithful to her"

Me: "Joshua Cebekhulu?"

Njabulo: "Yes, do you know why?"

Me: "I'm waiting for you to tell me"

Njabulo: "Because Thandeka can cook, clean, do the laundry, take care of the kids and she did it with love. She didn't feed them pizza every night like some women do nowadays"

Me: "Didn't she work?"

Njabulo: "Nope, her father left her millions and she invested it because Joshua takes care of family"

Me: "My brother is loaded"

Njabulo: "You heard the man. He wasn't trained to be a criminal for nothing"

Me: "You guys freaky me out. I'm sleepy now so good night"

Njabulo: "Goodnight beautiful" he kissed my cheek and then we both went quiet.

A sound of something falling woke me up. I listened carefully and realized it wasn't something falling but something banging against the wall.

Me: "What is that?" I whispered to Njabulo

Njabulo: "Listen carefully" we both went quiet and listened. Few minutes later we heard some moaning sound.

Me: "Ntokozo and Lisa?"

Njabulo: "Joshua and Thandeka"

Me: "She wouldn't"

Njabulo: "It's them, they have been at it for the past hour"

Me: "Miss goodie too shoes" I laughed a bit.

Njabulo: “No name calling please. I told you that being a bitch doesn’t suit you”

Me: “Whatever, I’m surprised that she would sleep with her ex husband after she made me feel like crap”

Njabulo: “You have nothing to be ashamed of” he kissed my neck.

Me: “Don’t do that”

Njabulo: “why not?”

Me: “You promised that we were going to sleep”

Njabulo: “I know but hearing them just woke few things up. Don’t tell me that you are not turned on right now” his hand touched between my legs.

Me: “I’m not. You know the situation” I removed his hand on my legs.

Njabulo: “But you know I want you” he kissed my neck again.

Me: “But it’s wrong. You are still married Njabulo”

Joshua: “I love you MaMyeza” I heard him say and I waited for Thandeka to reply.

Thandeka: “I love you too” she replied. I turned and faced Njabulo because I could hear him laugh a bit.

Me: “Wow” I whispered.

Njabulo: “I know” his lips covered mine as his hand rubbed the wet spot between my legs over my already soaked panties.

Chapter 32

I managed to sneak out before Njabulo and anyone else was up. I went to Joseph’s room, sneaked in and put a pillow and a blanket on the floor to make him think I slept on the floor after he dozed off. After that I went to take a bath because I reeked Njabulo’s scent. When I finished bathing I wore a gown because I didn’t have clothes and I wasn’t sure if Joshua had sent for my bags in Joseph’s house. Walking around in a gown was going to be awkward but I had no choice so I went to the kitchen. I was surprised to see Thandeka busy making breakfast.

Me: “Morning”

Thandeka: “Morning, you don’t have clothes?”

Me: “Nope but I’m hoping that Joshua will go get my things in Joseph’s house”

Thandeka: “I can land you some of my clothes but they will be tight since you have more meat on your

bones”

Me: “Are you saying I’m fat?”

Thandeka: “Well you are larger than me. My clothes might be a bit smaller than you”

Me: “Its fine I will wait for Joshua” I walked back up stairs to Joseph’s room. He was up but looked still kind of sleepy.

Me: “Morning”

Joseph: “Morning and I’m sorry about last night. It’s that I was just shocked and disappointed but I didn’t mean to insult you”

Me: “It’s okay. I understand” I was guilty because I did it again and this time it was more special than before. Njabulo was passionate and making love was filled with passion.

Joseph: “Thank you for sleeping on the floor for me. If it was someone they would have gone back to him but you didn’t and I really appreciate that” I just grinned and nodded.

Me: “Shall I get you some breakfast here or you will try to go down and join the others?”

Joseph: “I will eat here and go back to sleep again. I don’t know what Njabulo gave me but it’s working. I don’t even feel any pain”

Me: “That’s good, I will go get you some food and bring it back” I opened the door and walked out.

Lisa and Ntokozo were also up and chilling on the couch. He had his hand around her neck while she giggled about something.

Ntokozo: “For real dear, I’m telling you”

Phelisa: “You will have to prove it for me”

Ntokozo: “You are skating on a very thin ice Mrs. Mdluli”

Phelisa: “I know my husband will rescue me”

Ntokozo: “Poor man, I feel sorry for him” he kissed her nose before they both looked up probably sensing my presence.

Me: “Morning guys”

Ntokozo: “Good morning to you too MaCebekhulu”

Me: “Don’t call me that. We don’t even know if Joshua is really my brother or not. Nceba could have lied”

Ntokozo: “I doubt it but as you wish Mrs. Mzulwini” I almost objected to that but I realized it was a trap

so I decided to shut up and walked pass them to the kitchen.

I looked through the cupboards and found Future Life cereal and made a bowl for Joseph.

Thandeka: "What are you doing?"

Me: "Making some porridge for my husband"

Thandeka: "He is injured not dying. Make some real food for the man. The toast is ready and I made some eggs"

Me: "He can start with this and then serve him that later"

Thandeka: "I know you don't care about him anymore but don't let him see it. Treat him right Zandiswa. The man saved your daughter" she rolled her eyes and gave me a plate. I dished up and took the tray upstairs bumping to Njabulo in the passage.

Njabulo: "Morning"

Me: "Morning"

Njabulo: "We need to talk Zandiswa"

Me: "Sorry I'm in a hurry" I walked past him and got into Joseph's room. He was still up but looking really out of it.

Joseph: "Could you help me up?"

Me: "Where are you going?"

Joseph: "To the toilet. I need to pee" I helped him up and walked him to the bathroom. I waited outside for him to finish.

Joshua: "Why are you standing there looking lost?"

Me: "I'm waiting for Jay. He is in there"

Joshua: "Okay, Thandeka said you need some clothes. I asked Mlungisi to pick them up but he will only bring few clothes because they weren't packed and he doesn't know what you will need"

Me: "It's okay. As long I have something to cover up" Joseph opened the door and Joshua helped him back to the room.

After we all ate and Lisa and I did the dishes the guys said they had a plan to get into Jameson's apartment.

Ntokozo: "Over to you Thizo" he said after we all sat down.

Thizo: "They are expecting two ladies who are going to fix the air conditioner on the 3rd floor. Martha

and Maria Santos, from Ladies That Fix It so Lisa and Zandiswa will pretend to be Martha and Maria. You walk into the building and flirt with the girl on the desk. She is a lesbian so she will probably like it and then Maria walks in, see you busy flirting with the girl. You will argue and cause a huge scene to destruct the lady while we sneak in and go to the 4th floor. It should be quick say 5 minutes tops”

Me: “I don’t know how to flirt, let alone with a girl”

Phelisa: “I will, you can be my jealous girlfriend”

Thandeka: “So what happens when you guys finish the fighting? You don’t know how to fix the air con”

Thizo: “They will go upstairs and use the fire escape. We have the plan of the building” he pointed the huge drawing on the coffee table.

Me: “Where does that fire escape lead to?”

Joshua: “To the back of the building. Don’t worry it’s the stairs but you will need to jump first. It’s not that high though”

Me: “So I just walk in and fight with her for cheating. 5 minutes fight and then we go up stairs to the 4th floor and get out?”

Thizo: “The 3rd floor. You are going to the 3th floor not the 4th. Joshua and I we will go to the 4th floor and I am hoping that we don’t get to use guns”

Ntokozo: “Sheila is always ready for action”

Lisa: “Sheila can wait, no guns please. Zandiswa can’t handle one”

Njabulo: “I will be there on the escape area so you will be fine” We worked over the plan few times until we heard a car drive in. Joshua went to check and came back with two ladies.

Joshua: “Martha and Maria from Ladies That Fix It” he pointed the ladies.

Me: “I thought you guys made it up”

Martha: “We are here to fix it up” she smiled but her smile short lived because Ntokozo pulled out a gun and pointed them both.

The ladies were tied up and they put them in the back of their van while we wore their clothes.

Me: “How do I look?” I turned around.

Njabulo: “Like a Lady That Fix It”

Me: “what are you guys going to do to the ladies?”

Joshua: “set them on fire”

Me: "Oh my God no, why would you do that when they did nothing wrong?"

Ntokozo: "He is just kidding. We will pay them and they will disappear"

Me: "what if they don't? They could blackmail you later"

Joshua: "Then I will real set them on fire" they laughed and I didn't because I didn't see anything funny with being set alight or setting someone on fire.

Njabulo: "Relax Zandi, Joshua is just playing, the ladies will be fine and I doubt they will try to blackmail us"

Me: "I think I'm getting nervous now"

Thizo: "We should go guys"

Ntokozo: "Mlungisi I hope you and Joseph will be fine. Try not to strangle him"

Joshua: "Should someone try to drop in uninvited please don't destroy my house. Take it outside"

Mlungisi: "I will try not to"

Me: "Why is Thandeka coming? She wasn't included in the plan"

Joshua: "Don't worry she is driving with me"

Njabulo: "Let's go guys"

We got into the van and Phelisa drove. Joshua's car followed us while Ntokozo took another route and said we will meet them there. Njabulo was sitting at the back with the ladies. When we got to the building we pulled over and got off the car.

Phelisa: "Go get the tools at the back while I go flirt with the girl" she laughed and walked to the building. I went to the back and opened the door wider than I should have. One of the ladies screamed for help and a man passing by walked up to me. Njabulo pointed a gun at the ladies while I tried to keep a straight face to the man.

Man: "Excuse me lady, I think I heard someone scream in your car"

Me: "It wasn't my car but I heard it too"

Man: "Open the door then"

Me: "Excuse me? Why would I open my car for you?"

Man: "I want to see that you didn't steal some poor kid and hid them inside. It's either you open or I'm calling the police" when he said that I began sweating. I didn't know what to say or do.

Joshua: "Open the door and show him" he spoke in my ears. I even forgot about the ear piece I was

wearing.

Me: "Okay" I opened the door wider and without any warning at all Njabulo shot the guy in the head. He fell forward his head on my chest. I don't even know where Thizo came from but he helped Njabulo load the guy in the car.

Thizo: "You are not dirty so take the box and go inside" he instructed. I just stood there paralyzed in shock.

Njabulo: "Zandiswa" I heard him very well but I just couldn't move.

Ntokozo: "Thandeka go and do it. Njabulo take her home"

Thizo: "What if someone recognize Thandeka?"

Ntokozo: "My wife is in there. Someone has to go in" he shouted.

Me: "I will go" I spoke.

Njabulo: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes I'm sure" I took the tools and walked toward the building. I could see Lisa leaning against the girl's desk while she giggled like a high school teen.

Me: "What the hell are you doing?" I shouted so loud I even surprised myself.

Phelisa: "Shit, I'm sorry baby" she walked towards me and I slapped her across the face trying to make it look real.

Me: "You are cheating on me again? After I worked my ass off for us and this is the thanks I get?" I screamed.

Phelisa: "Don't be such a bitch. Don't you see you are causing a scene for nothing? I was just talking to her"

Me: "You were flirting. You know what? It's over. After this I never want to see you again" I saw Joshua and Ntokozo getting in the lift while the security guards were busy staring at us.

Phelisa: "I'm sorry baby" she caught my arm as I went towards the lift.

Me: "Ah ah leave me alone" I pressed the button. She pulled me towards her and smashed her lips against mine. I heard the sound of laughter and cheering while she sucked my bottom lip. Her hand held my head in place as the kiss got deeper and deeper. I didn't know how to respond to it because I've never kiss a girl before and it wasn't in my to do list. She pulled away when we heard the sound of the lift opening.

Phelisa: "Let's go" she took my hand led me to the lift and pressed the 3rd floor we were going to. We were both quiet in the lift. I couldn't look at her at all. When the lift reached the 3rd floor I was saved.

We got out and followed the passage leading to the staircase.

Njabulo: "Ladies where are you?" I heard him ask.

Phelisa: "In the stairs"

Njabulo: "Follow them down until you see where they end" We followed them down quickly until we found where they ended.

Me: "Hell no, I am not getting in that" there was a huge pipe that led to the ground floor. By the look of it, it was a work in progress for the building.

Njabulo: "It will slide you down to the floor outside"

Phelisa: "I will go first then" she jumped in and I could hear her sliding down.

Njabulo: "Zandiswa you have to do it. Jump"

Me: "I Can't. What if I get stuck in there and not come out? They could cover both ends and I will be stuck inside forever"

Joshua: "Will you jump to the pipe Zandiswa or I swear to God I will push you in myself"

Me: "I'm going back upstairs"

Ntokozo: "Someone is coming behind us. Jump Zandiswa"

Njabulo: "Now you guys know why I prefer women that stay home and know that they are women"

Joshua: "Yeah you right"

I felt a hand grab me from behind and covered my mouth to keep me from screaming.

Chapter 33

Joshua: "We will jump together" he whispered in my ear before he pushed us both into the dark tube. I held my breath until we landed on the surface.

Njabulo: "Thank you" he looked at Joshua. I rolled my eyes at them while we waited for Ntokozo. When he joined us we casually walked to the cars and drove of leaving the van.

Me: "The van with the ladies inside?"

Njabulo: "Thizo will take the van and dispose the body" the moment he mentioned the body my whole body tensed up and I looked at him. I knew they were criminals but I didn't expect him to murder someone in cold blood and then look so casual about it. I went quiet the rest of the journey and when we got home I went upstairs and showered. Sadly water and soap couldn't remove what I felt in my

heart but I scrubbed my body until I was almost sore. Someone banged the door.

Me: "I'm still busy" I shouted.

Njabulo: "You have been in there for almost an hour Zandiswa. Come out and we will talk about it"

Me: "Leave me alone dude" I turned the shower on and ignored him. I was regretting getting myself involved into this mess. I should have listened to Joseph and moved on with my life because my daughter was safe but no, I had to be stubborn and that landed me here.

When I exited the bathroom I went to get dressed and wore my tracksuits. My skin was red due to the abuse of scrubbing.

Joseph: "You are back"

Me: "Yeah and it went well, I hope"

Joseph: "You don't look well thought. What happened?"

Me: "Nothing worth worrying about. How are you feeling?"

Joseph: "Better I think"

Me: You must be hungry. I will go fix you some lunch" I didn't wait for him to respond. I opened the door and left. Finding Phelisa in the kitchen made my mood drop even further down reaching the negative numbers.

Phelisa: "Don't tell me it was your first time?" she looked at me her eyes shining with excitement.

Me: "If you mean being kissed by a girl? Yes it was and I'm hoping it was the last"

Phelisa: "Am I a bad kisser?"

Me: "No but I would rather stick to the opposite. I am not bio sexual"

Phelisa: "Neither am I. it's called experimenting"

Me: "Well it's an experiment I never tried before and have no desire to try"

Phelisa: "Aw come on, you are being shy for no reason. It's actually nice and girls lips are way softer than the men"

Me: "I tried it. I was kind of slow at school and Jonathan was my first boyfriend and he was the one who broke my virginity and 9 months later Anita was born and he was gone. Being a single mother at 17 gave me no time to play around and experiment things like kissing the girl"

Phelisa: "It's never too late" she stepped closer to me and before I had a chance to stop her , her lips were on my lips and her tongue pushing its way into my mouth.

Njabulo: "What the hell are you doing?" I heard him shout before I was pulled away from Phelisa's soft lips. When I looked around the room I noticed that almost everyone was in the kitchen staring at us. Ntokozo: "How could you do this to me MaCekane?" his voice sounded strange like he was crying or maybe about to. Before she could even answer he hit her so hard with the back of his hand. I gasped out loud covering my mouth. Phelisa stood there and tears fell from her eyes and then her nose began bleeding. I was surprised that the guys didn't say anything about this. The man just hit his wife and they were just standing there slowly shaking their heads.

Me: "Why did you hit her?" I looked at Ntokozo and looked at me but said nothing.

Joshua: "Come Lisa, let me see your nose"

Ntokozo: "Don't"

Me: "You have no right to hit her like that"

Ntokozo: "Shut up Zandiswa. Just shut the fuck up before I lose it" he warned and took out a handkerchief. He walked to the fridge for some ice cubes and then gave it to Lisa to put against her nose. I looked at Njabulo and he gave me a disappointed look before turning to walk away. I followed him to the lounge.

Njabulo: "I thought you were different, you are not. You are worse than all of them put together"

Me: "What are you talking about? I did nothing wrong"

Njabulo: "You tongue down Phelisa's throat is nothing? Just get out of my face"

Me: "She kissed me and I didn't kiss her back. I don't get what you are fussing about. You are being dramatic"

Njabulo: "Just go, I don't want to look at you right now" I didn't want to end up with blood on my face so I stood up and went to the kitchen. Lisa and Ntokozo were still there nursing her nose. The moment I walked in they walked out.

Thandeka: "Wow, you really are something. You know that?"

Me: "I don't but I feel that you are about to tell me"

Thandeka: "You managed to ruin my sister's marriage by seducing her husband and now you just ruined Lisa's marriage by seducing her. Can't you get enough? Are you really that low?"

Me: "I didn't seduce anybody. It was their plan for us to act like lesbians and Lisa took things to far by kissing me. I know it's easier to blame someone for everything but I had nothing to do with her kissing me"

Thandeka: "drama follows you around like crazy. If you are not being a bitch and refusing to jump, you are being a whore and jumping men like hoops"

Me: "Go ahead and insult me. It's not my fault and you know it" I made a sandwich for my husband and went to give it to him. When I got into the room he was asleep again so I left in next to the bed and walked out. Before I could close the door I heard a crying. A silent weep that made me go back inside to listen carefully.

Ntokozo: "How could you hurt me like this?"

Phelisa: "I'm sorry. I was just playing with Zandiswa"

Ntokozo: "That's how it's start and the next thing I know you will be fucking each other"

Phelisa: "I won't, I swear to you"

Ntokozo: "I want you to stay away from Zandiswa. You hear me?"

Phelisa: "Okay, I'm really sorry baby. I will never do that again"

Ntokozo: "You better or I swear to you, I will kill you and burry you in the garden before planting red roses on top"

Phelisa: "I like lilies"

Ntokozo: "I will plant them as well and some yellow roses" then I heard them laugh.

Phelisa: "You can add a mango tree"

Ntokozo: "I could never do that to you. I love you too much to kill you but please don't touch her like that. I'm the only person you are allowed to kiss and get freaky with"

Phelisa: "I will never"

Ntokozo: "I'm sorry about your nose"

Phelisa: "It's okay"

Ntokozo: "We should go back down stairs. Someone needs to put out the fire"

Phelisa: "what fire?"

Ntokozo: "Lindiwe landed an hour ago. She should be here anytime now"

Phelisa: "Gosh, things are about to get messy. I wonder if Njabulo knows"

Ntokozo: "He does. Njabulo is the one who told me"

Phelisa: "I hope he told Zandiswa as well. This affair is leading to a dangerous path"

Ntokozo: "I feel sorry for Zandiswa though. I honestly don't see Njabulo leaving Lindiwe for her"

Phelisa: "Why do you say that?"

Ntokozo: "Njabulo has another agenda and Zandiswa is just too stupid to see it. She is too naive and I feel sorry for her"

Chapter 34

Hearing Ntokozo say that broke my heart but I didn't have time to cry and feel sorry for myself, I had to act and act first before things got out of hand. I didn't know the type of woman Lindiwe was but she was Thandeka's sister so that alone was scary.

I went downstairs and called Joshua to the side and asked to have a word in private.

Joshua: "What's wrong?"

Me: "I need a favor"

Joshua: "Anything"

Me: "I need to leave the country tonight. Can you get me out of the country?"

Joshua: "Why? Is it because of the kissing you and Lisa pulled?"

Me: "I don't belong here Joshua. I don't fit in and I am tired of being insulted and called names by everyone and whenever they see fit. I want to go"

Joshua: "Where will you go?"

Me: "I don't know but I will figure that out once I have my daughter"

Joshua: "So you will live the rest of your life on the run?"

Me: "Rather that than this. Are you going to help me?"

Joshua: "OCebekhulu don't quit Zandiswa. It's something we just don't do. I know that you don't real believe that you are my sister but until the DNA says the opposite I will treat you like my family. You are the only family that I have Zandi. Zinhle got married and her husband is now her family and that leaves only you. Please don't leave me" he begged.

Me: "You could be my brother Joshua. I don't hate you but I don't like this life and I can see that once I'm in I won't be able to get out"

Joshua: "Than stay and we will breakout together. After this drama we will all start afresh somewhere together. I can get to know your beautiful daughter"

Me: "But Thandeka hates me"

Joshua: "She doesn't, she is just looking out for her sister and Zandiswa, Njabulo and Lindiwe had problems way before you came along"

Me: "It's more complicated than that"

Joshua: "It's not, you are not married, and you didn't cheat on anybody. Lindiwe will deal with her husband if she wants to start a fight. Hold your head high baby girl. You have me in your corner and family comes first in my house"

Me: "So I am not leaving this country?"

Joshua: "What country? You are not leaving this house" he laughed.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "That's what big brothers are for. Go chill and things will work out" I nodded and gave him a hug before we both went downstairs.

The moment we walked down the stairs Thandeka and a lady I assumed was Lindiwe walked to the lounge from the kitchen. They both pause when they saw us.

Thandeka: "Oh, Zandiswa this is my sister Lindiwe. Njabulo's wife"

Lindiwe: "Wow, you are not what I imagined" her tone was mocking.

Me: "What did you imagine?"

Lindiwe: "I don't know. I'm not good with imagining sluts who seduce married men"

Me: "Okay" I went to sit on the couch. She went to sit on the opposite chair and looked at me.

Lindiwe: "How do you sleep at night? Knowing what you are doing with my husband is wrong? I was taking care of your daughter and this is how you thank me?"

Joshua: "Ladies please. Lindiwe you just got here. You need to rest. Go upstairs and take a nap"

Lindiwe: "I don't need anything. I need the slut to look me in the eye and tell me why she slept with my husband in my damn house" she screamed and I swear I heard the windows crack.

Njabulo walked in and paused when he saw his wife. He didn't need to act all surprised like he didn't know she was coming.

Lindiwe: "Don't act surprised. You knew I was coming. I just didn't expect you guys to be housing the whore" she turned and looked up the stairs where Lisa and Ntokozo stood.

Ntokozo: "Aw MaMyeza how was the flight?"

Lindiwe: "I trusted you guys but you let him do this in the same house that you live in"

Ntokozo: "I assume you are talking about your husband. Shouldn't you guys talk about this in private?"

Lindiwe: "Why should we? They are fucking each other in front of you so the need for private is long gone"

Ntokozo: "You are all adults and as adults you can talk about this in a good manner"

Lindiwe: "I have nothing to say to her. I want you to kick her out" she looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "No, she is my sister and I will not kick out my family. You guys will need to sort this out on as adults just like Ntokozo suggested"

Lindiwe: "You don't even know if she is your family. She could be fraud"

Joshua: "Until the DNA proves otherwise, she is a Cebekhulu and I will prefer if you ladies stop insulting her. Don't call her name. This goes to everyone in this house. Zandiswa is my sister and as a big brother it's my job to deal with the bullies. Lisa, Thandeka and you, If I hear you guys call her a slut, whore, tramp etc you will have me to deal with. You married Njabulo not Zandiswa so don't attack her because of your husband's choices. She is human and as a human being she made a mistake but she doesn't need you ganging up on her"

Thandeka: "You are unbelievable Joshua. You are choosing her side over us? You just met her"

Joshua: "It doesn't matter. I'm done talking about this. Zandiswa feel free, what's mine is yours too"

Me: "Thanks broe"

Lindiwe: "Mxm" she stood up and went upstairs. Njabulo followed behind her. Thandeka stayed for few minutes and then went upstairs as well. I stayed with Joshua and Ntokozo because Lisa went to cook in the kitchen.

Me: "The list we went for. Did you guys get it?"

Joshua: "Yeah, you won't believe how many people are involved. People from high place, people you would never suspect"

Ntokozo: "Would you like to see it?"

Me: "Yeah, what's the next step anyway?"

Joshua: "You had a change of heart"

Me: "Well since I can't leave I might as well help out"

Ntokozo: "Just don't kiss my wife"

Me: "Tell her not to kiss me. I was shocked as you guys you were. I've never even dreamed of kissing another woman"

Ntokozo: "Good, I hate it and I hate people who do it"

Me: "why?"

Ntokozo: "Bad experience of the past that I prefer it stays buried"

Me: "Fair enough, about that list. When can I see it?"

Joshua: "It's in Joseph room. There are names crossed out and I thought maybe he can remember them"

Me: "Did he?"

Joshua: "The guy is heavily drugged I doubt he even saw it. It's on the stand"

Me: "I will go get it" I stood up and went upstairs. Joseph was still asleep and I was beginning to worry about his health. He hardly got up for longer than an hour. I was still standing and looking at him when I heard Njabulo and Lindiwe argue.

Njabulo: "would you let me explain?"

Lindiwe: "what's there to explain? You cheated Njabulo. I know you will use Phil as an excuse but you know that you were wrong to sleep with her"

Njabulo: "Will you let me finish, I did it for you"

Lindiwe: "You don't really expect me to believe that do you, what your sleeping with some whore is going to benefit me?"

Njabulo: "I wanted her to give us a child. I just wanted a damn child from her, nothing more" I heard him explain.

Chapter 35

Lindiwe: "You don't expect me to believe that do you?"

Njabulo: "Well it's true. She is perfect and we can both keep an eye on her during the pregnancy"

Lindiwe: "what makes you think she will hand the baby to me?"

Njabulo: "She raised Anita on her own and she doesn't want to raise another fatherless baby. Come on Lindiwe, you saw her and you saw how dumb she is. She will hate me for it and then she will give us the baby to raise"

Lindiwe: "Well she does look very naïve but you can't judge a book by its cover"

Njabulo: "I have this. Pretty soon we will be parents to another baby. You will see but you need to be nice to her. Make her feel guilty for sleeping with me while you were busy taking care of her daughter.

That way when she finds out that she is pregnant, she will give us the baby just to keep the peace”

Lindiwe: “I don’t like this plan at all but okay I will be nice to her”

Njabulo: “That’s all I ask”

Lindiwe: “I wish you had told me about your plan from the start”

Njabulo: “But you know that you would have said no”

Lindiwe: “Yeah I would have”

Njabulo: “Relax, things will work out”

I stood like that as tears just rolled down my cheeks. How could I be so stupid? I should have seen it coming. His wife being busy with another man and doesn’t give a damn about him. He used the oldest line from the book and used me just to please her.

Joseph: “Are you okay?” I heard Joseph ask and I quickly wiped the tears away before turning around to look at him.

Me: “I’m fine, just tired. How are you?”

Joseph: “You look like you are crying, what’s wrong Zandiswa?”

Me: “I miss my daughter, I wish I listened to you”

Joseph: “I’m glad you didn’t. At least now I don’t have to take orders from cruel men. I will get a chance to start over and be an honest man”

Me: “Yeah but I’ve ruined so many things for me”

Joseph: “You made a mistake and its okay. Just like everybody else. What’s important is how you are going to deal with this”

Me: “I don’t know, how I could be so stupid?”

Joseph: “You wanted to protect your daughter and that on its own means you are a good woman.

Me: “Ey I don’t know Jay. Don’t you need some food?”

Joseph: “No, I need bath maybe it will make me feel refreshed and then I can finally go downstairs. I have been a sleep for to long”

Me: “Are you going to manage?”

Joseph: “Yeah I will be fine” he stood up and I helped him limp to the bathroom.

I waited outside while he took a bath, when he finished I helped him get dressed and then took him

down stairs. Njabulo and his wife were already downstairs. the ladies were drinking wine and the guys drinking something gold but Joshua was drinking coca cola.

Ntokozo: "You are up, how are you feeling?"

Joseph: "Better now that I am out of that bed. Hello, I don't believe we have met" he looked at Lindiwe.

Lindiwe: "I am Lindiwe, Njabulo's wife"

Joseph: "Oh, it's nice to meet you. I am Joseph. Zandiswa's husband"

Lindiwe: "You are married?" she looked surprised and she looked at her husband.

Njabulo: "Fake husband"

Me: "He is a husband. Fake or no fake but he is my husband"

Joshua: "It's really nice to see that you are up. Are you comfortable enough?"

Joseph: "I'm okay"

Lindiwe: "So you guys are married but not really married. That must be tough"

Me: "It's not. We understand our agreement"

Lindiwe: "yeah of cause. So what do you do Zandiswa? Besides the obvious?"

Me: "What would that obvious be?"

Lindiwe: "Being a gang member?"

Me: "I am not a member. I'm here because I want to help take down people who think they can play God with other peoples' lives. After that I will go back to my life of being a business woman"

Lindiwe: "You own a business"

Me: "Silver Platters"

Lindiwe: "You own that company?"

Me: "yes, I built it from scratch"

Lindiwe: "Wow, you are a single parent. Where did you get time to build that company?"

Me: "When you are a single parent people doubt you a lot so it's easier when you have people cheering for you to lose"

Lindiwe: "Wow, you have worked so hard, even Anita is such a lovely young woman"

Me: "Thank you, can you lend me your laptop?" I looked at Ntokozo.

Njabulo: "Use mine. It's right here" he stood up and went to pick it up.

Me: "Thank you"

I checked my emails and then contacted Vanessa asking her to be my CEO for a while, while I was busy sorting out family emergencies. She emailed me back and said it was fine. At least now I was going to be able to focus on the mission at hand and work out a plan to deal with Njabulo. I was going to teach him a lesson he would never forget. Something he was going to weep about every time he thought about me. I wasn't going to do it because he seduced me but I was going to do it because he was selfish and he was planning to use me to make his wife happy. He had no right to do something like this to me and then have a nerve to call me stupid in front of her.

Joshua: "You are definitely my sister" I looked up at him and realized that everybody was looking at me.

Me: "why are you guys looking at me like that?"

Joshua: "Your lips are moving like you a planning something huge"

Me: "I'm thinking about work. I need to do something before Anita lose her trust fund money. I need to move my investments" I lied.

Thandeka: "You set up a trust fund for your kid?"

Me: "yeah, I need to look out for the future. I don't want to be naïve and think I will live forever"

Njabulo: "Wow, that's very clever of you"

Me: "Thank you, being a single parent teaches you things. Sometimes it hurts when you hear the truth but it's better to know then to be left hanging when people are done using you"

Joseph: "what are you talking about?"

Me: "I'm talking about life my love, life isn't roses and Anita needs to know that so that she can make informed decisions in her future"

Joseph: "Okay, for a moment there I thought you are talking about something else. Something deep"

Me: "Nope, I'm just planning my daughter's future"

Lindiwe: "That's good; if you have another kid you can do the same again. Set up another trust fund"

Me: "Fortunately I won't have another kid again and I will make sure that I don't ever fall pregnant at all"

Njabulo: "meaning?"

Me: "I'm planning to have my womb removed" the glass Lindiwe was holding slipped and fell on the floor spilling the wine on the carpet leaving red stains like blood stains.

Chapter 36

Thandeka: "Why on earth would you want to remove your womb?"

Me: "It's a decision I made years ago, I'm already on menopause" Lindiwe stood up and went to the kitchen to find a detergent to remove the stain.

Njabulo: "So you can't fall pregnant at all?"

Me: "Yes, raising Anita on my own made me realized that I don't want to raise another kid again"

Thandeka: "That's selfish, how could you be so selfish? Do you have any idea what I would give to have a chance to fall pregnant again?"

Me: "I am not you and I won't live my life the way that you want"

Thandeka: "Almost everything about you is bizarre. If you are not sleeping with a married man, you are kissing married women and now you want to remove your womb. Who does something like that for no reasons?"

Me: "Like I said, I am not you and you can't expect us to think the same way you do"

Lindiwe: "What if you change your mind later?"

Me: "I am already on menopause so even if I change my mind it won't happen"

Njabulo: "Wow, I honestly don't know what to say"

Me: "Don't say anything at all. Why are you guys all up in my business any way? You even spilled your wine"

Joshua: "And she ruined my floor"

Lindiwe: "I'm sorry, I was just shocked that she made such a huge decision just like that"

Me: "You make it sound like I was suppose to discuss with you first"

Njabulo: "Not to discuss but you should have at least thought about it and asked us what we think"

Me: "Yeah right, what next? Are we going to discuss what type of underwear I should wear?"

Njabulo: "Of cause not but I thought we are friends and as friends you share life changing decisions"

Ntokozi: "But Zandi says she made a decision years ago so how was she suppose to ask us for opinions because we didn't know her years ago?"

Me: "And I didn't know that you guys regard me as a friend. After being branded the bad girl I thought

you all hate me except for Joshua who actually stood up for me. I thought I was a naïve bitch”

Njabulo: “Why would you think, we think you are naïve?”

Me: “Because I am not street wise like them” I pointed Thandeka and Lindiwe.

Joshua: “You are perfect the way you are. You don’t have to be street smart Zandiswa”

Me: “Thanks broe”

Njabulo: “We don’t think you are naïve at all. I am just surprised that you can’t have kids. You would make beautiful kids”

Me: “That’s another reason why I am having it removed, when people see me they see a walking incubator. Can you believe it?”

Joshua: “Incubator? How?”

Me: “I was on holiday in Milan and we saw this couple. Beautiful couple and they started befriending us. We didn’t mind because they were South Africans on holiday. Later we found out that they like my daughter and they were convinced that I will be their surrogate. Can you believe it, like I would carry a child for 9 months and then hand it over to someone else” I lied.

Ntokozo: “They actually asked you?”

Me: “No, they assumed that I will say yes because the wife was a cancer survivor. Like it was my fault that she had cancer. Kind like you Lindiwe, just imagine now that you survived that ordeal and then your husband just assume that I will give you guys a child. Like a sane human being would expect that”

Joshua: “They were stupid; there are so many women who are willing to be surrogate. You don’t just pick anyone from the streets”

Lindiwe: “That’s just wrong, they were selfish”

Me: “Two selfish bastards. Do you know what I did?”

Joseph: “I hope you told them to go to hell”

Me: “Nah, I told them that I had my womb removed after having my daughter. But I was lying back then. The decision only came few months later when I was dating this guys who had multiple kids from different women. I realized that I didn’t want more kids. Anita is fine”

Njabulo: “But you made a permanent decision over a temporary situation”

Me: “Meaning?”

Njabulo: “Removing your womb just because some ass hole thought you would carry their child was wrong. You should have said no but still kept your womb”

Me: "I realized that most men see a baby making machine when they look at me so what better way than to be a broken baby making machine. Now I don't care if a guy is just using me because I know that I can never have that permanent reminder"

Joseph: "You make deep decision. Remind me to never mess you up" we all laughed at him but I noticed that Lindiwe and Njabulo were just grinning. Things were going my way and I was going to enjoy every minutes of it.

Lisa called us for dinner and we went to sit at the table. I sat opposite Njabulo and his wife. He was quiet and he kept looking at me when he thought I wasn't looking at him.

Joshua: "So did you look at the list?"

Me: "Sorry, I got destructed"

Joseph: "I did look at it and there are other names missing. Like Mr. Rudy Roberts from Roberts publications. My partner, Mr. Mdluli is not included as well"

Ntokozo: "Mdluli?"

Joseph: "It's Mzulwini and Mdluli"

Lisa: "Your brother be dragging your name through the mud babes"

Ntokozo: "Mdluli is probably his mother's last name" we laughed at him.

Me: "It's okay, there are so many Mthethwa's out there who are dragging me through the mud as well"

Joshua: "That's why we should have the DNA done quickly so you can change to Cebekhulu"

Me: "What if you are not my brother?"

Joshua: "I will still treat you like a sister. You are part of this family now Zandiswa. You and your fake husband"

Joseph: "You like doing that. Reminding me that it's fake"

Joshua: "Well if she turns out to be my sister you will pay lobola and then I will regard you as a husband"

Me: "I don't even want to know how much you will want"

Joshua: "Few millions"

Me: "Hell no, like you paid millions for Thandeka"

Joshua: "You don't want to know how much I really paid for Thandeka. For both of them because their father was mad that we are taking his daughters away from him"

Lindiwe: "We are worth every cent though"

Njabulo: "Yeah and we are blessed to have you ladies in our lives" he kissed her cheek. I sipped my wine and looked at them through the glass. It was going to be so much fun to destroy them when they least expect it. For now my mission was to take care of the pervert who sold my daughter. Their day was coming.

Ntokozo: "So what's next on the plan?"

Joshua: "I say we start on at the bottom and work our way up. Starting with Mr. Mdluli"

Joseph: "We are not at the bottom. The likes of Jenna are at the bottom"

Me: "meaning?"

Joseph: "Most kids are sold by their relatives, so the relatives get in contact with Jenna and The others"

Joshua: "So that means Jenna is the answer to all questions?"

Joseph: "Her and other teachers involved"

Me: "Let me go get the list so we can see who is who" I stood up and went upstairs and grabbed the list before running back to the dining room with it.

Joshua: "Let me see it" I gave it to him.

Joseph: "Most people get into contact with the school and that's where the offer usually takes place"

Me: "The principal just say yes to everyone who wants to sell?"

Joseph: "No, the target is the poor families. Where they are desperate for money they will do anything just to get the cash"

Joshua: "So Jenna is working with her principal?"

Joseph: "Yes but it's not the same with Anita and TM. They were sold before they were even born. So there is no middle man. The deal is between the seller and the buyer"

Me: "Same as the other kids they are raising?"

Joshua: "I have a plan"

Ntokozo: "Let us hear it"

Joshua: "We target the regular customers; get them to rent like 7 girls per night. When they are delivered we snatch them and then deal with the pervert"

Thandeka: "How are we going to get them? The customers?"

Joshua: "If you want to catch something you need to have something that they will kill to have"

Phelisa: "And that would be what?"

Joshua: "Pornography. We throw an undercover porn party. We rent a boat for a weekend and then invite Mr. Ling. He will invite all the porn stars he has on his payroll and that will attract the entire pervert society"

Me: "What makes you think they will come? We are talking about Billionaires, people who don't want to tarnish their image"

Joshua: "It will be private and not open to the public. We get Mr. Ling to hire all the girls at camp and then when they get there we drug all of them including the customers. We rescue the girls and then deal with the men"

Lindiwe: "That's a good plan"

Me: "Yeah except they know us. They won't release the girls"

Joseph: "The customers don't know us. To them we will be perverts just like them"

Ntokozo: "I might work. After we rescued the girls we can take care of the others without worrying about them"

Me: "What if there are kids? if they grow their own that means they could have another group being raised and groomed as we speak"

Joseph: "We need more people"

Joshua: "Don't worry about that. I have dogs waiting to get the instructions. If we take the kids, take the girls and kill the customers those in charge will be forced to come together and work out a strategy. That's when we strike"

Ntokozo: "Then we need Jenna and the other ladies they are the link to the inside"

Joshua: "But first we need to plan the party"

Me: "while you guys are partying in the ship what about us?"

Ntokozo: "You will be in that ship just not in the party"

Me: "That's good because I don't see myself participating in a big orgy"

Ntokozo: "Nobody will, it will be just a cover up. The men will be out of it before the girls even get there so there will be no sex at all"

Thandeka: "Good because I am still traumatized from the last time"

Me: "You participated in an orgy before?"

Thandeka: "Of course not. Ntokozo and Njabulo did" Everybody in the table went quiet.

Chapter 37

Ntokozo stood up and walked out and Njabulo went upstairs. Joshua put down the glass he was holding and gave Thandeka an intense look. Phelisa looked shocked to the core even her fork stopped midway. Lindiwe looked really embarrassed and she stared at Thandeka as if to say 'how could you'. Joseph and I looked at each other and looked at the others. What were they hiding and why would Ntokozo and Njabulo be involved in an orgy and Thandeka know about it. She said she wasn't involved but she saw it happened.

Joshua: "I remember very clear that I asked you to never repeat what you saw" his voice was filled with anger even the veins showed in his forehead.

Thandeka: "it slipped my mind, I'm sorry" she looked down and sniffed.

Joshua: "You are apologizing to a wrong person. What the hell is wrong with you? Since when do you just speak without thinking?"

Thandeka: "I thought they knew"

Joshua: "And them knowing gives you the right to just talk about other people's businesses?"

Thandeka: "No"

Joshua: "You are sleeping on that couch tonight and in fact you will sleep on it until you start minding your tongue" after that he stood up and left as well.

The dinner was ruined so I stood up and helped clear the table. Phelisa collected all the food that was left and stored everything in the fridge.

Phelisa: "I guess now I know why my husband doesn't want to talk about his past"

Me: "At least it's his past not the present and it cannot affect the future"

Phelisa: "Yeah I guess so, I just wished he told me. That wasn't a nice surprise"

Me: "Yep, but I wonder how Thandeka know about it. They wouldn't just get dirty and let her watch"

Phelisa: "Maybe she was with Joshua and they saw it together"

Me: "I guess so, I'm sorry"

Phelisa: "I'm okay Zandiswa; I think he was trying to protect me. But it's not fair. He knows my history but I am not allowed to know his"

Me: "Men think we are weak, they always try to protect us even when there's really no need"

Phelisa: "I think I'm pregnant" she whispered.

Me: "Oh my God, Congratulations" I hugged her.

"I thought I asked you to keep your hands away from my wife" said a deep angry voice behind us. I knew it was Ntokozo but when I turned around I was surprised to see him smiling.

Me: "It's just a hug" I lifted my hands up.

Ntokozo: "I'm just joking, Zandiswa will do the dishes. Come Mrs. Mdluli. We need to talk" he took her hand.

Phelisa: "Goodnight Zandiswa" I watched them walk away before continuing with the dishes.

When I finished I went to the lounge and Joseph was still sitting there alone. The house was quiet but I knew that upstairs it wasn't quiet.

Me: "Going upstairs right now would be a bad idea"

Joseph: "Sleeping there would be a bad idea"

Me: "Joshua needs to fix this. I can't stand to hear people fuck each night"

Joseph: "Did you really do it?"

Me: "Do what?"

Joseph: "Ask the doctor to put you on menopause?"

Me: "Yes, I had to do it"

Joseph: "Okay, it's your body so you have every right"

Me: "Do you feel like Ice cream while we wait for the storms to pass?"

Joseph: "That would be lovely" I stood up and went to check the fridge. I remember seeing it in the grocery. When I found it I went back to Joseph and we ate it. We stayed until we fell asleep on the couch.

Joshua: "Wake up Zandi" I opened my eyes and I was surprised that it was the next morning. Joseph was still sleeping next to me.

Me: "I can't believe that I fell asleep on the couch. My neck is so stiff"

Joshua: "I don't want to know how Joseph will feel when he wakes up. If you are stiff then how is he?"

Me: "You should have wakened me up last night"

Joshua: "You guys looked so cute cuddling here so I let the poor guy enjoy" he laughed and went to the kitchen. I woke Joseph up and helped him upstairs.

Me: "You should go bath first, I will follow you after"

Joseph: "Thank you" he stood up and limped to the bathroom. I looked through the bags and found shorts and a t shirt for him to wear. I found myself a dress as well. I could hear Lindiwe and Njabulo making love and I won't lie and say it didn't hurt because it did but I told myself that it was for the best. It was only a matter of time before the dopamine faded and everything will go back to normal.

When Joseph finished I went to shower and I showered quickly because I was hungry, I didn't even realize how hungry I was until my stomach just kept grumbling and grumbling nonstop. When I stepped out of the shower I felt so light headed I had to hold the wall for support.

Ntokozo: "Are you okay?"

Me: "I'm hungry"

Ntokozo: "You are shaking"

Me: "I am diabetic, runs in the family"

Ntokozo: "Let me help you to your room" he took my hand and walked me to the room.

Joseph: "Are you okay?"

Ntokozo: "She is diabetic. I will go get you something to eat" he walked out.

Joseph: "Why didn't you say?"

Me: "Because I always have it under control but I think it's the stress. Lately I've been going through difficult times"

Joseph: "Do you take medication for it?"

Me: "No, I need to talk to my doctor on my next visit"

Joseph: "You need to see a doctor today"

Me: "I'm fine. That's why I don't tell you guys' things. You act strange when someone shares things with you"

Joseph: "We worry, we are allowed to do so"

Me: "I'm a grown woman Jay" I put the dress on and wore the shoes before walking out. Ntokozo had a sandwich on a plate walking up the stairs.

Ntokozo: "Sorry I took so long" he turned and walked to the couch and I went to sit down.

Me: "Thank you" I took it and ate.

Eating a sandwich brought my energy back. I went to help Thandeka with breakfast. Lindiwe come to help as well.

Lindiwe: "Good morning" she sounded cheerful.

Thandeka: "There is nothing good about it. I didn't get a goodnight sleep. Thanks to certain people who just couldn't stop fucking"

Lindiwe: "I'm sorry, I was just missing my husband. That man knows how to put it down, don't you think so Zandiswa?" she looked at me. For a moment I thought about throwing a boiling kettle on her face but I decided to give her the best answer possible.

Me: "Well I wouldn't know. People say different things about that. For me I would say Njabulo is a minute man. But then again it depends on the partner. If it's over used then it takes way longer for a man to finish. So they say" I beamed at her.

Thandeka: "What are trying to say?"

Me: "She knows what I mean"

Lindiwe: "Actually I don't"

Me: "I mean, to me he lasted for few minutes because my goods are not over used. For you he probably lasted hours because your goods are probably old and worn out. We should take the food to the table" I took the eggs and walked out. I could hear her making comments behind me. I'm sure she was calling me a whore but I didn't care.

We had breakfast in silence. Joshua wasn't talking to Thandeka, Ntokozo and Lisa were like two teenagers who just began dating. They kept looking at each other and just smile. I figured it was the news of her pregnancy.

Me: "Share the news with the rest of us guys"

Joshua: "What news?"

Me: "Lisa's pregnancy" she looked at me in shock like she didn't want the others to know.

Ntokozo: "Are you pregnant?" he looked at her and she looked at me. I realized that he didn't know and I just ruined the surprise.

Phelisa: "I think so, I was going to confirm later and thanks to you" she looked at me.

Me: "I'm sorry I didn't know"

Lindiwe: "Yeah maybe if you stopped meddling in other people's business you wouldn't mess up so often"

Me: "Like you know me. Bitch please" I rolled my eyes.

Ntokozo: "Thank you baby" he kissed her cheek.

Phelisa: "I need to confirm first. Sometimes the body gives wrong signs"

Ntokozo: "It doesn't matter. Go get ready, I am taking you and Zandiswa to a doctor"

Joshua: "What's wrong with Zandiswa?"

Ntokozo: "She is diabetic and she is not on medication"

Njabulo: "And you didn't tell us that you are diabetic?"

Me: "It's none of your business" I stood up and went upstairs to change.

Lisa knocked on my door and said we should go. I followed her downstairs where Ntokozo was already waiting for us.

Ntokozo: "We should be gone for at least an hour or two. Joshua, Thizo is bringing the hacker with Nceba's laptop"

Joshua: "I know what to do"

Ntokozo: "we should go" he opened the door and we walked out. The weather was cold and rainy.

Phelisa: "I need another jacket. This one is not warm enough" she went back to the house.

Ntokozo: "why did you lie?"

Me: "About what?"

Ntokozo: "You are not on menopause and you are not planning to remove your womb" he looked me straight in the eyes.

Chapter 38

Me: "Excuse me?"

Ntokozo: "You are not on menopause"

Me: "How would you know?"

Ntokozo: "You are not a very good liar. You and Joshua make the same mistake when you tell a lie. You can fool the others but you can't fool me"

Me: "So I guess every lie I make you will know about it?"

Ntokozo: "Yes, so it's best if you don't lie to me"

Me: "Okay I won't"

Ntokozo: "Don't be smart. Why did you lie?"

Me: "Because I am angry at someone about something I can't share with you"

Ntokozo: "Okay but be careful Zandiswa" he walked towards the car and I followed behind him.

Phelisa joined us after few minutes and we left. I was quiet the rest of the journey, it did bother me that Ntokozo knew my lying face. It was only a matter of time before everyone else found out. I needed to talk to him and ask him to keep my secret.

When we got into the doctor's office they went inside first while I waited because I wanted to see my own doctor. They took 20 minutes before we left.

Me: "And?" I asked when we got into the car.

Phelisa: "False alarm" she sounded disappointed.

Me: "I'm sorry guys"

Ntokozo: "It's okay dear. We will try again"

Me: "That's good. Hopefully you will score next time"

Ntokozo: "Bad Joke"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Phelisa: "He is just messing with you. Relax" we all laughed.

When we got into Doctor Naicker's office I asked to see her for few minutes. I was lucky that she had an opening so they let me.

Dr Naicker: "Miss Mthethwa, it's been a while"

Me: "I know, I've been busy"

Dr Naicker: "How can I help you with?"

Me: "I'm feeling dizzy. I think it's the stress probably affecting my sugar levels"

Dr Naicker: "Okay, let us check it and see" she took her HGT machine began doing the procedure. I was familiar with it even that thing on my finger didn't hurt anymore. We waited for a minute for the results. When they showed she looked at them puzzled.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

Dr Naicker: "We need to a blood test. The results are not clear. Besides being dizzy, what else are you feeling?"

Me: "I'm hungry all the time"

Dr Naicker: "Have you changed your diet lately?"

Me: "Not really"

Dr Naicker: "I need to draw some blood, send it to the lab. I will call you with the results"

Me: "Thank you" I pulled up my sweater showing her my arm so she could draw the blood.

Dr Naicker: "I need you to relax and take things easy until we get the results" she instructed.

Me: "What do you think it's wrong?"

Dr Naicker: "It could be nothing. We will know for sure when we get the results"

Me: "Okay, how long do you think it will take?"

Dr Naicker: "3 days or maybe 4"

Me: "Thank you"

When I left the doctor's office I was confused and scared a bit. I didn't know what could be wrong.

Ntokoza: "Are you okay?"

Me: "Yeah I'm fine just hungry"

Phelisa: "But we just ate like an hour ago"

Me: "I wasn't full when we left the house" ntokoza's phone.

Ntokoza: "Joshua" listened for a moment before hanging up.

Phelisa: "What's up"

Ntokoza: "Joshua said we should come home" he picked up the speed.

Me: "I hope nothing is wrong"

Ntokoza: "Me too, I can't deal with bad news today"

Phelisa: "Me too" we all went quite until we got into Joshua's drive way. There was another car in the drive way.

Me: "Do you know that car?"

Ntokozo: "No, maybe Mlungisi changed cars" he packed next to the car and got out. We got out too and followed him to the house. When we got inside the house I couldn't believe my eyes. Nceba was sitting on the couch while Njabulo was busy injecting something on her weak and injured body. She looked like someone who survived the war.

Chapter 39

Me: "It's impossible, wasn't she dead?" I spoke after a moment of silence wasn't exactly passing.

Nceba: "I'm sorry Zandiswa" her voice sounded faint like she was about to die.

Me: "What the hell is going on?" I looked at Joshua and he just shrugged his broad shoulders.

Njabulo: "She is severely dehydrated but she will be fine"

Me: "She better be, she owes me answers" I went to the kitchen to drink some water. I was so thirsty I drank 3 large glasses and they filled up my stomach it felt like the water was literary up to my neck.

Joseph: "What did the doctor say?" he asked when he walked in.

Me: "She is sending the blood to the lab for some tests" I answered letting out a loud burp.

Joseph: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "Angry at Nceba. How can she play games with my feeling like it's nothing? I thought she was dead for real Joseph and now she just rocks up looking like a wounded soldier" tears just streamed down my face and I didn't even realized I was that angry.

Joseph: "She will give us answers when she is a bit stronger, for now we need to be strong" he pulled me into his arms in a tight hug. I made a mistake of sniffing against his chest and the smell of his cologne made my stomach turn. Almost everything I ate for breakfast came back and I made it in the bathroom just in time. I threw up until I felt empty and exhausted.

Ntokozo: "Zandiswa! Are you okay?" he banged the door and it felt like he was banging my head.

Me: "I'll be right out just now" I managed to say as I stood up and flushed the toilet. I went to the sink and washed my face. The feeling of cold water hitting my face wasn't nice like I thought it would be, instead it made me nauseas again but I didn't throw up again.

When I exited the bathroom Ntokozo and Joshua were standing near the door and they gave me questioning looks.

Joshua: "You need a hospital?"

Me: "No, I think it's the stress"

Ntokozo: "Why would the stress cause you to throw up?"

Me: "I'm not a doctor Ntokozo so I don't know" I snapped at him.

Ntokozo: "Maybe Njabulo should take a look at you" he suggested.

Me: "I said I'm fine" I walked back to the lounge and they followed. Thandeka and Lindiwe looked at me when I sat down. I decided to ignore them because I knew they were going to piss me even further off. Nceba was asleep and Njabulo was sitting next to her.

Me: "How long will it take for her to wake up?"

Njabulo: "I'm waiting for Doctor Forbes"

Me: "I hope it soon because she owes me answers"

Njabulo: "I'm sure when she is ready she will talk"

Me: "I'm going to rest for a bit, I'm tired" I stood up and walked upstairs to the bedroom. The moment I put my head in the pillow I dozed off.

I woke up covered in sweat and screaming. When I looked around I realized that I was having a horrible dream about Joseph covered in blood. It looked like he was bleeding from a chest wound and I was trying to stop the bleeding but it just got worse and worse. I sat up in bed and wept. At first it was just tears streaming down my face nonstop but it got worse and worse until I found myself wailing out loud. Joshua knocked once and walked in.

Joshua: "What's wrong?" he asked trying to comfort me. I just cried harder. I heard other voices fill the room.

Ntokozo: "maybe she needs a doctor"

Joseph: "You went to the doctor with her. What did she say?"

Phelisa: "She didn't tell us but I think it's the stress guys, it can't be easy and we haven't been friendly to her"

Joshua: "Maybe she is having a breakdown or something"

Lindiwe: "Why would she have a breakdown? She must be feeling guilty about something"

Joshua: "Lots of things could cause for her to feel like this. This is a single mother, she just found out that someone sold her only daughter, she is married to Joseph and she could be turning into a killer. It's possible for her to be having a breakdown. We don't really know her that well except what she told us"

Thandeka: "It can't be easy guys, just because we are used to this life doesn't mean everyone can just adjust to it so easy"

Joseph: "So what do we do now? She is still crying"

Ntokozo: "Let me call Njabulo" I heard the door close. I wanted to stop but I just couldn't. suddenly I found myself feeling sad and all I wanted to do was to let it all out.

Joseph: "Zandiswa" he held my chin. I looked at him.

Joshua: "It's okay, you are feeling sad and it's okay. We are going to call Anita, how is that?" I nodded between the tears. Joshua took out his phone and dialed the numbers. Ntokozo and Njabulo walked in.

Njabulo: "Zandiswa, are you in pain?"

Me: "No" I answered looking at Joshua waiting for him to say my daughter was on the line.

Njabulo: "I need you to look at me"

Me: "I'm fine, I just need to hear my daughter's voice"

Njabulo: "You will but you need to rest. I'm going to give you something to help you sleep" he took my arm.

Me: "Don't, I want to talk to Anita first"

Joshua: "Here, talk to her" he handed me his phone.

Me: "My love"

Anita: "Mum, are you sad? Your voice sounds strange"

Me: "I was asleep, I just woke up" I lied.

Anita: "Okay, anyway how are you?"

Me: "I'm good just missing you" tears filled my eyes again but I didn't want to cry and scare her.

Anita: "I'm fine and I miss you a lot. I miss your food to" she giggled.

Me: "You have to come home my love. I need to see you"

Anita: "When it's safe we will be there mum. Are you sure you are okay? You sound like you are crying"

Me: "I'm fine sweetheart just missing you. I love you Anita"

Anita: "I love you too mum and you are making me cry"

Me: "I'm sorry for that" I laughed a bit.

Anita: "Mum, Aunt Bongeka is taking us to the movies so can we chat later?"

Me: "Okay my love, I will call you later"

Anita: "I love you a lot bye mum"

Me: "I love you more bye Nita" I heard her laugh before the line went dead. After talking to my daughter I felt worse than before.

Njabulo: "This will help you sleep" he injected something into my arm.

Me: "I'm hungry"

Joseph: "Try to sleep, when you wake up you will feel better" he pulled the blanket over me and I closed my eyes trying to sleep.

I kept drifting into deep sleep and waking up but only for a few seconds before sleeping again. This kept happening until I finally woke up and Njabulo was sitting next to me.

Me: "What are you doing here?" I asked sitting up.

Njabulo: "How are you feeling?" he looked really sad.

Me: "Tired, what's wrong?"

Njabulo: "Why didn't you tell me that you are pregnant?"

Me: "What happened to my baby?" I removed the blanket from my body and the sheet was soaked in blood.

Njabulo: "You lost the baby"

Me: "No!!!!!" I cried out loud and when he tried to hold me I kept hitting him telling him to let me go. He held me tight until I opened my eyes and Joseph was holding me.

Joseph: "You are having a nightmare" he rocked me back and forth. I was relieved it was only a dream, a sad dream.

Chapter 40

4 Days later.

I woke up early and went to take a shower before everybody else was up. I had asked Ntokozo to take me to the doctor for my results and he agreed. It was better asking him because Joseph couldn't drive me and I needed to be safe. I was still feeling sick and threw up almost after every meal but the sad feeling was gone. Nceba was still weak but better than before, in fact it was only a matter of time before she woke up and hopefully told us what was going on.

Ntokozo: "Shall we?"

Me: "Don't you want breakfast first?"

Ntokozo: "No, I'm fine"

Lindiwe: "Where are you guys going?"

Me: "It's none of your business"

Lindiwe: "Lisa, you are letting her go with your husband just like that? Ntokozo is the only guy she hasn't fucked yet and right now you are giving her that chance. Don't say I didn't warn you"

Ntokozo: "Don't start and don't fill my wife's head with that nonsense. Let's go Zandiswa"

Me: "See you guys" I rolled my eyes at Lindiwe. Joshua and Njabulo laughed at her.

The trip to the doctor's office was quiet. My mind was wondering about all the possibility of being diagnosed with an incurable disease because I didn't know what was wrong with me and I was tired all the time.

Ntokozo: "You are very quiet, are you scared?" he asked as we sat in the waiting room.

Me: "I'm scared"

Ntokozo: "There's nothing to be scared about. I can go in with you if you want" he offered.

Me: "It's okay. I'll be fine. Thank you though" he nodded and we waited until the secretary called us in.

Ntokozo: "I'll be here when you return" he smiled and I smiled back before going into the doctor's office.

Dr Naicker: "Miss Mthethwa, I'm glad to see you. Please sit"

Me: "If you are glad than I guess it's not that bad news" I sat down.

Dr Naicker: "It's not bad news at all. How are you feeling?"

Me: "Tired, sometimes sad all I want to do is cry and then I throw up after every meal"

Dr Naicker: "That's tough but hopefully it will pass. I will give you some vitamins and I hope it will help but morning sickness doesn't last that long sometimes"

Me: "Morning sickness? As in like I am pregnant?" I looked at her in shock.

Dr Naicker: "Yes you are, we can do a scan so you can see"

Me: "It's impossible, I used protection"

Dr Naicker: "Maybe the condom burst, there are many possibilities Miss Mthethwa"

Me: "I'd like to do the scan" I requested. She nodded and handed me a gown. I stood up and went to change before lying on the bed. My head was spinning, how can I fall pregnant when I used protection and the last time I slept with Njabulo was too soon for the pregnancy to be showing. The doctor had to be wrong but I didn't want to tell her that.

Dr Naicker: "That's your baby" she pointed the screen. Honestly I didn't see anything at all.

Me: "How far am I?"

Dr Naicker: "about two weeks"

Me: "I don't understand"

Dr Naicker: "Like I said before, sometimes the condom burst. That's why we suggest that people use a condom and another form of birth control like a pill"

Me: "I wasn't using anything because I was single for years and I only had sex few days ago"

Dr Naicker: "Maybe the condom burst because they are not hundred percent as well"

Me: "I guess so. I don't want this baby"

Dr Naicker: "You have other options as well. I will give you a card for someone you can talk to"

Me: "I don't need to talk to someone. I want to have an abortion"

Dr Naicker: "I understand that it a shock for you but you have time to make a decision. Go home and think about this"

Me: "I lied and told people that I am on menopause. Can you imagine when they find out that I'm pregnant"

Dr Naicker: "Why would you lie about that?"

Me: "I was angry and disappointed. He turned out to be a biggest jerk I've ever met and I was hurt"

Dr Naicker: "You have time to decide on what's best for you. You are only two weeks pregnant"

Me: "You said two weeks?"

Dr Naicker: "Yes, some people take weeks before they get the signs unlike you. But people are different and every pregnancy is different"

Me: "Are you sure that I am two weeks?" that meant it wasn't Njabulo's baby but Joseph. I forgot about sleeping with him twice without a condom and him promising the morning after pill.

Dr Naicker: "Yes I'm sure"

Me: "I'm sorry Doctor. You must think I'm crazy. I just remembered something. I don't want to abort my

child" I stood up and went to change.

When I was done with the doctor I went to Ntokozo. He was still sitting there paging some women magazine.

Me: "Seeing anything you like?" I joked.

Ntokozo: "A tip on how to deal with morning sickness" he looked up.

Me: "So you know that as well"

Ntokozo: "Lisa had it on both her pregnancy"

Me: "You have two kids?"

Ntokozo: "Nope, she had a miscarriage on the first baby"

Me: "I'm sorry, that must have been hard for you guys"

Ntokozo: "Yeah it was especially knowing it was someone selfish who was the reason"

Me: "Who? Don't tell me someone killed the baby"

Ntokozo: "Lindiwe hit her and she didn't even show any remorse. Can we go?" he stood up and took the car keys.

Me: "Why didn't you guys send her to jail or something? She hit a pregnant woman"

Ntokozo: "It wasn't going to bring back my baby. I was worried about Phelisa because she wasn't coping with the loss. But between you and I, I hated Lindiwe for few years. If Njabulo isn't my friend I don't know what I would have done to her" when he said that he smiled.

Me: "Wow she is such a bitch for a murderer"

Ntokozo: "Ignore her, she likes to act like a saint if it someone else but she forgets that she has her own demons"

Me: "You don't say. Do you mind if we buy something to eat. I'm starving"

Ntokozo: "No problem so what did the doctor say?"

Me: "You don't know?" I was surprised because I thought he knew when he talked about morning sickness.

Ntokozo: "Am I supposed to know?"

Me: "No, it's just that you said something that made me think maybe you figured it out"

Ntokozo: "That you are pregnant?" he looked at me.

Me: "Yes, it turns out I am pregnant"

Ntokozo: "Joseph?"

Me: "Yes"

Ntokozo: "So the menopause story is back to bite you in the butt?"

Me: "Please don't remind me" we both laughed.

We went to Wimpy and ordered breakfast. Ntokozo asked the waiter to give us dry toast and tea first.

Me: "You are not hungry?"

Ntokozo: "It's for you my dear. They say it helps with the sickness"

Me: "I doubt that very much"

Ntokozo: "We will see" he laughed. The waiter brought us that tea and dry toast. I ate it.

Me: "Where am I supposed to fit my breakfast?"

Ntokozo: "You are eating for two now so it will fit just fine"

The waiter brought our breakfast and we ate but I asked him to remove the egg. Just looking at it made me feel sick. When we finished we paid and went home.

Me: "Can you do me a favor?"

Ntokozo: "Keep it a secret?"

Me: "Yes please"

Ntokozo: "That's a bad idea. You can't hide a human being Zandiswa. They are not stupid so they will know that something is up and your belly will probably show later"

Me: "I know but I need to figure out few things first"

Ntokozo: "No, we need to keep you and your baby safe. Already you need to take it easy and how will we explain that to the others?"

Me: "I will make up a lie or something"

Ntokozo: "And that lie will come back to bite you again. Just tell them the truth and then we will figure it out because already you are off the mission"

Me: "What?"

Ntokozo: "Yes, I am not risking your pregnancy for some low lives. From now on you are staying home"

Me: "You don't tell me what to do"

Ntokozo: "I wasn't asking for your permission. I'm telling you that you are staying home now and Zandiswa that isn't open for discussion" he stopped the car in Joshua's drive way.

Me: "I hate you"

Ntokozo: "Whatever just come inside and tell the guys the news" he opened the door and I got out. I didn't even wait for him I went straight inside and I was greeted by a smell of fried mushrooms. Everything I ate at Wimpy came back and I didn't make it to the bathroom this time. I threw up all over the floor. Phelisa helped me to the bathroom and I took my clothes off because I couldn't stand the smell.

Phelisa: "Are you going to be okay?"

Me: "Yes, thank you" I stepped into the shower and allowed the water to cool by body.

Phelisa: "I will go get your gown" she walked out. I stood there and tried to calm down because I was starting to feel emotional. This pregnancy wasn't like Anita's pregnancy. I never got sick when I was carrying her. In fact my mum used to shout at me saying I forget that I was carrying a human being because I did everything that pregnant women avoid. This time it was going to be tough. Phelisa brought the gown and left again. I finished showering and wore the gown. Going upstairs was a challenge because they were sitting in the lounge staring at me but I swallowed my pride and walked past them.

Ntokozo: "Are you forgetting something" I ignored him and proceed up the stairs. I heard him laugh but I was happy that he didn't tell them or force me to do so because I wasn't ready yet.

When I got to the bedroom I was surprised to find Joseph sitting on the bed looking at my pills.

Joseph: "So you are not on menopause and you are pregnant" he spoke in a sad voice.

Me: "I'm sorry I lied" I sat down next to him.

Joseph: "Have you told him? Does he know that you are pregnant?"

Me: "It's not what you think, it's actually....." He cut me off

Joseph: "I want you to get rid of it. I know I am just your fake husband but you carrying someone else's child while using my name is not on. Get rid of it before it destroys this family" after that he stood up and walked out.

Chapter 41

I didn't have the energy to talk to Joseph so I let him walk away and made a mental note to talk to him when he was calm because I wasn't getting rid of the baby. I didn't abort Anita when I was a teenager

even when Jonathan's mother handed me a R1000 to go for it I couldn't so I wasn't going to start now. If he still rejected it even after finding out the truth then I was going to be a single mum once again. Maybe this single thing was some sort of a curse for me and my mother. I was still sitting like that when I heard the sound of something falling and then voices shouting. I stood up and went to check it out.

Joseph: "You bastard" he spoke trying to break free from Joshua's grip. Njabulo was being held back by Ntokozo and his lip was bleeding. That alone confirmed my worse fear. I knew that Joseph had told Njabulo about the pregnancy.

Lindiwe: "Yeah, starring at the mess you created?" she looked at me and every pair of eyes looked at me.

Thandeka: "Is it true? Are you really pregnant with Njabulo's baby?"

Me: "No" I turned and walked away.

Ntokozo: "Zandiswa, just tell them the truth"

Me: "Why should I? It's my baby and I will raise him or her myself"

Joseph: "You are getting rid of that thing" he shouted.

Njabulo: "It's not your decision to make"

Joseph: "She is my wife"

Njabulo: "Fake wife and she is carrying my child"

Joseph: "let me kill him" he looked at Joshua.

Lindiwe: "I don't mind raising the baby. If it's my husband's baby then I will raise it"

Me: "You would like that wouldn't you? Your plan working out perfectly" I walked down the stairs.

Lindiwe: "I'm trying to fix your mess"

Me: "The mess your husband was trying to create? Haven't you guys heard of surrogacy?"

Joshua: "What are you talking about Zandiswa"

Me: "Well since it out in the open then I guess you should know. There was no menopause. I lied because I heard them say they want a baby from me. Njabulo was going to make me pregnant so that she can have a baby"

Thandeka: "Is it true?" she looked at her sister. Lindiwe looked away. Joshua released Joseph.

Joshua: "Go upstairs Zandiswa" he instructed.

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Just go upstairs Zandiswa and for once in your life just do as I tell you"

Me: "I'm not a child Joshua. You don't tell me what to do"

Joshua: "I just did and if you don't take yourself upstairs right now I will take you myself"

Ntokozo: "Go and Lisa go as well"

Joshua: "All of you just go upstairs right now" I was ready to protest but Thandeka and Lisa got up and walked up the stairs without so much as a back chat. I followed them as well.

Lisa: "So are you ready to face motherhood again?" she asked as we sat on the bed. My mind wasn't even there. I wished to be a fly and hear what they were talking about downstairs.

Me: "I guess so, I made this bed so I need to lie on it"

Thandeka: "You make it sound like it a curse? You are going to give someone life Zandiswa"

Me: "It's a mess"

Lisa: "You are not seriously married to the guy so there's no need to feel sad"

Me: "He is the father"

Thandeka: "Joseph?"

Me: "Yes, I'm two weeks pregnant"

Lisa: "Did you tell him?"

Me: "He didn't give me a chance. He just assumed that Njabulo is the father"

Thandeka: "You need to tell him"

Me: "Duh, what do you think? Of course I will tell him as soon as he gives me a chance"

Thandeka: "You can't really blame him for assuming something else. You are the one who slept with someone else's husband"

Me: "Reminding me the obvious again" I rolled my eyes at her.

Lisa: "So I was probably sensing your pregnancy"

Me: "Could be"

Thandeka: "I can't believe that Lindiwe would let Njabulo do that. If they wanted the baby so bad they could have adopted"

Me: "They probably thought they will get a walking incubator" Lisa laughed at that.

Thandeka: "They are being selfish"

Me: "Oh well sadly they won't even get a fighting chance because it's my husband's baby" I lay my head down and before long I dozed off.

I woke up when I heard someone open the door. The light was on to show that it was already the evening.

Joseph: "Here is some food" he handed me a plate" I sat up and took it.

Me: "Thank you, what time is it?"

Joseph: "around 7:30pm. You slept the whole afternoon"

Me: "But I am still sleepy"

Joseph: "when are you getting rid of that thing?"

Me: "I'm not killing our baby Joseph"

Joseph: "So you expect me to be fine with that?"

Me: "I know that what I did was wrong but I'm sorry and I hope that you will forgive me so that we can raise this baby together"

Joseph: "I'm sorry but I'm not willing to father someone else's baby. Already Njabulo has no respect for me so raising his child will not be a wise thing for me"

Me: "I'm two weeks pregnant Joseph. You are the father"

Joseph: "What?"

Me: "I slept with you without a condom twice in your house"

Joseph: "You must think I'm stupid Zandiswa. I love you but I am not stupid nor that desperate"

me: "I'm not lying Joseph. The baby is yours"

Joseph: "And I'm supposed to laugh now and hug you? You sleep with someone else and when they dump you like a hot potato you come to me and say it's mine? You disrespected me Zandiswa. Made me a laughing stock in front of your brother's friends and now you expect me to just take your word for it?"

Me: "I don't actually expect you to do that. I was letting you know that you are the father. If you don't want this baby just say so but don't remind me of my mistakes, I know what I did was wrong and I'm paying for it"

Joseph: "Don't raise that tone with me. Just because you are pregnant doesn't mean I can't smack you to the next century"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joseph: "We are going to do a DNA test"

Me: "We can't do that now. You know that will risk the pregnancy"

Joseph: "I know, when the baby is born we will do it. Until then I want nothing to do with you. I'll sleep on the floor" he stood up and took the pillow. I went quiet and ate my food. I knew he was just angry and the moment he calmed down he was going to stop being ridiculous and let us work it out like two adults.

When I finished eating I went downstairs to wash my plate. The guys were sitting there looking rather destructed.

Me: "What's wrong now?"

Joshua: "Nceba just got worse. She had an infection"

Me: "Where is she?"

Joshua: "Njabulo is busy with her in the room"

Me: "Can I see her?"

Joshua: "I don't know. Ask Njabulo" he looked behind me. I turned around and looked at Njabulo. His face told me it was bad news.

Me: "Can I see her?"

Njabulo: "Yeah but it doesn't look good. I think we should take her to the hospital" I walked passed him and went to the room. She was awake but looking weak. I went to sit next to her. The anger I had for her was all gone.

Me: "Hey"

Nceba: "You look sad, what's wrong?"

Me: "I'm pregnant. Joseph is the father" when I said that her face changed.

Nceba: "Where is Anita?"

Me: "In Canada, she is safe from your friends. Why didn't you tell me?"

Nceba: "I was scared and they were going to kill you"

Me: "Who? Who was it that sold my daughter?"

Nceba: "It was Jonathan's parents and your mother" after she said that her eyes rolled to the back of her head and the hand that was holding my hand let go. I looked at her my eyes blinded by tears.

Me: "Please tell me it's not true" I looked at her and when she didn't respond I screamed at her but she was already gone unable to explain anything further.

Chapter 42

I couldn't believe that Nceba once again was gone with all the answers. Surely she was mistaken when she said my mother was involved in the selling of my daughter. My mother loved Anita. She helped me raised her. When Jonathan's parents told me in my face that they did not want a black girl with their son my mum was there for me. She helped me through the pregnancy and when Jonathan was gone she was there for me. She was wrong she had to be wrong.

Njabulo: "You need to rest" when he said that I glanced at the big watch on the wall and it was almost 1am. I was surprised that I had managed to stay glued on the couch for hours just staring into space and thinking about Nceba.

Me: "I'm not sleepy. She was wrong. It's not my mother. My mother was a church woman. She wouldn't sell her granddaughter for cash"

Thandeka: "You will be surprised on things people do for cash"

Me: "Don't even try to bash my mother's name. I knew my mother and Nceba was lying about her. She was a lying bitch so I am not taking her words"

Joshua: "There's more to this than it meets the eye. We need to give her a proper burial"

Me: "Count me out"

Ntokozo: "You need to take it easy. Think about your baby"

Me: "I'm hurting Ntokozo, how can people betray me like that? My own mother!" tears began streaming down my face.

Phelisa: "Maybe there is a clue in her things"

Njabulo: "Check her hand bag" Phelisa went to take her bag and emptied it on the table. There were three passports with different names but her face, cash, eye contacts and folded papers that looked like photocopies of hand written documents.

Joshua: "Talk about travelling light. She didn't have much"

Ntokozo: "But she had enough" he picked the papers up and looked at them.

I was feeling nauseas so I went to the bathroom to get ready to go if I needed to do it. After 15 minutes it passed so I washed my hands and walked out bumping to Lindiwe on the passage.

Lindiwe: "Are you okay?"

Me: "Like you care" I walked away.

Lindiwe: "You are carrying my husband's baby Zandiswa. You can't expect me to be okay with that, just be grateful that I am showing some sympathy towards you"

Me: "It's not Njabulo's baby. I wish you would stop dreaming" I walked back to the guys. Ntokozo was still reading the papers. I picked one because I wanted to see what the big deal about it was. It looked like a diary entry. That read like this:

3 February

I found her, she goes by the name of Monica Bhengu now. Totally different to Nombuso Mbatha like she was previously known, she agreed to help me escape just like she did. It scary but it's worth it. I don't know how to say goodbye to them because after this I will be dead and I need them to learn to live with that.

Me: "It's a diary" I looked at another piece of paper.

Ntokozo: "Some pages are missing but it belongs to some guy named Adrian Donovan"

Me: "Looked like it was copied in the hurry or something and there's something familiar with Monica Bhengu. I've heard that name before"

Njabulo: "Yeah I've heard of it too but I don't remember where"

Phelisa: "It was in the magazine. Remember the magazine you were reading and you said it was junk. It must be somewhere here" she went to check the table in the corner.

Me: "Monica Bhengu, owja I remember she was a prostitute and she had a daughter. I read the story about her mother"

Phelisa: "I found it" she brought the magazine to us and we paged through it until we found the article. The picture of Monica Bhengu's daughter was there.

Me: "I don't understand. Monica Bhengu was found dead when she was 18. She didn't have a daughter"

Phelisa: "This article says Monica Bhengu's daughter runs a shelter for abused kids"

Njabulo: "It's totally different people who happen to have the same name"

Me: "No, Monica Bhengu died when she was 18 and Nombuso Mbatha stole her identity. It says so on the diary entry" I pointed the piece of paper I was reading before.

Njabulo: "That's impossible" he picked up the magazine and looked at the girl his eyes filling up with tears.

Joshua: "And now?"

Njabulo: "Nombuso Mbatha was my sister. My supposed to be dead sister"

Ntokozo: "What?" he took the magazine from Njabulo's trembling hands and looked at the picture.

Joshua: "She faked her own death and then stole the dead girl's identity?"

Me: "Can someone do that?" I looked at Joshua.

Ntokozo: "Mr. Adrian Donovan probably did the same. He stole someone's identity. The question now is, who is he and where is he?"

Joshua: "I think it's time I tell you guys the truth" we all stopped what we were doing and looked at him.

Joshua: "The story I told you about me hiring a girl for the night was a lie"

Thandeka: "What?" she stood up but sat down again.

Joshua: "I didn't rent your daughter. Nceba approached me with TM's pictures. She said she knows that I was married to Thandeka Memela who was now known as Thandeka Myeza. You guys know me; you all know that if something is about Thandeka I get to the bottom of it because I love this woman. So I began doing I listened and she told me that TM was Thandeka's daughter. She told me what was happening to her and that she wanted to help her and all the other kids. I asked her how she got into this cruel business and she told me that she grew up there. When she became an adult they stopped selling her so she was now a member. Her job was to train the girls and prepare them for the business. Nceba hated her job but quitting meant death so she couldn't leave. That's why she came to find me. TM wasn't the only girl she wanted to rescue. She told me that she befriended a single mother whose daughter was going to face the same fate in the future. She meant Zandiswa. When she showed me the picture of Zandiswa and her daughter I thought about my own granddaughter and I couldn't let them get to her. I agreed to help Nceba. I told her that I was going to involve my friends and she was fine with that until I revealed my friends to her. She knew Njabulo because she knew about Monica and her escape plan. When we were busy working out few things she discovered that Zandiswa and I share the same father. That was a coincident because we were looking through the hospital files and we saw that my father donated some cells for you when you were born. So I knew that I was not helping some random woman on the street but I was helping my sister and the woman I love. I'm sorry that I didn't tell you sooner"

I was so shocked I couldn't even speak. All I felt was some sharp pain on my lower body like I was going to have my periods.

Chapter 43

Ntokozo: "Who dropped her off?" he looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "We didn't see him but it was a man who drove off the moment we opened the door"

Ntokozo: "Then Mr. Donovan it the one who dropped her off. Judging by these diary entries, Mr. Donovan has been watching someone and planning something with Nceba. Here it says: "I watched them the whole day today, he is a man but not enough. I need someone with balls and this man is a wimp. They need someone strong and someone who won't think but act on their defense when the time comes" what do you think he meant by that?"

Joshua: "I don't know. Isn't there something else? More clues?"

Njabulo: "Maybe he was following my sister around. My sister was a single mother and she escaped this hell life. It's possible that he was watching her and trying to help them"

Joshua: "Then we need to find Monica's Daughter. I've done many things in my life but this one takes the cake. Right now I don't know whether we are coming or going. When you think you just found a break through something else popup"

Me: "Something hurts" I couldn't ignore the pain anymore.

Joshua: "where?"

Me: "In my stomach" I tried to breathe through the pain.

Njabulo: "What did you do?" he asked looking at me. I didn't respond because I didn't know what he was asking.

Ntokozo: "You are bleeding, we need to get her at the hospital" he picked me up while Joshua ran upstairs to get Joseph.

Me: "Oh God aaaaaah" I screamed when the pain became more intense"

Joseph: "Hang in there my love please" he brushed my hair. Ntokozo was driving in such a high speed it felt like we were flying but that helped because we got to the hospital just in few minutes. Ntokozo picked me up again and ran with me inside. The nurse came with a stretcher and I was placed in it before being pushed to somewhere I didn't know. I could hear voices speaking above me but I was into much pain to focus.

Nurse: "It's going to be okay. Sir you need to wait here"

Joseph: "Just save them both, please" I heard Joseph plead before I was wheeled into another room. There was too much light and I needed to sleep.

I kept drifting in and out of consciousness and at some point I woke up when there was a doctor staring at me. He smiled when he saw that I was awake. I was too dazed but there was something about his eyes. Do you know when someone who is wearing a mask, you don't know who they are but they know you. It was like that, his eyes knew me. When I opened my mouth to speak he slightly shook his head and said I needed to rest. I obeyed him because I was tired.

When I woke up again Ntokozo was sitting next to me. He looked angry but he smiled when he saw that I was awake.

Ntokozo: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "Tired, what happened?"

Ntokozo: "I should be asking you. Why did you do it?"

Me: "Do what?"

Ntokozo: "This is not the time to act stupid. You knew what you were doing when you did it. How could you try to abort your own baby?"

Me: "what are you talking about? I did not try to abort my kid" just the thought of him thinking I tried that was horrible.

Ntokozo: "So the doctors are lying? You didn't try to do it?"

Me: "I honestly don't know what you are talking about. I would never kill my baby"

Ntokozo: "Some heavy chemicals were found in your blood. Are you trying to tell me that someone tried to poison you?"

Me: "It's the only explanation"

Ntokozo: "Let me get you a doctor" he stood up and left. After few minutes he came back with a doctor.

Me: "Is my baby okay?"

Doctor: "Yes Miss Mthethwa, we managed to save your pregnancy. I'm going to refer to Doctor Collins, she will help you deal with the pregnancy and other issues you might be going through"

Me: "I did not try to abort my baby" I looked at the doctor. He looked at Ntokozo.

Doctor: "Miss Mthethwa we found some heavy chemicals in your blood"

Me: "Someone did it not me. Why would I kill my baby?"

Doctor: "I think you need to call the police then and report it"

Me: "I will"

Ntokozo: "When can she get out of here?"

Doctor: "She needs to rest, we are going to do another scan but you need to rest so I suggest two or three days in this bed"

Ntokozo: "I have a bed at home and I can even tie her up if I have to"

Doctor: "I don't suggest that sir"

Ntokozo: "She is not staying, do what you have to do and she is coming home today"

Doctor: "Sir, it's important for her to be here. I know I said she is fine but she still needs some medical attention"

Ntokozo: "I will see to that, thank you doctor" he smiled. The doctor looked at him with a defeated look but nodded and left.

The only conclusion I had in my head was that Joseph was the one who tried to get rid of the baby. He was the one who gave me food when I woke up. It hurt me that he tried that because that meant he really believed that Njabulo was the father.

Ntokozo: "Please don't cry"

Me: "How can I not see when my husband is trying to kill our baby?" I wiped the tears with the back of my hand.

Ntokozo: "Joseph?"

Me: "He is the only one who gave me food. I just don't get it. He said we will wait for the test when I told him that it his"

Ntokozo: "You can't blame him. What you did was wrong. What if the baby was Njabulo's? what would you have done?"

Me: "It's not so I won't waste time thinking about what if's"

Ntokozo: "You should be glad you are not my wife"

Me: "meaning?"

Ntokozo: "I was going to teach you a lesson. Make sure that if you ever look at another man you remember what I did to you and shiver"

Me: "Well I'm not"

Ntokozo: "And you should thank your lucky stars" he smiled.

Me: "You are a cruel man Ntokozo, you threaten someone and then smile in their faces like what you are doing is nothing"

Ntokozo: "I'm not getting into that with you, All I'm saying is that I was going to deal with you in a manner you will never forget"

Me: "Maybe I should stay here and tell the doctor that the threat is at home"

Ntokozo: "I'm married dear and Phelisa is the only woman I am allowed to discipline when she gets out of line"

Me: "You know that beating a woman is a crime?"

Ntokozo: "who said anything about beating her? I don't do that"

Me: "What other form of discipline is there?"

Ntokozo: "You are not my wife so you are not allowed to know. Let me check what's keeping the doctor" he walked out.

The scan was done and the doctor said everything was fine. I got instructions to stay in bed and lots of pills. Ntokozo assured the doctor that I was going to stay in bed until the baby was born. We left the hospital just after midday. Joseph came to pick us up.

Joseph: "I've never been so scared in my life"

Me: "Why?"

Joseph: "Why did you try to kill our baby? I know that I was angry but I told you that we can do the test when the baby is born"

Me: "What are you trying to do? Trying to make me feel guilty for your own doing? You gave me the food and that food was the only thing I ate"

Joseph: "I hope you are not trying to say I poisoned your food?"

Me: "You said it not me" I looked out the window.

Joseph: "How can you be so selfish Zandiswa? After everything I've done for you? I risked my life and married you. You decide to fuck someone and when you get pregnant you tell me it's mine I tell you that it's okay we will have a DNA test and then you try to abort the baby only to blame me afterwards. Is that how you thank me?"

Ntokozo: "If you didn't poison her food then who did?"

Joseph: "I don't know" he sounded really hurt. Ntokozo looked at me and then looked out the window as well.

When we got into Joshua's house he helped me out of the car and walked me inside.

Lindiwe: "Oh my God you are back? Shouldn't you be at the hospital recovering?"

Ntokozo: "She is fine, the baby is fine too"

Lindiwe: "Wow, okay. Let me go get the others" she walked upstairs. Joseph walked in with the bag that had my dirty clothes"

Me: "Can you get rid of them for me?" he nodded and went out again. The others joined us and they looked tired since we didn't get any sleep last night.

Thandeka: "I'm glad you and the baby are okay"

Njabulo: "Why did you try to abort the baby Zandiswa? Are you afraid that it is mine?"

Me: "I know that it is not yours Njabulo. Joseph is the father and I didn't try to kill my baby"

Joshua: "Joseph?"

Ntokozo: "No, let's wait for Joseph and then we will find out who tried to kill Zandiswa's baby"

Njabulo: "wait no more. Here he is" Joseph joined us smelling some smoke I figured he burned the clothes.

Ntokozo: "Zandiswa didn't try to kill her baby and Joseph didn't try as well. yes he gave her the food and it seems that the food was poisoned"

Joshua: "Who has a nerve to poison my sister in my own damn house? Zandiswa is supposed to be safe here guys and now how are we suppose to work together if we don't trust each other? What kind of family is that?"

Thandeka: "I'm disappointed too. Family takes care of each other. Who would try to kill her because that was the aim? You can't target a baby without harming the mother"

Ntokozo: "Lindiwe, would you like to confess something?" we all looked at her in shock.

Chapter 44

Njabulo: "Please don't tell me you are the one who tried to kill Zandiswa's baby" he looked at Lindiwe who didn't even look shocked like the rest of us.

Lindiwe: "I wasn't trying to kill her baby. I was trying to kill her" my heart sank when I heard that. I saw Joshua stand up and sit down again. Thandeka buried her face on her hands.

Joseph: "Why would you try to kill my wife?" she didn't answer, instead she stood up and walked upstairs.

Ntokozo: "The monsters we create" he took Lisa's hand and they walked upstairs as well.

Joshua: "You must be tired. Let me help you upstairs so you can rest"

Me: "Thank you" I stood up and went upstairs as well. Ntokozo's words kept ringing in my head. I wondered if it wasn't my own fault that Lindiwe had tried to kill me. As a human being I understood what pain did to people. She was a human like me and she was hurting because I had wronged her.

Killing me was a bit drastic but I understood where the source of that evil thought would surface from. I was angry at Joseph when I first found out that he was into human trafficking and I was ready to kill him just to protect what is closed to my heart. Lindiwe was doing the same thing; she was protecting her family by removing what was threatening to harm them.

I was about to fall asleep when I heard someone scream and someone shouting. When I listened carefully I heard that it was Njabulo and Lindiwe. They weren't arguing but he was beating her up. When she screamed again I heard Joshua threaten to break down the door if Njabulo didn't open the door.

Njabulo: "Joshua please, not now" there was another sound and then a breaking glass followed.

Joshua: "That's not how we do things; remember what you said to me?"

Njabulo: "Let me fix my mess. Please" there was another sound and I heard the door being hit repeatedly.

Joshua: "Shit, what did you do?"

Njabulo: "I should have done this a long time ago"

Joshua: "You saw what happened to me. I lost her because of this. It doesn't solve anything"

Njabulo: "Don't even compare her to Thandeka. Thandeka didn't kill people. Lots of people have done her wrong but she doesn't just kill them. First it was Lisa's baby and now it's Zandiswa. Who is next? Me?"

Joshua: "You were supposed to talk about it. Come Lindi, let me take you downstairs" I didn't heard anything after that, I was sleepy as well so I closed my eyes and slept.

I woke up when I felt the sun on my face. After only waking up for the toilet trips I was surprised that I had slept till the next day. I made the bed before going to the shower. The house was quiet but the smell of food confirmed that I wasn't alone and the bed also showed that I didn't sleep alone. When I exited the bathroom I went to get dressed before going downstairs. Lindiwe was sitting on the couch with a blanket on her legs. Her face had nothing, no marks or bruises to confirm what I heard the night before. Njabulo and Joseph were looking at something on his laptop. Ntokozo and Joshua were drawing what looked like a building plan.

Me: "Morning"

Ntokozo: "Morning to you too. Why are you here?"

Me: "Excuse me?"

Njabulo: "You should be in bed Zandiswa"

Me: "I just slept the whole evening and the whole night. I don't need more rest now"

Joseph: "But at least put your feet up and the weather is cold so you need to keep warm"

Me: "I'm fine and I will go get the blanket when I feel cold"

Ntokozo: "You always do that"

Me: "Do what?"

Joseph: "Be stubborn for no reason. You are pregnant Zandiswa and you need to take it easy"

Joshua: "If you do as they say you will save us the speech and drama"

Me: "I'm just pregnant not sick"

Phelisa walked in with breakfast in a tray. I thanked her and hoped she didn't work on it.

When I finished eating I took the tray to the kitchen. Thandeka was busy washing the dishes.

Thandeka: "How are you feeling today?"

Me: "I'm okay and I'm not even tired"

Thandeka: "I'm sorry about what Lindiwe tried to do"

Me: "It wasn't your fault. She was angry and I understand"

Lisa: "She let anger cloud her judgment"

Thandeka: "But at least you and your baby are fine"

Me: "Yeah but it will take time for me to trust her again. I know that we are not friends but now we are not even enemies. She is someone I don't know" I walked back to the lounge.

Joshua: "So you stay with Zandiswa and we all go"

Ntokozo: "Yeah sure"

me: "Where is everybody going?"

Njabulo: "To get the job done. You are no longer part of the plan Zandiswa"

Me: "Why does it have to be Ntokozo who stays?"

Ntokozo: "Because I want to stay. You and I need to work something out"

Me: "Does everybody need to go? I mean surely you guys don't need all the girls"

Joshua: "We don't but since it seems like we can no longer trust our own so we might as well bring everyone with us to keep a close eye on them" he looked at Lindiwe.

Ntokozo: "And you are more safe with me" he smiled.

Me: "Next time can I get to choose my own company please?"

Ntokozo: "Nope dear, from now on I will be like your body guard. You need me to survive"

Me: "Mxm" I sat down because I was fighting a losing battle.

The other's left and Lindiwe too. She was limping a bit but her husband wouldn't let her stay.

Me: "Where is everybody going?"

Ntokozo: "Njabulo and Lindiwe are going to see Monica Bhengu's daughter. Joseph and Phelisa are going to check the boat and Joshua and Thandeka are going to check the place where the girls are being kept"

Me: "But people know Joseph. What if they get followed?"

Ntokozo: "They will be followed that's why we need to strike now and deal with the facts later"

Me: "Meaning?"

Ntokozo: "We will connect the dots later when we are done taking the group down. There are many things to discover in this thing Zandiswa and if we start with connecting the dots by the time we actually strike they will take us down"

Me: "So we are going ahead with the plan without finding out who Donovan is and how he is connected to Nceba? What if we hurt someone who is innocent?"

Ntokozo: "No, we have the list and Joseph added other people who were left out so we know who is directly involved. We are taking down those who are directly involved now"

Me: "What if the other's come back later and kill us?"

Ntokozo: "I don't plan on dying anytime soon Zandi"

Me: "If you say so, I don't think anyone does plan death"

Ntokozo: "That's why you have to fight back. Mr. Donovan mentioned that Nceba put old news papers in your house and your office. I need to see them"

Me: "I forgot about that, so Nceba was the one planting them" I was surprised because she acted so surprised when I showed her papers.

Ntokozo: "Yeah, so many pages are missing in those copies and some copies actually show one paragraph"

Me: "Maybe the Diary is hidden somewhere in Plain sight"

Ntokozo: "we will look for all that when we finished taking care of the bosses. There's something else that you have to do"

Me: "Me?"

Ntokozo: "When we finish you are the only one who can do this Zandiswa"

Me: "Okay I will do it. Just tell me what is it"

Ntokozo: "You need to kill Joseph" I looked at him when he said that and for the first time there was no smile on his face.

Chapter 45

Me: "No, I won't kill my husband" I refused. The fact that he was even asking me that was sick.

Ntokozo: "You have too, it's the only way"

Me: "How do I kill my husband? This man is going to be the father. I already have a fatherless kid Ntokozo. I'm sorry I can't do it"

Ntokozo: "You don't have a choice Zandiswa. We need to sacrifice Joseph for this mission"

Me: "You are smart Ntokozo. Make another plan that doesn't include Joseph dying"

Ntokozo: "He has to die and you are the only one who can kill him"

Me: "You went to school for killing, you do it"

Ntokozo: "If I do it I will go to jail for life Zandiswa but if you do it you will get a reward for saving the kids from the monster you call a husband"

Me: "I don't want to get any reward. We don't have to kill Joseph. We can get him out of the country"

Ntokozo: "We have to frame Joseph so that he can take the fall for all of us"

Me: "How?"

Ntokozo: "It will be like Joseph was tired of this life and he murdered all his business associates in the ship and then he tried to hurt you as well so you defended yourself and few kids he kidnapped"

Me: "Why do we need create all of that? We can just kill them and then go into hiding. You guys kill people all the time and you don't sacrifice you own for it"

Ntokozo: "Killing one man or maybe two is nothing but killing more than 50 people cannot go

unnoticed”

Me: “I am not going to do it Ntokozo forget it”

Ntokozo: “Like I said before, you don’t have a choice. If Joseph don’t die than we are all sitting ducks. If they don’t kill us then the police will get us for killing them. Do you want your kids to be raised by strangers? Because that what will happen if we all go to jail”

Me: “Still I can’t raise them when I am in jail. Why am I being the only one taking the fall for everyone else?”

Ntokozo: “because Joshua and I can get you out of jail. Unlike if Joshua is in jail, you won’t be able to get him out”

Me: “Then use Lisa”

Ntokozo: “If Lisa kills Joseph she will be sentenced for life because she is not involved with Joseph. When we get rid of the buyers we are going to make it look like Joseph did it and then you are going to kill him in self defense”

Me: “When did you think all of this?”

Ntokozo: “You are like my muse Zandiswa. You get me going”

Me: “I thought a muse is associated to art”

Ntokozo: “Being an assassin is art my dear. You light me up”

Me: “That part right there freaks me out”

Ntokozo: “Why?”

Me: “You shouldn’t say things like that. I’m like your sister”

Ntokozo: “No you are not my sister. You the type of woman who would give me a mind blowing angry sex”

Me: “I will pretend I didn’t hear that part”

Ntokozo: “But you did. Just looking at you makes me think about things I don’t normally think about”

me: “Like what?”

Ntokozo: “Like you have pale lips, huge eyebrow and small hands. That alone shows that you would be great”

Me: “Did someone ever tell you that you are a freak?”

Ntokozo: “Just because I think your angry sex is out of this world?”

me: "Because you are married Ntokozo and I'm sort of like your sister and you just asked me to kill my husband"

Ntokozo: "Don't get me wrong, Lisa is a great woman and I love her but she doesn't have that certain fire that you have"

Me: "I'm going to tell her"

Ntokozo: "Fell free but It won't change the fact that I think you would give a great angry sex in bed. Look at you right now. Your nose is sweating"

Me: "I'm going to pretend that I didn't hear you at all"

Ntokozo: "No problem but you are going to kill Joseph in few days"

Chapter 46

Me: "I will not do it"

Ntokozo: "Did you just stomp your foot?" he laughed.

Me: "I will not kill my husband Ntokozo"

Ntokozo: "Come, let me show you something" he stood up and walked upstairs. I sat down and didn't move at all. He stood there for a moment and then walked back down the stairs and approached the couch. When he was almost in front of me I jumped up and tried to run but he caught my arm.

Ntokozo: "The doctor said you need to take it easy, what are you jumping for?"

Me: "Let go of me" I pulled my arm but he wasn't letting go.

Ntokozo: "I want to teach you something. You are going to jail so you need to learn to fight and protect yourself"

Me: "which part of I'm not killing my husband did you not understand?"

Ntokozo: "And you just keep talking. I told you that you are my muse Zandi and you get me going. The more you talk the more I want to do this. Now come or I will carry you up the stairs. You are not that very heavy"

Me: "Okay but no funny business"

Ntokozo: "I know I said you would give a mean angry sex but I'm married, your brother is my best friend, you are pregnant and I respect you"

me: "You do?"

Ntokozo: "Yes I do. I speak my mind Zandiswa. That's the type of man I am" he let go of me and I followed him upstairs to Joshua's shooting room.

Me: "Did you know Joshua's father?" I watched him load bullets into the gun.

Ntokozo: "You mean your father?"

Me: "Yeah"

Ntokozo: "Yes and he was a criminal too"

Me: "So Joshua and I take after him?"

Ntokozo: "You are not a criminal Zandiswa. You are a sweet woman who just happens to be involved into deep and dark things"

Me: "But I'm holding a gun right now and learning to kill" I took the gun and aimed on the target.

Ntokozo: "This is Joseph and you are aiming for his chest" he pointed the dummy. My finger was on the target but I just couldn't pull the trigger.

Me: "I can't do it Ntokozo. What if something goes wrong?"

Ntokozo: "It won't, just aim for the chest and pull the trigger" he stepped closer to me until we were almost touching. I tried again but I just couldn't. It was like I was aiming at Joseph for real.

Me: "I'm sorry I can't do it. I just can't" I closed my eyes because I could feel the tears approaching. The next thing I felt was Ntokozo's lips at the back of my neck. My fingers pulled the trigger and the gun went off repeatedly.

Ntokozo: "That was perfect" I turned to him and tried to punch his nose but he saw it coming and blocked it.

Me: "You bastard"

Ntokozo: "No name calling, I was just helping you"

Me: "What do you take me for? Just because I made a mistake with Njabulo doesn't mean I am a mattress. Something to just lie on, Nx"

Ntokozo: "For the record I don't think you are a mattress. You need to work on your balance. A bigger gun will take you down" he walked to the table and picked up another gun totally ignoring what I was angry about. I looked at the gun on my hands and decided to teach him a lesson.

Me: "If you ever touch me again, I swear to God I will kill you and go to jail for it"

Ntokozo: "Don't make me laugh, we both know that you don't have the balls to pull that trigger"

Me: "Really?" I pointed the gun at him.

Ntokozo: "Yes really, stop pointing that thing at me"

Me: "Or what?"

Ntokozo: "Nothing, your gun is empty so it's stupid that you are threatening me with an empty gun" I lowered the gun in defeat. He handed me another one.

Me: "I just threatened you, why are you giving me a gun?"

Ntokozo: "You are not that scary Zandiswa. I know that you won't kill me. Aim at the chest again" I didn't protest, I aimed at the chest but when I fired the bullet went somewhere else. I tried again and again but I just didn't hit it like the first time.

Me: "I can't"

Ntokozo: "You did it before"

Me: "I panicked. That wasn't an aim"

Ntokozo: "Why did you panic?"

Me: "You know why"

Ntokozo: "because I kissed you?"

Me: "Why did you do it?"

Ntokozo: "because I can see that you react only when provoked. You were mad that I kissed you and because of that anger you actually hit the target. God knows what you would if I do much more than kissing"

Me: "Please don't"

Ntokozo: "I won't. I was just showing you what you needed to know"

Me: "Can you change your plan, please"

Ntokozo: "Ask me anything and I will try to get it for you but don't ask me that. Joseph has to die. It's the only way"

Chapter 47

When the others came back I was taking a nap. Joseph woke me up and the moment I opened my eyes to his face I began crying. Having to kill him was too much.

Joseph: "What's wrong?"

Me: "Nothing, I'm just feeling emotional, that's all" I lied.

Joseph: "It must be the hormones but you should try not to worry too much. Everything will work out"

Me: "It won't. What if something goes wrong?"

Joseph: "Ntokozo's plan is solid, it won't go wrong at all"

Me: "You know about it?"

Joseph: "Yes, he told me and I think it's a great plan"

Me: "You think dying is a great plan?" I shouted.

Joseph: "I did tell you that only death will get me out of this Zandiswa. It's okay I've already accepted my fate"

Me: "What about me? Our baby? Don't we count for something?"

Joseph: "You do and I'm doing this for you. What if you give birth to a girl and for some reason they decide to take the baby because we are fighting them now? What then?"

Me: "We will fight back as a family"

Joseph: "I'm doing this to save our family. I will die and you will go to prison. Joshua will get you out. If not by an expensive lawyer than he will break you out, I know he will get you out"

Me: "This plan is selfish and you know it"

Joseph: "I'm doing it because I love you"

Me: "If you love me Joseph, you will say no to this madness and come up with a plan that doesn't include me going down for murder"

Joseph: "You are feeling emotional right now and it will get better"

"Mxm" I stood up and walked out.

Joshua was downstairs loading bullets into his gun. I went to sit next to him.

Me: "What are you doing?"

Joshua: "I'm thinking, what's up?"

Me: "The plan is stupid"

Joshua: "Why? because you still can't hold the gun?"

Me: "Because I don't want to kill Joseph"

Joshua: "You have no choice. If we kill 75 men on the sheep Zandiswa that cannot go unnoticed. Someone has to answer for it and Joseph will but not vocally because he will be dead. He will go down with the blame and you will be the woman who killed a mad criminal"

Me: "Why can't Thandeka do it? She is already a killer"

Joshua: "Because you can get out of jail Zandiswa. You are a respected business woman and your record is clean. The court will see that you had no choice but to defend yourself. With Thandeka, it's a different story because she is not known and if she kills your husband she will be tried for first degree murder. You have to do it. Just close your eyes and pull the trigger"

Me: "What if we lose the case and I end up in jail for years? I have kids"

Joshua: "I'm going to get you out. I'm a lawyer"

Me: "You can't represent me. I'm your sister"

Joshua: "Still I will get you the best lawyer. If that doesn't work I'm going to break you out the next day after the trial"

Me: "That doesn't make me feel better"

Joshua: "It's not suppose to. By the way we know who Adrian Donovan is"

Me: "Who?"

Joshua: "It was the guy who helped Njabulo's sister escape. He couldn't get close to her because he was being watched so he watched from a distance"

Me: "Where is he now?"

Joshua: "He left the country. In his apartment there are pictures of her and her daughter. He left us a later saying his job was done"

Me: "Did you take his photo? I want to see him"

Joshua: "The photos are in my laptop. Njabulo stored them there" I stood up and went to get the laptop on the table.

When I looked at the pictures I realized it was the man from the hospital. He looked familiar like I've seen him before.

Joshua: "You know him?"

Me: "I feel like I've seen him before"

Joshua: "You probably have because he was working with Nceba"

Me: "Owja, I saw him at the country club and when I did Nceba wouldn't tell me who he is"

Joshua: "Nceba was a good friend. We should have a ceremony for her tomorrow"

Me: "I think so too"

Joshua: "Relax Zandiswa, you have me in your corner and like I told you before. I protect my own"

Me: "Okay, it's just that I don't want to be a single mother again"

Joshua: "You will never be a single mother. I will help you raise the kids. It's going to work out. Joseph knew that the only way he could get out is by dying and he is ready to do it" I nodded and closed the laptop. Lindiwe walked down the stairs.

Lindiwe: "can I have a word with you?"

Me: "Why? So you could strike me this time?"

Lindiwe: "I'm trying to apologize"

Me: "Apology accepted"

Lindiwe: "Ah ha at least I tried" she walked back upstairs.

Njabulo: "That was quickly"

Lindiwe: "I tried and she just want to be a bitch about it"

Me: "What do you want from me?"

Njabulo: "She wants to apologize"

Me: "I told her the apology was accepted"

Lindiwe: "Just like that? You are not even going to let me explain?"

Me: "That's between you and your conscience"

Lindiwe: "You see what I mean" she looked at her husband.

Me: "I don't want to hear the speech Lindiwe. You are sorry, it's fine" I stood up and walked past them only to bump to Ntokozo in the passage.

Ntokozo: "What's wrong?"

Me: "What makes you think something is wrong?"

Ntokozo: "because the fire in your eyes is back. You know that you shouldn't get worked up like this"

Me: "Leave me alone"

Ntokozo: "Relax" he grabbed my arm and pushed me against the wall.

Me: "You are hurting me"

Ntokozo: "Breathe in and out" he rested his hands on the either side of my face.

Me: "This is actually a crime. Being harassed is a crime"

Phelisa: "What are you guys doing?"

Ntokozo: "Nothing, we are just talking" he stepped away. Phelisa nodded and walked back to the room. I walked away as well. when I got into our room Joseph was sitting on the bed writing something on the notepad.

Me: "What are you doing?"

Joseph: "Writing a letter to our unborn child. When she or he is older you will give him or her the letter"

Me: "You really are going through with this?"

Joseph: "it's the only way" he went back to writing.

Me: "Can I read it?"

Joseph: "You are not allowed to"

Me: "I wish there is another way"

Joseph: "There isn't. relax it will work out fine. I trust you brother and Ntokozo is smart"

Me: "And freaky too" I mumbled.

Someone knocked and Joseph told them to come in and Phelisa walked in.

Phelisa: "Can you come and help me prepare supper?"

Me: "Yah sure" I stood up and followed her.

We made some roasted chicken and boiled spinach with baked potatoes. She was quiet during that time. She only answered what I asked.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

Phelisa: "Like what?"

Me: "I don't know, you are very quiet"

Phelisa: "That's because I'm waiting for you to apologize for flirting with my husband"

Me: "Excuse me?"

Phelisa: "I can see Zandiswa and I get that you are not used to the attention that you are getting. Being a single mother is hard and you don't have time to entertain man but Anita is not here so you are letting your guards down and enjoying the attention. I get all of that but can you please try not to disrespect me."

Me: "I didn't flirt with your husband, he told me that I look like a type of woman who would give him a great angry sex"

Phelisa: "He told me that as well. Him saying that didn't mean you are allowed to flirt with him. I get that you guys have a nice chemistry going on but please try not to do it in front of me. Show me some respect"

Me: "So you don't see a problem with him saying I could be some freak in bed?"

Phelisa: "No, I don't have a problem. He said you look like someone who can't give a blow job as well. My husband shares his thought, I don't mind when he does that because at least he is being honest about it. I can't control what he thinks about but I expect you to respect me and to respect yourself by saying no to his attention"

Me: "So it's okay when you and your husband discuss me?"

Phelisa: "It's not about discussing you. I know that he will continue having such thought about you and I can't stop him so I might as well go along with it. So yah he did tell me that you look like someone who can be a freak in bed and that you probably can't give a blow job"

Me: "Then your husband is not the only freak. You are too and if you value yourself like you want me to believe you do, you would tell him to stop doing that. There's nothing nice about hearing your husband's thought about another woman. It's wrong and you might act like it's okay but we both know it's not and it hurts you" she looked down and when I looked behind me Ntokozo was standing there leaning against the door frame, you could tell that he has been standing there for a while.

Ntokozo: "I'm sorry" he looked at his wife and she had tears in her eyes.

Me: "I will give you guys some privacy"

Ntokozo: "No, I'm sorry to you too Zandiswa. It was wrong of me to say that about you"

Me: "It's okay"

Ntokozo: "I'm sorry my love, I didn't realize I was hurting you by doing that. When you didn't object to it I just assumed that you were fine with it"

Phelisa: "I hate when we fight"

Ntokozo: "I'm sorry. I will never do it again" he opened his arms and hugged her.

Me: "So cute, young lovers" I joked. We all laughed and Ntokozo turned around to hug me too. I just stood there with my arms folded to my chest.

Ntokozo: "Don't leave me hanging" he begged. I gave him a quick hug.

Ntokozo: "You are my muse" he whispered before pulling away.

Chapter 48

I woke up late the next day, in fact I wasn't planning to wake up but the grumbling of my stomach was too much so I woke up and showered before going to the lounge.

Ntokozo: "You look tired"

Me: "I'm hungry" I went to the kitchen to check what I could eat. Lindiwe was there cooking something on the stove.

Lindiwe: "Your breakfast is in the microwave"

Me: "No thank you. I'd stupid to eat that food after you tried to kill me"

Lindiwe: "So you forgiving me was a lie?"

Me: "No but still I don't trust you" I made myself a cereal.

Lindiwe: "You had an affair with my husband"

Me: "You killed Lisa's baby but here you are. Making a mistake doesn't mean I should be killed. They didn't kill you when you killed their baby"

Lindiwe: "That was a mistake and I said I was sorry"

Me: "My point exactly. You made a mistake and they forgave you. Do the same"

Lindiwe: "You are not Lisa"

Me: "And I don't wish to be" I took my breakfast and walked out.

When I got in the lounge Joseph walked in with a mean looking woman. When I say mean looking I mean the type of woman you don't mess with. She was all muscled up like she lifted weights 24/7.

Joshua: "Guys, this is Brenda, Brenda these are my friends"

Brenda: "Hai guys" even her voice sounded tough. I waved at her and went on with my eating business. The others greeted her. Lisa and Thandeka joined us.

Joshua: "Brenda is a life coach. She helped me deal with my demons and I asked her to come here today

because I wanted to say something to someone in front of her” he looked at Thandeka.

Brenda: “Jay is right. We met about 4 years ago when he walked into our support group down town. When I met him, he was hurt and angry. After our first session I asked to speak to him when the group left and he stayed. I discovered that he saw battling serious demons and they had already destroyed what he loved. I don’t just run a support group for men like Joshua but I also help men change and become better people. I know that people say you can’t change a person but sometimes people can change if they have enough desire to change. Joshua had all the desire to change”

Joshua: “I didn’t think it was possible for me to change. Honestly I gave up hope after sometime but after meeting Brenda and her introducing me to the anger management facility gave me new hope and today I’m happy to say that I feel like a new man. She is here today to congratulate me for finishing the program. It actually ended few weeks ago but I only got my certificate today” he pointed the envelope on the table.

Thandeka: “Congratulations”

Joshua: “Thank you MaMyeza”

Lisa and Lindiwe served us glasses of wine as we celebrated Joshua’s success in finishing the program.

Joshua: “I asked Brenda to come here because I wanted to apologize to Thandeka. MaMyeza, I’m sorry for all the pain I caused you those years ago. I was stupid and I was a coward to hurt you like that. You didn’t deserve to cry like that while I looked you in the eye and said I love you. There are things that we watch on TV and think it had nothing to do with us while it has everything to do with us. Like the 16Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, It was the night that you walked out this door that I actually paid attention to the TV and saw that advert about the 16Days. Today here I am and I admit that I was abusing you. I didn’t just abuse you physically but I sexually abused you as well. My job as a man was to protect you and I failed. It’s stopped being about those who wanted to hurt you and it became about me. You gave me nothing but love and support but in return I brought you nothing but pain and suffering. I wanted to own you; I wanted you to worship me because I thought I wasn’t being a man enough if you didn’t worship me. You stayed for more than 10 years with me and raised my kids like they were yours. Not once did you throw it to my face that they weren’t yours, even when Julia broke my heart and hid her pregnancy, you were there for her, you welcomed our granddaughter with opened arms. But still I threw you across the room, forced myself on you, broke your elbow and had my hand around your neck. The tears on your eyes became permanent even now when I look at you I still see your eyes shining with tears. I was a monster Thandeka, a monster you didn’t deserve. They said I was going to self destruct without you but they didn’t know that I was self destructing everyday and you had to deal with that behind closed doors. You wore a smile everyday hiding the pain I was putting you through every day because you wanted to protect our kids. When you packed your bags and told the kids that you were leaving, you had a chance to bash me and turn my kids against me but you didn’t. Instead you told them that you were going to be their mother even across the world and you kept that promise. When you left I realized that I lost a good woman, a mother, a sister and a friend. At first I thought you were angry and that you were going to come back when you calmed down but when

Ntokozo called and told me that he had taken you to the airport I realized that you were gone. I cried that night because I realized what I had done. Waking up alone in the middle of the night was torture because it made me realize that it was my own fault. I couldn't watch you sleep anymore. I couldn't wake up in the middle of the night and pull you closer into my arms because I hated the space between us. I woke up alone and I didn't like it. I didn't like a huge and cold house because it reminded me what I had lost while I was busy collecting stones. That's why I decided to seek help and I got it. I wanted to change not just for me but for you too. I wanted to be the man that you love and the man that love you the way that you deserve. So this is me, Joshua Cebekhulu and I'm begging you to take me back. This time I promise to be the man that I know I can be. Please MaMyeza. Will you marry me again" he took out a small box in his pocket and went to kneel in front of her. She was already crying and I was crying as well but I had an excuse, the hormones.

Thandeka: "I can't" she cried harder.

Chapter 49

Joshua: "You don't have to answer me right now" he sounded disappointed.

Thandeka: "You don't understand Joshua. I can't marry you because I'm still married"

Joshua: "What? To who?"

Thandeka: "To you, I never signed those divorce papers because I didn't want to lose my kids. When you and I got married I never went to register them as my kids because Onica and Tasha were both dead so I didn't see the need to legally register them as mine. When we talked about divorcing, I talked to my lawyer and asked about the custody of the boys and he told me that even though I had raised them, the law didn't really recognize me as their mother because we never really registered them. So I stayed married to you because I didn't want to lose my boys"

Joshua: "You thought I was going to block you from seeing the kids as punishment?"

Thandeka: "Leaving you was hard Joshua but leaving them was even harder. I was scared that you will never let me see them again and I couldn't live without them"

Joshua: "I would never do that to you. Yes, when you left I was angry but not angry at you. I was angry at myself for losing you"

Thandeka: "That's why my relationship didn't work out because Roy wanted me to get a divorce and I just couldn't"

Joshua: "You let him go just for the kids?"

Thandeka: "I'm the only mother they know and I wanted them to know that I loved them"

Joshua: "So that's why you can't marry me?"

Thandeka: "Yes but that's not all. After I left you I needed to break away from your control. I needed to learn to love again and that took me a while Joshua. It was hard, I used to have nightmares of you hurting me and I would wake up in the middle of the night and cry"

Joshua: "I'm not that man anymore. I got help"

Ntokozo: "I was there as well. He definitely did get help"

Thandeka: "And I'm proud of you"

Joshua: "I need you to come home MaMyeza"

Thandeka: "I am at home Joshua. We will work on it, together" she smiled with tears on her eyes.

Joshua: "Let me do this, I never want to see them again" he took a box of tissues and wiped her eyes.

Thandeka: "Thank you"

Joshua: "We will get married again, for now we can do some counseling together and learn to love each other again"

Thandeka: "But I will take that ring" she gave him the hand. We laughed as Joshua went down on his knees and proposed again.

After all that romance and tears, Lindiwe served us lunch and we ate. Brenda left after the meal. She offered Njabulo and Lindiwe some counseling. I didn't care because Joseph and I didn't need any counseling; he needed someone to knock some sense into his head that's all.

Lindiwe: "Maybe we can get married again"

Njabulo: "You would like that?"

Lindiwe: "Very much. After what we have been through, we deserve that"

Njabulo: "Okay, I'm down with everything you want" he kissed her.

Lindiwe: "maybe you can be my maid of honor Zandiswa"

Me: "That would be such an honor but no thanks"

Lindiwe: "I understand, It can't be easy watching the man you dream about get married"

Me: "Not only that but I really don't like sad events, that's why I don't organize funerals"

Lindiwe: "You think my wedding will be a sad event?"

Me: "I don't know but I do know that pretending to be happy just to fool someone is the hardest thing

ever” I stood up and went to the kitchen. I heard them laugh and Lindiwe saying something. I didn’t care because she needed to leave me alone. It was her husband who cheated on her not me but she was busy with me like I was the one who cheated on her.

Ntokozo: “You are so mean”

Me: “Really? I thought I was your muse”

Ntokozo: “If only, that’s all I’m saying” he put down the plate he was holding and walked out. I drank some water and that turned out to be a mistake because my stomach turned and everything rushed to my throat. I ran to the bathroom and threw up.

Joseph: “Maybe you need a doctor. There must be something to prevent this”

Me: “Maybe I need to stick to toast”

Joseph: “Can I go make you some?”

Me: “Thank you”

Njabulo: “Lindiwe was like you when she was pregnant”

Me: “So?”

Njabulo: “Maybe it’s my baby”

Me: “Not this again. It’s not your baby Njabulo”

Ntokozo: “Yeah it’s not. The doctor said she was already two weeks pregnant”

Joshua: “You went in with her?”

Ntokozo: “Yeah, she was scared and needed a friend”

Phelisa: “And you just had to step in and save the day?”

Ntokozo: “Like a hero that I am. So Thandeka how did you fool us into believing that you and Joshua are actually divorced?”

Joshua: “I’m wondering the same thing, how did you do it?”

Thandeka: “I know you Joshua. After being married to you for so long I learned few things”

Joshua: “Like what?”

Thandeka: “That’s my secret” she laughed.

Joshua: “I’m glad you did. I love you”

Ntokozo: "What if Joshua had decided to marry someone else?"

Thandeka: "It was going to be a surprise in Home Affairs when they tell him that he is still very much married" we laughed at that. Joseph brought me toast and tea. I thanked him and ate.

The rest of the day was fine we even called Bongeka and spoke to the kids. That confirmed how much I missed my daughter. Thandeka told her kids that she was back with their father. They were so excited except for TM but Joshua explained to her that he was going to be a parent to her as well. That moment was heartwarming. After that call Ntokozo said Thizo and other guys were there. They let them in. after the greetings were made, they got down to business.

Thizo: "The invites are out"

Joseph: "when?"

Thizo: "This weekend"

Joshua: "That was quick. I don't even want to know how you managed that"

Mlungisi: "Yeah it's better that way. So is Zandiswa ready?"

Ntokozo: "Don't worry about that, she will be ready"

Joshua: "Jo"

Joseph: "I'm ready"

Njabulo: "Tomorrow we will bury Nceba"

Thizo: "Make sure that Zandiswa is ready"

Ntokozo: "she will be, I will make sure of that" he looked at me. I looked at Joseph as my eyes filled with tears. It was now or never.

Chapter 50

The next day we had a small ceremony for Nceba, I didn't know who Nceba was but the fact that she had tried to protect my daughter meant she was a good person at heart. I just wished she had told me what was going on. I still wasn't sure about my mother being involved in this. What I knew about my mother was that she loved me, raised me to be a tough woman and she helped me raise my daughter. I knew that the Jonathan's parents didn't want the black girl with their son but Jonathan loved me and he was willing to be there for me throughout the pregnancy, sadly he died. Losing him was hard, raising Anita was hard, knowing that I was going to lose Joseph was hard and being a single parent once again was going to be even harder.

Ntokozo: "Come inside"

Me: "Few minutes" I stood in the garden and watched the sunset. The next day was going to be the party and Joseph's end.

Ntokozo: "I know it's not easy but you have to be strong Zandiswa" he came to stand next to me.

Me: "What do you want from me Ntokozo?"

Ntokozo: "In what manner?"

Me: "You are not being there for me because you care, you are after something"

Ntokozo: "Would you believe if I said I want you?"

Me: "No"

Ntokozo: "Well then let's leave it like that"

Me: "We are related"

Ntokozo: "We are not. You and Joshua are related. Not me"

Me: "You and Joshua are brothers"

Ntokozo: "Through a mother. Basically Joshua and I are not related like you and him. Even if my mother didn't marry Joshua's father still Joshua and I we would have used different surnames"

Me: "That doesn't excuse your perverted behavior"

Ntokozo: "Speaking my mind doesn't make me a pervert. It's acting based on that feeling that is considered perverted behavior" he laughed.

Me: "Why me?"

Ntokozo: "I don't know, maybe it's because you are strong but still able to show your weakness. Most women nowadays are all about independency and challenging men. It's rare to find someone who still possesses that quality"

Me: "being weak is a good thing?"

Ntokozo: "Women were made to be weak Zandiswa, if God wanted us to be equal he would have made us equal"

Me: "You and Njabulo have the same thinking capacity"

Ntokozo: "Really?"

Me: "He said I should be staying home and taking care of the kids and the house"

Ntokozo: "He wasn't lying about that. If you were my wife I wouldn't allow you to even touch the guns and all"

Me: "But you allow Lisa to do that"

Ntokozo: "Phelisa has been on the street, she is street smart and being smart like that was the only thing she knew. I couldn't take her and force her to be grounded like a lady from a picket fence house"

Me: "You think I grew up in the picket fence house?"

Ntokozo: "Maybe not but you are not that street smart Zandiswa. You make a man just want to put on an armor and rescue you"

Me: "I need to be rescued right now. Save me from having to kill Joseph" when I said that he looked at me like he was debating something with himself.

Me: "I can't do it Ntokozo, I'm not that strong"

Ntokozo: "You can and you will. You have to do it Zandiswa. Think of the kids you will save"

me: "Joseph will suffer for his father's sins. It's not fair" Ntokozo went quiet for a moment.

Ntokozo: "We haven't been honest with you" he spoke after sometime.

Me: "About what?"

Ntokozo: "About framing Joseph. It turns out he lied. When he said he wasn't directly involved he lied. Joseph is actually one of the bosses"

Me: "What?"

Ntokozo: "Yes, he was the one who signed off on the Anita deal. Your mother sold her to him"

Me: "I don't believe you"

Ntokozo: "I knew you won't but think carefully Zandiswa. Nceba and Joseph worked together, Joseph comes to you and offers a plan to save Anita, Nceba fakes her own death, your mother is dead and suddenly Nceba tells you that your mother sold Anita because your mother isn't here to answer for herself. Who do you think Adrian Donovan is?"

Me: "I don't know. It's too much Ntokozo"

Ntokozo: "Adrian Donovan is Joseph Mzulwini. The white man we all thought was Donovan turns out to be Mr. Quinn's son and Mr. Quinn is Joseph's partner. Joseph was in the car alone and ready to betray his partners but still those men gave him a flesh wound. If they were really after him like he claim they are, they would have killed him because he was going to give us the secrets"

Me: "You mean Joseph lied?"

Ntokozo: "He already sold Anita to Mr. Wong. You are his wife Zandiswa. What is yours is now his and you gave him that right when you signed that marriage contract. You have to kill him and save your daughter's life"

Me: "No"

Ntokozo: "Jonathan's parents sold your baby before she was even born like Thandeka's daughter. When Jonathan found out he went to confront your parents and then left to confront Mr. Quinn senior as well as Mr. Mzulwini. Jonathan's father called them and told them that Jonathan now knows. Mr. Quinn, Mr. Mdluli and Mr. Mzulwini worked out a plan to kill Jonathan and make it look like an accident"

Me: "How do you know all that?" I asked between the sobs.

Ntokozo: "Mlungisi does a private investigating so when Joshua told us about Thandeka's daughter and your daughter, Mlungisi began investigating the matter. Joseph is evil but he doesn't know that we know the truth now. He still thinks that we are on his side"

Me: "Why would he sacrifice himself then?"

Ntokozo: "He is not planning to sacrifice himself. Right now as we speak there is a guy preparing to take his place. He thinks he can fool us into believing that it's him you will kill tomorrow while it will be someone else. They paid the man few millions to take his place. You should know by now that some people would do anything to for cash"

Chapter 51

I couldn't believe what Ntokozo was telling me. Joseph didn't look like that at all.

Ntokozo: "Do you see how chilled he is about being killed for us? No man would be that relaxed when he is about to die for someone else's sins" I was about to answer when I heard the door being open and Joseph walked out.

Joseph: "are you guys okay?"

Ntokozo: "I was just talking to her about tomorrow. She is not taking it well"

Joseph: "It's understandable but you have to eat as well dear. Come inside to eat. I made you some toast" I nodded and followed him. Ntokozo walked in as well. The others were already eating and the smell of the food made me nauseas so I took my dry toast and tea upstairs. My head was spinning because of the crying and the confusion because I didn't know who to believe anymore.

Something vibrating made me jump, When my mind became clear I realized that I had fallen asleep without eating my food. The tea was now cold and the toast still dry like before. I put it aside and looked for that vibrating phone. I found it under the pillow. It wasn't mine so I assumed it was Joseph's. it had

two messages, I clicked on the first message and it was pictures of men. Different men and they appeared to be on the boat. I clicked on the next message and it was still men but now they were all dead. There was blood all over. This made me gag but I forced myself not to throw up. I clicked on older messages and realized that Ntokozo was right about Joseph not dying. The bastard had those men killed and he was going to let all of us take the fall for that and including him because he was going to fake his death too. The more I went through his phone I realized how evil the man really was. My heart almost stopped when my phone vibrated. When I checked the caller Id I saw that it was Ntokozo.

Me: "You were right and the men are dead already. He was ahead of us" I spoke.

Ntokozo: "You are lucky that I left my gun upstairs you sick son of a bitch"

Me: "what?"

Joseph: "Stop with the insults, didn't you guys have enough of those when you first came into my house? Telling me I can't put it down?"

Joshua: "What did you do to my sister?"

Joseph: "She is probably dead as we speak. You should be grateful that I killed her because I could have kept her as my slut. Make her fuck any man I want her to"

Ntokozo: "You won't get away with this"

Joseph: "I already have. I've already killed Zandiswa; my men have killed all my greedy partners in the ship. Now I'm going to kill you guys and then fake my death so that I can go to Canada and get Anita. I paid lots of money for Anita. Zandiswa's mother and Jonathan's parents gave us the parenting rights for the baby just like my father's did to Thandeka's daughter with her mother. When Zandiswa's mother changed her mind about giving us the baby I had to pay the money to my buyer. Jonathan's parents ran because they were afraid that I was going to come after them but I didn't. We watched Anita grow and planned to take her when she is a teenager. Her mother signed her parenting rights to me. Now I own her and I sold her for Millions in Dubai"

Joshua: "Zandiswa is carrying your kid"

Joseph: "I don't want kids Joshua, If I wanted kids I would have tons by now. All the girls who came to me and told me they were pregnant I had them taken care off. Zandiswa was stupid to fall pregnant"

Ntokozo: "My gun is under my pillow, If it was here I would have killed you by now"

Joseph: "And they say you guys are smart like that but I managed to fool you. The moment Joshua began fucking Thandeka I knew that I had won this. Thandeka is your weakness. The moment she is in your life you drop the ball Joshua. Look now you all are about to die without even getting married for the second time"

Ntokozo: "I'm not going to die"

Joseph: "You move and I will kill you. Only 15 minutes before they cops get here and find bloodbath. If any of you survive he or she will go down for murder because you guys killed the men on the ship"

I didn't waste time crying because it was clear what was happening. Ntokozo gave me clear instruction that his gun was under the pillow. I went to open the door quietly and went to his room. When I found the gun it was unloaded. I sat down and loaded it like I had seen him do it countless times.

Me: "I'm coming" I told him and I heard him laugh.

Joseph: "What's so funny?"

Ntokozo: "An inside joke. Why would Zandiswa's mother sell her own granddaughter?"

Joseph: "Because she didn't want to be the laughing stock in her own community. Her daughter was a teenage mother and to top all that she was going to give birth to a mixed kid. No mother wants the community to know what kind of slut she gave birth to"

Ntokozo: "Zandiswa is not a slut"

Joseph: "You wanted to hit it. I could see it in your eyes and how angry you were that she gave it to Njabulo not you. Like all other men, you have a beautiful wife but you are still longing for common sluts"

Ntokozo: "And what does that say about you? You did hit it and left your seed too"

Joseph: "She agreed to be my whore when she signed to be my wife"

Joshua: "And you just killed her in cold blood"

Joseph: "I saved her from watching her daughter being sold"

Ntokozo: "You and Nceba worked together?"

Joseph: "She is another victim of my charm. I made her believe that I wanted out and that I wanted to help Zandiswa. When she told me that she has Joshua involved too It became about revenge too. my sister Onica"

Thandeka: "Onica was your sister?"

Joseph: "Yes and she was killed because of you. If it wasn't for you she would still be alive"

Njabulo: "And you are convinced that you will get away with it"

Joseph: "When my partners became greedy I needed to get rid of them so that I can run the business on my own. You can imagine how much money I will make. They are all dead, thanks to you"

Joshua: "They were suppose to get here tomorrow"

Joseph: "I sent the invites early. Your invites are just to confirm to the police that you guys worked it out"

the plate. I watched them eat and I was surprised that I didn't feel nauseas but on the other side I was grateful because throwing up was not going to be a good idea. When they were done eating they put the plates near the gate for the guard to come pick it up.

C/Mate: "Still not feeling like talking?"

Me: "Yes"

C/Mate: "Suit yourself" she stood up and got her sleeping place ready. I sat in the same sport until I lost the feeling on my butt. I was dozing of when I felt two hands close around my neck. I screamed and opened my eyes.

C/mate2: "Who is boss now" she squeezed. I tried to scream but after few seconds I realized that there was no police coming to check, with my foot I managed to kick her knee and she flinched but didn't let go. I kicked her again and when she tried to adjust her balance I used my head to butt her nose and she lost balance. I coughed a bit and rubbed my neck.

Me: "I told you that I am very pissed right now" I stood up and walked to her. Without wasting time I kicked her back to the floor. She covered her face so I kicked her stomach and I kept kicking ignoring the others who were screaming for help.

"Zandiswa" said a voice behind me with such authority I automatically stopped hitting her and turned around to Ntokozo's face.

P/Guard: "Step back" he ordered before opening the gate. Ntokozo walked in and came towards me.

Ntokozo: "I'm so sorry I'm late" he opened his arms and hugged me. I sobbed against his arms. Seeing him there in a cell with me gave me hope that they did not desert me just like that.

P/Guard: "You are not allowed to touch her"

Ntokozo: "I'm not allowed to be here at 10:55pm so touching her makes no difference"

P/Guard: "Maybe you should came to this side with her because if I get caught doing this I will face charges as well"

Ntokozo: "Let's go talk" he took my hand and we walked out. The guard took us to an office. I sat on the chair and Ntokozo sat on the table.

Ntokozo: "You look weak, did you eat?" I slightly shook my head; tears were still streaming down my face.

Ntokozo: "You have to be strong Zandiswa. For Anita and that baby"

Me: "I want to have an abortion" I whispered.

Ntokozo: "Why? Because Joseph is the father?"

Me: "Yes and how will I raise the baby in prison?"

Ntokozo: "We promised to get you out and we will"

me: "How? I was caught red handed. I'm sure the police think I'm the one who killed those men in the ship"

Ntokozo: "Joshua is working on getting you out of here. If we can't get you out legally then we are taking the illegal route. I will personally burn this place down and get you out"

Me: "How did you manage to get in this late?"

Ntokozo: "Favor, someone owes me a favor so I called on it. You need to eat and keep your strength up"

me: "I won't survive here Ntokozo. They already tried to strangle me while I was dozing off"

Ntokozo: "The lady you just beat up?"

Me: "yeah, she will kill me in my sleep"

Ntokozo: "She won't. Already she respects you because you just whipped her ass in front of the others"

Me: "Can you do me a favor?"

Ntokozo: "Okay, let's hear it"

Me: "Can you not tell Anita just until I know how many years they are giving me"

Ntokozo: "We don't have to tell her anything because you will not stay here for long"

Me: "Thank you for trying to protect me but we both know that I'm going down for a long list of monsters"

Ntokozo: "I hate it when you feel like this" he stood up and pulled the chair I was sitting on before he lowered his head to my lips and kissed me.

Chapter 53

My body was enjoying it but my heart and brain said no, it was wrong and I had to be strong to stop it.

Me: "Please stop" I pushed him away.

Ntokozo: "I'm trying to comfort you"

Me: "No, you are using this situation to your advantage. I was stupid with Joseph and Njabulo, I can't be making the same mistake and expect something different. You are married and we are almost related"

Ntokozo: "Wow, few hours in jail and you already tough as nails"

Me: "I have to be strong because right now I'm on my own"

Ntokozo: "You think we will abandon you?"

Me: "I didn't say that"

Ntokozo: "But you did think it. How could you think that after what we all have gone through?"

Me: "Shouting at me will not help me at all. I'm in jail and pregnant with the monster's baby and that happened because I was too stupid and allowed the feelings to take over my thinking"

Ntokozo: "Don't allow this change who you are Zandiswa"

Me: "What do you mean?"

Ntokozo: "I mean just because you killed Joseph doesn't mean you will now turn into this hard lady who doesn't play. You need to remain the Zandiswa that Anita knows"

Me: "How does one go back? I have blood in my hands Ntokozo"

Ntokozo: "No you don't. You saved us all. When Joseph said you were dead I hated myself for a moment because I thought I had failed you"

Me: "Falling asleep while holding that tea saved us all"

Ntokozo: "But you were smart to listen and act. I thought you were going to struggle with loading a gun since it was left unloaded"

Me: "I've seen you and Joshua do it a couple of times so I knew how to do it"

Ntokozo: "I'm glad you slept and didn't drink that tea" he took my hands to his but I pulled away.

Me: "We have to respect boundaries Ntokozo and your wife"

Ntokozo: "You can be my second wife"

Me: "I don't think so" I laughed out loud but when I looked at him he wasn't laughing at all.

Me: "I like you but not that much. Lisa would never share her husband and Joshua will never agree to this. I'm a modern woman Ntokozo and we make mistakes but we don't do that" he was crazy.

Ntokozo: "That's what is wrong with you ladies. You would rather have an affair with a man instead of doing what our forefathers did to solve love triangles. Marry me and I will treat you and Phelisa like queens"

Me: "No and that's my final answer"

Ntokozo: "Why not? Please don't say we are related because we are not related"

Me: "If your father didn't take you and Joshua's mother went to get married with you, you would be a Cebekhulu and I would be your step sister. We are almost related so let us try not to be disgusting"

Ntokozo: "But I want you"

Me: "You are not the only man who wants what you cannot have"

Ntokozo: "Who told you I can't have you?"

Me: "Me, I believe I just said so in few seconds ago"

Ntokozo: "How sure are you that I can't have you?"

Me: "Unless you force yourself on me I am 100% sure"

Ntokozo: "I would never hurt you like that. But you are so sure that I can't get you and I'm asking myself if I have lost it all"

Me: "Lost what?"

Ntokozo: "That power to go and get what I want and Zandiswa I want you"

Me: "Please stop. I'm pregnant and I get that sometimes the pregnancy make men think crazy but please control yourself"

Ntokozo: "I like when you say please, the way you say it makes my imagination go crazy"

Me: "I'm not playing Ntokozo. I've already slept with Njabulo and look what that turned out"

Ntokozo: "You were stupid to do it. When I heard I was really pissed, for a moment I thought about smacking some sense into your head"

Me: "But here you are doing the same thing that he did"

Ntokozo: "No, he was using you and I'm not. I want to marry you and make you my wife"

Me: "How will you look at me knowing that I gave it to your best friend?"

Ntokozo: "I've made my fair share of mistakes Zandi. I have no right to act like a saint"

Me: "You are trying to get into my pants. Saying all the right things so that I can think you are different while we both know that you are not"

Ntokozo: "You are not allowed to judge me based on what other men have done or said. I won't make any speech just to hit it"

Me: "You are confident"

Ntokozo: "it's my rule of life. Never ever undermine yourself"

Me: "I'm sorry to undermine you but you are not hitting it"

Ntokozo: "Are you sure?" he stepped closer to me and I stepped back.

"I will never let you marry my sister" said Joshua walking in.

Ntokozo: "I know but that's why I didn't ask for your permission" Joshua laughed and came to hug me.

Joshua: "Is he giving you trouble?"

Me: "He is being a guy"

Ntokozo: "I'm being a man and I came up with a solution to my problem"

Joshua: "No, you are not marrying my sister"

Ntokozo: "You are jealous"

Joshua: "Of you having a second wife while I didn't have non for years? Hell yes but I don't want you marrying my sister because she is my sister"

Ntokozo: "You don't have a reason. We need to fight this one out and when I win I will marry her"

Joshua: "What makes you think you will win?"

Ntokozo: "because I want Zandiswa and I would never start fights I cannot win"

Joshua: "Beat me up if you want to because you are older. A grown man picking on his younger brother. Nothing says coward like that"

Ntokozo: "Resorting to emotional blackmail, that's low"

Joshua: "I can be low all I want. Nature allows me to do that. You are older than me" I was almost out of breath with laughter, they looked so stupid doing that but it was funny.

Joshua: "It's nice to see you laugh"

Ntokozo: "Yeah, look at her. She looked like a dying zombie when I arrived"

Joshua: "I hear she delivered a beat down on the cell"

Ntokozo: "She was killing that lady. You should have seen her. I hate this place. It's not right for her"

Me: "I was saving myself from a monster who was trying to kill me. She strangled me"

Joshua: "And I'm proud of you"

Ntokozo: "me too but please try to leave that Zandi in here when you get out. I like this Zandiswa not

the fighter”

Joshua: “Afraid she will whip your ass?”

Ntokozo: “Not even in a heat of a moment. Nobody lays a hand on me unless give them permission”

Me: “I need to talk to Lisa”

Ntokozo: “You are not even married yet but already you are trying to start a fight” we all laughed at that.

Joshua: “Still want a second wife?”

Ntokozo: “I’m not so sure anymore”

Me: “Chicken” I mimicked a chicken sound.

Joshua: “You are such a wimp”

Ntokozo: “I will show you who is a wimp”

Joshua: “You must be tired” he looked at me.

Me: “I am but I’m afraid to sleep. What if they kill me in my sleep?”

Joshua: “I talked to the guard and bribed him to get you another cell. Your bail hearing is tomorrow”

Me: “Do you think I will get it?”

Joshua: “You have too. Duane thinks you stand a chance”

Me: “Who is Duane?”

Ntokozo: “Your lawyer. He will come tomorrow and work some details out. You will tell him the truth. We told him the truth”

Me: “Even our original plan?”

Joshua: “Yes. He knows everything and he will tell you what to say. Listen to him Zandiswa, he knows what he is doing and I’m paying him a lot of money. If he fails getting you out I want my money back”

Me: “You threaten the lawyer?”

Joshua: “No, I reminded him what was at stake. I can’t lose my sister and my money too. It’s better when he knows what he is fighting for. It’s like a motivation”

Ntokozo: “a painless motivation” they both laughed

Me: “I guess I will never get out of here, how can you guys threaten the lawyer”

Joshua: "It wasn't a threat, it was a motivation. He will fight twice as hard"

Ntokozo: "Relax and take care of the baby. You need to get some sleep"

Joshua: "Yeah, we should go but I'll be here at sunrise" he gave me a hug before we all walked out. The guard showed me a cell I was going to sleep in.

P/Guard: "I hope you will be fine in here" Ntokozo went in first and sat on the bed.

Joshua: "will it be okay?"

Ntokozo: "Yeah, it's not that hard but it's not like home. Make sure she gets proper food in the morning. I will reward you" he told the guard.

P/Guard: "I will make sure Mr. Mdluli. Don't hesitate Mrs. Mzulwini, if you need something just let me know"

Me: "Thank you" I went in and sat on the bed.

Ntokozo: "be strong"

Joshua: "we are going to get you out. I promise"

Ntokozo: "And we don't make promises we can't keep. I didn't become a criminal for nothing"

Me: "You shouldn't be saying things like that in jail"

Ntokozo: "Zweli is my man" he looked at the guard who just smiled and looked down. Cops and criminals be putting a show for us while behind closed door they dance together under the stars.

Joshua: "Let's go dude so she can sleep" I stood up to hug Joshua again and then hugged Ntokozo as well.

Ntokozo: "I wasn't playing when I said be my second wife" he whispered before pulling away.

Chapter 54

3 months later.

I was still in jail because I didn't get bail. Duane was working hard to keep me out of jail but the state had a strong case against me, maybe it was because some of the cops were actually on Joseph's patrol and they were loyal to the boss even though he was dead. I lost weight because I wasn't eating and being there wasn't exactly fun. The guards took care of me but being in jail and pregnant was not easy. Another thing that was bothering me was the nightmares. Mostly when I closed my eyes I saw Joseph trying to kill me, the dreams ended with him on the floor in a pool of blood and that was driving me insane. My pregnancy wasn't going well as well. I was also sick and my lawyer was convinced that I being

sick was going to work on my advantage but time was running out for real. Ntokozo stopped with his proposal and I was grateful because I wanted to keep my friendship with Phelisa. Already Thandeka and Lindiwe were keeping their distance so I needed to keep her close so she can take care of my daughter.

P/Guard: "You have a visitor" he opened the gate and let me out. I followed him to the visitors room and I was surprised to see Phelisa there. Her face told me she was sad about something.

Me: "This is a surprise" I sat down opposite her.

Phelisa: "You look tired, are you okay?"

Me: "I'm in jail for murder dear, I'm not okay and I doubt I will ever be"

Phelisa: "I feel really bad for what I'm about to ask you"

Me: "Ask"

Phelisa: "Ntokozo told me that he wants you to be his second wife"

Me: "What?" I was shocked because Ntokozo came to see me almost every day and he stopped asking me about that.

Phelisa: "Yes, he wants to marry you and I'm here to beg you to say no"

Me: "I know that I have a bad reputation Lisa but relax dear. I will not marry your husband"

Phelisa: "It's not about you having a bad reputation but it's about him wanting to play the hero. In his eyes you are a woman in need and that's why he wants to help you"

Me: "Wow and I thought I was hot to charm him" I joked and Lisa didn't get the joke at all.

Phelisa: "I love my husband Zandiswa. Yes when we first got together he was more of a hero but we grew closer and today we have a family. I love my family and I would hate to see us end because that what will happen if you marry him"

Me: "You don't even have to explain Lisa. I understand and you have nothing to worry about"

Phelisa: "I'm glad you don't think I'm selfish and I don't want to share"

Me: "I would never share my husband, when I finally get one if I ever do I will not share him"

Phelisa: "You will get him and he will be special just like you are"

Lisa stayed for a hour and when she left I went back to my cell. I was tired so I decided to take a nap and hoped that I wasn't going to wake up in a cold sweat.

"Zandiswa, wake up" said a voice a moment after I closed my eyes. I opened one eye and Ntokozo was staring at me.

Me: "Hey"

Ntokozo: "How are you?"

Me: "Tired, I was just trying to take a nap"

Ntokozo: "Sorry I woke you. I talked to Lisa and she is fine with you being my wife"

Me: "Really?"

Ntokozo: "Yes really, I told her last night and she said it's okay"

Me: "Phelisa really loves you Ntokozo. That woman is willing to sacrifice her happiness just for you"

Ntokozo: "What do you mean?"

Me: "She said yes to please you, deep down she is crying and hoping that I will turn you down"

Ntokozo: "she came here?"

me: "Yes and we talked"

Ntokozo: "About me?"

Me: "Yes and about us. You don't love me. You are feeling sorry for me and that's why you want to help me. That's your nature and it's a good thing but you can't fix the world Ntokozo. Let me deal with this on my own and focus on your wife. She loves you"

Ntokozo: "And I love both of you"

Me: "No, you love her and feel sorry for me. I'm grateful to have such a caring friend but that's all I need. A good friend not a husband"

Ntokozo: "I hate it when you act like you have all the answers"

Joshua joined us and that ended our topic about marriage but I was glad that I was strong to say no. Marrying Ntokozo was not going to be such a bad idea since he was going to give us security but I needed to be strong and fight my own battles now. Just like any other sad moment in life there was something good along the way. Finding out that I had a brother was the best thing ever.

Joshua: "You are day dreaming, did you hear what I just said?" he snapped his fingers on my face.

Me: "Sorry I was just thinking about something, what were you saying?"

Joshua: "Someone stole the evidence against you"

Ntokozo: "Do the cops have any leads?"

Joshua: "For now there is nothing and I want it to stay that way so that all the charges can be dropped"

Ntokozo: "I want to know who and why"

Me: "why?"

Ntokozo: "They did not just break into a safe and stole the evidence. The guy went underground and destroyed everything they had. People don't just do that unless they have enough reason to do so"

Me: "Who do you suspect?"

Joshua: "I don't know, I'm bad Zandiswa but not that bad"

Ntokozo: "And this person did not just decide to destroy such an important case, he wants something"

Me: "Like what?"

Joshua: "Anything, there is a chance that he will want something in return"

Ntokozo: "I know he will. It's worse because we don't even know who it is"

Me: "Maybe it's someone who lost a child and they want to help me because I killed the monster"

Ntokozo: "Maybe but still something just doesn't add up. The guy is a mastermind criminal and I hate competition" Joshua and I looked at each other and laughed at him.

Chapter 55

Few weeks later they told me that because I was pregnant so they were transferring me to prison so that I can be closer to the doctors unlike the police station cell. I was still going to have my own cell so I said okay and informed my brother. Joshua said it was a good idea because I was pregnant and needed to be checked. Being in jail with real criminals was no joke. There were fights, screaming in the middle of the night and the guards were so mean. Ntokozo came to see me and it sucked big time that they couldn't come to my cell any more. I went to him in the visitor's room and I was surprised to see Thandeka and Njabulo.

Thandeka: "You don't look okay"

Me: "I'm in jail" I stated the obvious. I was aware of how thin I was and it annoyed me when they stated it.

Thandeka: "Are you eating?"

Me: "Yeah but morning sickness isn't helping at all"

Njabulo: "It will pass" I looked at him and nodded.

Ntokozo: "Have you had any visitor beside us?"

Me: "Nope, should I expect someone?"

Njabulo: "The man who stole the evident, we thought he might show up and reveal himself"

Me: "I haven't seen anyone"

Ntokozo: "It makes me angry that I owe someone a favor out there. Why are they not showing themselves" he sounded really angry.

Njabulo: "Maybe he is laying low until they drop the charges against Zandi"

Thandeka: "Can they do that?"

Ntokozo: "They should but you know the state. They will search for something else. Those men get paid to protect the criminals"

Njabulo: "Worse, the minister of Sport killed himself last night. They know that he is involved as well"

Me: "The coward taking the easy way out"

Ntokozo: "Do you know where Jonathan's parents live?"

Me: "No, we lost touch after they rejected my daughter.

Njabulo: "They ran when they thought Joseph was going to want his millions back"

Ntokozo: "They won't show up because they know that they will face jail time. Who knows maybe they killed themselves as well"

Thandeka: "I hope they kill themselves. How could they sell their own son just for cash? Them having Jonathan killed just because he was going to protect his family means they don't deserve to be parents"

Ntokozo: "Do you still remember Jonathan?"

Me: "I don't think I will ever forget him"

Thandeka: "They say you never forget your first" we laughed.

Ntokozo: "Your first what?"

Me: "Boyfriend"

Ntokozo: "You know this picture?" he handed my Jonathan's photo.

Me: "Where did you get it?"

Ntokozo: "Lisa found it in Nceba's things"

Me: "She stole it in Anita's things"

Thandeka: "Why would she steal a photo?"

Me: "I don't know and by the look of things we will never know some things because those who know are no longer here"

Ntokozo: "Yah ey, Nceba and Joseph died with the truth. I can't even find the guy we thought was Nceba's brother. His gang said he left the country about 2 weeks ago, but he wasn't involved. My guess is that he doesn't want to deal with this trial because the state might turn him into some sort of witness"

Njabulo: "I don't care about much as long they let you out. The rest we can leave it hanging. You were brave Zandiswa. If it wasn't for you we will be dead because Joseph caught us of guard"

Me: "I couldn't let my brother die without getting to know him"

Thandeka: "And us too, Joshua and I we are a package" we laughed.

When the guard told us that the visiting hour was over it hurt to see them go but I stood up and took my fruits they bought.

Thandeka: "I found this as well. Joseph's diary" she handed me a thick diary.

Me: "I will read it and let you know " I took it and went back to my cell. The guard brought me some toast.

P/Guard: "Your brother said you need this and tea"

Me: "My brother?"

P/Guard: "Joshua, he offered me some cash to supply you with this 3 times a day"

Me: "Can I use your phone?"

P/Guard: "Sure" he handed me the phone. I dialed Joshua's number and it rang once.

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "It's me. Did you organize toast and tea for me?"

Joshua: "Zandiswa?"

Me: "Yes it's me. I borrowed the phone"

Joshua: "I'm about to do that"

Me: "Someone beat you to it"

Joshua: "Who?"

Me: "The guard said it was you"

Joshua: "is that guard there?"

Me: "yes, should I give him the phone?"

Joshua: "Yes" I gave the guard the phone and he spoke for few minutes explaining the call he got and the amount deposited in his account for this task. After sometime he gave me the phone.

Me: "Who is it?"

Joshua: "The guy who stole the evident"

Me: "He wants me?"

Joshua: "I doubt he wants to hurt you. The guard makes the tea and toast so you are safe. Do me a favor and take a picture of that man and send t to me"

Me: "Okay" I hung up and asked to take a picture of the guard. The poor man agreed looking confused though. When I sent it Joshua called back and I put him on loud speaker.

Joshua: "You will do what you are paid to do, serve my sister the food and only you will touch that food. If the man changes his plan let me know. If he asks to see you in person you let me know so I can ensure your safety"

P/Guard: "Am I in danger?"

Joshua: "No but we can't be careful enough. I don't know why he lied and pretended to be me but so far it seems like he wants to help Zandiswa. Don't meet him on your own because we don't know what he wants"

P/Guard: "Okay, I will be careful with her food because the man only asked that I give her tea and toast because she can't eat anything else"

Me: "I hope he is really helping"

Joshua: "As long Emmanuel makes your tea then you are safe"

P/Guard: "How do you know my name?"

Joshua: "I know your daughter too. right now I'm staring at your family pictures. Google knows everything, you keep my sister happy broe and I will be a happy man but if I find out that you did more than just serve her tea and toast I swear to God I will lose it and do something to your beautiful wife"

P/Guard: "I don't want any trouble, please"

Joshua: "I have to make sure that you protect my sister from a man I don't know. If he tries something call me"

P/Guard: "I will sir"

Joshua: "Ey Zandiswa I think you have a guardian angel"

Me: "maybe"

Joshua: "I will come see you later today. Eat please"

Me: "I will bye" we hung up the phone.

P/Guard: "I will make sure that I serve you clean and safe food. Your brother doesn't play"

Me: "I know, thank you" the guard nodded and left.

I ate my toast and drank the tea in a flask. It was a great idea because I could have tea more than once. When I finished I lay down in bed and read the diary. Joseph was such a wimp shame. Keeping a diary like a high school teen, even though we knew that Joseph wrote that diary to make it look like some guy named Donovan was following Njabulo's sister but it was still worth reading because it sounded really genuine. Joseph was serious in touch with his ability to put the words down. I was still reading it when I noticed that between the hard cover and the wrapper there was something inside. Carefully I tore the wrapper and I was shocked to see photos. What shocked me the most was the person on the photos? My eyes filled up with tears as I went to check the last entry. The diary was last updated the day Nceba came into Joshua's house just before she died for real. I looked at Anita's photos again as I wept. The photos were hidden both sides. He had photos for each birthday for the last 14 years.

P/Guard: "I came to check if you are okay after the tea" I looked up from the bed and wiped the tears.

Me: "I'm fine. Can I call my brother?"

P/Guard: "Sure" he gave me his phone again. I dialed the number with shaking hands and it rang once.

Joshua: "Emmanuel"

Me: "It's me and I think I know who stole the evidence" I looked at the pictures on the floor.

Chapter 56

Joshua: "Are you sure about this? This diary was written by Joseph" he looked at the pictures.

Me: "Maybe it wasn't written by him after all. Hear this 'I saw my daughter for the first time today. She is beautiful; she has her mother's big eyes and my long hair. She seem to be getting more beautiful each time I see her and it hurts me not to be there with them' that doesn't sound like Joseph"

Ntokozo: "And suddenly you are an expert on how Joseph would sound like" he shouted.

Joshua: "Ntokozo" warned Joshua.

Ntokozo: "Don't Ntokozo me Joshua, this is madness. Jonathan is dead and someone else is probably messing with your head"

Me: "Excuse me!"

Ntokozo: "You are excused" he kicked the chair. The guard had to come and asked him to control himself or leave.

Joshua: "There is a possibility because they wanted to kill him. This is the man who was forced to leave his family because those he trusted turned against him. Remember he was 18 at the time"

Ntokozo: "Don't tell me that you actually believe this?"

Me: "I do believe it too"

Ntokozo: You would, that's what you are. A pathetic, spoilt little woman"

Joshua: "maybe you should go" he looked at Ntokozo.

Ntokozo: 'Yeah I should and I'm going to hunt the dog down and kill him. He wanted to die 15 years ago anyway" he walked out. Joshua took a deep breath and looked at me.

Me: "What is his problem?"

Joshua: "he is feeling bitter because if this is Jonathan then he can't play your hero anymore"

Me: "Your brother is crazy"

Joshua: "He cares a lot, I blame mum for leaving him while he was really young"

Me: "He needs to get over himself because if this turn out to be Jonathan then my daughter needs a father"

Joshua: "And you need him too"

Me: "I think it's too late for me"

"It's never too late" said a man who was sitting on the table next to us. Joshua and I looked at him at the same time. He took off his hat and glasses. The moment our eyes locked together I realized that I had seen the eyes before; it was the doctor from the hospital.

Joshua: "Can we help you?"

Man: "It's not you who can help me but rather me who can help you"

Joshua: "If you want to play please go play in traffic. We are busy and you are disturbing us"

Man: "You are talking about Jonathan Watson"

Joshua: "Yeah, so?"

Man: "I know where he is"

Me: "You do? And you are?"

Man: "I'm Maxwell"

Me: "You were at the hospital the other day"

Man: "I've been everywhere you are, after he recovered he asked me to follow you for him"

Me: "recovered from what?"

Man: "The car accident Miss. The car accident happened for real and he almost died"

Joshua: "Who are you?"

Man: "My name is Maxwell. I was the first person to the scene where his car crushed. He begged me to save him and I assumed he meant take him to the hospital. When I took him he pleaded with me to help him escape and I felt sorry for him so I hid him in my house"

Joshua: "How did you fake his death?"

Man: "He did that part himself. He told me that he already knew that there were people after him so he had someone who was going to help him fake his death. When he meet with the accident he was on his way to fake his death but sadly he meet an accident before he had a chance to tell his girlfriend the truth"

Me: "Where is he? I need to see his face"

Man: "That's why I'm here. He is giving up hope and I don't want him to do that"

me: "Hope about what?"

man: "I'm not qualified to help nurse a crush survivor Miss Mthethwa so when he was in my house he got worse in the wounds and that resulted with him needing an emergency operation on his face"

me: "He is blind?"

Man: 'no but he has a huge scar on his left side of the face. That's why he is afraid to face you because he is not the same guy you knew years ago"

Joshua: "where is he right now?"

Man: "He is leaving the country tonight"

Joshua: 'Can you take me to him?"

Man: "Yes, he needs to see you before he can leave" said the man standing up. Joshua stood up as well.

Me: "I wish I could come too"

Joshua: "if it's really him I will bring him home to you my sister"

When the guard took me back to my cell I was shaking. It was really unbelievable that Jonathan was alive all these years and he never made contact at all.

Chapter 57

I waited for Joshua to come back with Jonathan but he never did. Emmanuel borrowed me his phone and I tried to call him but he never answered. I didn't want to call Ntokozo so I tried Phelisa and she said Joshua left the day before and he never came home but Njabulo said he was fine. I thanked her and asked her to ask Joshua to call me when he gets back. I was worried about him. What if I had sent my brother to some sort of a trap?

Emmanuel: "Your breakfast" he handed me the flask and toast.

Me: "Thank you but I don't think I can eat anything right now"

Emmanuel: "Think of the baby, it's important that you eat" I looked at him because he meant well.

Me: "Yep, the baby" I took it and went to eat. After eating I decided to take a nap. My head was spinning because I was so caught up in deep things I didn't understand. Each time I thought I had finally made a breakthrough things just went from bad to worse.

I was still napping when someone woke me up and said I had a visitor. I woke and went to see, it was Joshua. The look on his face told me it wasn't good news.

Joshua: "I was too late"

Me: "Did you at least find something to prove if it's him or not?"

Joshua: "No, the place was wiped clean. I'm sorry Zandiswa"

Me: "It's okay, if it's him and he doesn't want us in his life then it's fine. We can't force him"

Joshua: "Maybe he is afraid that you will reject him"

Me: "why would I reject him? I would never reject Jonathan. Yes I know that he owes me answers but I was going to give him a chance to explain" I began sobbing. Joshua held my hand because he wasn't allowed to touch me.

Joshua: "Maybe he will come back?"

Me: "When? He left for 15 years Joshua and he wants to leave again"

Joshua: "I'm hoping he changes his mind"

Me: "He never did before so I guess he won't now" I sneezed and felt like something was leaking between my legs. "I think I need to use the bathroom" I stood up and Joshua nodded. I was about to walk away when he held my hand and I saw the guard rush to me.

Joshua: "I think you should sit down"

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Because you are bleeding"

I was rushed to the hospital because the doctor at the prison hospital said I needed to have an operation. I was losing the baby. By that time I was in serious pain and I kept drifting in and out of consciousness. I knew that the baby wouldn't survive and what hurt me the most was the fact that I had wanted to abort the baby more than once. It was like God was punishing me for not loving my pregnancy on the word go. When I finally came around Ntokozo was a sleep on the chair. As if he was sensing something he opened his eyes and looked at me.

Ntokozo: "Morning"

Me: "Hey, where am I?"

Ntokozo: "At the hospital. Don't you remember what happened?"

Me: "I had a miscarriage" he nodded and looked down.

Ntokozo: "What's important is that you are alive"

Me: "when was the last time you talked to Anita?"

Ntokozo: "last night. She is fine and I didn't tell her about the pregnancy because I figured you might want to explain it yourself"

Me: "Thank you"

Ntokozo: "I'm sorry Zandiswa, for everything that I did to you. Trying to take an advantage of the situation. It was wrong of me, it's just that I care too much and I hate to see you like this. I honestly thought I can protect you from everything but I was wrong and I also hurt my wife in the process. I hope you will forgive me"

me: "Just love and respect Lisa. She is such a good woman"

Ntokozo: "You don't have to tell me twice. Things will work out just fine for all of us, you will see" he smiled and I just grinned. Nothing was ever working out for me. After sometime he left and I slept too, I even had a dream of seeing Jonathan and hearing him say he was coming back.

When I woke up again there was a doctor looking at something. He smiled when he saw me awake.

Doctor: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "Tired and in pain"

Doctor: "You will get something for the pain"

Me: "What happened?"

Doctor: "The stress had an effect on the pregnancy, you went through a lot"

Me: "Wasn't my body supposed to warn me before all of this?"

Doctor: "It does but not for everybody" I nodded as the tear rolled down my cheek. Someone opened the door and I saw Joshua and Njabulo. The doctor asked to talk to Joshua and left me with Njabulo.

Njabulo: "I'm sorry"

me: "it wasn't your fault"

Njabulo: "I meant for what happened between us"

Me: "It's okay, it's all in the past now. You and your wife can move on and I will do the same with my daughter"

Njabulo: "Mlungisi and Thizo tried to track down the guy who stole the evidence and it was your baby daddy. Jonathan"

me: "I know"

Njabulo: "You are so chilled about it"

me: "Going crazy about it won't help"

Njabulo: "yeah but you will finally get the answers"

Me: "didn't you hear? He left. Just like before. He ran" I looked the other way.

Njabulo: "I don't understand"

Me: "me neither. I'm tired and I would like to get some sleep" when he didn't say anything I checked what he was doing and he was frowning on his phone.

Njabulo: "Okay, get some rest and it will all look better tomorrow" he didn't even look at me.

Chapter 58

After staying in jail for full 8 months I gave up hope of ever getting out. I told myself that my life was now going to be like that and I asked Joshua to bring my daughter home so she could see me but he refused and said Duane was working on something.

Emmanuel: "There is someone here to visit you" he woke me up from my nap, I was no longer pregnant but I still slept a lot just like I did during my pregnancy.

Me: "Is it Joshua?"

Emmanuel: "Yes and your lawyer"

Me: "Okay" I woke and followed him out. We went to a private room and I was surprise to find the room full of people and the journalists.

Duane: "Please sit down" he whispered.

Me: "What is going on?" I sat down in between men I've never seen before. One of them stood up and introduced himself. He gave a long speech about women's right and children protection. I wasn't interested in all that in fact I wasn't listening until he said something about me being free and the charges dropped.

Me: "I am free?" I interrupted him.

Man: "Unless you like to stay more"

Me: "Of cause not, I have a daughter and I need to see my child. I didn't think I was ever getting out of here at all. Thank you so much" I began crying because of the excitement.

Man: "I hope you will be able to forgive us for the pain you went through"

Me: "I'll think about all that at home. When do I leave?" I looked at Duane and everybody laughed.

I was released that day and my record cleared. Joshua took me home where they had a surprise party for me. I didn't feel like partying but I didn't want to hurt their feelings so I stayed for an hour with them and then said thank you before getting ready for bed.

Joshua: "You are turning in already?"

Me: "I'm tired. I haven't been well after the miscarriage"

Joshua: "Maybe you need to be checked out by a specialist"

Me: "The doctor said my body needs to recover. Maybe I will take Anita somewhere for a holiday"

Joshua: "Leaving me behind?" he sulked.

Me: "We will come back"

Joshua: "Can you wait for few minutes. I have another surprise for you"

Me: "Really? What is it?"

Joshua: "Go sit down and you will see" I nodded and went to sit on the couch. The ladies were telling me about what I missed and it wasn't much except that many people were dropping like flies because they were afraid to get caught about the human trafficking syndicate. Miss Jameson committed suicide as well and the principal in Anita's school. The guy I thought was Nceba's brother turned out to be her husband. They got married in secret because Nceba wasn't supposed to get married. Njabulo's sister was sold by the lady that ran the orphanage and she drank a bottle of sleeping pills and never woke up. Njabulo's sister came up with a plan to escape and asked Nceba to help her escape the life of child prostitution. Sadly life on the outside was tough still so she went back to it but this time she was doing it for her own survival. I was glad that she managed to change few lives based on her experience.

Joshua: "'They are here" shouted Joshua going to open the door. We all stood up and waited. Anita walked in first looking older than I last saw her.

Anita: 'Mum" she ran into my arms. We had an emotional hug as we both sobbed against each other. When we finally pulled away I noticed that all the kids were back and excited to see their parents.

Bongeka: "I think I aged more than you guys" she complained.

TM: "We were not that bad"

Anita: "We were angels" they laughed.

Bongeka: 'yeah right. Ask my husband just how handful you guys are" we laughed at her.

Lwazi: "Honestly I'm thinking twice about having more kids"

Joshua: 'Aw come on. Few kids and already you are giving up"

Thandeka: 'I understand. Thando and Kevin are too much hard work just the two of them. I can't imagine someone extra"

Kevin: "But you love us anyway" he hid behind Joshua.

Thandeka: "So much and I will kiss you both until you all go grey" she chased after him.

"I've been waiting outside for so long" when I heard that voice it felt like something was sinking in my stomach. The voice I knew so well and never thought I would ever see again. I closed my eyes and opened them again. He stood there his gold hair brushing his shoulders and looking like a cartoon drawing.

Jonathan: "I'm sorry I just couldn't wait for you guys to welcome me in" he looked at Ntokozo.

Ntokozo: "We understand. Zandiswa, this is the surprise we had for you" he pointed Jonathan. I didn't

even realize I was crying until he walked towards me and took out a handkerchief to dab my tears.

Jonathan: "I'm sorry" he whispered. I turned to walk away but his hand closed around my wrist and held me tight. His grip was now strong unlike those years ago when we used to run in the woods like two silly kids.

Jonathan: "I know it such a shock for you to see me like this after I died almost 16 years ago. It was so hard to keep away from you. Every day I drove past your building and see you and Anita get into the car. So many times I've watched you guys and almost revealed myself but I knew that would risk your lives and I couldn't. I had a plan Ndiswa; I was going to take you and our kid away. The night that I died I was going to kidnap you and escape with you but I never got to you. I had everything, the tickets, cash and a flight. When I met that accident everything changed. I lost my eye and had a huge opening on my face. The doctors who worked on me said it was a miracle that I survived and that they managed to heal the wound after multiple infections. I had this huge scar on my face and everybody who looked at me had to look away. I was like a monster and I couldn't come back and risk your lives"

Me: "I gave you this" I took the handkerchief and looked at it.

Jonathan: "Yes, it was one thing I had of you beside the pictures that I had my man take"

Me: "But Joshua couldn't find you. I thought you left"

Jonathan: "I was afraid that you will reject me because I was looking scary. Then this man came" he pointed Thizo.

Me: "You went to get him?" I looked at Thizo.

Thizo: "When Joshua told us about the man who organized food for you in prison I had to check it out. I discovered it was him and I saw the reason why he wanted to stay hidden. Njabulo and Ntokozo organized for him to have an operation and see if the doctors could fix him up. We flew him to Brazil"

Me: "And none of you said anything?" I looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "I found out about it later after we had already went to look for him"

Ntokozo: "It wasn't going to be a surprise if you knew"

Jonathan: "And the doctor did a wonderful job. My eye still can't see but you can hardly tell that I'm blind on my left eye"

Me: "You look amazing though"

Thandeka: "So how did you know that she could only eat toast and tea?"

Jonathan: "I saw them, Ntokozo and Zandiswa ordering it and I saw that she ate it well so I figured she was going to need that in jail as well"

Me: "Thank you"

Jonathan: "Thank you for taking care of her. She is beautiful and smart just like you" he hugged Anita.

Me: "You met already?"

Anita: "After the surgery he came to Canada to recover. I'm glad to be back home with my mum and dad"

"Wait until they treat you like a kid your whole life" said someone who was standing at the door with a toddler.

Joshua: "Julia"

Julia: "Dad" she walked in followed by a blonde man who was carrying the bags.

Thandeka: "Why didn't you tell us that you are coming?"

Julia: "And ruin the surprise?" she hugged her.

Joshua: "And my granddaughter looks like a model. Why does she have such long hair?" he picked up the kid.

Julia: "It's her natural hair dad. It grows back. She can't be looking like a boy all the time"

Joshua: "I want her to look like a boy. We have to keep the boys afar"

Anita: "She is a little girl. Boys will bother her when she is 15"

Jonathan: "are they bothering you already?"

Anita: "No" she blushed.

Joshua: "That's it. From now on you all going to be tom boys. No skirts"

Julia: "Gosh dad, you freaking out the kids" she took her daughter.

Thandeka: "Why are you saying kids? you are a kid too"

Julia: "Well not anymore mum" she showed us her left hand and there was a huge diamond on her finger.

Lisa: "Oh my God" she took her hand and we all went to admire her finger. It was beautiful.

Joshua: "Sorry to burst your bubbles but I want lobola first"

Julia: "You will get it" she looked at her blond fiancé who visibly blushed and cleared his throat.

"Why is everybody standing? And I have been knocking for the last five minutes" complained another

lady walking in with twins.

Thandeka: "Zinhle"

Joshua: "Wow, suddenly I'm a very excited man. Got my whole family with me" we all took turns hugging her. She looked like Joshua and her kids looked like her.

Zinhle: "So many faces I don't know but I have time to get to know all of you"

Joshua: "Yeah sis, but there is someone you have to meet and get to know right away. Zinhle this is Zandiswa. She is our sister. Our father was her father"

Zinhle: "Oh my God, the girl in the picture" she looked at me closer.

Joshua: "Yes, we found pictures in our father's things and we thought it was a family friend"

Me: "It's nice to meet you all"

Zinhle: "This family is just growing Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes and this is Nosipho but we call her TM. She is Thandeka's daughter. Well you know that Thandeka and I share everything so she is now my daughter, Nosipho, this is your Aunt Zinhle, Sister Julia and your brothers, Kevin and Thando"

Julia: "Finally I'm not the only girl. Welcome to our family Nosi, be warned. Mum and dad are not as sweet as they sound. They run a tight household and if mum said no just know that Dad will say no as well. if you want something so bad you will need to soften mum and convince her before dad gets here" advised Julia.

Joshua: "You have been siblings for few minutes and already you girls are up to no good" we all laughed until we heard something fall.

Ntokozo: "Lisa" he rushed to her. She lay there so still like she was dead.

Chapter 59

We filled up the hospital waiting room as nobody wanted to wait at home. The doctors were working on her for 2 hours straight. Joshua bought coffee for all of us except kids, he bought them cold drinks.

Ntokozo: "What could be taking so long?" he complained.

Joshua: "Be patient broe, she will be fine"

Thandeka: "She is a strong woman"

Ntokozo: "but how could she just pass out like that? I don't understand. I've been selfish and just kept giving her more and more without caring. I'm turning into a monster"

Jonathan: "The lady will be fine. You need to be strong"

We all stood up when we saw the doctor approach us.

Doctor: "Wow, I haven't seen such a big family in this hospital" he looked at our kids.

Joshua: "What's wrong with her?"

Doctor: "I would like to talk to her husband alone"

Ntokozo: "Just tell us doctor. What's wrong with my wife?"

Doctor: "Mr. Mdluli, your wife is fine, because she hit her head when she fell we had to check for any possible injuries on the head and we found nothing"

Me: "Thank God"

Doctor: "But we did discover that she is 3 weeks pregnant. Her hypertension was very low and that's why she fainted"

Ntokozo: "But she is fine? And the baby is fine?"

Doctor: "They are both fine and you can see her" he looked at us as if to say 'not you'

Ntokozo: "Thank you doctor" he stood up and went to see her. We waited for him because we knew that we were not going to be allowed in there.

Joshua: "Such an eventful day"

Thandeka: "There's always drama in this family"

Jonathan: "You don't say" we all laughed. Ntokozo stayed for an hour with her and then came back. We all left the hospital and went home.

It was already late so we put the kids to bed. Anita didn't want to go to sleep, I had to go and sit with her.

Me: "Are you afraid?"

Anita: "That I will wake up and all this will be a dream"

Me: "We are both awake. I'm never going to leave you again"

Anita: "I know that it wasn't something you had a choice about. You did it to protect me. In Canada I went to see a hypnotist and he hypnotized TM. She has all those horrible memories blocked. Just to think that I almost suffered the same fate is scary. I'm glad you killed him mum"

Me: "I'm glad I did too. We saved lots of kids and they will need lots of therapy but at least they are safe now"

When we got to the school playgrounds the entire family was there. Even Yamkela was sitting in Joshua's lap eating away some chicken. Joshua didn't even care that he was now stained all over. It warmed my heart to see Julia and Nosipho get along so well. They were like twins. Ntokozo was busy fussing over Phelisa. He basically watched her steps and ensured that she was fine all the time. I realized that Ntokozo cared a lot and that was his weakness as well. Thandeka was busy mothering her sons. You could tell that they had such a strong bond and they were all bonding with Nosipho. Jonathan and I watched and admired our daughter.

Jonathan: "I love you Zandiswa"

Me: "I love you too" I rested my head on his shoulder. Finally I got my happy ending.

The End.