

Good morning

DRIBBLED is a series, meaning it doesn't necessarily focus on a "main couple" but explores other characters as well hence there's Mpumelelo, Nkosinathi, Onele and Cassandra episodes.

Each character gets to have at least 50 inserts for each season before we can move on to season 2. Season 1 for Cassandra is finished and season 2 is currently under construction, I still have to finish up Mpumelelo and Nkosinathi season 1.

I've recently added Onele as a character because I had a storyline for her, which I didn't wanna overshadow under her sister's storyline. Secondly, I added Onele because I felt unmotivated to write about Nkosinathi and Mpumelelo just yet. So I thought this additional character would keep the page going...

I understand that some of you are under some sort of confusion, we will wrap up Nkosinathi and Mpumelelo POV latest next week. I'm really not sure.

I see some of ya'll don't want an insert written under a certain character eg: #Onele_03 then Cassandra's POV written under that episode. I am not sure how I will keep track of it but I will work around that.

As usual, your opinions matter even if I won't use all of them but ndiyazibona izikhalazo and I'm an open book that likes and appreciates transparency (most times) .

Let's talk.

What do you think?

How do you feel?

#Dribbled

[06/26, 14:37] : #Cassandra_01

When I first got to PE I remember I was a university student, you know the excitement of being independent and finally leaving your mother's house (even if it's just for a while) but the feeling nje of knowing that akhomntu uzaw'be endingxolis a, endithethisa nangexesha longena endlini. I was really excited to be my own grown-up for once. Unfortunately I wasn't granted space e res like most of my friends, so I had to rent outside of the school premises meaning moghel was gonna live e Summerstrand, heaven knows I was not just excited but I was on cloud nine.

So the first three months were a blur nothing exciting and no exciting people except for my group of friends from high school, I decided to stay over ndingagoduki ngo March because I wanted to familiarize myself with the area, well that's what I

told my family. My three older sisters were married, two older brothers were working in different cities and I was in my first year of Varsity leaving behind my younger sister who was still in the 8th grade. When my older brother heard that andibuyi he decided to come check on me, unannounced. I don't know what he was hoping to see but he got the address from mom wafouna sesithi mandimvulele igate.

I was excited coz I knew ndizophiwa imali, other than that I was irritated that he didn't call xa esiza as if ufuna ukundibhaqa entweni. I got up and went to open the gate for him, he drove in with two of his friends, bohlika and we hugged as I led them to my room. He literally paraded my room to a point that his friends just burst out in laughter knowingly... ndabe ndimhleka nam because he was just being too obvious.

Me: ukhangela ntoni bhuti kangaka?

Lionel: no ndiyajonga kaloku ii living conditions zakho, maybe kukho some crooked floors in the bathroom.

Me: so ucingela nditybilike, ndiwe, ndophuke?

Lionel: that's what big brothers are for... so uhlala nabani apha?

Me: for now ndisahlala ndodwa, chomi zam got space eres.

Lionel: akho skwatta?

Me: Nope, azikho allowed. U strict u landlord yhu, if you're gonna live here ungena nomzali a sign'e so that whatever happens the parent must be accountable.

Lionel: u right mos lomntu... khaw'nxibe ke sihambe siyothenga ukutya uthe umamakho ndikuthengele i grocery ungaolamba kude.

See why I was excited?

I knew ndizo sort'wa out kwinto yonke.

I wore slippers and a jacket over tights and vest then we got in the car and went to Greenacres. I pushed the trolley and said I should pick whatever I think I'm gonna need, jonga ndathenga nee toiletries to last me the next term yonke. One of his friends was shocked when I went to take three packets of sanitary towels...

Ginger: haibo Sandra uzothenge nezizinto uhamba nathi kengoku?

Me: ii pads bhuti?

Ginger: ewe man, ezizinto ubusenzithenga xa uze nee chomi zakho mfondini.

Me: haibo bhuti, awukwazi nokuzibiza nge gama?

The other guys laughed... I was really shocked that umntu omdala njengaye still had that stigma towards ii pads, like, it didn't make sense tu.

Ginger: ezizinto Sandra zizinto ezifihlwayo, nina

nivele nizithi dlubhu phambi kwethu.

Me: well uxolo bhuti I didn't know ba anizazi...
kaloku ubhut'wam udlangondithengela xa
endithengela ii toiletries so...

Ginger: haibo Lionel uphatha ez'way nyhani?

Lionel: Tyhini, mangaphi amantombi eza emva
kwam ekhaya Ginger? Ayilohlazo kwedini
ukubamba ipad.

Ginger: tyhini lomjita.

Lionel: uyacaca ba zange wakhe wazithunywa..
Linda uzale ke okanye uts hate. Zintwez'ncinci ezi.

Yats ho i pusha itrolley la chap, but I could still see
the disgust and discomfort from bhut'Ginger as we
continued my shopping and headed to the
paypoints. Since it was late already we went to have
supper together before they dropped me off and
went their way.

A few minutes after they left, I got a text from

Lis akhanya who's my friend from high school but she got indawo e res, she wanted me to come over... naye akagodukanga. Now I wore sneakers and took a walk to her res ndafika kukho oo roomza bakhe ababini whom I've met before.

Lisa: jongani, benditheni? u Friend uhlala e ready!

Que: hay jonga mas ambeni!

Me: whoah yhimani, kuhanjwa kuyiwaphi? u Qaqamba kutheni e excited guys?

Lisa: ufikelwe chomi u Que so uyasikhupha!

And so it began...

[06/26, 14:38] : #Cassandra_02

While still in primary school I watched my friends getting excited about dating, like, almost all my friends had boyfriends and I couldn't care less. It

wasn't because there were no guys hitting on me, I guess I was just too much of a child to give attention to anything "adulty". When we got to the 9th grade I finally got enticed and thought maybe I should give this dating thing a try and there was this cute yellow bone'ish guy who had been befriending me since grade 8 so, we hit it off. He was from a rich family and yes I got spoilt rotten from the day I said yes. My relationship with Sinethemba went on from grade 9 to grade 11... weirdly enough, we broke up because of a friend. Two years of love, destroyed because a friend of mine had an obsession over this guy and I only found out through social media. I still thank God that Sindy, who was also my friend, called me instead of getting the weird looks eskolweni the following Monday and not knowing why...

Sindy: Chomi when last did you see Ta Snez?

Me: Thursday eskolweni, why?

Sindy: so he wasn't at school Friday?

Me: no, he said he's visiting his dad in Grahamstown.

Sindy: go into your Facebook and see what Lusanda uploaded.

Me: what has Lusanda got to do with my boyfriend kengoku?

Sindy: just go into Facebook Cassandra.

Me: okay.

We hung up and I immediately went online and saw my friend out at some park with my boyfriend, Okay. At first I thought it was just a coincidence that maybe they actually met at the park, that maybe umntu ebehamba indlela yakhe (someone was just going his/her way) and they accidentally bumped onto each other well, until I saw his comment on the picture "you were good company Lulu, I look forward to next weekend". Lusanda was my friend, like...friend! What was the connection between the two of them? Her response sent me to the ER: "aw baby...thank you for inviting me. Cant wait" I

froze..but decided to comment on that picture just net for control. I wrote “you two look beautiful and the weather was permitting” immediately after sending that comment my phone rang. I was having chest pains just seeing his name on my screen but I answered because I wanted him to lie straight to my ears or even better, tell me that I misunderstood all that I saw, and be sincere in doing so. Sincere enough for me to believe him.

Me: hello?

Sine: baby...it's not what it looks like.

Me: what are you talking about?

Sine: that picture you saw on Facebook, it's not what it looks like.

Me: I actually saw your comment before I saw the picture though.

Sine: can I come over so we can talk? Please.

Me: what do you wanna say to me that you cannot say now? Over the phone.

Sine: Cass...you know I love you, lento ka Lusanda was just a one day thing. But baby, please can we meet up so that I can explain properly?

Me: no Sinethemba, you can explain to her next weekend torho(please). I don't have time for that shit.

Sine: we are just friends come on Cassandra.

Me: since when are you just friends with my friends bro?

Sine: I was just saying, there's nothing more than that.

Me: I never asked, and I'm not interested to know.

Sine: baby?

Me: bro, please. I'm already a laughing stock on social media, you wanna make it worse now by coming to my hood after you went picnicking with my friend behind my back? Seriously?

He sighed...

Me: let's just pretend we never knew each other.
You go your way and I'll go mine.

Sine: you're blowing this out of proportion Cass...I'd never date your friend noba sekuthwani (no matter what). Come on.

Me: oh, so you decided to go on a picnic with her while you told me you were visiting your dad in Grahamstown for the weekend?

I heard him mumble "shit" he must have thought I'd forget...so soon though?

Me: you thought I'd have forgotten?

Sine: baby...look, ndiyeza.

Then he hung up.

I switched my phone off, locked myself in my room and cried it all out. I acted all brave on that phone but I was shattered, I wasn't really mad at Lusanda

because maybe I revealed all too much of my relationship to them as my friends so she must have wanted a taste of what I was experiencing but Sine? He was supposed to be MY boyfriend not OUR boyfriend. How could he do that to me? Facebook of all places? Really? My mother believed I was busy with schoolwork that's why I spent my weekend in my room, I didn't wanna tell her that the first love had just broken my heart. She didn't even know that I'm dating so...

Monday, I saw Lusanda at a distance and just walked straight to class where Sindy and Lisakhanya were already waiting. We hugged and pretended for a second..until she (Sindy) couldn't anymore.

Sindy: I saw him this morning, he came looking for you.

Me: I don't wanna talk to him nor do I wanna talk about him.

Lisa: what are you going to do to Lusanda?

Me: nothing.

They looked at me as if I'm insane.

Sindy: nothing? So we continue as friends as if nothing happened?

Me: look, she knew what she was doing. I don't have the energy for both of them, besides, we have exams coming up so let's just focus on that.

Lisa: chomi...oh shit, here he comes.

Me: argh!

He came behind them, greeted and asked to speak to me aside. I just looked at him...my heart reshattering to a million pieces once again.

Sine: five minutes only, please.

I just followed behind him as we walked outside... and then we bumped onto a chirpy Lusanda. As she registered what was before her, face happy face turned red within a second but then Sinethemba didn't pay much attention to her, nor did I. We just walked past her and stopped near the girls toilets...

Me: you're already on four minutes.

Sine: baby look, I know I lied to you...and I'm sorry.

Me: okay.

Sine: I didn't know she'd upload those pictures on FB and I'll be honest with you...I didn't even think until you responded on them.

Me: I know.

Sine: please forgive me baby, I fooled around I admit kodwa it was just harmless fun.

Me: look, we don't have to do this. Let's just go our separate ways and forget this ever happened.

Sine: but I still love you Cass...ndiyakuthanda ndithini ke? (I love you what must I do?)

Me: deal with it.

Then I walked back to class...somehow, this whole picnic thing had caused a huge commotion even in the classroom, I had people who weren't even my friends, just mere classmates, confronting Lusanda. I flatly ignored the whole thing...I didn't have the energy, I wasn't gonna be caught fighting over a boy at school to. Never.

[06/26, 14:39] : #Cassandra_03

The noise in the class only died down when our first teacher for the day walked in, I heard people running towards their desks, hush hush sounds here and there, then there was total silence. After a couple of minutes in the teaching, Lusanda sent me a text "Chomi I'm sorry" I ignored her and just focused until the next class. Lusanda was always amongst the top five students every term, some of

barely made the top ten everytime, I think that's mostly why we tolerated her, she was clever and we would listen to her explaining everything to us in study groups. But other than that, there was nothing much we could or rather, I could say about our friendship.

After the first four period we had interval, I was the first one to go out because I wanted to run to the loo first. Behind that closed cubicle I could hear my name, Lusanda's and Sinethemba's, obviously it was a joke...eyona joke indim kuyo yonke lonto (the real joke being me in all of that). I broke down all over again, I cried until I heard them leave, walked out and washed my face then I went to look for Sindy and Lisakhanya ndafika sebesitya (they were already eating).

Lisa: uvelaphi? (Where do you come from?)

Me: bathroom.

I sat down and took out my lunchbox in silence.

Sindy: you okay?

Me: yup.

Sindy: Look at me.

I giggled, I didn't want to look at her, not that moment.

Sindy: have you been crying Cass?

Me: No, ndizothi ndililela ntoni? (What will I say I'm crying for?)

Sindy: then look at me.

I swallowed hard and looked up, I could feel tears threatening to come out that moment especially when I saw how she looked at me. The empathy in her eyes. I looked away.

Lisa: chomi, ndiyayazi uyamthanda u Snez but izodlula lento suyifaka entliziweni kakhulu. (I know you love Snez but this will pass too, don't take it to heart)

Sindy: Nanku lo sathana esiza. (Here comes the satan/ devil)

Me: uba? (who?)

Sindy: Lusanda.

Lisa: hay uyaphi kengoku? (Where is she going now?)

Sindy: hay siyalingwa guys. (we're being tested guys)

Lisa: ndizom' moera kemnake andina kwaxesha lohleka naye. (I'll beat the hell out of her, I don't have time to laugh with her at all)

I took a deep breath...I hadn't realized how much I was hurt until I heard the gossip in the girls toilets. That shit hit hard.

Lusanda: guys...

There was total silence.

Lusanda: Guys andinayanga u Sinethemba, we just went out for fun. Like... akhonto iqhubekayo phakathi kwethu. (Guys I am not dating Sinethemba, there's nothing going on between the two of us)

Lisa: Did you hear yourself saying you just went out for fun?

Lusanda: ewe Lisa, fun. (yes Lisa, fun)

Lisa: So you go around with people's boyfriends for fun? Seriously Lusanda?

Lusanda: It was harmless fun, why can't you guys get that?

Sindy: harmless fun gqiba nibizane baby koo Facebook? The same guy you had harmless fun with told his girlfriend that he's going to

Grahamstown yet you posted a picture with him at some stupid park. You call that harmless fun?

Lisa: she knew that because ebets hilo u Cass kwa Friday. (Cass did mention that on Friday)

Me: Lusanda, ndcela usinike ispace. (Please give us some space)

Lusanda: haibo chomi!

Me: hay don't chomi me, infact here comes your baby, go and have a repeat of harmless fun with him. Mkhaw'lele engekafiki torhwana (Please meet him halfway before he gets here)

Lusanda: hay Cassandra why are you being childish? It's not like yo-

She didn't need to say more, wayilahla impama u Lisakhanya (Lisakhanya slapped the lights out of her brains) I screamed on her behalf as I jumped to grab Lisa who was already rolling up her sleeves, Lusanda had the nerve to want to fight back, she came charging at us but was met by Sindy's fist

that sent her flying to the green ground behind her stupid ass. By now the spot was overcrowded by the school kids cheering on. I looked up and saw Sinethembe helping Lusanda get up and that tore me up even more, how could he do that, I'm right here. Why would he rather help her instead? I swallowed my pride and pulled Lisa who was now more vocal and cussing, SIndy grabbed our bags and followed us as we left the scene. I heard footsteps behind us, and then a tap on the shoulder accompanied by a "baby can talk" I let go of Lisa's hand, turned and gave him one helluva klap. I could see the shock in his eyes and now there was total silence around us...

Me: I made this easy for you, let us pretend like we don't know each other. That should be easy, but nooo, you want to make a fool out of me right?

Sine: Andizokuncama kodwa mna baby. (I'm not gonna give up)

Lisa: uzozikhabisa ngathi kengoku (You want to be

beaten by us)

Sine: ungenaphi wena Lisakhanya? (Where do you fit in here Lisakhanya?)

Lisa: Do you want me to show you where do I fit in? Really?

Sine: just mind you damn business mfethu.

Lisa: Cassandra is my damn business, you should be minding Lusanda...she's bleeding.

Sindy: and you're bleeding too.

He touched his nose and saw blood, I just chuckled and walked away.

He wasn't worth my time anymore, yes we dated for two years and never had sex but he said he understood when I told him I wasn't ready, he said he'd wait. Lusanda was not a virgin ke anyway maybe he got the goods from her...and she knew I wasn't giving him any because friends discuss these things amongst themselves. Right?

I swiftly moved on from two wasted years of my life just like that, they only fully disclosed their relationship a few months later and by then she was no longer our friend. It didn't last though, I mean, they dated for the rest of that year only, after that he changed provinces. When he left, he begged to meet me and I only gave him a chance maybe because I kind of needed closure as to why he would hurt me like that...

We met at Spur, I had my own money to pay for whatever it was that I was going to eat...I got there thirty minutes before him and ordered a shake as I waited. He got there and ordered himself orange juice...

Me: okay, we're here. What's up?

Sine: can I just say that I never stopped loving you.

Me: noted.

Sine: I wanted to apologize to you, ndiyazazi ukuba ndaakukhathaza ngalanto ndayenzayo ne chomi yakho so ndcela undixolele. (I know what I did with

your friend hurt you badly so I plead that you forgive me)

I didn't respond...

Sine: I uhm...I know it will take time for you to do that so I will not push.

Me: why did you do it? That's all I wanna know right now, why?

Sine: Andiyazi Cass andra, and'funi nobe ndiqamba amabali ndikuxokisa. (I don't know Cass andra, I don't even wanna lie to you by making up stories)

Me: is she more beautiful? More fun to be around with? What is it? There's got to be something.

He ran his hand over his face...

Me: did she offer you sex? Is that what's hard to confess?

Sine: yes.

Me: wow!

The waitress came to take our order...I ordered Buffalo wings and he ordered the special of the day.

Sine: I'm sorry...I got weak at the temptation. I won't even go to the Facebook post...I feel so ashamed.

Me: eight months later, you feel so ashamed?

Sine: I wanted to explain to you but you never gave me a chance...understandably.

Me: you should have texted. Andithi you texted when you wanted us to meet today?

Sine: I know...look, we're here now.

Me: and I wonder why.

Sine: I wanted to apologize and tell you that I'm leaving the EC.

Me: oh.

Sine: yeah...so uhm, bendingafuni uhambe uyiva

ngabantu or uyibone kwi social media. (I didn't want you to see my departure on the social media or as a hear-say).

Me: uyaphi? (Where are you going?)

Sine: I'm going to KZN...will continue high school kwelacala and maybe start Varsity there as well

Me: kay...good luck. I guess.

Sine: thank you.

After eating, he paid for both of us then our paths separated. It wasn't long after we departed when he sent me a text "thank you for meeting up, I feel a lot lighter now and I wish you all the best" I just replied with a "thanks" and deleted his number, he was already blocked everywhere else. After that meet up, I never heard from him again.

[06/26, 14:40] : #Cassandra_04

Back to PE, we went out to Blue Waters Café for a

light snack and just a lil chill, Que was forever on her phone and I only understood when an AMG pulled up outside waxhuma, waphuma (She jumped and left the building). I looked at Lisa, she just shrugged and smiled at her cocktail...

Lisa: So utheni ubhuti wakho? (So what did your brother say?)

Me: he didn't say much, he just stocked up my pantry qha.

Lisa: akumnandi. (How nice)

Sips: nanku ebuya u Que. (Here's Que coming back)

We looked up...

Que: Masambeni guys (Let's go guys)

Me: where are we going to?

Que: zange ungabina mibuzo kanene wena (You always have questions)

Me: haybo girl, soze uvele uthi makuhanjwe ungasixeleli ba siyaphi asizonts ana kaloku. (you cannot just tell us to go without telling us where we're going)

Que: khanithethe naye bethuna. (someone please talk to her)

Everyone grabbed their bags and walked out, I followed, mumbling. It's as if everyone knew where we were going except for me. We got inside the car and drove to Blackbeards Restaurant in Brookes Hill then later we were taken to Cheers Revue Bar to begin with the night life. Past eleven I was already tired and I told Lisa that ndifuna ugoduka (I want to go home) but she kept on dismissing me so I just called a cab and left them phaya (there) without telling them that I'm going home. Following morning, I woke up feeling all kinds of hungover. Must have been the mixing and matching of the adult beverages...I sat outside basking on the sun listening to my neighbor's music...later in the afternoon I got messages from my friends asking

for my whereabouts, I ignored them. Totally.

Only Sisipho literally came to check up on me seeing that ndimke bes amandelwe kukonwaba (I left while they were still having fun) the previous night, she called saying I should open the gate for her and I did. She joined me on the towel that I had laid on the floor sangqengqa namanzi wethu abandayo (we lay down with a jug of cold water)

Me: nimnke nini pha? (what time did you guys leave)?

Sips: after you left ndiye ndemnka nam, ndabashiya phaya. (I left right after you, left them there)

Me: yhu hay guys ninghamanxila shame. (ya'll are drunkards shame)

Sips: yila ndoda ka Qaqamba bro, uyankala la bhuti. (It's Qaqamba's boyfriend, that guy is a stocker)

Me: I'm just glad that he didn't bring his friends, besizoba zi targets zo win'wa. (we were gonna be

targets for them to win)

Sips: u late... ndimke xazifikayo ezots homi zakhe mna, ndazimela mtshana. Yhu ngekhe. (you're late, I left at their arrival, I actually snuck out.)

I burst into laughter... caba beku budget'we ngathi (apparently they had had us in their devious plans). We spent most of the day just binging on junk food and basking on the sun until late then she left.

Two weeks later, again, we went out with Que's boyfriend and this time around he brought his entire squad along ndavela ndahlekela ngaphakathi (I just laughed from within). Zathenga eza chap yamnyama itafile yethu (he bought all kinds of alcohol for us), one of them who showed interest in me introduced himself as Tyson (what an old name) ndambona futhi ba uyandigada apho ndiya ngakhona (I noticed that he was keeping an eye on me, every corner I turn, he's there). I took my sling bag and grabbed Lisa's hand, pulling her towards the ladies room

Lisa: you're hurting my wrist Cassandra!

Me: hewethu, niwathembise ntoni lama doda enu?
(what have you guys promised your men?)

Lisa: uthetha ukuthini amadoda ethu? Ndine ndoda elapha mna? (What do you mean our men? Do I have a man here?)

I gave her a stern look...she took a deep breath in, exhaled and looked at me with a shrug.

Lisa: they are harmless Cass, they just wanna have fun.

Me: please give me the definition of fun because I have a grown ass man following behind me the entire time here.

Lisa: is he making you uncomfortable?

Me: duh?

Lisa: then tell him he must stop following you

around, easy.

Me: heh Lisakhanya?!

She chuckled and left me in there...I cussed and cussed, applied lip balm and then walked out like nothing happened. Xandifika kwathiwa kuyahanjwa kuyiwa elok'shini, hay ndayiqonda nje ukuba andizolunga kemnake (Upon my arrival I was told that we're changing location, I knew immediately that I was n't gonna be part of this). It was already past 01:00am so siyaphi kwi lokishi zase Bhayi? Siyothini? (Where are we going? What for?) Sisipho and I tried to protest but they tried to convince us that bazosigodusa k'qala then ke bahambe (they'll take us home first then they'll continue to wherever they were going) no Lisa no Que who were actually fed-up with us by now. Kwangenwa emotweni... yaqhuma, (we got into the car, and we drove off) I noticed after fifteen minutes that actually asigoduswa apha 9we're not being taken home), I felt my chest closing in.

Me: haibo Que I thought your boyfriend said kuzoqalwa ngathi (we'll be the first ones to be dropped off)?

Que: hay wethu chomi kuzobekwa thina then ayonibeka u Tyson (no friend, we'll first be dropped off then Tyson will take you guys home).

Me: but that's not what we agreed on, ngenisuke nasiyeka sazihambela mos (ya'll should have just let us find our own way home).

Que: haibo Cass, nizogoduswa (you'll be taken home). Chill.

Tyson: relax'er baby girl, I'll take you home.

I bit my tongue ndizobathuka xabedibene (swear at both of them)...we dropped them (Lisa, Que and two other guys) off and then Luthando suggested I take the front passenger seat because he wanted to have a moment with Sisipho, akavuma tu u Sisipho so he gave up and joined his friend in the front

passenger seat. I remember us passing through Kwamagxaki and then I focused on my phone, next thing, I just look up realizing that we're on the highest speed and by now we should have at least arrived kwa Sisipho..

Me: Tyson what are doing ku N2? Aren't you supposed to be taking us home?

Sips: N2? Haibo?

She lowered her window and tried peeping outside but the car was just too fast I saw her rolling it back up and looking at me in fear. Tyson wabe ethe cwaka (was just quiet).

Me: Tyson?

Luthando: can you shut up?

Me: shut up? Heh bethuna, nis is aphi (where are you taking us)?

Luthando: Ty you better shut this bitch up or I'll do it myself.

Me: Tyson?

Luthando turned up the volume...I panicked and texted Lisa and Que, sent them our location but abaphendula (they didn't respond). I could feel Sisipho shaking right next to me, I couldn't text my brothers because...ndizothi bendifuna ntoni e clubbini namadoda amadala kangaka endingawaziyo (what will say? Why in the first place was I in a club with old men that I actually don't know)? After some driving I noticed Shamwari Private Game reserve so I sent the location again to both lamantombazana (these girls), I was hoping that at least whatever happens to us, with these locations they will have something to give to the police so as to trace or whereabouts. After an hour 25/30 minutes we found ourselves in Grahamstown.

Tyson: we're going to the garage now, don't make

any funny stuff.

Luthando: ufuna ntoni e garage bekuthwe lemoto igcwele nje? (what do you at the garage, we were told the car is fueled up)

Tyson: they might need a bathroom, come on.

Luthando: uzakunya yazi wena ngu ta Khiro. (you're gonna get yourself in trouble with Ta Khiro)

Sajongana no Sisipho (we eyed each other)...they decided that Luthando must go in alone and buy us water and snacks then sizochama (we'll pee) along the road xasesimnkile kule garage (after we've left the garage). Sisipho started crying...there was not even one petrol attendant on sight kwakulo Total sikuye...

Me: nisisaphi Tyson? Who is ta Khiro? At least you guys owe us that much, where are you taking us?

Tyson: that's not importa-

Sips: hay fokof man sigoduse!

He locked the doors wathula...I moved forward from my seat just so I could see his face.

Me: niyosithengisa? (are you going to sell us)

Tyson: no.

Me: then what the hell is going on?

Tyson: throwing tantrums ain't gonna help anyone of you, just go along with the plan. If you get a chance there, run for your life.

Me: if we get a chance where kaloku? Where are you taking us?

Tyson: we're going to Katberg, from there I don't know.

Me: why are you doing this?

Tyson: it's a job...I'm sorry.

Me: I'm calling the cops.

Tyson: you should have called the cops ngoku

besise Bhayi (while we were in PE), from here onwards all the cops are under Khiro's payroll. And anyway, your phones are disconnected so you won't be able to call any family members.

Me: I don't care, I'm calling them anyway.

Tyson: alright, have it your way.

I dialed my brother and it cut off, Sisipho was also trying kwelakhe icala (on her side) but all to no avail. Luthando got in the car while I was explaining to the policewoman on my phone ukuba kwenzeka ntoni (what was happening) and I could tell that she wasn't interested but I told her everything, sent my family a message. I'd rather have them know now, they can shout at me later on.

[06/26, 14:40] : #Cassandra_05

We somewhat gave up and just cuddled each other in silence, my battery was dying so I turned my phone off with the hope that when I switch it on

again it would be one bar up. Later on in the wee hours of the morning we got to Katberg Eco Golf Estate and Hotel, we were taken to a house that had other ladies in it and they had alcohol, oka pipes and all that you can think of. Luthando took us to a room, just closed the door and walked away.

Sips: did he lock the door?

Me: nope.

Sips: sihleleli ntoni? Masambe mfondini sigoduke.
(Why are we still here? Let's go home)

Me: go look outside Sisipho, we're in the middle of nowhere, sizoghweha sithi siyaphi? (Even if we run away, where will we run to?)

Sips: sizoya e (we will go to the) reception
Cassandra and get help, come on!

I just removed my shoes ndakhwela ebhedini ndalala (got in bed and slept)...surely one of those girls must have wanted to go back home, surely one

of them must have tried something and failed. I was tired from all the traveling, trying to escape right now wouldn't be profitable at all...I didn't have the strength and Sisipho was asleep half the trip so she had the energy but did she have the escape plan? I felt her joining me in bed then I blacked out, only to be woken up by someone opening the windows and letting the sun in. I sat up, rubbing my eyes and saw a lady..beautiful and in her thirties, she smiled and looked at me

Lydia: Hi...there's warm water in the bathroom, go take a bath I brought your food.

Me: when can we go home?

Lydia: I wouldn't know, I was instructed to help ya'll get comfortable.

Me: instructed?

She nod.

Me: by whom? Who instructed the other guys to bring us here?

Lydia: I am not supposed to have any conversation with you, please just get up, bath and eat.

Me: okay, okay. Please tell me why are we here? What are they gonna do to us?

She sighed...

Lydia: I guess Luthando didn't fill you in, you're gonna be mules.

Me: mules as in drug mules?

Lydia: yep, but your leading lady will only be here at twelve so I'd suggest you take a bath and try to have a little something in your stomachs before she gets here or else she won't allow you to eat anything for the rest of the day.

Then she walked out, I shook Sisipho to wake up.

Sips: mh? Siphi?

Me: doesn't matter...kuthwa sizoba zi mules. (They say we're gonna be mules)

Sips: ii mules?

I looked at her...figured that her mind is only waking up now coz she cannot not know what mules are.

Sips: oh fuck no! NO!

Me: it's time we start strategizing ke sisi.

Sips: hayini oo Qaqamba!

Me: you think they knew?

Sips: you can never date a drug dealer and not know that he's a drug dealer Cassandra, obviously she knew.

Me: but Lisa wouldn't sell us out like that.

Sips: how long have you known her? Because I

know Qaqamba would do almost anything for money.

Me: I've been friends with Lisa since the first year of high school...she wouldn't do this to me.

We just stared at each other for a minute then I just headed towards the bathroom, there was a bathtub and a shower so I opted for the shower. Sisipho walked in and ran the bath in silence, I don't know why but immediately when the warm water hit on back I felt vulnerable. So I cried. At least crying in the shower wouldn't be a sign of weakness even to Sisipho, she wouldn't notice. Throughout the night I felt like I had to be the stronger one, but right at that moment, I just couldn't be strong anymore. We had reported this to the police but no one had come to our rescue? Our friends were not checking up on us, well that wasn't much of a surprise since they only check up on anyone when it's time to go out but now this was all different. I did send them our locations throughout the drive, I did text them what was happening, why now didn't they at least get

back to us? Yes my phone was still off...if I still had one. The thought of not having a phone struck! I ran from the shower to the bedroom and searched for my phone and it wasn't there so I went back to Sisipho

Me: have you seen your phone today?

Sips: uhm, I didn't check. Why?

Me: my phone is not in my bag.

Sips: soze! (never)

Me: I'm serious, I put it there before we got here but now it's not in my bag.

She got out of the water and went to look for her own phone, and it wasn't there. Obviously they searched our bags while we were sleeping. We stood there looking at each other, I sighed and went back to the bathroom, grabbed a towel and dried myself up, grabbed another one and went to eat.

Sips: what if the food is drugged already?

Me: they wanna make us mules, why would they drug our food?

Sips: why are you so calm about this?

Me: please tell me how is not being calm gonna help us?

Sips: you're not even trying Cassandra, at least try to look stressed or something.

Me: so you think I'm not stressed because unlike you I'm not crying? You think I'm enjoying this? You think I'm happy being here without my phone to call my brothers, with no one at home knowing my whereabouts? You think I'm okay with that? Really?

She just looked at me and tears rolled down her puffy face, I just ate the food in silence. Lydia came back with clothes for us to wear...Sisipho jumped up and went to her

Sips: please help us escape sisi please.

Lydia: hey hey, let go of my arm.

Sips: why are you helping these people exploit young girls?

Lydia: ufika nje sew'bona abantu aba expoilt'wayo? Awuzo lasta apha wena. (You've just arrived and you're already seeing exploitation? You're not gonna be here for long)

Sips: good, then take me back home. Please.

Lydia: Uyotyia nini? (When are you gonna eat?)

Sips: what happened to your conscious? Huh? Are you not a woman? Someone's daughter or sister?

Lydia: when you get your first paycheck you will understand. Now ladies, be quick, someone needs to clean up this room...here are your clothes.

Then she walked out, when I was done eating I went to choose amongst the bag that she had put on our bed and to my surprise, I saw my own clothes, like... MY clothes that I had left back in my room. I looked at Sisipho who was now eating.

Sips: what?

Me: they uhm, they must have accessed our rooms while we were in the club. I think.

Sips: what do you mean?

Me: come and see.

She got and came to stand right next to me, she grabbed her jacket and looked at me in dismay. Then she began digging ferociously in the bag that contained our clothes. I just waited, feeling defeated at the realization that our own friends could have legit got us here. That was the only explanation. How else would they know where I lived? At least Sisipho lived with Que but mna? And how the hell did they get in? My landlord is the strictest person I've come across in my entire life... phew!

Me: they sold us out for real.

Sips: yhu!

I sat on the corner of the bed trying so hard not to cry but I was failing myself...it felt like a lava was going up my trachea closing me up for breathing. One look at Sisipho and I broke down as well, I had lost all hope right that moment.

[06/26, 14:40] : #Cassandra_06

After a moment of truth, truth of uncertainty, I gathered my courage and started getting dressed. They were MY clothes at the end of the day, I wouldn't be spending the day uncomfortable in someone else's clothes, the clothes belonged to me. I took black skinny jeans, matching long sleeved vest and an oversized longer length hoodie that I had stolen from my big brother when I was leaving home for varsity. I chose mainly because I wanted to console myself, secondly, because it covered my behind. Didn't want these psychos to be gawking at me. I then waited for Sisipho to be done then we

opened the door and walked outside, this was no one on sight, not even Lydia. We took a walk, I mean, the area was beautiful yes but I was considering what Sisipho said earlier. Getting help from the reception.

Me: try to compose yourself, we don't know if they are also under these people's payroll.

Sips: sure.

We walked until we saw the reception rondavel, walked in and went straight to the lady behind the computer...

Anna: good morning, how can I help you?

Me: uhm good morning ma'am, can I use the phone? Please.

Anna: sure, here.

She gave me the phone and I dialed my brother, one ring and he answered

Lionel: hello?

Me: bhuti...ndiyakudinga, ndis engxakini andizokwazi uthetha isidala kodwa ukuba unokwazi ndicela uleqe uze e Kartberg.

Lionel: kunini ndiku founela, wenza ntoni apho?

I cleared my throat, Anna stood up and walked out to a side office near her desk.

Me: it's a long story but we're kind of kidnapped and we heard that sizokwenziwa ii mules.

Lionel: haibo Cassandra! Okay...ndiyeza.

Me: ungazi wedwa, I don't think ku safe apha. And I have to go...love you, bye.

I hung up just as Anna returned to her desk...

Me: thank you very much ma'am.

Anna: you're welcome, enjoy your stay.

Me: thank you.

I smiled and walked out...we walked a bit faster, only stopped where we saw something like a small pond and we sat down.

Sips: is he coming?

Me: that's what he said, but I don't think they'll keep us here for long.

Sips: you think we'll be taken somewhere else?

Me: yeah...I just hope they don't go looking for us. I fear what they might do to us.

Sips: yho...I once read that when such cases happen, to be on the safe side you must cooperate

until you see a chance to run away or get help. But not to make it too obvious.

Me: yeah...let's go.

We started walked back to our "house" and everyone was scattered in search, Lydia spotted us first, I saw her telling of the perfectly build guys. He whistled and then everyone stopped and looked at him, he did something with his head then everyone walked inside...Sisipho and I looked at each other as we slowly went closer to the house that was now full of people.

Me: let's stay here, if they need us they'll call us.

We sat down on the green grass...

Luthando walked out and looked at us in disgust.

Luthando: nivelaphi? (Where do you come from?)

We ignored him...

Luthando: Sisipho ndiyathetha andinyi, nivelaphi?
(I'm talking to you, where do you come from?)

Sips: silapha mos ngoku. (We are here now)

Luthando: don't you fucken give me that attitude.

Sips: or what? Huh? What are you gonna do?

Wayilahla impama (he slapped her) and I jumped with a half-scream backwards in shock. Lydia came out running and grabbed his arm while I grabbed Sisipho ndamrhuqa to the other side of the lawn where she just sobbed.

Me: I thought we were gonna cooperate?

Sips: fuck that! I wanna go home.

Me: okay, go home then.

She looked at me, I shrugged. Two guys came out to us, grabbed our arms and pulled us inside the house, there were about fifteen other girls and they were either our age or a bit older but none of them looked older than 25. An older woman was in the center, giving instructions...as we were tossed inside like garbage bags, she stopped talking and looked at us.

Lady K: ah, the snobs are back. Let's clap hands for them.

They clapped hands for us...I wanted to puke.

Lady K: my name is Khanyisa and I will be your leader, commander in chief and your momma. But of course, you can call me Lady K

We just looked at her...

Lady K: what are your names babies?

We kept quiet...

She laughed, looking around at everyone then back at us.

Lady K: you don't wanna talk? Alright, I think I can get you to talk. Richie?

A younger colored guy came running to her with an electro shocker, she merely commanded him with a head-signal and he was right behind me. I felt a grip around my ribs and immediately screamed as that sent electrical vibes throughout my entire body, she must have again, commanded him to stop because he did but now I was in so much pain I was literally a crying mess.

Lady K: are we ready to talk?

Sips: my name is Sisipho.

Lady k: that wasn't difficult now, was it?

Sips: no ma'am.

Lady K: baby, call me Lady K.

Sips: Lady K.

She nod with a smile, came to squat right in front of me and lifted my chin.

Lady K: you think you're a tough cookie to crack, don't you?

I just looked at her, my whole body shivering.

Lady K: okay, let's try something else.

Lydia: Khanyisa there's no need for that, I'll handle her.

Lady K: oh, so you're gonna tell ME how to do MY job now?

Lydia: Khanyisa.

Lady K: wow! Okay madam handler, take her.

Lydia offered her hand, I took it and stood up as she walked me outside, I removed the hoodie and lay my back on the green grass.

Lydia: you okay?

I nod

Lydia: please try to cooperate, she doesn't play nice.

Me: I just wanna go home Lydia.

Lydia: I know that, but you're here now. You have to cooperate with her or she can and will make your life a living hell.

A troop of big machines (cars) stopped and a lot of guys came running towards the house, Lydia left me there I was so out of this. Next thing, a guy comes out of the walks up to me.

Guy: please come with me, the big boss wants to

talk to you.

I sighed and followed him to the car, I don't know why. He opened the door I just stood there, he gave me a little shove so I just got inside and sat in the darkness of this big car that smelt of rich leather.

Ta Khiro: U right?

I looked around, I couldn't even see nalomntu ebeyondibiza (the person who went to call me). It was pitch black inside there, I started feeling anxious, I felt my chest closing in and I was breathing heavily in over a second.

Ta Khiro: Cassandra?

Me: huh?

Ta Khiro: u right? (are you okay?)

Me: uhm, no.

Ta Khiro: utheni? (what's wrong)

Me: I want to go home...please.

Then he went silent. I was already tearing up, I was actually silently crying.

Me: hello?

Ta Khiro: I'm still here.

Me: Are you gonna take me home?

Ta Khiro: convince me why I should.

I took a deep breath in...and out.

Me: enkosi ngempahla zam (thank you for my clothes) and the food but I don't know why you brought me here in the first place, someone has already taken my phone, I've been electrocuted...in fact I have just realized that I actually don't know what I must say for you to return me to my own life.

I sighed...feeling defeated and disappointed at myself that I couldn't convince this guy to take me home, given an opportunity.

Ta Khiro: you don't know what to say?

Me: can you please put the light on?

Ta Khiro: that's not necessary...do you think your friend will be happy if you go home and leave her behind?

Me: You mean I can't leave with her?

Ta Khiro: well...You're both here because you have jobs to carry out. I can't just let go of both of you at once.

Me: what jobs?

Ta Khiro: do you think your friend will be happy if you go home and leave her behind?

Me: I don't know...but I know she wants to go home too.

Ta Khiro: so if she doesn't go, you won't go?

I took a moment and reflected on that question... Sisipho was just too fragile to be left alone here. She needed me, we needed each other now more than ever. What kind of friend would I be if I left her here all alone? How different would I be from oo Que?

Me: No.

Ta Khiro: okay...suit yourself.

Next thing, the door opened and I was once again escorted to another car but now everyone was going to it. I didn't even get a chance to see where Sisipho was because there were a lot of them handcuffed and ankle-cuffed going to the cars behind the one I just came out of. I sat down and looked at everybody, they didn't seem as petrified as I was but you could see the uncomfortability. The door was closed and the driver started the car, Sips wasn't in there with us, she must have been in

the other cars...oh well, we were probably going to the same place anyway.

[06/26, 14:41] : #Cassandra_07

We rode in silence for about two hours then the cars stopped, someone came to open the one we were in...

Guy: Cassandra?

I looked up

Guys: follow me.

I got up and followed him, he closed the door and the car drove on while we went back to the car that I sat in earlier on when Ta Khira wanted to speak to me. The door opened so I got in as instructed by this guy, he closed the door and went to the front passenger seat, I sat down in that darkness as the car drove on smoothly until this guy decided to

Speak up.

Ta Khiro: Feeling better?

Me: I'm thirsty.

Ta Khiro: there's water next to your seat.

Me: could you kindly put the light on?

Ta Khiro: could you kindly lower your right hand and take the bottle of water next to your seat?

I sighed and reached for the sealed bottle of water, drank half of it, murmured a thank you then waited for him to speak up again.

Ta Khiro: your brother was late.

Me: huh?

Ta Khiro: you called your brother to come rescue you, he was late. He won't find us nor will he find a trail even if he tries to track us down.

Me: who said I called my brother?

He laughed, that irritating devilish laughter.

Then he clicked onto something, I recognized Sisipho's voice immediately. U girl, told them everything, I mean EVERYTHING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I couldn't believe my ears, she told them how we sneaked out and went to the reception, how I told her to act calm and called my brother to come fetch us. That damned bitch sold me out, she was also given the opportunity to go home and she took it. I couldn't believe my ears when she said "I'd rather go home" when asked about me she didn't hesitate to say "I'm sure she'll be fine" my jaw dropped.

Ta Khiro: you call such people your friends?

Me: I want to believe you fabricated this, Sisipho would never do this to me.

Ta Khiro: Just like Qaqamba would never sell you out?

Me: wait, you know Que?

Ta Khiro: what do you think?

Oh my flip!

So truly speaking, Que sold us out to this guy?

Me: how long have you known her?

Ta Khiro: five years now.

Me: wow. I feel so stupid, so naïve, so trusting.

Ta Khiro: you are not stupid but you are naïve.

Me: wow.

I suddenly felt sick... somehow he seemed to be the only person I could trust with my life right now.

There were so many other girls in here but why did he seem to draw so much interest on me?

I cleared my throat..

Me: so what are you going to do with us? Me? Now that you know I tried to get myself out of here?

Ta Khiro: I haven't thought that far, I'm still pondering on you sacrificing your own life for someone who didn't even think twice when given the same opportunity.

Me: ndimuncu kaloku that's clear. (I'm the dumb one)

Ta Khiro: unentliziyo entle Tshawekazi, ntonje ungqungwe ngabantu abangakunqweneleli okuhle apha ebomini. (You have a good heart, just that you're surrounded by people who don't wish you well in this life)

I legit believed him...haibo u Sips, nje kanjalo? (Just like that?) here I was, sacrificing my own life so that we could fight together, on the other hand she takes the first opportunity to go home WITHOUT ME. For him to even know my clan name? Or, Sisipho told him? Or wait, Qaqamba? Hayini!

Ta Khiro: I need a favor from you.

Me: I don't promise to do it.

Ta Khiro: that's up to you.

Me: okay.

Ta Khiro: I will drop you off at your own home, all you have to do is to never mention this encounter.

Me: wait, you'll take me home?

Ta Khiro: yes.

Me: what about Si- oh you know what, never mind.

Ta Khiro: that's the attitude I want. Now, I know uzobuzwa kokwenu ukuba uvelaphi and why ufike nempahla ezimbalwa, your brother will also ask ukuba ubuyothini e Katberg. Now I know your family is going to ask where you come from and why did you bring such a small bag, your brother will also ask what were you doing in Katberg) You need to come up with a believable story.

Me: you want me to protect you?

Ta Khiro: no I want you to protect yourself and your

family, once you tell them everything that you saw here obviously bazofuna ukuyo report'a emapoliseni (They will want to report it at the police station) and then what do you think will happen to them?

After he said that...I remembered that Tyson did mention that this guy has every police station in his payroll. Flip. And this was so chilled saying this as if he was reassuring me that something will most definitely happen if someone tries reporting this.

Ta Khiro: It's all up to you, I won't be able to save you once it gets there.

Me: can I ask one question please?

Ta Khiro: shoot.

Me: why are you saving me?

Ta Khiro: you have a good heart, and anyway besingafuni wena besifuna u Sisipho (we didn't want you, we wanted Sisipho). You just happened

to be at the right place, wrong time.

Me: wow. Thank you...I guess.

Ta Khiro: don't mention it.

Then there was total silence...I closed my eyes and let the tears roll down my dry face, so this could mean that Sisipho was still in one of those cars because “besingafuni wena besifuna u Sisipho” she they could have just been trapping her when they asked her about going home, they possibly just wanted to see the difference between the two friends. After another two hours of driving, the car stopped and I sat up in halt.

Me: where are we?

Ta Khiro: I have organized a car to take you home.

Me: another car? How will I know that it's not another kidnapping?

Ta Khiro: you won't know, but I'm telling you that I have organized a car to take you home.

I panicked...I thought he was taking me home.

Ta Khiro: or do you want taxi fare?

The thought of being around many people and noise after what we went through these past few days sounded traumatic. And the worst is, I didn't know where we were, at least I'd send my brother the location and he'd come fetch me right now, no matter how mad at me he was. He will still come through, that I know without a doubt.

Me: can I call my brother to come fetch me here?
Where's my phone?

Ta Khiro: in your bag, under your seat.

I opened the door, stepped outside and lifted the seat, found my bag, scratched and found my phone. It was off so I turned it on and called my brother.

Lionel: heh Cass andra ndilapha e Katberg, uphi?
Kuthwa khange abonwe umntu onjengawe apha.

Me: we uhm, ndcela uzondithatha I've been dropped
off somewhere else.

Lionel: dropped off by who?

Me: I can't talk right now, will you be able to come?

Lionel: send me your location and this time please
be there? You're wasting my fuel mfondini.

Me: thanks bhuti.

He dropped the call...I was already outside with my
bag, there was no reason for me to go back into that
car again. I sent the location and got the shock of
my life to see that I'm actually at Barkly East. Yhu
that was like 3 if not 4 hours from Katberg.

Ta Khiro: see you around.

Me: I hope not.

Ta Khiro: well, we will definitely see each other again. You can bet on that.

I watched the door close and the dust that followed the car as it vanished. I sat next to the road for about thirty full minutes before a white man stopped for me, asked who I was waiting for then he said he was going same way my brother would be coming from so he said let's go we will meet my brother halfway. I jumped at that, he seemed nice, better than sitting kwa mpenge-mpenge and waiting all alone. So this time I communicated with my brother all the way till we got to Lady Frere and the white guy dropped me off and went about his way, thirty more minutes then my brother came to fetch me. He didn't say much as I expected, he just drove home in silence. When I got home, there was no one which was good, I went straight to my room and ran myself a bath, soaked in for an hour crying and wondering why in the first place didn't I just come home? It's holidays for heaven's sake and the real kids went home, why didn't I just be a child and

go home too? What was I thinking? Where will I get this story that I'm supposed to orchestrate now? Why should I even trust what that guy said? What if he was bluffing? What if he doesn't know anyone here he just wanted to scare me off?

But he didn't sound like he's bluffing tu .

[06/26, 14:41] : #Cassandra_08

I came out of the water and went to make myself food...he was there, waiting for me to say something. I was scared, I was shaking, only now.

Me: thank you for coming through.

Lionel: there's food in the oven, your parents will only be back next week.

Me: thanks.

I warmed the food, ate half the plate and stole a

look at him, he was watching me like a hawk.

Lionel: ubuyephi Cass andra? (Where did you go?)

Me: I uhm, we went out with my friends...

Okay fine I fabricated an entirely different storyline, one that wouldn't need to be reported at the police, one that didn't involve any kidnapping and he believed me. He did lecture me though on going on "road trips" with "untrustable friends". We had gone for a road trip...right? That's why I have impahla ezimbalwa (few clothes). After that conversation I went to bed, I cried myself to sleep, even when I woke up I still couldn't believe that ndisindile just like that. I spent the week at home, went back to school before my parents returned because I couldn't face them and because I needed to rent before the term began otherwise my room would be given to someone else who came with money first. It's a first come first serve kinda world anyway.

My brother was back to his own life when I left so I had to take a taxi, which I didn't really mind now that I had fully recovered from that traumatic experience. When I had secured my room with the rent, sent proof to my folks and started doing some spring cleaning, I had taken everything out of the room and was mopping when my landlord came to have a small chat...

Sabrina: Cassandra? Do you have a moment?

You know when you wish that no one would make any small talk with you and then the most boring yet unthought of person decides to be the one to make that conversation? I didn't wanna have that small talk with her, but I had to play nice. At least she was nicer than her husband... thought, stricter.

Me: sure, how can I help you?

Sabrina: I just wanna find out, how was your

vacation?

Me: vacation?

Sabrina: yeah, few weeks back your friends came to pack a weekend bag for you saying you lot were going on vacation.

I swallowed hard.

And faked a smile.

Me: it wasn't that much of a vacation, and I didn't stay much. I just decided to go spend the rest of it at home.

Sabrina: you didn't have fun?

Me: I guess I just needed to be home more than on a vacation with friends.

Sabrina: mmh.

Then there was this awkward silence.

Me: oh-kay...I'll uhm, go back to work.

Sabrina: look Cassandra, you seem like a good child and when I met your parents I could tell you're from a good home.

Me: oh

Sabrina: I don't like your friends, I know I am just your landlord and not your mother or aunt but I have to tell you that I do not like those girls.

I smiled at her...you can never fool an old person, she must have seen right through them.

Sabrina: if you know what's good for you, better stay away from them especially that one with an afro.

Me: Que? Why?

Sabrina: there's just something about her, I couldn't really pin it on her when they came here but she's

got this dark aura around her. She's dangerous
Cassandra, that's all I'm saying.

Me: thank you aunt Sabrina, I appreciate this.

Sabrina: okay then, you can continue with your work.

Me: mh. Thanks.

She walked away...I sat on the stoep and just thanked God. Yho I still couldn't believe how I got snatched from the lion's den like that, in all honesty I suddenly believed that I had an angel looking over me everywhere I went. That could be the only explanation, I mean, I was the only one who was sent home that day amongst so many girls and that's not a miracle?

Anyway, I finished up what I had started and only in the evening did I start cooking for myself, I didn't feel the need to go out even to take a walk to the shore, I just wanted to be in my own fresh smelling space until classes began. First week was just a normal week and I didn't see any of my "friends" on the grounds, the SRC was busy preparing for the

Freshers Braai and Miss NMU so beku busy nje all over and I had made friends in my classes, just people to study with at the library, you know, so there really was no need for me to feel the gap for Lisa and her betrayal. I think, only in the third week did we bump onto each other...well I saw her first and just changed lanes. I didn't wanna start any drama.

As I walked home, I saw her again, with her boyfriend and this time, our eyes locked. I saw how pale she became in a matter of seconds and her eyes dropped, wangathi yinja ebe amaqanda (she became like a dog that stole eggs).

Me: A.P?

Aphiwe: hey, Cass. U sharp?

Me: grand bro, you?

Aphiwe: sharp mfethu, unqabile man... ubugodukile nah?

Me: haha, yeah wethu. I eventually missed home.

Aphiwe: oh haike, see you around ntwana yam.

Me: sharp.

Then I walked away...

There was nothing to say to Lisakhanya.

When I got to my room I flopped on my bed and started watching series, fifteen minutes was a lot when her call came through but then, I had blocked all her numbers so it just reflected on my screen and then cut off immediately so I switched my phone off, watched my series and fell asleep while watching. I had no class the following morning so I took myself out for lunch in the afternoon, while eating, I was joined by a guy who introduced himself as Nkosinathi. He seemed a bit older than me but he was clean, smelt good and he had such an accommodative sense of humor. I was already eating, so when he asked to join me he bought his

own plate of food and beer s ancokola (we started the conversation).

Nkosinathi: so you're a student, I suppose.

Me: and you're not, I believe.

Nkosinathi: no I'm not.

Me: what do you do?

Nkosinathi: I do everything and anything I can put my mind to doing.

I looked at him, that answer was too calculated.

He smiled as he took a sip of his beer.

I decided not to go deeper with this guy, yes he seemed kind but the thought that I was kidnapped a few weeks back came flooding back to my mind and I quickly ate up my food in silence, paid and left him there. He came after me and found me at the taxi stop waiting...

Nkosinathi: haibo, what did I say to you for you to rush out like that?

Me: uhm, nothing. I just remembered that I have some school work to get back to. Sorry.

Nkosinathi: and you couldn't say?

Me: you do know that we don't owe each other any explanations. Right?

He sighed.

Nkosinathi: can I at least have your number? You didn't even tell me your name.

Me: it's not important, and I don't give my number to strangers.

Nkosinathi: we can't be strangers still after eating in one table.

Me: we are strangers, or do you now know my name?

He swallowed...

Me: thought so. Bye.

A car stopped right in front of us, I got in and never looked back. My heart was beating so hard against my chest, I wanted to cry already. I knew that exact moment that I needed counselling, I needed counselling for the trauma that I went through, I couldn't possibly live the rest of my life like that.

I got off at my place and there was Lisakhanya standing against my gate. I felt something coming up my trachea, a huge lump.

Me: ufuna ntoni Lisa? (What do you want Lisa?)

Lisa: haibo Cass, molo. (Cass, hi)

Me: Lisakhanya Centile ufuna ntoni? (Lisakhanya Centile what do you want?)

She sighed and took a step forward, I took two backwards.

Lisa: I tried calling you last night.

Me: awuphenduli mbuzo. (You're not answering the question)

Lisa: I wanted to talk to you chomi.

Me: I have nothing to say to you.

Lisa: come on Cassandra, at least give me a chance to explain.

Me: hewethu andifuni explanation yakho mna, suka e gatini ndingene. (I do not want your explanation, get away from that gate I want to go in)

Lisa: you're not being fare here.

Me: fare? Hay fokof man, don't come telling me about being fare when you and that friend of yours sold me out kulamadoda wenu (to your men). Does Aphiwe even know that you're a pimp?

Lisa: Cassandra I'm not a pimp and you know that.

I looked at her, spat on the ground before her and walked in closing the gate behind me. She stood there holding onto the bars of the gate, I locked my door and flopped on to my bed. Tyhini, fare? Fare where? Tchi!

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_09

I never really saw Que for the entire term and I totally avoided and ignored Lisa because I was through with her, she meant nothing to me and she knew it. I didn't care about her explanation, if I didn't make it out of that place where would she explain? To whom would she explain? Tchi. When time came, I went back home and this time around the folks were home...mommy booked us a spa weekend away just so we could have time alone without the boys. Guess she missed me that much.

On Friday of that weekend we watched movies, dined and went to sleep then Saturday we had breakfast in bed.

Mom: so kunjani eskolweni girl yam? (so how's school my girl)

Me: kuyafundeka ma, kunzima kona but kuyafundeka. (It's tough hey, but we try)

Mom: still enjoying the course?

Me: yeah...kakhulu futhi mama. Siya kwi expo at the beginning of next year. (Very much, we're going to an expo at the beginning of next year)

She stopped eating and just smiled at me, I blushed.

Me: haibo mama? (mama what?)

Mom: umhle man, utatakho ebenexhala lokuba awuzokwazi ukuhlala wedwa kaloku, uhleli ungathandi nohamba kwa wena. (you're beautiful,

your father was worried that you won't manage living on your own especially since you actually never like travelling)

Me: I adjusted yazi mama, and I think it helps that I don't stay at the school's residence.

Mom: yhu la Sabrina ndiyamthanda. Ngoku ubuye kwi vacation nee chomi zakho wandifounela wandixelela. (oh I love that Sabrina. She called me and told me that you've gone on a vacation with your friends)

Me: haibo! (what)

Mom: u right kaloku sisi, mna ndakushiya kwakhe. So xa unolimala ndizokubuzisa kuye coz ndikwazi uhlala kwakhe, wenze kakuhle gqithi. (She did the right thing my child, I left you in her house. So if ever you were to get hurt, she'll have to answer because you are under her care. She did the right thing)

Me: heee hayini. (oh wow)

I was really shocked that she even told my folks, but then again, it was the right thing to do. They would have maybe traced back to Qaqamba and Lisa had I not returned. At least they would have a start for their search.

After breakfast we went out shopping that entire Saturday, we ate good food and just unwinded. I felt so free spirited maybe it was because I was doing all of this with my best friend, one person that I knew deep down had my best interests at heart. After that looooong day, we had dinner at a restaurant by the sea, watching the waves hitting on the rocks.

Me: oo bhuti aba buyi na? (Aren't your sons coming back)

Mom: hay andibazi mntanam, akhange ndibuze mntu mna ndifounele nje abantwana. (I don't know, I didn't ask them I just called and spoke to my grandchildren)

Me: oh wow, okay.

Well normally, all my siblings would come home during holidays ne families zabo (Their families), this was the first. But the folks did seem cool with everything I guess it wasn't such a big deal after all. Sunday we left early, for church, went home first to change and then we went to church.

January I returned back to PE for registrations, decided that I will not go home so I rented for the first term and stayed in my rented home, on a sunny day I decided to just take a walk to the beach, the weather was permitting and I had nothing to do. My mother was only gonna come check on me in two weeks time so we could also do grocery shopping and then ancokole no (have a conversation with) Sabrina because mnk! A blue Ford ranger slowed down right next to me on the road, I could hear the soft sounds of acappella as the driver lowered the window but that didn't stop me, I just

continued my walk and minded my own business.

Nkosinathi: molo sisi

I only stopped walking because I recognized his voice, I turned and saw a familiar face. A part of me was embarrassed because of the last time we saw each other but another of me didn't really care much, I didn't owe him no explanation whatsoever. He was still a stranger to me.

Me: molo bhuti.

Nkosinathi: still remember me?

Me: do we know each other from somewhere?

Nkosinathi: we kinda met, last year.

I faked a thinking face...and smiled as if I just remembered him.

Me: Nkosi...nkosi something?

He laughed...sending chills down my spine. I suddenly felt warmth all over my body.

Nkosinathi: Nkosinathi, yes.

Me: mh, I remember you.

Nkosinathi: uyaphi?

Me: nowhere specific. Just taking a walk.

Nkosinathi: we're both headed towards the beach so lemme give you a ride.

Me: no thank you, I prefer walking.

Nkosinathi: please...and you never told me your name.

Me: I still don't think my name is of any importance...but, you can drive along. I'll walk, thank you for the offer though.

Nkosinathi: alright. See you.

Me: sharp.

He rolled his window up and drove away..a few minutes later on, I saw this same guy walking towards me, when he was nearer he stopped and waited for me to reach him. I just laughed.

Me: iphi imoto yakho kengoku? (where's your car)

Nkosinathi: ise garage. (at the garage)

We now walked together as we reached the sand, I removed my flops and walked barefoot with my flip flops in hand.

Me: unexesha kodwa (you have too much time on your hands), aren't you supposed to be at work or managing some workers somewhere?

Nkosinathi: my people know what to do, and when to do it.

Me: mmh...so what's up? Why did you have to park your car and come walk with me?

Nkosinathi: I like you...and I want to get to know you.

Me: is that what you say to every student you meet?

Nkosinathi: nope, but that's what I say to every person I like.

Me: how many people have you said that to today?

Nkosinathi: you're the first one.

Me: mh.

I saw a rock and went to sit down on it, he obviously followed and we sat down for a whole minute in silence just watching the waves.

Nkosinathi: can we be friends?

Me: why?

Nkosinathi: you're always on your own, the few

times that I've been seeing you and...I could do with a friend too you know. Someone to talk to.

Me: ziphi iintanga zakho? (where are your age-mates)

Nkosinathi: zikhona...zi busy. (they are busy)

Me: yiba busy kaloku nawe, I'm sure ndiyintanga ka sister wakho omncinci mna what could we possibly talk about? (be busy too, I'm sure I could be your younger sisters age)

Nkosinathi: my younger sister is doing grade 7, so you're probably the same age as the one right after me though she's doing her third year now.

Me: how old is she?

Nkosinathi: she's 21.

Me: mh..almost

Nkosinathi: that means you're 20...and before you ask or speculate, I'm 2.

Me: you're actually not as old as I thought shame.

He laughed...well I thought he was thirty or something. After sitting there and throwing stones at the water we went to grab ice cream, he forced me. Because I didn't have money and I didn't want him to buy for me, but he forced me and said I should pay him when we bump onto each other again, so I agreed. Didn't want no freebees from no one.

Me: last time we spoke you said you do anything and everything.

Nkosinathi: yes.

Me: what do you mean you do everything?

Nkosinathi: exactly that.

Me: break it down for me.

Nkosinathi: okay, I own a club or two, I buy and sell cars, I do painting and some tattooing, I have spaza shop and a car wash somewhere kwa Dwesi, should I continue?

Me: in a nutshell, you're a hustler?

Nkosinathi: maybe, if that's the right word.

Me: mh. Interesting.

Nkosinathi: now tell me, why are you always eating alone? Where are your friends?

Me: it's a long story.

Nkosinathi: I have the time.

I sighed and told him everything...the truth, not what I told my family.

Nkosinathi: did you report them?

Me: no, I didn't wanna endanger my family.

Nkosinathi: but what about the other girls?

Me: I know this will sound selfish but my family is more important than the other girls. I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: no don't be sorry...I understand. Have you thought about therapy, to help you deal with the trauma?

Me: I have, I just don't trust the one they offer on campus.

Nkosinathi: I can pay for a professional one for you?

I stopped and looked at him...he sighed.

Nkosinathi: or, we can look for an NGO that offers free counselling?

Me: yeah, we could do that. But, why are you offering to help me? What will you claim in return?

Nkosinathi: we're friends, and friends don't sell each other but they help each other.

Me: what do you get in return?

Nkosinathi: I get a happy friend?

I smiled.

Okay...he seemed genuine.

But with what I've seen, you can never be too sure.

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_10

I sat there in silence...I was sure he could read my mind but I didn't care.

Nkosinathi: I can't even ask if you're hungry because you won't eat and not pay.

Me: you're a fast learner.

Nkosinathi: but if I say this one is on me, and maybe if we get a next it will be on you, will that help?

Me: I'm not really hungry, and I should get going. I've been here for a while now.

Nkosinathi: okay..can I at least drop you off?

Me: no, my landlord is very strict, she tells my parents everything.

Nkosinathi: next thing you'll have to explain why you got off a blue Ford ranger?

Me: exactly, and I don't think I have the energy.

Nkosinathi: no problem.

He took my phone which was on the table, dialed his number, saved it and put it back without calling himself.

Me: and you did that why?

Nkosinathi: you'll have my number for whenever you want to talk.

Me: you should have just asked for mine.

Nkosinathi: I still don't know your name, remember? I know you wouldn't just give me your number, so I'm cool with it.

Me: mnk.

Nkosinathi: at least now you have mine, whenever you feel like you need to talk, or take a walk.

Me: maybe it will come in handy someday, thanks. Now I really have to get going.

He got up first, I looked at him.

Me: I thought you were hungry?

Nkosinathi: well, I can eat at home. I want to walk you home.

Me: that won't be necessary, I know my way around here.

Nkosinathi: I know that, but I said I want to.

Me: yho, okay.

I got up and walked besides him.

We walked for a while in silence until we got to where we met earlier so I stopped walking and looked at him, he was indeed taller than me and the sun was up so I kinda had to either squint my eyes or shade them.

Me: you can go back now, I'm safe here.

Nkosinathi: ufikile apho ubusiya khona? (have you reached where you're supposed to be going?)

Me: no but-

Nkosinathi: then masambe ke, (let's go then) after what you told me I can't just leave you estratweni (on the streets).

Me: uhm...

Then he walked ahead, like, I had no other choice but to follow behind him and eventually caught up with him. We now made conversation as if we were old pals, the conversation blew up until we got to my gate.

Me: uhm, this is where I live. I am really not sure why I am trusting you with my location but, here we are. Thank you for walking me up here.

Nkosinathi: don't mention it. See you around.

Me: yeah, see you.

He smiled and walked away, I opened the gate and smiled my way to my room. He was such a gentleman.

Right opening my door, Sabrina came to give me a package that was delivered for me, I just thanked her and closed the door as she left. Opened the box and saw another smaller box, opened that one and saw an envelope which had a spa voucher, underneath it was a bar of chocolate and a smaller box that had black and gold beautiful earrings. No letter, nothing.

Me: now this is weird.

Then my phone rang...an unknown number.

Me: hello?

Ta Khiro: How are you?

Me: who am I speaking to?

Ta Khiro: How are you, Cassandra?

The chill yet commanding tone in his voice took me back to that conversation in Ta Khiro's car.

Me: ta Khiro?

Ta Khiro: yes, how are you?

Me: you have my number? Did you deliver this?

Ta khiro: you like it?

Me: you really think I'm gonna wear this? Eat this?
Use this?

Ta Khiro: whatever you do with it is your business.

Me: why did you go through the trouble of buying and delivering them? What do you want from me?

Ta Khiro: calm down.

Yhu I flipped!

Me: don't you dare tell me to calm down please, don't you dare. You get access to my house, you take my clothes without my permission, you abduct me, then you un-abduct me, then you deliver gifts at my house? Call me up on my phone and still tell me to calm down?

He kept quiet...

Me: hay don't you dare!

Ta Khiro: are you done?

I huffed!

Ta Khiro: okay, it sounds like you're done.

Me: what do you want from me?

Ta Khiro: nothing, I just love you.

Me: you just like me? Hehe! Ndiyayifuna lento

uyitshayayo. (I'd like a taste of what you're smoking)

Ta Khiro: I can deliver it for you.

Me: ta Khiro please say what you want to say, or I'll hang up on you. Right now?

Ta Khiro: ndiyakuthanda Cassandra. (I love you Cassandra)

Me: andikuthandi mna. Are we done? (Well I do not love you)

Ta Khiro: for now yes.

Me: no no no, we are done forever! Don't call me again, don't come near my place, don't buy gifts for me.

Ta Khiro: good night.

Then he hung up on me...like what the actual FFF???? I took that box, put everything back in it and went to the trash tin at the end of the yard and burnt everything. Couldn't care less how much those beautiful earrings cost him, I didn't give a ducks ass. I lay on my bed just thinking...about

everything.

Later, after my mother had come and left again, classes began and on the first day, I bumped onto Que. I saw her first...and didn't give her room to pretend like she didn't see me.

Me: Qaqamba.

Que: uhm, hi...Cass.

Me: nyayi nyass! Yazı unguş athana womntu?
(You're an evil person)

She looked around nervously. Then tried to pull my arm.

Que: this is not the right place.

Me: oh there's a right place? Heh Qaqamba, do you know how sick you look right now? I'm sure you've got worms eating up your intestine.

Que: Cassandra!

Me: fokof man Qaqamba! FOkof!

Another girl came to where we were standing...I knew her from the union I had joined when I first arrived, she was also on her second year. Like me.

Sara: hey guys.

Me: hey, you know each other?

Sara: yep. Why do you look so nervous Que?

Me: mh be careful, she's that snake that your parents warned you about.

Que: Cass, please don't do this.

Me: don't do what? Tell her that you and your boyfriend will sell her to a druglord?

Sara: uhmmm...what's going on here?

Me: nothing. J ust be careful around this one, or you'll end up somewhere in Limpopo being a mule

transporting drugs.

She looked at Qaqamba, I saw her eyes fuming, I just laughed and walked away. As I mingled amongst the students, I began to notice policeman walking around the court. I went straight to my classes, only heard on social media later that day that the police were actually there because about four girls who were doing the first year the previous year were reported missing last year already and now the police had a new lead. I didn't even know that they had been reported missing, maybe it's because I had been keeping to myself and my books. Two days later, two policeman came to my class, spoke with the lecturer outside then she walked back in class and came to fetch me. We were taken down to the dean's office...there was Sara. Gosh!

Sergeant Mtheza: Miss Cassandra, please take a seat.

I sat down without saying a word.

Sergeant Mtheza: Thank you for joining us, we do apologize for disturbing your classes.

Me: uhm, no problem sir. Why am I here?

Sergeant Mtheza: as you should know, we have an ongoing case of missing students since last year.

Me: I only heard of it two days ago.

Sergeant Mtheza: seriously? It has been on social media and the news though.

Me: well I'm not so much of a social media person, I spend my time at the library sir.

Sergeant Mtheza: that's good to hear, you know why you're at this institution. Now back to your question, you are here because Miss Sara here, believes that you might have some information to help us solve the case.

Me: me? Have information to help you solve the

case? How?

They all looked at Sara.

I also looked at Sara and at that very moment, I knew I was gonna deny EVERYTHING.

Sara: remember when I saw you and Que on the field and you said I must be careful around her, or I might see myself being a mule in Limpopo?

Dean: do not ask leading questions young lady.

Me: me? Are you it was me?

Sara: yes Cassandra, come on. I know you.

Me: I know you know me but, are you sure that I said that?

Sara: yes, you said I must be careful she's the snake my parents warned me about.

Me: I am so confused.

Sara: haibo Cassandra.

Sergeant Mtheza: calm down Miss Sara...

Then he looked at me.

I was soooo calm.

Sergeant Mtheza: do you remember seeing her two days ago?

Me: I don't know, I see her almost every day. We're in the same union.

Sergeant Mtheza: but do you remember seeing her specifically two days ago?

Me: I don't know sir, I'm sorry.

The second sergeant came forward.

Sergeant Williams: Young lady, do not waste our time, I remember everyone I met this past week.

Me: great, but I don't. And I don't have to...well until now apparently.

Sergeant Williams: your cockiness is not gonna help you.

Me: help me? Wait, am I being charged here?

Dean: no no no, we are just helping the cops do their work.

Me: why then, will my cockiness not help me sir?

Sergeant Mtheza: don't worry about that sisi, please try to remember anything. I mean anything that you can that could help us with this case. Young lives could be in danger.

Me: sergeant, I don't know what Sara is talking about...why don't you call Que. Maybe she will remember something.

He sighed...

Sergeant Williams: if we find out that you are hiding any information from us you do know that you will be charged with obstructing justice?

Me: I am well aware sir.

Sergeant Williams: alright then, you can go back to class.

Me: thank you..and good luck with the case.

I got up and walked out, straight to class. I could feel eyes feeding on me but I didn't care.

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_11

Once that class was done, my lecturer asked me to stay behind, I knew that I'm gonna be questioned again but I didn't care. I meant it when I said my family was more important than those girls. My life was more important than those girls, my freedom was more important. If Qaqamba and Lisa have no consciousness then it's unfortunate but I wasn't gonna put my own family at risk knowing fully well that even the police are under this guy's payroll. What if this was just a test on me? What if Ta Khiro sent these cops on a ghostchase just to see what I

would say when cornered? Tchini.

I packed my books and waited for the rest of the students to evacuate the lab then my lecturer joined me, sat on the table in front of me.

Lecturer: Cassandra?

Me: ma'am?

Lecturer: please tell me the truth, what do you know about those girls?

Me: which girls ma'am?

Lecturer: the missing girls, I have this feeling that you actually do know something. Please.

Me: who are these girls that are missing? I really don't know.

Lecturer: your friend Sisipho is one of them.

Me: Sisipho is missing?

Lecturer: you didn't know?

Me: no, but then, we were no longer close friends anymore.

Lecturer: why?

Me: I guess I'm just too boring, she was now close friends with her roommates, Que and Lisa.

Lecturer: Lisakhanya?

Me: yes ma'am.

Lecturer: she's been taken in for questioning, apparently her name appears a lot in this case.

Me: well I think she would know, I mean, they live in the same room. It's weird that no one asked me about this if they went missing last year already.

Lecturer: the dean didn't want the students to be involved in any way unless they're implicated directly to the case and Sara mentioned you yesterday so that's why you were called today.

Me: oh I see.

Then we sat in total silent...the dean knocked and

walked in. I knew I was about to be cornered now so I had to be strategic about my answers as well. These are grown ass people who have the ability to smell a lie from a distance.

Dean: Miss Cassandra, are you sure you don't know anything about what the policemen were asking you earlier?

I looked at him, very quizzically but not in any form or disrespect.

Dean: it's just that Sara is very sure that you said those words to her, she's very adamant.

Me: I'm very sure sir...I'm sorry.

Dean: when last did you speak to Sisipho or Lisakhanya?

Me: I last spoke to Sisipho last year, I think March. Lisa...I'm not sure, but it was this year.

Dean: that long, when last did you see her? Even if you didn't speak to her?

Me: who sir?

Dean: Sisipho.

Me: I last saw her the last time I spoke to her.

Dean: where were you when you last spoke to her?

Me: we were at some club, with Lisa and Que. I don't really remember the name though.

Dean: after that?

Me: I went home to visit my parents, then later as the classes were resuming I came back to where I live here. We never really made contact after that.

Dean: but Sara says that you guys were very close friends?

Me: as I said to Miss Julie, we were not as close as people assumed, she was more close to her roommates: Qaqamba and Lisakhanya.

Dean: why?

Me: they enjoyed the outgoing life, I didn't. And I have a very strict landlord who reports everything I do here to my mother back home so I really cannot

afford to be going to clubs every weekend.

Dean: oh I understand, okay. Thank you for being honest my child, I hope you don't feel like we're pinning anything on you.

Me: no sir, I'm okay and I do wish I could help.

Dean: you may be excused.

I grabbed my bag and went home, from a distance I saw Sara. I just took a deep breath in and walked on, she was obviously waiting for me because when I neared up to where she was sitting, she stood up and took her bag.

Me: what now?

Sara: why did you do that?

Me: do what?

Sara: deny what you said.

Me: baby, I don't know what you're talking about.

Sara: Cassandra, we both know what you said. Stop lying.

Me: alright then, stick to your truth, I'll stick to mine.

I walked faster, she caught up.

Sara: don't you care about Sisipho?

Me: nope.

Sara: but she's your friend.

Me: was.

Sara: what happened?

Me: none of your business.

Sara: Cassandra!

Me: yey! Get off my back, please. Leave me the heavens alone.

Sara: Cass, you could help the justice system stop these guys and bring back those girls home, I know you know something. Please.

Me: Sara, I do not know what you are talking about. I don't know what else you want me to say, I really don't.

Sara: okay fine...can you please give me Que's number? I've been trying to get hold of her.

Me: I don't have it.

Sara: but aren't you guys friends?

Me: when was the last time you saw me with any friends?

She kept quiet...thinking.

Me: exactly, I don't have friends and I don't need friends. Now can I go in peace?

She just nod, I walked away.

Once I got to my room I cooked pasta with mince and some creamy cheesy greens and just lay there thinking, then I remembered I had actually made a

friend. I took my phone and called Nkosinathi...

Nkosinathi: Nathi speaking, hello?

Me: hey, uhm. I hope awukho busy? (you're not busy)

Nkosinathi: depends who I'm speaking to.

Me: Cassandra.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra? Waphi? (from?)

I sighed...

Nkosinathi: hello?

Me: you saved your number in my phone at the beach.

Nkosinathi: oh heeeey, wow. What a beautiful name. How are you doing?

Me: I'm cool. You?

Nkosinathi: I'm good and no, andikho busy. (I am

not busy)

Me: good, wouldn't like to disturb you.

He chuckled.

Nkosinathi: so, what's up Cassandra?

Me: nothing much, guess I just needed to talk?

Nkosinathi: should I come over?

Me: uhm, no you don't have to.

Nkosinathi: well I was gonna go grab something to eat, maybe you can meet me down the street?

Me: sendiphekile bro, sorry. (I've cooked already)

Nkosinathi: ndiphakele ke ndiyeza. (Then dish up for me as well, I'm coming)

I laughed, I mean, I just said he doesn't have to come over so where is he going?

Me: uyaphi? (Where are you going?)

Nkosinathi: my car needs fuel so ndizodlula ngokutya kwam kuwe, don't stress andizanga kuwe ndikuvile ngoku uthi I don't have to come over. (I'll just come by to fetch my food, I heard you when you said I don't have to come over)

Me: well I called so we could talk, or you could listen while I do the talking?

Nkosinathi: no problem, fire away. I'm all ears.

I could hear that he's either walking, or getting up.

Me: phew, thank you.

So I narrated everything that had happened earlier on at campus...while narrating, I heard his car starting. I figured that I'm on hands-free but I had to ask, just to be sure.

Me: are you driving?

Nkosinathi: yep. I don't trust this Sara character.

Me: neh?

Nkosinathi: what if she's actually one of them, but she wants you in the soup? You were the last person to be seen with Sisipho right?

Me: Not necessarily, Que and Lisa were in that car too. With those guys as well.

Nkosinathi: but what if the receptionist at Katberg recognizes your faces?

Me: when my brother went there she denied having seen us.

Nkosinathi: oh okay, she's on the payroll too.

Me: possible.

Nkosinathi: no relax...if you feel like you need to stick to your story then stick to it.

Me: what if it backfires?

Nkosinathi: we'll cross that bridge when we get to it, for now stick to what you said.

I sighed...

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: you're welcome.

Me: dude are you really coming here?

Nkosinathi: erh, yeah. I'm almost there.

Sewuphakile? (have you dished up already)

Me: hay Nkosinathi. (no Nkosinathi)

Nkosinathi: hay ntoni? (no what?)

Me: surely you can still go buy your food, I cooked pasta.

Nkosinathi: I'm not allergic to pasta, and no, I won't be buying food when you have cooked.

Me: akukubi okukutya. (This food is horrible)

Nkosinathi: ku right...ndcela uphake fast futhi, I'm very close. (I don't care...please dish up fast, I'm very close)

I sulked as I hung up.

I quickly dished up for him, went outside and waited for him one block away from my actual gate. I saw his car and got up, he lowered his window and reached out his hand.

Nkosinathi: enkosi sisi.

Me: eshe.

I gave him the lunchbox, he smiled as he peeped and put it next to him.

Nkosinathi: masambe siye garage. (Let's go to the garage)

Me: and'funi. Bye bye. (I don't want to. Bye bye)

Nkosinathi: u right, tchi.

I laughed at him as I walked back to my place,

locked the gate and locked myself inside my room. Now that I had spoken to someone, I felt lighter. I then attended to my projects, worked all the way throughout the night and only slept in the morning, at least for three hours before my waking up usual time.

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_12

Kwa thuleka futhi yazi (there was so much peace and quietness) for that entire week, didn't even see oo Que. My two brothers decided to pop in unannounced three weeks later, good thing, they were taking me to a sibling weekend away and I would have never said no. A weekend away with just my siblings? Yhu.

The Friday that they picked me up we just went to the movies and had dinner then went to bed. Nkosinathi and I were getting closer by the day, he was easy to talk to and now that he had my number we spoke very much often but for some reason we

hadn't had a conversation that entire week. I won't lie, I wanted to check him out and find out where he's been, but every time I checked his last seen on WhatsApp there were no new changes so I just let him be. Saturday morning I woke up and went for a walk listening to music on my phone...it was soooo refreshing to not be in PE even if it was just for a weekend. I found a pond and sat there watching small fish swimming, oh and frogs too...then this guy called. I admit, my heart jumped straight to my neck, I hadn't realized how much I was missing him until that moment...but then for some reason I didn't wanna make it too obvious. I took a deep breath in and answered my phone...

Me: hello?

Nkosinathi: hey, how are you?

Me: I'm good, how are you? Where have you been?

Oh gosh!

I said I wouldn't make it too obvious!

Me: uhm sorry, you don't have to answer that.

Nkosinathi: it's okay to ask...bendigodukile. (I went home)

Me: oh.

Nkosinathi: yes, and now I'm back. Can we have lunch? I still have your lunchbox.

Me: I'm not around, sorry.

Nkosinathi: you went home for the weekend?

Me: actually no, I'm on a weekend away.

Nkosinathi: wow, where?

Me: no I'm not gonna tell you.

He burst into laughter...

Nkosinathi: why? Are we no longer friends?

Me: we still are, but I'm not telling you anyway.

Nkosinathi! Cassandra?

Me: Nkosinathi I am not telling you anything, I want to enjoy my weekend away from anything relating Port Elizabeth.

Nkosinathi: you know I can trace and track your location through this call, right?

Me: I'm woke enough to not put my location on bhuti (brother), come on.

Nkosinathi: awusadiki (You're irritating).

Me: I know.

Nkosinathi: ubuya nini? (When are you coming back?)

Me: ngoms o, very late. (Tomorrow)

Nkosinathi: I will wait for you.

Me: hay don't wait for me, we can meet up Monday after my class.

Nkosinathi: hay mfondini I missed you, I will wait.

Me: you make too much time for me, I feel pity for your woman.

Nkosinathi: does that mean you didn't miss me?

Me: that's beside the point.

Nkosinathi: point being?

Me: that you make too much time for me.

Nkosinathi: we're friends Cassandra, come on.

Me: mmh.

Nkosinathi: what time should I come tomorrow?

Me: uzandiphathela ntoni k'qala? (What will you be bringing for me?)

Nkosinathi: anything you want.

Me: okay, I'll call you when I get there.

Nkosinathi: okay, enjoy the rest of your weekend away with whosoever you are there with.

I burst into laughter, that's where he was going with all of this. He wanted to know who I was with and I was not going to tell him at all, it was most definitely none of his business.

Me: thank you, we will definitely enjoy.

Nkosinathi: yeah, rub it in. Rub it in.

Me: bye bye.

I hung up on him while he was laughing then I walked back to where the rest of my siblings were, they were all up and eating breakfast.

Lionel: so what are we doing today?

Cindy: I just wanna go to a Spa.

Siki (Sikelelwa): Or we can go for the hot air Balloon then we go to the spa.

Asanda: Or we can drive up to the Cradle of Humankind, shouldn't be too far from here.

We just watched the elder siblings in silence... Cindy noticed that we were watching them, she just laughed at us.

Cindy: and then, nina?

Steve: kubi loomhlobo emzini na bethuna (Is being married that bad)? We're only here for the weekend, ezizinto nifuna uzenza (the things ya'll want to do) could be done if we were here for the entire week.

Cindy: haha! Why do you suggest asonwabanga emizini yethu? (We're not happy in our marriages?)

Lionel: nifuna ukwenza yonkinto le (you want to do everything) in a short period of time as if nibotshelelwe kulemizi yenu (you're bound).

Siki: niske nibenjena kenina (Please don't be like that).

Me: mna noba ndingalala apha phandle, hambani (you can go anywhere, I'd rather lie down here).

Onele: uyafana nam wena mntase (Same here), just being away from home is enough for me.

Asanda: uyakusebenzisa na umama (Is mom over working you?)?

Onele: worse njengoba ndindedwa, yho hayini

bethuna (Especially now that I'm the only child at home).

Me: ba worse babagcina kubo abazukulwana these past holidays (And your siblings didn't bring the kids for holidays).

Asanda: hayini kaloku, abantwana funeke baye macala. Andimazi kutheni enga understand'i umama coz sasimxelele kwa kudala that abazoya endlini abantwana last year (No guys, the kids must get to visit both sides of their familie, I don't know why mom doesn't understand that because we told her last year we won't be bringing the kids.

Lionel: hay wethu niyamazi umama wenu (but you guys know your mother)...

Onele: wayaphi u Lisa, Sandra? (Whatever happened to Lisa, Sandra?)

Me: ukhona lowo (She's around).

Asanda: kutheni wats ho kanjalo? (Why do you say it like that?)

Me: wafika wats hints ha wethu sisi u Lis akhanya

eBhayi. (Lisa became a changed person in Port Elizabeth sisi)

Cindy: so that mean's ya'll no longer friends?

Me: yeah...ndiyinkomo edla yodwa ngoku (I'm a lonesome now).

Siki: surely bakhona abanye abantu that you can befriend (there are other people)?

Me: I don't trust abantu base Bhayi mna bethuna (people from Port Elizabeth), I actually like it when u Bhuti comes to check up on me. At least I get to leave the house with someone, ndiyeke lento yohamba ndedwa oko.

Kwathi cwaka...(Total silence)

Cindy: sorry babe, sew'zogqiba man nyamezela. (hang in there, you're almost done with the course anyway)

Onele: she still has lonyaka nalo uzayo in such loneliness (She still has this year, and the following

one)? Ya'll never said kunjena ukhula (growing is this painful).

Asanda: yhu kunzima ukhula Oni, worse kuthi bats hatileyo. Ulife uyema the minute you have abantwana. (Growing up is very difficult Oni, worse for us as married people. Your life stops the minute you have children)

Siki: kubangcono (it becomes better) when you marry someone who understands your goals and ambitions, otherwise it's tough out there.

Me: yho hay sana sendifuna ufnda (I just wanna study hard), graduate and leave that place. Noba ndiyokhangela umsebenzi eKapa (Even I go job-hunting in Cape Town).

Lionel: uzomelana nohlala nalo bhuti wakho u strict? (Will you manage living with this strict brother of yours?)

Steve: khangathi uzazohlala nam, uthe uzaw'ya eKapa. (She didn't say she's coming to live with me, she said she's gonna go to Cape Town)

Cindy: ay'se cace! (But that's very clear she's

coming to you)

I just laughed at them, at the back of my mind I knew I'd never survive living with ubhuti. He's more like dad, straight line all the way. I wouldn't have no freedom living with him tu. My phone vibrated, messages from Nkosinathi. I just ignored him.

We later went on the hot air balloon, then later went for the massage. All six of us lay there getting pampered. The atmosphere..bliss. After that we just ordered in and had dinner while playing games by the fire place...Nkosinathi called, but the phones were in a basket near the TV so my sister Siki who was closer to it grabbed it and answered on loud speaker...

Siki: Hello?

Then there was silence for a moment...he must

have recognized that the voice wasn't mine, which was weird because Siki, Onele and I have almost the same voice.

Siki: hello?

Nkosinathi: uhm, hi..can I please speak to Cassandra?

Siki: and you are?

Nkosinathi: a friend.

Siki: surely friend, you have a name?

Nkosinathi: oh sorry, Nkosinathi is the name. Is it possible to speak to Cassandra, please?

Siki: she's bathing, I can take a message for her if it's urgent.

Nkosinathi: no don't worry about it...I'll call her tomorrow morning.

Siki: alright then.

Nkosinathi: and I'm speaking to?

Siki: her girlfriend.

Nkosinathi: you mean friend, right?

Siki: girlfriend, she didn't tell you she's a lesbian?

Nkosinathi: no...

Siki: oh sorry, I didn't mean to burst that bubble. Will that be a problem in your friendship though?

Nkosinathi: oh no no no, I don't see why it should.

Siki: alright then, I'll tell her you called.

Nkosinathi: thank you, night.

Siki: night bro.

They hung up...we all burst into laughter. I couldn't believe that I actually let her do that. Oh my word!

Me: you are sick shame!

Onele: and he believed her!

Me: so easily...he's legit convinced I swear.

Asanda: she was convincing, I would have also believed her.

Steve: who is he?

Okay so now they all waited for an answer in silence.

I cleared my throat, Onele was already laughing at my answer.

Me: uhleka ntoni? (What are you laughing at?)

Onele: mh.hm.

Steve: hayini, who is the he?

Asanda: hahahaaa! Yhu phendulani u the he bethuna (Someone answer “the he” please).

Me: haibo bhuti, utshilo wathi ungu Nkosinathi nje. (But he did say he is Nkosinathi)

Steve: ngowaphi? (From?)

Me: I don't know, we met pha e Bhayi.

Lionel: I thought you said you don't have friends anymore in PE?

Steve: uthe uyinkomo edlayodwa (She's said she's lonely) to be specific.

I just laughed at them... tshi!

Cindy: akonwabe u sisters.

Steve: Cassandra une ndoda eBhayi (Do you have a man in PE)?

Lionel: uzoba nendoda njani na u Cassandra eyi lesbian (How can she have a man when she is a lesbian)?

We all burst out laughing...

Steve: Lionel iserious lento ndiyibuza apha (Lionel, this question is very serious).

Lionel: nankoke ubhuti wenu! (there goes your brother)

Me: andina ndoda man bhuti (I don't have a man), he's just a friend.

Cindy: he's just a friend, ang'na address, ang'na bhelas (I don't have an address, nor do I have his numbers).

Asanda: yang'caphukisa! (You're making me angry)

Siki: eske I'm sorry!

Onele: yho hay!

I was a mess, I couldn't even talk.

They were killing me with laughter.

Steve: Cassandra?

Me: serious bhuti, we're just friends.

Steve: when am I meeting him?

Lionel: whoah, when are WE meeting him.

Asanda: for ntoni bethuna?

Lionel: we have to know her friends, especially guy friends.

Asanda: yhu hay ni wors e kunomama notate.

Siki: nam ndicela ukubakhona kulo meeting.

Me: we ae not meeting him anytime soon.
Unfortunately.

Siki: why?

Me: hay sisi.

Onele: hay inoba yi boyfriend.

Me: uthule wena.

Siki: ungakulinge uphoxe u Onele, ukuba unendoda uzakutsho ngoku.

Me: hayini bethuna abantu bakulo Onele!

Onele: bazintlani shame kodwa ke...ningaze nibenjena bhuti kum.

Steve: xa kutheni?

Me: xa ene friends ezizi guys bhuti.

Steve: hehe hehe!

We just laughed at him...such hype over Nkosinathi who was just a friend? What will happen when I actually get to have a boyfriend?

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_13

After playing the games I looked for my phone to return his call and I couldn't find it. So I went to my brothers who had started a fire for braaing outside.

Me: bhuti did you by any chance see my phone?

Steve: which one of us?

Me: both of you?

Steve: nope.

Lionel: iku Cindy.

Me: oh my God!

I turned to go...

Steve: she's probably investigating this boyfriend of yours.

Me: he's not my boyfriend.

Steve: whatever!

Then I ran off, found Cindy in the bedroom going through my messages with Onele.

Me: can I please have my phone?

Onele: uh-oh!

Cindy: so he did call you earlier, is that why you went missing when we woke up?

Me: no.

Onele: he says he misses you.

Me: my phone please.

Cindy: how long have you known him?

Me: phone please.

Cindy: answers first.

Me: you guys invaded my privacy, could have just asked.

I sat down next to them...

Cindy: do you love him?

Onele: how old is he?

Me: No I don't love him, and I don't really care about his age.

Cindy: he's very fond of you. Here.

She gave me my phone, I read the message: "it's weird to actually think that I miss you as much as I do. If I had known you're away I would have spent the weekend at home and come back Monday...but anyway, enjoy. Please call me when you're back." That was the message he had sent earlier, the one that I ignored. Then right that moment, he sent

another one: “Good night buddy”.

Me: maybe I should call him.

Onele: put him on loud speaker again.

Me: yhu, you two are nosy!

I called him while they were listening...

Nkosinathi: Cassandra, finally!

Me: haha, get a grip.

Nkosinathi: you're hard to get hold off.

Me: because I'm having fun, I don't have time to be looking at the phone.

Nkosinathi: I get that now.

Me: I got your messages and yes, I will call you when I'm back.

Nkosinathi: call me ngomsa, not Monday.

Me: eshe...good night.

These two were shaking their heads, wanting the conversation to continue but there was nothing else to talk about. I had said what I wanted to say.

Nkosinathi: why did you call me?

Me: to tell you I got your messages. Why else would I call you so late?

Nkosinathi: you could have texted.

Me: I wanted to call, but what difference does it make?

He went silent...

Me: you okay?

Nkosinathi: yeah...I'm okay.

Me: you don't sound like you're sure. What's up?

Nkosinathi: why didn't you tell me you're a lesbian?

Onele had to cover her mouth with a cushion...I just chuckled. I didn't know what to say, I was looking at my two sisters for something to say and they just laughed at me.

Me: I uhm, I didn't think it mattered.

Nkosinathi: I thought we were friends.

Me: we are, you could also be gay and I wouldn't know.

Nkosinathi: are you sure you wouldn't know?

Me: there are a lot of gay man who are married to women for some reason and they have children, so no, I wouldn't know. But wait, why are we even talking about this? Will my sexuality change something in this friendship of ours?

Nkosinathi: no it won't...I'm sorry man, it just came as a shock.

Me: no hard feelings.

Nkosinathi: okay then. We're cool?

Me: yes we are cool, now good night. It's late.

Nkosinathi: night buddy, can't wait to see you.

Me: you sound excited.

Nkosinathi: because I got you something.

Me: what?

Nkosinathi: hay, good night.

Then he hung up on me...

Me: what the f-?

These two just burst out laughing...

Cindy: uyakuthanda shame umntana bantu (he really loves you), I don't get how you don't see that.

Onele: and this lesbian thing really hurt his feelings.

Me: wazintoni wena nge feelings Onele (What do you know about feelings)?

Cindy: ask again, please!

Onele: hayini, don't gang up on me. Feelings are feelings, whether in movies or in reality, nothing changes.

Me: mh!

I lay on my back thinking...

Cindy: do you like him?

Me: who?

Cindy: Nkosinathi.

Me: as a friend.

Cindy: why?

Me: I don't know if I want to be in a relationship... and he's a bit older than me.

Cindy: how old?

Me: maybe three to five years, I don't know. I never really asked.

Cindy: well my husband is nine years older than me.

Onele: and dad is thirteen years older than mom.

Cindy: see, he's not that old.

Me: still...I don't want to be in a relationship now. I just want to focus on school and leave PE.

Onele: is it that bad?

I sighed...

Me: he makes too much time for me...yhu, I could call him now and tell him to come fetch me and he would. Without thinking twice.

Onele: but isn't that nice?

Me: mh Oni mntaka tata.

Cindy: what does he do?

Me: he says he does almost everything. Owns a

spaza, a carwash, clubs...the works.

Cindy: so you could be financially safe, with someone who would do anything for you.

Onele: but she likes him as a friend, right?

Me: remove the sarcasm.

Onele: haha!

I covered my face with a cushion...the quickly sat up.

Onele: she likes him...

Cindy: she loves him baby girl.

Me: nope, not ready to be in a relationship. I won't be manipulated by you two.

I threw that cushion and went to join Siki and Asanda in the kitchen, we made salads and they didn't even mention the Nkosinathi phone call.

When we were done with the salads we joined the guys outside, drinkers had a dop, Onele and I had juice. Fortunately for us, Cindy had bought non-alcoholic bubbly so we could fit in elohlotyana.

We had a fun night, slept in the early hours of the Sunday morning, maybe its because we knew we were only checking out later that afternoon. Onele and I woke up past ten to make breakfast and then we went for a swim...

Me: how's high school?

Onele: kumnandi...(It's nice)

Me: that smile?

She giggled.

Me: you have a boyfriend, don't you? Oh flip Onele you have a boyfriend?

Onele: why are you screaming?

Me: hay suka! (I don't care)

Onele: I don't wanna be in trouble bro, keep your voice down.

Me: is he also in high school?

Onele: yes. One grade ahead.

Me: wow...why didn't you tell me last year already?

Onele: because bendifika e high school (I was new in High school) and you were gonna make a fuss out of it.

I looked at her...

Me: so you started dating him last year?

Onele: we were just friends, well until December last year.

Me: December? I was home in December, why didn't you shed a light? When did you become so sneaky though?

Onele: urgh Sandra, I wasn't sure he was serious about it.

Me: how sure are you now? Do I know him?

Onele: ngu Sima. (it is Sima)

Me: Sima as in Simamakele the headboy from primary?

Onele: yep.

Me: yhu kudala nafunana wethu (It's been a long time coming), I'm not shocked!

Wahleka.

(She laughed)

Me: hay shame he did seem like quite a nice boy, I hope he doesn't become a playboy and play with your heart.

Onele: that's what I was afraid of nam, but I'll never know unless I give him a chance. Right?

Me: Right, just...whatever you do, don't feel pressured to have sex with him. If he really loves you he must wait for you until you're ready.

Onele: thank you sis...please don't tell the others just yet, I don't want the fuss.

Me: your secret is safe with me, for now.

Onele: for now?

Me: hay kaloku andiyokhabhathi yogcina amabibi wakho mna! (I'm not your closet)

Onele: yhu u Cassandra bethunana!

Now was my turn to laugh at her..which she stopped with just one question.

Onele: uthi kutheni wena no Nkosinathi ninga date'i? (Why again are you and Nkosinathi not dating?)

Me: oh not that again.

Onele: it's just the two of us now.

I sighed and took a sip out of the virgin cocktails we had made for ourselves.

Me: well for one, I think he already has someone.

Onele: why do you think that?

Me: I just do, and two, si right sizi friends. I don't want us to ruin that unnecessarily.

Onele: three?

Me: dating will disturb my studies and I can't afford that, you have to watch everything you do when you're studying via bursary, one wrong move bursary is gone.

Onele: do you love him?

Me: I like being around him.

Onele: but do you love him?

I shut up.

Onele: Mom always said we should follow our hearts in whatever we do.

Me: I know, but baby girl, dating right now is off the cards. Trust me.

Onele: if he does ask you out will you turn him down?

Me: I have been honest with him and I will still be honest with him, I think I like the lesbian idea though. Maybe I'll work around that for now.

Onele: hay you're sick! That idea is sick!

I just laughed at her...I grabbed my phone and texted him "Good morning..." he called immediately. Onele screamed in excitement as I showed her the screen. I had to wait for her to calm down before I answered the phone.

Me: Hello?

Nkosinathi: Good morning to you too.

Me: you know you could have texted. Right?

Nkosinathi: I know, but I wanted to call...and tell you that I'm going to Pretoria tonight so can we reschedule?

Me: uzobuya nini? (When will you be back?)

Nkosinathi: I'm not sure, maybe in two weeks or more, I can't really say.

Me: akhonto ingamandla? (What's the urgency?)

Nkosinathi: my sister's husband was involved in a hijack so I kinda have to go there for moral support and maybe assist with the kids.

Me: I'm sorry...did he survive?

Nkosinathi: yes, he's at the hospital but they took the car and bank cards.

Me: I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: thank you, so we reschedule?

Me: yeah definitely.

Nkosinathi: sure ke ntwana yam.

Me: sharp mfethu.

We hung up...

Onele: mfethu? Really?

Me: we are friends, calling him mfethu should be normal.

Onele: I wonder how would you feel if another girl would snatch him right under your nose.

Me: you're too young to be thinking like that.

I got up and left her there...he wasn't mine, why would I feel anyhow if he were to be taken by anyone? He's a free man, not that it's any of our business.

Onele: but you do like him, you just don't wanna admit it.

I threw a dishcloth at her to shut up, she just cracked up and laughed. Phew!

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_14

When the rest of the crew was up, they had breakfast and then we just chilled, reminisced on stories while they were growing up in a strict home. It was just a refreshing time. Then out of the blue, one of my sisters told us that she's getting divorced. I was shocked, we were shocked. We didn't see it coming, and anyway she's the meek one so we would have never seen that she wasn't happy in her marriage

Asanda: well now that we're here I might as well tell you guys that I'm getting divorced.

Siki/ Steve/ Onele: what?

Asanda: I'm getting divorced, in fact we have already filed for it. We're just waiting for the court

date to finalize things.

Siki: what happened?

Asanda: a lot...it was a gradual thing, I just kept on believing that it's gonna stop but I guess I was too naïve.

Cindy: what was the gradual thing?

Siki: why didn't you say anything until now?

Asanda: I didn't wanna bother you guys, and anyway, there was nothing you could do.

Siki: come on Asanda. Does mom and dad know?

Asanda: yes.

Steve: I didn't think it will come to this so soon.

Now we all looked at him, did he know?

Cindy: you knew they were having problems?

Steve: yes, she once called us for intervention. Thought the guy heard.

Cindy: who's us?

Lionel: us, dad, and uncle Vusi.

Cindy: oh you also knew?

Siki: it's fine Cindy as long as someone from her side of the family knew, I just wanna know what has he done qha?

Asanda: he impregnated another woman.

Cindy: u Lerato?

Siki: hay kaloku mdala oka Lerato. (Lerato's child is older though)

Asanda: another one, Thandiwe. They work together.

Cindy: that son of a bitch!!!!!!!

Asanda: he's not worth it Cindy.

Siki: how did you find out?

Asanda: she came to tell me at work.

Cindy: what?

Asanda: they had been at it for over a year now, right after he broke things off with Lerato.

Lionel: how are the kids?

She smiled, shaking her head. I was secretly weeping.

My heart was torn.

Asanda: Live is suffering the most because she's a daddy's little angel, but her brothers are the most supportive towards me. We had to sit them down and tell them everything, and they know how things were during the Lerato saga so Aphiwe was the first one to ask when are we moving out?

Lionel: and what did his dad say?

Asanda: he told them he'll be moving out, but I actually suggested that we sell the house and find something smaller but big enough for all four of us.

Steve: if he's moving out, will he move out with Relo?
(Lerato's daughter)

Asanda: he has to, he has no choice.

Cindy: wow. Yhu.

I was just too shocked to say anything, amazingly, she was brave. I could tell by looking at her face that she was no longer hurting, she was at peace with this decision. I cleaned myself up when I saw Siki stealing a look at me.

Asanda: so yeah...the road has come to an end now.

Me: did he at least apologize?

Asanda: he did shame, he begged and begged. Even sent his family to come and beg, but you can never make the same mistake twice and cry foul when you're caught out.

Siki: andisam'baweli. (Wish I could see him)

Lionel: oh hay khawume ngodlame. (oh please, there's no need for violence)

Siki: yintoni udlame? Isile lendoda. (What violence? That man is very silly)

Cindy: he begged because he didn't know you're strong enough to leave him after eighteen years of marriage and twenty years of friendship.

Asanda: neh? But his biggest mistake was to think that I loved him more than my peace, and more than my kids' happiness.

Steve: uyakwazi unyamezela (You're very patient), I give that to you. Yageza la rubbish kula saga ka Lerato andinabhongo (That rubbish was very rude during that Lerato saga).

Cindy: yhini mntaka mama...but you look like you're okay.

Asanda: ndakhala ndaxola mntaka mama, ndi right gqithi ngoku. (I'm okay now, I cried enough)

Me: maybe you should consider therapy for Live.

Asanda: she's started already, and she seems to be enjoying it.

Me: who's paying for it?

Asanda: ngu tatakhe kaloku (his father), he broke the family up. He must pay for the consequences.

Steve: unjani u Akhona? (How is Akhona)

Asanda: uthule...but ebekhe wandiba ndindedwa and asked ba why now? (He's quiet, but he did steal a moment when I was alone and asked why now)

Me: meaning he wanted you to stay?

Asanda: no, he wanted me to leave kwa kulanto ka Lerato (during that Lerato period), so he wanted to understand why I never left then and only leaving his dad now.

Me: oh.

Asanda: ba supportive man no brother wakhe, but I also booked them for therapy sessions. I don't mind paying for them...I don't want them to hate their father.

Siki: unayo ke intliziyo ka Mariya wena. (you do have Mary's heart)

Asanda: hay mntase, abangeni ndawo kwi fights zethu abantwana(No, our fights do not have to include the kids). I want them to be able to visit him when they want to, without feeling like they

shouldn't because izobangathi they are betraying umama.

Cindy: yho you are a better woman than I'll ever be.

Asanda: ngu life bethuna. (it's life guys)

Okay so...after that we just hugged, Onele and I were the only ones crying over this. But then when we both realized that she was okay, we got a grip. We later left Magaliesberg, I returned to PE and everyone else returned to their areas. When I got to my room I just got in bed, it was already too late to go anywhere. In the morning I went to campus... and the first person I see had to be u Qaqamba.

Que: Cassandra, hey unjani?

Me: I don't wanna talk to you...so please.

Que: wait, I was contacted by the police regarding what you said ngalamini u Sara wayefike sime sobabini.

Me: so?

Que: what did you say to them?

Me: tyhini, hay get lost man!

Que: Cassandra, whatever you said phaya ingasibambisa sobabini you know that, andithi?

I just walked away from her...throughout the day the police were roaming around the school grounds doing their investigations because more girls have gone missing again that past weekend. After my lessons I went to work on a project at the library, later went to buy myself bread because I knew I wasn't in the right space to cook. As I walked home, I noticed that there was a car that had been following me from the shop but now it was getting closer and closer. I tried walking faster but I realized that it's either I run for my life or I'll be kidnapped all over again. I saw an older woman watering her garden so I quickly pushed her gate open and went to her, the car stopped a block away from her house.

Me: molo mama..bendicela amanzi. (Afternoon
mama, could I please have a glass of water)

Madlamini: oh mntanam, yiza. Ngena aph'endlini.
(Oh my child, come. Let's go inside)

I quickly looked behind me as I followed her inside, I
sat down as she went to the kitchen, opened her
fridge and poured me a drink instead of water, I
smiled as I thanked her and drank up.

Now I was afraid of getting up and leave because I
knew that car was still waiting...I think she noticed
that I was nervous because she then sat down
across me.

Madlamini: u right mntanam? (My child are you
okay?)

Me: ndi right ma...uhm, enkosi mama. (I'm okay
mama, thank you)

Madlamini: ungu mamni ke nontombi? (What's your

clan?)

Me: ndingu mam'Tshawe ma. (Mam'Tshawe ma)

Madlamini: ooh okay. U qinisekile ukuba u right?
Ukhangeleka wothukile. (Are you sure you're okay?
You look a bit frightened)

I looked at the door then back at her...

Me: ikhona imoto endilandelayo mama yazi,
ndiyiqaphele ngoku ndiphuma eshop. Oko ithe chu
aphemva kwam. (There's a car that has been
following me after I left the shop)

Madlamini: le moto imthubi? (You mean the yellow
car)

Me: ewe ma. (Yes ma)

Madlamini: heh, yazi ke oko ibijikelaza apha
namhlanje. Khawume ndikhangele u bhuti walapha
akukhapse. (I have noticed this car going around
today. Let me look for my son to walk you home)

She must have known where I lived because I was just down the road and I would pass by her place almost every day especially when I'm coming from the library. She walked outside and came back a few minutes later...

Madlamini: hey mntanam, ubhuti walapha semkile, uphangele inight shift. (It looks like he's already left for work, he's on night duty)

Me: hay akhongxaki mama, mandithi chu. Maybe seyimkile lemoto. (No there's no problem ma, I'll walk by myself. Maybe the car has left already)

Madlamini: isekhona mntanam, isame apha entla komzi. (The car is still here my child, it is still waiting up there)

Yho haike...

Madlamini: ungalala apha sisi, ndizokukhapha

ksasa uyothatha iimpahla zotshints ha for ukuya eskolweni. (You can sleep here, I'll walk you home in the morning so that you can change on time for scholl)

Me: hay mama andizokwazi ukuxakekisa oluhlobo. Mandihambe, maybe iyazihambela nje lamoto. (No mama I can't put you through that much trouble, let me go home, maybe the car is just minding its own business.)

Madlamini: hay kaloku Tshawekazi kwababantwana balahlekayo kweli Bhayi andizokwazi mntanam ukuyeka uhambe ungaziva khuselekileyo tu. Nam ndinomzukulwana ofunda eRhawutini ongangawe, inimba ke iyafana. Yiza, uzolala kula kamera yakhe. (I cannot let you go while you're feeling unsafe, especially amidst these kidnappings here around PE. I also have a granddaughter your age who is in Gauteng, come sleep in her room.)

Well...

I was afraid, obviously and secondly, she was just

being an angel. I couldn't refuse even if I wanted to. She dished up for me, warmed the food satya watching TV the wangenisa izinto ze gadi yakhe (she collected her garden tools), waphunga (had coffee), we prayed then sayolala (we went to sleep). I couldn't sleep...past eleven I called Nkosinathi, hoping aphenhle (He answer) because I didn't want to call my brothers about this. Tu.

Nkosinathi: hey.

Me: you don't sound like you were sleeping at all.

Nkosinathi: neither do you, what's up?

Me: how is your sister, and the kids?

Nkosinathi: she's alright, she was with him when their car got hijacked.

Me: oh no, did they hurt her?

Nkosinathi: no, she just has a swollen ankle. Other than that, she's fine.

Me: the kids?

Nkosinathi: bazoba right... they're still in shock, but they'll be alright. Now, utheni wena?

Me: I think I might be in trouble.

Nkosinathi: with?

Me: ta Khiri and his people?

Nkosinathi: why?

Me: there's a car that's been following me today, I couldn't even reach my place because I felt uneasy so I asked for water komnyumzi.. ndiselapho kulomzi nangoku.

Nkosinathi: uthini Cassandra? Uphingoku?

Me: after ndifumene amanzi, which was not really amanzi but anyway, I told umamalapha bandilandelwa yimoto and I'm not feeling safe, she tried getting me her son to walk me home but ebesephangele ungene inight shift. So she gave me her grandchild's room wathi uzondikhapha k's as a uyonxiba endlini.

Nkosinathi: but you're safe, for now, right?

Me: ewe. But what if ndibeka nobakhe ubomi

engozini?

He sighed...

Me: I know you have ezakho izinto, I'm sorry to budge you with this.

Nkosinathi: no no no, don't be sorry. I said you should call when you needed someone to talk to.

Me: I know ukude and there's not much you can do.

Nkosinathi: I will organize someone to come fetch you and take you to campus tomorrow morning.

Me: I don't have a class ngomso, but thank you.

Nkosinathi: okay, no problem just try to be in one place, call me again when you're not feeling safe.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: at some point you will have to tell your brothers, you know that, right?

Me: hay Nkosinathi I cannot take that risk.

Nkosinathi: hey, listen here...you will have to let them know that you're not feeling safe. You don't have to tell them everything but at least let someone from your family know.

I kept quiet...

Me: okay. Good night.

Nkosinathi: good night.

I turned my phone off and lay on my back thinking, the room was beautiful and it smelt fresh.

Madlamini must be a clean lady, or her granddaughter was back in the last week or two?

[06/26, 14:42] : #Cassandra_15

In the morning I woke up, she was up already, having coffee in the lounge.

Me: molo mama.

Madlamini: molo mntanam, ulele kakuhle kodwa?

Me: ewe mama, enkosi.

Madlamini: sendiphekile ipapa, hlala phantsi utye.

I couldn't refuse, I felt like I was in my own home. She dished up for both of us, we sat down and had porridge, her son walked in from work looking sleepish. He greeted, put on the kettle and then walked back out to his room at the back. Sometime later, he came back. His mother filled him in, then when I was done eating he cheerfully walked me down the street and even waited for me to be inside. My landlord was doing her laundry outside...I just greeted and went inside my room, went to bath then cooped up myself in bed and watched series. My mother called...I knew immediately that the landlord had called her.

Me: mamam?

Mom: baby girl, how are you?

Me: ndi right mama, unjani wena?

Mom: I'm okay sisi...kuthwa you did not sleep in your room last night.

Me: ewe mama.

Mom: bekutheni sisi?

Me: bendiyofunda mama e library so saphuma ebusuku, since we were all girls I couldn't walk alone ebusuku so ndalala kwabanye.

Mom: ooh okay, next time ke mntanam try to report to your landlord.

Me: okay mama.

Mom: what time is your class baby?

Me: I don't have one today, I'm a bit fatigued so I'm spending the day indoors ma.

Mom: phumla ke mntanam, akhonto ushota ngayo phofu?

Me: yinyama ne data mama.

Mom: yhu eshe!

Me: oh please mamam, yhini sewubuze kakuhle kangaka.

She laughed at me, promised to send money later on that day so I can buy my meat following day on my way from my class. I really spent my day in bed, then later cooked and still continued binge watching series until an unknown call came through...I took a deep breath in.

Me: hello?

Ta Khiro: Cassandra, unjani?

I knew his voice all too well...I could feel my chest closing in.

Ta Khiro: you don't have to be afraid of me, I wouldn't hurt you even if I wanted to.

Me: ufuna ntoni ke kum?

Ta Khiro: ndiyakuthanda nje ndandits hila kuwe, I'm just calling to check up on you.

Me: seriously?

Ta Khiro: yes.

Me: oh-kay...I'm okay.

Ta Khiro: u sure?

Me: yes...look, why are your guys following me around?

Ta Khiro: what guys?

Me: there's a yellow car that was following me around yesterday and I'm sure it's one of your cars.

Ta Khiro: oh that, hay don't worry about it. It's sorted.

Me: what's sorted?

Ta Khiro: Qaqamba said something about you saying something to the police, but my contact told us you actually didn't say anything. The guys just wanted to have a word with you.

Me: ta Khiro?

Ta Khiro: Yes.

Me: Please tell your people to leave me the hell alone. How am I supposed to study if I am always on the lookout for my life? Do you people know how traumatic that is? Walking these streets looking behind you all the time because you might be kidnapped or something?

He kept quiet...

Me: please, I did everything you said I should do, I'm no longer friends with Que and I don't really care what she does. Now just leave me alone.

Ta Khiro: okay.

Me: thank you.

Ta Khiro: now, on to the other matter.

Me: what other matter now?

Ta Khiro: Cassandra I love you, and I will not stop telling you that until it sinks into your heart.

Me: some of us love with heads, our hearts are too fragile. Sorry.

Ta Khiro: can you give me a chance?

Me: no.

Ta Khiro: why?

Me: I don't trust you. I'm legit afraid of anything relating to you.

Ta Khiro: but you don't know me. I could be anyone.

I froze at that.

I don't know him.

I've never seen his face.

He really could be anyone.

Ta Khiro: Please?

Me: no, I'm sorry.

Ta Khiro: okay...I don't easily give up though. But I'll let you be, for now.

Me: yho hay!

I hung up.

Where will I live in peace?

Tyhini! I got up, turned off the lights and had an early night. There was nothing else to do and I had to be fresh for the following day, we had a group presentation in two days so that meant another library session and preparation. Nkosinathi didn't call, so I didn't call him too, instead, in the morning I was woken up by a text asking if I still need someone to come fetch me to which I texted back and told him no I'll be fine. Prepared for class and left with my lunch box.

Fast forward to three days later, after our presentation I asked to leave because I wasn't feeling well at all. I went to the pharmacy first and got myself some pills, then I walked home. When I got to my gate, there was Nkosinathi's car parked there. He got out as I approached the gate...

Me: Hey...what are you doing here?

Nkosinathi: hey, you look exhausted.

Me: I am.

He extended his open arms, I didn't even hesitate, I went for it. I needed it. After that presentation I needed something warm and assuring, his hug was just that.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: you're even heating up, are you okay?

Me: I'm tired and I feel sick, but I'll be fine. Got meds from the pharmacy.

I showed him the pharmacy bag, he didn't seem convinced at all.

Nkosinathi: I wasn't expecting you, yet.

Me: ubuzohlala apha until when?

Nkosinathi: ude uphume eskolweni.

Me: yho...awunanto yokwenza?

Nkosinathi: ndinazo, I just wanted to see you first because if I didn't start here, bendisenongakuboni.

Me: oh.

He opened the passenger door...

Nkosinathi: get in, masambe.

Me: I need to re-

Nkosinathi: please.

I sighed and got in the car, he drove in silence and took me to an actual doctor, I was examined and yes, the doctor said it's exhaustion and flu.

Meaning now I was booked off for the rest of the

week and given and vitamin BCo injection and other multivitamins to help me recover. He drove to McDonalds and bought a family meal, then drove me back to my place.

Nkosinathi: will you be okay?

Me: yes, it's just flue.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra.

Me: seriously bro, you didn't have to take me to the doctor but thank you, I appreciate it.

Nkosinathi: I have to cancel my flight for tomorrow, I can't leave you like this.

Me: hayini, undivile? Okay, umvile ugqirha ngoku ebesithi it's just flue and exhaustion? Andiguleli ukufa so you actually can go.

He ignored me...as we drove nearer to Madlamini's home I asked him to drop me off there, just to tell her I'm okay. And thank her. He wanted to go in with me, I wasn't up for arguing with him over a house-

visit. Madlamini was in her garden, pruning her tomato trees. When she saw me, she smiled excitedly and stopped everything to come greet me, we hugged for an intense minute then we walked inside her house.

Madlamini: oh mntanam, unjani? Ukhangeleka udiniwe kodwa.

Me: ndine fever ma, kodwa ken di right.

Madlamini: molo nawe bhuti?

Nkosinathi: molo mama, ndiyakubona uright.

Madlamini: mqaba-qaba mntanam. Heh Tshawekazi, iphelelephi langxaki?

Me: hay ndiye ndaxelela lo bhuti ndihamba naye mama, kodwa ke kuthe kanti bekungekho nto ingako.

Madlamini: ooh hayke kungcono, uyile ke kwagqirha?

Me: ndivela khona mama ngoku.

Madlamini: ooh okay, ungumni kewena ndoda?

Nkosinathi: ndingu Rhadebe mama.

Madlamini: ah, umth'omkhulu, ndlebe zintle zombini!

They both laughed, he was in his element.

Madlamini: oh banobubele ke abo bantu,
ndiyathemba ubafuzile nawe.

Nkosinathi: kuthwa umntu akazingqineli Zizikazi,
kodwa kungqina ihambo yakhe.

Madlamini: uvuthiwe!

Again, they laughed. I was just sitting there smiling.

Thanked God she didn't ask the relations between
mna no Nkosinathi, maybe she had made her own
conclusions. After that chat, Nkosinathi gave her
R100 to buy "drink" she didn't want to take it tu, but
he insisted wancama wayithatha then we left. Drove
that short distance and parked at my place...

Me: I'm sure my mother already knows that I was taken by a Blue ranger.

Nkosinathi: landlord is a spy huh?

Me: oh well, I get used to it.

Nkosinathi: mmmh.

I took my bag,

Me: enkosi once again.

Nkosinathi: are you sure you'll be fine?

Me: yes I'm sure, go back to your sister. She needs you more, and your girlfriend or wife must be missing you as well.

Nkosinathi: okay...I will call you k'sasa because I don't want to wake you. You have to eat, then eat the meds and stay in bed.

Me: yes dad.

Nkosinathi: mxm...here.

I chuckled at how he said “mxm” when I said “yes dad”, he gave me the McDonalds meal. I took it without argument because I knew kwangoku ebeyithenga uyithengela mna. Maybe he didn't want me to cook when I'm supposed to be in bed allowing the medication to work. We parted ways, I went inside and got in bed. I wasn't hungry at all, I just ate the chips and the medication then ndalala. I didn't wanna call home and stress the folks out, and my brothers can't always be available whenever I feel like. Following day, I woke up with full blown flue, blocked nose, red sore eyes, sore body and joints. The works. I woke up, warmed milk for cereal then went back to bed...I texted my mom to tell her I wasn't feeling well, because I knew landlord was gonna tell her that I skipped classes anyway. Past one in the afternoon, my brother (Steve) called and said he's outside, I peeped through the window and opened for him, he drove in and came out of the car with Aphiwe, umntana ka Sis' Asanda. They brought in shopping bags...oh umama bethuna. Aphiwe and

I hugged, while the big bro was packing the food in my cupboards.

Me: niyaphi?

Aphiwe: uthi umakhulu uyagula, uyamazi ke.

Me: wes'ba nditshilo kuye ba it's just flu.

Steve: who bought you meds?

Uh-oh!

Me: my friend.

Steve: Nkosinathi?

Me: yep.

Then he ignored us, Aphiwe looked at me quizzically I just shrugged.

Aphiwe: you really look sick though.

Steve: we should get you to the doctor.

Me: that won't be necessary bhuti, I was at the doctor izolo so the medication will probably work in a day or two.

Steve: he took you to the doctor?

Me: he insisted, bes endizithengele mna amayeza e chemist.

Akhona: who's this dude?

Steve: une boyfriend umakazi wakho mfondini.

Me: akayo boyfriend yam bhuti u Nkosinathi, we're just friends.

Steve: friends who spend money on doctor's bills are hard to find.

Akhona: when are we meeting him?

Steve: ask again.

Me: meeting for ntoni?

My phone ran...it had to be the friend in question!
Yho.

Me: hello?

Nkosinathi: uvuke unjani?

Me: I think I'm worse, but...unjani wena?

Nkosinathi: I'm okay. Andihambanga izolo, can I come see you?

Me: not now.

Nkosinathi: why?

Me: my brothers are here.

I saw Steve giving me the look, but I didn't care. I could see Akhona was also saying something but, I didn't care. Nkosinathi was not going to come here while they were here.

Nkosinathi: ooh okay, text me later.

Me: I'll call you k'sasa. I'm gonna have an early night.

Nkosinathi: please text me later today, I rescheduled my flight to tomorrow evening.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: s hrap.

Me: sho.

We hung up.

Akhona: he wanted to come here, why didn't you allow him to?

Steve: does he have to ask before he comes?

Me: yes, he knows I have a strict landlord who doesn't allow anyone into the yard.

Akhona: you should have let him come, we just wanna see the guy.

Steve: and pay back his money.

Me: he doesn't want to be paid back bhuti, can we drop this thing ngoku bethuna?

They looked at each other and giggled, hay suka it was irritating already.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_16

Benza ukutya aba (these two made food) and we ate dinner together, I know they were just buying time, they thought Nkosinathi would give in and just come unannounced seeing that it was really getting late.

Steve: I will be out of the country for the rest of this week, so if you need anything just call your other brother.

Akhona: you must have forgotten that he's only coming back in two weeks?

Me: uyephi? (Where's he gone to?)

Steve: oh flip!

Akhona: he's gone on a project in Malawi.

Me: I'll be fine guys, don't stress.

Akhona: and you have Nkosinathi.

Me: Akhona!

Steve: She really doesn't want us to see him.

Me: there is nothing to see.

Akhona: is he married?

Me: I don't know.

Steve: does he at least have a girlfriend? Have you seen her?

Me: no.

Akhona: no he doesn't or no you haven't seen her?

Me: no I haven't seen her.

Steve: so he does have one?

Me: I don't know...it's none of my business.

Steve: mh.

Akhona: haikhe masikushiye (guess we must leave you)..I still have a flight to catch in the morning.

Me: you guys need to visit this year haibo, I miss Aphiwe now that I've seen you.

Akhona: we definitely will. But he won't be able to stay long, he's got a trip to England this year for his golf tournament.

Me: hay nyhani? (Really)

Akhona: yep, he's actually serious about it more than I thought he would be.

Me: and is the school paying for it?

Akhona: nope, dad is.

Me: has he paid for it already?

Akhona: he's paid for fifty percent of it, the rest he has to pay up on the day of departure.

Me: oh okay. I'll call him and wish him luck.

After a couple of minutes these two eventually left, I cleaned up my room and lay on my bed thinking whether I should call this guy or not. I dialed his number but didn't put the call through, I think the

questions my brother and nephew asked me about him made me contemplate. What if he has a girlfriend or wife and I'm disturbing their quiet time? For all I know he could be married, even without the wedding band. But then he said he wanted to be my "friend" so I wouldn't be overstepping the boundaries here, and he was expecting my call anyway. So I called him...

Nkosinathi: hello?

Me: hey...uhm, you can come, if you still want to.

Nkosinathi: okay, on my way.

Me: uyayazi ndi right neh?(You do know I'm alright, right?) Like, you don't really have to?

Nkosinathi: yep.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: sharp.

He hung up...I put on my heater, after a minute,

there was a knock on my door. I got and went to open because I knew it can only be my landlord, but it wasn't. It was one of the tenants, Cleo.

Me: hey, Cleo.

Cleo: hey sorry to disturb you...have you seen the madam today?

Me: uhm, no. why?

Cleo: I have been trying to call her but without any luck and she hasn't been here the whole day.

Me: are you sure?

Cleo: yeah, I was supposed to return her 5L paraffin that she learnt me last week already.

Me: haibo.

We both went to knock there, it was dark inside and locked. We went to the other side where our posts are dropped off and where the rubbish is collected, and there was a notice: I WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, FOR EMERGENCIES
PLEASE CONTACT RUEBEN ON...then she left her
son's number.

Me: oh...I actually didn't notice that she's not
around.

Cleo: oh wow!

Me: I hope she's okay.

Cleo: I'll call her son tomorrow, it's already late.

Me: yeah.

We both returned to our own rooms, I put on the
kettle for tea and wore my fuzzy socks while
waiting for this guy. It wasn't long when he called...

Me: hey.

Nkosinathi: I'm outside.

Me: awufunu ngena? (Don't you want to come in?)

Nkosinathi: I don't wanna get you in trouble.

Me: it's okay, she's not around.

Nkosinathi: sure.

I opened the gate for him...he came in with food too. Like, all of them had to come see me with food? I just had flue, I could still cook for myself. We didn't hug, he put the food bag on the cupboard and sat down on the stool while I sat on my bed, covered in a fleece.

Nkosinathi: how are you feeling?

Me: I'm better, thank you.

Nkosinathi: you sound better but you don't look better.

Me: I think it's because I didn't rest enough but I'm okay nyhani, how is your brother inlaw?

Nkosinathi: he's recovering very well...heard they are discharging him tomorrow.

Me: that's good news.

Nkosinathi: yeah...so, your brothers?

Me: gosh! They actually stayed here so late because they wanted to see you.

Nkosinathi: so that means you told them about me?

Me: I had to tell them who bought me medication.

Nkosinathi: would have loved to meet them, but you said I shouldn't come.

Me: they have this theory that we're dating, apparently no friend can pay doctor's bill for a friend. Especially in Port Elizabeth.

He burst out in laughter, I was just smiling at him. He found this amusing.

Nkosinathi: I love your brothers...maybe I should meet them for real.

Me: hayi, for ntoni? (Why?)

Nkosinathi: they sound like good people.

Me: no they're not. Please.

He laughed...

Me: uzohamba ngoms o ubuye nini? (If you're leaving tomorrow, when are you coming back?)

Nkosinathi: I am not sure, that's why I wanted to see you today.

Me: oh.

He looked at me with all sincerity.

Me: dude, why are you suddenly so serious?

Nkosinathi: I uhm, wanted us to talk.

Me: about?

Nkosinathi: us. Our friendship.

Me: oh-kay...what about it?

He cleared his throat.

I sat up and looked at him uncomfortably, he was making me uncomfortable.

Me: Nkosinathi?

Nkosinathi: don't look stressed now, akhonto.

Me: but?

Nkosinathi: I feel like I'm coming on too much on you, I mean, I want to be there for you, I want to protect you...but at the same time, I feel like it can get overwhelming on you.

Okay wait...what just happened?

I was sooooo flippen confused.

Me: so wait, are you trying to tell me that you're

leaving because of our friendship?

Nkosinathi: not necessarily.

Me: then what? Are you having problems because of our friendship? Does your woman have a problem with us being friends?

Nkosinathi: no Cassandra.

Me: then what kaloku?

He sighed.

I just looked at him.

Nkosinathi: I know you're not feeling well, can we go to the beach. We'll stay in the car.

Me: what do you wanna say there that you can't say now?

Nkosinathi: Please.

Me: Nkosinathi come on, man up. What is going on?

He got up from where he was seated and came to sit next me, taking my hands into his.

Me: what's going on?

Nkosinathi: it was Khiro who tried to kill my sister and her husband so that he can get me away from you. I'm a barrier to him.

Me: what?

Nkosinathi: here.

He gave me his phone, I listened to the voicemail and my heart sank. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Immediately my eyes teared up at the realization that it was in fact Khiro's voice on the other end, I had put his family in danger.

Me: I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: don't be, it's not your fault.

Me: don't...we both know I brought Ta Khiro into

your life and now your family is in danger. I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: hey, look at me.

I couldn't..he lifted my chin so I looked at him, then my eyes failed me. I closed them, trying to stop the tears that had welled up. He just hugged me, too tight that I actually let go and cried.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_17

After a couple of minutes I let go of his embrace and cleaned myself up, he sat there and just waited for me to be calm. I took in a few breaths and looked at him...

Me: It's cool, you can go. I wouldn't like to put more of your family members at risk.

Nkosinathi: that is not the case, I'm not going away because I feel I'm at risk. I'm going away so that I can regroup with people who know Khiro's world

and see what my chances are.

Me: no Nkosinathi, that man is a thug. You cannot stoop down to her level.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra.

Me: please don't do this.

Nkosinathi: I have to stop him, how many other people is he going to hurt because they come closer to you? Someone has to stop him.

I kept quiet... maybe I should have just been honest with my family about this Ta Khiro story from the start.

Nkosinathi: what is it that makes him feel entitled when it comes to you?

Me: I don't know.

Nkosinathi: did he say anything as to why he released you and not the other girls? Why you?

Me: apparently he has a crush on me.

Nkosinathi: oh, that explains it.

Me: explains what?

Nkosinathi: him wanting me away from you.

I sighed...he must have been stalking me, us. For him to know that we've been spending time together he must have been keeping an eye on me ever since I got back. It's been over a year now for goodness sake, doesn't he have a life.

Nkosinathi: I'll call you.

Me: okay.

He got up to leave, I walked him to my door.

Nkosinathi: are you safe with everything?

Me: like?

Nkosinathi: food, toiletries...the likes?

Me: yeah I'm sorted. Thank you for asking.

Nkosinathi: okay. Bye now.

He opened his arms so we hugged, I heard myself saying "I'm gonna miss you" to which he replied "I'm a phone call away and I'll be back before you know it" I just nod. Before stepping out, he kissed me on the forehead then he walked out. I opened the gate for him, locked my door and cried myself to sleep. I didn't know whether I'm crying because he was leaving or I'm crying because I've put his life and his family in danger. But ke what matters is that I was crying.

Two days later I was fine yaz, no Nkosinathi and no Ta Khiro in sight. I was doing what I had come to PE to do: STUDY! On the last day of the semester I saw Lisakhanya at distance so I changed direction, I couldn't risk my life like that. I had come to understand that even the meekest people can be deadly. She wouldn't fool me twice.

I diverted and walked the other way, then I saw at short distance three cars, one was that of Qaqamba's boyfriend. The same one that took us a year ago...yho I felt chest pains as my pace quickened. Again, I quickly walked right into Madlamini's house, but she wasn't there so I made small talk with her son who wanted to walk me home because he was going to the garage for diesel. I was more than happy, that's what I initially wanted anyway. We walked together talking about nonsense until it was my turn to leave him, I quickly got inside and closed the gate. Got inside my room and started packing then I called my dad...

Dad: Nontombi?

Me: I'm ready to be picked up tata.

Dad: haibo, aren't you taking a taxi?

Me: yhu, I thought umama asked you to come fetch me.

Dad: it must have slipped her mind, take a taxi. I'll transfer you money just now.

Me: yhu ha.a tata andizokwazi, kwaba bantu babiwa kangaka kweliBhayi yho hay uxolo Tshawe ndiyoyika. (I won't be able to, people are been abducted here and I'm scared)

He laughed at me...that hurt.

Dad: okay, I'm still in a meeting right now. I'll call you when I'm coming.

Me: I'm sorry if ndikukhupha endleleni yakho. (I'm diverting your from you way)

Dad: hay awundikhuphi mntanam qha bendicinga unokuba ungxamile. (No you're not, but I thought you're in a hurry)

Me: hay I don't mind waiting tata.

Dad: okay ke nontombi.

We hung up.

I wasn't about to risk my life tu especially having

seen that car. I heard someone calling my name so I just opened my window and saw Lisa at the gate.

Me: yintoni? (What?)

Lisa: nd'cela ungena chomi. (I'd like to come in please my friend)

Me: ndiyi chomi yakho ngoku? (So I'm your friend now?)

Lisa: Cass please, I'm in trouble.

Me: u right Lisa, hamba iya ku Qaqamba. Iimoto zamadoda enu zinilindile, or uthunywe zizo nawe apha kum? (Go back to Qaqamba. Your men's cars are waiting for ya'll, or did they send you to me?)

Lisa: Cassandra ndiyakucela torho nd'cela undivulele igate my life is in danger.(Please I am begging you, open the gate, my life is in danger)

Me: Andizokuvulela gate Lisakhanya, nobam ubomi wabufaka engozini and you didn't give a damn nditheni kengoku mna ndimuncu lento ndizocingelana nawe? Hay fokof. (I'm not going to

open no gate, you also endangered my life and you didn't care, am I that stupid now? That you want me to feel pity for you?)

I closed my window, and waited for dad to come fetch me. I was already fed up with Port Elizabeth I just wanted to be home with my family already. I swear Lisa didn't go away, she was still calling my name in that gate but I ignored her until someone else opened the gate for her and they both came knocking on my door. I put on headsets and played music.

I only woke up when my dad called and said he was outside...took everything and opened the door only to find Lisakhanya on my stoep.

Me: can you move out of my way?

She jumped up, she must have been sleeping when I opened the door.

Lisa: chomi please, all I need is five minutes of your time.

Me: you have one minute.

Lisa: I know you're going home today, please ask your dad to give me a lift. I also wanna go home but I don't have money. Please Cass i-

Me: your minute is up.

I slightly pushed her aside and walked to my dad's car, this girl had the liver to follow me. I opened the car, greeted dad while I packed my bags, he saw her and greeted her.

Dad: ugoduka nini wena Lisa? (Lisa, when are you going home?)

Really? She quickly went over to his side and answered him.

Lisa: bendibawela tata ugoduka nangoku qha andikabina mali yohamba. (I would have loved to go home even now but I don't have money yet)

Dad: ziphi iimpahla zakho uzokhwela apha? (You can ride with us, where are your clothes)

Me: uhlala kude u Lisa tata (Lisa lives at a distance) and its getting late.

Dad: hay kaloku asizokwazi umshiya efuna ugoduka. (But we can't leave her, she wants to go home)

Me: awuzoy'fakelwa imali kokwenu Lisakhanya? (won't they send you money from home?)

She totally ignored me and just looked at my dad.

The nerve!

Lisa: ndingabaleka tata ndiyozithatha, I live just up the road. (I could run now and fetch theme)

Dad: khwela mntanam. (Get in my child)

I was already in the front passenger seat, she directed him to the residence she was living in, then she got off and went to fetch her clothes while we waited on the parking area. My dad looked at me, I looked at my phone.

Dad: kwenzeka ntoni kuni? (What's going on between you two)

Me: we're no longer friends tata.

Dad: what happened?

Me: long story, it's been a full year now.

Dad: but what was she doing at your place?

Me: I don't know and I don't really care, maybe she wanted a lift home.

Dad: mntanam, musa ukuyilahla intliziyo entle oyiphiweyo ngu Thixo xa ukude kunekhaya lakho.

(My child, don't abandon the beautiful heart God gave you just because you're far away from home)

I kept quiet...I wasn't about to play friends with Lisakhanya tu.

Dad: Nontombi?

Me: tata.

Dad: xolela mntanam. (Forgive)

Me: yhu ha.a tata torho.

Dad: I don't know what happened with you two but I know that you were once good friends, xolela sisi.

I kept quiet...she came out with ALL her bags, dad helped her load in the trunk then she sat with my bags at the back passenger seats. He put on jazz as we drove in peace. We dropped her off first because dad knew where she lived, then went home. Spent a week at home...and I was already missing Nkosinathi but I didn't want to call him.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_18

Two weeks later, I called him.

I couldn't take the silence...it was dreadful, lucky enough he answered immediately...well not him, but at least someone answered.

Simba: Nathi's phone hello?

Me: hello, uhm... Can I please speak to Nkosinathi?

Simba: he's busy sisi, I'll ask him to call you back.

Me: okay thank you.

Then I hung up immediately.

I didn't want to start having to explain who I was and all that...a few hours later, he called me back but my phone was with Onele and she answered it weza nayo kum (she brought it to me) looking excited as she continued with whatsoever they were talking about. I took my phone and went to lock myself in my room, I knew she was gonna ask me to put the phone on speaker so that she hears the entire conversation. I sat on my bed, legs crossed

and looking outside the window

Me: hey.

Nkosinathi: hey, you good?

Me: I'm okay. You?

Nkosinathi: hanging there...kuthwa you called.

Me: yeah, was just checking up on you.

Nkosinathi: oh thank you, otherwise u sure u right though?

Me: yeah I'm cool, I'm at home so I'm alright.

Nkosinathi: oh end of semester kanene, okay. So when can I come and see you?

Me: I thought you couldn't be seen with me or around me?

Nkosinathi: but I miss you.

Me: but you had to wait for me to call you?

He sighed.

Me: whenever it's safe.

Nkosinathi: okay, I'll call once I've landed that side.

Me: were you gonna come this anyway or you'll just be coming down for me?

Nkosinathi: I'll be coming to see you.

Me: am I that important?

Nkosinathi: hee, what kind of question is that? I'll be coming to see you and some friends, but they're at work during the day so I can only see them after four.

Me: alright then, ndizova ngawe ke. (I'll hear from you)

Nkosinathi: your brothers won't mind?

Me: leave them to me.

Nkosinathi: okay then...

We hung up...I was excited to see him.

I don't know why but I really was. I threw my entire body backwards smiling to the ceiling, what if I was really falling for this guy though? He excited me in strange ways. Two days later, he called and said he'll be landing in three hours. I got ready, nothing hectic. Just a bath, got into a knee-length denim dress and white kicks then I took my phone and wallet. As I was about to go out, my brother drove in.

Onele: yhu, nanku bhuti. (here come your brother)

Me: omphi? (Which one?)

Onele: u Ta Steve.

Me: yhini!

She burst into laughter... I was stressed.

Onele: uyaphi kanti wena? (Where are you going?)

Me: I'm just going to town.

Onele: entweni? (For what?) Your other friends are

not back.

Me: so I can't go to town ngenxa yokuba bengekho?
(Because they're not back?)

Onele: ndcela ukukhapha ke? (Can I go with you?)

Me: hay and'funu khats hwa Onele. (No)

I stepped out...hugged my brother and attempted to walk out of the gate but he had grabbed my wrist so tight.

Me: khayeke bhuti. (Please let go)

Steve: uyaphi ndifika? (I've just arrived, where are you going?)

Me: I'm going to town, ndizobuya kwangoku. (I'll be back just now?)

Steve: ndifika? Awunabubele kanene. (I just got here, what happened to your kindness)

Me: ufika ndiphuma nje bhuti, I promise andizohlala.
(You got here while I was already on my way, I

promise I won't be long)

Onele: mbuze bhuti uyaphi, because akafuni noba ndimkhaphe. (Ask her where she's going, because she doesn't want me to go with her)

Me: eshe.

Now my brother looked at me...

Steve: landoda yakho ikuladele ngoku? (Your man has followed you here now)

Me: uyaz'bona ke bhuti?

Steve: hay ndiyabuza? (I'm just asking)

I just walked away as if ndiqumbile (I'm upset), he called after me apologizing but I didn't turn. I just walked to the bus stop so that I could catch a taxi. I waited for this guy for less than 5 minutes, then he appeared, we hugged, my knees went wobbly just by drawing in his scent.

He held my hand very tightly as we walked to his car making small talk, opened the car for me and we drove out to an eatery near the sea. We ordered sea food and drinks...he was smiling at me all this time.

Me: stop staring.

Nkosinathi: you're glowing, kumnandi ugoduka. (It must be nice being home)

Me: akho ne stress sobiwa sana. (I'm not even stressing of being abducted)

We both laughed...

Me: how's your brother inlaw?

Nkosinathi: he's discharged, u right noko.

Me: and your sister?

Nkosinathi: ba right...they've signed up for counselling. The kids need it more but everyone is okay.

Me: wena?

He smiled...took a sip and just nod.

Nkosinathi: I'm good.

I looked at him, he had a scratch that I hadn't noticed near his left ear. I extended my hand and touched it...

Me: ubutheni apha? (What happened to you here?)

Nkosinathi: bendidlala ne(I was playing with the) boys, nothing hectic.

Me: yho.

Nkosinathi: awumhle man Cassandra (you are so beautiful)...you even carry this light atmosphere around you.

I blushed.

Throughout that meal we subtly “flirted”, well I did he probably was just being himself.

Then he suggested we go watch a movie, and I was up for it. After the movie we grabbed Ice cream...

“Naaaaaathiiiiiiii”

We stopped and turned around to see who was calling him, he laughed when he recognized who she was. She immediately left her friends and came running to him, I stepped aside and watched them tighten the embrace. I think at some point I might have had a glimpse of jealousy, especially when she kissed him on the lips, he didn't look like he was expecting it. They had a conversation for a few minutes before she recognized my presence.

Kim: oh, hi.

Me: hi.

Then she looked at him.

Nathi: Kim meet Cass andra, Cass andra..Kim.

Kim: nice to meet you.

She opened her arms...we semi-hugged.

Kim: mh, you smell good sana girl.

Me: you too..Bright Crystal?

Kim: yes! Oh my God, inqabile ke lo perfume I'm shocked you know it.

Nkosinathi: what brand is that?

Kim and I: Versace.

He nod...

Kim: how long did you say you're staying?

Nkosinathi: I'm depending on your brother, why do you ask?

Kim: I'm with my friends right now, am I seeing you later?

Nkosinathi: most definitely.

Kim: alright then, bye now.

She kissed his cheek and ran to her friends. There was an awkward moment between the two of us after Kim left...I cleared my throat and walked on. He walked right next to me and held my hand, don't know why he felt that was necessary but I wasn't complaining. We got inside his car and he drove for a while in silence.

Nkosinathi: you're suddenly too quiet.

Me: nawe nje. (you too)

Nkosinathi: is it because of Kim?

Me: huh?

Nkosinathi: she's a huggy person, those hugs and kisses mean nothing.

Me: why are you explaining that to me kengoku?

Nkosinathi: because I feel like that's where this awkwardness began.

Me: hay bro, umdala (you're old). You can be hugging and kissing whosoever you want, it's none of my business.

Wathula (He kept quiet)...we drove around until I got called from home then I asked him to take me home. We drove to my house in still in silence, two blocks away I asked to get off, he wasn't having it.

Nkosinathi: is this your home?

Me: no but I'll be okay here.

Nkosinathi: I wanna drop you off at home
Cassandra.

Me: akho (There's no) need bra, I'll just take a walk up the street sendifikile. (I'm already close)

Nkosinathi: kutheni ungafuni ndibone kokwenu nje? (Why don't you want me to see your home?)

Me: ubhuti ukhona ekhaya (My brother is home), I don't want to be answering questions.

Nkosinathi: am I that embarrassing?

I sighed and lay back on the chair...yazi I could tell yonke le tension iqalele pha kula Kim.

Me: this is so unnecessary yazi.

Nkosinathi: exactly, now please, let me drop you off kokwenu. (At your home)

I sighed again, decided to just direct him straight to my house ndayibona ngoko eka bhuti indaba. When we stopped at the front yard my brother's car wasn't there, it actually looked like there was nobody home.

Nkosinathi: but ingathi akukho bantu apha nje. (It looks like there's nobody home)

Me: lento ndiyibonayo...(Exactly)

I dialed Onele...

Onele: hay sikus hiyile ke thina bekukudala ngoko. (We've left you, you took your time)

Me: eshe, niyephi? (where have you guys gone to?)

Onele: ubhuti has taken us out for dinner, but sisaqale e airport siyokhaw'lela umama. (We're going out for dinner, but first we're picking mom up at the airport)

Me: oh, nindiphathele ukutya ke coz ndilapha endlini. (Please bring me food, I'm home)

Onele: sure.

I dropped the phone...

Nkosinathi: akhobantu nyhani? (There's really nobody?)

Me: yeah.

He started the car again waqhuba (and drove)

Me: haibo!

Nkosinathi: andizokushiya wedwa apha. (I'm not gonna leave you here all alone)

Me: ekhaya? Hay ayikho kelento uyenzayo. (At my own home?)

He stopped the car and looked at me. Gosh, his eyes.

Nkosinathi: okay fine, hlika ke uyohlala wedwa kokwenu. (You can get off the car and be home

alone)

I hesitated.

Nkosinathi: thought as much.

He started the ignition again.

I smiled as I looked out the window, I suddenly wanted to be in his company for longer, my day with him really got ruined ngula Kim. She put me off.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_19

We drove around and eventually went to eat again, haha guy was feeding me and I was enjoying being fed by the guy. He was indeed a great company to be around. He made me happy. We were having ribs and salads, he had just one glass of whiskey next to him..it was waaaaaaaay past four.

Me: did you tell your friends that you'll be running late?

Nkosinathi: I texted the most important.

Me: Kim's brother?

Nkosinathi: yeah.

Me: mh.

He stopped eating...

Nkosinathi: don't you want to meet them?

Me: hay!

Nkosinathi: and that exclamation?

Me: it's no-

His phone rang, it was nearer to me and I saw Kim's name on the screen. He answered...I got up and went to the bathroom. After closing the door of that cubicle I lectured myself for a full minute, why was I suddenly feeling jealous now? He wasn't my boyfriend and whoever he decided to kiss wasn't

my concern. Why was I catching feelings all of a sudden? Luckily I had my phone with me, I wanted to call oo Onele to come fetch me I was definitely failing myself here...Aphiwe called me ndisahleli kula toilet seat.

Me: mtshana!

Aphiwe: oh haike, unjani? Uphi kutheni kune echo?
(how are you? Where are you, why is there an echo?)

Me: ndise bathroom. What's up?

Aphiwe: was just checking up on you.

Me: oh-kay. Why?

Aphiwe: because I missed you.

Me: hay Aphiwe.

He burst into laughter...I know my family, like, I know them.

Aphiwe: I wanna come visit you in PE noba yi weekend ey'1.

Me: yhu...why?

Aphiwe: come on makazi.

Me: ungathi makazi uyandicenga nyhani. Yhu u Aphiwe. (when you call me your aunt I know you're really begging)

Aphiwe: hay phuma e toilet uthetha kakubi yile echo. (please get out of the toilet, the echo is making bad sounds)

Me: hay suka andifuni visitors mna kwam. (I don't want visitors at my place)

Aphiwe: ayondlu yakho leya, ufuna ndicele ku makhulu andicengele ku landlord wakho? (that's not your house, do you want me to ask granny to speak to your landlord and ask permission?)

Me: uyi rubbish uyeva? (you're rubbish, you know that?)

Aphiwe: I guess we have a deal then, favorite aunt.

We laughed as I hung up on him, tchini. I walked out still laughing at this weirdo, well I was just smiling when I reached the table. Nkosinathi was still on the phone, yhu haike . I sat down and he spoke for a few minutes then hung up.

Nkosinathi: where did you disappear to?

Me: bathroom. What did I miss?

Nkosinathi: nothing much, but your food must be cold.

Me: it's fine.

I attended to my meal...

Nkosinathi: and that smile?

I looked up, like, I was still giggly because of Aphiwe and I couldn't hide it.

Me: what smile?

Nkosinathi: that one, right there.

Me: hay man...I was just speaking to my nephew on the phone.

Nkosinathi: mh.

He said that “mh” with a little chuckle but I ignored him. We continued eating, he settled the bill then we walked to the parking lot...

Nkosinathi: so where does your girlfriend live?

Me: girlfriend?

Nkosinathi: yeah, the one who answered your phone.

Holy flip † ♀ kanene I'm a lesbain who has a girlfriend somewhere in Southern Africa. I quickly thought of an answer...Even though I was caught off guard by then question.

Me: oh, she lives in Joburg.

Nkosinathi: when do I get to meet her?

Me: when I finally meet your girlfriend then I will think about it.

Nkosinathi: you still gonna think about it?

Me: ewe. I'm gonna think about it.

We reached his car..for some reason we just stood by against it, without even thinking about it, I felt his hand on my chin, then his lips on my lips. I closed my eyes and tried not to overthink what was happening, a part of me wanted to push him back, but another greedy part of me wanted to kiss him deeper than the kiss itself. He must have felt my body relaxing at his magical touch, that he furthermore kissed me, parting my lips with his, sucking my bottom lip. We breathed the same air...I could taste the whiskey he was drinking while we were eating, then he stopped but didn't move an

inch.

Nkosinathi: I want to be more than a friend to you.

Me: it's the whiskey talking.

Nkosinathi: I'm not drunk.

Me: Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra, ndifuna wena.

Ndiyakuthanda ...I came all this way because I wanted to be closer to you. I wanted to spend time with you.

I didn't know what to say...more than anything he smelt HEAVENLY oh my good Lord he smelt so good my knees were weakening!

Nkosinathi: I know you said you're a lesbian and I don't have a problem with that but...ndiyakuthanda and I just don't know what to do with myself when it comes to you.

Me: have you tried controlling yourself?

Nkosinathi: what I'm doing right now is the best I can ever do.

Me: you call this control?

Nkosinathi: you don't get it.

Me: make me get it then.

He lowered his head and kissed me again, this time around I just let go. I wanted to be kissed njena it was no use trying to deprive myself of what I knew I wanted that very moment, when was the last time a man actually held me? I wasn't about to ruin this moment because of some high school bad breakup. His arms were stronger than they looked. His hands...Somandla † ♀ ! He pinned me against his car and kissed the lights out of my brains... when we finally stopped, he wiped the corner of my lips with his thumb, slicking it down to my chin. My hand was on his chest and the other, on his waist grabbing the fabric of his t-shirt and we just stood there in total silence just listening to his others

breathing. His phone rang but he ignored it, it rang again but he just ignored it.

Me: answer your phone.

Nkosinathi: I don't want to.

Me: iyangxola ke. (it's making a noise)

He reached for it and put it on silent.

Nkosinathi: do you get it now?

Me: maybe...But...

Nkosinathi: but?

Me: you're old enough to be my elder brother, they'd never except our relationship.

Nkosinathi: they?

Me: my family, my siblings.

Nkosinathi: I don't really care about them, I care about you.

Me: I may care about you, but I care a lot about them.

Nkosinathi: I will not push you, but just know that I want to be with you. I love you, and I'd do anything to be with you.

I just nod, then he kissed my forehead ... He opened the passenger door and I got in, he was such a good kisser though, as we drove in silence I still couldn't believe that I've been missing out on such

I unknowingly touched my lips as I went over what just happened, detail on detail.

Nkosinathi: you okay?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: are you okay?

Me: oh yah, I'm good.

I snapped out of that bubble.

Nkosinathi: u sure?

Me: yeah...I actually cannot believe that we just kissed. This changes everything in our friendship.

Nkosinathi: I've always wanted to kiss you, from the first day I saw you but then the opportunity hadn't raised itself yet.

Me: why couldn't we just remain friends?

Nkosinathi: andikwazi ukuba ufuna ntoni, maybe you really want us to be friends...Kodwa ke ndikuxelele mna ukuba ndifuna ntoni.

Me: ingxaki yam I don't understand ufuna ntoni kum bekhona abantu who could easily be in your caliber. Oo Kim kanje.

Nkosinathi: my caliber?

Me: ewe Nkosinathi, iintanga zakho and out there, business minded people.

Nkosinathi: what if I don't want business minded people at all around me?

Me: what happened to eagles flying with the eagles?
And umdala.

Nkosinathi: ndikushiya nge eight years qha
Cassandra, khayiyeke le part ye age.

Me: Ude wayibala? Yho, you have a lot of time in
your hands.

He looked at me and then looked at the road ahead
without even attempting to answer my last remark.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_20

When we got to my front yard, he turned off the
ignition and looked at me not saying a word, I
smiled knowing that he could possibly want me to
apologize for what I said qha wethu I wasn't going
to apologize ngoku yes I was gonna apologize,
xa endifounele later on. Not now.

Me: thank you for today.

Nkosinathi: which part of today?

Me: that's not important, thank you qha.

Nkosinathi: will I see you tomorrow?

Me: aren't you supposed to be spending time with your friends?

Nkosinathi: will I see you tomorrow na?

Me: I don't know, we'll talk.

Nkosinathi: fair enough.

I opened the door...

Me: good night.

Nkosinathi: good night.

I got off his car, closed the door and walked into my father's yard. The minute I closed the gate, he flickered his lights and drove away, I smiled as I realized that he didn't want to hoot, instead he

flickered the lights. Genius.

Judging by the noise everyone was making from the inside one could tell that it's a full house. I knocked and just opened the front door because it wasn't locked, Onele came to check and ran back to the lounge. I followed behind her and went to hug my mother first, sat right next to her and just greeted everyone else who was home...

Mom: awumhle, uvelaphi na wethu? (you're so beautiful, where are you coming from)

Me: I was out nje mama, catching some air.

Mom: thought I'd see you at the airport.

Me: they left me behind.

Onele: we left you behind? Where were you?

Me: I said I was coming, ya'll decided to leave me.

Onele: bhuti?

Steve: sims hiye ebeyephi kqala? Let's first establish

that. (we left her behind? Let's first establish where she was first.)

Me: how was your trip ma?

And just like that, I shifted the conversation away from me. Mother narrated her trip, Onele made tea and we sat around mom listening to her stories. We later sang a hymn, prayed and went to our separate rooms. I wore a onesie and switched off my light as I got under the blankets.

Onele: sew'lele?

Me: go to bed.

Onele: why is your door locked?

Me: because I want to sleep in peace.

Onele: Sandra please let me in.

Me: Onele go to bed.

She went silent for a while... Then I heard her scratching on the door like a kitten or puppy. She wanted to irritate me nyhani kengoku. But I just kept quiet, I had a great day. I wasn't even going to entertain her tactics.

Onele: where did you go? Is he here too? Where did he take you?

Me: good night little sis, I love you.

Onele: come on Sandra.

I just smiled to the darkness that had clothed my room, I waited for him to call ndancama ndalala.

Midnight, I woke up to no message in my phone I went to pee then I swallowed my pride and called him because I realized being upset over him not calling would be childish, he never said he'd call me, it was just my expectation and I couldn't judge him that. He's not a mind reader noko.

His phone rang once and he answered...As if he was expecting the phone to ring.

Nkosinathi: hello?

Me: I hope I didn't wake you up.

Nkosinathi: nah, I'm still up.

I could hear a lot of noise in the background, it didn't seem like they were going to sleep anyway.

Nkosinathi: what's up? Everything okay?

Me: yeah...

Nkosinathi: you sure?

Me: yep, I guess I just missed you that's all.

He went silent on me...I knew he heard me so I wasn't going to repeat myself.

Me: anyway, now that I've heard your voice, let me go back to sleep. Enjoy the rest of your night.

Nkosinathi: wait...

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: can you sneak out?

Me: when?

Nkosinathi: right now, I want to come see you.

Me: you're gonna get me in trouble.

Nkosinathi: please.

I thought hard about this... But I wanted to see him too, this mischievous behavior excited me.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: ndiyenza ke. (I'm on my way)

Now come to think of it, ubhuti ulala kwi flat that's outside at the back so there was no way that I was

going to use the gate at the back. I had to use the small gate the front and hope I don't get seen. I wore my slippers and snuck out, tiptoed to the kitchen because the lounge door would wake everyone up. Line noise efani nje (that door has a weird noise), I slowly closed the door and walked out of the gate taking a few steps away from sight. Sneaking out wasn't a new adventure, almost everyone had done it, difference between my elser sisters and I was that I wasn't going out as in sleep out, difference between my brothers and I was that I wasn't going clubbing, difference between Onele and I was that I wasn't sneaking out to go hang with the badboys. I was just going here to the front gate, get my good night kiss (God willing) and then go back inside. Bonke bona when they snuck out, babuya ngentseni .

His car stopped right in front of me and he turned off the ignition as I got inside, he was now barefoot but wearing shorts and a vest and he was a bit tipsy than usual.

Nkosinathi: unuka kamnandi nas ezinzulwini zobusuku. (you smell good even in the middle of the night)

Me: you're in a happy place.

He chuckled.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry if I'm cramping your style. Am I cramping your style?

Me: how? You're not vomiting on my laps so I'm good.

Nkosinathi: you don't mind this drunk Nkosinathi?

Me: it's been a tough couple of weeks, and you've been dealing with a lot of things, I'm sure you also need to unwind a bit.

Nkosinathi: oh wow. I didn't expect that.

Me: why?

Nkosinathi: I just didn't.

He took a sip of his tonic water...was he insinuating that I'm a snob?

Nkosinathi: uthini ubhuti wakho? (what did your brother say?)

Me: he suspected that you're here, that I went out with you.

Nkosinathi: he knows all the tricks in the book.

Me: yeah well, he's not as innocent...Did you at least tell one of your friends where you're going?

Nkosinathi: yeah of course, I left one of them at the garage. I'll pick him up just now.

Me: mmh.

He picked up my hand and kissed the back of it, looking deep into my eyes.

Nkosinathi: I love you. You do not know the torture of not seeing you when I want to see you, I wish there was a way where I could open my heart uyibone yonke lento ndiyithethayo.

Ndathula...

Nkosinathi: baninzi abantwana abandifunayo kula braai, qha zits homi zika Kim and kengoku zindwebe zifana naye. Can't deal.

I burst into laughter that can't deal sealed it.

Nkosinathi: Suhleka...those girls saw a jackpot when they saw me, and Kim probably told them about me, Yey oko bendithe nca bafuna iiBreezer, ne Hunters Gold...Amantombi asela ibeer avelaphi?

Me: I wouldn't know, but utywala butywala.

Nkosinathi: hay baby, ungasela yonkinto, not ibeer.
Hay never.

Did he just say baby?

So soon?

What if it don't work out? What if he realizes that it was just infatuation? That he didn't really love me qha he wanted a word for this need of protecting me? What if he rem- I felt his lips on mine and I closed my eyes immediately. He must have been drinking whiskey again, that's all I could taste in his mouth.

He grabbed my waist and pulled me closer to him as the kiss deepens, after a few seconds I moved from the car seat and sat on his lap with my legs spread across his body. His hands immediately went for my thighs while my hands went for his chest, it was broad and strong, masculine. He kissed down my neck beck and then back to my lips then he stopped and looked at me...

Nkosinathi: why are you tense?

Me: I'm sorry for what I said earlier.

Nkosinathi: water under the bridge.

Me: u sure?

Nkosinathi: I don't have time for such remarks, I've got bigger Problems, making money and winning your heart is one of them.

I touched his scar on the forehead, I had a feeling he got that scar fighting either directly with Khiro or with Khiro's people but I wasn't going to ask him further, he did say he was playing with the boys mos.

Me: you've worn my heart a long time ago, you just didn't realise that. Or we just were too busy being friends to realize that.

Nkosinathi: nyhani? (Really)

Me: I wouldn't be here if that weren't true.

He leaned forward so our lips touched then he spoke in between them.

Nkosinathi: you've made this trip worthwhile.

Me: I'm glad.

Then we kissed all over again... How I wished it wasn't midnight or if it were, how I wish weren't in front of my house but somewhere safer, maybe a room? But then again, I got my good night kiss.

[06/26, 14:43] : #Cassandra_21

After a few more minutes in each other's arms... I tried to get off him but he held my waist so I supported my back against the steering wheel. We sat in silence, him pecking my lips every once in a while.

Nkosinathi: you make me happy yazi baby.

Me: lomzuzu?

Nkosinathi: haven't you noticed that I really enjoy spending time with you, talking to you?

I just smiled at him...

Me: I should go back inside before someone wakes up and notices the kitchen door isn't locked.

Nkosinathi: so soon?

Me: haike.

Nkosinathi: I thought we'd share this.

He gave me a paperbag with a box of cake... I was still smiling † ♀

Me: enkosi... But you should also get going, you're drunk meaning you shouldn't be driving and your

friend is waiting for you at the garage.

Nkosinathi: okay baby ndiyahamba ke.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: call you tomorrow?

Me: yes, now goodnight.

Nkosinathi: akho nalo goodnight kiss kengoku?

I kissed him, he kissed me back and then as I pulled back, he pecked my lips.

Nkosinathi: night.

I returned back to my house and tiptoed myself back to my room with a glass of juice, I ate my cake in my room alone. Onele did say she's got a boyfriend so he must buy cake for her.

In the morning, I woke up first and made tea and

oats for mom because I wanted to talk to her while the others were still sleeping. Once she was halfway with her porridge I cleared my throat...

Mom: spit it out.

I almost jumped out of the bed.

She waited...

Me: promise me you won't shout.

Mom: promise I won't shout at what? Why?

Me: mama!

Mom: Cassandra Thixunathi!

Me: oh mama.

Mom: don't start with me so early in the morning.

Me: mama just promise me you won't shout kgala.

Mom: are you pregnant?

Me: what? No mama.

Mom: then what?

Me: promise?

Mom: okay, I promise.

I took a deep breath.

Me: I might have a boyfriend.

Mom: you might?

Me: yes might. Uyandithanda (he loves me) and I think I love him too.

Mom: but?

Me: he's eight years older than me.

Mom: yintanga ka Sindiswa? (Cindy)

Me: you could say.

Mom: Haibo mntanam, what happened to boys your age? Oo Sinethemba kanje.

Me: I don't know...I guess...hay I don't know.

She kept quiet for a second...

Mom: well u sis 'wakho married intanga yakhe, yamjolela, yamithisa ngaphandle not once but two times. She's now a divorcee...Ayina formula into yothando girl.

I didn't know what to say... That situation that sis Asanda was in, still killed me inside.

Mom: your dad and I are 13 years apart, but then, we were the generation that was forced to marry. I was forced to marry him.

Me: we're not talking about marriage ne mama? I said I might have a boyfriend.

Mom: anyone who loves you will want to eventually marry you even if it's not now, but eventually they should.

Me: okay.

Mom: you don't sound too sure about him though.

Me: I'm telling you about him though.

Mom: it seems like you're telling me because you want affirmation not because you're sure about him or his love for you.

Okay...That's the thing when having conversations with older people, they read beyond what you're telling them.

Mom: Cassandra?

Me: mama?

Mom: what's going on? Do you really love him or he's just a college fling?

Me: I think that's what I'm trying to establish, but I like being around him. I enjoy his company a lot.

Mom: and?

Me: and, he thinks I'm a lesbian. Well that's what he was made to believe.

Mom: by whom?

I narrated what happened in Magaliesburg to her, she couldn't stop laughing. At first I was embarrassed but then I saw how chilled she was about this whole thing...

Mom: whatever you do, just do your dad and I this little favor?

Me: okay?

Mom: don't fall pregnant. We still want you to graduate and find a fulfilling job, umntana is not the end of the world but uyabumis a ubom one way or the other.

Me: I promise I won't disappoint you.

Mom: and don't let him distract you from your books, no matter how charming he is. He must respect that you're only a student.

I smiled...I wanted to tell her how great he's been for all this time that I've known him but then, I'd be cornering myself if I did so. So, I shut up. Onele walked in and jumped in bed next to mom, I got up to return the cups and bowls to the kitchen.

Onele: I wasnt chasing you away, nam ndifuna iindaba. (I also want the news)

Mom: what news?

Me: please ask again.

I took the trays to the kitchen and went to sit in the sun, my brother came out and joined me.

Steve: liyagulis a ke ilanga. (you shouldn't be sitting in the sun, you'll get sick)

Me: uzand'thengela amayeza nje. (you're going to buy me meds)

Steve: Tyhini!

I laughed at him we made some lousy conversation then he spoke up looking straight into my eyes.

Steve: I saw you last night sneaking out.

I swallowed hard. I couldn't even lie myself out of this one.

Steve: is he really serious about you or he just wanna smash and pass?

Me: uhm...

Steve: you don't know?

Me: he seems serious, but one can never be too sure these days.

Steve: that's why I have to meet him.

Me: Yho bhuti.

Steve: Sandra, your safety is most important to all of us. If this guy was able to follow you from PE then definitely this is something to be looked at. He either might be serious about you or he's a stalker.

I kept quiet...

Steve: I just want to know his intentions ngawe, that's all.

Me: I understand that, but the relationship is still new. I don't want ya'll to scare him off.

Steve: ku right ngoku ise new so that ya'll don't waste each other's time.

Me: can I think about this? Please.

Steve: mkay.

Then he took his shirt and went inside... How did he see me? I was soooooo cautious nje † ♀ .
Anyway, Nkosinathi later that day called and said

he's coming as he had promised , asked what he should bring. I was obviously with Onele, mom and big bro were out shopping so I asked her ufuna ntoni and she said inyama noba injani. He came with braaied meat and drinks... When he declined ukutya nathi I gave them to her and went on a ride with him.

Me: my brother saw me last night.

Nkosinathi: Shucks!

Me: you can say that again, but he's not mad. He just wants to meet up with you.

Nkosinathi: and know my intentions ngawe?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: I see no problem there.

Me: isn't it a bit too soon though?

Nkosinathi: not if I do have intentions . Set it up, I'll be there.

Haike aphela emqaleni.

Nkosinathi: you were hoping I'd shy away?

Me: don't you think we're moving too fast?

Nkosinathi: I think we're moving at the right pace, he probably just wants to see if I'm not taking chances with you. Which I'm not.

I exhaled...

He stole a look at me while driving...

Nkosinathi: woyika ntoni?

Me: what if they roast you so bad? My family can be brutal.

Nkosinathi: I don't care.

Me: Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: Haibo baby, I'm a grown man. Relax, I can handle your siblings.

Me: okay... If that's what you want then, so be it.

We went to buy ice cream at Wimpy then just chilled in his car... He told me his business stories, gave me a clue on his family and his own personal life goals. He definitely was the man I'd want to spend my life with, but I still felt I needed to know more about him even though I was a little afraid to ask questions directly. Out of nowhere I felt a kiss on my cheek, I looked at him and he was smiling

Me: and that smile?

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda.

My heart melted, he had a way of saying that word that would make all my bones weaken immediately, now I suddenly didn't know what to say in response. He knows I love him too, last night must have been a great experience for him as well. We both finally expressed our desire towards each other.

Nkosinathi: and I want you to know that I'd do anything to see you happy, even if that means taking all the jabs from your brothers, I'd do it. Because I love you.

Me: enkosi... I appreciate you saying that.

Nkosinathi: last night was magical, I still cannot believe what happened, but every time I close my eyes I hear your voice and your exact words.

I blushed... At least we felt the same way about each other. I wasn't the stupid moron who fell in love with a man who didn't love her.

Nkosinathi: and of course, your scent.

I burst out laughing he always compliments my perfume, it's one thing that I know he really likes kum. The scent.

Nkosinathi: baby unuka kamnandi Yho, xa ibikhwele wena imoto yam inuka wena iveki yonke.

Me: Yho, is ezakubethisa mos.

Nkosinathi: izandis indis a ezintweni, umntu uzongena eve ukuba ndinomntu.

I laughed at him...

Me: what did Kim's friends say?

Nkosinathi: nothing, but Kim gave me a lecture this morning on how I illtreated her friends.

Me: Yho.

Nkosinathi: she'll survive, they'll survive. Her brother got engaged last night.

Me: longterm girlfriend?

Nkosinathi: yes, mother of his son. They've been together for eight years now.

Me: yhu, what took him so long to pop the question?

Nkosinathi: I don't know... I believe when you've met the right person in life, and you want him or her to be part of your life, you want to build together...

Marry her and grow together. Eight years is just a waste of time.

Me: yhu, uyakwazi unyamezela no girl. (the girl must be a very patient person)

Nkosinathi: she's very humble though, that's what I love about her. He's more out there, then she's more calm... Their relationship always had that balance.

I admired how he spoke so confidently about them, he must be good friends with Kim's brother. Onele called sisancokola...

Me: little one?

Onele: hey, Lisa is here to see you.

Me: what does she want?

Onele: I don't know.

Me: ask her.

Onele: uyaz'bona ke Sandra?

I waited, she spoke to her but I couldn't make out the sounds.

Onele: she says she just wanted to have a word.

Me: tell her andikho and you don't know when I'll be back.

Onele: oh... Okay.

Me: sharp.

I hung up...

Nkosinathi: and that?

Me: hm, don't ask.

I lay my head on the headrest and finished off my ice-cream.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_22

He eventually took me home, satya inyama nomtaka mama. I returned back to school after a few days, when I got back I heard arrived to news that my landlord had passed away. Nothing clicked when we got the news, I mean, people die every day so why would this be in connection to anything? Two weeks later we prepared to attend her funeral... it is when we heard the cause of death that I started to be curious because there was no cause of death. She was found dead, they took blood tests and autopsy but still, nothing discriminating was found in her blood. I went back to my room only to find Lisa again at my gate.

Me: hay Lisakhanya what is this? What do you want from me?

Lisa: they are looking for you, they killed your landlord because they want to get closer to you.

Me: who's they?

Lisa: oo ta Khiro.

Me: and you're here telling me because?

Lisa: we used to be friends Cassandra, I can't just watch while they plan your own death.

Me: go to the police ke, because there's nothing I can do.

Lisa: Cassandra uyandiva phofu? (Do you hear what I'm saying?)

Me: loud and clear, and I'm telling you to go report them at the police station because if you don't, and I die, my blood will be in your hands.

I opened the gate and closed it while she was standing there...she never cared when she and her friends sold us out, to this day we never heard what really happened to Sisipho or the conclusion of it. Why would I now fret and quiver because she

decided to be friendly all over again? Tyhini!

Once I got inside I called Nkosinathi...I was scared but I wasn't going to show Lisakhanya, what if they sent him?

Nathi: baby?

Me: are you by any chance in PE?

Nkosinathi: uhm, no but I'll be in PE in two days.

Me: okay, we'll talk then ke.

Nkosinathi: you sound anxious, what's going on?

Me: Lisa was here...uthi oo Ta Khiro are the ones who killed my landlord kuba befuna ukuba (just so they can be) closer to me, apparently my life is in danger.

Nkosinathi: tell her to go report them at the cops.

Me: I did.

Nkosinathi: okay, uhm...do you have a class

tomorrow?

Me: yes, whole day and I'll be spending the rest of the afternoon at the library. I don't have a class the following day though.

Nkosinathi: do you want me to organize a person who can transport you? Just so you feel safer?

Me: It's okay that won't be necessary, I just wanted someone else to know. Just in case anything happens.

Nkosinathi: I'll be at ease knowing that you're well taken off.

I kept quiet...

I didn't want to put another person's life in danger again, I was hurt enough by unknowingly endangering his family.

Nkosinathi: babe?

Me: uhm, I just don't want to put anyone in danger.

Nkosinathi: I'm sure whoever I find to transport you will know how to protect himself, you don't have to worry about that.

Me: okay ke. Thank you.

Nkosinathi: I love you, and your safety is important to me.

Me: I appreciate that, I appreciate you.

Nkosinathi: sharp ke, I'll give him your number to call you in the morning when he's ready to fetch you.

Me: okay, thanks.

Nkosinathi: sho.

We hung up.

I made tuna and mayo sandwich and got busy with my work, called my dad and then went to bed. I had such a boring life yazi...no friends, no roommate, nothing. In the morning I woke up to mom's message that she'll be coming over in the next few days so that we can look for another place for me to stay as this one was no longer safe for me, well

they were told of the incident as our parents and guardians. Yippee.

Just as I was about to make cereal, my phone vibrated: “good morning, I’m outside” well, it must have been my driver so I just grabbed a banana and locked ndahamba. Got in the car, greeted him then he drove me straight to school, dropped me off and left.

Later that afternoon, I texted him the time to fetch me at the library then I went about my business... interestingly, I bumped onto some nosy girls who were talking about Qaqamba and when they saw me coming they stopped talking. I walked right past them, they followed me...

Sihle: Cassandra, right?

Me: right, how can I help you Sihle?

She looked at her friend.

Sihle: oh you know me?

Me: who doesn't know you Sihle? Pastor's daughter.

Sihle: oh wow.

Me: how can I help you?

Sihle: did you hear that Qaqamba has been arrested?

Me: no I didn't and I don't care.

Sihle: I thought you two were friends...though in the past year I haven't seen yall together at all.

Me: you thought wrong, now can I get to my work?

Sihle: yeah sure...but uhm, apparently they are coming for all her friends, including Lisa.

Me: good for them.

The second girl looked at me and shook her head, Sihle just smiled and dismissed herself. But I didn't care nyhani. I sat down and got busy with my work, when I was done. I texted "my driver" and he was

there in less than 5 minutes. He took me home and returned to wherever he lived. Once in my room, my phone rang. Unknown number...I took a deep breath in.

Me: hello?

Que: Cass, unjani?

Me: who am I speaking to?

Que: it's me, Que.

Me: Qaqamba, what can I do for you?

Que: I've been arrested, and I need your help.

Me: are you sure you're talking to the right person?

Que: you can be my witness Cassandra, please.

Me: witness to what?

Que: they say I had a hand in Sisipho's disappearance. And other girls, and I didn't.

Me: you basically want me to lie on your behalf?

Que: Cassandra please.

Me: Qaqamba, do you know that I would have also disappeared that night? We tried making contact with you guys, but you never responded, we tried everything there was to try but what did you do? Nothing. So no, I will not lie for you. Call your man to save you, call your friend Lisa to save your ass.

She started sobbing.

Que: Lisa's number no longer exists.

Me: serves you right.

Que: Cassandra ndiyakucela torho (I am begging you)

Me: ambocela indodakho le benibhatakwa ngemizimba yethu kunye. (Go beg your man, same man you were eating the money we were bought with, with)

Que: Cass...(Then she totally broke down)

I hung up...

As I prepared to get in bed, Nkosinathi called just to ask how my day was and what I was going to do the following day.

Me: I'll be in doors.

Nkosinathi: the whole day?

Me: yeah.

Nkosinathi: I'll be there in the afternoon, please be ready I'm taking you out.

Me: I don't feel like going out yazi.

Nkosinathi: you cannot let these people control your life, you're supposed to be enjoying your varsity life, going out and having fun. Not locking yourself indoors.

Me: my life is more precious than fun, thank you very much.

Nkosinathi: baby.

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: please be ready when I get there.

I kept quiet...

Nkosinathi: nothing will happen to you ndikhona.

Me: I know.

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda, uyayazi lonto neh? (You know that I love you, right?)

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: alright then, good night.

Me: night, be safe.

Nkosinathi: will do.

We hung up...I was still afraid of saying “I love you too” and he didn’t even push for it. My feelings for him were becoming stronger and stronger each day, but I didn’t know how to handle them, I didn’t know how to express them. At the back of my mind I

could still hear my mother's words: "don't allow him to distract you from your books" and he wasn't distracting me because he never called during class hours or when I tell him I'm the library. He only calls at night, and visits me when I have no classes, so he wasn't distracting me. BUT, I was distracting myself because I couldn't help but think of him all the time...his scent was all I could smell even at that moment, I could get drunk from it.

Me: Cassandra, you need to get yourself together.
Fast!

I lay on that bed looking at the ceiling thinking, how did I get here? How did I fall so hard for this guy? Like, I love him. There was no other explanation other than that ndiyamthanda u Nkosinathi and just admitting that to myself sent goosebumps up my spine...which made me wonder what ever happened to Sinethemba? That's one guy who made me feel like I was the only girl in the universe.

What if he is Ta Khiro? Or his protégé?

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_23

The following day I woke up to clean my room, when I opened the door, there was an envelope and a box on the stoep. Sometimes our mail would be delivered like that so nothing clicked, I picked up the box and went inside, opened it and saw shoes.

Okay, so I thought maybe Nkosinathi bought and delivered them as a surprise for our lunch. They were beautiful nude stilettos, and they were my size. I wanted to fit them into my feet but there was this urge to open the envelope first...then Nkosinathi called, so I thought, he just wanted to find out if I got his package.

Me: hello?

Nkosinathi: you're up already?

Me: yeah, I have to clean the room before you get here.

Nkosinathi: mmh, you sound better than last night.

Me: yeah, uhm, did you deliver something to my doorstep?

Nkosinathi: no.

Me: are you sure?

Nkosinathi: yeah, you got a delivery?

Me: yeah, a box of shoes.

Nkosinathi: delivery note?

Me: I haven't read it...I kind of assumed it's from you.

Nkosinathi: please read it out loud

I opened the envelope...and my heart sank.

Me: it's from him.

Nkosinathi: who is him?

Me: Ta Khiro, he sent these shoes.

Nkosinathi: what does the letter say?

Me: I saw these while I was out catching a breather and I thought they'd look good on you, I hope it's the right size. Maybe one day when we get to actually go on that date that you owe me you can wear them.
Your Love, K.

Nkosinathi: wow, the guy is really smitten.

Me: this isn't amusing.

Nkosinathi: do you like the shoes?

Me: not anymore. I'm gonna give them away.

He burst out laughing, my heart was shattered, they were beautiful shoes I won't lie but I wasn't about to wear anything bought by Khiro. What if Lisa was right, Khiro wants me dead and his plan was to buy the shoes, I wear them and get swollen feet and die from that or something?

Nkosinathi: okay, we'll talk when I get there.

Me: what time will you be here?

Nkosinathi: not sure yet as to what time I'll be at your place but I'll be in PE after two.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: sharp.

Me: sho.

I hung up.

I was upset yazi, the shoes were beautiful.

I went on Facebook and looked for Lisa's number since I had deleted everything of hers in my phone..found it and called her, if I'm gonna give away these shoes then she must take them. Rather her than any random kid, just in case there's a tracker in them then she must be tracked, she must be in danger, not just any innocent kid.

Lisa: Cass, yho.

Me: ukhona? (Are you home?)

Lisa: yeah, why?

Me: I'm coming over.

Lisa: wena? Uza kwam? (You? You're coming over?)

Me: yes, is there a problem?

Lisa: no no, not at all.

Me: sho.

I hung up...put the shoe in its box, not the delivery box then I walked up the street to her place, she was outside doing her laundry, I greeted and sat down on the chair opposite to where she sat. now I had to play it smart, Lisa may be naïve but she's definitely not stupid.

Lisa: so what brings you here? I mean, don't get me wrong, you're welcome but I know how you feel about me.

Me: I came to give you this.

She took the box and I saw her eyes popping at the sight.

Lisa: wow. Why? It's your size so why would you give them to me?

Me: I don't like them, and it would be rude of me to return them to the buyer.

Lisa: oh, somebody bought them for you?

Me: yeah..and last time I checked we were the same shoe size.

She looked at the shoe and kept quiet...

Me: ukuba awusithandi (if you don't like the shoe) it's okay, I'll look for someone else.

Lisa: no, I like it. It's just weird, I mean. We don't talk anymore.

Me: kaloku you allowed Qaqamba to get between us but I'm not here for that. I just came to give you the shoe, that's all.

Lisa: enkosi (thank you).

Me: sharp...bye.

Lisa: sharp.

I walked back to my place...hay u Khiro will see what to do mntaka bawo. When I got to my room I finished up what I was busy with and bathed, made food for myself while still wrapped in a winter gown then I waited for the guy to call athi uyeza nyhani (and say he's really coming over) so I must get ready.

Instead of Nkosinathi calling, my sisters called and said they were coming over later on that evening.

Me: niyaphi guys?

Cindy: we're having a sleepover at your place.

Asanda: why do you sound like you don't want us to come over?

Me: I'm renting a one room, remember?

Asanda: and your strict landlord died, so we're coming.

Me: okay fine, what time will you be here?

Cindy: past six'ish.

Me: mh, okay. I'll leave the key e next door just in case I'm not here when you get here.

Cindy: uyaphi? (Where are you going to?)

Me: I have a date.

Cindy: with that guy?

Me: yes, with that guy.

Cindy: have you told him you're not a lesbian?

Me: nope, and now that ya'll are coming, I won't tell him. I'll just introduce you guys, he must meet my girlfriend.

She burst out laughing, I hung up. Bayaphi?

I started getting dressed, I wore a mustard above the knee corduroy dress with white Allstars, my phone and wallet in my mini-backbag then I went to leave my spare key e next door for my sisters. I heard a hooter outside just as I was cleaning up, I didn't give it any attention because he never hoots. He calls or texts. He hooted again, so I went to the window and saw his car, grabbed my bag, locked the house and went out. He was playing reggae, softly...I put my bag at the back passenger seat and buckled up the seat belt. All this time he's just looking at me, with a smile of course and I'm right there blushing like an idiot.

Nkosinathi: I don't think I'll ever get used to your scent, lemoto izonuka wena iveki yonke (this car is gonna have your scent the whole week) if I don't take it to the car wash.

I just laughed at him, why was he making me blush?

Me: u right?

Nkosinathi: mmh.mh, wena?

I nod...

I sooooo badly wanted to throw my arms around his neck and smother him with kisses but then * sigh * I didn't wanna sell myself short here.

We didn't say much, until we reached the restaurant that he was taking me, we got out of the car, walked besides one another as we were led to our table. He opened my chair and sat down...

Waiter: do you want anything to drink while going through the menu?

Nkosinathi: Old-Fashioned please.

Me: Last Word please.

Waiter: coming right up.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi looked at me surprised, I smiled and looked at the menu as the waiter left us. We both ordered alcoholic beverages, so what?

Nkosinathi: you drink?

Me: there's just a bit of gin in there, don't look distressed.

Nkosinathi: so that's a yes.

Me: yes I drink.

Nkosinathi: I'd have never guessed.

Me: but I was kidnapped coming from the club, remember?

Nkosinathi: other people go to the club to dance only.

Me: unfortunately I'm not other people...so what are you eating?

Hay kaloku we were not going to focus on me, our drinks came and we placed our orders for the food. I wasn't surprised when he ordered steak, ribs and a salad. I've noticed that he appreciates his meat very much. I ordered Greek salad and Chicken Sofrito.

Me: you're back for good?

Nkosinathi: only for a few weeks... I actually should be in Canada right now but I postponed.

Me: Canada? Doing what?

Nkosinathi: business enlargement.

Me: and you postponed? Why?

Nkosinathi: I don't have enough funds to cover everything, so I'll go in December.

Me: but will the opportunity still be standing?

Nkosinathi: I hope so, ndithethile nabo (I've spoken to them) before postponing and they agreed.

Me: ooh okay.

I ate the meal first, salad later.

Nkosinathi: I missed you.

I looked up, he was looking at me with his glass in one hand.

Nkosinathi: I want to spend more time with you yazi Cassandra, get to know you even more.

Me: we've been friends since last year, what don't you know about me ngoku?

Nkosinathi: what do you like, what don't you like, do you want to get married one day, how many kids do you want, your dreams, everything. I want to know everything.

I sighed and told him everything that I thought he should know, based on the outline he gave me.

Nkosinathi: so you do want to get married?

Me: yeah I mean, marriage is beautiful but I don't want those extravagant ceremonies, just something intimate.

Nkosinathi: you're very different from most people I've met.

Me: most women you mean?

He nod.

Me: tell me about your last relationship.

Nkosinathi: what do you want to know?

Me: everything.

He took a sip and lay back on his chair, I waited for him to talk. This seemed interesting.

Nkosinathi: we dated for three years and we lived together the third year, I cheated in the first year of the relationship which is why she wanted us to live together eventually.

Me: why did you cheat?

Nkosinathi: I don't know, I guess I wanted to fit in amongst the boys, having more than one girlfriend was fashionable.

Me: Oh-kay.

Nkosinathi: So after she found out that I cheated she forgave me, second year into the relationship she was offered a job in Gauteng which meant she had to leave Cape Town and come up to J o'burg where I was based at the time, that's when we started living together. She fell pregnant and aborted the baby without my knowledge, end of the year she fell pregnant again and aborted the baby again. The second time around she said she was going home for a month, only to find out she was admitted at the hospital because there were complications during the abortion process. Her family came up to see her, I was shocked because... well. Apparently she was pregnant with twins and one of them was not removed during the process so the doctors tried to save the baby, and they did.

Me: where's the baby now?

Nkosinathi: he only lived for three months.

Me: I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: don't be...I got what I deserved. Anyway I wasn't responsible for the second pregnancy, it turned out she was secretly dating her colleague and he was the father.

Me: how did you come up to that conclusion?

Nkosinathi: her sister knew about the relationship so she told us at the hospital, but then I didn't believe her, I mean, I knew my girl. She wouldn't do that, so when the child was eventually taken out from the womb and incubated, I hunted the guy down, we had a man-to-man conversation then we both requested for a paternity test and the favor was on the other guy.

I swallowed hard.

This was painful.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_24

Nkosinathi: I was hurt yes I mean, when someone says they've forgiven you and you actually change your ways you do think that they've really accepted your apology, but then, I hurt her first by cheating on her so I guess karma took its toll. I also forgave her, but we decided to go separate ways, it wouldn't have been a healthy relationship after that.

Me: and that was when?

Nkosinathi: two years ago.

Me: so since then you haven't been in any relationship?

Nkosinathi: no.

Me: you haven't been with a woman?

Nkosinathi: haha! Haibo baby.

I laughed along with him, yes this was uncomfortable but we had to talk about such things.

Me: this is us getting to know each other njena.

Nkosinathi: okay, okay fair enough. I've been with women yes, but I haven't been in any serious relationship since the one I just spoke about.

Me: so you were having flings for the past two years?

Nkosinathi: yes.

I took a sip...what if nam ndiyi fling? I couldn't stop but think of that.

Me: okay...so where do I stand? Where do we stand? Are we in a relationship or you are still flowing with the fling wave?

Nkosinathi: I'd like to believe we're in a relationship, well I believe we are in a relationship.

Me: why?

Nkosinathi: I love you, and I am now ready to be in a serious relationship, I'm ready to be in a

commitment. I've been to therapy to sort out some issues that I realized I had, and I've taken time out from the game, focused on work and rebuilding myself.

I think he could read my thought but he didn't want to lead me.

Me: well I'm afraid of giving you my all only to find out you were just looking for a fling.

Nkosinathi: are you doubting my commitment to you?

Me: no...no I don't, I guess it's just too much truth for one day.

Nkosinathi: okay ke I hope uphendulekile.

Me: yeah...ndiphendulekile, thank you.

We resumed to the food in front of us. When we were done, he paid then we took a walk on the

beach so we had to leave the shoes in the car and walked barefoot. He held my hand as we walked in silence for about fifteen minutes then when he found a rock he steered the walk towards it so we sat there and just watched the lazy waves.

Nkosinathi: lo Khiro, do you know him?

Me: know him in what way?

Nkosinathi: have you ever seen his face?

Me: no, he was in some dark corner when we were talking in his car, I couldn't even tell which side he sat on.

Nkosinathi: so you wouldn't be able to identify him if he were to be caught?

Me: no...unless he were to speak up. I would most definitely recognize his voice.

Nkosinathi: sometimes people use machines or devices that change voices as well yazi baby.

Me: you mean he could have used some device to change his voice?

Nkosinathi: it's possible, if he hides his face, why would he reveal his voice?

Me: I never thought of that.

Nkosinathi: and sometimes people use devices to represent themselves, it's possible that he wasn't in that car with you, he could have used some device to communicate with you.

Have you ever felt stupid ngento ubucing'ba uyayazi?

I just kept quiet, he took my hand but I didn't even look up at him until he squeezed it.

Me: ouch.

Nkosinathi: relax, akazokwenzanto.

Me: and how do you know?

Nkosinathi: I'll protect you.

Me: how? You're not always around, I won't always be here too. Maybe I should have reported this yaz.

Nkosinathi: you can still tell your family, or your brothers only.

This whole conversation just ruined our “date”, I got up, he followed and we walked back to the car hand in hand but in silence. I got in, he went to the ice cream stall and returned with chocolate ice cream for me and started his car. How did he even know which one I like?

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: so where should we go now?

Me: aren't you taking me back home?

Nkosinathi: it's still early.

Me: my sisters are spending the night, so it's not.

Nkosinathi: did you leave them with the key?

Me: they haven't arrived yet, but I left the key for them.

Nkosinathi: then they'll let themselves in and make

themselves comfortable.

I looked at him, he looked ahead.

Me: you're already calling the shots?

He laughed out loud.

Me: hay uyashesha.

Nkosinathi: today is about us, when I told you I'm taking you out you didn't mention them.

Me: they told me after your call that they're coming over.

Nkosinathi: haike, ezamva zidliwa zizagweba.

I laughed at his dramatic response.

Me: okay, let's go watch movie then. I'm paying.

Nkosinathi: no, today's on me. Everything.

Me: no I want to pay for the movies. Please.

Nkosinathi: where does a schoolkid get money from?

Me: I'm a varsity student, I get money from home.

Nkosinathi: okay okay, don't murder me.

I hit his shoulder, he laughed and drove to Sterkernikor. I paid for our movie and bought our drinks then we went in. two hours later we were done, we went to grab a snack then he drove me home and parked outside the gate.

Nkosinathi: what did you do to the shoes?

Me:gave them to Lisa.

Nkosinathi: you look like you're upset that you gave them away.

Me: they were beautiful shoes, I actually loved them. But the thought of wearing them...yhu.

Nkosinathi: we'll go buy them tomorrow.

Me: no please, I won't be wearing shoes matching to Lisa's shoes.

Nkosinathi: we can buy something similar.

I took a deep breath...well, I wanted those shoes. I wasn't gonna lie about that.

Me: are you sure?

Nkosinathi: yeah, call me when you're free to go then I'll come fetch you.

Me: or you can buy and bring them here.

Nkosinathi: I won't know which shoe to take...even if you were to describe them.

Me: I should have taken a photo yaz.

Nkosinathi: we're going shopping together. I'm actually glad you didn't take that photo.

I smiled...he had this excitement at the end of that sentence which made me excited to go shopping with him.

Me: okay, thank you for today.

Nkosinathi: thank you for being great company.

My phone vibrated..I looked at the scree and my heart jumped. He noticed.

Nkosinathi: it's him, right?

Me: could be.

Nkosinathi: speaker phone.

I put the phone on speaker and answered...

Me: hello?

Ta Khiro: you gave my gift away, I'm hurt.

Me: should I be apologizing?

He took a deep breath.

Ta Khiro: Cassandra why do you enjoy hurting my feelings?

Me: because you kidnapped me! That shit will traumatize me for life.

Ta Khiro: how else can I apologize to you?

Me: leaving me alone would be great, thank you very much.

Ta Khiro: I cannot leave you alone, I love you and you already know that. If I didn't love you like I do I wouldn't have let you go.

Me: well unfortunately I love someone else, but you already know that.

Ta Khiro: Nkosinathi Dakumba will never love you like I love you Cassandra.

Me: are we making comparisons already?

He kept quiet...I looked at Nkosinathi, he wasn't fazed one bit by this.

Ta Khiri: have a great day.

Me: you too.

Then he hung up.

Nkosinathi: he surely did his research about me.

Me: well, that shouldn't be a surprise, before he attached your brother inlaw he must have done the research on you.

Nkosinathi: mh.

Me: sounds like a voice device?

Nkosinathi: I wouldn't put it past him...but I'll trap him and find out. Soon.

Me: you don't seem shaken.

Nkosinathi: argh, I don't get shaken by cowards. He needs to man up and face me if he wants to intimidate me.

Me: yatsho indoda!

Nkosinathi: gqibezela baby, yatsho indoda yam.

I burst into laughter!

Me: exactly that.

Nkosinathi: exactly what?

Me: exactly what you said.

Nkosinathi: I want to hear you say it.

I smiled and looked at him...hey, umntu had beautiful hands kodwa man.

Me: yatsho indoda yam.

Nkosinathi: caba iya blus his a?

Me: aw'na ndoda kaloku wena awuzoyazi.

Nkosinathi: hayini u baby!

I laughed at his exclamation, after a moment. We somehow ended up kissing, my hand found home on his chest while his found home on my waist. But my hand couldn't help taking a tour up his masculine neck and back down to where it had found comfort. A message came through my phone but I ignored it, then my phone rang, I took it out while kissing and checked the screen. It was my sister...

Me: hello sis?

Nkosinathi didn't stop, he kissed down my neck tracing my bowline.

Asanda: hay phuma bekunini ngoko.

Me: huh?

Asanda: get out of the damned car!

Me: eshe. Okay.

I hung up, blushing.

Me: I have to go.

Nkosinathi: shoe shopping tomorrow.

Me: ewe baby.

He smiled and kissed me on the lips, I opened the door, opened the remote gate and closed it. He flickered his lights and drove off.

Me: now I have to face my deputy mothers.

I took a deep breath as I walked up to my room.

This was going to be an interesting night for sure, I mean, I wasn't supposed to tell him that my sisters were home instead I was supposed to introduce

him to my girlfriend who had come for the night. But then, he makes me forget my lines.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_25

Following day we woke up and went to eat breakfast out, spent the day shopping with my sisters then by lunch time they went to the airport. So I called Nkosinathi, he promised me shoes and andizithenganga kule shopping on purpose...

Nkosinathi: Baby, hi?

Me: Hey, unjani?

Nkosinathi: I'm excited, we're going shopping.

Unjani wena?

Me: I'm tired. I'm at Greenacres.

Nkosinathi: hay, I thought I'm fetching you.

Me: hay wethu I'm here already. Uphi wena?

Nkosinathi: I will try to be there in the next 15 minutes.

Me: ukuba ubambekile, don't force it.

Nkosinathi: akhonto inondibamba baby ngexesha lethu.

Me: okay ke.

I hung up and went to buy myself a smoothie, I initially wanted to buy an ice-cream but when I got there I saw chocolate smoothie so in less than that 15 minutes he was there, texted me for exact location. When he got there, we hugged for a minute and kissed then he sat down taking my smoothie

Me: unuka umojjo bra.

Nkosinathi: bendisoja ne gents.

Me: so ndikuphazamisile nyhani. I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: hay abayi ndawo, ndizobuya besephaya.

Me: ooh okay... Masambe ndisibonile isihlangu sam.

He drank up the shake and carried my bags as I led him to the shop where I saw the similar shoe, I showed him the shoe, he didn't even look at the price.

Nkosinathi: thatha kaloku.

Me: did you see the price?

Nkosinathi: it doesn't matter baby, andithi uyasifuna?

Me: ewe baby. Enkosi.

I took the shoe and led him to the counter, the guy at the till looked at me I knew he's looking at me because of the price of the shoe. This guy removed R8 000 cash from his wallet and paid for the shoe, I smiled and walked away with my box of shoe. He caught up with me...

Nkosinathi: sisifumene isihlangu, right?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: ayikho enyinto oyifunayo?

Me: Yho hay, I've already done shopping with my sisters.

Nkosinathi: the question is, ayikho enyinto oyifunayo na?

I laughed...

Me: ha.a baby. Unless you want to buy me something.

Nkosinathi: okay, we're doing my own shopping kengoku.

Me: so this was about you all along?

Nkosinathi: no, this was about your shoe. But I had to slip myself in.

I smiled...and followed him, we went on a shopping spree but then, what was weird were the different sizes that he was picking. I was just there

to obviously advice here and there but he had things under control, he looked in his element. We proceeded to the counter, and now he swiped. We carried the bags to the car, started the ignition and drove off...

Me: can I ask you something?

Nkosinathi: sure.

Me: who are you buying these clothes for?

Obviously awunxibi size six, seven and the others kwinyawo ezinye.

Nkosinathi: I'm buying for my guys.

Me: your guys?

He chuckled.

Nkosinathi: my dad was a truck driver before he retired to being a full time business man, during school holidays he used to take me and my siblings

on some local trips and we'd meet different people in different living situations. That's how I met some of these guys that I bought the clothes for, they are my family. My guys.

Me: oh, where do they live? Are we going there now?

Nkosinathi: if you don't mind.

Me: why would I mind?

Wathula... Drove into Spar and parked.

Nkosinathi: lock yourself in here, I'll be back in a few.

Me: you don't want me to tag along?

Nkosinathi: you'll get tired, I'll be quick.

Me: mmkay.

I locked myself in there and looked at the clothes we just bought, in a few minutes he pulled up with a trolley full of those takeaway meals, loaves of bread,

milk, drinks, cooked meat and four boxes of fruit then we drove in silence. I wasn't going to ask him again. He drove to a place that looked like an old age home or retirement.

Nkosinathi: this a shelter that dad built for some families who were living in the streets when he was still a truck driver. I come here twice a year, my part is to buy clothes for the men, my sisters pamper the women, my dad holds classes for the men once a month, mom hosts skills classes for the women. It's a lot... Infact everyone of us has a duty to play here.

Me: wow... So how many families live here?

Nkosinathi: about sixteen now, that's why we're extending, the place is crowded as it is. Look there...

I followed his finger, they were extending the shelter.

Nkosinathi: want to come in?

I nod.

We carried just the clothing and followed each other in there, one of the kids saw him and came running towards us, he hugged Nkosinathi's leg and went running telling anyone who cared to listen that "Ufikile u bhuti" and then everyone started coming out of their rooms with huge smiles, I smiled back at those who were looking at me, this guy led me to what must have been their main hall, we put everything down then he went out with two other guys to fetch the other bags that we couldn't carry. On their return, he said a small speech of how he's been busy that's why his visit was a bit late than usual, they were forgiving though. They just seemed to be happy that he was there... He distributed the clothing to all the men then he asked for any queries or hassles that they needed him to attend to but they had none, then he asked for indlela. One young man spoke up...

X: aw bhuti, awuzos azisa ke ku sisi ohamba naye?

Everyone murmured, in agreement I guess. He looked at me for approval, I just quickly turned my eyes away from him.

Nkosinathi: anisekho curious Xolani.

X: bhuti ndits hatile ulibele? akhonto ndizoyenza.

Nkosinathi: akhonto ubunoyenza noba ubungats hatanga mfethu.

X: hahaha, inene.

Nkosinathi: okay, so everyone meet my girlfriend Cassandra, baby, meet my family.

Everyone started getting excited, ululating and clapping.

Me: it's nice to meet everyone.

X: this is the first time ubhuti esiza nentombi apha

sis 'wam, usixolele nge excitement.

Me: it's no biggie bhuti.

X: umhle bhuti, hope sizombona more often.

Nkosinathi: makaziphendulele.

I giggled.

Me: well, if he allows me to, I don't see a problem.

Ndingeza ndizodlala nabantwana.

X: haike, siyavuya thina.

I smiled, Nkosinathi looked at X sternly they the elders just laughed at the both of them. This time we really left and drove to the streets... Andithi we only left clothes phaya, we still had food at the back. He stopped under a bridge and got out shouting izinto that I didn't understand some sort of secret call or something and in a matter of seconds, people came out from all sides of the bridge, street people, dirty people. They came running towards him,

others hugging him, others just purely happy to see him. After a moment he came to me in the car...

Nkosinathi: come and greet my other family.

Me: oh.

Well...ndaphuma and went to greet his other family. The younger ones actually came to hug me, it was heartwarming. Like a warm welcome to the family kinda situation.

Nkosinathi: so who's on duty today?

Four guys lifted up their hands...then he signaled for them to follow him to the car, they returned with all the food. Everything he had bought kwa Spar, then the four guys gave to two older ones who were going to divide and serve for everyone. We didn't spend much time with them, we left. After a few minutes of driving in silence his phone rang...it was connected to the car so I was hearing the entire

conversation.

Nkosinathi: hello?

Caller: uphi? (Where are you?)

Nkosinathi: I'm driving, what's up?

Caller: driving to where Nathi?

Nkosinathi: I'm taking my girlfriend home mfondini, ufanani? (What do you want?)

Caller: ndcela undiphathele ispinach if uzoza ngapha ke ogqiba kwakho. (Please bring spinach if you're going to come this side when you're done?)

Nkosinathi: ndizoza late, thuma umtana kwa Marhade sikhona. (I'll only be there later today, send a child to Marhadebe's house)

Caller: ooh okay. Uphi lomntu wakhwebhongo? (Where's this girlfriend of yours?)

He looked at me, I shook my head.

Nkosinathi: uzamthini? (What do you want from her?)

Caller: haikaloku, when are we seeing her?

Nkosinathi: when I bring her to you, whenever that will be.

Caller: kutheni umfihla? Mbi ngalondlela? (Why are you hiding her? Is she that ugly?)

Nkosinathi: wambi, wamhle ayinifuni. Ayikufuni, ngumntu wam ayingomntu wethu. (Her ugliness or beauty is none of your business, she's my girlfriend not OUR girlfriend)

Caller: ndand'k'gqibele une choice ke, ungazosiphoxa eBhayi mntaka tata. (last time I checked you had a good choice in women, don't come embarrass us in Port Elizabeth)

Nkosinathi: fokof Asenathi!

She burst into laughter, he hung up.

Nkosinathi: sorry about that.

Me: your sister?

Nkosinathi: yeah.

Me: mh.

He drove for a sec and stole a look at me.

Nkosinathi: umhle baby, but I don't have to justify that to anyone.

Me: I know.

Nkosinathi: so you're not upset?

Me: nah, the only few things that would upset me would be you not standing up for me before your family/ friends in serious matters, you flirting in my presence and you denying me food. Other than that, it will depend on my mood for that day.

Nkosinathi: ndikuvile, I've realized you love your

food.

Me: very much...now can we talk about your other family?

He chuckled and looked ahead.

Me: you seem to have a soft spot for street people, why?

Nkosinathi: my elder brother ran away from home and started living on the streets a year after he graduated from varsity.

Me: oh, I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: its okay, he passed on on my first year of varsity but because he was living on the streets we developed this pattern of buying him food while he was there, then we realized that we can't just buy him food, we had to buy for everyone so it became a ritual even after his death.

Me: why did he run away from home?

Nkosinathi: apparently he was bewitched, because he wasn't a druggie so... anyway, we tried buying clothes for him but he would either sell the clothes or rip them apart. Then we tried getting closer to his peers, they told us that we can only help them with food, because if we buy them clothes, they'll sell them for drugs and glue so that's what we've been doing all these years.

Me: why don't you take them to the shelter? Or build them their own?

Nkosinathi: they know where to find us when they want to go to the shelter, in fact the shelter only accommodates families. Meaning, a wife, husband and child or children. And these guys don't want to be under supervision. They want to do as they please, practice their own freedom.

Me: wow.

Nkosinathi: but the minute we see one of them pregnant or one of them reports to us, or the pregnant one comes forward and she wants to keep the child, we take them to the social workers for

safety, some give up their kids right after birth and some go to therapy, and learn skills that will bring them income or go back to school while living in a safe environment with their kids.

Nkosinathi and his family seemed to have good hearts. To build a shelter and clothe homeless families, food for street people. He drove me home and parked outside, turning the ignition off.

Nkosinathi: what are you planning to do after your graduation?

Me: I was planning to move to Cape Town.

Nkosinathi: was?

Me: that was before you happened.

Nkosinathi: oh, so things have changed now that I happened?

Me: I haven't revisited my plan ngoku.

Nkosinathi: do you still want to go to Cape Town?

Me: I just want to get out of PE..and I don't really wanna go work from home.

Nkosinathi: oh-kay. Well, I won't put any pressure on you, all I can do is to support you.

Me: and I appreciate that, very much.

Nkosinathi: so when do I get to see you again?

Me: when do you want to see me again?

Nkosinathi: I'd actually love to spend more time with you.

Me: but we do spend time together when you're around.

Nkosinathi: its not always enough, but I also do not want to disturb your studies.

Me: maybe we should work on a schedule then.

Nkosinathi: one weekend at your place, the next at mine?

Me: you're ready to take me to your personal space?

Nkosinathi: why not?

Me: oh-kay. But that will have to wait, my mom should be coming over this week so that we can look for another place for me to stay. Since the death of the landlord this place isn't as safe anymore.

Nkosinathi: alright.

I knew he had to return back to his friends but I didn't want him to go, which was selfish of me. I asked him to help me with the shopping bags, we got inside then I walked him back out, we kissed at the gate then I watched him drive off. He could also tell that I didn't want him to go but...guess he wanted me to ask.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_26

Mom paid me a visit then we went house hunting, we didn't find anything on that first day then she had to sleep over so while I went to school, she went house hunting and found a room that was fifteen minutes away from campus. When I got

there to check it out, I saw familiar faces and I was satisfied by the level of security but there was just something that wasn't sitting well with my spirit in there. When we got to my current place she asked me...

Mom: you don't seem to like it.

Me: I like it...it's clean, and looks safe. But there's just something about that place that doesn't sit well with my spirit.

Mom: I noticed...maybe we should go check it out again before I deposit the rent money.

Me: okay, or we can send u bhuti in disguise.

There's something man, I just can't put my finger to it.

Mom: okay ndizomfounela akhe aye pha (okay I will call and send him there), so you can stay here for now. Until we're certain of what's going on there.

Me: okay, now can I take you out?

Mom: ngemali yam (with my money), yes.

Me: mali katata (you mean dad's money).

Mom: oks alayo yeyomyeni wam nayo (you mean my husband's money).

Me: heeehehe! Hay sisi.

She went on and on about this, but anyway we went out for supper, made a lot of conversation about my future plans now that I had one year to graduation... as we sunk our taste buds into our dessert, I saw Nkosinathi walk in with three other guys. I swear I held my breath as our eyes locked. He looked at me then his eyes raced over to my mother then he smiled...I smiled and just kept my eyes ahead.

Mom: and that smile?

Me: I've just realized that I left my wallet at home.

Mom: usile! Yazi usile Thixunathi (You're silly).

Me: yhu mama eligama (Yhu mom that name).

Mom: lelakho, nizithanda gqithi izinto

ezikhums hileyo, wanimos ha utata wenu (It's yours, your father spoilt all of you rotten with his English tactics).

Yep, I shifted the focus just like that. My phone beeped and I looked at the message "Can I come and greet umama zala (my mother inlaw)"? yhu u Nkosinathi bawo!

Mom: ngubani lowo? (who's that)

Me: hay mama, ngabantu be phone yam.

Mom: haikaloku tell them ukwi date, they must have table manners.

Yho andayihleka...

Me: one of my friends wants to come and greet you.

Mom: what kind of friend asks for permission to greet your parents?

Me: kaloku mama.

Mom: kaloku Ntoni? (What?)

Me: it's a male friend, akafunundifaka engxakini (He doesn't wanna get me into trouble), you'll start thinking I'm going around making male friends kweliBhayi. And I've told them how strict you are.

Mom: oh, now it's them.

Me: him and other friends that I've made.

Mom: makaze ndimbone (he must come).

Me: please say nice things. Please.

She rolled eyes at me...lomama! I texted Nkosinathi "as long as you don't introduce yourself as the future son-in-law." He responded "ndiyafihlwa?" (Are you hiding me?) me: "awufihlwa mfondini, ndibaleka idrama" (I'm not hiding you, I'm just avoiding drama) he sent a smiley face. After a couple of minutes he walked up to our table and greeted, we fist bumped then he offered a handshake to my mother, he introduced himself then they had a short

conversation before he returned to his table. Mom watched him, till he sat down at his table.

Mom: he's got the looks.

Me: haibo!

Mom: and he smells good.

Me: mama!

Mom: PE men have a reputation wethu Cassandra, how long have you known him?

Me: it's been a while.

Mom: he doesn't look like a student.

Me: he's not.

Mom: what does he do for a living?

Me: businessman.

Mom: what business does he do? Drug dealers, human traffickers, sangomas are businessmen as well.

Now I had to explain to her what kind of businesses he was involved in, told her about the street people stuff he was involved in, the works. She seemed impressed even though she didn't ask about my "boyfriend" the one I told her about, she seemed to kinda have put the dots together but I wasn't going to confirm anything yet. When we were done, we left...a few days later, after mom left Nkosinathi called.

Me: baby?

Nkosinathi: you're scarce.

Me: zincwadi babe...I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: is my mother in-law still around?

Me: nah, she left a few days ago.

Nkosinathi: so that means I can steal you for a few minutes, a study break?

Me: sekulate ngoku nje (it's already late). Can you steal me tomorrow? I have no class.

Nkosinathi: so that means you'll cook?

Me: heeee! Haike steal me now ke.

Nkosinathi: so you don't want to cook for me?

Me: I don't wanna play wife to a boyfriend.

He laughed...

Nkosinathi: okay, so I guess cooking for me is out of the cards? Can we go watch a movies, right now then? I'll let you rest tomorrow and not bother you.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: I'm outside.

Me: uyaXoka! (you're lying)

He hooted...I got up and opened my curtain, there was his car!

Me: yhu!

Nkosinathi: 5 minutes.

Then he hung up.

I quickly got out of bed and prepped up, grabbed my phone, removed my bank card from the wallet and put inside the phone cover at the back. I learnt to always be prepared. Then I locked and went to him, he was already standing outside, talking on the phone. I walked up to him, kissed him on the lips as he held my waist while finishing up his conversation. In between his sentences with whoever he was talking to, he was kissing me on the lips until the conversation was over.

Nkosinathi: hey beautiful.

Me: hey stalker.

Apparently, I was tickling him. He didn't say anything, but laughed as he opened the door for me. We went for a movie, he paid for everything obviously, then we took a walk on the beach. Hand in hand.

Nkosinathi: looks like I'll be leaving PE sooner than I thought.

Me: that's why you pushed for tonight.

Nkosinathi: partly yes.

Me: partly?

Nkosinathi: I just missed you.

Me: mmh. When are you going?

Nkosinathi: next week Thursday, morning.

Me: I'll be in class, I have a presentation.

Nkosinathi: can we at least spend the weekend together?

Me: if you're not needed elsewhere, no problem.

Nkosinathi: I don't have any reservations as yet, but I will switch off my phone.

Me: okay then, weekend it is.

We spent a few minutes walking and talking on the

beach then we walked back to the car and watched the stars, my head on his shoulder.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: how many children do you want to have?

I looked at him, shocked.

Nkosinathi: I know usezofunda, graduate and start working before you can settle down and even think about having a child but, I'm asking just out of curiosity.

Me: three is enough. Two boys, one girl.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Me: you?

Nkosinathi: I don't really care, as long as we can provide for them. Emotionally and financially.

Me: but you won't always be there physically,

ungulo wehla esenyuka as it is right now.

Nkosinathi: I know that, but you will be there with our helper.

Me: helper? Yhu, having a stranger in my own house?

Nkosinathi: you can never be a stay at home wife baby, what if nowakho umsebenzi makes you travel a lot? Sizobathini abantwana?

Me: bazoya koo makhulu babo.

Nkosinathi: and if we don't live in the same city as their grandparents? During school days?

I sighed...

Me: point taken.

He kissed my forehead, I closed my eyes enjoying the comfort...my phone rang, I looked at the screen and my heart sank.

Me: hello bhuti?

Steve: hey, unjani?

Me: I'm good, how are you bhuti?

Steve: all good, I'm coming to PE ngoms o to do a follow up on your accommodation.

Me: okay bhuti.

Steve: what time will your class end?

Me: I don't have a class tomorrow bhuti.

Steve: ooh okay ke. Sharp.

Me: sure.

We hung up...guess we did well by meeting right now no Nkosinathi because we wouldn't be able to, with my brother around.

Me: my brother is coming over tomorrow, to follow up on my accommodation issue.

Nkosinathi: at least we have the weekend to ourselves, hopefully.

Okay at least that was still standing, after some time we drove back to my place. He parked outside, I still appreciated that he respected my space and wouldn't just drive in without being invited. We sat there finishing off our conversation, he leaned over and kissed me on the lips.

Nkosinathi: umhle man baby.

Before I could even answer, he kissed me again, this time we both engaged. The more we kissed was the more I fell for him, I was beginning to really feel that I'm in a relationship now. I stopped and pulled back, wiping my gloss off his lips, he looked at me without saying a word...

Me: thank you for today.

Nkosinathi: today can be many days.

Me: I know...and I can't wait to spend many other days like this with you.

He leaned forward again and kissed me...that kiss was abruptly stopped by a bullet that came from behind the car and by God's mercies it slipped through a gap somewhere between us and smashed the windscreen, I jumped with a scream of shock at the sound of shattering glass. Nkosinathi tried getting out of the car, I pulled his arm.

Me: hayi uyaphi? Ufunukufa?

Nkosinathi: baby, calm down.

Me: Nkosinathi ndiyakucela, don't.

Nkosinathi: baby.

I looked at him, my teary eyes begging him not to go out.

He kissed me and got out to look around, then out

of nowhere came a car that drove straight to him, I shouted for him to duck and he dived to the other side of the road, the car drove off so I got out of the car and ran to this one on the other side of the road. He wasn't harmed, but I was too shaken I just hugged him and balled. After a while he slowly removed my arms and looked at my teary face, cleaned me up with his hands.

Nkosinathi: no one makes you cry and gets away with it, I'm gonna find them and they're going to pay.

Me: please, just let it go. Please.

Nkosinathi: I'm not letting anything go, you could have been shot. I could have been shot dead, or knocked over..I am not letting this go.

Me: your life is more important to me than catching anyone who did this.

Nkosinathi: come, let me walk you inside.

I got up, we walked hand in hand as he went to lock

the car then walked me to my room. He inspected the room thoroughly before we sat down, I was still shook but I made chamomile tea for the both of us.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_27

After a few seconds of silence he spoke up...

Nkosinathi: you have to tell your family about this guy.

Me: ubhuti uyeza, I'll tell him.

Nkosinathi: I'm gonna cancel the trip, until I know you're safe.

Me: no, no. Please don't.

Nkosinathi: baby.

Me: I'll be well taken care off, ubhuti will see what to do once I've told him. Wena hamba (just go) and do your business, I'll fill you in on whatever happens.

Nkosinathi: baby my mind won't function well knowing I'm leaving you in this state.

Me: you just have to trust my brother then, I don't want your affairs to be affected by this.

He kept quiet.

I put my cup down and hugged him, he put his own cup down and wrapped his arms around me. I was still teary, and I couldn't stop but replay the whole scene in my mind and I realized that one or both of us almost died. We could have been dead a minute ago, and no one came out to even check what was happening when the gun was shot, even when the car screeched as it almost ran over Nkosinathi. We could have died like dogs.

Nkosinathi: it's okay...

He rubbed my back until I felt more calm then I cleaned myself up.

Me: I'm sorry for putting you through this.

Nkosinathi: please pack a weekend bag sihambe.

Me: huh?

Nkosinathi: I'm not leaving you here, you're traumatized.

Me: hayi baby...I c-

Nkosinathi: I will bring you back in the morning before your brother gets here.

Okay so now my fear was him wanting sex when we get to his house, but honestly speaking, I knew I wanted to go with him. I wouldn't sleep a wink in this place. I got up and packed my weekend bag, since I'll be spending the weekend at his place anyway as we had planned, took extra toiletries, charger and an extra pair of shoe.

Me: done.

Nkosinathi: okay, make sure all your windows are closed.

I checked, then we left.

We drove into his place...wasn't as big as I would have imagined it seeing that he's a business man. It was modest and big enough for the bachelor that he is (two storey), his sister called him again but he rejected the call. We got out of the car and he carried my bag, unlocked his house and I followed right behind him in silence. The inside of it took my breath away. It was clean, smelt very good and it was well furnished. It was homely, it was him, warm and embracy, I suddenly felt at home.

Nkosinathi: I'll prepare the bedroom for you, please make yourself comfortable.

Me: enkosi. (Thank you)

After he left I went to the kitchen and looked for anything to munch on, I found koeksisters and I took two with a glass of water, kuthwe I must make myself comfortable kaloku. He came back.

Nkosinathi: I have run a bath for you, second room on your left.

Me: thank you.

I left him there and went to the bathroom, well, bedroom. It was an ensuite, I thought I'd be getting a separate room but I realized that we'd be sharing his bedroom. I soaked myself in the bath and let go of everything that was bothering my thoughts, he had some scented foam bath that soothes the inner cells in my brain. When I eventually came out, I wore my pj's and slippers, then walked out to where I had left him, but whilst at the top of the stairs, I heard voices. His and another of a female so I stopped and listened...

Nkosinathi: but I just gave you money, uyenzi?
(what did you do with it)

Her: I bought stuff, why are you being stingy all of a sudden?

Nkosinathi: I told you ndiyaqokelela for this Canada business deal, I can't be wasting money that I don't have Asenathi.

I sighed...it's his sister.

I was starting to think it's his girlfriend or something.

Her: maybe if you stopped spending money on women we wouldn't be here right now.

Nkosinathi: ooh, so wena u-right for spending money on "STUFF" right?

Her: okay fine, I'm sorry. Ndithini ke? Because asina nyama and isepha iyaphela, I can't order ndingena mali. (what must I Do now? We don't have meat and the soap is on the verge of finishing, I can't place an order without money)

Nkosinathi: I don't understand how you do business, I gave you the carwash and ts his anyama to manage but eyonanto uyenzayo (what you do) is running them down. I really don't understand your business

conduct.

Her: but you're not being fair.

Nkosinathi: place an order for ezizinto zishotayo then send me a proformer invoice, I'll send the suppliers money directly to them.

Her: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: was there anything else?

Her: no... utya ntoni apha? (what do you eat here)
The way your kitchen is sooo clean ingathi awupheki. (it's like you don't cook)

He didn't answer her..she left him and walked to the kitchen, opened the fridge, freezer, cupboard then came back to him.

Her: the freezer is still full, doesn't this new chick of yours know how to cook? Or you got another one of those who eat out all the time? Again?

Nkosinathi: you're almost overstaying your

welcome in my house.

Her: Nathi, you cannot be living like this. You need to grow up ngoku, you can't be living out of the box.

Nkosinathi: that's it...please take your keys and go.

He gave her the keys, she laughed as he led her to the door.

Her: mntase, subheja njeee man, mazingheke ez'way xazize apha. Yintoni na mfondini. (don't just give these chicks your money, when they come here make them cook for you)

Nkosinathi: I love you, bye.

Then he shut the door.

As I was about to go down, she shouted for him to open the gate. He opened without responding to her then he walked towards the stairs and saw me

Nkosinathi: you're hungry?

Me: nah.

Nkosinathi: then don't come down, I'm switching off the lights anyway.

Me: sure.

I turned and walked back to the room, he came in right after me and went to the closet, removed a gown and went to shower. My phone rang... unknown number. Obviously ngu Khiro lowo so I didn't answer...he called again, but I just rejected the call. I was shaken already, I wasn't going to allow him to ruin my night any further. I switched off my phone and got in bed...a couple of minutes later, Nkosinathi returned, switched on the bedside lamps and then switched off the main lights as he came to bed. He didn't say much, he just pulled me close and we cuddled my worries away.

Nkosinathi: I love you, and I will do anything in my

power for your safety, especially from this obsessed woman in a man's body.

Me: can we not talk about him? Please.

Nkosinathi: okay...

I moved in closer to him, his body temperature was doing something to my senses. I had to shut my brain dead as I could hear Onele's voice at the back of my mind.

In the morning, I woke up all alone. I went to the bathroom, returned and found my phone charging, I got in bed and just lay there for a few minutes. I didn't wanna go home but I had to. My brother was coming so I had to be at my place on his arrival. I drew a deep breath and gathered enough strength as I went to shower, when I came back, he had made breakfast for the both of us and the bed was made.

Me: morning.

Nkosinathi: good morning. Slept well?

I smiled as he was walking towards me, his hands reached out for my waist before his lips found home on my own. His breath was fresh, chocolaty yet minty his grip was demanding at the same time, assuring. Ay angazi.

Me: like a baby, thank you for opening up your home to a stranger.

Nkosinathi: you're the stranger?

Me: am I not?

Nkosinathi: no stranger has ever slept on my bed before.

Me: guess I'm the special kind then.

He kissed my lips and let go, I got dressed, then joined him for breakfast. When we were done I went

down to wash the plates and cups we had used
then he took me home, and left me there. I just lay
on my bed... And Lil sister called † ♀

Me: hey?

Onele: hey, Sefikile ubhuti? (has big brother arrived
yet?)

Me: nope.

Onele: ooh, unjani?(oh, how are you?)

Me: uzamthini u bhuti?(why are you asking for your
brother?)

Onele: no I'm just checking on him, his car was
faulty when he left here.

Me: have you tried calling him?

Onele: he's not answering.

Me: okay, I'll check on him just now.

Onele: sho... So how are you?

Me: I'm okay. You?

Onele: you're just okay? Seriously? Is there trouble in paradise?

Me: haha! Okay fine I'm happy, dude, what do you want me to say?

Onele: that, I wanted that excitement at the end of your voice.

I laughed all my siblings are very special

Onele: spill the beans ke sisi.

Me: there's nothing to spill Onele, Yhini.

Onele: you're a liar.

Me: nyhani.

Onele: how's your boyfie? Have you guys done the deed yet?

I just started laughing, she shouted at me in excitement... Maybe she thought I had actually

given Nkosinathi the cookie.

Me: you need to chill baby sis.

Onele: oh my wooorrrddd!

Me: I slept at his place last night, but w-

Onele: Cassandra!

Me: we didn't have sex.

Then she kept quiet.

Me: we slept through the night, in each other's arms.
But we didn't have sex.

Onele: how is that even possible?

Me: it's possible.

Onele: I don't believe you Sandra, what level of self control do you and this guy have over your hormones?

Me: onele?

Onele: what?

Me: are you still a virgin?

Onele: uh, no. Duh.

Me: flip! When did you? Oh J esus Mary and Somizi!

Onele: when I told you I had a boyfriend I thought you'd put two and two together, why are you so slow?

Me: well because I had a boyfriend while I was in high school and we never had sex for two full years.

Onele: wait... You mean, you're still a virgin?

Me:Yes!

Onele: hay Sandra don't lie.

Me: Tyhini why would I lie about that? To you even, and ke unlike you I would have told you if I wasn't.

Onele: wow. So Sinethemba never got the cookie, that's why he ran for your friend.

Me: exactly.

I could feel some sort of tension or embarrassment around this conversation now.

Me: do you sleep out when the folks aren't there?

She cleared her throat.

Me: oh Onele.

Onele: I did it twice only.

Me: no need to feel defensive about it I'm not gonna judge you, just be careful. Use protection.

Onele: thank you, please don't tell anyone about this. You know your siblings.

Me: I won't, as long as you promise me you won't get yourself pregnant us anxiba is school uniform. That would kill mom.

Onele: I promise mntase.

We concluded on the conversation then I called my

brother, he said he's on his way. His car died so he called his friends and they first had to tow the car to a nearby garage then drive to me.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_28

When my brother arrived, he arrived with Ginger, his friend. I asked to speak to him aside because I had to tell him about this guy who has been terrorizing me so we went outside and sat in the car. I told him everything, from the club scene to when I called at the reception for help, he was furious that I didn't tell them sooner but he was glad that I finally did. We went back inside and found his friend talking on his phone but as we walked in, he abruptly stopped and hung up. He (Ginger) was acting so weird around me I actually couldn't handle it nor could I understand because we're used to each other but he was just being weird in so many ways. Or, I could be paranoid, after all that I've been through. They left to go check out my new place leaving me behind then came back...

Steve: I think you should stay here for a while.

Me: why?

Steve: that place is not safe... I'm still gonna do my research about it but it's not safe.

Ginger: you're just paranoid, there's nothing wrong with that place. It's got enough security and it's nearer to campus, what more could you guys want?

Steve: I'm listening to my gut feeling here, and it's never wrong.

Ginger: well it could be wrong in this case, Cass, why don't you go check that place out for yourself? Maybe you will see what I'm talking about.

Me: I've been there... That's why ubhuti is here, I also had this unsettling feeling about that place.

Ginger: I know the owner, maybe I should hook ya'll up.

Me: oh-Kay.

I looked at my brother... He shrugged, I spent half my day with the two of them then later called Nkosinathi to come fetch me we had plans for the weekend and honestly, I missed him. He was busy at his club, some sort of supplier meeting, so he fetched me from where I was and took me to his house and then left to finish off what he was doing. Being the good girlfriend that I thought I was, I decided to cook. Nothing much... Just a healthy home cooked meal'nyana. I think I considered this after hearing his sister calling him out on eating a lot of takeaways. I made grilled chicken and pork, greens with mushroom sauce, blanched carrots and mashed potatoes. Then I made myself hot chocolate and went to watch movies...

Onele sent a pleas call me, so I transfered half my airtime for her and still called her because little sister.

Onele: enkosi mntaka mama.

Me: you're welcome, what's up?

Onele: I just missed you.

Me: we spoke yesterday, what's up?

She chuckled.

Onele: I wanna know more about this relationship of yours.

Me: hay hay.

Onele: where does he work, what kinda work does he do, does he even work, does he take you out on dates? To what kind of places?

I sighed...

Me: yes he works, takes me out on dates... In the normal restaurants around.

Onele: you don't sound enthusiastic about this

conversation. What's wrong?

Me: I'm sorry baby girl, I'm just tired. It's been a long day.

Onele: okay... When is Aphiwe visiting you?

Me: I don't know, I'm still waiting for his confirmation.

Onele: can I also come? I'll ask dad to drop me off on Friday on his way to George in two weeks.

Me: who said Aphiwe will be here in two weeks?

Onele: I was just saying.

Me: okay first let me find a place to stay, then we can talk about ya'll visiting.

Onele: okay ke... Hay bye bye.

Me: bye. I love you.

Onele: love you too.

Just as I hung up... I heard a car driving in, but then the driver knocked. Nkosinathi did say he left with a

second key so why would he knock? I didn't move, the knock came again so I got up, opened the door and was greeted by a woman. I wanted to say it's his sister but, the attitude on her face threw me off.

Asenathi: molo.

Me: good afternoon.

Asenathi: it's actually evening. Suka ndingene.

↑ ♀

Yep, it's indeed his sister. I recognized her voice, but does she have her own gate remote? Wow. I moved out of the way and she walked right in, she started ranting about everything, I mean EVERYTHING. Unfortunately for here I wasn't listening at all, I just sat on the couch and watched what I was watching. She came to stand behind me, with hands on her hips... I saw her on the TV screen.

Asenathi: nguwe lo uphekileyo apha? (are you the one who cooked?)

I just nod.

Asenathi: so I came all the way here, for nothing?
Does he even know you're here?

I didn't respond.

She came to stand in front of the TV. I looked at her.

Asenathi: hello? Ndiyathetha.

Me: uthini?

Asenathi: umntu walapha uyakwazi ba ulapha na?

Me: and how do you suggest I got in here if he doesn't know?

Asenathi: it's possible ubulele apha kwathwa uvuke uhambe kasa but wabona ijackpot and you

decided otherwise. You wouldn't be the first one to do that.

I looked at her and laughed, she was just being stupid right now. I could see her face turning red.

Asenathi: so this is funny to you?

Me: it is, I mean, what you just said shows how little you think of your brother, you know that?

Asenathi: no honey, it shows how little I think of you. This has nothing to do with Nathi.

Me: you believe Nathi sleeps with every woman who's willing to get money out of him, and then moves on to the next one the following day. You said it.

She huffed and my phone rang.

Her brother was calling.

I ignored the phone, I wanted to answer her.

Me: unfortunately for you, I'm not here for his money, if I was, trust me, you would know.

My phone rang again... † ♀

Asenathi: ufounelwa yenye indoda lento ungayiphenduliyo iphone?

Me: ungenaphi wena kwi phone yam?

Asenathi: kuphi apha?

Me: kuphi? Tyhini hay suzoba yi bully emzini ongengowakho.

Asenathi: Haibo, heh sisi, eneneni ucingba kuphi apha? Kutheni wafika waqhela nje?

Me: what I know is that akukho kwakho qha apha.

Asenathi: Yey ungunoqatiko.

Me: iketile igxeka imbiza kodwa zits ha kunye eziko.

Then I answered my phone.

Me: baby?

Nkosinathi: babe what shou- wait, why are so down all of a sudden?

Me: I'm okay.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: is there something wrong?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: then whats going on?

Me: nothing, uhm... Are you done?

Nkosinathi: almost, I stole five minutes just to check on you.

Me: oh that's sweet but it wasn't necessary, I'm okay.

Nkosinathi: baby are you sure you're okay? I'm catching some weird vibes.

Me: yes, stop stressing.

Nkosinathi: okay, see you in a bit.

Me: sharp.

I hung up... This girl was still standing in front of me

.

Asenathi: ungubani igama lakho nontombi? (what's your name)

I ignored her.

Asenathi: ntombazanandini, Ndiyathetha. (girlie, I'm talking)

Asenathi: wonder where Nathi got such an ill-mannered brat, you're even waaaay younger than him. You're definitely here for the moola.

Me: whatever makes you happy.

Asenathi: heh!

My phone rang again...

Me: Haibo baby usebenza nini kanti?

Nkosinathi: please tell me Asenathi is not there.

I didn't answer.

Nkosinathi: she is there, right?

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: oh God. Okay ndiyeza.

Me: there's no need for that, finish up your business and then come home, I'm fine.

He sighed...

Me: I'm serious.

Nkosinathi: okay, please text me if she does or says anything that makes you uncomfortable.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: love you too.

He hung up... I went to the pantry and took out Pringle, went past Asenathi who mumbled but I didn't care, zange sakuthethela thina ukutya ekhaya. I sat on the couch and texted my sisters, we were having one helluva conversation that I was even tempted to tell them where I was but then I got a grip. A few minutes later I heard my boyfriend driving in, a part of my heart jumped for joy because "baby is home " but then there was this one who's busy acting like his mother here. He didn't even knock, the door wasn't locked so he opened and walked in...

Nkosinathi: molweni.

I didn't even turn to look at him.

Asenathi: finally. I've been waiting for you, you look tired, how did it go?

He left her there and came to kiss me, lifted my legs and sat down, returning them onto his lap. He looked at me, came forth and pecked me on the lips, we did this a couple of times before his sister came to sit on the other couch and cleared her throat. We stopped, I looked at my phone while they made conversation.

Asenathi: you didn't tell me you're cohabiting.

Nkosinathi: you didn't tell me you're coming to my house.

Asenathi: after what I saw when I was here I came to cook for you, unfortunately I was beat to it by your new girlfriend. Is she your girlfriend phofu?

He looked at me.

Nkosinathi: you cooked?

I just nod, still looking at my phone.

Nkosinathi: wow.

Asenathi: you didn't know? You didn't ask her to cook?

Nkosinathi: no, why would I ask her to cook?

Asenathi: because she's here, and you're busy. Surely it's common sense that she should do something, and not wait for you to bring takeaways.

Nkosinathi: She's my girlfriend, not my wife.

Asenathi: oh, so that excuses her from even cleaning after herself when she's here?

Nkosinathi: why are you concerned ngendaba zakwam khona? You do realize that u baby ngumntu wam, like, mine alone. Right?

Then there was silence.

I actually appreciated him addressing that point out, I wasn't obligated to do anything for him, I'm not his wife. This shows that he listens.

Asenathi: okay then, let me leave you two. I'm done here.

Nkosinathi: please drive safe.

Asenathi: Haibo, you're not walking me out?

Nkosinathi: hay Asenathi allow me ndibuke u baby wam. Kutheni ndatefelwa nguwe ngoku?

Me: you can walk her out, I'll plate up.

Nkosinathi: oh... Okay.

I got up and went to the kitchen, they walked out. I plated up for the two of us and warmed the food then took it to where we sat ndamlinda. After a few minutes he returned, locked the door and came to eat. I was quiet, contemplating on whether I should

tell him about his sister's attitude or not. Maybe I shouldn't, he knows his sister.

Nkosinathi: I was going to ask you what should I bring, when I called earlier.

Me: but you got distracted.

Nkosinathi: ewe baby, what happened earlier?

Me: nothing.

Nkosinathi: baby, what did she say to you?

Me: nothing... How was your meeting?

He just looked at me and said nothing, I ate my food, when I was done I went to make coffee for myself. He followed and got himself a glass of whiskey after he had washed the plates. We sat in one couch...

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: don't let her get to you, she's a bully I know, but don't allow her to get under your skin.

Me: okay. But... Mxm, never mind.

Nkosinathi: no, say it.

Me: you know her, she's your sister and you put up with her because she's your sister.

Nkosinathi: right.

Me: I'm nothing to her, and I'm here because you invited me here so I'm your guest.

Nkosinathi: right.

Me: next time, and I hope there won't be a next time, next time can she please respect that I'm your guest and not hers? Yho your sister is ill-mannered.

Nkosinathi: what did she say to you?

Me: it doesn't matter what she said... J ust...

Nkosinathi: okay, okay. I'll talk to her. I promise.

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: yithi enkosi baby kaloku.

Me: Yho haike.

Nkosinathi: why is that difficult to say?

Me: wena awuzazi ukuba ungu baby?

Nkosinathi: ndiyazazi but I want you to say it.

Ivakala kamnandi xakusitho wena.

I just laughed at him.

Nkosinathi: okay, so I must get used to you not wanting to address me as your boyfriend.

Me: I can and I will address you as my boyfriend but can we open room for us to still be friends more than a couple?

He blankly looked at me maybe I wasn't making any sense.

Me: I love you and I want to be comfortable around you both as a boyfriend and as my friend.

Nkosinathi: you can call me baby and still be comfortable. I am.

Me: you don't get it.

Nkosinathi: no baby, you're just making excuses.

I smiled.

Nkosinathi: I'll be patient with you, as long as you know that I will not hide you. You're my woman so the people in my life should know you.

↑ ♀

I wasn't ready to meet his friends and family yet, if his sister is like that, what about the rest? Yho ha.a I wasn't ready.

[06/26, 14:44] : #Cassandra_29

After some time chilling and finishing off the movie I was watching, he switched off the lights and we went to bed. For some reason I was nervous about undressing in front of him...

Nkosinathi: I'll take a quick shower, have you bathed already?

Me: it's cold.

Nkosinathi: warm water will make you warm, quicker.

Me: argh.

Nkosinathi: you can come join me if you wanna.

He didn't wait for me to answer, he grabbed his gown and went through the mahogany doors that separated the bedroom from the bathroom. I sat on the bed contemplating on this, then swallowed my pride and undressed, grabbed my own gown and went to the bathroom. I watched him from behind

as the soapy foam slid from his head down his behind, he was fit, had an athletic body. I don't know how my gown left my body and how my legs carried me to the shower...I was gonna bath mos, he showers. I bath. That's it. But my legs were so forward they actually carried me to the shower, my hands reached out for the door and opened it. I swear my body was doing its own thing, it wasn't me it was my body parts. They were on their own mission and I seemed to have no control over them. I reached for the soap and he turned around, for a second we held the gaze as our eyes looked deeper into each other's souls. He got the soap first, not breaking the gaze, then he smothered it on the sponge he had on the other hand. From the corner of my eye I saw his hand with the sponge touching my elbow, up to my shoulder. I broke the gaze and looked at his hand, he literally smothered my whole body with foam then without saying a word, our lips locked, I felt his slippery, foamy body smashed against mine as mine smashed against the glass shower door.

My arms were betraying me, they flew over his shoulders as he lifted me up, my legs found home around his waist as he pressed against me. The water was just being extra in this whole situation...I felt his hand between my thighs and I knew it's about to go down. He found the right spot and started rubbing it while kissing the lights out of my brains. His circular motions were becoming faster causing my breath to become lighter and shorter. I felt my body stiffening and my toes curling, the feeling was familiar to the days I used to play with myself out of curiosity. I had gushed my fluids all over his hand, then he inserted one finger...it got stuck. He looked at me in disbelief...

Nkosinathi: you're a virgin?

I just nod.

He kissed the embarrassment out and carried me to the bedroom. Were both wet, but he lay me down and continued showering me with kisses all over my body. I was in heaven, the way he worshiped my body took me straight to heaven and I didn't wanna come back, I felt at home right there. Then he kissed his way back to my lips and stopped, looking down at me.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I love you.

Nkosinathi: are you sure?

I nod...

Nkosinathi: I don't want you to break your virginity because you found yourself in my bedroom. I want you to be ready, to feel ready.

Me: I am now.

Nkosinathi: unfortunately, I didn't think we'd go this far. I don't have any condoms.

I swallowed hard.

I wasn't going to say "it's fine we can have sex without them" no, my health comes first.

Nkosinathi: but I will make this night, worth your while. Trust me.

Me: we're not having sex without protection.

Nkosinathi: I share the same sentiments, but that doesn't mean I can't please you otherwise. I can't leave you hanging, and I'm not going out again just to buy condoms.

I was so confused.

He kissed me again, lips, mouth corners, chin, neck, ears, neck again, back to lips, then down to my chest then he took his time there. By the time he went to my navel I was already wetter than when we were in the shower. He kissed down, opened up my thighs and relaxed between them as he drunk up all the juices, milking up more where those came from with his tongue. I found myself squirming and

breathing heavily, trying to shut my thighs while his head was buried deep between them but he had a firm grip on them as he had them wide spread across the bed. I had even lost count of the orgasms, honestly, this whole ish was worthwhile. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

When he was done he kissed his way back up to my lips, I could taste myself in his lips as we kissed for a while then he lay down next to me and pulled me closer so my head lay on his chest. I wanted to ask how he felt not having been satisfied in his personal capacity but then, I didn't want anything to ruin this moment. It was perfect the way it was.

Nkosinathi: I didn't think you'd be a virgin.

I smiled...and kissed his chest.

Me: you assumed I wasn't.

Nkosinathi: it's hard to find girls who still keep themselves these days.

Me: you are looking in all the wrong places.

Nkosinathi: maybe, but I found you. And I'm content.

Me: good night babe.

He kissed the crown of my head salala (we slept).

I had class the following morning but I was going to skip it.

Having class on a Friday is like working on a Sunday.

In the morning he woke me up...I turned to face the other way, he kissed my back till his lips got to my neck.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: mh.hm.

Nkosinathi: wake up.

Me: not going.

Nkosinathi: you're not going to class? Why?

I didn't answer him.

He kissed me again, I took a deep breath in and just turned my head, my nose touched his. He was too close.

Me: I don't feel like going to class today.

Nkosinathi: where are you going to get the lessons you're going to miss?

Me: I'll get them.

Nkosinathi: and what are you going to do with yourself the whole day?

Me: I don't know.

He kept quiet...

I covered my head, then a thought struck my mind ndaphinda ndazityhila. He hadn't moved an inch.

Me: you can go to work, don't let me hold you back.

Continue with whatever schedule you had for today.

Nkosinathi: and leave you here, all alone?

Me: I don't think I'll burn the house down.

Nkosinathi: and if Asenathi comes back here today?

Me: I'll deal with her according to her approach and attitude.

He smiled.

Nkosinathi: okay ke. Let me bath and go to work.

I smiled and kissed him before covering my head again. He went to bathe, got dressed and came to kiss my forehead as he left for work. I slept until 10am then woke up, made the bed, cleaned the room, bathed, cleaned the bathroom then went downstairs to make myself food. The kitchen was clean...he had left a note on the fridge: "if you want bread you can take a walk to Shoprite, there's

money by the TV” well, if it involved walking, I’d rather NOT want bread. I stayed in today because I wanted to stay in, not take a walk just for bread. I made myself muesli and went to sit in front of the TV watching Netflix. Past 12 he called...

Me: baby?

Nkosinathi: you finally woke up? How’s your day so far?

Me: warm and fuzzy? Yours?

Nkosinathi: cold and busy. I miss you.

Me: I don’t miss you, get back to work.

He burst out laughing, I joined in.

Nkosinathi: wenzani? (what are you doing?)

Me: watching Netflix.

Nkosinathi: mmh what should I bring you? Think I

might be home early.

Me: nothing.

Nkosinathi: nothing? Are you sure?

Me: yep. What would you like to eat tonight?

Nkosinathi: the weather permits stew and dumplings.

Me: I'll try my best to make that for you.

Nkosinathi: you know you don't have to, right?

Me: yep, and you better not get used to it too.

Nkosinathi: I won't...but I do appreciate.

Me: okay now, back to work.

Nkosinathi: yes ma'am.

We hung up.

My brother called...Lionel.

Me: hello bh-

Lionel: why didn't you tell us?

Me: oh..he told you.

Lionel: of course he told me, how could you hide something like this from us?

Me: I promised I wouldn't tell anyone, I didn't want to put your lives in danger.

Lionel: are you listening to yourself Cassandra?

I sighed...

Lionel: well, good news is, we think we have found this Khiro psycho.

Me: you what?

Lionel: bad news is, it might be someone you know.

Me: no.

Lionel: we're coming to see you next week, if he calls or texts, just continue like you normally do. Don't let him know we're onto him.

Me: you just said you've found him nje?

Lionel: yes, but now we want to trap him. And catch him in his act.

My heart sank...the possibility of Khiro being someone I knew knocked me over. Who could it be? Why would they go through so much trouble? Why would anyone hide behind this stupid façade?

[06/26, 14:45] : #Cassandra_30

After that phone call, I got up and went to make dough for dumplings, defrosted beef meat then put on the fire at the fire place while calling my mother.

Mom: nontombi?

Me: mama, unjani? (how are you?)

Mom: I'm good baby, unjani wena? (how are you?)

Me: I'm okay.

Mom: mamela mntanam, I'll call you later on today
I'm rushing to a meeting? (Listen my daughter)

Me: okay ma. Love you.

Mom: love you baby.

We hung up...

I took a deep breath, I had no one in mind as who could be the pervert who's been making my life a living hell. I decided to just focus on the cooking, I started off with the veggies while I listened to good music. I wanted to play something that would cheer me up and the only person who could do that would be Chris Brown or Drake...turned out this guy only listened to jazz. Well, mostly jazz, but I found something I could listen to.

As expected, his sister popped up again.

She knocked, I went to open the door for her...she actually greeted, and I could tell that she was surprised that the house was filled with the meat

aromas. I closed the door and returned back to the kitchen while she sat in the lounge probably waiting for me to join her. After a couple of minutes, she walked up to where I was and sat across the kitchen counter.

Asenathi: smells nice.

I didn't answer her...what was she doing here anyway? Isn't she supposed to manage some carwash and tshis anyama that her brother gave her?

Asenathi: I think we got off on the wrong foot yesterday.

Me: you think?

Asenathi: okay, we got off on the wrong foot yesterday, I'm sorry.

I just looked at her.

Asenathi: I guess I'm just used to seeing him with different girls, and besides that, he hadn't properly introduced you to us. As he would in the past when he's really serious about a girl. I'm sorry I was rude to you.

Me: it's water under the bridge.

Asenathi: what you said, about me thinking so little of him...that aint true.

Me: but you just said you're used to seeing him with different girls. How's that different from what I said yesterday?

Asenathi: it's just that I always feel the need to protect him.

Me: which I cannot fault you on, but he's a grown man. Surely he can stand up for himself and surely he knows when he's being used for money.

She sighed.

I continued cooking.

Why was she suddenly so kind towards me today?

Asenathi: can we start over?

Me: is that why you're here?

Asenathi: yes sisi, I came to apologize.

Me: I thought you're here to watch that I don't leave with any of your brother's property.

Asenathi: oh-kay, I deserve that.

I chuckled.

She's use to getting her way, she could just be meek right now because she didn't get her way with me. Well she better get used to it, I wasn't raised to be a coward, I know very well when I'm being bullied.

Asenathi: he loves you, and all I can do is to work with you for his well-being. He's my brother and I love him, if you make him happy then I have to accept that.

Me: otherwise you're just doing this for him? Did he maybe send you to come and apologize? Is that what this is?

Asenathi: no. He doesn't even know I'm here.

Me: I bet he does, he knows you more than you know yourself.

Asenathi: maybe, but he doesn't know that I came here to apologize to you.

Me: okay. Forgiven.

She smiled.

Asenathi: thank you...now let me introduce myself properly. My name is Asenathi and I'm your boyfriend's sister.

Me: my name is Cassandra, and I'm your brother's girlfriend.

She extended her hand, I extended mine and we

made a truce.

Asenathi: so, what do you do?

Me: I'm a student.

And yes, she spent more than two hours chatting me up a storm then she left. I didn't even offer her drinks, it's her brothers' house, she knows the way around his house. And by the time she left, I wasn't even done with the dumplings so umnke engatyanga (without eating). When I was done cooking I lowered the stoves to for the gravy to simmer, went to cuddle myself on the couch eating grapes. I wanted to call my brother and ask him about this Khiro guy but I was afraid of whatever he might say, of whoever he might say is this guy especially now that he said I know this khiro. As I was still contemplating, Nkosinathi called, I found myself smiling at the screen.

Me: Mr Dakumba?

Nkosinathi: aw baby!

I laughed at him so hard my stomach hurt.

He continued with his exclamations, it was so weird and funny at the same time.

Me: stop it.

Nkosinathi: so I mustn't show that I'm happy?

Me: no, I'm not saying that. Just...

Nkosinathi: you're too modest yazi wena.

Me: whatever!

Nkosinathi: but I love you anyway...are you still okay?

Me: ewe babe, I'm okay.

Nkosinathi: are you sure?

Me: yep, your sister paid me a visit again.

Nkosinathi: oh God!

Me: she actually came to apologize this time around.

Nkosinathi: wait, what?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: baby, Asenathi doesn't apologize to anyone except to her folks.

Me: well, she apologized, said she was just looking out for you.

Nkosinathi: wow...you must have made an impression, even though you still don't wanna tell me what happened between ya'll yesterday.

Me: it's water under the bridge, especially now that she had apologized.

He kept quiet...

Me: you still there?

Nkosinathi: yeah uhm, I'm actually glad that she came in person to apologize to you. Yazi baby I love you, and yesterday I was kind of hurt that you two

got off on a wrong foot.

Me: mh.

Nkosinathi: now she's made it easy for me to take you home, introduce you to the fam.

Me: whoah whoah tiger, we're moving waaay too fast now.

Nkosinathi: not now obviously, when you're ready.

Me: I'll be ready after I've graduated. If you introduce me now, your entire family is going to think I'm after your money.

Nkosinathi: what they think doesn't really matter.

Me: it does, if it didn't you wouldn't actually mind not introducing me to them. Can we talk about something else now?

He didn't answer me...

Well I continued talking anyway...

Me: my brother has an idea who this Khiro might be, just that he thinks it's someone I know.

Nkosinathi: someone you know? Like who?

Me: I don't know, we'll find out soon enough though.

Nkosinathi: oh-kay.

Me: you can get back to work ke.

Nkosinathi: I'm actually outside.

Me: outside where?

Then I heard the gate open...

Me: eshe.

He laughed.

I hung up, after a while he walked in with a bouquet of roses, my heart melted. You know when it's cold, and then someone walks into a warm house that smelt hearty food? The fire burning and the atmosphere changed, like you're not in your own

home? I could tell just by one look at him that he was happy. There was this beautiful glow in his eyes. He came to kiss me, gave me my flowers and a gift bag then he removed his shoes and sat next to me. I opened the gift bag, there was a pair of diamond studs, red wine and a box of chocolate. The things some people would receive on Valentine's Day.

Me: thank you. These are beautiful.

Nkosinathi: wanted to appreciate you for spending the weekend with me and of course, the cooking.

Me: haha! You better!

He smiled as he watched me looking at the studs...

I closed the box and looked at him, touching his hand.

Me: you don't have to buy me expensive gifts to show that you appreciate me. A simple thank is

enough.

Nkosinathi: I know, but I wanted to. You've been going through a lot lately, I just wanted to put a smile on your face.

Me: I appreciate that.

Nkosinathi: as long as I don't make it a habit?

Me: ewe baby. I don't wanna get used to things I know I can't afford.

Nkosinathi: but I can afford them.

Me: and when you decide you no longer wanna buy them? What then?

Nkosinathi: do you have to be negative though?

Me: no...okay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: we haven't been dating for even a year but you're already thinking ahead. Can we just enjoy this time? Enjoy each other without thinking about what if's and what not's?

Me: yes, I'm sorry.

He kissed the top of my hand looking deep in my eyes. I couldn't help but think, what if he's Khiro? Why didn't he sound shocked that my brother could be able to trace this Khiro guy back to someone I know? I know him, I know a lot of people back home but I know people and this thing was killing me. Not knowing who it was, but after this "negative" comment I just made, I didn't wanna bring this one up as well. It would ruin the evening.

Nkosinathi: there's something I'd like us to talk about.

Me: oh-kay.

Nkosinathi: I see a future with you and you know that, but I want us to run some tests first. So we can plan accordingly.

Me: what tests?

Nkosinathi: blood tests, chlamydia test, laparoscopy, semen analysis? All kinds of tests.

Me: what's laparoscopy?

Nkosinathi: it is a keyhole surgery that involves making a small cut in your lower tummy so a thin tube with a camera at the end (a laparoscope) can be inserted to examine your womb, fallopian tubes and ovaries.

Me: it won't do any damage?

Nkosinathi: I doubt, but we'll speak to the GP to explain more before we can consider it.

Me: okay, whenever you're ready.

Nkosinathi: is tomorrow too soon for you?

Me: uhm...that was fast. But, no...we can get on with it.

Nkosinathi: I'll make an appointment then, maybe he can come here with his kits.

Me: okay. Can I ask you a question now?

Nkosinathi: sure.

Me: how would you feel if we were to discover that I can't have babies?

Nkosinathi: I don't know, honestly. But, there many

other ways to make babies so it wouldn't be a train smash.

Me: would you love me any less?

Nkosinathi: Never!

I kept quiet.

Not that I didn't believe him but I had gotten to know how much he values family, it would shatter him.

He looked at me...

Nkosinathi: trust me, I'd never love you any less just because you can't have babies. Hypothetically speaking. I love you now, and I'll love you even then. For all we know, I could be the one who cannot have kids, it takes two people to make babies.

He sealed that with a kiss.

[06/26, 14:45] : #Cassandra_31

While I plated up, he lit candles all around the house and switched off the lights. Moved the coffee table, lay a blankie where the table was and we had dinner by the fire place. There's nothing romantic about dumplings and stew but there was everything romantic about this setting, I had my flowers next to me and my wine waiting in the fridge...what more could I ask for?

My phone rang while we were having some light conversation...

Me: hello bhuti?

Steve: uphi? (where are you?)

Me: uhm, ndis endlini (I'm at home). Why?

Steve: Cassandra, I'm at your house, where the fuck are you?

Holy shit!

Me: ndiyeza bhuti. (I'm coming)

Steve: uyeza uvelaphi? Ulibonile ixesha? (Where are you coming from? Did you see the time?)

Me: it's not even seven yet, I'm coming.

Steve: hey hey hey, don't fucken give me that attitude uyeva? Why didn't you go to class? Where the fuck are you?

I was already on my way to the bedroom,
Nkosinathi was right behind me.

Steve: if you're not here in the next five minutes I'll come fetch you and you won't like what I'll do to you.

Then he hung up.

I didn't say a word, I just got dressed into warm clothes, couldn't pack anything because...what will I say to him? That I went for a weekend at my boyfriends' place while they were busy looking for a man who could possibly be a serial killer? Hell no!

Nkosinathi: baby, what's going on?

Me: I have to go, my brother is here and he knows I skipped class today.

Nkosinathi: okay calm down.

Me: how can I be calm? That nigga is livid.

He watched me...

I didn't even know what I was doing, at least I wasn't dressed in pyjamas.

Nkosinathi: let me take you home.

Me: okay...okay, so ndizothi ndivelaphi (where will I say I'm coming from) so late?

He took my hand and walked me down the stairs, grabbed the flowers and gift bag and walked out. My phone was on the other hand. We drove in silent for five minutes.

Me: and's oyiki. (I'm so scared)

Nkosinathi: just tell him we went to watch movies, we were about to have dinner when he called that's why you smell of food.

Me: why did I miss class?

Nkosinathi: you were feeling down?

Me: okay...okay.

Nkosinathi: baby calm down, you look guilty right now.

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath in..and out, three times then I looked at my flowers and smiled. Maybe this plan of his was gonna work.

Me: okay, here goes nothing.

Nkosinathi: just be calm, tell him you went out and here's proof in your hands.

Me: okay, love you.

I kissed his cheek as we neared where I stay, I saw my brother's car outside the yard but there was no one inside. I got off, Nkosinathi flickered his lights and left. I took a deep breath and counted my steps as I opened the gate and went to my room. The door was open, Steve was back with Ginger...

Me: molweni, where did you get my key?

Steve: uvelaphi? (where have you been?)

He looked at my hands, the bouquet of flowers and the gift bag.

Steve: is he the reason why you missed class today?

Me: no.

Steve: then where were you the whole day? Your neighbors said they haven't seen you the whole day, not even yesterday.

Me: I was here kanti, I was just feeling down...he called, took me out for dinner and movies to cheer me up. That's it.

He looked at me, trying to read the truth out of me.

Me: oh-kay, why are you guys here?

Steve: I came to check on you.

Me: I thought ya'll were coming next week.

Steve: well it's a weekend, we have to make sure you're safe. And I've found a place for you to live but we can only check it out next week when the owner is back from her holiday.

Me: what about that other one?

Steve: nah, it's out of the cards.

Me: okay. Thanks.

I put the flowers in water and the gift bag in my wardrobe.

Me: tea?

Steve: no...we won't be long. Can you do me this one favour please?

Me: sure.

Steve: stay indoors.

Me: as in stay indoors the whole weekend?

Steve: yes, the whole weekend. It's better for us to locate you when you're here than elsewhere.

Me: I have a date with my boyfriend tomorrow...I can't.

Steve: so your date is more important than your life?

Me: bhuti my life cannot and will not come to a standstill because of some psychopath who cannot man up and face me in person. Will I also stop going to campus because I fear I might be knocked

over? Or someone might grab me on the way and drive away with me? No. that's not going to happen.

Ginger: she's right...she can't put her life on hold because this scumbag. And anyway, if he wanted to hurt her, surely he would have done that already.

Steve: how sure are you that you're safer with him?

Me: it's better than being here all alone, people here didn't even come out that night we got shot at.

Steve: okay...can you call him to come here.

Me: call who?

Steve: your boyfriend. I wanna talk to him.

Me: haike bhuti.

Steve: it's either that or we're going with you and we're bringing you back on Sunday afternoon.

I sulked while dialing Nkosinathi.

He answered...

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: ubhuti ucela uze apha. (MY brother would like to see you)

Nkosinathi: is everything okay?

Me: yeah.

Nkosinathi: okay, ndiyeza. (I'm coming)

Me: thanks.

I put the phone down...what if ubhuti was going to break the Khiro news to me in front of my boyfriend? I panicked, my brother was just so chilled all of a sudden.

Me: what are you going to say to him?

Steve: you'll hear when I talk to him.

Me: please don't be harsh.

Ginger laughed...

Me: suhleka bhuti, uyamazi u chomi wakho. (please don't laugh, you know your friend)

Ginger: at least the guy needs to know that he can't mess with you, let your brother do his work as your big brother.

Me: he's not messing with me njena.

Ginger: it won't hurt reminding him.

Steve: and it won't hurt tu. Anyway, she's been hiding this guy, so why not meet him now while we're both here?

Hey!

Umnqwazi wam ubungaqini tu yilento ka bhuti (I was so uncomfortable) ...Nkosinathi asked me to open the gate for him and he drove in, came knocking on my door and walked in. He greeted these two and sat down, my brother looked at me, I took a deep breath and did the introductions.

Me: bhuti this is Nkosinathi Dakumba...bra, that's Ginger, my brothers' friend and this is Steve my brother.

They all shook hands, he probably would have corrected that "bra" but under the circumstances we had found ourselves in, that reference worked out just fine.

Steve: I called you here because I believe you're well aware of what Sandra has been going through, especially these past few weeks.

Nkosinathi: yeah, sure.

Steve: Asikwazi mos thina pha ekhaya, waziwa ngu Cassandra but I'm gonna need you to do me a favour. Keep an eye on her ingakumbi kule weekend. (We don't know you, only Cassandra knows you. Keep an eye on her especially this weekend)

Nkosinathi: oh-kay. Kutheni kule weekend? (What's happening this weekend?)

Steve: le chap u Khiro namajita akhe alapha eBhayi

kule weekend. Obviously asikwazi uvele sim'attack'e okanye simbambise singena proof yalento ayenza kulomntana kodwa ke we are working on that. But ndi funa sonke sisebenzisane sibe careful. (Khiro and his men are here in PE. Obviously we can't attack him or report him without solid proof of what he's been doing but we're working on that. All I need is for all of us to be careful and work together)

Nkosinathi: kutheni ningam'godusi u Cassandra for the weekend? (Why don't you take her home for the weekend?)

Steve: akafuni, uthi une date nawe. (She doesn't want to, she says she has a date with you)

Nkosinathi: surely we can reschedule, I mean...this is her life and I believe she's safer at home than here.

They all looked at me...I wasn't gonna go home and put the rest of my family in danger mna. That was not going to happen.

Steve: and'funi ke ukuba ngathi ndiyam'monela ngolonwabo kodwa ke bendis its ho kuye ukuba makagoduke okanye ahlale ngaphakathi apha iweekend yonke. Side sibe sure ku safe. (I don't wanna come across as a jealous brother but that's what I was saying to her, or else she must just spend the weekend indoors until we're sure she's safe)

Ginger: kodwa akakwazi umisa ubom bakhe umntana, lo Khiro makambone ukuba she's still living her life even though he's trying to make it a living hell. (But the child cannot put her life on hold, this guy must see that she's still living her life even though he's trying to make it a living hell)

Steve: I get that, but does anyone understand the risk that comes with living her live right now?

Nkosinathi: okay so what do you want me to do?

Steve: if she's really adamant that she's staying, I need you to keep an eye on her. Now that the landlord died, even this place is not safe for her.

Nkosinathi: I can do that...do you need help with anything regarding this Khiro guy?

Ginger: neh, we got everything under control.

Steve: give me your number...I might need something. I can't say right now.

Nkosinathi removed his business card and gave to Steve...Steve looked at the card, back to Nkosinathi, then back to the card. I could tell he wanted to say something but he probably bit his tongue for one reason or the other.

Steve: uyabona ba ubune license bendizokuzamela imoto ngoku ungakhweli taxi? (IF you had your license I'd get a temporal car for you so that you don't have to catch a taxi)

Nkosinathi: that wouldn't be safe, what if these people plan a hijack and catch her driving alone?

Steve: true...yey, ndenziwa kuxakwa.

Me: have you told dad about this?

Steve: no, only your brother.

Me: oh okay.

Nkosinathi: alright then...I guess I can go now?

Steve: yeah man, thank you for coming through.
And, we're still going to talk about this relationship of yours when the time is right but I must say it's nice to finally meet you.

Nkosinathi chuckled as they shook hands, then he walked out.

I followed behind him so that I can open the gate for him. He got in his car and lowered the window...

Nkosinathi: I'm not letting you sleep alone here, once they're gone I'll come back to fetch you.

Me: okay.

Then he drove out.

This whole thing was draining me out, this Khiron guy has been running around in circles for two whole years. Haibo, doesn't he have a life?

[06/26, 14:45] : #Cassandra_32

After a while, Ginger excused himself, his phone had been ringing non-stop. I looked at my brother who couldn't be bothered at all by his friend's shadiness...

Me: what's up with u bhut'Ginger bhuti?

Steve: he's got his own demons, don't mind him.

Me: I can't help but think he somehow knows who this Khiron is, there's just some uneasiness with him lately especially when we mention this guy.

Steve: don't let your imagination rule over you, how long have you known Ginger now?

Me: okay okay, fine.

Steve: good, now I really have to go. I promised my woman I'd be home this weekend.

Me: drive safe.

Steve: you too, be safe. Call me if anything happens, if you can't get hold of me call Lionel.

Me: okay.

Steve: ushota ngantoni? (What else do you need?)

Me: I have everything I need, except for money.

Steve: imali yantoni xa unazo zonke izinto ozidingayo? (What money when you say you have everything you need?)

Me: pocket money, please?

He removed R300 from his wallet, mumbling that he knows mom gave me money when she was here blah-blah-blah. What mattered was that he was giving me money, I didn't mind the mumblings. When his friend returned, they left together in one car..just as I closed the gate, my boyfriend texted and asked whether they were still here so I texted

him back to come fetch me. He was there within a wink of an eye...he told me to bring my books so that I leave on Monday morning, so I took everything I'd need (Books, laptop, etc) a couple more clothes and my new studs. Well, I didn't leave anything "valuable" just in case there's a break-in during the night while I'm out being hot and cozy in someone's arms. We left together, got at his place and went straight to bed. I was emotionally exhausted by this whole thing and he could tell. We cuddled in silence...well, until he spoke up first.

Nkosinathi: what's the story with your brother's friend?

Me: what story?

Nkosinathi: he was uneasy when I got there.

Me: he's been like that for a while now, maybe he just has a lot going on for him.

Nkosinathi: mh.

I closed my eyes...the darkness was sooo calming, I don't know when I fell asleep but when I woke up, he was still fast asleep. The sun was up, so got up, went to the bathroom, came back and took my phone while I walked barefoot to the kitchen. I just wanted oats, nothing else so when I got to the kitchen I looked for it and found it. I checked my messages, missed calls and all of that stuff while cooking the oats... I saw a missed call from Siki and it caught my attention. It had been a while since I spoke to her, like, a while. So I called her back.

Siki: hey baby girl. You sleep very early.

Me: big sis, I was exhausted. How are you?

Siki: I'm very well, you sound like you had a good night sleep.

Me: I did. So what's up?

Siki: nothing, I was just missing you and I was sent to ask you when are you visiting us?

I laughed at the last part...

Siki: we live in a bigger house now, come on.

Me: but your kids still have mice and scorpions as pets.

Siki: they have cages Sandra, come on.

Me: I hate mice, I might just wanna kill them.

Siki: like you did the last time you were here?

Me: that was a mistake though, I didn't know Kimmy was a pet. How could you even allow your son to name a mouse "Kimmy"?

We both laughed.

Me: I'll first talk to dad, then maybe I can spend two weeks with you in December and the other weeks with Cindy.

Siki: you'll spend two weeks with us, then all of us including Cindy, we're spending the rest of the holidays at Asanda's.

Me: oh okay, that'll be nice.

Siki: alright then, enjoy your weekend baby.

Me: you too sis.

She hung up.

I dished up for the two of us, took both our bowls and necessary additions upstairs and found him still sleeping. Must have been tired. I didn't wake up up tu, I got in bed next to him, supported my back with a continental pillow then I took my oats and ate in silence. When I was done I covered the bowl with a saucer since his was already covered I just lay next to him, took pictures of his sleepy face because I was bored. I decided to rather bother my family on the Whats App family group...it was only about 30 minutes to an hour later when he finally woke up. Well he could have woken up prior to that and just watched me, coz I found him watching me in silence...

Me: how long have you been awake?

Nkosinathi: good morning baby.

I blushed

Me: good morning babe.

He looked ahead of me, I followed his eyes..oh he was looking at time.

Nkosinathi: I overslept. It's gonna be a long day.

Me: you must have been tired, didn't wanna wake you.

Nkosinathi: thank you.

Me: you have plans for today?

Nkosinathi: nah, switched my phone off last night and I'm not switching it on anytime soon. Whoever needs my attention will either have to wait, or come here.

Me: yes boss!

He chuckled as he got out of the bed, I went down with the tray that had his porridge, warmed it and made him tea. It was still chilly so...went back upstairs and found him in bed again. Gave him the tray and buried myself right next to him, we made conversation while he was eating, when he was done he took the tray downstairs and came back to bury himself right next to me as well. We made conversation looking at each other, cuddling, breathing the same air, it was nice and cozy...and then of course my phone had to ring in the middle of that coziness.

Me: hello?

Lisa: chomi uphi? I just passed past your house kuyatsha. (Where are you? Your place is burning down.)

I looked at my screen and then got back to her...

Me: uthini Lisa? (Lisa what are you saying?)

Lisa: kuyatsha kulandawo uhlala kuyo. Kanti uphi wena? (Where are you? Your place is burning down)

Me: uyaxoka! Ubuyothini wena phaya so early? (You're lying, what were you doing that side so early?)

Lisa: ndizoxokelantoni na Cassandra?

Ndivelothenga ukutya so obviously indlela idlula ngakwakho. (Why would I lie about something like this? The way from the grocery shops passes by your house)

Me: oh...okay.

I hung up and looked at Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: what?

Me: kuyatsha kwam. (There's fire at my place)

Nkosinathi: WHAT?

Me: exactly.

We both jumped out of bed, I quickly changed and but I couldn't find my shoes so I left wearing slippers. By the time we got there, the house, the flats and everything was ablaze. We arrived in time with the fire brigades so all we could do was watch along with the tenants and other residents from nearby houses. One of my tenant-neighbors saw me and she came running to me..she threw her arms around my neck and hugged me crying.

Me: heeey. Calm down, calm down.

Her: when we couldn't find you, we already thought of the worst. We thought you were still inside there.

Me: we? You and who?

Her: the landlord's son. He said the fire started between yours and Lucretia's flat.

Me: mine? Where's Lucretia?

Her: She's somewhere here, but she's safe.

Me: so nobody's hurt?

Her: no...just our clothes and furniture, and some students couldn't save their books. Oh my god, books.

She looked at me terrified.

Her: we couldn't save anything from your flat, by the time we saw the fire it had already burnt down half of it.

Me: it's okay, I'm just glad that no one got hurt.

Someone else called her so she ran across the street to that person, I went back to my boyfriend who was busy with a phone call. I could only thank God that I had taken my books when I left the previous night, I could only thank God. Clothes don't really matter, I could still buy them again. I felt Nkosinathi's hand on my waist but he was still talking on his cell...when he was done he said we should go back to his house. When we got there we

sat down and he looked at me without saying a word.

Me: it's him.

Nkosinathi: yes.

His yes shook something in me, he sounded very sure. I eyed him quizzically.

Nkosinathi: I was talking to your brother on the phone, he wanted to find out how you're doing.

Me: no, wait. Why do you sound very sure that it's him? Your yes sounds very convinced.

Nkosinathi: your brother called me last night after he left and said I should go and fetch you, he didn't want to say anything in front of his friend.

Me: so he knew this would happen?

Nkosinathi: he thought something might happen, he just didn't know what exactly. His gut was unsettled.

Me: but, doesn't he trust Ginger? Why would he not say anything in front of him?

Nkosinathi: that's why I asked you last night what's his story.

My mind raced...so Nkosinathi really knew, that's why he suggested I take extra clothes and my books. My brother trusted a stranger with my life? Nkosinathi was a stranger to him kaloku.

Me: it's so unlike him to trust someone he doesn't know with my life.

Nkosinathi: he trusted you, not me. You said you don't want to go home because you have a date with me, he used that.

Me: I see.

I was still shocked. I could only think of the other tenants, I didn't really care about myself but the other tenants lost their stuff because of this stupid

asshole excuse of a man.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_33

I took a deep breath and called my brother...

Steve: Sandra?

Me: They burnt my place down.

Steve: I know...just stay put where you are, Lionel and his people are on it.

Me: bhuti I'm scared. If this guy didn't care about the rest of the tenants in that compound what else can he do to get to me?

Steve: he doesn't want to hurt you, right? He's just obsessed with you.

Me: that's what he had made me believe.

Steve: just stay where you are, I'll keep you updated with everything.

Me: okay. Thank you.

He hung up, I got up and walked upstairs. The bed wasn't made because we had rushed out to go check out the fire so I got on with it and made it. I opened all the windows and just started cleaning the room, I just wanted to get busy with something as long as I don't get to think about this whole thing. I heard him walk in and he just stood by the door... until I was done with everything. We had dirty laundry, from the previous day, maybe he had for the entire week but I couldn't do laundry now and then tomorrow I am still left with dirty clothes so I opted to rather wash everything on Sunday.

Me: was up?

Nkosinathi: come here.

I put the broom down and went to him still standing by the door. He wrapped his arms around my waist and kissed me until I smiled...

Nkosinathi: I promised you before that nothing will ever happen to you. I will protect you, at any cost.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: now stop over-working yourself. It's Saturday, we should be resting, relaxing.

Me: I just want to do something, I want to avoid thinking about this.

Nkosinathi: I don't want you doing anything other than relaxing, Khiri won't hurt you while I'm here.

He kissed my lips still smiling at me..I just hugged him.

Me: I love you.

Nkosinathi: ndim othanda wena. (I love you)

Me: okay I've cleaned the room, let's go clean the kitchen now.

Nkosinathi: mmkay, after that we are watching movies, eating junk food and drinking winery.

Me: hahaha! You don't have winery, you'll be drinking your whiskey bhuti.

Nkosinathi: I have bottles of winery sisi, I just bought that one specially for you.

Me: mmmkay.

We walked down the stairs hand in hand...my phone rang, private caller.

Nkosinathi: do not answer him, he's just trying to track your location.

Me: oh-kay.

I cut the call.

There was a car hooting at the gate, I looked at him with my heart on my throat.

Nkosinathi: that must be Saheed.

Me: Saheed?

Nkosinathi: yes, a friend of mine. I asked him to come talk to you.

Me: for what? Is he a counsellor? Or Psychiatrist?

Nkosinathi: none of the above.

He had already opened the gate while telling me about this friend of his so he went to open the door now, I went to sit down because, “he asked his friend to come talk to me”. Saheed walked in, they greeted each other and came to where I was.

Nkosinathi offered him a drink and he asked for water so he went to fetch him bottled water. Saheed explained to me what Nkosinathi told him about this Khiro issue, then he told me why he was here: to install an anti-tracker into my phone so that even if I answer this guy's calls, he doesn't know my whereabouts. I gave them my phone, Saheed

worked his magic. After about an hour later, he tested it and he seemed satisfied by his work so they walked each other out again. I sat there not knowing whether this was going to be helpful in any way but I had no choice but to trust Nkosinathi. I texted my brother and updated him on what just happened, he responded with “Okay, hang in there” okay at least he knows. At least he’s updated. Nkosinathi came back and sat with me...I stood up,

Me: we were about to clean the kitchen, remember?

He stood up and followed me to the kitchen, I washed, he dried and packed then when we had swept the floor he ordered enough junk food to feed the men on the streets and we camped in. I didn’t want to think about this thing so I appreciated him not making conversation about it as well.

Nkosinathi: about the tests.

Me: yes, I thought you were going to call in your doctor?

Nkosinathi: I was, but then you're under a lot of stress, I decided not to.

Me: and you didn't tell me because?

Nkosinathi: it slipped my mind I'm sorry, anyway, we can reschedule to any other day once this whole thing is over.

Me: you think it'll ever be over?

Nkosinathi: your brothers seem to have it under control, so I believe it will.

Me: mh.

Nkosinathi: relax...you have the best family I've had to encounter even though I haven't met them but I can see that you're surrounded by caring and loving siblings.

Me: mh, you forgot crazy.

He laughed...

Nkosinathi: I cannot say anything on that, I have a

bully as a sister.

Me: she's actually nice, kind would be the right word, its just that she's looking out for you.

Nkosinathi: I am old enough to look after myself.

Me: baby, family will always be on the lookout for us, no matter how old we get. When are we going to see your other families again? I did promise to come back and play with the kids.

Nkosinathi: for now let's just focus on you, we'll go there whenever it's safe for you.

Me: I want to do something that will keep my mind busy from thinking about this.

Nkosinathi: let's eat, we've got food and Showmax or Netflix at our disposal here.

Me: oh-kay.

He went to get the food, put everything on the coffee table and then we had a semi-argument over what to watch. I won obviously. After about two hours, his phone rang...both our phones were right

in front of us so I saw Kim's picture pop up on the screen. I took a deep breath as he answered, they spoke for a good thirty and something minutes...

Nkosinathi: Kim and her brother's fiancé are in town and they want to come see us.

I didn't answer him, he nudged his elbow in my ribs.

Me: hm?

Nkosinathi: Kim and her brother's fiancé are in town and they want to come see us.

Me: you mean they wanna come see you.

Nkosinathi: US.

Me: bandazelaphi mna? (Where do they know me from?)

Nkosinathi: I told them I'm with you.

Me: mmh, when are they coming?

Nkosinathi: tomorrow, lunch time.

Me: oh thank God, thought they're coming now.

Nkosinathi: would that have been a problem?

Me: I haven't bathed, look at my hair, there's junk in front of us, yeah that would have been a problem.

He smiled...

Me: what's that smile for?

Nkosinathi: you pretend like you don't care what people think of you, but listen to you right now.

Me: these aren't just people, they are YOUR people, YOUR friends. Even I won't make a lasting impression but let me at least make an attempt to make the first impression.

Nkosinathi: yes ma'am.

He said that with such sarcasm, I had to look at the smirk on his face. I threw a pillow at him and he ducked laughing out loud, his laughter warmed my

heart so much I just wanted to jump onto him and hug out that silliness. There was just something warm and fuzzy about watching and hearing his laughter. He grabbed my waist still laughing, I just chuckled as he kissed me from behind.

Later on that day we didn't even bother cleaning up the lounge, we went upstairs, I ran myself a bath hoping that he'll shower and go to bed leaving me in peace to enjoy my bath. I undressed and got under the bubbles, closed my eyes and allowed the aromas to do the work. He walked in with a bottle of wine and two glasses...

Me: uyaphi?

Nkosinathi: I'm bathing with you.

Me: why don't you take a shower?

Nkosinathi: I don't want to.

He got out of his clothes, got in the bath still going

on about him wanting to bath with me and I don't want him to, like, he was mumbling alone, I was just laughing at him. He got in, spread my legs so he could get between them and then poured the wine giving me mine.

Me: what are we celebrating?

Nkosinathi: me.

Me: you? Why?

Nkosinathi: I have managed to turn a lesbian straight without even having sex with her. Cheers to me.

I burst out laughing...I couldn't believe that he just said that.

I felt defeated, he must have known all along that I was lying to him.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_34

We had a whole lot other conversations about our future whilst in there. He seemed like a man with a plan, he knew what he wanted and when he wanted it.

Nkosinathi: so what have you decided on, regarding after your graduation?

Me: I think Cape Town is still in the cards.

Nkosinathi: is there a potential employer that side?

Me: not really, I just want a change of scenery.

Nkosinathi: I have a house in J o'burg that I don't live in. If Gauteng is an option.

Me: okay, I'll keep that in mind. Where does the rest of your family live though?

Nkosinathi: all over, sister and fam in Gauteng, the folk in the greener parts of the EC and some siblings abroad.

Me: mh, maybe I should consider this abroad thing too.

Nkosinathi: hay hay don't even think about that. You want me to have to travel to get to see you?

Me: it will be worthwhile though.

Nkosinathi: no baby, you can go anywhere within South Africa I won't stop you because I know I'll be able to see you anytime I want to. Abroad? Hay babe.

I couldn't help but laugh at him, he was right though. I also don't see myself living anywhere without my family. Myeke yena , but my family . After a while he asked me to move from where I was to his side of the tub so that meant I had to come on top, I put my glass down and slid on top of his foamy body, his hand caught the back of my thigh and his lips didn't waste any time. We kissed very slowly, his hands working overtime on my behind. I could feel his temperature rising and I was ready to give myself to him. Maybe because I thought having sex would get my mind of things for a moment, or maybe because I sincerely believed he was the right

one and I felt ready. He pulled my head backwards as he kissed from my lips down my neck, I let out a soft moan as this sent sensation across my body

. I literally felt my nipples waking up to attention. He must have felt them on his chest because his other hand went up my back, pressing on the middle part so our chests were pressed together, and his kisses were driving me insane . They were doing something to my mind..I stopped and looked at him, taking a breather.

Nkosinathi: the water is getting cold.

Me: we should get out then.

I started, got out of the bath and grabbed a towel, he followed after draining the water out and grabbed his own towel. After drying himself out he came to help me dry my hair, he had already grabbed another towel. As he stood behind me I could feel his erection against my butt, that excited me for a second but scared the lights out of me the next

second. What if he's too big? What if this whole shandis will be painful and I can't walk tomorrow? What if he doesn't enjoy it? What if I bleed a lot and dirty his white sheets? What if he decides he no longer wants me after I give him the cookie? What if, what if, what if? I closed my eyes as I felt his hand on my boob and lay my head back, he was just touching and kissing me in all the right places . Within a single breath, he turned me around and pinned me against the door kissing me deeper than before, this time I knew deep down that there was no turning back, he was prepared, he must have had bought condoms. Both our towels fell down so we did a body to body kinda situation as he melted under the love spell (or was it lust?) he opened the door and walked us both to the bedroom. Lay me on my back and worshipped my body. This would officially be our second attempt at this and I could tell that he was a dedicated fast learner, I mean he knew exactly what excited me and he stuck to it. I swear I had multiple orgasms from his kisses only. He stopped and looked at me...I could see the hunger in his eyes

Nkosinathi: are you sure?

I nod.

Nkosinathi: for real?

Me: for real.

He reached for his drawer and took out a condom, gave it to me to open. I wanted to laugh, he knows I'm a virgin by now so using 'ba ndakhe ndayivulaphi i condom? I bit off the corner of it, opened the rest of the packet with my forefinger then I gave it back to him. He wanted me to assist him with it and I wasn't gonna do that, I didn't even want to look at his manhood lest fear creeps in. After a few seconds of waiting he came up to my lips and kissed me, I kissed him back, I felt his hand between my legs and I opened for him to go further in. He found the g-spot in a few seconds and my walls came crumbling down, I gasped for breath as I realized that I had just cum all over his fingers. I

opened my eyes and watched him in awe as he licked it all off nigga was just showing off now... he came closer between my legs and I felt him at the entrance of my palace. I closed my eyes shut as I tensed my muscles. He stopped and came back to kiss me, I guessed this was his way of calming me down. The kisses I mean. As soon as I got the groove back, he went for the first thrust and I quickly shut my thighs, but to what? His entire body was on mine, he waited for my body to relax, not having stopped to bathe me with kisses. He thrust again and this time I legit let out a cry, he just did circular motions and my fingers went deeper onto his back. The third time he thrust was waaay better than the first two attempts and then we got into the groove. I had one orgasm, he had his and then he helped me remove the bed linen which had blood stains. I soaked it in the bathtub and went to join him in bed.

My thighs were hot, he made me lay on him with his thighs between mine as he kissed the crown of my head.

Nkosinathi: Did I hurt you?

Me: mh.mh.

Nkosinathi: do you still love me?

I chuckled, why wouldn't I still love him? I just gave him my pride for heaven's sake.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

I didn't respond.

He squeezed my behind soooo tenderly I found myself moaning like a cat that just found warmth on a cat woman's lap.

Me: good night baby.

Nkosinathi: night babe.

I closed my eyes and fell asleep, in the wee hours of the morning I woke up and went to the bathroom. I

could feel some pain down there especially when I peed, I held my tears back because I didn't wanna be u HAHA but yho. I traced my steps back to his bed, trying my best not to rub my thighs together so much, I snuggled up next to him and covered my head so I could only breathe our scents or rather the sex odour? Whichever was breathable, I found myself caving in against his body. He was warm. His arm pulled me even close and then I felt his lips on mine, he had this tendency of speaking while our lips were smashed together.

Nkosinathi: goo' morning.

Me: mmh'ing.

Then he sucked my bottom lip in, I would have never thought I'd break my virginity and still get the morning glory the following day but then, I got it. I enjoyed the attention, the kisses, the thrusts, the moans, the groans more today, yes I was still sore but it wasn't as painful as when he broke the hymen.

There was this way he would softly say my name between his teeth as he climaxed! It sent me off the rails. Two rounds with multiple orgasm and then we cuddled until the sun came up. When I finally woke up he was not in bed, I touched myself down there... I was hot and a bit puffy which was understandable. He emerged from the bathroom looking sharp and came to sit next to me...

Nkosinathi: I'm going out for a bit, what should I bring you?

Me: nothing.

Nkosinathi: haibo baby.

Me: serious.

Nkosinathi: okay, I'll be gone for about an hour, just text me if you need anything.

Me: okay. Please take the key with.

Nkosinathi: sure...are you sure you don't need anything?

I nod...

Well I needed to be taken for shopping, I have lost everything in that fire. But that wasn't his responsibility, I have a family to take care of that. And anyway, I just wanted him gone so that I could bath, nurse my swollen self. He kissed me on the lips, grabbed his phone and walked out. I waited until I heard the car leave then I called Onele...

Onele: hello?

Me: hey, aren't you going to church? You sound sleepy.

Onele: nah, dad's asked me to accompany him to Siwe's wedding. He's the officiator there.

Me: oh wow.

Onele: yeah, I'm feeling bleh though.

Me: why? Didn't get enough sleep?

Onele: snuck out last night, and today, I just want to sleep. Not go to a wedding. Gosh.

Yho andam'hleka.

I was initially going to tell her about losing my virginity then I decided, no. It's not really necessary. She doesn't have to know now, actually, she doesn't even have to know.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_35

Khiro called...

I didn't want to answer him so I put the phone on silent and just watched it ring.

He called about three more times but I still wouldn't be bothered. I didn't want to answer him ndihleli ndedwa in this house. Aphiwe called...

Me: mtshana.

Aphiwe: makazi othandwayo, unjani?

Me: I'm okay, why are you excited?

He laughed...

Aphiwe: I'm just calling to remind you of our deal.

Me: I haven't forgotten chanas, I'm still looking for a place to stay. Even your other makazi wants to come when you're this side.

Aphiwe: oh really?

Me: yeah, I'll tell ya'll when I've settled in. Don't stress.

Aphiwe: okay ke, please send me airtime or data when you have money.

Me: that's actually why you called.

He laughed...

Me: cela ku tamkhulu wakho mfondini, I don't have money nam nds ezocela kuye.

Aphiwe: ooh yah, let me call him with the rest of this airtime. Bye bye, I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He hung up...

I got out of bed, wore Nkosinathi's vest and flops and went to make myself food. By the time I went back upstairs, I had three missed calls from my other brother. I didn't want anything to ruin my morning so I didn't call him back, he texted: "Sandra uright? Was checking on you but awuphenduli phone. What's going on?" okay I texted him back

:" ndi right bhuti I'm just avoiding the phone lest this psycho tries to call me" he responded with

"okay ke... I'm in PE I'll fetch you from campus tomorrow" I screamed

yes Steve is always a call away but Lionel? he's a definite

fave. I was so excited, but I still wasn't gonna call

him I was just enjoying my day in peace. When I

was done eating, I made the bed and took a shower

then I wore tights and a vest still wearing his flops I

returned the plates downstairs and washed them. Now that this guy had gone off, I had to clean up the lounge that we left dirty the previous night only because I didn't know what time he'd be back and I didn't know what time his visitors would be coming. Just as I finished cleaning, he called...

Me: baby?

Nkosinathi: ude wavuka?

Me: duh.

Nkosinathi: I'm on my way, I miss you already.

Me: I miss you... Your house becomes too big without you.

Nkosinathi: I brought you something.

Me: I thought we spoke about you and gifts.

Nkosinathi: I said brought, not bought so it's not a gift per se.

Me: oh-Kay.

Nkosinathi: I'm not saying anything, you'll see it

when I get there.

Me: uziphathele ukutya ke, I'm not going anywhere near the stove today.

Nkosinathi: okay babe. See you in a bit.

Me: sure.

I hung up and just finished off then went to scoop ice cream for myself into a bowl and watched cartoons. I seriously didn't want any gifts from, yes I appreciated being appreciated but he bought expensive gifts about thirty minutes later his car drove in, he unlocked the door and walked in with a bouquet of flowers, again.

Me: ah, I should have guessed.

Nkosinathi: the flowers?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: actually, I brought you this. He went back outside and as he walked in, a chubby puppy

walked in behind him with its tail up in the air. I couldn't believe my eyes it was so cute I fell on my knees and started playing with it. He watched me in silence, then the dog wandered off around the house. I stood up, threw my arms around his neck and squeezed.

Me: thank you so much. Where did you get it?

Nkosinathi: from one of my associates, he was giving away three of them.

Me: and why didn't you take the other two?

Nkosinathi: uzohlalaphi nezinja ezintathu baby?

Me: oh kanene. Sorry.

He kissed my lips and gave me my flowers while I sulked, then he looked behind me at the lounge and smiled.

Me: I only cleaned that mess because I don't know

what time your friends are coming. Didn't want them to find your house turned into a pigsty.

Nkosinathi: there has been change of plans, they want us to go over.

Me: you and who?

He looked at me...

Me: I'm not going anywhere, but that don't mean you can't go.

Nkosinathi: I'm not leaving you alone here, the lunch might take long.

Me: it's fine, go and enjoy.

I let go of his embrace and went to put my flowers in water, he went upstairs and came back dressed in shorts and a vest. He sat on the coffee table, because he wanted to look me straight on the eye

Nkosinathi: kutheni ungafunu hamba?

Me: andina mpahla yonxiba.

Nkosinathi: we can got to the mall and buy something.

Me: ha.a baby, I don't want you buying me clothes so early in this relationship. My family will come through.

Nkosinathi: nini? You need Impahla ngoku.

Me: I'm not naked, so I don't need them. U bhut'Lionel uyeza ngomsa so I'll be sorted.

Nkosinathi: I already promised them that we'll be there, sobabini.

I took a deep breath...

Yazi even if I wasn't showing it, lanto yalamlilo indikhathazile and I was only going along with this lunch thing because they were coming over. Now that bengezi apha I didn't feel like I should go out, I

wouldn't be good company. I enjoyed my loneliness.
The peace, the quietness calmed me down.

† ♀

Me: akumoshakelanga nto kaloku nangoku, you can still go.

Nkosinathi: please don't do this.

Me: please don't force this. Please. I know you really want me to meet your friends but... Not now. Please.

He sighed and just looked at me then he took my spoon and ate my ice cream. When he had finished it he went to put the bowl in the sink and came back to sit next to me on the couch.

Me: ndi serious baby unгахamba. I'll get a chance to look at my books while you're gone.

He didn't answer me...

Me: uqumbile kengoku?

Nkosinathi: ewe.

Me: so you really thought I'd go to your friends wearing tights and vests?

Nkosinathi: ndizenayo nje i option yoba singayothenga into yonxiba ngoku, doesn't have to be the whole wardrobe qha awufuni.

Me: I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: for what?

Me: for putting you in this position. I don't want you spending too much money on me, your sister wants to protect you from gold diggers and me accepting imali yakho oko makes me feel like I'm in this for convenience.

Nkosinathi: ungenaphi u Asenathi ngoku?

Me: I understand where she's coming from.

Nkosinathi: you just don't wanna go to the lunch

baby, yiyeke ngoku. Ndikuvile.

Me: okay.

Hay tyhini ndathula nyhani, yes I had taken a few clothing items from my flat but they weren't good enough to go meet his friends ndinxibe zona. I didn't mind going to school ngazo, but ukuya koo Kim? Ziyahlebis a. It wouldn't have been a problem if they were coming here because I'd be busy serving them even if I'm wearing my torn jeans or tights but kwabo I'm gonna be a guest. Soze ndiyozihlebis a mna, ndizofika sendihletywa already kula campus ngoms o nangokukuts helwa.

After about 30 minutes sithule I just left him there and went upstairs, took out my laptop and books and did some work. Fifteen minutes later he walked in and went to his closet wakhupha impahla... Imagine , he wore denim to denim so who was gonna be the joke next to him? When he was done...

Nkosinathi: u sure aw'funuhamba nyhani baby?

Me: sure sure baby, go and enjoy yourself.

Nkosinathi: so there's nothing I can do or say to change your mind?

I shook my head...

Nkosinathi: uzotya ntoni apha?

Me: there's bread in the bread bin. I'll make something when I get hungry.

Nkosinathi: okay... Ndiyahamba kengoku. Come and lock.

Me: you can go with the key.

Nkosinathi: you have a puppy now, you cannot lock it outside or inside for that matter.

Me: oh, almost forgot about him.

I got up and followed him down the stairs, he seemed a bit pissed off but I didn't really care heartless, I know. We got to the door, he stopped and turned.

Nkosinathi: yazi andiyithandi lento uyenzayo.

Me: I know and I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: uyayazi I don't mind doing whatever I do for you because I love you, now suddenly you don't want me to buy you into yonxiba just this once because you don't wanna seem like a gold digger?

Me: you don't get it.

Nkosinathi: there's nothing to get apha, you're just making a lot of senseless excuses.

Me: please don't allow this to change your mood, usaya ebantwini and you can't rock up with such sour mood kubo.

Nkosinathi: baby this is funny to you?

Me: no it's not, I'm just saying.

Nkosinathi: ndcela unxibe sihambe Cassandra.

Me: I don't know how you expect me to go out and mingle with people I don't know when I've just lost everything. I'm telling you impahla endinazo andinoya ngazo ebantwini and uzibonile nawe but you don't wanna hear that, I'm not telling you because I want you to buy me clothes but I'm just telling you to understand that andizokwazi uxweba aphe cam'kwakho sisiya kwi friends zakho.

Nkosinathi: you had no excuses when I told you they are coming here.

Me: because this is your house and I'm here already so if they wanted to come and have lunch here I don't have the capacity to stop them, and nangoku if bebesiza apha I'd be serving them noba ndinxibe ntoni but now ufuna ndiye kubo. It's not the same.

Nkosinathi: whatever baby.

Me: you don't want to get it. It's fine wethu.

Nkosinathi: hm, be safe.

Me: love you.

Nkosinathi: I love you, even if uyandicaphukisa.

I walked away, he grabbed my wrist so I turned to ask why was he grabbing me but instead, we just kissed. I had tears threatening to come out and I didn't want him to see that because I didn't want him to think I was just giving him these excuses so that he doesn't go to his friends. I tried to pull back but he had me so tight in his arms that I swallowed the lump in my throat and kissed him back. We eventually stopped kissing, he removed hair from my face not saying a word and then he walked out, I waited until he drove out then I locked myself in and went back to my books. When I was done, I went to find and play with my new friend named him Xuni (Shuni) and don't ask why coz I don't know. I ordered double crammed pizza and it was delivered, I really wasn't going to cook again. I'd done enough of that already these past two days. Onele called...

Me: baby sis.

Onele: Hewethu kuthwa uts helwe.

Me: kuts ho bani?

Onele: utata uve ngomama ka Lisa.

I sighed...

Me: ewe wethu.

Onele: why didn't you tell us?

Me: because I didn't want you guys to worry.

Onele: where did you sleep? Where are you right now? Bra kuthwa kuts he yonkinto.

Me: I'm okay, I'm safe, I have my laptop and books so don't stress.

Onele: Sandra uphi because dad is worried about you, haike umama uzomelwa yi ntliziyo yena xasimxelela.

Me: Oni mamela...

Onele: oh mntas ekhaya...

Me: hey listen to me, I'm safe. Okay? Tell dad to not worry, oo bhuti have come to my aid already. Ta Steve will be fetching me from campus ngoms o so I'll ask him andizame ngempahla after sifumene enye ke indawo yohlala. Other than that I'm okay.

Wathula....

Me: uyandiva?

Onele: was there anyone hurt?

Me: fortunately no, just that sonke sits helwe yimpahla and furniture. At least I was able to save my books, I don't know about others.

Onele: Yho hayini ... What did the police say?

Me: I don't know, I think I'll hear everything ngoms o.

Onele: okay. But you haven't answered me, where are you right now?

Me: I'm safe.

Onele: you're safe where?

Me: that's not important Onele, all that matters is that I'm safe.

Onele: that's true, okay ke. Please keep me updated, I'll tell dad not to worry.

Me: you can tell him to call Bhut Steve.

Onele: okay sure, I love you.

Me: love you more.

We hung up...

I put my phone down and just sat there thinking abantwana babantu bats helwe ngenxa yam ndinguyelo mna kwa ndonda nditya is onka nebhotolo kodwa bona abanazo nendawo zobalekela. The landlord's son, ilifa lakhe litshe lalithuthu ngenxa yam abanye abantwana who are not as privileged njengam basezosokola iimpahla baphinde basokole indawo esafe yohlala all over again. I felt tears trickling down my face...

Me: I wish Qaqamba would rot in jail.

She's the reason why we met this Khiro pig, she trapped us, we were abducted and taken to that place because of her. Sisipho and other girls went missing because of her now I'm living a life of a prisoner because of her it was all her fault. She deserved to rot in jail.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_36

I went downstairs and tried to find something to feed Xuni then I gave him a plate of water before I warmed up three slices of pizza, made myself tea and took that upstairs ndatyela khona. Before eating I packed my bags, left out what I was going to wear the following day, ironed my clothes and charged my laptop then I ate up and got under into pj's ndalala with my phone also charging next to me.

Steve called...

I had to answer him because he knew I'm with Nkosinathi ndizothi ndongamphenduli ibengathi sibusy senza abantwana.

Me: bhuti?

Steve: unjani?

Me: I don't know, numb?

Steve: do you want counseling?

Me: for what? This psycho is still a free man.

Steve: alright then, pull yourself together.

I sighed.

Steve: I've just deposited money into your account, it will be enough to buy new clothes, and groceries for now. Lionel will be there to take you to your new place tomorrow, in fact he's already that side but he'll fetch you from Campus and take you there.

Me: okay. Enkosi bhuti.

Steve: I'm still trying to organize a driver for you, but I'll see tomorrow what I can come up with.

Me: as in a personal driver? An everyday kinda thing?

Steve: yes, kaloku we have to thread carefully.

Me: do you know that by doing so we're adding more people in Khiro's list of obstacles? More people's lives are going to be in danger here bhuti.

Steve: what do you suggest we do ke Cassandra? We are trying to put out fires here, fires we know nothing about. Maybe, just maybe if you had told us earlier ngalo Khiro ngesingekho lapha. Just maybe, and right now we are doing all that we can do to make sure that your life is not in any risk but that's not enough is it? You know better, right?

Siphambene thina? Singamageza caba? Iingqondo zethu sinyathela ngazo?

I swear, the minute he shouted at me I let go. Tears streamed down my cheeks I was never a

vocal crier but if you'd listen attentively you'd know that I'm crying.

Steve: please work with us here, please.

Me: 'm sorry.

Steve: uphi u Nkosinathi?

I had to hold my breath to answer him, so that he doesn't hear that I'm actually crying.

Me: having lunch with his friends.

Steve: how long will he be gone?

Me: I don't know.

Steve: okay, please ask him to call me when he's back. I need his bank details.

Me: okay bhuti.

Steve: sharp.

He hung up, I buried myself in the middle of the bed and cried. By the time Nkosinathi called for the gate I had dreamt more than seven dreams if possible I saw about three missed calls from him, called him back and he said he's outside ucela ndivule. You can imagine crying myself to sleep ndizovuka enjani amehlo kudumba? I checked myself out in the mirror and they were indeed puffy but there was nothing I could do about them at that moment, I took a deep breath in and went to open the door for him. I just quickly opened for him and went back up the stairs, got under the covers and pretended to be asleep. I actually prayed that I fall asleep msinya I didn't have the energy of having to explain why I bought pizza instead of eating the bread ebendithe sikhona when I was asked ndizotyantoni, I didn't have the energy to explain why ndilele emini to a point that I didn't hear three of his calls. I didn't have the energy to explain why I had puffy eyes nor did I have the energy to listen to him going on about how the lunch went. I just wanted to sleep and wake up tomorrow ndiye eklasini qha. I wanted to get back into my normal routine was that too much

to ask for?

He came into the room, I heard every breath he took, his footsteps... I could hear everything. Then he came to bed, lay down on what was left his side of the bed and slowly uncovered my head. I had my eyes shut.

Nkosinathi: hey?

I didn't answer him.

He planted a fairy kiss on my lips.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: vuka uzotya.

Me: not hungry.

Nkosinathi: okay vuka ke.

Me: mh.hm.

Nkosinathi: I'm not going anywhere ungavukanga
Cassandra. Oko ubulele?

I didn't move an inch, he didn't move an inch
‡ ♀ I finally opened my eyes and met his. His own
eyes brightened as he looked into mine...

Nkosinathi: why were you crying?

Me: I wasn't crying, ndilele kakhulu qha.

Nkosinathi: the sheets are wet where your face was.

Me: it's probably sweat.

Why was he investigating me? Haike.

Nkosinathi: okay, please, come and eat with me.

Me: I'm not hungry, I ate before ndilale.

Nkosinathi: did you see the time ngoku?

I looked at the clock behind me... It was quarter past eight I couldn't believe my eyes.

Nkosinathi: please, come and eat with me.
Ndiyakukhumbula baby.

Me: uyatefa kodwa. Khange utye aph'avela khona?

Nkosinathi: khaw'phakame wethu sisi.

I rolled my eyes at him as I got up, I went to rinse my mouth and washed my face then we went downstairs. He had bought Chinese food for the both of us so he warmed the food while I turned on the TV, brought it in one tray then sat next to me eating. I really wasn't going to ask him about his lunch tu...

Me: uhm... Will you be able to keep Xuni for me until

I get a proper place to stay?

Nkosinathi: who's Xuni?

Me: my puppy.

Nkosinathi: oh, okay. No problem.

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: I'll buy him a kennel ngoms o, those guys who sell them along the freeway don't work on Sundays.

Me: enkosi.

We ate in silence, he looked at me.

Nkosinathi: you okay?

Me: yeah.

Nkosinathi: you're uncomfortably too quiet baby.

Me: I'm okay, just thinking.

Nkosinathi: wanna share?

Me: nah, don't wanna bore you. Uthe ubhuti you should please call him, something about your bank details.

Nkosinathi: bank details zantoni?

Me: I don't know.

Nkosinathi: don't tell me he wants to pay me for accommodating you this weekend.

I shrugged

Although I wouldn't put it past my brothers, they'd definitely do that.

Nkosinathi: Kim was disappointed that you didn't pitch.

Me: I'm sorry baby, I'll make sure I pitch next time.

Nkosinathi: she understood though, one of her friends was also a tenant pha kuni.

Me: oh, really?

Nkosinathi: yeah, she was there with them. She only managed to save ubhaka onencwadi ne file ene CV nee certificates zakhe qha. Everything else burnt down. She's traumatized.

Me: and it's all my fault.

He stopped eating and looked at me.

Nkosinathi: baby no, it's not your fault.

Me: well who's fault is it? Someone's gotta take responsibility.

Nkosinathi: Khiri obviously.

Me: and who brought him into all ya'll lives? Me.

Nkosinathi: baby...

Me: please don't say it, please.

Nkosinathi: no I'm gonna say it, it is not your fault. I will not sit here and listen to you blaming yourself for a grown ass man's selfish actions, I will not.

I just kept quiet.

It was my fault nje † ♀

We finished eating then we went upstairs again, he got into his own pj's and joined me in bed. I turned my phone off and lay my head on his chest.

Nkosinathi: it's not your fault.

Me: masilale bra.

Nkosinathi: it's not your fault Cassandra.

Me: okay... When are you leaving for Canada kanene?

Nkosinathi: I'll update you.

Me: Kay.

Nkosinathi: will I see you ngoms o?

Me: I'll call you once I've settled in apho andisa khona ubhuti.

Nkosinathi: I'm gonna miss you, it's been a great weekend.

Me: nyhani?

Nkosinathi: you don't think so?

I shrugged.

Nkosinathi: well, I had home-cooked meals for two consecutive days, my bed was warm for the entire weekend, and I can never get over turning a lesbian to become straight even before the sex. That alone is a highlight.

Me: and you took my virginity. Yep, you really had the best weekend.

Nkosinathi: ewe baby but nothing beats le yakho yobu lesbian.

Me: hahaha will I ever hear the end of this?

Nkosinathi: nope, I always have to remind myself of this. I did the things.

Me: uyadika uyeva?

He lifted my chin so we faced each other, planted a kiss on my lips sucking my bottom lip, I giggled.

Nkosinathi: I'm still in awe that you decided to trust me enough with your innocence.

I smiled...

Me: and I don't regret my decision, you made it easy for me to trust you. Now, we have to get those tests done.

Nkosinathi: yes. First settle in, then I'll arrange everything.

Me: alright then Mr Dakumba.

I kissed him back, we did this pecking thing for a minute sihleka inbetween.

Me: feels like we've been at this for a long time.

Nkosinathi: it's gonna be hard not waking up next to you and not having the hope of seeing you anytime soon once I've boarded.

Me: let's pray I get Wi-Fi apho ndiyakhona so we can Skype.

Nkosinathi: I'll buy you enough data even if akho Wi-Fi, we have to Skype.

Me: yes wena boyfriend.

Nkosinathi: hahaha! Yerr!

Me: baby, sew'qala ii boyfriend duties kwangoku ntwana.

Nkosinathi: awfuni noku girlfriend'wa nje wena baby, yinto endizoy'thini le?

Me: just because I didn't allow you to buy me clothes doesn't mean I don't want girlfriend allowance.

He laughed out wade wats arhwa ngamathe

Nkosinathi: uthini baby?

Me: haike baby suba sis'thulu xasithetha ngemali kaloku.

Nkosinathi: hay ndiyakuthanda kodwa mntu wam.

I smiled...

Izoza nyhani yazi la girlfriend allowance even though I was playing around with him.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_37

It was no surprise that everyone in class knew what had happened the previous weekend but unfortunately I was not in the mood to explain or involve myself in any relating conversations. As expected, the police came to see all of us who lived there, we were taken to the dean's office yet again and questioned. None of us seemed to know what

had happened, after about forty minutes of being questioned everyone else was released except for yours truly.

Sergeant: Your name is Cassandra, right?

Me: yes sir.

Sergeant: it is said that the fire broke out between your flat and your neighbours flat.

Me: that's what I was told too sir.

Sergeant: where did you say you were the night of the fire?

Me: I was out with my boyfriend sir.

Sergeant: oh, so what time did you come back home?

Me: I don't really know the time but lemme check my phone.

Sergeant: your phone?

Me: yes, Lisa called to tell me my place is on fire.

Sergeant: oh, is Lisa your friend or one of your neighbors?

Me: she lives up the street, she saw the fire on her way from the shops.

Sergeant: could you please call her for us.

Me: sure.

I called Lisa, she came to the dean's office and it was her turn to be questioned.

These guys were just barking up the wrong trees now, honestly. They were trying to pin this whole thing on Lisa and I stood up for her, anyone would have called me had they had my number but maybe they didn't and she did. She did nothing wrong by calling me. After about two hours, they let us go. We walked together back to class...

Lisa: I didn't know you have a boyfriend.

Me: because it's none of your business.

Lisa: come on Cass.

Me: Lisa please, I meant what I said. I want nothing to do with you, we can never be friends again, I don't trust you.

Lisa: but will you ever forgive me?

Me: I have forgiven you, I cannot carry you in my heart forever.

Lisa: enkosi.

Me: you're welcome.

Then we walked straight to our seats, after I had all my lessons I went to spend just one hour at the library then my brother called and said he's outside. I packed up and left. We hugged then got in his car, we made conversation on our way to my new place, as we approached the house I looked at him.

Me: sizapha?

Lionel: yep, you'll be staying here for the rest of the

year.

Me: yhu.

Lionel: you'll be fine, I've already paid rent for the remaining months.

We drove in, went to the main house and my brother introduced me to the landlords. They were pastors, both of them. They gave me my keys: remote for the big gate, key for the small gate, two keys for my door, two keys for my burglar gate. Then their daughter walked us out to the flat I was given, there were five more flats at the back. We unlocked and walked in...it was warm, fully built-in furnished two room, with an en-suite bathroom. It just needed a bed and a TV.

Me: this is an upgrade.

Lionel: Steve has organized transportation for you, but the guy will only be available next week onwards. So in the meantime, you will have no

choice but to use meter taxi.

Me: okay, enkosi bhuti.

I saw a paper on the cupboard, I went for it.

Me: Rules.

He laughed as we read through the rules, I knew that moment that I'm gonna break 20 percent of them ndifika nje but I was not gonna say that. All gate are automatically locked after 9pm and will be opened again at 4pm, by automatically locked I mean not even your key or remote control will be able to open the gate. What kind of joke is that? Tyhini aba bantu.

Lionel: I already bought you a bed and some things that I thought you might need, so do you mind staying here while I go fetch it?

Me: no of course not, you can go.

Lionel: okay sharp.

Me: wait, let's split the keys so that you can keep my spares.

Lionel: great idea.

I split the key ndamnika, I gave him the remoter only to use now then he left, I walked around the flat. It was beautiful yazi. The kitchen side had built-in cupboards with a stove and a bar fridge, an electric box just above where a microwave would be, then there was a sleeper couch at the end of the room which was ideal for someone who's just have pop up visitors. The bedroom had a built-in closet, a bathroom that had a tub and a shower. Wondered how much rent was paid in here.

I sat on the sleeper couch and called Nkosinathi..he didn't answer so I hung up, must have been busy or driving. I lay on my back thinking. He returned my

call...

Me: hey.

Nkosinathi: hey, how was your day?

Me: we were questioned by the police, other than that, it was fine.

Nkosinathi: we kind of expected that, right?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: how is the new place?

Me: very beautiful, but also very far from campus.

Nkosinathi: but is it safe?

I read out the rules to him, he burst out laughing.

Nkosinathi: baby, is this prison?

Me: like? Yhu.

Nkosinathi: but it will do you good under the

circumstances.

Me: yeah, I know.

Nkosinathi: do they do random checks just to see ba nikhona na in your rooms?

Me: andiyazi yazi. But haibo, we are tenants kaloku not kids to be monitored.

Nkosinathi: hahaha! Mna andizongakuboni ngenxa yalonto ke qha. I don't care about those rules.

Now was my turn to laugh...we spoke until my brother returned, then we had to cut the call. Lionel had two other guys helping him with bringing in my stuff, I arranged everything whilst they were there.

Lionel: it's already late now, you'll have to go shopping alone ngoms o.

Me: it's no biggie, I have toiletries and clothes to wear until Wednesday. I'll ask a friend to accompany me Thursday since I have no class Thursdays.

Lionel: uzoty ntoni in the meantime?

Me: I'll see bhuti, don't stress. Having a roof over my head is the most important.

Lionel: okay, so what else do you need?

Me: I need to know the progress with finding him.

He chuckled.

Me: oh-kay?

Lionel: we've found him. We're just looking into the logistics of everything then we'll involve you.

Me: when did you find him? Who is he?

Lionel: Saturday, you'll see him. Just be a little patient.

Me: so it is someone I know?

Lionel: yes, someone we know as a matter of fact. We are still looking for three of his goons whom he sent to temper with Steve's car, they're out on the

run in Cape Town but we have a trail.

Me: hay lomntu unes'yali.

Lionel: nah, he's probably mentally disturbed.

I didn't ask any further...

After seeing that I've settled in, he left.

I unpacked the few clothes that I had, and prepared for the following day.

In the morning, as I was about to leave for class, I got a call from bae and he wanted directions so that he could pick me up and take me to campus. I sent him the GPS coordinates, he arrived and drove me to class promising to fetch me immediately after my library hour. On my way to the library Steve called to find out how was the first night at my new place, we had a long hearty conversation as he apologized for shouting at me and I apologized for coming across as ungrateful for what they were doing for me. He mentioned that he spoke to the old folks about me, and told them that they (Lionel and

Steve) have everything under control but I should expect to see them (Parents) anytime in the week as they wanted to see how I'm doing for themselves and obviously mom just wanted to be sure iright lendawo ndihlala kuyo. I didn't mind that though, that would guarantee more moola I my pocket. After my library hour I texted this guy and he said he's already outside...I walked out and saw his car, got in and he drove to McD's wandithengela ukutya kwangokuhlwa...then he drove me back to my place.

Me: what are you doing Thursday?

Nkosinathi: I'm going to Pretoria in the afternoon, why?

Me: bendizocela undikhaphe to do some shopping.

Nkosinathi: no problem, I also have a favor to ask.

Me: shoot.

Nkosinathi: ndcela uphumele kwam ngoms o?

Me: ngoms o ku Wednesday right?

Nkosinathi: yep, sizovuka kwelacala and go shopping.

Me: okay, deal.

Nkosinathi: can I come in and see?

Me: sure, you didn't even have to ask.

Nkosinathi: I don't wanna get you in any trouble.

Me: nah, you won't. As long as you don't park in their parking then we should be fine.

Each flat number had its own parking plot, we parked in mine and went to my room. He walked around while I put my food on the counter, he came back and opened my fridge. Dololo. He opened the cupboards then looked at me...

Me: I still have to buy groceries, don't look at me like that.

Nkosinathi: uvuka utye ntoni k'sasa before you go to school?

Me: I didn't eat. And please, do not stress yourself about it. Please.

He closed the doors and came to sit down, I got up and plated for both of us. Satya sincokola and I could tell lento yokuba ndibene cupboards ezi empty didn't sit well with him but, hello? I just got here, remember? Last night was my first night here. As he was about to leave, Steve called...

Me: hello bhuti?

Steve: uphi?

Me: sendlini.

Steve: okay I'll send someone to fetch you.

Me: uphi wena ndize kuwe?

Steve: unayo indlela yokuzisa?

Me: uhm yes, Nkosinathi is here. He fetched me from campus.

Steve: oh okay, please give him the phone.

I passed on the phone, they spoke for less than three minutes then he gave me back my phone and said we should go, honey, I didn't need to ask where we're going. The look on his face said it all. We were going to Khiro. He drove like a maniac for the first fifteen minutes of the drive and slowed down as we neared some shady road with bushes...

Nkosinathi: u ready to see this guy?

Me: yeah, I can never be really ready anyway so let's get this over and done with.

Nkosinathi: okay. Here goes nothing.

He drove for about fifteen minutes on gravel road and then we saw ahead a stranded house that looked like it was lit by a candle. We walked in hand-in-hand until we heard voices, he knocked and my elder brother opened the door. We walked in and saw a lot of men strapped on chairs... I tightened the grip on boyfie's hand because this wasn't a good sight.

Steve: hey, you okay?

I let go of Nkosinathi and went to my brother, Lionel was standing next to this one chair with a man whose face was covered with a black cloth and I guessed that was Khiri. We walked to him, Steve gave Lionel a nod and he removed the covering.

Me: WHAT?

Steve: yep, this is the psychopath that has been making your life a living hell.

Me: no way, tata ka Aphiwe nguwe nyhani lo? Really?

Lionel: he's too intoxicated to answer you.

Me: oh my God. Did he at least say why he has been doing this?

Lionel: apparently he has been in love with you kwakudala qha awumniki attention.

Steve: you think that's a shock. Come see this.

He unveiled another man.

Me: oh God no! bhut'Ginger?!

Nkosinathi: why am I not surprised?

Me: I don't believe this.

[06/26, 14:46] : #Cassandra_38

Well there was nothing else to do, I had finally seen the man who had terrorized my life for more than two years, I couldn't ask him questions because they drugged him, they drugged Ginger, they had actually drugged all of them. I asked Nkosinathi to take me home, my brothers walked us out and watched us leave. It was the longest silent drive I've been in. He made sure I'm in doors then he left, I had this weird feeling that he was going back there but I wasn't gonna stop him. I actually felt sick.

That night I didn't sleep a wink, all the memories of visiting sis' Asanda came back, I remembered the times he'd compliment how my trousers fit on me

and because I was a kid I didn't make anything out of it. Most times he didn't shy away from throwing compliments my way, but it was out of innocence on my side I didn't see anything wrong until now. This psycho has been filthy right under our noses and we didn't see anything wrong with it. I woke up and finished up the food I had left the previous night then I went to bath...when I was done with everything, I checked the time, good Lord! I was three hours early so I just lay in bed thinking about almost everything that my mind could think of. When the time came, I got up, locked my room and walked out only to be met by boyfie's car waiting. I tried to open the door but it was locked so I knocked and he opened, didn't seem like he slept at all.

Me: morning?

Nkosinathi: good morning, ngena.

I got in and he started the ignition, he was still wearing the same clothes he'd worn the previous

night. He looked tired too...

Me: did you get any sleep?

Nkosinathi: I'll sleep after dropping you off.

Me: so you didn't go home?

Nkosinathi: mh.hm.

Okay ndathula...he was tired and I was asking him a lot of questions. I didn't expect him to come pick me up though, I was going to call a cab but I couldn't say that now. He was here. We drove in silence until we arrived in campus, he gave me his phone

Nkosinathi: please write in your grocery list here.

Me: I thought we're buying my groceries ngoms o nje.

Nkosinathi: oh, I forgot. What time should I pick you up?

Me: usual. But andiphethanga mpahla yots hints ha so we'll have to go via my place first.

Nkosinathi: sure.

I kissed his cheek and got off his car...

Me: please go home and rest, you look awful.

He laughed and drove off.

I took a few steps and stumbled upon some chemistry students who were probably in their last year, like, badala nokwana apha kum. I apologized for ubagila coz I was looking on the ground at that time, I tried to walk ecaleni since bebevale indlela but they kept stopping me so I looked up ndicaphuka kancinci.

Me: oh-kay, what's up?

Sivuyise: nguwe lo Cassandra ujola no Nkosinathi?

Me: who's asking?

Sivuyise: answer the damned question.

Me: damned question? Heh sisi, I don't have to answer any damned thing.

Sivuyise: nontombi, ujola no Nkosinathi na? Ewe, hayi?

Me: buza kulo ukuxeleleyo.

They chuckled.

Uyayazi lantsini yesigezo? Le yesigqzu? They did that and it irritated the heavens out of my belly but I already had a lot going on in my life adding them wouldn't be beneficial to any of us. On top of that, they were the old and influential students eskolweni.

Likhona: hesana unayo ne cheek u girl.

Sivuyise: mamela ke sisi, let me give you some friendly advice: hlukana no Nkosinathi if you know what's best for you.

Me: inoba sadityanis wa nguwe mos.

Sivuyise: i cheek le unayo ayizokwenzela nto right now, ndithi qha kuwe hlukana no Nkosinathi.

Likhona: and ke asizophinda sikuxelele lonto, asizozikhwenene.

I just tried to walk away from them, apparently one of them had an okapi in hand, she stabbed and dragged the knife onto my bag and the zip let go causing a fall to all my books. I quickly turned and saw how serious they were, I bent down and picked up my books.

Sivuyise: I repeat, if you know what's good for you, hlukana no Nkosinathi or I won't be this kind next time. Sekutheni ndizoshera indoda neengqeqe ngoku?

Then they walked away.

My bag was ruined, like it was torn into two and the

zip was a mess. I wouldn't be able to carry anything in it so I turned back and walked towards the gate, took a taxi and went back home. When I got to my room I cried for about 30 minutes gqiba ndaphakama, ndavuthulula and went shopping. I went to do my grocery shopping at Spar and bam! There was Nkosinathi and Asenathi also doing grocery shopping. She saw me first and waved, I waved back and turned the other way, he came looking for me. He legit dropped everything and came looking for me, found me on the spices aisle and he was probably also calling me coz he was furiously looking at his phone when we bumped onto each other.

Nkosinathi: aren't you supposed to be in class?

Me: I am.

Nkosinathi: then what are you doing here?

Me: I think sizokwenza into ey'one: grocery shopping.

Nkosinathi: ndcela ungaphenduli isigezo ekubeni

ndikushiye eskolweni an hour ago.

I sighed...

Msindo wam uza kade kakade, bekungona ndizivayo kengoku ukuba ndinako ukucaphuka and he was not helping the situation tu.

Me: it's a long story man baby and this is not the right place.

Nkosinathi: where's your bag?

Me: sendlini.

He looked at me in unbelief.

Nkosinathi: so you went back home after I dropped you off?

Me: yes.

He huffed.

I swallowed and started picking my spices while he watched me in silence...it wasn't long when I started getting Facebook a lot notifications. I decided to check out what was the deal, only to see everything that happened was captured and posted. On Facebook. The embarrassment I felt that very moment, the entire school must have watched it because the view were over 5K already. This one must have seen my face so he came to stand next to me and watched in silence, as the video ended I heard him sigh if not groan.

Nkosinathi: why didn't you say anything?

Me: it doesn't matter.

I felt like I was about to cry so I quickly turned and went the opposite direction, quickly grabbed cereals and anything else I could think off at that moment and again pushed my trolley to the next aisle. He found me on the last aisle taking maas and cheese, he got his hands on my trolley and pushed it in

silence. His sister must have just finished off their own shopping on her own, I went to the till and paid then he pushed the trolley to his car.

Me: I'll catch a taxi.

Nkosinathi: no, I'm taking you home.

Me: I said, I'll catch a taxi.

His sister lowered the window...

Asenathi: khangene emotweni guys ndizoba late.

Nkosinathi: akafuni.

Asenathi: hay khawuyeke ubane drama wethu Cassandra ngena sihambe, ya'll will drop me off before he takes you home.

I huffed, he obviously wanted us to "talk" and being Mr Nice Guy he wouldn't feel like a man if he let me

take a taxi ekhona. I got in the car at the back passenger seat. He was not driving the Ranger, instead a red Polo Vivo. He loaded my groceries in the boot and we went to drop off his sister first then he drove to my place in silence, I opened the gate for him, he parked and locked the doors. As soon as I heard the lock, I threw my head back. I knew it's coming, the talk I mean.

Nkosinathi: what happened?

Me: you watched the video.

Nkosinathi: but I still don't know what happened kaloku.

I sighed and told him what happened.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: yeah, I'm sorry. Please unlock.

Nkosinathi: she's my ex.

Me: she didn't sound like an ex...ndcela uvule amacango ndiphume.

Nkosinathi: well she's not really an ex, we had a fling, on and off for about six months. But akhonto is idibanisayo ngoku.

Me: the doors?

Nkosinathi: kaloku I'm trying to explain to you into us a yalento ikwehleleyo.

Me: now that you mention into indehleleyo, I was supposed to myself a bag before you bullied me into getting in your car.

Nkosinathi: can you listen to me, please?

Me: ndikuvile bra she's your ex, ya'll had a fling, what else are you trying to explain now?

Nkosinathi: Baby?

I sighed.

He unlocked the car... We both got out and he helped me carry my groceries, we unpacked and

repacked into the cupboards then he just stood there and waiting for me to finish up putting my toiletries in the bathroom. I came back and took my phones and charger, tossed them into my bag...

Me: mas ambe.

Nkosinathi: siyaphi?

Me: you're taking me to town, I wasn't done with my shopping.

I opened the door for him to leave as I locked and went to his car, he started the ignition and we drove off.

Nkosinathi: I'd never two-time you. I hope you know that.

Me: doesn't matter now, I'm already a laughing stock on campus. I should actually be grateful they stabbed my bag and not my flesh.

Nkosinathi: I'll deal with her.

Me: whatever you think is best.

Sathula...I watched the video again.

Kodwa ndiyalingwa...from Khiro to this in one week?

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_39

I asked him to drop me off at Woolies so that I could buy my bag, he dropped me off and left. I walked in and bought my bag, paid for it and went to other shops where I continued with my initial clothes shopping. He called me about two hours later...

Me: hello?

Nkosinathi: uphi?

Me: ndiphuma kwa Mr Price.

Nkosinathi: I'm at the parking lot.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: uphuma kuba ugqibile or you're still shopping?

Me: ndisaya e Sheet Street for bedding.

Nkosinathi: okay, I'll wait here.

Me: sure.

He hung up.

Now he seemed pissed off, I felt rage ngoku athethayo but I was the wronged one so I wasn't gonna concern myself ngaye right now. He should have told me that wakhe wanentombi kula university so that at least I'm aware, uzibhaqa sew'gezelwa ngamantombi amadala over a man? In fact kwalento yabo ingathi ise fresh judging by the girl's approach kum. I did everything I had set out to do then I walked back to his car...he opened the boot so I packed my things in there, I had not eaten so I was hungry. I got in next to him and closed the

door...he started his car.

Nkosinathi: siyaphi?

Me: ndilambile.

Nkosinathi: ufuna ukutya ntoni?

Me: I don't know, ndilambile qha.

He drove to KFC parked and got out, I followed him.

Uyazelaphi ukuba ndizofuna utya ntoni? I found him at the que so I stood just next to him, tucking my arm under his.

Nkosinathi: thought you'd wait in the car?

Me: and let you buy what you want instead of what I want?

Nkosinathi: you said you don't know what you want to eat.

Me: ewe kaloku, now that we're here I do.

He laughed.

We went to the counter together...he ordered the family meal and looked at me, I asked for dunked wings, chilli Twister and KitKat Krusher. He paid then we waited on a nearby table...

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

I looked up at him...

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: for what?

Nkosinathi: for everything that has happened today, ewe I have dealt with Sivuyise but I still want to apologize to you and promise you it will never happen again.

Me: when did you break up with her?

Nkosinathi: beginning of last year.

Me: why?

Nkosinathi: she said she wanted to focus on school so she needed space, I gave her space ke nam.

Me: This is what I don't get, why didn't you tell me that you actually dated pha eskolweni?

Nkosinathi: I didn't think it's important, well, now that we're talking about it...I also dated another girl kwaphaya. Medical student.

Me: oh Bawo! What's her name? Wenza unyaka wesingaphi ngoku?

Nkosinathi: she's doing her PhD, ngu Anezwa Salinji.

Me: wait, you are Anezwa's ex? Oh my God!

Nkosinathi: I take it you know her.

Me: who doesn't know Anezwa bra? She's the uni's top student, has been to Cuba and came back, she's the face of the medical faculty.

Nkosinathi: okay, uyamazi.

Heh sana lobhuti!!!!!!

Our number was called, he went to take our food, I took my Krusher and Twister while he carried the family meal and wings to the car. Got in ndatya I twist lena. He came in and started his car...well we had a deal that I'm sleeping over tonight, I didn't get the memo ukuba that had changed. I could see uxakiwe ukuba siyaphi.

Nkosinathi: should I drop you at your place?

Me: uzophinda uyondithatha?

Nkosinathi: oh-kay.

Me: I was asking though.

Nkosinathi: thought you'd changed your mind about tonight.

I didn't answer him, ndatya qha.

We got to his place wakhupha u KFC yedwa, I just selected izinto that I knew I'd need from those

shopping bags then I left the rest in the car and followed him inside. I sat on the couch and ate while reading the comments on that videos, yey people were having a field day. While watching, I got a call from my lecturer...I let it ring while watching it until she hung up. As I took a breath, she called again. Nkosinathi gave me a look as he walked past me, so I answered.

Me: Mrs Lawson?

Her: Cassandra, how are you?

Me: I'm okay ma'am, you?

Her: I'm good thank you for asking, I see you're not in class today. And you were supposed to hand in my assignment.

Flip!

I forgot!

Totally slipped my mind.

Me: I'm sorry, it slipped my mind. Can I email it to you? Or I can bring it tomorrow morning ma'am.

Her: sure, no problem you can email it. You have my email address.

Me: yes ma'am, I'm really sorry about this.

Her: don't worry about it, I understand you have a lot going on.

My spirit dropped.

Me: you also saw the video.

Her: everyone's talking about it, but then I'm just worried about you. You just survived a fire that destroyed all your belongings, do you need any assistance with anything?

Me: uhm no ma'am I am good. Thank you for asking.

Her: okay then, Friday before you leave the campus can we have a word?

Me: sure, no problem.

Her: alright then, have a good day.

Me: you too ma'am. Thank you I'll email the assignment before the end of today.

We hung up...

Me: I forgot I was supposed to hand in an assignment today.

Nkosinathi: iphi? I can go drop it off for you.

Me: I have it in my laptop, I'll email it to her.

Nkosinathi: you left your laptop at home.

Me: oh great!

Kwaphela nalo appetite kengoku, when he asked where he should go after that shopping spree I should have told him to take me straight home. I should have, but I didn't.

Nkosinathi: masambe siyoy'thatha.

Me: did you get any rest today?

Nkosinathi: I'll rest tonight.

He was tired, it was evident that he showered and went shopping with his sister before resting.

Lomntu akhange alale ngenxa yam, he was up all night with my brothers kulanto ka Khoro. On top of that, I had a weird feeling that they were doing that shopping for me qha ndababhaqa, anyway I just didn't want him to take me home ndimbona ba udiniwe. That would be abusing him.

Me: nd'cela utye k'qala, and rest a bit. We'll go later on. I did say she'll get it before the end of the day. Not now.

He gave me this weird look, qha uzixelele ba akazokhupha nto ngomlomo wakhe.

Me: ndiyakucingela, you look drained.

Nkosinathi: okay ke, lemme go take a fifteen minute nap.

Me: please.

He grabbed bottled water from the fridge and kissed me on the cheek on his way up to his bedroom. I gave him exactly fifteen minutes then I went to check up on him, he was fast asleep so I quietly closed the windows and curtains, put on the heater so the room would feel warm and then turned off his phone closing the door behind me. I warmed my wings, went outside to go sit with Xuni. I gave him the bones and we played for a while, Nkosinathi had really bought him a pretty wooden kennel which would need to be changed once Xuni grows because it was built for a puppy. I got tired of playing with him so I went back inside and watched Netflix...Lionel called...

Me: bhuti ka Onele?

Lionel: ola, unjani namhlanje?

Me: I'm okay. You guys?

Lionel: we're good. Just woke up.

Me: seems like ya'll had a rough night.

Lionel: you don't wanna know...aren't you supposed to be in class?

Me: I am, but I'm not.

Lionel: ndim lo ubhidwe yi English okanye nguwe?

I laughed...

Me: I am supposed to be in class but I'm not in class. Long story.

Lionel: Onele called me about some video of yours that's trending on FB.

Me: that's the long story, why didn't she call me?

Lionel: I don't know...who are those girls?

Me: one of them is Nkosinathi's ex, the rest are her friends.

Lionel: oh, now that's where the long story comes in.

Me: yep, but don't worry about me. I'll be back in class Friday.

Lionel: ukwazile uthenga ubhaka at least?

Me: ewe bhuti ndimthengile.

Lionel: alright ke...ube right man and you did well by not fighting back.

Me: sendi right kanti bhuti.

Lionel: good, now...do you want to see this psycho? Maybe you have some questions for him?

Me: I do...but, can I see him nge weekend or Friday afternoon when I won't be anxious of going to campus the following day. And I need strength, ndiyamoyika mna lomntu somehow he's not the Taka Aphiwe that I used to know ngoku.

He laughed...

Lionel: alright...we have also called Asanda, she'll be flying in Friday.

Me: you told her everything?

Lionel: yes, everything. She couldn't believe us. Or didn't want to believe us, andikho sure.

Me: it's shock. I wouldn't have believed you nam had I not seen him with my own two eyes.

Lionel: yeah well...

Me: thank you for the update bhuti.

Lionel: sharp, see you Friday.

Me: sure.

I didn't wanna call Onele ke so I just let the thought slide, ndatya ii wings ezi and watched series until later on in the afternoon when Nkosinathi woke up. He came to the couch I was on, and rested his head on my thighs/ lap looking up at me or rather at the ceiling.

Me: you look better.

Nkosinathi: why did you switch off my phone?

Me: wanted you to get enough sleep.

Nkosinathi: mh.

I kissed the tip of his nose, even if he didn't say thank you I know I did him well for switching off his phone. It didn't look like he had brought it with when he came down.

Nkosinathi: when are you visiting your boyfriend? Or is it sugardaddy? Or should we just maintain the brother-in-law part?

Me: you know you're in a position where I can easily strangle you, right?

Nkosinathi: you wouldn't.

Me: ask that question once again.

He smiled.

Me: thought as much.

Tshi!

After a few minutes he got up and dragged me to the kitchen because he was hungry.

He couldn't go warm ukutya yedwa? While watching him I heard Xuni barking, well, yelping so I went to check out what could be the reason. I laughed as I turned back to the kitchen...

Nkosinathi: ungxolela ntoni u Zuma?

Me: it's Xuni and he's barking at your visitor.

Nkosinathi: I have a visitor and you didn't let them in?

Me: you have your gate remote nje.

He reached for it and paused..turned back to look at me, I was smiling at him.

Nkosinathi: baby who's at the gate?

Me: your girlfriend.

Nkosinathi: my girlfriend?

I nod, he went to the door and saw Sivuyise ehamba yedwa carrying ubhaka. She probably came straight here from campus. She waved at him and he just stood there not knowing whether he should let her in or close the door and pretend like she's not standing outside his yard.

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_40

Sivuyise dialed something on her phone and put it in her ear, unfortunately for her our boyfriend had left his phone upstairs.

Me: think she's trying to call you.

Nkosinathi: I don't need this right now.

Me: let her in, I'll just go upstairs.

He looked at me...

Me: she came all the way, obviously she's got something to say so let her in, hear her out. I'll give you privacy.

Nkosinathi: we've got nothing to hide though.

Me: I wouldn't want to pour out my heart to any man in front of a woman I had just harassed for that man. Don't let her go through that just to prove a point to me.

I pat him on the shoulder as I took his chips and my phone then I walked up the stairs leaving no trace of my existence in the lounge. He let her in, not because I asked him to but because he wanted to.

Men don't do favours unless it's beneficial to them. Well most men. I lay in his bed and went on Facebook searching for that video andiyibona. Maybe she took it down after he paid her a visit while I went shopping. I don't know, but I couldn't find it.

I wanted to call Onele but she was probably still in class so I just went through my timeline to pass time. My phone beeped, it was a message from sis Asanda asking what would be the right time to call me so I texted her back and told her to call now and she did.

Me: sisi?

Asanda: unjani?

Me: I'm okay, how are you doing?

Asanda: I'm good. Ithini lento yakho no S'thembele?

Me: into yam?

Asanda: ewe.

Me: kutheni iyinto yam sisi?

Asanda: andithi uthi uyakufuna.

Me: haibo sisi.

Asanda: I'm trying to understand lento yenzekayo Cassandra so help me out here. What exactly is going on between the two of you? How long has it been going on? When I told ya'll about the divorce were those tears of joy that you'll finally have him all to yourself okanye nyhani you were sad because my marriage has ended and my kids would be living in separate house from their dad?

Me: wow!

Asanda: I'm being as honest as I can, I need clarity.

Me: I understand you need clarity sisi but you're asking the wrong person, I also need clarity on everything.

Asanda: ayinguwe na kanti oxelele oobhuti bakho ba ufunwa ngu S'thembele? So who am I supposed to ask?

Me: so amongst being told that two years ago I was

abducted by this guy, that he's been doing this to other female students, that he takes them and makes them drug mules or sells them to his friends outside the country, that he's been stalking me and making my life a living hell, that he almost killed my boyfriend's sister and husband, that he burnt down where I was living and not just my flat but that entire compound...all you could hear was that ndithe uyandifuna? Seriously sisi? Seriously?

Asanda: oh now you suddenly have a boyfriend?

Me: hayini bethuna!

Asanda: where was this boyfriend when all of this was happening? Why am I only hearing all of this now?

Me: why does it even matter to you? You're not married to him anymore.

Asanda: and you could be one of the reasons why I'm not.

I just chuckled.

Or wait, did I choke on my own spit?

I couldn't believe that she was taking his side after all these years of being treated like rubbish, she still chose his side over mine. I couldn't believe my ears.

Asanda: I know you're my sister and maybe you wished for the life I had whenever you visited us when we were still married but to accuse the father of my children of ukuncwasa ade akuthengele nezihlangu? Cassandra ndiyamazi u S'thembele was a womanizer but he'd never stoop that low. For you to even insinuate that he's involved in human trafficking is beyond me. Hay mntaka mama I can't.

Me: I don't think I want to continue with this conversation anymore sisi.

Asanda: we'll talk ngoms o because I really want to understand.

Me: sure.

Asanda: sharp.

I hung up...haibo u sisi!

While I was still meditating on her choice of words, I saw the screen on Nkosinathi's phone light up. He must have left it charging when he woke up so I unplugged it and switched it on and to my surprise there was no security code whatsoever.

Immediately kwangena ii notifications for missed calls and yes, he still had Sivuyise's number saved. I just went to the WhatsApp conversations...

honestly, there was nothing to find. They had truly last spoken ku WhatsApp last year at the beginning of January even nalo conversation was lousy and cold. There was no juice so I just turned the phone off again and put it where I found it. After a few minutes he came back, and sat next to me...

Me: she's gone already?

Nkosinathi: she's still here, wants to see you.

Me: for what?

Nkosinathi: she wants to apologize to you.

Me: tell her I'm good.

He looked at me, I just laughed at him.

Me: hay ndi serious, I'm good.

Nkosinathi: baby.

Me: baby, tell her I'm good. She can keep her apology for someone who needs it.

Nkosinathi: I thought we were peaceful people though.

Me: she stabbed my bag this morning, my books scattered on the floor, her friends took a video of that and posted it on Facebook and now she comes here alone to apologize to me? Hay baby, makenze u Facebook live axolise.

He laughed, threw me with a pillow and walked out. After a few minutes I followed, I just wanted to see if she was still there. They were walking each other

out...but Nkosinathi saw me.

Nkosinathi: oh hey.

Me: is your girlfriend gone yet?

Honey, I could see her. She was 90 percent out of the door.

Nkosinathi: she's here, ndimbize?

Me: nah, I'm here for food not her.

She had already turned and walked back in. I walked straight ahead to the kitchen.

Sivuyise: uhm, Cassandra. Can I have a word?

Me: ha.a babe.

I took out a side plate.

Sivuyise: please, I just want to apologize to you. I know I was wrong for what I did earlier.

Me: you knew what you were doing when you were doing it, su actor.

Nkosinathi: baby, please give her a chance.

Me: andina chance guys, I don't mind ya'll sorting out your issues because andingeni ndawo but if she wants to apologize to me she's gonna have to pull the same stunt she pulled earlier today. On the real.

I resumed to warming up the food...they just stood there, I put on the kettle and took out my cup and looked at this guy.

Me: coffee?

Nkosinathi: tea please.

I put his cup as well then waited for the water to boil, playing with my phone.

Sivuyise: I know you don't wanna hear this kodwa ke I'm sorry.

Me: you actually do not have to do this, lomntu um'actelayo doesn't really care about this apology thing, don't be fooled or manipulated by that sexy voice. He doesn't care. Trust me on that.

Sivuyise: I'm not acting Cassandra I'm really sorry.

Me: you weren't this meek this morning, you were loud, cheeky, violent. Where were you hiding this side of you?

She sighed.

I looked at Nkosinathi...

Me: didn't you give her my answer?

He gave me a stern look and didn't say a word.

Me: you didn't, haike. Khaphanani...if you're giving her a drive can I give you my key for my laptop?

Sivuyise: he's not giving me a drive.

Me: you don't want him to?

Nkosinathi: Bye bye Sivu...Baby nxiba izihlangu siyothatha le laptop kwangoku uyicingileyo.

Me: singahamba.

He looked at my feet, I ignored him. Sivuyise and I walked out first, I had a drumstick in my hand. I realized that moment that food makes me peaceful, I was in this unknown element of peace and chill. She looked behind her, I smiled, our boyfriend was still inside the house.

Sivuyise: iyagezisane mntase indoda?

Me: ah-ha, here comes the real Sivu. The one I met earlier today.

Sivuyise: word of advice, I've been here before too.

Thread carefully.

Me: oh so now you've BEEN here, earlier on you said you ARE here. Which is which? Sise ey'phi kwa mantyi mntaka somnci?

She chuckled.

Sivuyise: he may be giving you all the attention now, buying you all the expensive gifts and even booking weekend aways but honey uzokulahla u Nkosinathi ungazazi noba ungubani trust me on that, I know him all too well. Kodwa ke qhuba nono, its hamba lelakho qha sizobe sikhona ke thina, watching and waiting.

Me: for someone who was said to be just a fling you must have caught quite a lot of feelings but ke asinobasathini... In case you don't know; some of us can actually survive aph'ebomini without men. Uhlwa yile chap akusoze kude kundicuntsule ingqondo njengawe and you should trust me on that, I'd never ever fight for a man.

Bending axakwanganto nakusasa, uyimoshe ngofaka indoda otherwise I'd have dealt with you accordingly.

Nkosinathi opened the car, I smiled and got in. He opened the gate for her and watched her walk out first as we drove out behind her.

Nkosinathi: you're mean.

Me: ndifana nani xanidibene.

Nkosinathi: haike baby.

Me: andingo haha wenu baby, xanivana vanani nodwa not nam okanye ngam.

Nkosinathi: you could have just accepted her apology even if uyambona ba she's just acting.

Me: oh, uyambona nawe ba she's just acting?

Nkosinathi: come on now, I know Sivuyise.

Me: alright. Ndim lo ungu LOL wenu? Because niyazana nina so manifake u LOL in the middle?

Right.

He laughed...

Nkosinathi: what were you talking about phandle?

Me: she was telling me how they're going to wait for the day you're gonna dump me ibengathi ndishiywe ziingqondo.

He burst out laughing...

Nkosinathi: but I didn't dump her, she dumped me because she wanted to focus on her books.

Me: haike, I don't know your business bhuti and it doesn't sound interesting at all. She just knows that one day you're gonna dump my arrogant ass qha.

Nkosinathi: so she really was acting, yonke lento ebezoyenza apha was just an act?

Me: I'm worried about you shame. I really am.

He was still laughing...

He found all of this amusing.

Typical gender tendencies.

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_41

We got to my place, I took out my belongings from his boot and just left them on my bed as I took the laptop and we drove back to his place. I quickly edited and sent the assignment to my lecturer... He was busy in his study, giving me space to maybe do my work in peace.

After I was done, bekungona yonke lento isinkayo (it was only now that everything was sinking) into my mind. Like yonke lento (everything) ... Especially the Sivuyise part, if he said he's dealt with her, why did she come all the way? He did go to her mos when I

was was shopping so why did she come here? I was either paranoid or someone was not telling the truth here...

I walked barefoot to where he was working ndafika e busy yi call, I waited standing by the door until he was done.

Nkosinathi: what's up?

Me: if you have dealt with Sivuyise earlier when I was doing my shopping, why did she come here?

Nkosinathi: and why are we bringing this up ngoku (now)?

Me: ndcela undiphendule torho. (please answer me)

Nkosinathi: she came here to explain why she did what she did to you and apologize.

Me: kanti why didn't she explain that when you went to see her?

Nkosinathi: I don't know... Maybe she was too

embarrassed? I don't know.

Me: usamthanda? (do you still love her?)

Nkosinathi: huh? (what?)

Me: usamthanda na?(do you still love her?)

Nkosinathi: baby no, where's this coming from now?

Me: you said she broke up with you, not the other way round. So if she broke up with you usamthanda then it's possible that you could still love her nangoku. Right?

He got up from where he sat, behind the desk and came to hold my hands.

Nkosinathi: ndithanda wena. (I love you)

Me: there's just something yazi... When I was talking to her phandle she would say something and say uyakwazi and nawe ngoku besithetha unento ethetha ithi Uyamazi. (When I was talking to her outside she would say something and say she

knows you, you too when we were talking you'd say something and say you know her)

Nkosinathi: she knows me, I know her. We dated, remember?

Me: ya'll still have unfinished business and I feel like I'm the stupid one in this whole thing.

Nkosinathi: you're just blowing this out of proportion ngoku baby, there's really no reason for this.

Me: okay.

I let go of his hands and walked into his room, he followed me. I was standing by the window. I turned and looked at him, my hand on the hip.

Nkosinathi: baby there's noth-

Me: did you guys like ever break up manyhani? She said she wanted a break because she wanted to focus on school... That's not breaking up, so in actual fact, she's right. You're still her boyfriend.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: why am I so naive though?

He just looked at me...

I moved from the window and went to sit down on the edge of the bed. I heard my phone vibrating, I checked who the caller was and suddenly felt over-emotional. I couldn't deal with Sis Asanda right now. She had said enough already... Nkosinathi grabbed my phone and answered it, then gave it to me.

Nkosinathi: baby?

I shook my head, he told her to call me back later and she wasn't having it so he gave it to me again, I saw that she was still on the line. I took the phone and hung up. I took a deep breath, closing my eyes but as I released it, tears came flowing down the sides. I think I was just having a breakdown because of everything that I've been going through...

Nkosinathi: please don't cry.

Me: do you still love her?

Nkosinathi: no baby, no.

He sat next to me, hugging me so I cried onto his shoulder.

Nkosinathi: you've got to believe me. Please.

Me: it's hard to.

Nkosinathi: why? I've never given you any reason not to believe me.

Me: you said you dealt with her, why then did she come here? What would have transpired if I wasn't here?

I looked up at him...

Me: What did you two even talk about while I was

up here? Did you even talk?

Nkosinathi: I don't know what you want me to say kengoku, you said I should let her in, you gave us space. I told you I had nothing to hide.

Me: I wasn't thinking.

Nkosinathi: you're not thinking now.

Me: oh ndiphambene neh?

Nkosinathi: that's not what I'm saying.

Me: then what are you saying?

Nkosinathi: all I'm saying is tha-

Me: you know what? I don't wanna know.

I got in bed, and covered my head balling my eyes out. He got in and hugged me tight allowing me to cry, ndilalele kulonto (I fell asleep crying) and when I woke up he wasn't there. I looked at my phone, I had four missed calls from Asanda, three from Siki, four from Cindy and two from Onele. The rest were from both my brothers, I didn't call any of them but

instead I turned my phone off and just sat there. How could u sisi imply that I was jealous of her? How old was I the last time I visited them? How could she think like that ngam of all people? I wouldn't be hurt yinto eyenziwa ngu Nkosinathi more than yinto eyenziwa ngumntu was ekhaya, honestly speaking, my family comes first in everything so for her to say those things kum? It hurt. I was hurt... Yes ngalamzuzu I didn't care about anything she was saying I was just shocked but the moment everything started sinking in, I realized that she really chose her ex husband over her own sister. That hurt. That shit hurt more than the possibility of Nkosinathi being inlove with Sivuyise or the other way round. It cut deep as if he could hear my thoughts, he walked in...

Nkosinathi: hey, you're up.

I wiped off my tears, not looking at him.

Nkosinathi: you must be hungry.

Me: can I ask you something?

Nkosinathi: sure.

He came to sit next to me.

Me: I know that you uhm love me, but uhm, I just wanna know... Given an opportunity to choose, would you take her back?

Nkosinathi: who?

I looked at him.

He knew who I was referring to alright.

Nkosinathi: baby don't do this to yourself.

Me: is that your answer?

Nkosinathi: there wouldn't be a need for me to choose, Cassandra you're everything I've been looking for, I found you, you found me and ndiyakuthanda. I know love isn't always enough

hence I've made my intentions ngawe clear, I want to marry you. I want us to have a proper family, I'd do that now, but I have to give you space for you to pursue your dreams as well. That's the only reason why I'm not on my way to your day right now.

I wiped a tear...

He lifted my chin and wiped my tears kissing me on the cheeks and forehead. I wanted to smile but my face muscles wouldn't let me.

Nkosinathi: it hurts seeing you like this, it hurts seeing your tears. Please stop this ndiyakucela babe.

Me: it hurts me thinking that all this time I might have been dribbled.

Nkosinathi: dri- what?

Me: dribbled. I know what you said, but I just can't shake off this feeling I have.

Nkosinathi: baby I'd never dribble you. Please

believe that.

Me: don't all men say that?

Nkosinathi: I'm not all men... Yazi I feel like there's more to this than this Sivu issue. What exactly is going on?

Me: please stop shortening her name, for some reason it feels like uyamteketisa.

He sighed...

Nkosinathi: okay, sorry. So talk to me, what's really going on?

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: I understand that you are going through a lot, your flat just got burnt, you had to move and start from scratch. You just found out that your brother inlaw is actually the man behind everything,

and then as if that wasn't enough, Sivuyise happened. It's safe to say that you're going through some emotional difficulties right now but please don't ever doubt my love for you. Ever.

I didn't respond, instead tears were just coming out of my eyes.

Nkosinathi: if there's anything you want me to do to prove that akusekho nto indidibanisa no Sivuyise please say it, I'll do it. Anything baby.

I just cleaned my face in silence.

Me: my sister accuses me of being jealous of her life, she doesn't want to hear that her husband is actually a psychopath.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: not as sorry as I am... I mean, my own sister

chooses her psychotic ex-husband over her own sister.

Nkosinathi: just give her time, she's still shocked.

Me: I'm still shocked too, I'm still hurt, I'm still angry but you don't see me insulting people.

He kept quiet...

Me: maybe I should just go to my flat.

Nkosinathi: haikengoku.

Me: I'm not good company, I'm a mess, I'm making your problems mine.

Nkosinathi: you're my mess, and you're not going anywhere.

I had this huge lump in my throat, ndibanga ginya ayimnki tu but instead it was growing bigger. I jumped off the bed and ran to the bathroom, ndasela amanzi and looked at the mirror. He gave

me a minute then came knocking on the door...

Nkosinathi: is it safe to come in?

I wanted to laugh at him but I just opened the door and smiled at him...

Me: uyaphi?

Nkosinathi: hay mfondini iyandi traumatizer lento uyenzayo.

I walked out ndamshiya emephaya.

Me: you said something about being hungry.

Nkosinathi: ewe masiyotya.

Me: sotya ntoni?

Nkosinathi: I cooked.

I paused...

Me: you cooked?

Nkosinathi: ewe baby, I cooked.

Me: does your sister know that you can actually cook?

Nkosinathi: she knows but kaloku ndizophekela mna nabani?

He was right.

Sometimes akumnanga utya uhleli wedwa. We went downstairs, he plated up and served me. Lobhuti cooked oh my word, mutton stew with flavored rice and roasted veggies.

Me: thank you. Smells as good as it looks.

Nkosinathi: we're not in competition ke baby, I know you cook delicious food.

Me: I'm not competing tu.

We ate making small conversation over nonsense. When we were done eating I washed the plates and he dished up dessert, my mouth watered at the smell of chocolate. After some time sincokola he brought back the old conversation...

Nkosinathi: I spoke to our family doctor, he says he'll be available for a housecall next week Saturday.

Me: oh okay.

Nkosinathi: so, should I confirm?

Me: sure, why not?

Nkosinathi: Thank you.

My sister called again...

I rejected the call and the other one called, I rejected it too. They were probably together and I didn't have the energy to be attacked by two grown women

over a man two if not three times my age.

Nkosinathi: and that?

Me: my sisters.

Nkosinathi: maybe they want to apologize?

Me: hm... I've had a bad day already, all I need is a good night rest for class tomorrow and some energy for Khiro.

Nkosinathi: do you want me to tag along xa usiya?

Me: if you're not busy... But I'm sure I'll be fine with my brothers there. Don't worry about it.

Nkosinathi: okay... I'll drop you off and leave then, but, call me if your sister starts acting up again.

I smiled...

Me: enkosi. And, I'm sorry for earlier.

Nkosinathi: it's cool... I'm actually glad that there's some sense of entitlement about this relationship

somewhere in you. Lento yakho yongathi you don't
care iyandoyikisa sometimes.

I laughed out loud...

Nkosinathi: at some point I thought yonkinto yi joke
kuwe, but today ndikubonile ba you care too deep.
And I like that.

Me: and you think you've found my weak point?

Nkosinathi: nope, your weak point is love. You love
with everything in you and that's why you are afraid
of getting hurt, uyayazi it will take time for you to
heal and trust again.

Me: hay weh fakhen, shut up!

Nkosinathi: u fakhen ndim ngoku?

He was laughing so hard, I watched him smiling.
His laughter did things to my heart that I couldn't
explain... His laughter warmed my insides.

Nkosinathi: why do you do that?

Me: what?

Nkosinathi: that, that smile. Whenever we're laughing you stop laughing and just smile at me.

Me: ndiyakuthanda kaloku.

Nkosinathi: it's beautiful baby, but it's creepy at the same time.

Me: aw'qhelanga nyhani uthandwa wena.

He threw me with a pillow and I caught it and threw it back but he ducked and fell on the other side of the couch.

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_42

After we had the meal we went upstairs and cuddled.

Me: odlula kwayo yonke lento I'll take Xuni.

Nkosinathi: please, feels like I have a son that I should feed and change oko.

I laughed at him.

Nkosinathi: I bought him proper food yazi, forgot to tell you.

Me: thank you.

His phone rang...he answered and spoke for a while then put the phone on my ear.

Steve: Cassandra?

Me: bhuti?

Steve: what happened to your phone?

Me: I think I might have switched it off.

Steve: your mother is looking for you ke you better switch it back on.

Me: okay. Enkosi.

Steve: when last did you speak to your sisters?

Me: earlier today.

Steve: bayeza bonke ke ngoms o (They're all coming over tomorrow). Asanda told everybody about this.

Me: u right wethu bhuti, bekungekhonto bendiyifihla (It's cool, I wasn't hiding anything) besides protecting everyone from this guy and Sis Asanda thinks I actually enjoyed yonke lento. Apparently I must have always been jealous of her life all this time.

Steve: she did not say that, please tell me she didn't.

Me: I wish. But it's cool, I'll see them when I see them.

Steve: tchini the nerve!

He hung up...I handed Nkosinathi back his phone.

I reached out for mine, switched it back on and called mom. And yes, they had told her of

everything so obviously she was shouting at me because of the version they had told her, now I had to retell the story as it had transpired. She recalled my hatred towards Lisakhanya apparently dad informed her and she had seen that we had drifted apart coz u Lisa ebesaziwa ekhaya since high-school. After a very long chat with the mother, I realized that Nkosinathi had fallen asleep, pulled a fleece over him and walked out. The conversation with my mom forced me to make things right with Lisa...yes she understood my anger towards her but she still wanted me to make peace saying that the Lisa that we all know wouldn't have sold me out just like that. There must have been a valid reason and the only way to find out was for me to open for her.

I sat on the couch, took a deep breath and called Lisa...she answered.

Lisa: hello?

Me: can you talk?

Lisa: Cass, sure. What's up?

Me: I uhm, I wanted us to talk about this whole thing that happened ngalamini e clubini (that day at the club). Obviously we won't uhm, go deeper into the little details but I just want to know what happened. Why did you do guys what you did?

She sighed...

Lisa: why are we going back there now only? It's been two years Cass.

Me: I want to be able to forgive you and move on, and I can't. Not until I understand what happened.

Lisa: you can't forgive me? Que had got the both of us, why are making this as if I'm the one who sold you guys out?

Me: Que was your friend and roommate, you introduced me to her, when Sisipho and I needed help you didn't even bother. Even when I returned,

you didn't bother. Why?

Lisa: I'm sorry, but I tried reaching out and you pushed me away.

Me: kudala wats ho bra, now I wanna know why.

Lisa: Okay fine... So uhm Que had come through for me previously when I couldn't afford some things, and she had promised to do more if I just stick with her. When you guys went off, she said to me that she had hooked you up with a boyfriend so I relaxed. As we were still having fun my phone was making noises as you guys were sending us messages so she took it and switched it off. To cut the story short, I I couldn't help you when you returned because I had slept with one of the guys and they had made a video of that, threatening to leak it into la website yase kolweni should I be found near you so obviously I did not want that to happen.

Me: you had sex with umntu ongamaziyo Lisa? (a stranger?)

Lisa: I was intoxicated okay?

Me: but you know better.

Lisa: are you gonna judge me now? Should I stop talking?

Okay...ndathula.

Lisa: so uhm, after some time I realized that I was pregnant so I contacted the guy and he said I should abort because he's got enough kids to feed, and I didn't want to do that because for one, I was scared for my health, we've heard many scary abortion stories and the after effects. He sent me about eight grand to go and abort, I saved up lamali and said I aborted, after three months Que told him that I didn't so he came looking for me, took me to this other doctor in Middleburg and removed the baby. I spent two months in Middleburg because I became sick after the abortion, came back to school ngelaxesha lamapolis a who were investigating about oo Sisipho and the rest of the girls who went missing.

Me: if you wanted to do right why ungazange

uthethe that time?

Lisa: I had found out that when they were doing the abortion procedure, they had actually inserted a chip in my arm. They were able to hear everything I say, track my movements with the chip. Ezanto ze movies man.

Me: you're using past tense.

Lisa: yes...beginning of last year ndiye ndane boyfriend from Malawi, Bomani. I told him everything that I had gone through and that I was going through when I met him, he actually discovered the chip kwabanye abantwana that he had met before so he took me to his friend in Pretoria, they did the checks and found it then they removed it.

Me: and just like that, you were free?

Lisa: no, we came up with a plan to uhm, ufaka la chip ku Que. I won't go into detail but the plan worked, that's actually what played the major role in her arrest.

Me: I see.

Lisa: even in those shoes that you gave me...we found a tracking device.

Me: I know.

Lisa: you trapped me.

Me: felt good yazi?

Lisa: wow!

Me: do you blame me?

Lisa: actually, I don't. But bro, can we make peace now? Please. Andikakwazi ukuchaela oomama why ungasayi anymore, andizazi ndizoyiqala ngaphi. (I can't even explain to my parents why you don't go there anymore, I don't know where to start)

Me: this is us making peace, my entire family knows ngalento and I suggest nawe uzame uyichaza kokwenu even if you don't go into detail. But I do know you've told Kwakhanya.

Lisa: why do you say that?

Me: I've seen her, she's got some attitude towards me. I do wonder though what exactly did you tell her.

She kept quiet...

Me: I'm going to see Khiron tomorrow.

Lisa: what? Are you insane? Cassandra Are you crazy?

Me: no, I'm not insane nor am I crazy. I want answers.

Lisa: maybe you have a death wish.

Me: maybe you should come with yazi... maybe, we can finally get closure yayo yonke le mess.

Lisa: no thank you I'm good. I might never have children in my life because of that abortion so I don't ever want to see that man.

Me: wait, he impregnated you? Khiron?

Lisa: ewe Cassandra! When did you become so slow?

Me: oh my God! You slept with him? He is the stranger that you slept with?

She didn't answer...

Me: Did you know that he's my sister's ex-husband?

Lisa: who?

Me: Khiro. He's sis Asanda's ex-husband.

Lisa: soze! Soze Cassandra soze. (Never! Never
Cassandra never.

Me: he's my nephews' father, my ex-brother-in-law.

Lisa: oh my God! No.

Me: see why I want answers kengoku?

She didn't answer again...

Me: if uyafuna ukuya please inform me on time so
that we can pick you up.

Lisa: okay... I'm not promising anything, but I'll think
about it.

Me: no prob, and thank you for telling me ezizinto,

maybe nyhani after tomorrow I can finally put this whole thing behind me.

Lisa: yeah, me too.

Me: okay bye now.

Lisa: thank you for calling chomi. Really means an entire world.

I smiled and hung up.

I decided to check on my puppy, hadn't fed him in a while. I looked for the food Nkosinathi said he had bought for him, got water as well and went outside to feed him. It was cold outside but I couldn't bring Xuni's kennel indoors, at least he had a blanket to snuggle on. I walked back inside and went back to bed, I did sleep ngoku bendikhe ndane breakdown emini so now I had no sleep left in me. I watched him sleep for an hour, two, three then I decided to wake him up.

He just looked at me...

Me: wake up.

Then he closed his eyes...I bit the corners of his lips, kissed his chin and even tried tickling him but he was not budging. I stopped and looked at him, he opened his eyes and smiled.

Me: you're enjoying this, right?

Nkosinathi: I didn't disturb your sleep earlier.

Me: but you've been asleep for three hours if not more.

Nkosinathi: I didn't disturb your sleep.

Me: ngena ezingubeni ke. (At least get under the covers)

He took a whole minute to get up, undress and get under the blankets.

Guess he wasn't showering today.

I did the same and got next to him, his sister called saying there's a break-in at their parents' house. The way he jumped up the bed and started getting dressed. I sat up and watched him, he went to his walk-in closet, I heard izinto eziwayo but I didn't wanna go near him. His phone rang again, Asenathi so now I got off the bed and went to give it to him.

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_43

Once I walked in there, I realized that this closet actually had rooms! This MF closet had chambers! And the thought that he was somewhere in there sent chills up my spine. Now because I didn't want to go further in there I walked back out and answered the phone...

Me: hi Ase, ndcela ubambe he's somewhere in his closet. (Please hold)

Asenathi: awandibiza kamnandi, mamela,

zumxelele u Nathi ubhut'Nko sephaya and uthi akho monakalo so he can relax. (Please tell him that the big brother is already there and he confirms that no harm was done)

Me: oh-kay.

Asenathi: he'll tell you everything.

Me: okay sure.

He returned fully dressed and saw his phone in my hand...

He didn't say anything but I saw the look in his eyes, it had questions.

Me: your sister says that ubhut'Nko sephaya and akho monakalo so you can relax.

Nkosinathi: oh...that was fast.

He took the phone and called his brother.

I gave him space...

He later came down with my shoes and his hoodie to wear. I didn't ask questions, I just wore the shoes and followed him while getting into his hoodie. He locked his house and drove out in silence...after about two hours of driving, and a whole lot of phone calls from his siblings, I decided to ask him...

Me: what's going on?

Nkosinathi: there was a break-in endlini. (At home)

Me: so siya kokwenu ngoku? (So we're going there?)

He nod..after a second he looked at me.

Nkosinathi: I didn't wanna leave you alone ndingazazi ukuba ndizobuya what time. I'll try for us not to stay long is since you have a class in the morning. (Not knowing what time I'll be back)

Me: cool..so who's this other Nko?

Nkosinathi: Nkos'ehlanga, my elder brother from dad's first marriage.

Me: oh okay.

Then we drove in silence again.

I didn't wanna ask more questions, he seemed to be under stress but I was also stressing because I'm about to meet his family under such circumstances. That was stressful on its own but I wasn't gonna say that now. We drove into his homestead, but as I looked around I couldn't see not even one car. We parked and went to the main door, he knocked but there was no answer, he tried the knob and the door opened. He held my hand as he walked in slowly.

There was no one...maybe he wanted to see that for himself? But hello? The house was empty.

He took out his phone and called his brother...

#Nkosinathi's POV

So Asenathi called to tell me that there was a break-in endlini, she called again qha wathetha no Cassandra who then told me that uthe u brother wam there was no harm done. But I still wanted to go check the house out. When we got there...the house was empty, I called him just to find out where they were and what they were doing wherever they were.

Ta Nko: Nkosinathi?

Me: Bro, niphi? (Where's everyone?)

Ta Nko: ndihambe nabo...uphi wena? (I left with them, where are you?)

Me: ndilapha endlini. J ust got here. (I'm here, just got here)

Ta Nko: Didn't Asenathi tell you not to worry about it?

Me: well I couldn't just not worry, I had to come and see this for myself.

Ta Nko: you can come kaloku...just be fast, umama

is a bit shaken ingaske akhaw'leze alale.

Me: okay. Sharp.

I hung up and looked at Cassandra...

Cass: and?

Me: my brother took them to his house, masambe.

I looked for the key in the kitchen, turned off the lights and locked. We drove in silence, but I could feel the anxiety from u baby rubbing off me.

Me: stop stressing.

Cass: I'm not stressing.

Me: I can feel you stressing baby, relax.

She smiled and released some short breaths. From there to my brothers' house would have taken us an

hour or so, but because it was already evening, we got there within 20 minutes. As we got out of the car I saw the anxiety in her eyes, I knew deep down that she wasn't ready to see my parents yet but I didn't want to leave her alone after everything that has happened. My parents were a priority yes, but she was also a priority now. And when she's at my place she's my responsibility.

Me: hey, come here.

I held both her hands and kissed her on the lips.

Cass: do they know about me?

Me: we're not here for that right now, and if they don't like you which I don't see why they shouldn't, it's their loss.

She nod...that was either an indication that we can go in OR she was just plainly dismissing me. Either

way, we walked up to the door and knocked, the door was opened by my niece who jumped at me for an embrace, a minute later she saw that I wasn't alone then she extended a hand to greet my guest. We followed her to the lounge...

Me: molweni. (Good evening)

Ta Nko: hey, that was fast.

Me: uthe I must be fast mfondini.

We hugged, he hugged Cassandra and offered her a seat.

Me: baphi? (Where are they?)

Ta Nko: second room on your right.

I got up and went to check on my parents leaving my brother with my girlfriend, when I got to the room my sister-in-law was coming out with a tray.

We briefly greeted then I walked in. mom was already in bed, dad sat next to her...

Me: Dambuza.

Dad: kwedini, tyhini ukhaw'lezile kwekwe. Yazi bendingekha kucingi. (Young man, that was fast. I didn't expect you yet)

Me: hay, kuyahambeka noko. (The roads are clear)

Dad: ooh haike, u right kodwa. (oh okay, how are you?)

Me: ndi right xhego...ndiyanibona ni fresh nani. (I'm alright dad, I can see ya'll are fresh as well)

He laughed...

Dad: si fresh mfondini, qha sothukile. (We are fresh boy, but we are shocked)

Me: kwenzeke ntoni? (What happened?)

Dad: hey andiyazi...bendise garage mna ndive nge festile eyophukayo nesikhalo sikanyoko. (Hey I do not know...I was working in the garage then I heard a breaking window and your mom's cry)

Me: haibo.

Dad: when I got there I saw two figures already jumping off the fence so we called your brother, he called you guys. But he first inspected and saw nothing to worry about then he suggested we come here since your mother is a bit shaken.

Me: I see...is she sleeping?

Dad: she just had painkillers, allow her to sleep. You can come back in the morning if you're not busy.

Me: I'll come back, ca never be too busy.

Dad: and your Canada trip? What happened?

Me: it's still on, don't worry about it.

Nkos'ehlanga walked in and sat on his own chair...

Dad: u right mfondini? (Are you alright?)

Ta Nko: I'm good taima, ulele umama? (I'm good dad, is mom asleep?)

Me: yeah.

Ta Nko: she needs to see a doctor tomorrow.

Me: I'll call her doctor for a house call if you don't mind.

Ta Nko: that'll be great, I'll take a day off.

Me: u sure? I'm not too busy I can spend the day here as well.

Ta Nko: ndi sure...you can come, utata ingathi une summit e Joburg, okanye ujikile mfo'mkhulu? (I'm sure...but you can come, I think dad has a business summit in Joburg, or have you cancelled old man?)

Dad: hayi ndiyahamba mna, hlalani nina nonyoko. (No I'm going, you two stay with your mother)

We laughed at him...

Dad: xa amadoda onke omzi ezogadana naye ngubani ozokwenza imali? Hlalani banta bam, nikholo lonto kakade. (If all the men in this family are going to be guarding her who's going to make money? You stay here with her, that's why we gave birth to you anyway)

After spending some time chatting with the old man we gave him space, it was already late and I had promised to come back again in the morning. When we got to the lounge my brother's wife (Liyema) was making conversation with Cass, as soon as we walked in they both kept quiet.

Me: and then?

Liyema: and then what? Hewethu, unqabele ntoni? (Why are you scarce?)

I went to sit next to my girlfriend, nudging an elbow into her ribs and she just smiled. It's so weird that

girls will be crazy when alone with you and then start acting shy in the presence of your family, Cassandra was like a new born puppy now, kodwa hlobo eli andigqagqanisela ngalo when it's just the two of us. She was a totally different person.

Liyema: so you're not gonna answer me?

Me: I don't know what you want me to say that I didn't say last week.

Liyema: mmh, khasazise ke. (Introduce us)

Ta Nko: haibo baby, ngoku sendinshiye nobabini akhanincokole? (Even after I left the two of you together, you still didn't talk?)

Liyema: baby yhima. Nkosinathi?

I looked at Cassandra...

I really wanted to laugh at her face but instead I took her hand into mine, khendizenze umntu nam otherwise I could have just introduced her informally with no show of affection whatsoever

because I'd like to believe we're cool like that.

Me: baby that's my big brother, this nosy woman is Liyema his wife and the kid you saw when we walked in is their third born. They have four kids for now.

Liyema: sukuthi for now, we're done. Finished.

Me: is that right bhuti?

Ta Nko: I don't know about that.

We all laughed at the face Liyema gave him.

Me: everybody, this is Cassandra, my girlfriend.

Ta Nko: kuhle ude sikubone ke Cassandra, even though we see you under these circumstance.

Liyema: so when can we invite you for lunch so we can get to know you properly.

Me: haike Liyema, don't!

Liyema: andithethi nawe. Cass? (I'm not talking to you)

Cass: uhm, ndixhomekeke kulo bhuti sisi. (I'm dependent on this guy)

Liyema: ooh okay, usahamba wena? (Are you still going?)

Me: ndim ngoku u wena? Liyema ndingubhuti kuwe usayazi phofu lonto? (Are you talking to me?)

Liyema show some respect)

Liyema: ungubhuti?

Me: Liyema?

She laughed.

Liyema: are you still going to Canada? That's the question at hand.

Me: yes I have to, so we can only respond to this lunch thing when I'm back.

Liyema: fair enough.

Me: but we're not promising anything.

Ta Nko: why am I not surprised?

I got up...

Me: before ya'll start with the emotional blackmail, mas ambe baby.

We said our goodbyes and drove off, she fell asleep on the way. Woke her up when we got home and she walked straight to the bedroom.

[06/26, 14:47] : #Cassandra_44

#Lisakhanya

I still couldn't believe that Cassandra called to ask about something that happened two years ago. It's been two years and she had made it clear that she wants nothing to do with me so why now all of a sudden? On top of that, she wants to see Ta Khiro?

Yhu!

I was curious though of what he'd say if I were to rock up with her, but I knew deep down that I wasn't ready to face him just yet. He brought back dreadful memories, the mention of his name sent shivers up my spine yet I thought I had finally moved on. It took me sessions and sessions of counselling for me to even close my eyes and be able to sleep at night after that abortion saga now to relive everything from scratch just because she needs closure? Noooo! She must go find her closure yedwa, I'm done. I am closure myself when it comes to that animal. Kwakhanya my big sister called...

Me: hey.

Khanya: hey, why do you sound down?

Me: I received a call from Cassandra.

Khanya: what does she want?

Me: I don't really know, she said she wanted to

know everything, how it happened, why I never helped them out when they sent signals, everything from scratch.

Khanya: when you wanted to tell her she was acting all righteous, why now?

Me: she wants closure she says.

Khanya: so you must now re-live all that bulls hit? Who does Cassandra think she is? Huh?

I sighed...unjena ke u Khanya.

Me: mntaka dad calm down.

Khanya: haisuka! Next thing she's gonna want ya'll to go revisit those demons just so she can find closure?

Me: she already did, I refused.

Khanya: she must be crazy! Does she know the hell you went through because of that man? Does she even care phofu?

Me: Khanya we both know it wasn't her fault, she didn't know. Qaqamba is the culprit here.

Khanya: Lisa, Cassandra knows you, she knew you before ya'll went to PE, she should have given you the benefit of doubt or at least allowed you to explain yourself after that ordeal that she also went through. She should have given you a chance ayeke uzenza i ice queen apha! (Stop being an ice queen)

Okay that went south very fast...

I understood where she was coming from but then I also understood where Cassandra was coming from, I mean, I should have done something when they were sending us locations.

#Nkosinathi

She went straight to bed, it was understandable though because she had class the following day and she had this meeting with her brothers which I

noticed was stressing her out. I did try to ease the tension when it comes to this Khiro issue but then... anyway, I called the doctor since they operate in a 24hr cycle and booked for mom, unfortunately they wouldn't be able to attend to a house-call as they were short of doctors so I made an arrangement to take her there for a 10am appointment. After that I followed Cassandra up the stairs and also got in bed. She had her eyes closed but obviously she wasn't asleep, I would have loved to make love to her but right now would be insensitive. I think. Maybe I should wait for the weekend? But what if she was not going to come back, maybe because her sister was coming she'd spend the weekend with her, try and solve these issues they have ngalo Khiro wakhona. After a while she opened her eyes...

Me: hey...

Cass: hey...why are you staring at me?

Me: can we talk?

Cass: sure.

Me: baby do you really not trust me? Like really? Be honest.

Cass: why do you ask?

Me: the way you were questioning me about Sivuyise.

Cass: I just had to ask. But I'm sorry if that hurt you.

Me: if?

Cass: okay, I'm sorry my questions about Sivuyise hurt you.

Me: are you now convinced that ndithanda wena wedwa? (You're the only one I love?)

Cass: for now yes, but baby these things change as time goes. I really wouldn't like to be hurt especially by you.

Me: I wouldn't hurt you intentionally Cassandra, believe that.

Cass: okay, I believe you.

Me: you don't believe me, you're only saying that because you think that's what I wanna hear.

Cass: haike.

I wasn't gunning for a fight so I let it slide even though we both knew that was not an apology, I kissed the crown of her head...as she closed her eyes and we slept. In the morning I woke up first and bathed, I had to drop her off and rush to take my mother to the doctor. When I was done, I woke her up, while she was bathing I made the bed and went downstairs to make her breakfast. Asenathi called...

Me: hey, what's up?

Asenathi: unjani umama?

Me: she's fine, it's just shock. Aren't you visiting her today?

Asenathi: I am, I wanna cook for her coz sis Liyema ingathi ebesithi she's going to work.

Me: okay ke. Sharp.

Asenathi: I called kaloku yhima.

Me: oh. Sorry.

Asenathi: Sivu came to see me.

Me: I didn't know ya'll were friends.

Asenathi: we're not but she wants me to beg you on her behalf...

Me: Asenathi no, please don't do this. Please.

Asenathi: mntase I know how much you loved uSivu, you cannot just overlook that ngenxa yalomntu umts ha whom you don't even know. Whom we don't even know.

Me: I actually appreciate you using past tense because that's all in the past now, she had her turn, it's now over. Can you advise her to move on? Or beg her, please.

Asenathi: she didn't actually dump you, she just asked you to give her space so she could focus on her studies. I thought you understood that part.

Me: I don't have time for this.

Asenathi: why do I feel like you actually still do love her but you're afraid of admitting that because of

the new girl?

Me: I don't care what you feel like Asenathi, uyintoni khona kwi lovelife yam? You didn't even like Sivuyise and now you're here advocating for her? Really now?

Asenathi: I don't like any of your girlfriends because they are gold-diggers but I grew to like her because she cared about you. Amongst all the girls you've been with kweliBhayi she's the only one who did your laundry, cleaned your house, cooked for you whenever she slept over. She took good care of you Nathi.

Me: she wanted to, no one asked her.

Asenathi: it was her way of showing you that she cared and you loved her for that too, you enjoyed being taken care off.

Me: cared, good. And I appreciated her for that all the time, now moving forward w-

Asenathi: please think about this, I told her about what happened at home and she might visit mom too.

Me: so you called to tell me that you will be visiting mom with my ex?

Asenathi: possible future wife, maybe?

Me: voets ek uyeva!

Asenathi: haibo Nathi!

I hung up.

Why the heavens would she invite Sivuyise to go visit my mom? Why? What were they hoping to achieve? Haike fok bonke ke! I just warmed milk for cereal, there was no time for bacon and eggs tu and I was already irritated yile phonecall. Cassandra came down, dressed and ready to go. We ate in silence...she was probably still sleepy, my mind was just elsewhere. When we were done, we walked to the car and I took her to campus. She must have noticed that I'm in a sour mood because she didn't say a word all the way, which I appreciated kakhulu because I was really in a bad space. As she got off the car...

Me: what time should I pick you up?

Cass: aren't you spending the day with your mother?

Me: I'm only taking her to the doctor, Asenathi and my brother will be there with her the whole day.

Cass: I thought you're spending the day with your family as you said last night so I was gonna call my brother to pick me up, we're meeting Khiron anyway.

Me: can I pick you up and drop you off? Please?

Cass: okay. Bye.

Me: bye.

She walked away...

As I watched her walking away I suddenly felt bad that I didn't even kiss her goodbye, talking about kissing when was the last time I actually kissed her? Argh! There was just too much going on in both our lives right now. I drove up to my brother's house, and when I got there, mom was already up and

waiting, her daughter had not arrived yet which was good. My brother accompanied us to the doctor, it was just shock and old age...nothing much then we went out for breakfast.

Mom: heh Nkosinathi?

Ta Nko: shu!

Me: mh, mama?

All three of us laughed, the only time a mother will say “Heh banban” is when a serious question is about to be asked.

Mom: utshata nini mntanam? Umdala ngoku haibo?
(When are you getting married? You're old enough now)

Me: xandifumene intombi enokulunga ukuba ngumolokazana wakho nozala. (When I get the right girl to be your daughter in-law mom)

Mom: yenjani leyo ke mntanam? (And what kind is that my son?)

I chuckled...this was a trap.

Ta Nko: just pretend I'm not here.

Mom: uLiyema uthi ubuye nentombi entle pha endlini phezolo. (Liyema says you came a beautiful girl last night)

Me: uLiyeme unolwimi. (Liyema is a gossip)

Ta Nko: Don't! Don't you dare say my wife is a gossip.

Me: we're pretending as if you're not here. Hold your peace ke.

Mom: when am I meeting her?

Me: I don't know yet nozala, it's still the early stages.

Mom: can she cook?

Me: yes.

Mom: do house work?

Me: yes.

Mom: is she clean? Does she have good manners?
A good character?

Me: most definitely.

Mom: does she respect you? Your work? Your family?

Ta Nko: I also saw her mama, the way he's answering she sounds like a mini Liyema.

Mom: Your wife is not a good cook Nkos'ehlanga but asingxoli ngalonto, now Nkos inathi...uthi what is the main reason why we haven't met her?

Me: yhima mama, what did you say about Liyema?

Ta Nko: mama choose your words wisely, us ayolala kwam again tonight.

Mom: ndithi uLiyema ebendiphethe kakuhle kwakhe, aw'vanga ndaw'ni ndikhumshe?

Yho lomama!!!!!!

My brother and I just burst out laughing, she was serious. Not even a corner of her tooth out.

[06/26, 14:48] : #Cassandra_45

I went straight to my first lecture for the day, bumped onto Sivu's friends and they just laughed. Okay thought we left all of that in high-school. I went for my lessons, did all there was to do for the day then decided to leave class an hour before the scheduled time. I was tired man. I took a walk to Wimpy for a shake then I called this guy to come fetch me...there was something off about him this morning, or it could have been me? I don't know, but it looked like he was pissed off, for some reason. The phone rang once and his sister answered...

Asenathi: Nathi's phone hello?

Me: hi Asenathi, is he busy?

Asenathi: yes he is, can I take a message?

Me: no it's fine, I'll call him later.

Asenathi: he did mention that he's spending the day with his mother, right?

Me: yes he did.

Asenathi: but you were hoping he'd steal a minute for you maybe?

Me: nope not at all sweetie, I was just checking up on him. Sorry to bother you.

Asenathi: alright ke babes.

Me: sharp.

She hung up...

Now if I thought I was insane when I felt some weirdness from Nkosinathi earlier today then I was definitely not insane a minute ago. His sister was sour sour sour, I didn't even have the energy to ask why she was cold and rude to me all of a sudden or maybe what happened last night had triggered all of them? But he was fine at his brother's house. Wow. I texted both my brothers and Lionel came to fetch me thirty minutes later...the drive to where they had kept was daunting, he didn't make much conversation and I was sitting next to him sweating

just by thinking what the hell am I going to say to Khiro? How will I face him? Where will I get the guts to even face him? As we neared the place I saw three familiar cars...

Me: have they seen him yet?

Lionel: no, she says she wants to see you first.

Me: how is she?

Lionel: I don't know...I haven't spoken to her, but Steve has.

Me: kay.

I breathed out.. he stole a side look at me.

Lionel: relax, akhonto bazokwenza yona xabedibene nalandodakhe. (there's nothing they can do to you, her and that husband of hers)

Me: don't talk like that, she was married to the guy so she's bound to not believe us.

Lionel: us amthethelela? (you're still making excuses for her?)

Okay I shut up.

He parked and we got out, Siki saw us and came towards us. She didn't say anything, she just threw her arms around me and wept. I was dry, like, no emotion kinda dry so I just hugged her until she calmed down.

Siki: why didn't you say anything?

Me: I thought I was protecting the fam.

Siki: we're supposed to protect you, not the other way around.

Me: I know sisi... I wasn't thinking straight, I just did what I thought would be right at that moment.

She hugged me again...

Steve came out, we had a short conversation with

him then he walked us inside. Asanda was nowhere to be seen so I also didn't ask her whereabouts. We got into this room and Khiro was all alone... No ginger on sight. As we walked in, he looked up and I saw his face covered in shame.

Steve: should we leave the two of you? He said he won't talk unless we give you guys privacy.

Me: and you trust him?

Steve: he's bound, there's nothing he can do to you.

Me: where's sis Asanda?

Steve: in her car outside.

Me: please call her, she must be here when he talks.

Steve: u sure?

Me: ewe bhuti.

Steve: what if he twists his story while she's here and makes you the bad guy?

Me: please get u sisi torho bhuti.

Steve: okay. If that's what you want.

He walked out and came back with Asanda, she didn't even greet me. The rest of them walked out, Lionel came to whisper that they'll be standing right outside this room's door so if anything happens I must just shout. I gave him my phone because I expected Lisa to call and ask us to pick her up, I also expected Nkosinathi to call when he's coming to pick me up from campus as we had agreed when he dropped me off in the morning. Unless his sister told him otherwise but I didn't say much to her though judging by her attitude I wouldn't be surprised if she twisted something for him. Asanda stood there folding her arms, I took a seat and sat a short distance from the guy.

Khira: I didn't think you'd be flattered seeing me like this.

Me: are you talking to me or your wife?

Khira: you mean ex-wife, right? I'm talking to You,

why would I talk to her?

Me: what exactly is your problem taka Aphiwe?

Khiri: I don't have a problem. Who said I have a problem?

Asanda: are you guys seriously doing this?
Seriously?

Me: huh?

Asanda: heh S'thembele, how long have you been sleeping with my sister?

Me: WHAT?

Asanda: shut up wena andithethi nawe! (you shut up, I'm not talking to you)

Khiri: what does it matter? You divorced me, remember? So whatever I do should be none of your business.

Asanda: answer the damn question!

He laughed...

She was fuming...

Khira: aw Ma-Asi, do you see how frustrating it is to not have control over anything?

Asanda: S'thembele!?

Khira just looked at me smiling...

Khira: please get me a glass of water behind you, don't worry, I won't hurt you. It has a straw in it.

I got up and went to give him the water, he drank it all then I sat down again.

Khira: uyabona Asanda, a simple request and your sister does it without questioning me. You know nothing about requesting and saying please, well not all of us are gonna dance to your tune baby.

She smacked him and he laughed, she did it again and he laughed louder.

Khira: is that all you got? You came all the way from Gauteng just to smack my face? Are you really that lonely baby?

I cleared my throat...

Me: I came here for answers, please cooperate with me.

Khira: okay love, what do you wanna know that I haven't told you already?

Asanda: did you just say love?

We ignored her

Me: your guys kidnapped me and my friend, you let me go but you kept her... A lot happened yes, but I just wanna understand the part where you burnt down where I lived. Why? You had a car that was following me the whole week? You put a tracking chip into the shoes you gave me as a gift, why?

Khiro: this is very simple though, I love you.

Asanda: you love her?

Me: so you hurt people you love?

Khiro: okay let's do it like this: I don't hurt people I love, I just try as much as I can to get their attention.

Me: you burnt an entire commune down!

Khiro: I knew you were not there when I burnt down that place, I wasn't stalking you with that car those guys were just looking out for you. It was for your own sake.

Me: are you even listening to yourself?

Khiro: yes, what did you expect me to do when you're not giving me any attention? You're busy frolicking that asshole right before my eyes, come

on man!

Asanda: heh S'thembele, did you just say you love Cassandra? Right in front of me?

Khira: but why uzenza shocked when you know that I've always loved your sister baby, she has always been respectful towards me unlike you. I saw my future with her more than I saw it with you. I don't think that's the first time you're hearing this.

Asanda: uyaziva S'thembele? (are you hearing yourself?)

Haven't you humiliated me enough?

Khira: I know you've made me look like the bad oke in this divorce thing but you and I know the truth. And like this, the truth always comes out.

Asanda: you're missing the point here.

Khira: the point here is that I'm in love with your little sister, always have been.

Asanda: is that why you were sleeping around while we were still married? Is that why you treated me like garbage in front of your children? Is that why

you-

Khitho: I couldn't get to her so why not sleep with any other woman who avails themselves? Andithi you didn't wanna have sex with me because I'm a filthy drunkard? Yet my money was good enough for you.

Asanda: uphambene, you thought I'd have sex with you after whoring around? Xa ufuna i aids yifune wedwa sufuna ufaka nam, eyemali yakho yona andisoze ndingayityi I'm entitled to it.

Me: guys, please stop this.

Khitho: every night when I slept with any other woman besides you I'd see Cassie, and for a second that made me feel good and then I'd have to come back home to you. See how miserable I was?

Asanda: ulimenemene kodwa S'thembele. You were never miserable, YOU made our lives miserable at any given moment.

Every chance you got.

He rolled his eyes...

The door opened and Lisa walked in with my brother.

Asanda: what are you doing here?

Lisa froze.

I got up and went to her.

Me: I asked her to come.

Asanda: why?

Me: because she also needs closure.

I pulled another chair for Lisa, Khiro laughed as she sat down.

Khiro: hay baby you really did your homework here, you also brought her in? How did you convince her? How much did you pay her? Ndiyamazi uyaythanda imali u chomi wakho. (I know how much your friend

loves money)

Lisa: can you shut up?

Khiri: okay uxolo ke.

Me: okay, I believe all of ya'll know each other.

Khiri: yes, she wanted to have my baby but I refused.

He laughed...

His laughter was irritating yet funny at the same time.

Lisa: you forced yourself onto me and got me pregnant you pervert, I didn't want to have your baby nje out of the blue.

Khiri: so why didn't you abort when I sent you money to abort?

Lisa: and put my life at risk? Are you sick?

Khiri: but you didn't die, or did you? We got the

thing removed from your womb and you're still alive
so what risk are you talking about?

Lisa: do you know there's a high possibility that I'll
never have children again?

Khoro: iyamithisa ngoku iminwe? (can fingers make
one pregnant now?)

Lisa: what?

Me: yintoni iminiwe ngoku?(what fingers?)

He laughed...

Asanda: Lisa can you wait outside for a second?

She quickly got up, I grabbed her arm.

Me: you're not going anywhere.

Asanda: I wasn't talking to you.

Me: and I'm not talking to you either I'm talking to
Lisa, hlala phantsi wena.

Asanda: Heh Cass-

Me: I called Lisa here, not you.

Asanda: is that how you talk to me now?

Me: hlala phantsi Lisakhanya. (Lisakhanya sit down)

Khiri: Cassie baby, your big sister is afraid that you'll find out that we both had sex with your dearest friend, Lisakhanya.

Me: you both did what? Wait... By both you mean...
As in, the both of you?

Lisa: uyaxoka chomi lobhuti don't listen to him. I told you I have a boyfriend.

Me: khawume wena, taka Aphiwe uthini?

Khiri: your sister divorced me to be a lesbian. But I know she didn't tell you that, because I'm the bad guy, right? I'm the womanizer.

Asanda: shut the fuck up wena.

Khiri: I only fucked Lisa to get back at you Asanda, unfortunately she fell pregnant but then I fixed that. So ya'll can continue with your fingershandis.

I looked at Lisa...

Me: you're a lesbain?

Lisa: chomi no...

Me: and you slept with my sister?

Asanda: Cassandra uphume ezindabeni zam, I'm still your elder sister.

Me: Haibo Lisa!

Khiri: she's a real hoe baby, fucked the wife while she was still married, fucked the husband after the divorce. A real hoe I tell you.

I didn't know what to say...

So that's why Asanda asked her uzothini apha when she walked in, she was afraid of this truth coming out.

[06/26, 14:48] : #Cassandra_46

There was total silence in the room, I got up and cleared my throat.

Me: I think I've heard enough for one day.

Khiri: does that mean I'll see you again?

Me: I don't know, I just need to get out of here right now.

Khiri: bring me beer when you come again, your brothers are just feeding me food and drinking alone.

Me: we're not friends.

He smiled wearily and nod. I walked out and left all of them there... My brothers were really on the other side of the door and my other sisters were waiting in their cars. I asked Lionel to drive me to my place, he gave me my phone as he walked me to my room. We sat in silence for a minute...

Me: I don't think he's as bad as we've made him to be.

Lionel: what did he say?

Me: there's a lot of unresolved issues between him and sis Asanda, I think I might need to see him again because today just took another unexpected twist.

Lionel: can you make that sooner? We can't keep him in there forever.

Me: let's make it Sunday, without her.

Lionel: okay. But are you okay?

Me: yeah I'm good. Just a bit shaken but I'm okay, I'll be okay in the morning.

Lionel: okay.

I closed my eyes... I wished I'd unhear what he said about Lisa and my big sis, the thought of them having sex disgusted me in many ways.

Lionel: come and lock, I have my gate remote with me.

Me: thank you, please drive safe.

Lionel: good night baby.

I locked after he left, then I ran myself a bath and soaked myself in, reliving everything that had happened earlier. I reached for my phone and realised that Nkosinathi didn't call, the last call I received was Lisa's call and that was it. Well, I wasn't going to call him now and risk having another Asenathi encounter. When I was done bathing I just slipped under the covers ndalala. I had no plans for Saturday, I just needed to relax and gather all the courage I need to face Khiro phof kwa Khiro lowo I just wanted an apology from him. In the morning I was woken up by a phone call from Nkosinathi.. I just watched it ring two times then he sent a text: baby, please answer your phone.

The same person who wanted to fetch me after

class izolo, same person I was supposed to spend the weekend with, is only checking up on me ngoku? Ebeyekeleni last night? I didn't return his call but instead I stayed in bed until 11am, went to make myself breakfast then I did some laundry. Somehow, I missed mam'Madlamini yazi, strange because we kinda had two encounters but the fact that she was an old kind woman reminded me of my own late grandmothers.

Me: maybe I should take a walk when I'm done here.

It was an accountable distance, but I knew if I walked ukuya then I'll catch a taxi coming back. As I was finishing up with my laundry, I saw bae's car at the gate so I just opened for him to drive in. He came out bearing gifts † ♀ a bouquet of pink and white roses, a black medium shopping bag and food. Uyamazi umntu wakhe ngokutya...

Nkosinathi: Babe...

Me: hey...

I was handing clothes in the washing line. He came behind me and gave me a hug, followed by a kiss on the cheek.

Nkosinathi: u sharp?

Me: yeah, you?

Nkosinathi: I'm good, missed you last night.

I didn't answer him.

I just collected the things I was using then we walked inside, put the vaskom and buckets in the bathroom, hung the pegs bag and went to pour him juice and biscuits then I sat across him with my glass of water. He put the tray down and looked at me...

Nkosinathi: how did yesterday go?

Me: it went well.

Nkosinathi: what did he say?

Me: a lot of things, some I don't wanna remember.

Nkosinathi: oh Kay... So it's over now?

Me: I'm seeing again tomorrow.

Nkosinathi: why?

Me: I didn't get what I was looking for, so I think tomorrow will be the last day.

Nkosinathi: I thought you said everything went well just now?

I sighed...

Nkosinathi: okay ndiy'yekile. I thought uzolala endlini last night.

Me: I didn't want to disturb your family time.

Nkosinathi: my family time? What are you talking about?

Me: didn't you spend the day with your mother kanti?
Infact didn't you spend your day with your family?

Nkosinathi: I took mom to the doctor, dropped her off after the appointment and went about my business. Inoba ndibuyele phaya nge past 4 only because I had left my phone charging there so I had to go fetch it.

Me: thought you'd spend the day kaloku, seeing that she needed medical attention.

Nkosinathi: ubhuti was there, no Asenathi and her newly found friend Sivuyise was there so there was nothing for me to do.

My heart sank at the mention of that girl's name.

Me: did you say Sivuyise was there as well?

Nkosinathi: yes, uye no Ase.

Me: and where were you while she was spending time with your family?

Nkosinathi: oh bawo! I was busy, I didn't even spend thirty minutes phaya.

I laughed... So that's why Asenathi was giving me attitude when I called.

Nkosinathi: what's so funny?

Me: you said you'd pick me up from campus and drop me off koo Bhuti.

He mouthed "shit"

Me: Or did that slip your mind?

Nkosinathi: it did... I totally forgot, hence I came bearing gifts. This is my way of apologizing baby.

Me: I don't want your gifts.

Nkosinathi: haike baby, you can't entirely drop this on me. We agreed that I'd pick you up, you should

have called me to remind me as well. Yi team work le.

Me: I actually did call you, but your sister answered the phone and told me you're busy.

Nkosinathi: wait, what?

Me: oh and she told me that you must have told me about spending your day with your mother so I shouldn't expect you to drop that and come running to me. I'm just paraphrasing though.

Nkosinathi: but I checked the call history when I went to fetch my phone, you didn't call, otherwise I would have come straight to you afterwards.

Me: wait, so did remember, just that because I didn't call you decided not to fetch me. Is that what you're saying?

Nkosinathi: that's not what I'm saying, but, all I'm saying is that nawe you should have called.

Mayingabi yi one sided relationship lena baby.

I took out my phone and went straight to that call,

gave him to see. He ran his hand across his face, kind of disappointed.

Me: I guess Sivu is still a family favorite then.

Nkosinathi: baby.

Me: please... You don't have to explain it any further, I get it.

Nkosinathi: okay, okay, you get what? What exactly do you get here?

Me: I don't feel like having an argument right now babe, please let's just drop it.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra please don't do this.

Me: don't do what?

Nkosinathi: Everytime you and Asenathi have a clash, I have to get caught in the middle.

Me: this is not a clash, she answered your phone and basically told me to leave you alone, then deleted call history. That's it.

He huffed.

He had nothing left to say.

Me: lonto uthetha ngathi we've been dating for ages and all the time your sister and I have been having uncalled for clashes.

Nkosinathi: please don't read too much into this, I didn't spend time nabo and I don't even know why she came with Sivuyise.

Me: it doesn't really matter, silapha ngoku.

Wathula...

The lump I had in my throat when he said Sivuyise was there to see his mother? Lisa called ndisabambe iinyembezi ngenkopho

Me: hi?

Lisa: hey, can we meet, I want to explain everything.

Me: what needs to be explained ngoku?

Lisa: the stuff your brother inlaw said, I'll tell you everything. Please.

Me: hay bra yiyeye. It's none of my business.

Lisa: Cass please.

Me: yazi I remember the shock when I told you who he was, now I realize that you weren't shocked because of what I was saying, but instead you were shocked because of what you've been doing.

Lisa: we were making progress kwi friendship yethu Cassandra, I really don't want this to affect that.

Me: I am not gonna judge you, honestly, but I don't think I can meet up with you right now. I still have unfinished business with Khire so lemme just face that.

Lisa: but will you consider? After everything has calmed?

Me: look, let's just drop it okay. I heard enough last night, and honestly speaking it is really none of my business. So I'm not meddling.

Lisa: okay ke, if that's how you feel.

Me: thank you, sharp.

Lisa: sure.

I hung up and went to put my glass on the counter taking a deep breath in, just to calm my nerves down... Nkosinathi didn't even touch his biscuits, but he came up behind me and held my waist.

Nkosinathi: ndcela uxolo ngolibala ukuthatha izolo, I'm sorry that Sivuyise was there ewe ebengayanga kum but she was there so I'm sorry.

Me: it's cool.

Nkosinathi: please don't dismiss me, I know it's not cool and you're most definitely not cool with yonke lento.

Me: I did say I don't want us to argue about this, so please ndcela siy'yeke nyhani baby.

Nkosinathi: kaloku qala undixolele then I'll drop it.

Me: ndikuxolele.

Nkosinathi: nyhani? From the bottom of your heart?

I nod, he kissed my neck...

Nkosinathi: how can I make it up to you?

Me: you brought me gifts already, akhosidingo for more.

Nkosinathi: baby, the question is how can I make it up to you?

Me: okay ke book me a weekend away.

Nkosinathi: you or us?

Me: uyaphi kengoku wena?

Nkosinathi: who's gonna carry your bags, drive you around, massage your feet and cuddle you at night?

I giggled...

Me: okay fine, book us a weekend away.

Nkosinathi: done.

Me: before or after you go away?

Nkosinathi: the weekend before my trip.

Me: okay. Thank you.

Nkosinathi: you really don't wanna go with me kengoku?

Me: I'm sorry, I just need to rest a bit.

He didn't get it.

I could tell by the disappointment on his face, but I really didn't want his company. I just wanted to be alone. While was still chilling with me I had a phonecall from dad, we spoke for a while then he asked about Lisa, told him we kind of sorted out our stuff but we weren't gonna be buddies like before. But we've made peace. That's all he wanted, for us to make peace apparently he remembered the time I bashed her when she wanted a lift home utata ezondithatha, he knew then there was a problem

but he decided he'd wait for me to tell him. Oh abantu abadala kodwa.

[06/26, 14:48] : #Cassandra_47

This guy spent about another hour oko endicenga ukuba masihambe sobabini (begging me so that we can go to his place together), apologizing and apologizing for the previous day and I just didn't want to go. I think he thought I didn't wanna go because of him failing to keep his word the previous day, kanti I just wanted to spend time ndedwa and cry or heal ndedwa without having to explain why my eyes are puffy or why I don't want to wake up or why I don't wanna eat or why I don't wanna bath. I just wanted to be dramatic in my own space. I had to promise him that I'd sleep over after the second confrontation, but even then, he still seemed reluctant.

Me: I'll sleep over ngoms o babe.

Nkosinathi: I don't wanna leave you alone here.

Me: I'm okay. I'm safe here, there's enough security.

Nkosinathi: I know that, but still.

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba, its fine.

He smiled...

Me: you really need to relax, I was upset last night yes but now I'm okay.

Nkosinathi: I'm really sorry about last night, I will address this with Asenathi.

Me: that won't be necessary, myeke.

Nkosinathi: no it is, u Asenathi cannot be a third party in our relationship. I don't meddle in her personal life.

Me: yeyenu baby, andingeni ndawo mna. (It's your baby, I'm not getting involved)

He reached out for my arm, pulling me close so we

hugged while he kissed the side of my head.

Me: did you find out who's responsible for what happened kokwenu?

Nkosinathi: we opened a case so the police are busy with investigations.

Me: and you trust the cops? Seriously?

Nkosinathi: haha! I don't have the capacity right now to take the law into my own hands but ubra ebesithi he's giving them one week to come up with something solid, thereafter, he will see what to do.

Me: I fully support him.

We broke the hug, I walked him out and watched him drive out.

I went back to the house and realized he actually left all the gifts he had brought, I smiled to myself and texted him "Please don't forget to feed my child" then I plated up for myself, ndatya ndalala. I woke up the following morning hoping I'd get to go

to any nearby church, I needed to offload and God would be the only one to listen without judging but rather comfort me. I spent about fifteen minutes just watching the ceiling then I turned my phone on and checked messages, my sisters wanted us to meet for breakfast and they had sent me the location. I bathed and texted them to come fetch me, I don't have a car, hello? And I wasn't gonna call Nkosinathi to come fetch me. Siki came to fetch me with Cindy, they were not as bubbly as usual but I guess it was understandable.

Siki: ubungazoya ndawo? (You didn't have plans?)

Me: thought I'd go to church.

Cindy: is there a church nearby? Or you have a specific church that you go to?

Me: I was gonna look for it. But it's cool wethu.

Siki: hay kaloku, we can look for a church and then go for lunch instead of breakfast.

Me: okay, lemme Google the nearest church then.

We found Summersstrand United Church and ndaziva nam ba ndiright after everything that I've been through, the fact that my siblings were there made it even worth it. After church we went out for lunch...

Me: uphi u Sisi?

Cindy: she went back to see her ex-husband.

Me: she still doesn't believe me?

Siki: I don't think she doesn't believe you, its shock and u Asanda ke uyamazi ngofihla so yonke lento kuye if bekusiya ngokwakhe ifanba yenzeka yaziwa nguye, nawe, no S'thembele qha. Then asixelele thina ngexesha lakhe.

Me: but sonke nje siqala koo bhuti when kus enzeka izinto kuthi.

Cindy: as ban aye wayeqale kubo ngendaba zomts hato wakhe.

Siki: she'll come around guys.

Me: wow.

Siki: sum'hoya baby, when she's calmed down
uzozibona ba eberongo and apologize.

I just nod...

After we had lunch, we were now in a bubblier mood than in the morning so Cindy video- called mom. She was sooo happy and excited to see us in one place, and dad was near too so we had the longest laugh with the folk nabo babuza u Asanda but dad kinda understood coz he brushed the question mom threw at us and said he'd call her later on. After that phone call we drove to where Khiro was kept...

Siki: how are you feeling?

Me: numb.

Siki: but you wanna go through this?

Me: I have to, I want to end this today and move on with my life.

Cindy: we're here for you.

Me: usisi uzothi ya'll are choosing sides.

Cindy: mdala u Asanda and she knows what kind of man she was married to.

Siki: and we will deal with her later, right now sijongene nawe. (our focus is on you)

I exhaled...

We parked outside and we looked at each other as we heard our sister shouting and a man hauling back, which was followed by an agonizing cry of a man. I got out of the car and walked in there, ubhuti undibone sendingaphakathi (only noticed me when I was already inside) and I saw Asanda whipping the lights off her husband. When I walked in, she stopped and went to the other side of the room. I walked further in, slowly to the center of the room. She was sobbing in her corner...he was messy, blood all over his body, on the floor, his face was a mess. He had snot, blood, tears, sweat...even the room was smelly. Steve came to stand next to me, with his hand over my shoulder...I looked up at him,

I thought I did request that she must not be here. Why did they allow her in? she's the reason I'm having a second confrontation with this monster because she meddled in Friday.

Me: what happened?

Khira: I'm sorry.

I looked at Khira again.

Me: what happened to you?

Khira: I am sorry for burning your place down, my guys have located that guy who owns the place and we will repay everything to the very last cent.

Me: and I'm supposed to believe you, just like that?

Khira: Cassandra, just take my apology and leave me alone. I'm so fucken fed up with you people.

Me: hay hay hay! Don't you dare "you people me". Don't you dare!

Khira: YOU PEOPLE! There, I said it.

I saw a bucket with piss in another corner of the room and I assumed it's his so I grabbed the bucket and threw the contents onto his face.

Me: phu, uyanuka. (You smell)

He laughed...

I pulled a chair and sat at a fair distance from him.

Me: uphi uSisipho (Where is Sisispho)? I won't ask about the others but I wanna know where is Sisipho?

Khiri: you still care about that bitch, you have a good heart nyhani.

Me: answer my question.

Khiri: what's it to you? She sold you out, or have you forgotten?

Me: I haven't, but what you're saying still doesn't

answer my question.

He didn't answer, then Asanda came to stand next to me...

Khira: she's in Mozambique, working.

Me: what do you mean working? What work?

Khira: she's delivering drugs.

I looked at my sister...

Me: you never mentioned that you were married to a drug dealer.

Asanda: you never asked.

Me: oh so you knew?

Asanda: khand'yeke Cassandra. Ndiyeke. (Leave me alone Cassandra. Leave me alone)

I looked at Khiro...

Me: I expect to see Sisipho here, in three days.

Khiro: they're flying in tonight, she'll be here by tomorrow morning.

Me: thank you.

I took a step towards the door...

Khiro: I'm sorry.

Steve: you should be, the only reason I'm not killing you with my bare hands is because I am an uncle to your children but they deserve better than you.

Asanda: But I don't have a reason not to kill you.

Steve: Asanda hayi. (Asanda no)

Asanda: I really don't. And we both know that, this motherfucker made my life a living hell and I was submissive to him all these years because

ndicingela abantwana (I was thinking for the kids).
My kids are old enough right now, they'll survive
without this poison.

Then she stormed out...

Khiri: she has a licensed gun.

Me: how would you know?

Khiri: I took her for training when we got married.

Lionel ran after Asanda...I looked at Steve

Me: what will happen to him now?

Steve: are you done with him?

Me: he's apologized, so I guess it doesn't really
matter now. I just hope he really reimburses that
guy coz lilifa lakhe eza flats.

Steve: haike, we will deal with him accordingly. You
don't have to know the details.

Me: you are not killers ke bhuti. Don't let his filthy blood be on your hands.

Steve: we will teach him a lesson he will remember for the rest of his life, he will respect women. Trust me on that.

Me: okay.

I walked out...

All this time was vibrating in my bag, and it could only be Lisa or Nkosinathi. I was gonna get back to them anyway, whoever it was. When I got outside, I saw Steve and Asanda having a heated argument by her car. I went straight to them, why was she being dramatic? She didn't believe me but she knew her husband was a drug dealer, why now all of sudden was she being dramatic about this?

Me: bhuti, please give us a minute.

Lionel: she's in no position to talk to you right now Cass, myekele kum (leave her to me).

Asanda: if you know what's good for you fokofa wena phamb'kwam (get lost).

Me: ndikwenze ntoni sisi (What have I done to you sis?)? Please tell me so that I can apologize.

Asanda: Cassandra Thixunathi Mzayi, get the fuck out of my face.

Me: sisi you're honestly telling me you're gonna choose a man over your own sister?

Asanda: my own sister would never entertain my own husband, no matter what!

Me: ex-husband, and no, I didn't entertain him. Obhuti can tell you, if he's got any truth bone in him then he can tell you too that I never entertained him.

Asanda: then why was I the last one to find out? Were you planning to cash in on him?

Lionel: ndcela niyeke lento niyenzayo man nina, Asanda put the gun away. (Please stop what you guys are doing)

Asanda: you better tell your sister to move out of my way right now.

Me: hay suka uyi bully gqithi man, kunini ndicacisa into enye awufunuyiva. (You're such a bully, I've been explaining one thing to and you don't wanna hear it.)

By this time all the other siblings were coming to us.

Asanda: uthini Cassandra? Uthi k'theni? (What did you just say?)

Me: Ndithi uyi bully sisi! Ibully nguwe. (I said you are a bully! You are a bully.)

With one blink, she fired a shot and it went straight to my ribcage. It was a silent gun, no one heard a sound, but I heard my other sisters from behind screaming as I fell down. In a fazy moment I saw Lionel jumping at her and grabbing the gun, someone rushed to me and held where I was bleeding.

[06/26, 14:48] : #Cassandra_48

I was rushed to the hospital while Lionel tried to calm Asanda down in another private room kulanlu, Siki apparently also wanted to stay behind as well so Steve and Cindy left with me. Went to a public hospital first, but there was no doctor on duty so Cindy said ubhuti should drive to any private hospital. She'll take care of the bill.

I was attended to by a male doctor, Dr Mpumelelo Sirhonyi. I was fortunate that the bullet just grazed my rib bones, and possibly broke one or two but other than that there was no major harm. Oh and I lost quite a lot of blood. I spent the night there, actually woke up past three in the morning wearing just a bra and of course a bandage around my ribs, and two of my sisters were asleep beside my bed. I tried to lift my arm but it was numb so I cleared my throat as loud as I could and Cindy jumped from her seat...

Cindy: hey, you're up.

Me: hey, nd'cela amanzi. (Please give me water)

She went out and came back with a jug of water and a glass, poured for me then helped support my back as I drank half the glass then I rested abit. She woke up Siki, she must have followed kwemka ubhuti.

Siki: hey, zinjani intlungu?

Me: I feel numb.

Siki: numb phi?

Me: I think umzimba wonke coz I also can't lift my hand or rather arm and I can't feel my toes.

She touched me, nothing.

Cindy: the doctor will check on you k'sasa.

Me: cool. Yho kuyabanda apha. (This room is cold)

Siki: lemme put on the heater above your bed.

She got up...

I could tell that they were nervous about something, well it was obvious ba yintoni le ibenza nervous but I wasn't gonna break the ice tu. I'd rather fall asleep all over again.

She came back to sit down.

Cindy: aren't you hungry?

Me: I am, but...

Cindy: I have drinking yoghurt in the car.

Me: uzophuma nabani? What's the time khona?

Siki: we'll go together, and ask the security at the door to walk with us.

Cindy: it's twenty-five-past-four.

Me: maybe I must just wait kude kuse. I'm getting discharged, right?

Cindy: haibo Cassandra.

Me: I have classes to attend sisi, I can't just sit here.

Siki: we will go and report you, awuyindawo until we are sure u right.

Cindy: masole siyothatha le yoghurt futhi.

They both left me there...I sighed and tried touching my ribs with the other hand that seemed to be fine but I couldn't feel any pain. I waited there, I could still see the rage in my sister's eyes as we argued izolo, I could still feel her wrath. But I couldn't understand why?

These two returned with my yoghurt, I drank it in silence.

Cindy: she came to check on you, uyazisola. It was anger that made her shoot you.

I closed the lid of the bottle using my lips and the

working hand...

Cindy: I, mean, we will not stand before you if you want to lay charges. It's in your right baby, as long as you will forgive her.

Me: so now I must forgive her?

Cindy: it's not a must.

Me: kanti uthini sisi?

Cindy: hay andizazi nam.

Siki: what we're trying to say is that yonke lento is shocking to all of us, ewe we will support whatever decision you make but please don't allow this to drive a bigger wedge between the both of you.

Me: who will be allowing a bigger wedge between who? Me or her?

Bathula...

Me: she could have easily taken my side as her little sister, as a woman in fact but she didn't. She chose not to.

Cindy: she was shocked.

Siki: and she was married to the guy for years so her reaction could be credited in a way.

Me: I was shocked when I found out its him too, but who's in a hospital bed right now? Me. The same me who was kidnapped by her husband, the same me who was living ubomi bentshontsha because of her husband, the same me who's belongings in a foreign town got burnt down ndas hiyeka ndi stranded, same me who was protecting this entire family from this guy. That's the same me who was shot, a live bullet right here... See? That's me.

Cindy: baby...

Siki: Cass, families fight and forgive. Siblings fight, yes this is a first, but siblings do fight. It's common, just take your time, you'll eventually find it in your heart to forgive her, I know you will.

Me: so now this me must get shot at by her own

sister, and forgive her because she was shocked and siblings do fight. That's how this family thing works, right?

They didn't answer...I turned onto the unharmed side and just covered myself...and wept in silence so they don't hear that I'm actually crying. I fell sleep crying and by the time I woke up, the rest of the siblings were there including the doctor. I looked around for a few minutes then I felt my fingers, the numbness was a bit better now so I supported my body and tried to get out of bed, they were all busy talking to the doctor but Lionel saw me and came rushing to help me.

Lionel: uyaphi?

Me: toilet.

Lionel: what happened to itoilet being the ladies room or something more decent?

I smiled at him, he walked me all the way then waited outside while I went in, did my business and came out, again we walked together to my bed.

Dr Sirhonyi: Cassandra, I'm doctor Sirhonyi. Not sure if you remember me from last night.

I shook my head, he smiled.

Dr Sirhonyi: it's okay, you were half-awake anyway.

Me: when can I go home?

Dr Sirhonyi: in a day or two. We're waiting for lab results.

Me: zantoni?

Dr Sirhonyi: blood tests, it's just procedure. And I have to check on your wound, make sure the bullet didn't leave pieces in your body.

Me: surely you can do all of that namhlanje, I have to go back to school.

Dr Sirhonyi: even if I discharge you, I'll book you off

for a week before you can even return to varsity so chill. Relax sisi.

He rolled his eyes at me, in a friendly manner. I just smiled.

He did all his checks, wrote stuff on his report then excused himself promising to send a nurse with my medication for the day. All this time Lionel was the closest to me, as soon as the doctor walked out, he sat on my bed so I rested my head on his shoulder.

Lionel: how are you feeling?

Me: hungry?

Lionel: what do you want to eat?

Me: inyama, noba yeyantoni.

Lionel: okay, let me go and buy you inyama ke.

Me: can I use your phone and call Nkos'nathi bhuti?

He gave me a weird look, I returned it with puppy eyes.

Me: okay I won't call, I'll text him.

Lionel: we already called and told him, he was here last night.

Me: oh, he was?

Lionel: yes. Uzobuya later on today he said.

I nod.

He got off the bed, so I sat up and supported my back with a pillow and just watched all of them.

Lionel: ndiyabuya, u girl uyanditefela undifuna inyama as if uvuka ngenyama xa ekokwabo.

I laughed, some of them laughed too. Why was he being dramatic over meat? Eshe. When he left, the other guys came closer...

Steve: u grand?

I nod...

Steve: oh, aw'kwazi uthetha kodwa ubuziswe ndim apha?

Me: ndi right bhuti, I'm just hungry. And exhausted.

Steve: exhausted wanton oko ubulele.

Me: ndibulele bani bhuti?

Steve: haike ndakukhaba.

Me: lonto ni violent pha kokwenu.

Then there was total silence...

I looked at them, they were really tense.

Me: oh sorry, that was meant to be a joke.

Steve: you can't joke ngalento Cass.

Me: uxolweni.

Steve: you don't have to apologize... Uhm, so other than being hungry, how are you feeling?

Me: I don't really know bhuti... I miss mom though.

Siki cleared her throat.

Me: someone did inform umama notata that I'm here, right?

Cindy: Uhm no, not yet.

Me: why?

She looked at Siki...

Siki: we Uhm, didn't think you'd want to tell them.

Me: why not? They know everything mos ngoku so they might as well know that I'm here.

Cindy: we were kind of hoping that you'd first sort things out with u Ma-Asi then sibafounele ke.

Me: what's there to be sorted out here? Haibo sisi, nyhani you guys didn't even tell utata ke? Dad?

Steve: Asanda wants to have a word with you, we'll give you guys a moment.

The turned their backs to walk out...

Me: asoze nindishiye ndedwa apha, asoze.

Asanda: come on mntase, I just wanna have a word with you. Alone.

Me: and how do I know you won't finish what you started? Wena bhuti how do you know she's not carrying a gun here? Or a knife so that ndife a painful death?

They all stopped, I think Siki was on my side here but knowing my family, they came here planned everything. She couldn't ditch the plan now and openly show them that she also feels like I'd be unsafe alone in a room with sis Asanda.

Asanda: I don't have a gun nor do I have a knife, you're safe.

Me: if ya'll are really leaving me in this room alone with u sisi then can one of you take the pillows ke?

Cindy walked back to my bed, apparently I was crying while talking. I didn't feel the tears coming down my cheeks until she just hugged me tightly. I let out a cry, I felt a third person joking the hug and the warm and their own muffled cries made me cry even more.

Lionel: kubhubhe bani ndafika kuzizijwili?

No one answered him...

We broke off the embrace and then I realized that it was Siki and Cindy in that embrace.

Steve: maybe it's a bit too soon mntase... Give her time.

Asanda: okay, I'll uhm, leave you guys to it.

Steve: let me walk you out.

Cindy followed them while cleaning her face, I drank a glass of water and took the food that my brother had brought ndatya in silence. They were quiet too, until I finished eating, a nurse came in and gave me medication, checked on my wound and left. I lay there in silence...

Lionel: what happened guys?

As Siki was about to tell him, Cindy walked in with Nkosinathi... My heart almost jumped out of my chest. He greeted them and came to hug me, his hug made me sooo emotional.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: it's okay... I'm sorry about last night.

Nkosinathi: automatically rescheduled, don't worry

about it.

Lionel: okay, we'll give you guys some space.
Sizobuya ne phone yakho later.

Me: and my gown, slippers, ne toiletry bag bhuti
please.

Siki: sure baby.

Then they left us.

[06/26, 14:48] : #Cassandra_49

Once they were all out he moved from the chair and sat next to me on the bed, kissing my forehead in silence. I don't know how I got to the point of wanting to be dependent emntwini like I wanted to be dependent on Nkosinathi that very moment, if he'd say jump, I'd ask how high. No arguments. I just wanted someone to take the lead...

Me: I heard you came to see me last night.

Nkosinathi: yeah, I couldn't not come when your brother told me what had happened. I had to see for myself, for some weird reason he was chilled and I thought it was some prank or something.

I just smiled as I wiped a tear that had run across my nose-bridge.

Nkosinathi: I have sent my business partner to go to Canada yedwa, I can't leave you like this.

Me: I'm sure ndizobe sendi right when you have to go though.

Nkosinathi: ha.a baby, he can do everything on my behalf. Kunini usehlelwa zizinto kulonyaka? (You've been going through a lot this year)

Me: so I can't convince you to go?

Nkosinathi: no, no amount of convincing will work ngoku.

Me: enkosi ke. Kakhulu. (Thank you then. Very much)

Nkosinathi: did she at least apologize?

Me: I don't know...I don't really care, I just want mom and dad here coz bonke aba are trying by all means to force me to forgive her.

Nkosinathi: just try to calm down baby, kuyo yonke lonto. Just make sure uyaphuma qha apha, I don't really like hospitals.

Me: haha! I could see how uncomfortable you were when you walked in.

He chuckled...

Nkosinathi: baby.

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry about that Sivuyise thing, I've sorted Asenathi and it will not happen again. I promise.

Me: hay wethu, it's cool.

Wakhe wathula...

Nkosinathi: when your brother said you got shot...I didn't know what to think and what not to think. I was just going through a lot of turmoil. My mind raced. Eish.

Me: well, here I am so chill. I'm a die hard.

He lifted up my chin and kissed my lips, we looked into each other's arms and started kissing very passionately. After a few minutes, someone walked in and cleared his/her throat so we abruptly stopped and saw my siblings. Even after my siblings returned, he didn't wanna leave my side, but he had no choice. No visitors were permitted during family conversations...

Me: I'll call you once they're gone.

He nod, kissed my lips and walked out. I looked at my siblings, in their own way they were still trying to restore peace amongst us but looking past being shot by your own sister.

Me: so what's up?

Cindy: she's sorry Cass, uyazisola.

Me: okay, I've heard that. If there's nothing new then I really need to rest a bit, and nani you need to go home, freshen up and rest. It's been a long day.

Cindy: we won't force you, but we do hope that you forgive her.

Me: okay.

This time they didn't stay long, I had my phone and slippers here so I was kind of comfortable. I switched on my phone and called my father...

Dad: nontombi? Yey, unqabile.

Ndingabe njani na when we just video called him with my sisters izolo? Haike utata.

Me: ningabile nani nje tata, ninjani kodwa?

Dad: we're good sisi, unjani? You sound sad.

Me: I'm at the hospital.

Dad: wenzani apho?

Me: sis Asanda shot me while we were arguing about her ex-husband, but I'm not badly hurt. Just broke a rib or two.

Dad: haibo, yinto yanini le uthetha ngayo?

Me: last night tata.

Dad: haibo! Okay, please send me your location, I'm in Grahamstown right now so I'll come by after my meeting.

Me: okay tata. Love you.

Dad: I love you baby girl, uqine mntanam.

I smiled as we hung up.

I called Onele...I needed some positive energy to get me through this whole ish.

Onele: hay lants o!

Me: I wonder ungxolelani.

Onele: hahaha! Andis akukhumbuli, unjani mntase?

Me: uyandikhumbula? Why don't you call me?

Onele: hay kaloku I don't have airtime mna ndingumntanes kolo.

Me: mna dnidphangelaphi kanene?

She laughed...

I could literally see her face as she laughed out loud.

Onele: khaw'buye futhi I miss you. There's a lot we need to talk about.

Me: I think I'll come around next week, not yet confirmed.

Onele: alright...so uzandithengela ne mntase I airtime?

Me: where's your boyfriend Onele?

Onele: what has he got to do with you buying me airtime?

Me: I'm not gonna buy you airtime uphinde uyigqibe ngofounela yena because we both know you're not gonna call me.

Onele: mntase wena eyakho iboyfriend iyaphangela nje, why are you doing this to me?

Me: I'll transfer the airtime for you Onele!

Onele: I know you will... So, can we talk about your boyfriend? What are his intentions?

Me: he wants a baby, a family, everything.

Onele: and why do you sound bored?

Me: because I feel like we've been through this conversation before, but I understand uyachazeka

ngu Nkosianthi wethu...Onele I meant to ask you, uyahlabis a?

Onele: uhm...how did we get there?

Me: answer the question.

Onele: no andihlabisi, but I do prevent. And we use protection.

Me: are you sure you're safe? I really don't want you falling pregnant in high school.

Onele: ndi safe mntase, nyhani.

Me: okay ke...bye bye now I need to rest a bit.

Onele: send my airtime before you rest. Please.

Me: eshe.

She laughed, I hung up.

I didn't wanna spoil her mood by telling her what happened, dad will tell them. No mama.

I put my phone away ndalala...

Later on, my doctor returned just to check on me.

Dr Sirhonyi: how's my patient doing?

Me: your patient is ready to go home.

Dr Sirhonyi: haha! I'm the only one who can say that, and besides, I'm really going home.

Me: shift over?

Dr Sirhonyi: yep, I'll assign another doctor to check up on you later on in the night.

Me: okay, thanks.

He looked at me...smiling.

Dr Sirhonyi: you carry so much positivity, you know that?

Me: what do you mean?

Dr Sirhonyi: even though you're here with a bullet wound, you're still laughing, smiling. Even the room

is not as tense as I thought it would be when I heard about how you got shot.

I swallowed hard...

Me: oh, they told you?

Dr Sirhonyi: it's my job to know, as your doctor. And if you wanna lay charges I will help you.

Me: I actually don't know what I wanna do right now.

Dr Sirhonyi: laying a charge against your sister doesn't mean you hate her but you're merely protecting yourself for future purposes. Or, you could just give her a protection order, which I wouldn't go for because you're family, you're gonna be in the same space most of the time.

Me: and if I decide not to lay a charge?

Dr Sirhonyi: it is still your choice, obviously you would not lay a charge having reasons not to. Reasons valid to you.

Me: mh.

Dr Sirhonyi: what I'm trying to show you is that, ekugqibeleni, you have to make the decision ngokwkakho not based on what we think or on what your family wants. You were shot, not anyone else.

Me: thank you for being objective.

Dr Sirhonyi: you're welcome, enjoy the rest of your short stay with us.

Me: as if this is some holiday resort, thank you.

He laughed and proceeded to attend other patients.

I just lay there and waited for my dad...

My phone rang from its hiding place, it was Nkosinathi...

Me: baby?

Nkosinathi: ndikuphathele ntoni?

Me: Chocolate cake?

Nkosinathi: Mh.

Me: that's all...but just be warned, dad is also coming.

Nkosinathi: hay wethu I'm your friend if he asks.

Me: haike, yhiza ne cake yam babe.

Nkosinathi: sharp. See you just now.

Me: sure.

He hung up...

When he finally came, he came with flowers, my chocolate cake and my laptop. It was thoughtful of him because I didn't even think of that, apparently he asked for my key ku bhuti then he went to fetch it. A nurse gave him a vase for the flowers then he joined me in bed as we shared the cake, I fell asleep sisancokola and only woken up when I heard my dad's voice. They were talking, dad and Nkosinathi. Wow.

Me: tata.

He turned and came towards the bed, hugged me and sat down.

Nkosinathi: I'll come back later.

Me: sharp.

He shook dad's hand then left.

Dad: who's this young man?

Me: Nkosinathi?

Dad: yeah, ubhadlile. Nazanaphi? Oh uxolo man, unjani sisi?

Me: ndi right tata, andiyazi nento endiyigcinelweyo mna apha.

Dad: unjani u Asanda?

Me: I don't know.

Dad: she hasn't come to see you?

Me: she has, I'm just not ready for anything that she wants to say. She shot me, that's all I know right now.

Dad: I understand...baphi oo bhuti bakho?

Me: bakhona...

Ndis andothi bakhona, all of them walked in. With sis Asanda...

Me: and here they come.

Siki: tata. Ufike nini?

He turned and looked at them in silence, they were shocked that he's here, he seemed pissed off that all of them were here but none of them thought of inform him no mama about what happened.

Dad: oh, nilapha, nonke.

Steve: we were going to call you tata.

Dad: when?

Lionel: namhlanje taima, we couldn't call you singayazi how badly hurt she is. We were still waiting for the doctor's report.

Dad: so none of you thought of calling me immediately when she got shot? None of you thought it was important to inform abona bazali bakhe when she woke up this morning? None of you?

Cindy: s'cela uxolo tata.

Siki: we didn't wanna stress you guys, we thought we'd handle this and we have tried.

Steve: I guess our efforts are unappreciated ke, naku ekufounele wakuxelela ba ulapha akalinda kuthi.

Dad: who said she called me? Ngubani?

Steve: kanti umazi njani wena tata ukuba ulapha since we didn't call you?

Dad: I called her ndifuna ubona lendlu intsha ahlala

kuyo, kucacile you did not brief her ngoxoka.

Steve: oh haibo tata.

Yho wandinceda utata akats ho ba ndim who called.
Yho!

He knew what he was doing, he knows all his children and he knew if he agreed that I called him here bazondijikela later when he's gone. He got up...

Dad: you're here telling me about unappreciated efforts, unappreciated efforts zantoni Steve? Zofihlela mna nonyoko ukuba u Asanda udubule udad'wabo ezimbanjeni? Huh? Is that the effort you're moaning about?

Me: tata.

Dad: okanye nitheni, nifuna ubhatalwa for what you did for her kule period yale mess ka S'thembele ukuze nibone ukuba anikho unappreciated? Is that what you want?

Siki: that's not what he meant tata.

Dad: oh, so wena Sikelelwa uyamazi what he meant? Because he first discussed it with you that he feels unappreciated? Sixelele ke why he feels unappreciated because kuyacaca ukuba unolwazi oluphangaleleyo.

Siki: hayi tata bendingats ho.

Dad: then why ezothethelwa nguwe u Steve as if akanamlomo?

She backed away...

Cindy's eyes were teary, she was snuggled up onto Lionel's arm in silence. Such a cry-baby.

Dad: zundenzele i-invoice kendoda, yonke into that you bought, paid for, one way or the other please make an invoice for me. Mna mntu uzele u Thixunathi ndizakubhatala. I will appreciate you kakhulu mntanam.

Steve: that's not what I meant tata...akho need for you to repay anything.

Lionel: s'cela uxolo tata, siphazamile ngokungani xelesi about this. S'xolele Ngconde, s'xolele mfomkhulu.

Everyone was quiet...dad was just looking at them shaking his head.

Asanda: nd'cela uxolo tata.

He looked at her.

She fell onto her knees and crawled to where he was standing, she was crying and begging for forgiveness. Suddenly the room was filled with lamentations, she was begging kabuhlungu and he seemed immune to her cries, kwabuhlungu kum. He was just looking at her, his own eyes teary. Even oo bhuti were crying but ubona nje ngeenyembezi in their eyes. Lionel left Cindy and came to hug me, Steve joined us, while the females went to console Asanda on the floor. My heart broke into a million

pieces, who would have imagined?

[06/26, 14:49] : #Cassandra_50

After a few minutes, dad picked her up and hugged her. She cried on his chest begging for forgiveness and he calmed her down. Steve cleaned up my eyes, and nose while kissing my cheeks. He most definitely didn't mean that unappreciated remark the way dad took it, I could tell that's not how he meant it. Everyone was now calm, we just waited on dad.

Dad: we will discuss the way forward when you're discharged mntanam, okwangoku just try to recover.

Me: okay tata.

Dad: Asanda, sigoduka kunye.

Asanda: okay tata.

Dad: Steve, Lionel...ndikhupheni, I want to have a word with the two of you.

Then he dialed something on his phone, a minute later, my own phone beeped.

Dad: in case you need anything while you are still here, when your doctor discharges you undifounele I'll come fetch you.

Me: enkosi tata.

He hugged me, kissed my forehead and left without saying a word koo sisi.

Both my brothers followed behind him, including sis Asanda so I was only left with Siki and Cindy in the ward.

Siki: can I cut a slice?

I looked over, she was standing next to my chocolate cake.

Me: sure.

She cut and came to sit on my bed, Cindy was already sitting next to my feet.

Cindy: what did the doctor say?

Me: nothing new.

Cindy: when are they discharging you?

Me: he didn't say.

Siki: do you guys think utata is gonna punish Asanda?

Me: isn't she too old for punishment na?

Siki: akhomntu u too old kutata, wait and see.

Cindy: we are also going to get our own punishment for not telling them, uzova wena.

Well, it was their decision, I didn't ask them not to tell the folks. We decided to eat that entire cake, oobhuti babuya nokutya then late they went home

and left me alone to think. The following morning my doctor came in, checked my wound, asked the nurse to redress it and then I was discharged, but my family was not there yet so I asked to occupy the ward until maybe 12 and if they still don't come then I'll call an Uber to take me to my flat.

Sana wabetha u 12 abantu bengade bafike, so I signed and walked out of the ward...went to sit in the foyer and called my boyfriend before calling the cab.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: hey, u right?

Nkosinathi: yep, what's up?

Me: you sound like you're driving.

Nkosinathi: ewe ndizakuwe.

Me: ooh okay, sharp.

Nkosinathi: ubuzothini baby?

Me: I got discharged this morning so I thought I

should call you first before calling a cab.

Nkosinathi: and why would you need to call a cab ndikhona?

Me: bendingafuni ukus okolis a kaloku baby, but now that you're coming there won't be no need for me to call no cab.

Nkosinathi: mnkq, undilindephi ke sisi?

Me: I'm at the foyer, text me when you're here.

Nkosinathi: if I text you who's gonna carry you bag?

Me: I have hands bra, and besides, I only have a wound on one side of my body so I can pretty much do everything.

Nkosinathi: bye bye baby.

Me: haha! Bye.

He hung up.

Okay so I waited.

I wasn't gonna call my family tu yazi.

When Nkosinathi finally arrived he didn't text, he just came to the foyer. I laughed knowing fully well that ebezama nje ukundikhupha is hori. I stood up as he was approaching where I was sitting, grabbed my bag and walked towards him too. He took my bag while planting a soft kiss on my lips, and walked me to his car. We drove straight to Wimpy, he didn't even ask ukuba bendityile na he just drove there and parked. We walked inside and ordered food...

Nkosinathi: where am I taking you to?

Me: can we chill for now, then you can take me to my place later.

Nkosinathi: will you be okay if we chill at my place then?

Me: please.

Nkosinathi: okay...baphi oo bhuti bakho?

Me: I don't know, they haven't called at all today.

Maybe they're busy.

Nkosinathi: abazothetha when they find out uphumele kwam and didn't call them?

Me: I'll deal with that when it comes to it, I just don't wanna be alone right now.

Nkosinathi: alright yitya ke sihambe.

I wanted to answer him sarcastically but decided not to, we ate making small conversation then when we were done, we left for his house. Guy pampered me, ran me a bath, heated the room, when I was done bathing there was ice cream waiting for me, he made sure I drank my medication before I eat that icecream. He gave me his t-shirt to wear while washing my clothes in the laundry room. After he had hung them, he came to lay down with me endityela kwale icecream andiphathele yona.

Me: how's your mother doing?

Nkosinathi: she's doing well, we have found the

culprits.

Me: people you know?

Nkosinathi: naah, ngamaphara nje who were taking chances.

Me: ooh okay.

Nkosinathi: how bad is your wound? When will be your next check-up?

Me: check my folder baby.

Nkosinathi: don't tell me uyalala?

Me: you forced me to drink meds, hello?

Nkosinathi: akuyonto ukhumbula wena kanene...

While we were talking, my dad called.

Me: hello tata?

Dad: I just called your doctor, he said you're discharged?

Me: ewe tata, I was gonna call you ofika kwam

endlini.

Dad: okay, I'll come fetch you tonight.

Me: why not tomorrow morning tata? Ubulapha nayizolo when will you rest?

Dad: I'll be there between 5 and 6.

Me: okay tata.

Dad: pack a weekend bag ke.

Me: alright.

Dad: bye now.

He hung up...I looked at the boy.

Nkosinathi: he's coming to fetch you, right?

Me: yep.

Nkosinathi: how long will you be home?

Me: haike baby, ngoku ndis elapha nawe?

Nkosinathi: kaloku nam ndiyakukhumbula.

Me: see why I said you shouldn't cancel Canada?

Nkosinathi: I've moved passed that. It's fine, I'll come see you pha kokwenu.

Me: I won't stay for long obviously because I have to come back to school.

Nkosinathi: mmh.

I wanted to ask if he knew anything about what will happen to Khiro or what had already happened to Ginger but I didn't think I was ready for the answer so just aborted the thought and question. We both kind of rested or rather fell asleep sincokola, he woke me up at 4pm, mpahla zam already ironed so ndanxiba then he drove me to my place and left at five, my dad was there at 5:30, I also packed iimpahla that I wasn't wearing for u Onele, and my short weave because she had been nagging me about it, then we drove home. For the first 10K's we were just quiet...until he spoke up

Dad: what have you decided on, regarding Asanda?

Me: I wanna lay a charge tata.

Dad: okay, I think we should start at the police station ke before we go home.

Me: you don't think I'm being unfair?

Dad: for her to learn a lesson kumele ohlwaywe, you will forgive her at your own time but now we'll let the law play its role.

Me: okay.

Dad: umama will be saddened, but, it's your decision to make and I support you. Fully behind you.

I smiled...

Me: enkosi tata.

Dad: you're welcome mntanam.

My dad drove straight to the police station, we lay the charges against sis Asanda, filled in everything that needed to be filled in then we drove to McDonalds, he bought me a McFlurry then we drove home, Asanda yena will be served ngoku elapha kokwabo. In fact ngoku silapha kokwabo sobabini. When we got home, umama wandenza elona sana... Onele was not home when I got home, we had supper engekho then I called her when I got to my room.

Onele: mntase?

Me: uphi na?

Onele: I'm at the park, why?

Me: hay ndiyakukhumbula qha.

Onele: oh man...

Me: why are you at the park so late though?

Onele: ku tense endlini man, I'll go back when they've gone to bed.

Ndathula...

Onele: mntase why didn't you tell me?

Me: I wanted to, but then I didn't want u sisi to think ndiyamjikela ndinixelela behind her back.

Onele: is she okay though? I think she suffers from Bipolar disorder man yazi.

Me: I don't know.

Onele: hay mntase usisi would never shoot you in her right minds, I don't believe she would.

Me: I know, but you should have seen her.

She went silent...

Me: khaw'buye ke I brought some stuff.

Onele: haibo, ukhona?

Me: duh!

Onele: eshe utata akatsho ba uyothatha wena, okay

mntase ndiyeza.

Me: sure.

We hung up, I texted bae and told him we arrived safe and updated him malunga ne case le ndiyivulileyo against usisi. I knew deep down that what I had done would bring a division amongst my siblings and I but I was ready for that. I was ready for anything that was to come now.

[06/26, 14:49] : #Nkosinathi_01

I wasn't born into a poor family, nor was I born into a wealthy family but because I saw how hard my father worked as a truck driver and as a business man I learnt to work for my own money. You could say I'm a workaholic because I'd rather work than fall inlove, my last serious relationship showed me flames. I even told myself that I'd never love again, xa umntu enomitha ehlala nawe kanti umithele omnye umntu. That incident didn't just bruise my ego but it scarred my heart to a point that

I started seeing women as objects, utata zange andifundise lonto, but live did. Sonke singamadoda ekhaya grew up being taught that umfazi uphathwa njenge qanda, mthande and umthandisise yena uzokuhlonipha. But as I grew up I had realized that most girls I've been with abazi nothing ngo thandwa, all the know is the money language so I adapted into that, sleep with a woman and give her money. Kuthwa yimali yomqamelo, right? But I'd always wonder how is that different from prostitution? None of business though. As long as I get what I want and she gets what she wants.

But then when I bumped onto Cassandra...

I don't know what happened, but whatever I had adapted disappeared and I saw myself wanting to be the man I saw my dad being to my mother. He was always there, present even in his absence. As much as I gave my all from the beginning of our friendship I did realize that she's afraid to love which is why I took baby steps, I knew she's the one. I might not have said it but I knew she's the one.

Okay..so Sivuyise insulted u Cassandra at campus, then she came to apologize endlini. I knew she didn't come to apologize, she came hoping we'd kiss and make up but then when she got there, my girlfriend was already there. U Cassandra uya riska naye I didn't understand why she'd leave us sithethe sodwa when I really had nothing to hide... I watched her as she walked up those stairs, closed the door.

Me: oh-kay, what's up?

Sivu: She lives here now?

Me: why would she live here? Why is that even your problem?

Sivu: no I'm just asking...

I just looked at her...

Sivu: Nathi, why did you move on so quickly?

Me: how quickly is quickly kanti? A year?

Sivu: I never said we should break up...I just wanted time to focus on my studies and you moved on nje kanjalo? How could you do that?

Me: have you graduated ke ngoku?

sivu: no.

Me: then go back and focus on your studies, we're still on the break as requested by you kaloku.

Sivu: Nathi this is not funny. Okay did you have to date her ke? Same campus?

Me: what difference does it make?

Sivu: my friends know your car, and they've seen you dropping her off.

Me: how's that any of my problem?

Sivu: baby ndiyakucela.

Me: ucela ntoni Sivuyise? Please be specific, what exactly are you asking for?

Sivu: mlahle.

I looked at her and laughed...

Me: u right aphentloko? Ndikulinde unyaka wonke ufike sew'sithi mandilahle umntu wam? Uvelaphi ndiye?

Sivu: kodwa nawe uyayazi she can never be me. Even your sister agrees.

Me: I also agree, she can never be you. Trust me on that one.

Sivu: why are you being sarcastic kengoku?

Me: Sivuyise Mqalanje, iphelile into ibisidibanisa... infact yaaphela k'dala even before you wanted to take a break. Please don't embarrass yourself now, take it like a soldier and also move on.

Sivu: baby please don't say that.

Me: please don't touch me... uzothini ubaby xezophuma kula room ugwencela kum?

She moved back and wiped her tears using the back

of her hands, I gave her a tissue box and just waited for her to finish.

Sivu: feels like you never really loved me.

Me: it was good while it lasted, I'm sorry that it didn't materialize.

Sivu: can I get a glass of water please?

I went to get her bottled water...she drank half and asked me to go fetch Cass so she could apologize for earlier. I reluctantly walked up those stairs knowing fully well that Cassandra akazoyenza lonto. I walked in and sat next to her on the bed...

Cass: she's gone already?

Me: she's still here, wants to see you.

Cass: for what?

Me: she wants to apologize to you.

Cass: tell her I'm good.

I looked at her, she just laughed at me.

Cass: hay ndi serious, I'm good.

Me: baby.

Cass: baby, tell her I'm good. She can keep her apology for someone who needs it.

Me: I thought we were peaceful people though.

Cass: she stabbed my bag this morning, my books scattered on the floor, her friends took a video of that and posted it on Facebook and now she comes here alone to apologize to me? Hay baby, makenze u Facebook live axolise.

I laughed, threw her with a pillow and walked out. After a few minutes she followed me down the stairs, maybe she thought our visitor was gone already or she just wanted to catch us in any action. You can never really know with women. I saw her as I was walking Sivuyise out...

Me: oh hey.

Cass: is your girlfriend gone yet?

Me: she's here, should I call her?

Cass: nah, I'm here for food not her.

She had already turned and walked back in.

Cassandra walked straight ahead to the kitchen.

Sivuyise: uhm, Cassandra. Can I have a word?

Cass: ha.a babe.

She took out a side plate, whistling.

Sivuyise: please, I just want to apologize to you. I know I was wrong for what I did earlier.

Cass: you knew what you were doing when you were doing it, su actor.

Me: baby, please give her a chance.

Cass: andina chance guys, I don't mind ya'll sorting out your issues because they're none of my business but if she wants to apologize to me she's gonna have to pull the same stunt she pulled earlier today. On the real.

She resumed to warming up the food...we just

stood there watching her, she proceeded to put on the kettle and took out one cup, looked at me and asked:

Cass: coffee?

Me: tea please.

Well Sivu had no other choice but to leave, and we didn't even eat okwakutya because we had to go fetch someone's laptop from her flat. Fast forward to the day I took my mother to the doctor, I really didn't know that Sivuyise was gonna be there. I had a lot on my plate but mother was priority so when I realized that Asenathi was there with Sivu I decided to attend to my other businesses that needed my attention. I drove to Port Alfred to see Khaya and Khanya (twin brothers) who are both my business partners. We had to discuss Canada...

Khaya: there's enough money in the bank now, maybe we shouldn't just focus on Canada. One of us can also go to Hong Kong and meet up with

Wang Wei for that franchise business.

Me: I think you should go to Hong Kong, la chap is very fond of you. He speaks highly of you.

Khaya: bro, ufuna ndiyoty a amasele?

Me: what?

Khanya: hahaha! Uzoty a ne kati ntwana yam?

Me: hay man wena sukuyokisa le ntwana. Mamele skeem, ikhona irice phaya nenyama.

Khanya: uzoty a irice ngeenkuni.

Khaya: chopsticks you moron.

It was always a pleasure to meet up with these two, very much business orientated yet very humorous. Wang Wei wanted to partner with us in bringing business to the country, then sell us a restaurant that side. So we were gonna be his frontman on his medical supplies business here in SA which was good because that business had limited competition and he had a couple of the biggest Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong. I left these two

having concluded that Khaya will go to Hong Kong alone then Khanya and I will go to Canada and later join Khaya in HK. I drove to my brother's house to fetch my phone, checked messages then I went to the car wash and spent time with the guys there before heading to the club. I didn't realize that I had been neglecting my work until I walked into that place, nonetheless I made up for lost time and later went home in the wee hours of the morning.

Following day, I went to see my girl. She wasn't answering her phone though...once I got there I realized that I slipped up and apologized but, it wasn't entirely my fault so after leaving Cassandra's house I had to go correct an error. I went straight to Asenathi who was at the carwash, I found her talking to a client so I mingled with the gents a bit until I saw that she's free then I walked up to her and asked that we meet in the tshisanyama office. I closed the door once we were both inside.

Asenathi: yintoni was serious? Kufebani?

Me: I'm coming from Cassandra right now, she says that she called me and you answered my phone.

Asenathi: ibise charge, so obviously I answered your phone.

Me: utheni kuye?

Asenathi: yena uthi nditheni?

Me: Asenathi?

Asenathi: Please don't tell me you're gonna take her side? See why she's not good for you?

Uyasixabanisa lomntana Nathi.

I took a deep breath, yazi I know my sister.

Xa ezazi ukuba urongo ubanjena, she knew right that moment that she was wrong and she just told herself that she was not gonna apologize.

Me: Asenathi Dakumba, this is the last time I'm telling you this. Stop meddling in my affairs. Stop it Asenathi, yiyeke.

Asenathi: I'm merely showing you the ri-

Me: shut the fuck up and stop meddling in my relationship! Please man, haibo.

Asenathi: okay fine, but she's still not good for you.

Me: I'm gonna ignore that, for now. Do me a favour, if you love Sivuyise so much, fuck her and leave me out of it.

She swallowed hard.

Me: andizoxakwa yinto emandiyenze if you ever pull another stunt again, especially when it comes to my relationship. Trust me on that...now moving on, ndcela ubona i-cash register ye carwash ne petty cash yayo. After that I want all the finance books ze ts his anyama, right now.

She looked at me without moving.

Me: ndiyathetha Asenathi.

Asenathi: uhm, iincwadi?

Me: ugale nini uthintitha?

She didn't move so I went to the drawer and removed the books, the cashbox and put everything on the desk. She looked so uncomfortable and the only reason could be because she was not managing my business properly, which I was going to deal with, right now if that was to be the case.

[06/26, 14:49] : #Nkosinathi_02

I sat down with the books I could find and tried balancing the expenditures to the profits, I could see nje ukuba kutyiwa imali yam akho kwa business ngandawo. I was getting angrier by the minute so I decided to just take everything ndiyosebenzela endlini.

Asenathi: uyahamba?

Me: yes.

I walked out...she followed

Asenathi: uhm, mntase...

Me: can you hold that thought? We'll talk when I'm done with these.

I got in my car and drove to all the clubs, collected iincawdi and went home ndas ebenza. Out of all the businesses the car wash yeyona ingangenisi mali, kudala ke wathi umama I must take that business from Asenathi because yiyo le imenza angafunukwenzanto, utya lamali in the name of being family. After I checked all the books I scheduled a meeting with all my managers from the different businesses and also created job advertisements for ezi bendivile ukuba siyashota istaff then I had an early night. I received a call from Steve...

Me: grootman?

Steve: uphi?

Me: ndis endlini, what's up?

Steve: Cassandra has been shot, us esibhedlele.

Me: shot by who?

Steve: asanda, but she's not badly hurt.

Me: okay... please text me the hospital name and ward.

Steve: use Mercantile but I'll text you the ward number right now.

Me: sure, enkosi.

We hung up...

I got out of bed, got dressed and rushed to the hospital, Steve sent the ward number while I was driving so I only checked it out when I parked at the hospital.

When I got to the ward, two of her sisters were there...

Me: Molweni...how is she?

Cindy: hey, uhm...she's out. But the doctor said it's just a graze, no harm done.

Me: oh okay.

I went to touch her forehead, I don't know why. I just wished she would wake up while I'm here, maybe if I could hear her voice I'd be sure that no harm was done. I could see there was a lot of blood...

Me: she lost some blood.

Cindy: quiet a lot, but that can be sorted. Don't stress yourself about it.

Me: uphi umdubuli?

Cindy: her name is Asanda, and we left her there.

Me: I know what her name is, but I don't care about it.

Cindy: haike ungakulinge Thembinkosi or whatever your name is, in fact why am I even entertaining you? Because this is a family matter, awungeni ndawo.

I looked at her...

Me: family matter? What is a family matter here? Wakhe wayivaphi ifamily edubulanayo?

Cindy: bhuti ndini, don't come out here sizililela uzosi insult'a, please. Phuma kulento, awungeni ndawo.

Me: if this is how ya'll are gonna handle this, then your family is full of hypocrites and you obviously do not care about Cassandra as much as you portray to.

She stood up with a hand on her hip...

Cindy: how dare you?

Me: don't you dare raise your voice at me! Don't you dare.

Cindy: or what? Huh? What are you gonna do? Kanti u Cassandra ujola ne bully all this while?

Me: ibully nguwe, ibully ngula dad'wenu, ibully nini in actual fact pha kokwenu. Kuyacaca mos lo Asanda had intentions of harming u Cassandra kwalento wayengazange am' believe'e emxelela about this Khiro issue. Nizi bully eziqhelileyo to get their way in everything.

She threw me with a glass of water, the other one jumped and stood in front of her...

Cindy: get the fuck out of here. Now!

I ignored her..grabbed the chair she sat on and pulled it closer to the bed holding my babe's hand and prayed in silence. After about fifteen to thirty

minutes, I got up and walked out. She wasn't waking up mos and I was getting angrier. I drove back home and lay there...after a few minutes of laying down I decided to just drive to one of the closest clubs that I own just to cool off a bit.

Manager on duty was Chad, a mischievous coloured boy who knows how to make money. He understands my language very well.

Chad: Minister of Finance, I didn't think we'd see you here tonight.

Me: didn't think I'd be here tonight too...I just need to cool off a bit.

Chad: and I've got exactly what you need.

Me: I'm not in the mood for any company Chad, just bring me whiskey and mint cigars. I'll be in the chambers.

Chad: coming right up.

I went to the secret chambers for VIP treatment,

found one in the far end of the selection and removed my t-shirt, put on music and flopped onto the couch. It wasn't long when I heard a knock on the door, I got up and went to open it...there were three girls. One carrying a tray with glasses and ice, the other carrying the cigar box and the other carrying the whiskey.

Girl1: Chad said we should come serve you, sir.

Me: oh...uhm, please come in, you can put everything on that table.

Okay, I said girls.

I should have said girls in lingerie.

Half-naked, sexy, white girls.

For a second I was tempted to close the door, they knew very well what they came here to do. They came to serve...but isazela wouldn't let me. So I just waited pha emnyango.

Girl2: on the rocks?

Me: you girls can go, I'll manage thank you.

Girl1: Chad said you needed company.

Girl2: and we'd be more than happy, to make you happy.

Me: don't worry about it, I'm good. Thank you.

They nod and walked out...

I had an erection while talking to them, I sat down and drank about four glasses of whiskey consecutively. Felt my body relaxing...after about three hours of drowning myself in alcohol, four times rejecting Chad's idea of blowing off some steam, turning off the girls enthusiasm, I called Chad to call me a cab, I wouldn't be able to drive. I'm fortunate enough to be the small percentage of people who don't get hungover even after a heavy night of partying. While I was still listening to my body ek'seni, Chad called...

Me: Chad?

Chad: oh, you're awake.

Me: you were calling hoping I'd be asleep?

Chad: hay boss, I'm just checking up on you.

Me: Chad?

Chad: boss?

Me: get yourself a girlfriend, or a boyfriend.
Whichever will make you busy.

He burst out laughing...

Chad: when I don't check up on you, you say I only care about your money though.

Me: and that's your job, to care about my money.

Chad: have you gone gay on me now?

Me: what?

Chad: you sent away three beautiful girls last night, after I personally selected them for you.

Me: I told you, I wasn't in any more for company nje.

Chad: you owe me.

Me: ska!

I hung up

Got out of bed and took a shower...

When I was done I called u Khaya no Khanya and told lo ebezohamba nam that uzohamba yedwa, I couldn't be planning to leave the country right after my girlfriend got shot. I wouldn't be able to cope kwakulo msebenzi, I knew very well that there nothing much for me to do but I wanted to be here and not across the border in case she need something. After that phonecall I went to visit her at the hospital, she was awake and better to what I had thought. Funny enough, her sister wasn't rude at all. Maybe lehli ugwebu or it was because some of their siblings we present? I don't know. After spending some time with her I flew to Pretoria, I had a business meeting there and I also had to check on my sister that side...

Once I landed, I bumped onto one of my exes...she was looking beautiful. Not that I was shocked, she's always been beautiful.

Nthabi: dude, you look good.

Me: look at yourself, how are you?

We hugged...

Nthabi: I'm doing alright, how are you? How's business?

Me: business is alright, I'm okay as you can see.

Nthabi: who's the lucky woman? You look smitten.

Me: are you jealous?

She laughed...

Nthabisang has always been warm and accommodative, I wouldn't really say she was

flirting but that laugh had some tingles.

Nthabi: well...

Me: do you have time for coffee?

Nthabi: sure, why not?

We walked to the nearest café and bought coffee sancokola for about thirty minutes just catching up.

Me: what are you doing now?

Nthabi: I'm working in Canada, I just got here yesterday to check on my mother.

Me: mh, any husband I should be getting introduced to?

Nthabi: maybe you could be the husband?

Me: haha! Me? Come on now, surely there's someone there.

Nthabi: there is, but he's just not into marriage so

there's no hope.

Me: does he have any reason not to marry you? I mean, you're an incredible woman.

Nthabi: heh! You're only saying that now? Wow Nathi!

Me: hey, you dumped me. Not the other way round so please...

We both laughed.

Would have loved to ask about her son but then I decided not to.

We went our separate ways, I went to my business meeting first thereafter I went to my sister's place and spent the night there.

[06/26, 14:50] : #Nkosinathi_03

When I got to my sister's place, her husband was away on business meaning he's fully recovered. We chilled for a bit, got updated ngezinto zonke then

obviously, the marriage question popped up again. I think my family thinks I don't ever want to get married, I don't blame them. But they had to be patient with me, I wasn't gonna make some life changing decisions in a haste just to please them. We still had to take some tests no baby before anything else, what if I'm incompetent? How is she gonna take that? What if she's incompetent, how am I gonna take that? We had a lot to go through before I even pop the question but I wasn't doubting her one bit.

Pearl: So, have you finally decided that she's the one?

Me: who?

Pearl: your new woman.

Me: she is.

Pearl: you don't sound too sure.

Me: I feel like she's pulling back, for some reason we're losing connection.

Pearl: have you discussed how you feel, with her?

Me: I haven't had the chance to, she was shot by her sister so uses 'bhedlele right now.

Pearl: did you say, shot by her own sister?

Me: it's a long story.

She didn't ask more, unfortunately I couldn't wait and see my nephews because I also needed to be there for Cassandra. I flew back to PE and drove straight to the hospital, she called while I was on my way to her...

Me: baby?

Cass: hey, u right?

Me: yep, what's up?

Cass: you sound like you're driving.

Me: ewe ndizakuwe.

Cass: ooh okay, sharp.

Me: ubuzothini baby?

Cass: I got discharged this morning so I thought I should call you first before calling a cab.

Me: and why would you need to call a cab ndikhona?

Cass: bendingafuni ukusokolisakaloku baby, but now that you're coming there won't be no need for me to call no cab.

Me: mnkq, undilindephi ke sisi?

Cass: I'm at the foyer, text me when you're here.

Me: if I text you who's gonna carry your bag?

Cass: I have hands bra, and besides, I only have a wound on one side of my body so I can pretty much do everything.

Me: bye bye baby.

Cass: haha! Bye.

I hung up. I have come to realize that ucela was not in her nature, instead of asking to be assisted she'd rather do it herself no matter how difficult it was. Independence is sexy, trust me, but sometimes it's

a turn-off because an independent woman doesn't leave a gap for the man to actually be the man in the relationship. Sometimes men come across as insecure when they speak up about this, unknowing to the female species that sometimes we just wanna feel like we are in control, we want to know that we can lead. I drove and parked nearer to the entrance of the hospital, went straight to where she said she was, she saw me and laughed as she stood up taking her bag into her one working hand. One of my hand fairly touched her waist as I grabbed the bag, and kissed her at the same time before walking her out to my car. I was hungry so I drove straight to Wimpy, didn't even ask her if she's hungry because I know she can never say no to food, and, even she had eaten breakfast, it was already close to lunch time now. She must be hungry. We didn't say much after placing our order...

Me: where am I taking you?

Cass: can we chill for now, then you can take me to my place later.

Me: will you be okay if we chill at my place then?

Cass: please.

Me: okay...baphi oo bhuti bakho?

Cass: I don't know, they haven't called at all today. Maybe they're busy.

Me: abazothetha when they find out uphumele kwam and didn't call them?

Cass: I'll deal with that when it comes to it, I just don't wanna be alone right now.

Me: alright yitya ke sihambe.

When we were done eating I took her home, made sure that she's comfortable then her dad called so I had to rush her to her flat afike ephaya and I did, without no hassles. She later texted and said she's arrived home safe and has laid a charge against her sister...which was good, but I knew that would divide them bezi siblings. While still thinking about her, and my money that Asenathi had been misusing all this while, I received a call from Nthabiseng...well, thanks to Truecaller, because I

didn't have her number.

Me: hello?

Nthabi: Mr Dakumba, u sharp?

Me: Very well thank you, u sharp nawe?

Nthabi: hay fokof Nkosinathi, yintoni wa formal nam ngoku?

I burst out laughing...

Me: where the hell did you get my number?

Nthabi: I guess I never really deleted it.

Me: little miss Mischievous are you!

She giggled...

Oh Lord.

Nthabi: are you by any chance still around?

Me: no, I left this afternoon.

Nthabi: you left for Cape Town or for PE?

Me: PE, what's up?

Nthabi: I thought we could maybe have late lunch and catch up.

Me: erh...

Nthabi: I know, but we're both all grown now. Surely we can be civil towards each other.

Me: civil is not a problem, but I mean, we separated on a very wrong foot, I don't hate you for your decisions obviously but having lunch with you Nthabiseng? I don't think that would be a great idea. I actually don't think I can do it without having to think back.

She paused.

I could still hear her breathing so she was obviously still on the line, but not responding as immediate.

Me: seeing was great though, and yes, we have grown.

Nthabi: I'm sorry I hurt you.

Me: it's water under the bridge, sikhula njalo.

Nthabi: Nathi I know how much you loved me, at the time all I could think of was vengeance to what you did and then I got carried away.

Okay now was my turn to process what she just said...

Nthabi: earlier when you said I'm a wonderful woman, I knew you meant it. I just wished I'd heard you say it back then.

Me: you wouldn't have heard it back then, your focus was on making me pay and I did.

Andikukhaleli.

Nthabi: I'm really sorry.

Me: it's cool, I think kwangoku sasisohlukana I did say I've forgiven you.

Nthabi: you did. I guess seeing you brought back memories.

Me: yeah hey.

Then we both went silent...

Honestly speaking we had some good times, but akhonto ingapheliyo, right?

I cleared my throat...

Me: I uhm, I guess your son has grown into a handsome young man now?

Nthabi: he has yho. He's contributed a lot into this responsible woman I've become.

Me: I know you're a wonderful woman, and I also know that you've been an incredible parent to him.

Nthabi: enkosi bro.

Me: you're welcome...

Nthabi: you would have been a great dad.

Me: let's rather not go there.

Nthabi: it's the truth and I know you probably really don't wanna hear it but I know very that you would have been a great dad.

Me: mh.

Nthabi: it's a pity I can never be a co-parent with you anymore, I mean, I'd have loved to. Watch you play soccer with our child, build cargos and stuff. Just as we imagined.

Me: unfortunately this world doesn't accommodate imagination. It's reality after reality and our realities are waaay different right now.

Nthabi: yeah hey...

Me: yep.

Nthabi: I'm going back next week, can we meet up ke? Even if it's lunch. I can come down that side if you won't be able to come up.

Me: I have a very busy week but I can do lunch, on Thursday though. I'll come up.

Nthabi: thank you. See you then.

Me: thanks for the call.

Nthabi: sharp.

We hung up...

Why was I suddenly catching some weird vibes from Nthabiseng?

Almost as if she wants something more than lunch...something more than what she was fronting with. And now all of a sudden she's all I could think of, flip!

I got up and went to the cellar...I needed something stronger than what I had in my room. I grabbed a bottle and went back to my room...just as I was about to open the bottle, Sandile texted and said mandivule igate. It can really be Sandile. I got up and went to open the gate, bottle still in hand, the

drove in and walked into my house...about six of them, as the gate was closing, another car hooted so I reopend the gate. Sandile shouted engena nje...

Sandile: yewena kwedini ka notrakhi!

I laughed at him, he grabbed my Hennessey as went straight to the fridge.

Me: heh Sandile, uyaw'ze uyiyeke into yovela uthi gqi emzini womntu?

Sandile: ndizay'yekela ntoni? Heh kwedini unenkazana oyifihlileyo apha?

Me: khon'ba bendinayo?

Sandile: izothi shu ke because sizonxila kuse phandle apha kwakho.

Lenja ize namajita wonke...

I watched them all as they walked in with bottles and cases zotywala...Sandile was already making

himself food, the others making themselves comfortable and I was lo Popeye ubukele bona. I just laughed at myself and closed the door ndaya kubo.

Mas'xole: uph' uSandile?

Me: inoba uyatya pha e kitchen.

He got up and went to him...they are brothers, Masixole is younger. Sandile saw him coming ndamva ethukisela.

Sandile: yay'bona kelento yoshumaneka kwam nako ndilandelwa ngoo Mas'xole. Uyaphi emva kwam? Uyaphi?

Mas'xole: utya njani ndingatyi?

Sandile: heh kwedini Nkosinathi khaw'ndizamele intombi ayikho le.

Me: mhla wakwazi ufouna uthi ucela ukuza kwam

ndaw'kuzamela.

It wasn't long when a scooter hooted outside...

Me: who's girlfriend is that?

Luthando: Pizza delivery.

Oh okay, I knew that moment it's really about to go down.

[06/26, 14:50] : #Nkosinathi_04

Masixole paid for the food while I went upstairs to call my babe...she didn't answer her phone so I texted her goodnight then I joined the gents.

Kwamanzi phantsi in no time, you know when you're having so much fun that you don't notice time? We only realized that kusile when we heard a hooter outside...

Me: anyone expecting someone?

Luyanda: that must be my wife.

Masixole: oh-hoo!

Me: usalandwa lomjita nangoku?

Luyanda: hay fokof vula igate angene u baby.

We laughed at him as I got up, opened the gate and watched her as she drove in and parked. She didn't make any attempt to come out of the car, so I told him. He gathered his shirt and jacket then walked out stumbling... I checked the time, it was half past six in the morning. Oko besinxila ubusuku bonke. He got in the car, I reopened the gate and they left. When I returned, the others were half asleep so I left them pha and went to sleep in my own bed. I don't care how many we are, I'd never sleep in the couch kwam ibhedi ikhona.

Woke up at 12 to a ringing phone and it wasn't mine, I looked at the screen and saw a half-naked woman.

She looked familiar, just that I was also half drunk I couldn't really think straight. I got out of bed and took a shower before walking down the stairs to find the lounge scattered with drunk men. I opened the windows, went to the kitchen and made that raw egg mixture to cure my hangover then I went for a swim at the back. Masixole was already there, with a jug of ice cold water. We swam in silence for a few minutes then I took a glass of his water and rested a bit.

Mas'xole: you have been scarce lately. Everything okay?

Me: yeah, just been busy.

Mas'xole: been busy huh?

I looked at him... Masixole unayo lanto yocing'ba nje'ba eyi journalist uyi journalist nakuthi sonke. He doesn't know where to draw the line between his work and our own personal lives.

Me: say what you wanna say or leave me the fuck alone.

Mas'xole: who is she?

Me: huh?

Mas'xole: you only become this scarce when you have a new woman in your life so what's her name? What does she do?

I sighed...

This motherfucker was chilled as fuck just trying his best to read my mind.

Mas'xole: she's a student, right?

Me: fuck you Masixole.

Mas'xole: when the fuck will you learn dude? Leave students the fuck alone!

Me: she's different.

Mas'xole: wait, that's what you said with the last

one. What's her name again? Sivu. Yes. You said she was different from the medical student... And where did that relationship end up? Or should I ask how different was that relationship?

I got out of the water...

This nigga followed my damned ass out of the water.

Mas'xole: students don't have time for serious relationships, you should know that by now. Abantwana all they want is to look good, eat kwindawo eziphezulu, go shopping and milk you dry off your money. That's it.

Me: as I said, she's different. Way too different.

Mas'xole: okay... Khawutsho ke, what's so different about her that wasn't different about abanye aba?

Me: she doesn't ask for my money, I have to beg her ukuze ayithathe. She's on some miss independent ish and it's sexy AF but it's a challenge because I'm

used to throwing things at girls and they'd be oozing. She's not like that.

Mas'xole: either she's umlungu ke or she's from a rich family. Which is which?

Me: unfortunately ngumXhosa. From an average family if I may say.

Mas'xole: when are we seeing her?

Me: I don't know. I don't think I want ya'll to meet her.

Mas'xole: Haibo Mfethu, why not?

Me: nizi fucken zabantu that's the problem, ndizomzisa kuni and ya'll will start interrogating her.

He laughed...

Me: and besides, she doesn't want to meet ya'll yet. She's had enough of Asenathi I'm sure she thinks all the people in my life are upstuck and rude.

Mas'xole: Yho your sister is the worst, ngegqibele ngaye.

Me: they met unintentionally, she was here and

Asenathi came over.

Mas'xole: ndikhe ndamthi tshe lowo ehamba nala Sivuyise. Are they besties now?

Me: apparently so, she's wants love back and she knows who to talk to.

Mas'xole: uphambene lamntana, love back yantoni after so long?

Me: uphambene nala Asenathi umrwayileyo, I don't have time for her childishness. I'm content with my girlfriend and when we both feel ready for ya'll to meet, it will happen. Not ngoku kusafuna nina.

Mas'xole: do you really love her? The new one, or uthanda the fact that she's a challenge?

I stopped to think...

Not because I didn't know the answer, but the answer was also refreshing even to me.

Me: I think ndiyamthanda bra...kakhulu futhi.

Mas'xole: you had to think?

Me: I know ndiyamthanda, but when someone like you asks, one has to be sure of what they say. Ndi content mjita, hundred percent.

Mas'xole: hay ndiyakuva... Kodwa ke, ndis akucebisa. Hlukana nabantwana beskolo. Theses bitches only care about the gram. Nothing else.

I just laughed at him...

We went inside and woke up the rest of the guys.

Once everybody was up, we started off with a braai before heading out to Sandile's crib because he wanted to show off, niqqa bought himself a house. Off the market! After we viewed the crib, saqala phantsi utywala...

Cassandra called so I had to walk away from the noise, which I knew she would still hear it in the background but where I stood was better.

Me: mntu wam?

Cass: baby, unjani?

Me: I'm okay...unjani wena? How's your rib?

Cass: it's okay. Uphi?

Me: at a friends' place.

Cass: mmh, ndiva ingxolo.

Me: so what's up? Ubuya nini?

Cass: maybe in two weeks. I don't really know.

Me: how's the tension at home?

Cass: usisi usiwe kwi psychiatric hospital for some evaluation and whatnots, other than that ku right. There's Onele so yeah.

Me: mmh, so if you'll only be back in two weeks what about your check up?

Cass: I got a letter to have it this side...I miss you man baby.

Me: I miss you too.

Cass: eshe, you're only saying that kuba ndisits ho... but I really do miss you.

Me: want me to come visit? To show you that I

actually do miss you as well.

Cass: hay wethu, you're probably busy so no it's fine.

Me: I can never be too busy for you... Thursday I'm going to J o'burg so I can come to you either Friday or Saturday. Whichever is best for you.

Cass: Friday won't be ideal... maybe let's try Saturday ingathi omama have some missionary plans.

Me: alright ke, ndikuphathele ntoni xandisiza?

Cass: uzoza for the entire day k'qala?

Me: it's all dependent on you kaloku baby, what do you want us to do?

She went dead silent.

Me: baby?

Cass: I just wanna spend time with you, that's all.

Me: okay, let's make it a full day then.

Cass: u sure? Don't want you changing your plans for me unnecessarily.

Me: Cassandra please don't start. Please.

She chuckled...

Cass: eshe kutheni wa sensitive nje?

Me: it must be the alcohol.

Cass: I leave you for a day, next thing you turn to alcohol for comfort? Wow.

Me: yazi bumnandi kanjani utywala baby? Abuxoxisi.

Cass: haha! I'm very close to uyeka ukukhumbula, say one more word nje baby.

I didn't respond, I was just smiling from ear to ear.

Cass: exactly!

Me: you're bullying me.

Cass: and you love me for that.

Me: baby...

Cass: mh?

Me: ndiyeza man.

Cass: uyeza nini? As in right now?

Me: ewe. Right now.

Cass: it must be the alcohol talking, for real.

Me: see you in a bit.

I hung up.

She didn't say I must not come, which means she wanted me to come. Right?

I went back to the guys and told them I had an emergency to attend to, she was calling me and I ignored her. The guys let me go without even asking much. If only they knew. I drove up to her hometown, booked myself into a hotel gqiba

ndalala... Ndikhupha nje utywala. After four hours I woke up to tons and tons of missed calls and text messages from her so I called her back.

Cass: finally! Uphi? Why aren't you answering your phone? Do you know how worried I've been all this time?

Me: hey babe.

Cass: Nkosinathi where are you?

Me: I'm in your hometown...just woke up from a heavy nap. What's up? Ungxolelani kangaka mntu wam?

She exhaled.

Woman was mad.

Me: baby?

Cass: you drove all the way here just to mute me for four flippen hours? Really?

Me: I was tired, so I took a nap. I'm sorry.

Cass: yho heee! Awonwabe man.

Me: get ready, I'm coming to fetch you.

Cass: ulibonile ixesha Nkosinathi?

Me: yes, we are going out for dinner. I'll be there in the next thirty minutes.

Cass: so you're gonna say jump and I'm supposed to ask how high?

Me: why are you being difficult now? I thought ubundikhumbula so I made a plan, yintoni ngoku?

Cass: ndizothi ndiyaphi ekhaya elixesha? I have told you when the ideal is day for you to come here.

Me: so I can't be spontaneous with you?

Cass: can you be spontaneous and considerate?

Me: Baby ndize okanye ndingazi? Because ngoku uyandijikelezisa?

She kept quiet...

Me: is that a no?

Cass: Gosh yiza, I'll see what to say apha.

Me: thank you. Yho.

I hung up...

I guess it's true that women don't really know what they want, she knew deep down that she wanted me to fetch her but she just wanted to give me the run around for nothing. I've never met a girl exakwayo kupha kokwayo when she wants to, Cassandra wasn't gonna be the first. I knew she'd find a way.

[06/26, 14:50] : #Nkosinathi_05

I took a quick shower and drove up to her home, I could see iimoto phandle so I just drove one block ahead and parked, then I called her.

Cass: hello?

Me: ndilapha phandle.

Cass: so you were serious?

Me: yes.

Cass: kay.

Then she hung up...

I saw her little sister at a distance, walking cozily with a boy behleka kumnandi and then kuzobakho u Cassandra owenza ngathi kokwabo ku strict when the younger one can be that comfortable on the streets with a boy? Hay khawume. She came out and looked around, when she spotted my car she walked up. I felt bad when I saw that how she was walking, that side must still be painful kodwa. I got out of the car and met her halfway. She looked beautiful...girl even had time to put on make-up, I didn't even greet, I just went in for a hug and we kept it tight for a sec then I moved back and kissed her full on the lips.

Me: good afternoon.

Cass: more like good evening.

I chuckled as we walked hand-in-hand to the car, I opened the door for her, she got in and then I went to my side of the car. Got in and started my car ndaqhuba...

Me: saw your little sister.

Cass: thank God she didn't see you, ebezokwenzela idrama u Onele.

I looked at her, she wasn't mad earlier.

She was pretending to be mad.

Me: so siyaphi baby?

Cass: anywhere indoors, I think ndizoqalwa yi flue.

Me: so no beach?

Cass: unfortunately no. I can't afford ungalali

zintlungu ebusuku.

Me: linjani khona?

Cass: the wound? It's coming alright, umama does the things.

Me: mmh...

I drove in silence until we got to the restaurant I had in mind, which was just downstairs to the hotel I had booked myself in. We walked in, a waitress directed us to a vacant table.

Me: I hope this is warm enough.

Cass: it is, thank you.

We got the menus and placed our first orders, drinks and starters. I could sit right there and watch her in silence, she's perfection in a human form. She looked up and blushed...

Cass: don't do that.

Me: what?

Cass: you're staring at me.

I moved my seat so I could be right next to her, without a notice I just went for a kiss. She released a "mh" and I guessed that was a reaction to shock but she didn't push me away, we just kissed until the waitress cleared her throat. I watched Cass blushing as she accepted her drink...

I looked at the waitress...

Me: do you mind bringing our food to my room please?

Her: room number?

I wrote it down for her she took the number, with a nod, walked back to the kitchen.

Cass: wait, so you booked yourself here?

Me: yeah, shall we?

Cass: and this is your idea of dinner? Dinner in your hotel room?

Me: yep, this is my idea of a private dinner with my girlfriend. Shall we?

She chuckled as she stood up, and gave me her hand as we walked to my room. Once we got in there she went to the loo while I got comfortable on the bed.. She came out and put her phone on silent as she joined me.

Cass: you enjoy taking risks neh?

Me: mh?

Cass: you're clearly still half drunk, I don't even wanna know how you managed to drive the distance.

Me: I guess it's true that love makes one do some

crazy shit.

She smiled, came close and kissed me on the lips.

Cass: the crazy shit you do makes me feel some
typa way.

Before she moved backwards, I had already
grabbed her behind and longevated the kiss. We
quickly got into the groove, we clearly missed each
other. No lies detected. And for once, she was not
sending mixed signals... She was sending the right
signs and I was promptly listening and adhering to
her subtle directions.

Unfortunately, room service came knocking just
after she had pulled my t-shirt over my head.

Me: hold that thought.

Cass: spoiler!

I laughed and walked to the door, paid and took the tray and took the food to the dressing table.

Me: guess we eat now?

Cass: ulambile?

Me: for you yes.

Cass: guess we eat later then.

She voluntarily removed her blue linen dress, I wasn't about to say no even though when I saw that bandage around her midsection I did feel reluctant because I thought I'd hurt her. That's the last thing I wanted... Hurt her in any possible way. I moved in on her, kissed her lips and kissed down her chin, neck, chest and stopped just above the bandage...

Me: are you sure? I don't wanna hurt you.

Cass: I'm sure you'll be able to work you way around it.

Me: yes ma'am.

Kissed her back up.

I didn't want her to feel incompetent in any way that's why I didn't make much of a fuss about this, we surely worked around it as my lips found familiar spots to kiss down her body straight towards her inner thighs. Baby really got prepped up for her boyfriend, she smelt good, fresh. I slowly and softly kissed her inner thighs making my way towards the pleasure hole. I stopped kissing, to blow some air on her already wet lace panties and her entire body shivered as she released a soft minimized moan. My fingers grabbed the hem and pulled the panties down revealing what seemed like a glorious forbidden fruit. My mouth watered and my dick hardened even more, it was painful against the fabric of my pants.

Me: you clean up very well huh?

Cass: we don't want pubic hair stuck between your teeth now do we?

Me: I'm not complaining baby, not complaining at all.

With that, I dived in and ate her out. She missed me! U baby didn't just miss me but she missed what I was doing to her, she was like a waterfall releasing juices nonstop and my tongue was right there doing justice to her muffled cries and moans as she bucked up trying to meet me halfway. Still muffin her, I slid in two fingers and started finger humping her, my mouth glued onto her clit. I saw her hand going for the sheets, grabbing for dear life and the other pushed my head deeper onto her as her walls came crumbling down with a loud shudder. I cleaned her up, excited to see her legs vigorously shaking. She couldn't even say a word... Her breath was uneven, so I just used that opportunity and grabbed a condom from the drawer and got on with the business of the day. I had gotten condoms on

my way to fetch her because I knew I'd be getting some. Bendingekhe ndi drive'e all these kilometers for nothing ke kodwa. The first time we made love I noticed that she enjoyed intimacy, she enjoyed missionary but now that was all impossible. There was no way I'd get that close to her and not think about her wound. None at all so I improvised but made sure that we're both catered for and in the end, we hit the climax at the same time. I turned her around so she could be on top, she lay her whole body on mine as I pulled the covers over our bodies...

I lifted her chin and kissed her, tenderly.

Me: your phone has been vibrating nonstop here.

Cass: it's probably mom, I'll call her back in five minutes.

Me: why not text her ayazi ba you're safe at least?

Cass: five minutes baby.

Then she closed her eyes and kissed my chest, walala umntu. I let her...

After thirty minutes she woke up, I caught her looking at me and she just laughed.

Me: Haibo, umntu uvele avuke ebuthongweni sehleka?

Cass: I'm just amazed at the things you make me do.

Me: me?

Cass: if ndibethiwe ekhaya just know it's all your fault qha.

Me: nxiba ndikugoduse.

She got out of bed and went to the bathroom, came back and got in bed. Lay her head on my chest drawing izinto endingazaziyo...

Me: I'd hate to disturb your wet dreams but baby it's getting late, we should get going.

Cass: please pass me my phone.

I reached for her phone...

Cass: heh sana umama caba she's gonna release a search party!

Wahleka heh!

She called her sister...

I don't know why she put the phone on loud speaker.

Onele: Hewethu! Uphi umama eligeza nje apha?

Cass: I'm still breathing, zumxelele.

Onele: Cassandra uphi?

Cass: I'm with my boyfriend Onele.

Onele burst out laughing, they actually laughed in unison. Bahleka ngokufanayo aba bantu! Onele sounded like a louder echo of u baby.

Onele: and why are you calling me instead of your mother sisi?

Cass: because you have to come up with a story and tell your mother andibuyi.

Onele: girl, do you have a death wish? Unaye umshwalensi nontombi?

Cass: I'll text her wethu, she won't die ngemini enye.

Onele: heheheeee!!! Undenzela istress ubonanje.

Cass: I love you too, good night.

Onele: hay bra awubuyi nyhani? Like, you're serious?

Cass: yep. Dead serious, if you can do it, surely I can also pull this off.

Onele: heheeee! Hamba Cassandra. Ubulise ku sbari kewethu.

Cass: will do.

She hung up...

My heart was dancing on ice fam, dancing on ice.

I cleared my throat...

Me: oh-Kay. Unayo ke i insurance sisi?

Cass: ya'll will cremate me if need be, it will be cheaper.

I laughed at how sarcastic she was making this whole thing. She texted her mother, turned off her phone and smiled as if uzothi "finally at peace" she had this relieved yet naughty look on her face.

Cass: where were we?

Me: we have food somewhere in this room waiting for us.

Cass: food yes.

Me: though I'd personally prefer...

My hand found her swollen lower lips, she shut her thighs giggling.

Me: my hand is in there.

Cass: sikhuphe. We're eating ukutya, not umntu. Yhu ndizophela apha.

I kissed her neck, all the way around and she was giggling so very sexually, even letting her guard down. My slipped in two fingers while she was giggling, her breathing cut...

Cass: b- baby!

I breathed the following sentences word by word very close to her ear, I could feel her temperature rising with every word.

Me: I want you to come for me.

Cass: thought we were having dinner yazi.

Me: this is dinner.

My fingers danced in her pussy, she humped then grabbed my wrist, her waist dancing on top of my hand.

Cass: fuck I'm gonna come!

I bit a piece of her ear... Breathing heavily into it.

Me: come all over my hand.

Cass: oh my gosh! Oooh faaaakh!

She let go...

I watched as her body struggled to control itself as waves and waves of ecstasy rushed through each and every corner of it. I found myself suckling on her nipples, there were so erect I couldn't help but suck on them. As she cleared, she lifted my chin and we kissed...

Cass: I love you.

Me: I love you Tshawekazi. You have no idea how much I missed you.

Cass: I actually do, the last time you had to come this far ndakuvuma ezinzulwini zobusuku. And even then, you happened to just miss me.

Me: haha! And you snuck out even then.

Cass: you see the crazy shit you make me do?

Me: and you never regret sneaking out, that I know. So I'm not gonna apologize for making you do such crazy shit.

She laughed, grabbed a towel and cleaned herself up and went for the food. Because we couldn't control our sexual desires we ended up eating cold food but we didn't complain. When we were done eating we cuddled in bed sancokola.

Me: awuy'funi iwine?

Cass: isn't the bar closed yet?

Me: only one way to find out.

I grabbed the phone and ordered a bottle of wine, sweet rose ka baby and a whiskey for myself. We drank half the night, had sex the other half. She fell asleep kqala kunam...

But was the first to wake up, by the time I woke up she was already dressed and ready to go.

Me: Yho, you bathed already?

Cass: yep. Ambovasa I've already ordered breakfast.

Me: oh-okay.

I got out of bed and went to take a shower... When I came out, she was eating, glass of wine in hand while standing on the balcony. I walked up to her, snuggled from behind and kissed her neck. Her hand went to waist and felt the towel around it wahleka...

Cass: you better get dressed before you get horny again.

Me: you mean to tell me akho nezo mornings?

Cass: unless I wanna get myself pregnant.

Me: whatever happened to protection?

Cass: sizi gqibile phezolo ii condoms baby. Or should I say today?

Me: ooooooh! Okay... Yeah, mandinxibe.

She spanked my ass as I walked back in to get dressed. When I was done, we sat in the balcony and had breakfast together, in that fresh morning breeze, once done, I drove her home. As we neared her house, I didn't even notice a hint of ukoyika.

Me: you look chilled.

Cass: hay wethu baby.

Me: mh, Unesibindi endisoyikayo mvanje.

Cass: if a bullet couldn't kill me, I'm quite sure whatever endiyibekelweyo ekhaya won't do any more harm.

Well she seemed to have things figured out. I did say this though, umntu xe efuna utaka ubanayo indlela, nanku naye ubenayo. Simple.

[06/26, 14:51] : #Nkosinathi_06

I parked my car a block away from her house, just

like I did when I came to pick her up., turned off the ignition and looked at her.

Cass: when are you going back?

Me: how long do you want me to stay?

Cass: eshe, khaw'phendule umbuzo Nkosinathi.

Me: kaloku ndize kuwe apha, I can stay as long as you want me to.

Cass: really now?

I touched her thigh, squeezed it while looking deep into her eyes, I watched her eyes roll back and I knew I got her good.

Me: I can stay another night if you promise to make a plan, again.

Cass: oh uhm...okay.

Me: uzandifounela and tell me what you've decided

on. Neh?

Cass: sure. Bye now.

She kissed me on the lips, I pulled her closer and kissed her deeply. We went at it for a while then she got out of the car and walked back to her house. I only drove away once I saw that she was inside. I called Mark wathi he's home so I went to see him, ndafika u Kim ephaya. She jumped at me as I walked in so I had to catch her.

Kim: heeey! Why didn't you say you're coming here?

Me: because I don't get to tell anyone when I want to come here!

Mark: Kim should know that by now...what's up bru?

We man-hugged as he offered me a seat, I got comfortable as we caught up on what I have been missing in his life. Their lives in fact. Later on, I called Cass kuba ndicinga uhamba but she didn't

answer so I drove back to my hotel room. As I walked into my room, Nthabi called...

Me: Nthabis eng.

Nthabi: Nathi, unjani?

Me: I'm okay, yourself?

Nthabi: I'm good. Was just checking up on you.

Me: mh, I see.

Nthabi: we're still on for Thursday, right?

Me: sure...I'll call you once I land.

Nthabi: alright ke...see you then.

Me: sharp sharp.

I hung up...

Then there was a knock, I got up, opened the door and yes...it was Cassandra.

Me: this is a nice surprise.

Cass: what's surprising kodwa ubuthe I should call you if I want you to stay another night?

Me: you haven't called though. But I'm not complaining, come here.

I grabbed her wrist and pulled her for a kiss as I closed the door, she entertained me. I was so sure that she's here for another sleep over until she held my face with both hands, giving me baby kisses.

Me: I knew you'd come back.

Cass: yeah whatever, I'm not here for long. I left my phone here, that's why I couldn't call you.

Me: you left your phone here?

She walked past me and went straight to the bed, there it was, right there.

Cass: thank you.

Me: and then, uyaphi?

Cass: I stole a minute away from mom and Onele, so I have to return before they notice that andikho se bathroom.

Me: oh, okay.

Cass: I love you. Bye.

Me: baby uzandilalis a ndedwa nyhani?

Cass: Yep, grab a pillow and cuddle.

Then she walked out...

Why the hell didn't I notice that she left her phone here? What were they doing here anyway? Anyway, I got myself in bed because it was clear, my girlfriend was not coming over tonight. Following morning I woke up and got ready to go back to my comfort zone, I texted losisi just to let her know I'm going back home and possibly straight to Jo'burg. She decided to call...

Me: babe?

Cass: uhamba njani ungandibonanga kodwa ubuze kum apha?

Me: I did see you izolo.

Cass: so you guess that's enough for ba ude uvele uhambe kengoku?

I laughed...

Me: what do you want from me, woman?

Cass: ndiyavas a bra, ndilinde ndiyeza we can at least have breakfast together ke xa kucaba ufunuhamba shushu.

Me: well I'm dressed already, maybe I should just come and pick you up?

Cass: you haven't checked out already?

Me: nope.

Cass: okay ke ungeza.

Me: sharp.

We hung up...

I grabbed my car keys, put up the DND card and locked my door ndahamba.

I first went to fill up the gas, got myself some ginger and then drove to fetch losisi. I couldn't see iimoto kokwabo so I parked right at the gate...texted her and waited. After waiting for more than ten minutes I decided to call her...

Cass: ndiyeza baby.

Me: what's taking you so long?

Cass: umamalapha uthi mandimenzele itea all of a sudden.

Me: oh crap, ukhona?

Cass: yes. But I'm almost done, just give me five minutes.

Me: sharp.

I decided to drive up to the usual spot, just in case umamakhe decides to walk outside and sees my car. After five to ten more minutes she really came out, I started my ignition and reversed. Wangena, ndaqwitha. After a few minutes, we spoke.

Cass: you were really gonna leave without seeing me?

Me: asizoqala chuku ndihamba mos baby?

Cass: hay ndiyabuza kaloku.

Me: at least I didn't just leave, I told you.

Cass: you texted baby, texted.

Me: okay I'm sorry ke. Where do you wanna eat?

Cass: baby why are you dismissing me?

Okay...she just wanted us to fight for nothing

kengoku.

She really was just picking a fight with me, so I just ignored her and drove straight to Wimpy for breakfast. She didn't seem unkeen of my choice so we walked in, ehamba ngemva probably sulking. I found a seat and she joined me, I ordered breakfast for both of us. She ordered juice instead of coffee then wathula...

Me: uqumbile kengoku?

Cass: hayi.

Me: qha wenzani?

Cass: when will I see you again?

Me: is that your answer?

She just looked at me...

Me: you will see me again when you go back to PE.

Cass: when will you be back from Joburg?

Me: Nge weekend. Hopefully.

Cass: kay.

Heh man, umntu wavela watshints ha all of a sudden? Besi right not long ago, why the sour mood now? And I told myself I'm not gonna entertain her namhlanje, if she wanted to be a spoilt brat then she can have a field day on her own not nam. Breakfast came, I dug in. Watya naye ethe chu...my phone was on the table, I don't know why but Sivuyise decided to call me right that moment. Her face popped up on the screen and Cass saw it, I held my breath before answering...

Me: hello?

Sivu: hey, uhm...u right?

Me: ndi sharp, wena?

Sivu: ndi right...I need help wethu, uphi?

Me: andikho.

Sivu: I know awukho coz I'm at your place.

I sighed...

Cassandra was literally counting seconds, I could tell by the way she was side-eyeing me throughout this whole phonecall.

Sivu: I just need you to proof-read my work, it's your field of expertise.

Me: unfortunately andizokwazi I'm on my way to Joburg right now.

Sivu: oh okay, can I at least email it to you?

Me: Sivuyise?

Sivu: yhu yintoni ude ulibize lonke ngathi sixabene?!

Me: Please find someone else to do this for you, I'm busy, I won't have the time.

Sivu: oh okay. Sorry to have bothered you.

Me: yeah. And good luck.

Sivu: thanks.

I hung up and continued eating...

Cass: guess she'll always be part of your life.
Somehow.

Me: I'm not gonna answer that, you know where I stand with Sivuyise.

Cass: mxm.

I stopped eating ndamjonga...

Me: uyanqumnka baby?

Cass: ndizonqumnka ndimithiswe ngubani?

Me: exactly, suba ne mood swings ke ngathi uyanqumnka. If you're upset about something, tell me. I'm not up for mind games.

Cass: kengoku ithi lonto ndigcwalisele?

Me: andikugcwalisele qha ndonele yile attitude unayo namhlanje kodwa nguwe othe I must come fetch you.

She sulked.

Hebethuna!

Me: utheni ke? Tell me.

Cass: andinanto.

Me: qha you woke up and decided that you're going to spoil my day today?

Cass: can we just eat? Yho.

Me: if that's what you want, okay.

Ndatya mna, watya futhi wathatha ixesha lakhe.

When she was finally done I asked for the bill, she took it upon herself wabhatala and I didn't even

attempt to contest. She paid then we walked out, she was now walking ahead of me wafika k'qala emotweni and I just watched her without unlocking the car. She opened the doors, locked. Then she just waited...after five minutes she turned and looked at me, I was busy taking pictures of her, just to piss her off even more.

Cass: nd'cela uvule imoto yakho ndingene.

Me: aw'zongena emotweni yam with that attitude... khaw'mele ngapha this picture is dark.

Cass: WTF! You taking pictures of me?

Me: yep, melangapha kaloku baby!

She hissed and stormed off to the nearest bus stop on the street, caba ithi eyam iyokhwela itaxi. I watched her wafika wema estophini kwabe kungqabe kwa ii taxi, I got into my car and drove straight to her, lowered the window...

Me: mas ambe.

Cass: aw'ndidike.

Me: aw'fiki kum, now get in the car before I carry you into it.

She wanted to laugh, I could see the corner of her lips shivering. She got into the car, I started it and we went straight to my hotel room. We both got out singathethi, walked right next to each other, I opened my room and she walked in wafika waziphosa on the messy bed. I just grabbed water from the fridge, something about her stinking attitude was a turn-on but I was counting and having a conversation with my mind on whether to act on it or not. I put the bottled water down and got ontop of her...she looked at me without saying a word so I kissed her, biting the corners a bit until I saw a glint of a smile.

Me: uyay'thanda idrama yaz.

Cass: khas uke phezu kwam Nkosinathi.

Me: and'funi.

Cass: bra, suka phezu kwam.

Me: u bra wakho ngu Steve no Lionel. Surely you do notice that I don't have a slavery name.

She smiled...

Then laughed..

I just kissed her... maybe she was upset that I'm going back home? It can't be because of that phonecall, ifike la call sele ekwi sour mood but I really wasn't gonna have it. Umntu makabe sour pha kokwabo.

[06/26, 14:51] : #Nkosinathi_07

I later went to drop her off kokwabo, drove back to PE and left my car endlini as I flew to Joburg. Once I landed, I transferred R2 500 into her bank account

and waited for her to call because I knew she was going to and she did, as expected.

Me: hey.

Cass: hey, uhambe kakuhle?

Me: yeah...you're in a better mood?

Cass: don't start ke baby, please.

I just laughed at her, she really was being dramatic just for the sake of being dramatic earlier on.

Cass: mamela, aw'phazamanga? I just got a bank notification.

Me: it's yours.

Cass: 2.5 baby?

Me: ewe, I'm sure you will make good use of it.

Cass: iyashota ke, ndcela uyongeze.

Me: haibo!

Cass: la R500 uy'shiyele ntoni? In fact uy'shiyele bani?

Me: hehehe! Hayini, ngu enkos i endimfumanayo lo?

Cass: baby enkos i, but iyas hota ke.

Me: ishota xa ubunayo wena?

Cass: eshe, ndingathi iyas hota kanti bendingenayo?

Me: what do you want to buy baby?

Cass: a weave, yi 3.7 for three bundles and a closure.

Me: so wena une R700?

Cass: baby uzoyongeza okanye ndenze enye iplan?

Me: yhima baby, kutheni ndingacengwa nje?

Cass: okay, I guess I should make another plan then.
Bye bye, love you.

Me: I'll s-

She had already hung up...wow!

Typical demanding ungrateful species!

I transferred la R500 and only got kisses on WhatsApp as a response. Whoever was talking to my girlfriend was not good influence on her tu, umntu wam is not after money and ebengazoqalis a ngoku. I took a cab to my house in Pretoria, freshened up and went to spend a day at one of my clubs just to check on things there. Okay so my lunch date came up and I was very busy in Soweto that day so I called her and rather scheduled for dinner instead of Lunch because I realized I wasn't gonna make it to lunch on time. On my way from Soweto to Pretoria I saw Asanda, she saw me first and pretended to see me so I also played the game. We didn't owe each other anything so there was actually no need for us to play buddy-buddy on these streets. I got home and prepped up for my date, the weather was drizzly and one would prefer to stay in bed in such weather but I also wanted to get this over and done with ndohlukane nale Ntombi. She sent her location, restaurant of choice, I drove straight to it and found her sipping on wine...

Oh-kay...I knew Nthabi is beautiful she's got good sense of style but, she had literally just pulled all stops for this dinner. I took a deep breath and walked ahead to the corner table she was already seated on. She stood up, and we hugged then she signaled for a waiter to come take my order while I sat down.

Me: your best whiskey sir.

The guy nod and walked away...

Nthabi: always smelt good, nothing has changed.

Me: you look beautiful.

Nthabi: I'm glad you noticed.

I chuckled...

Me: you really didn't have to dress up for me though.

Nthabi: well I aim to please and leave a memory, so I had to.

Me: leave a memory huh?

Nthabi: ewe tshini, we can't just meet up umnke ungandazi noba bendinxibe ntoni, at least mayibekhona into oyikhumbulayo about this dinner.

I laughed...kinda nervous.

Don't ask me why.

My drink came through and we started having meaningless conversation about everything.

Nthabi: so uhlelelini eBhayo when your magor businesses are this side?

Me:I think I enjoy the place more than this busy city.

Nthabi: is it just innocent enjoyment or?

Me: haha! And I have a girlfriend in PE.

Nthabi: haha! I knew it.

Me: hay suka ubuza into oyaziyo mos.

Nthabi: kaloku ndiyakwazi Nathi, awuhlala endaweni where you don't benefit, and as far as I know you don't make much money ngeza businesses ziseBhayi so it could really only be a woman.

Me: so you have been stalking me?

Nthabi: I have been showing interest, not stalking.

Me: why? Unqatyelwe yinto yokwenza kula Canada?

Nthabi: kaloku sukube ndine xesha.

Me: so you recon I'm worth your time now all of a sudden?

She swallowed...

Me: indulge me, please.

Nthabi: can we forget the past, please? And move on to the greater things ahead in life?

Me: just like, we must forgot?

Nthabi: I'm sorry I hurt you, I really am.

I just looked at her...

Nthabi: I was selfish yes, maybe it's because I was also hurting at the time. Please forgive me Nathi.

I swallowed...

She sounded sincere now than when she actually asked for forgiveness before.

Nthabi: Please.

Me: I forgave you a long time ago, because I know I was also wrong. I also did you wrong so I couldn't really blame everything on you.

Nthabi: so that means you've forgiven me?

Me: yeah, k'dala.

Nthabi: Thank you...you have no idea what this means to me.

Okay, she really sounded sincere yaz...we ordered food and had a great chat, we got comfortable and even lost track of time. By the time I actually checked the time it was past 10...

Me: yho, ulibonile ixesha?

She checked her phone...

Nthabi: oh wow...is it that late already?

Me: guess it's true what they say...

Nthabi: time flies by when you're having fun?

Me: exactly.

She giggled...

Me: did you drive here?

Nthabi: oh no, I got a cab.

Me: okay, let's get the bill then I'll take you home.

Nthabi: hay wethu, I'll get a cab again. Don't stress about it.

Me: hay hay sundenza ixelegu.

I signaled for the waiter, he came with the bill. She took the bill and paid.

Nthabi: I got this.

Me: oh- I see.

She tipped the waiter then we left, got into my car sahamba.

Me: Since when do you pay for food?

Nthabi: I got money honey, and I've grown to understand that it's not a man's responsibility to get the bill.

Me: mh, uyakhula nyhani.

She laughed...

Nthabi: so usahlala kulandlu yakho?

Me: yeah.

Nthabi: thought you wanted to sell it when I left SA.

Me: I realized that izondinceda in cases like these when I actually don't wanna go over to my sister's place.

Nthabi: yho u sister wakho use strict ngexesha?

Me: very. And it's annoying, but I can't be annoyed kwakhe.

Nthabi: nyhani ke.

So le indim decided to just drive to my place...I didn't have no weapon with me and driving to where she stays at night is risky. I knew I had a little something in my safe that would protect both of us should we encounter any sort of danger.

She saw indlela and laughed ngoba uyayazi.

Nthabi: why are we going to your place kanene?

Me: because you haven't given me your address, and ikhona into endiyifunayo aph'endlini before I can take you home.

Nthabi: uqale nini ungakwazi ekhaya Nathi?

Me: ndaalibala!

Nthabi: hayini uxokelani?

Me: kuthini uxoka?

She looked at me smiling...

Nthabi: mh.

I laughed as I drove in, parked my car ndaphuma.

Me: I'll be right back.

I walked in and didn't close the door then ran to my room, first went to pee then as I came out, I heard her walking towards the room so I walked back into the bathroom and closed the door, rinsed my mouth nge mouth wash and walked out acting surprised.

Me: and then?

Nthabi: undishiyele ntoni ndedwa phandle?

Me: I thought I said I'll be right back.

Nthabi: uzothatha ntoni ke?

I went to my closet, put on the code and went further into a secret chamber, took out the gun and walked back out. She saw it and took three steps back.

Nthabi: oh my God...what are you gonna do with that?

Me: it's for protection.

Suddenly she was encloded with fear, so I took two steps forward, she took one backwards.

Nthabi: Please put the gun away.

Me: are you afraid of the gun or ikhona into that you'd like to tell me. Kutheni us oyika nje?

She swallowed...

Me: Nthabis eng, you know I'd never hurt you but I need this because istout la area yakokwenu especially ebusuku.

Nthabi: I uhm, I'm sorry. I know, but please put it away.

I put it on the bed and extended my hand to her...

Me: come here, kutheni ingathi u traumatized nje?

She stood still.

But she was shaking in her boots.

Me: hey...hey, I'd never hurt you calm down. Please.

I reached for her hand and hugged her, she melted at my embrace. Okay, something must really be up with her and the sight of guns. She pulled back after a minute and tried wiping off a tear that had rolled down her blushed cheek..I held her by the shoulders.

Me: hey, look at me.

She looked up.

Me: I'm sorry if I awakened some buried memories, okay?

Nthabi: it's okay...I just, I'm trying to forget.

Me: did he ever hurt you?

She looked down.

Me: Nthabis eng, did he hurt you? Is that why you're afraid of the sight of guns?

Nthabi: please, let's not talk about this. Can you please take me home?

Me: u sure?

She didn't respond...

I lifted her chin up and kissed her, she didn't waste any time. She responded with so much hunger and

passion. We kissed deeper and passionately, at one point our clothes went flying across the room and our bodies clashed against each other and against the walls/furniture in the room. I picked her up and led her to the bed, as we made out, I reached for my top drawer and lucky enough there was an unopened packet of condoms. I grabbed one, she took it, opened it and ripped me off my jeans as she turned me over and went down on me. She slurped alright, took me to heaven and back and as I closed my eyes at this pleasure, she slid the condom in very slowly looking straight into my eyes then she got up and did squats on me. The view was ballistic, she had so much hunger and the screams of ecstasy were not helping the situation. She was in the zone...a few more rides then she hit the climax and fell onto of me. I turned her around and made love to her, this time she was screaming but moaning very deeply, something about her moans was heating me up from the deeper parts of my groin, her fingers sunk deep into my flesh and her thighs locked me tightly between her legs. She had her second orgasm. I turned around and ate it from

behind...

Nthabi: mmmmaaah fuck it Naaaaaaathi! ooooh my
goooooorr...

She grabbed my arm with one hand, the other grabbing the pillows, her body crashing. I watched her body shudder as we both hit the climax and slopped next to each other. She was never the cuddling type, right after I fell next to her, she moved away from me and moaned touching herself between the legs for a minute before going silent on me. After fifteen minutes of silence I reached for the bed cover and pulled it over both of us, still giving her the space she appreciates then I watched her sleep.

[06/26, 14:51] : #Nkosinathi_08

I couldn't help but think of the days we shackled up together, the fights, the happy moments. I mean, we

even almost reached the “photoshoot/same outfits stage” but even now, I still couldn’t forget that she aborted two of my babies, yes I forgave her. But it’s the forgetting part that makes this hard. I touched her skin...ever so soft, mxm. I got up and drank two glasses of whiskey then I tried calling my girlfriend, who was probably fast asleep because it was very late. I ended going back to bed and I must have fallen asleep while watching her but by the time I woke up, she was already gone. There was literally no sign of her, but she left a note next to the bed “Thank you for dinner” and that was it. Okay.

I got out of bed and went to take shower, came back and sat on the bed to call her...she can’t just make me a booty call and disappear just like that. No. And besides that, I still wanted to know more about her son, he could be mine after all. Or not? But she got him after we called it quits.

She answered the phone on the second ring...

Nthabi: hey sleepy head.

Me: hey you.

Nthabi: unjani?

Me: I'm okay... unjani wena?

Nthabi: I'm a happy girl.

Me: uhambe ngantoni?

Nthabi: dude, I'm a J o'burger, I know my way around.

Me: you should've at least woken me up.

Nthabi: I didn't want to... look, last night was beautiful but we both know you're in a relationship so...

Me: can we meet up for breakfast?

Nthabi: Nathi...

Me: I'll pick you up at 10 sharp.

Then I hung up...

I got dressed, made my bed then walked to the kitchen while calling my girlfriend.

Cass: hey baby?

Me: hey, slept well?

Cass: ewe babe, wena?

Me: all's good...just checking on your pretty face.

Cass: eshe, uvuke ukwi good mood I see.

Me: have I ever been in a bad mood though?

Cass: ubundigcwalisela izolo oku.

Me: that's because you were in a bad mood baby and I wasn't gonna have none of that.

She laughed...

Cass: baby ubuthe ubuya nini kanene?

Me: about that, I might be held up a bit.

Cass: oh?

Me: yeah, there's been some new developments on a business I'm interested in so I think I might spend the weekend. But it's not confirmed yet.

Cass: okay...okay.

Me: why do you sound hesitant? Or disappointed?

Cass: nah akhonto, bendisithi ndizokucela udlule ngam ngapha if you're going to PE this weekend.

Me: ooh uxolo mntu wam.

Cass: it's not a biggie, ndaw'ske ndihambe Monday notata xasiphuma e court.

Me: niyoxoxa lanto ka sis'wakho?

Cass: I decided to drop the charges.

Me: what?!

Cass: ndicingela oo Aphiwe baby...I wish I could make her pay without putting her kids in more stress than they already are in. I still care about them, what their parents did doesn't change anything when it comes to them.

I sighed...

Here goes nothing...

Me: okay.

Cass: I know you don't think I did the right thing.

Me: you did what you think is right nje baby.

She went silent...

Me: don't beat yourself up about it...it's not the end of the world.

Cass: I know..thank you for listening.

Me: always, now, uzithengile iinwele?

Cass: yaaaaaaas! OMG, I still don't believe it.

Me: when do I get to see them?

Cass: zizofika in 7 days kaloku so I'll install them ofika kwazo.

Me: can I ask a favour?

Cass: I'm not gonna make iwig, I know.

I laughed...

Me: enkosi baby. I really don't get why ya'll want to buy expensive hair and still turn it into a wig. A wig? Yho ha.a can you leave that for your mom? Or grandma?

Cass: kaloku senzela xakushushu siqhize mfondini.

Me: but you're not making a wig, neh?

Cass: nope, for lena I'm not making a wig. But the curls one that I'm also planning to buy, most definitely.

Me: aw'zoya kwam ne wig mos?

Cass: inoba ndizoya kwakho ngama flerho kaloku, akho nix.

Me: ngcono leyo baby, I'll pay R120 for amaflerho wakho andina stress.

She laughed at me.

Like, I know it's none of my business but I hate wigs.

Buy your weave and stitch it on, sew it on, not lena yomqwazi, zibe worse ezi ze twist. And the funny part is that aba bantu bazithandayo actually don't know how to wear these flippen things! Nxa.

Cass: whatever!

Me: mamela mnt'wam, I'll call you again later on, now I've gotta run.

Cass: uyaphi ek'seni kangaka?

Me: I'm meeting someone over breakfast then ndiye kwi briefing e J o'burg South after that and later on ndiye ku sister wam for dinner with the boys date.

Cass: alright ke...good luck with the business dealings.

Me: thank you baby. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Cass: enkosi, nawe.

We hung up.

Grabbed my car keys ndaphuma.

I drove to fetch Nthabiseng, I knew she would be ready when I get there and she was. I parked outside and didn't even have to call her out, she walked out dressed and high-waist jeans, a white crop top and white sneakers. She got in the car, I drove off!

Nthabi: what's up?

Me: with?

Nthabi: you're usually this quiet when something's bothering you.

Me: nothing's bothering me.

Nthabi: u sure?

I chuckled and drove into a parking lot, parked and we both walked out, ordered breakfast and sipped on tea while waiting for the food.

Nthabi: okay, out with it.

Me: I only got to know you have a son through social media. Why did you never mention him?

She smiled knowingly...

Nthabi: because I didn't think you'd be interested to know. We broke up, and moved on.

Me: who's the father?

Nthabi: relax bafo, it's not you.

Me: I know that, but who is it?

Nthabi: Nathi why are you doing this?

Me: I'm just curious. That's it.

Our food came esathule...

Me: ngu Ayanda?

She nod.

Me: then why is it hard for you to say it, it's not like you got him while we were still together.

Nthabi: mentioning his name feels sort of like a disrespect to you.

Me: in what way?

Nthabi: Him and I dated while I was still with you, I get that we forgave each other and whatnots but still...I don't wanna rub it in your face.

Me: I'm surprised you got pregnant for him again after that twin issue.

Nthabi: I was never careful wethu, or maybe I just wanted to trap him.

Me: trap him?

Nthabi: he was everything I wanted in you, and I wanted to be selfish for once and just have him for myself since I couldn't have you.

I didn't understand what she was saying...she

cheated on me for revenge, then she wanted to trap the man because he was everything I was not? Does that even make sense?

Nthabi: and bendifuna ukuzixolisa for the other babies I lost.

Me: aborted?

Nthabi: ewe, aborted!

Me: but you had a choice. No one forced you to abort.

Nthabi: back then, I didn't think you'd make a good father. You were too busy, you were too childish... too much everything. And when I had finally got Ayanda I thought I'd leave you and settle down with him. But then, after he hit me I decided mandiyos ikhupha nes o sakhe.

Me: he hit you, while you were still with me?

Nthabi: ewe, he wanted me to move in with him andafuna. I was afraid ba ndizoy'qala ngaphi kuwe undithembe kangaka. You were kinda naïve.

Okay...

Nthabi: look, I'm sorry.

Me: it's all good, but one more thing. Where is Ayanda now?

She shifted uncomfortably.

Me: Nthabis eng?

Nthabi: ukhona.

Me: ukhona uphi?

Nthabi: he's in Canada.

Me: ooh, nihlala kunye?

She nod...

Nthabi: we're engaged.

Me: oh. Congratulations.

Nthabi: enkosi Nathi.

But why wasn't she happy?

Nthabi: he bought my mother a landlu wayerenta kuyo umama.

Me: oh finally. At least one thing off your shoulders.

She chuckled.

Me: are you happy though?

Nthabi: huh?

Me: are you happy? With him?

She played with her food.

Me: hey, look at me.

Nthabi: I'm okay.

Me: you look okay, but are you happy nah?

Nthabi: uzandenzani Nathi if I'm not happy? What can you possibly do?

Me: I can try to do something if you wanted me to, we both know you are not happy. Nthabiseng you are a beautiful woman, but kum mna mntu ukwaziyo you look miserable. Something is bothering you.

She got up and walked out.

I removed money from my wallet and walked out following her, caught up with her, grabbed her hand and led her to my car.

We got in and so I drove back to my place, she was now crying.

Safika endlini and went to the lounge, I went to get her water wasela the whole bottle in one go.

Me: uyakubetha lomjita Nthabi?

Nthabi: nd'cela uyiyeke lento Nathi. I can handle it.

Me: you came to visit your mother because u dinwe kukubethwa ngu Ayanda Nthabis eng? But still uzophindela kuye, u right kak'hle?

Nthabi: I am going back because I built my entire life in Canada, okay!

Me: but you can still live your life and leave him!

Nthabi: no I cannot...I won't.

Me: why?

She just threw her hands in the air and got up.

Nthabi: I love him. I really do.

I got up and held her waist...

Me: I loved you, I never laid hands on you. Nakanye.

Nthabi: I know...but he's a changed man, I've spoken to him and ndimvile ba uts hinthile kancinci, he goes to therapy now so uzoba right.

Me: Nthabis eng...

Nthabi: hey, I know he loves me. Trust me, I know.

I looked at her...I felt sad that she was making excuses for this guy. Mhle lomntu, she's got a budding career, why would she stay in an abusive relationship? She kissed me, I responded and we just kissed. But then I stopped her...

Me: if you love him so much, what is this?

Nthabi: are you not in a serious relationship kanti?

Me: I am, bu-

Nthabi: then we are just having fun because I'm in the country. Nothing more.

She kissed me again, this time I had no intention of stopping her, we were both adults here. She said we were just having fun, meaning no strings attached. I pinned her against the wall as I ripped off her clothes, grabbing her behind. She liked it rough, she was about to get it.

[06/26, 14:52] : #Unedited

#MorningBang

#Nkosinathi_09

After we had sex, we both had a quick shower, separately of course then I drove her back home. I went to my briefing as scheduled, ndaphumela kwa sister wam to fetch the kids and we had late lunch, watched movies then ebusuku ndabagodusa. I thought of ulala e Pretoria, but decided nah, akho need. Ndiyigqibile into ebendizoyenza apha so I checked available flights to PE and the last one was at 9pm so I quickly booked that one, got a cab to take me to the airport and waited about 10 minutes

for the flight to arrive because it was already late. Yafika iflight, flew to PE and got Masixole to fetch me. Ethukisela as usual because akakwazi ungathukiseli bayafana nje pha kokwabo ...phofu lomntu uthukisela driving me to a party his girlfriend is hosting, akandigodusi. Undisa epartyini le ndimkhuphe kuyo when I asked him to come fetch me. So now I had to be in a party mood ngenkani...

We partied the night away, I only got to my flat at 8am, nakhona ndafika ndalala on the couch. I knew I would not manage the stairs tu.

When I woke up later on in the day I woke up to a flat battery, three missed calls from u baby and it only clicked then that I promised to call her phezolo and I didn't! Flip!

I searched for my charger, charged the phone and went to grab iced water from the fridge. I came back and first called Asenathi, I wanted meat, just didn't wanna cook ngokwam.

Asenathi: Mntaka mama?

Me: khandenzele inyama ndiyeza.

Asenathi: ndikwenzelephi inyama Nathi uyithathile nje its his anyama yakho?

Me: ndenzele kweyakho xa kucaba awunoya e tshis anyama for your brother, if awukho se tshis anyama as we speak phofu.

She silently released a “mxxm” but I wasn’t gonna take her out about it ngoku, I was just hungry. And hungover.

Asenathi: eyamalini?

Me: sausage ye R80 ne Pork ye R150.

Asenathi: mmh, icherry yakho caba iyarhawuka.

Me: I’ll come fetch it in an hour. Enkosi.

I hung up engekaphenduli then I called my girlfriend. She didn't answer until it went on voicemail but I tried again and she answered sendincama...

Cass: hm?

Me: babe...I’m sorry I didn’t call you last night, ndiye nda busy.

Cass: too busy to call umntu wakho I see.

Me: I'm sorry baby.

Cass: kay.

Me: I'll make it up to you, I promise.

Cass: okay kaloku.

I fell back onto the couch, feet in the air and my hand on my forehead. This time she had every right to be upset with me, I had no way out. She wasn't being dramatic, she was plain upset with right futhi.

Me: I'm sorry.

Cass: look, I have to run. Later?

Me: uyaphi?

Cass: ndise town with my parents.

Me: ooh okay, please text when you're back home.

Cass: sharp.

Me: love you.

Cass: Love you too.

Then she hung up.

I put my phone away and closed my eyes for a minute... Everything that happened the past two days flashed back, not that was no flashback, that was a replay. An entire movie on replay.

Me: uyi shit yomntu Mfethu!

I sat up... Realizing that I really had sex with another woman, an ex for that matter, wait an ex that got pregnant for another man while we were still living together. Shit! How did all of this happen so fast?

While still sitting there, Nthabiseng called. I looked at the screen in disbelief... I cut the call and called Cass again. She answered so fast as if she was expecting me to call or she was busy on the phone while I called. Either way...

Cass: I thought you said I should text you when I'm free to talk.

Me: uhm babe, ndibuyile.

Cass: oh-Kay.

Me: in case you still wanna come this side for the

weekend.

Cass: I've already told my dad ndihamba naye Monday.

Me: oh okay, I just wanted to let you know.

Cass: sure.

Me: sharp.

I hung up.

She called back.

Me: Babe?

Cass: u right?

Me: yes why?

Cass: u sure u right?

Me: ewe baby.

Cass: you sound anxious, it's actually weird.

I chuckled nervously.

Cass: wenze ntoni e Joburg Nkosinathi? naku une nervous laugh.

Me: Haibo baby, haike haike.

Cass: well it's either you did something or you're about to do it right now. I'm really getting weird vibes from you right now.

Me: Cassandra andenzanga nto, and I'm not gonna do anything. If you don't believe me, buya.

She didn't answer...

My hands were suddenly getting sweaty.

Me: Ndiyavuka ngoku and I'm just gonna go fetch meat ku Ase and then come back home, I've got nowhere to go namhlanje. Have nothing planned in fact for the entire weekend.

Cass: mmkay.

Me: do you believe me?

Cass: ewe baby, now can I really text you when I get home?

Me: sure thing.

Cass: thank you, bye bye.

Me: one more thing...

Cass: oh God!

Me: ndiyakuthanda.

She laughed and threw in the "ndiyakuthanda nam suka" in that laughter. I smiled as we hung up...

Okay, got that out of the way successfully.

Nthabiseng was still calling and I just didn't wanna talk to her yet... I switched the phone off and went to freshen up then I went to the car wash ndavas a imoto yam and collected my meat.

Asenathi: awunqabe.

Me: ku busy charlie.

Asenathi: too busy for your own sister?

Me: too busy for myself even.

Asenathi: don't overwork yourself bro, try to balance things.

Me: ndizopheka ipapa when I get home with this meat ndilale. I really need to eat real food and rest a bit.

Asenathi: mh, where's your lover?

Me: she's home.

Asenathi: why? Is she sick or she just went home for the weekend?

Me: she's nursing a gunshot wound.

Asenathi: Haibo! She was shot? When?

Me: iiiits none of your business mntasekhaya.
Masisole siy'yeka njalo.

Asenathi: heh, kutheni ufani nje I'm genuinely concerned ngomnye umntana!

Me: no you're not, you just want something to say when you meet up with your bestie.

Asenathi: my bestie?

Me: yes, Sivuyise. Your new friend.

Asenathi: gosh, siselapho na?

I smiled and took my meat ndams hiya... I really made pap and chakalaka, ate it with the meat and got in bed. I couldn't even work... I was suddenly overwhelmed with guilt. I looked at the pictures I took of Cassandra the day we went out.

Me: hay bra uyi rubbish nyhani.

I must have fallen asleep, ndisacinga. I heard my phone ringing and then I looked at the screen...

Me: Nthabis eng.

Nthabi: hey, are you avoiding me or what?

Me: I was sleeping... Sorry, what's up?

Nthabi: I was just checking up on you, nothing much.

Me: oh okay.

Nthabi: look, I understand that akhonto is idibanis ayo neh but-

Me: there's no buts Nthabi, you said it yourself that we were just having sex... I mean, we are both in committed relationships. Nothing more.

Nthabi: I get that.

Me: good, it ends there.

Wathula...

Me: if this were to ever come out, my girlfriend

would die. Literally.

Nthabi: so ucingela yena?

Me: ndiyamcingela naye but it's the truth. Akhonto sinoyenza ngoku.

Nthabi: I hear you...

Me: you do?

Nthabi: I do... But surely we can arrange to meet up everytime I'm in the country? She doesn't have to know.

Me: so awundiva lilonke.

Nthabi: we can be discreet Nathi, please.

Me: it's not gonna happen... Look, I have to go, my girlfriend is on another line. Bye.

I hung up...

Seriously?

I closed my eyes and tried to think... I got up and went to get a cigar. Lit it up and took a walk to the balcony ndats hayela pha... Sandile called.

Me: Kwedini.

Sandile: uphi Mfethu?

Me: ndilapha endlini.

Sandile: khaw'khawleze uze apha kum bra u Masx uhlatyiwe.

Me: what? Okay sho.

I quickly ran out and drove over to Sandile's place, we took Masixole to the hospital after he was admitted, we went on a man hunt to find the guys who stabbed him. I didn't even ask for the whole story, ndonele kuva ba uhlatyelwe icherry ndahamba nabahambayo. You don't get to stab one of us and then we let it go just like that, as a matter of fact, bes endifuna nalo cherry imhlabisileyo mna. We found the two guys kwa Dwesi and we didn't even say much, hlaba impama emtwini samfaka emotweni semnka naye sayomngombela emahlathini sams hiya pha and then went looking for le cherry ka Masixole. On the way to her, I decided to now ask ba bekwenzeke ntoni?

Me: yhimani majita, singeka fiki ku Mbali, kanenen nithe why did those fools stab u Mas'x?

Sandile: lomntana was apparently two-timing u Mas'x with lantwana, so lantwana found out and then decided to come after u Mas'x.

Me: ooh okay.

We drove to her home sathumela umntana makasibizele, kwathiwa use shop so we drove down to the shop and saw her. Sandile asked me to stop the car and I did, waphuma wayaku Mbali who was with her friends, he didn't say a word, uvele waphosa impama zantathu kwabe sekuwilizela because she cried out. Saphuma nalamajita sihamba nawo and went to stop him, I grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

Sandile: yhela Nkos'nathi mfethu khandiyeke ndikhabele lenjakazi.

Mbali: ndizakubambisa unye nja ndini, ubetha

kubani?

Waphuncuka kum lo wayofaka enye impama and the friends scattered...

Sandile: yazi yintoni Mbali? Icebo mandikuhlabe man nam njengo Mas'x lo umhlabise ngamadoda wakho ndivele ndiyobanjelwa into ebambekayo.

Mbali: u Masixole uhlatyiwe? Nini?

Sandile: sund'buza ikaka uyeva? Sukundibuza irubbish, bloody fucken harlot!

I grabbed Sandile ndayomfaka emotweni and went back to Mbali.. she genuinely seemed shocked.

Mbali: Nathi, uhlatywe nyhani u Masixole?

Me: ewe...we just dropped him at the hospital an hour ago.

Mbali: hayini u Mabhuti.

Mabhuti being the second boyfriend...

Mbali: ndcela undiphe iward akuyo torho Nathi... akazondinika u Sandile.

Me: Andizokwazi nam, he'll call you when he wants to talk to you. Just give him space.

Mbali: Nathi please, ndiyakucela torho.

I sighed..and gave her my phone.

Me: faka inumber yakho, I'll text you.

She did...Sandile lowered the window kula moto and shouted

Sandile: ndakukhaba unye zekhe ndikubone kwesas'bhedlele Mbalentle! You will wish ubundibambisile trust me. Masambe wena

Nkosinathi.

She saved her number, gave me my phone then I returned to the car. We went back to the hospital and spent quite a lot of time there waiting for the doctors to update us because the stab was very critical, it was just above the heart and so Masixole needed to be operated to drain blood from it lingayi entliziweni kakhulu.

[06/26, 14:52] : #Nkosinathi-10

We waited for Masixole to be operated at the hospital then left after he was given a ward, I texted his girlfriend the ward number right after dropping Sandile at his place. Khanya called on my way to my place...

Me: Mjita? (my guy)

Khanya: u sharp mkhuluwa? (You good?)

Me: tops, kanjani? (good and you?)

Khanya: hundred, heh man, ude wathini ngohamba kanene? (Good, what have you decided on regarding the Canada trip?)

Me: hay kaloku ndithe andihambi. (I told you i'm not going)

Khanya: thought by now you'd have changed your mind. This is big, thought you might want to handle it.

Me: nah, I promised umntu wam a weekend away before ndihambe, I'm now thinking of making it a week away. I trust that you will handle it like I would.

Khanya: what have you done Nkosinathi?

I laughed,

Me: what do you mean what have I done? Can't I spoil my woman?

Khanya: you're guilty of something and trust me, a

woman knows when a man does things to ease up his guilt.

Me: unfortunately I haven't done anything...we just need the time away from people like you.

Khanya: people like me are always on the road, we actually don't have time for people like you.

Me: ugqibile? (are you done?)

Khanya: mh, sharp mfethu. (yep, cheers bro)

Me: good. Now go make money.

I hung up...

I don't get why people should ask what have I done when I just wanted to spend more time with my girl, I get that I cheated, but hey, leave me alone. When I got home I warmed up my food ndatya, when I was done eating, I called Nthabiseng...

Nthabi: Nathi?

Me: u sharp?

Nthabi: ufuna ntoni (what do you want)bro, you made yourself quite clear earlier.

Me: look Nthabiseng, we are both adults here. You broke up with me for a reason, can we not do this back and forth thing? Please.

Nthabi: I'm actually not asking you to marry me here, you know?

Me: I know, but babe...what if you decide you wanna be in the country every other month? Must I now leave my girlfriend and attend to your needs?

Nthabi: it's just harmless fun...uqale nini ubhora kanje? (when did you become so boring?)

I kept quiet...

This was the exact same trap that got niqqa's killed in the past...and I wasn't here looking for trouble with babe's brothers or Nthabi's fiancé.

Nthabi: I saw you on the guest list kula Franchise briefing that's coming up in Canada, guess

saw'bonana phaya (we'll see each other there).

Me: unfortunately andiyi (I'm not going), I'm sending my business partner.

Nthabi: ubaleka mna (are you running away from me)? Wow.

Me: I didn't know you'll be attending.

Nthabi: well now you know, surely you can arrange something?

Me: already have plans with my girlfriend. Sorry.

Nthabi: mh, I get it.

Me: can we just forget that what happened, actually happened?

Nthabi: I'm not promising anything, but I will try.

Me: maybe you c should also delete my number from your phone?

She burst out laughing...

Me: ayt...cheers.

Nthabi: bye.

I hung up and just sat there...

Then I decided to go check on my folks, with a weekend bag so that I can actually spend the weekend with them xa ndingenanto yokwenza and engabuyi (since I have nothing to do and Cass isn't coming back) u Cassandra. They were actually back from my brother's place and fortunately enough for me, they had no plans for the weekend as well. We put up the braai stand at the back and started off our weekend with some vleis. Phofu dad and I were at the back while umama was indoors...

Dad: when last did you visit your families?

Me: yho it's been a while...you?

Dad: I've been busy as well. But I called them, zininzi izinto abazidingayo bonke (there's quite a lot that they need), I'd really appreciate it if ungazama ukuyobabona aph'enyangeni (you could try and visit

them within the month).

Me: I might just pass by next week. Did they send you a list of the things they need?

Dad: I'll check my emails later.

Me: sharp.

He looked at me, I laughed.

You know when an elder gives you the look, efuna ubuza into (when they wanna ask something) and you know you don't want them to ask it ngoku ungekho sure what they want to ask?

Dad: uhleka ntoni? (what are you laughing at?)

Me: khayeke taima. (nothing dad)

He laughed.

Dad: so this new girl you have?

Me: I knew it! Yho hay akho peace kulendlu

I murmured ndams hiya pha and went inside, as I walked in, Cassandra called so I walked back out to the chair in the lawn.

Me: baby?

Cass: hey, I'm home.

Me: okay, let me call you back.

Cass: sure.

She hung up and I called her...

Cass: Mr Dakumba.

Me: Future Mrs Dakumba, unjani?

Cass: I'm tired, yho. Unjan' wena?

Me: uдинwe yintoni?

Cass: I've been shopping with the folks namhlanje, akho shop singayingenanga. And these people just kept on going, yhu ha. a nd'funuhamba mna apha!

I laughed at how dramatic she sounded.

Me: bendithe buya ndikhona.

Cass: I wonder bendizothi kutata what changed my mind all of a sudden kengoku?

Me: ubuzoyazi ba mawuthini yazi baby.

Cass: eshe.

Me: I've booked us for a week away, instead of just the weekend.

Cass: ulibele ba ndiyafunda?

Me: you're still on sick leave as per doctor's orders sisi.

Cass: hehe! Hamba Nkosinathi.

Me: so siyahamba Wednesday ke.

Cass: siyaphi babe? Location.

Me: I can't tell you that.

She laughed

Cass: okay fine...I'll be there ke Wednesday.

Me: no, you'll be here Monday, I'm fetching you right after your dad drops you off.

Cass: caba ibindikhumbula le shame.

Me: kaloku you only believe it when you see it.

Cass: undicaphukis ile ke izolo yaz.

Me: I know...and I'm sorry.

Cass: ubu busy yintoni kangaka ude undilibale babe?

I sighed...

Me: I was accidentally at a friend's place, bekukho iparty.

Cass: yho, so you partied and forgot about me?
Really?

Me: baby please, masiy'yeke. I'll make up for it.

Cass: mnqk! Men are trash nyhani kodwa.

Me: because I know ndikonile, I'll take that. But at the end of the day, I'm your man so I'm basically your trash.

Cass: awuselociko!

Me: awusandithandi!

She didn't respond for a minute, I internally counted to ten then she spoke up.

Cass: I miss you yazi.

Me: I miss you too...should I come fetch you?

Cass: no, sezofika u Monday ndikubone.

Me: are you sure you don't want me to come fetch you?

Cass: I'm quite sure babe, it's okay.

Me: okay ke, see you Monday.

Cass: sure.

Me: I love you ke, uyazi lonto.

Cass: I love you...uzandibekela ntoni?

Me: Uzofika Monday sibe sesi hamba Wednesday, and you still wanna know ndizokubekela ntoni baby?

Cass: is that your answer?

Me: ufuna ntoni mntu wam?

Cass: surprise me.

Me: okay, then I'll try my best to.

She laughed as she hung up...

Monday morning,

I woke up and cleaned my house, baby was coming back.

First of all I didn't know how I was going to react once I see her after what happened in Pretoria but I was soooo looking forward to our upcoming trip. I really missed her. When I was done cleaning the house I grabbed my car keys and went shopping... first stopped at Edgars and bought her two pairs of heels, one strappy and the other just patent then I bought her two lingerie sets; one lacy red and the other strappy black. Drove to Woolies and got whipped cream and strawberries, wine and chocolates then I called the ts his anyama to prepare me a takeaway then I went to buy her flowers. She did say I must surprise her so this was me surprising her with Food, gifts, clean linen on the bed and essentially a clean house. Done.

I rested a bit while contemplating on whether to call her or not...after about 30 minutes of just sitting there idle, I decided to go check on Masixole at the hospital. As I walked into his ward, I heard voices. Familiar female voices, which was not far-fetched because he's got a girlfriend whom I know, and we

also have female friends but, they were arguing
ngaye ...so I silently walked in and watched the two
women squabbling over his head. Nthabiseng no
Mbali...yes. Thee Nthabiseng.

Mbali: so basically you've been sleeping with this
whore Masixole right under my nose? Kutheni
ungazithandi nje?

Nthabi: ungakulinge ke undibize i-whore mna
njakazi ndini...uyaw' gym'a nini? Uhlise amanqatha
la because ubaleka unukiselwa nguwe u Mas'xole.
Awuwathandi amanzi.

Mbali: Uthini?

Nthabi: akho moya apha, take a bath, ufake idettol
nerwatyityi uzoba right.

Heeeee!

I stood there feeling like isibhanxa...

Lo ndimshiye eRhawutini ufike nini apha? And,
uqale nini ujola no Mas'x?

Masixole: baby?

Nthabi: omphi? Because last time I checked besingo baby sobabini mos?

Masixole: khawume wena man...babe?

Mbali: hay fokof thetha!

Masixole: nd'cela uxolo, it was just a moment of weakness.

Mbali: a moment of weakness kwi ex ye best friend yakho? U right Masixole? Uphilile kak'hle?

Nthabi: ingenaphi kengoku eyokuba ndayi ex kabana? Ingenaphi?

Mbali: oh hay nawe uhambe uba weak, uyambona lomntu baa kana morals kwaphela kodwa wayozithi nyha!

Nthabi: uthetha nam nontombi?

Mbali: she's insulting me right in front of you and awubethelwa nangu wan. Sogqiba ucelana namaxolo.

Nthabis eng laughed...lantsini igezayo.

Anyone could tell that u Mas'x uhlebile ngo Mbali ngoku ebecenga iimpundu ku Nthabis eng. It was just evident.

Masixole: Nthabi khaw'phume.

Nthabi: andiyi ndawo.

Masixole: I need to talk to uMbali eyedwa, please... just leave.

Nthabi: wonene ngoku zimp-

Mbali: nono, phuma. You can come back later xandimnkile ngoba kuyacaca ba indoda lena yeyethu, but for now phuma. Ambo linda iturn yakho kwi foyer sthandwa.

She grabbed her bag and turned, wathi ntle ngam ndimile ndibabukele.

Nthabi: uhm...Nathi, how long have you been here?

Mbali also turned...I heard Masixole cursing under his breath.

Mbali: yho...Ta Nko.

Me: Mbali...u grand?

I walked towards the bed, totally ignoring Nthabiseng.

Mbali: I'm good, enkosi bra.

Me: no sweat...igrand i nigga?

I was no looking at Masixole whom I could see iintloni all over his face.

Masixole: yeah mfethu.

Me: linjani inxeba?

Masixole: they are still draining the blood and some

water, but ndingaphuma aph'e vekini.

He shifted uncomfortably on his bed.

My phone rang, u baby was calling but it put her on silent.

Mbali: let me give you guys a moment.

Me: hay andihlelanga ntwana, I can see ni busy apha.

Mbali: hay ufika, I'm sure he also wants to speak to his friend.

Me: umntu wam usendleleni ezayo, I thought I should just pop-in to pass time...nguye lo ufounayo.

Mbali: ooh okay ke.

Me: haike mfethu I'll probably see you sew'phumile apha.

Masixole: hopefully bra.

I smiled, we fist-bumped then I walked out.

Nthabiseng was really waiting in the foyer, she saw me and stood up. I walked right past her...she followed me to my car...

Nthabi: it only happened three times.

Me: what happened three times?

Nthabi: sleeping with him, three times qha.

Me: I don't think that's any of my business though, ulala ngomzimba wakho mos. Andithi?

She looked at me without blinking...

Me: you don't owe me any explanation...you can sleep with the whole crew if you want. It's your body baby, do what makes you happy ngawo.

Got in my car and left her standing there.

[06/26, 14:52] : Nkosinathi_11

I drove for about five minutes before I returned
Cassandra's call...

Cass: hello?

Me: I was at the hospital, uxolo. What's up?

Cass: ufuna ntoni at the hospital?

Me: I went to check up on Masixole, I told you
uhlatyiwe. Right?

Cass: no you didn't... u right?

Me: yep. He looks fine.

Cass: mmh.

Me: ndizokuthatha? (should I come fetch you)

Cass: ewe.

Me: sharp.

She hung up.

Okay, maybe I should accept that umntu wam unentliziyo encinci coz I could hear that udikwe kwa ndim while talking on the phone. And eyonanto enokumdika right now is calling me, ndingafumaneki...nothing else. I drove to her place, called for her ba makaphume, she walked out engaphethanga ne bag for changing clothes. Just her phone, earphones ne charger.

She got in the car, fastened her seatbelt and sat there in silence...moody AF.

Me: and then? Kutheni ungabulisi?

Cass: we just spoke on phone a minute ago.

Me: but still?

She yawned... adding a “hey baby” in that yawn.

I chuckled and drove my car...put on music so that

singaxoxisani at all aphenleleni seeing that she's in a "pretense" foul mood. As I drove in endlini yam, do you not think Nthabiseng would call? I cut the call isaqala nje u ringer, as we got off the car I blocked the number ndavula endlini and walked in following Cassandra.

Cass: aku clean apha, u sure kudala ubuyile?

Me: what are you trying to say ngam baby?

Cass: haike I was just asking. Why u tense?

She laughed that off and went to flop on the couch, taking a TV remote.

I called her from the kitchen...

Me: Baby ulambile?

Cass: no andilambanga babe, but ndibawela i-pizza.

Me: xa ungalambanga izongena ndaw'ni i-pizza kanene?

Cass: yithenge mnt'wam I'll show you.

Imagine!

Me: okay.

Yes.

I ordered pizza on delivery, she was going to get away with anything today, in fact the whole week. I ordered her crammed pizza with sides, then I joined her on the couch. Putting my legs on her thighs... she sniffed on my feet and we both laughed.

Me: ubuye ugeza futhi kokwenu.

Cass: so you didn't miss me?

Me: I'm still trying to establish that.

She reached for a pillow and threw it at me...I

ducked but caught it and she laughed, later her pizza was delivered, I brought sideplates, wine and glasses then we dug in.

Me: thought you'd be coming with a weekend bag or something.

Cass: I was too tired to unpack and repack.

Me: why would you need to unpack?

Cass: because andizonxiba impahla apha ebendizinxiba ekhaya.

Me: you have clothes to wear at different places?

Cass: you wouldn't understand...what time are we going Wednesday?

Me: hay babe yhima ngo Wednesday, uzovuka unxiba ntoni ngoms o?

Cass: are you not gonna take me home kanti?

Me: hehee! Hay yi last number.

Cass: ndizovuka ndinxibe oos horti bakho sana xa kucaba andizogoduka, caba ndizolala ze lento

ungabuziyo ba ndizolala ngantoni ubuza ba ndizovuka ndinxibe ntoni.

Me: you predicted that one yourself, otherwise ngew'ze unxibe ii pyjama kaloku.

Cass: thought we'd just have dinner then you take me back home.

Me: kaloku your thoughts are higher than my thoughts baby, apparently.

She burst out laughing, she looked cute, trying to laugh out loud and still cover her mouth because it has food in it.

Me: uzolala u-ze ke Charlie.

Cass: une medical aid kamnandi, ogula kwam ndim nayo.

Me: I didn't say you shouldn't bring your clothes? You decided not to.

Cass: baby sizoxoxa ngempahla zam? Monday?

Kodwa sihamba Wednesday?

Me: no babe asizoxoxa tu, sizotyana ngoku and chill.
No arguments whatsoever.

She threw me with another pillow and it really hit me this time, I watched her laugh whole heartedly. Mhle umntu wam kodwa! Found myself asking bendifuna ntoni ku Nthabiseng le ndingayaziyo? Le ndingenayo right now? Why the fuck am I greedy? Because kunyoluka mos okuya kuthe kwandifumana.

Cass: uqumbile kengoku?

Okay...clearly I drifted off.

Me: nope, ndizokufumana qha. Payback time akuzoba mnandi kangaka.

Cass: eshe, yimalini igrudge ye cushion na baby!

BABYYYYYYYYYYYY!!!!!!!

She sang the last baby.

Me: haha! Awonwabe man, lonto uzonwabis a ngam.

Cass: because in two days I'm going on baecation, hello!

Me: sisi how is your wound?

Cass: hay sana soy'bona phambili eye wound, andina life uzakuma ngenxa ka sis Asanda tu bube obakhe ubomi buqhubeka.

Me: well, you dropped the charges.

Cass: I know, she's my big sis at the end of the day.

There was nothing I could say furthermore...as we were just bonding on that couch, Masixole called.

Me: Ntwana? (my guy)

Masixole: mfethu...ungakwazi ukuza aph'e hozy?

(hey, will you be able to come to the hospital?)

Me: nini mfethu? (When?)

Masixole: ngoku (now)bra, or later on tonight.

Me: yintoni ingxaki? (What's the problem?)

Masixole: I want us to talk, about u Nthabis eng. I know you heard everything earlier on but I feel like I need to explain my side of the story.

Me: hay mfethu akho need yalo way. Ungaqhuba pha. (there's actually no need for that. You can continue)

Masixole: hay Nko mfethu.

Me: serious, ndaphuma mos phaya so akho way. (I'm no longer there, so you can really continue)

He went silent on me... Cassandra was busy playing with my toes andiyazi why, and she seemed to be enjoying what she was doing.

Masixole: ingaske sidibane mfethu. (I just wish we

can meet up bro)

Me: okay ndoda...but it cannot be now or anytime this week.

Masixole: u busy kakhulu?

Me: yes, and I'm going away Wednesday.

Masixole: inoba uhleli nala cherry yakho, khamnike iphone. (You must be with that girlfriend of yours, give her the phone)

I chuckled and gave Cassandra the phone, she looked at the screen and shrugged.

Me: khaw'thathe iphone uyeke ujamelana nam. (Can you take the phone and stop staring at me?)

She didn't take it, instead, she put it on speaker while it was still in my hands.

Cass: uhm, hello?

Masixole: hi sisi unjani?

Cass: ndi right wena unjani?

Masixole: ndi grand mfethu, nd'cela undiboleke le ndoda yakho for a few minutes man.

Cass: as in now?

Masixole: ewe...he won't be long.

Cass: and who am I speaking to?

Masixole: andibhalwanga kulo phone?

Cass: yho haike...baby ngubani lo undithethisa a naye?

Masixole and I both laughed, well I was laughing at the bored funny faces Cass was making while talking to him.

Masixole: I'm his best friend. Didn't he tell you a friend of his is at the hospital?

Cass: andikhumbuli...nd'cela eze kusasa wethu best friend.

Masixole: heee! Ayingxame lento ndimfunela yona chom'am.

She looked at me and mouthed "uyafuna ukuya?" I shook my head.

Cass: ingxaki sisebhafini, and sisandongena. On top of that, ndiyafika so andizokwazi ush'yeka ndedwa apha mna.

Masixole: ooh okay...hay ne, mandimbone ksasa ke.

Cass: sure ke bhuti.

Masixole: sharp ntwana.

He hung up...

Cass: and that?

Me: he's just being a cry baby, thank you for saving

me.

Cass: you owe me.

Me: I know...can we actually go take a bath now?

Cass: sure.

She collected the plates, while I cleaned up apho besityela khona then we went upstairs, I walked ahead of her. Got inside the room first and grabbed the flowers, she walked in, ndamnika and she laughed...as she was laughing, I gave her the giftbag.

Cass: oh my God babe, I was joking.

Me: haike, akudlalwa njalo nam.

Cass: clearly. Oh my God.

She smelt the flowers...well they were fresh, but hello, flowers smell like flowers. Why do women smell them? Are they expecting some other

fragrance? She walked in and put the flowers on the dressing table then opened her gift bag, I watched her face. It brightened up as she took out her gifts, one by one. After she saw the last one, she came to me ebobotheka and wrapped her arms around my neck planting fairy kisses on my lips

Cass: thank you.

Me: anything for you.

Cass: just so you know, I was really pulling your leg.

Me: I actually don't mind.

She looked back at her gifts zilandelelana kulendawo azibeke kuyo...

Cass: baby you actually hand-picked lingerie for me?
Wow.

Me: I hope it fits though.

Cass: it's the right size I'm sure it's gonna fit. Enkosi.

Now I kissed her, she was like butter on oven-baked bread. I was just kissing her, not lusting or anything. Just purely kissing the girl. Then I stopped, still in each other's arms.

Me: I love you Cassandra, I really do.

Cass: and I have no doubt about that.

Me: uzoba ready nini for ukundits hata ke?

Cass: nguwe ozotshata mna once I've graduated.

Me: kulo life u unpredictable kangaka you think sizofika kwi graduation yakho sis athandana kanjena?

Cass: that's all up to us, and besides, nothing is impossible. All we have to do is to be faithful to each other.

Me: sometimes baby u life ukhe ube tricky yazi.

Cass: then we deal with lo trick when we get to it... for now, can we focus on now?

I smiled and moved a strand of her away from her face.

Me: yes, now we're gonna bath together, wena unxibe your new lingerie for your boyfriend.

Cass: my boyfriend said ndizolala ndi ze..and I'm not complaining.

Me: so you wont be trying out your gifts?

Cass: surely I can do that maybe Wednesday or Thursday?

Me: baecation. Yes.

Cass: see? Patience.

Then she walked away, few minutes later I heard the water in the bathroom. I sat on the bed and waited...I had a lot on my mind, what if she found out about what I did in Pretoria and decides to dump me? Now that Nthabiseng's here anything is

possible. How do I tell Cass about this angandilahli in that same process? She called out from the bathroom...

Cass: yizo vas a Nkosinathi!

Me: coming!

I got up, went to the bathroom and found her soaked in a bubblebath.

I undressed and joined her.

[06/26, 14:52] : #Nkosinathi_12

We bathed each other, had a lot of conversations regarding our future and where we were currently the saphuma and went to bed. She really got in between the sheets naked and I admired her comfortability now around me, her confidence even in her speech was remarkable. I got in right next to her and we lay there on our back not saying

anything for a few seconds...

Cass: when are you visiting abantu bakho again?

Me: abantu bam?

Cass: yes, the homes you took me to.

Me: oh...sometime aph'enyangeni. Wanna tag along again?

Cass: ewe...if you don't mind of course.

Me: I don't...

Cass: can we dedicate a weekend for that? Saturday siye kwaba ba on the streets and spend some time nabo, listen to them and pray with them if need be. Then Sunday siye kwi home?

Me: that could work...okay, as long as yonke lonto won't disturb your school schedule because now that you're booked off, you will have to make use of all the time you can have xa ubuyele eskowleni to catch up with the lessons you missed.

Cass: ooh that...surely we can work around that.

Me: mmkay.

She turned around and faced me, supporting her head nges andla.

Cass: what do I need for the trip?

Me: swimwear and lingerie qha.

Cass: so siya ngase lwandle, okay.

Me: there could be a pool too you know? Not necessarily ulwandle.

Cass: hehe! Okay...but baby, not even a small clue?

Me: I'll give you a clue ngoms o xa undiphekela.

She laughed

Cass: who said I'm gonna cook for you?

Me: you want a clue, right?

Cass: this is blackmail.

Me: this is being clever baby.

She smiled...my phone rang.

Cass: haike sana, inoba kuzofuneka sizicimile ii phone zethu.

Me: maybe it's important. please?

She rolled her eyes as I answered her trying to reach for my phone...it was u Mbali.

Me: hello?

Mbali: Ta Nko...can you talk?

Me: what's so urgent?

Mbali: nd'cela uthethe no Mas'xole torho.

Me: what has he done now?

Mbali: he's leaving me for your ex. Uthi if it wasn't for me ngengekho sesibhedlele.

Yho!

I looked at Cassandra...her eyes were fixed on my face.

Me: Can we talk tomorrow? Uzandiqumbela lo sisi ndihleli naye.

Mbali: oh okay, enkosi bro.

Me: sure ntwana.

I hung up...

Me: don't ask.

Cass: I'm not interested one bit.

I put my phone down and pulled her closer so we

cuddled.

In the morning I woke up alone in bed, went downstairs, still alone in the house, then I walked outside because I noticed the door wasn't locked. She was having a glass of wine by the pool, unxibe ivest yam upholelwe namalanga.

Me: ungu mlungu.

She turned and smiled,

Cass: hey babe.

Me: usela utywala on an empty stomach?

Cass: it's just one glass of wine. And the doctors recommend red wine.

Me: wine is alcohol nontombi.

Cass: I don't tell you when to drink your whiskey

though.

Okay ndamyeka, I just went closer to her and hugged her from behind. Kissing her neck, tickling her soft spots...

Me: uvukeleni ek'seni kangaka?

Cass: I was tired of watching you sleep.

Me: kutheni wena ungalelanga?

Cass: I don't know...buphele msinya.

I kissed her neck...

Cass: a Nthabiseng called.

Ndamelwa yintliziyo same time.

Me: a who?

Cass: Nthabiseng.

Me: did she leave a message?

Cass: uthe she'll call you later akhonto i-urgent.

Me: mmh.

She must have called me ngenye inumber then, because I know fully well that I blocked her number.

Cass: ngowaphi?

Me: she's an old friend, besidibene at the hospital when I went to see Mas'xole.

Cass: the same Masixole who wanted you to visit him last night?

Me: yes.

Wathula...

Ikhona lento ayibalayo, I could feel it.

Me: what are you calculating?

Cass: haibo, am I supposed to be calculating something?

Me: baby?

Cass: hay wethu she sounded “demanding” at first then wehla when I told her I’m not gonna wake you up until she tells me why she’s calling you so early.

Me: she’s got a strong character indalo...don’t mind her.

Cass: mmh.

Me: now, can we go make breakfast?

Cass: yes sur.

We walked back to the house hand in hand, she was finishing off her wine. I was dead uncomfortable not knowing what they said to each other. What if la sathana uzichazile ku baby? Now ndileli xoki mna lithi sizi old friends? Fuck! She volunteered to make breakfast as long as I return upstairs and make the bed instead of standing there and watching her, and

I obliged. Ndamshiya...got upstairs and went through my call history, yes, Nthabiseng called me with another number. I stood by the door, looking down the stairs coz I'm on the lookout for "Mrs" as I returned the call...it rang once and she answered

Nthabi: baby!

Me: what the fuck do you think you're doing?

Nthabi: hay suka I was just missing you.

Me: heh Nthabiseng, ndiyakunqanda.

She laughed...

Me: yazi awuzohleka when I really deal with lento uyenzayo?

Nthabi: okay uxolo ke, there's something I wanted us to talk about.

Me: you know very well that I blocked you for a reason, right?

Nthabi: I know, and I respect your reason but please hear me out.

I waited...

Nthabi: are you still there?

Me: khaw'thethe.

Nthabi: oh sorry, look... your friend wants us to uhm, try this thing uyabona. Like, siyeke ufihlana... I'm not sure if he's spoken to you yet.

For one, she said they only slept together three times, now uthi bebefihlana? Inoba ibona isibhanxa le xa ijonge mnanyhan-nyhani. But I wasn't gonna argue ngalonto tu, andingeni ndawo ebomini bakhe.

Me: ndingenaphi kanene?

Nthabi: all I wanna ask is that you don't tell him about our recent encounter, that's it.

Me: heh mfondini bendizomxelela xandingenaphi kwinto yenu?

Nthabi: he's your friend kaloku, I thought maybe...

Me: I don't care guys what you do...it's your lives.

Nthabi: okay ke. Enkosi.

Me: please stop calling me Nthabiseng. Please.

Wathula...

Me: it's the last time I'm asking this kuwe, stop calling me.

Nthabi: ndikuvile, andiphindi.

Me: thank you. Yho.

Nthabi: she must be everything you wanted...zange ude undibhebhethe kangaka.

Me: oh Bawo!

Nthabi: relax, I get it. I won't bother you ever again, good luck with your relationship.

Me: I wish you the same.

Nthabi: hopefully she never finds out that you're a serial cheater, it's in your blood baby. You can never run away from it no matter how ind denial you are.

Me: at least I've never fucked any of your friends. I'll gladly take a point for that.

Nthabi: Voetsek!

I chuckled as I hung up and blocked her again, I quickly made the bed and returned downstairs. Breakfast was almost ready so I just helped with the plates and glasses, when she had dished up, she suggested we eat outside. We sat by the pool satya...I could tell she would have loved to have a swim, but...

Me: don't look so sad, uzophola soon.

Cass: and why were you watching me?

Me: haibo baby,because I love watching you.

She sighed...

Cass: oh well...it better heal soon. Imagine not being able to wear crop tops anymore.

Me: that would actually do you good, uzibizela ingqela ngeza crop tops.

Cass: caba funeka mntaka bawo ndibe ngumakoti ongalotyolwanga ndinxibane noo ngqu-phantsi oko? Hay soze ke baby.

Me: zikhona ii top ezi grand that you can wear and still be sexy.

Cass: I know and I have them, but still...I wanna be able to show some skin when iweather ivuma. Dive into the water, like now.

Me: you're just complaining.

Cass: uyayaz'ba njeng'ba ingathi you're not in favour of croptops, get this, I'm not wearing them or anything else for you neh? But the minute I stop wearing them kuba ndisiva wena uzojika ukhangele

other women abazinxibayo?

I blinked...why was she talking ngathi ikhona into ayaziyo nje?

Cass: kaloku nina umntu unikwa le, afune leyaaa. I really don't understand why men bengoneli.

Me: are we still talking about crop tops baby?

Cass: ewe wethu.

Me: okay.

She looked at me and laughed, I just shook my head and drank my juice. Ayidibani mos lento siyithethayo...

Cass: since I don't have clothes to wear, can you take me to my place before you start your day?

Me: you actually don't need clothes, asiyi kwa

ndawo namhlanje so you can wear that vest imini yonke.

Cass: you promised to visit your friend.

Me: he can wait, I'm spending the day with you then late ke siyopakishela uhamba.

Cass: hesana!

Me: don't act like you don't wanna spend the day with me.

Cass: eshe...what have done?

Me: masambe siyobeka ezi zitya.

Cass: ina baby.

She gave me her tray, waphakama and walked away...

Me: haibo!

Cass: aw'soze baby woyiswe zi tray ezimbini.

I watched her catwalking around the corner, and akajika tu wandishiya pha neza plates, when I got inside, she was on the couch with another glass of red wine, curtains closed and she was browsing through Netflix. I put the trays down and went to join her, she lay her head on my chest as we watched a movies of her choice. I kissed the side of her head, for some reason she was playing with my fingers.

Cass: baby?

Me: mh?

Cass: I love you.

I peeped at her trying to get a better look of her face as she said that.

She looked up...she was serious, that broke my heart.

Me: ndiyakuthanda nam sthandwa sam, kakhulu

futhi.

Cass: I know you do, I just thought I should remind you.

Me: you being here with me, right now, is a reminder babe.

She smiled

I bent my head down and we kissed.

Either the guilt on me was too much or she was suddenly emotional.

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_13

My hands were on her thighs...

She turned around so that our bellies touched, she just looked at me biting my bottom lip while smiling. I grabbed her behind with one hand while the other squeezed her thigh, not removing the eye contact.

Cass: wenzani?

Me: wena wenzani?

She laughed...

Me: you're biting my lip baby.

Cass: it's our lip, remember?

Me: oh okay.

I squeezed her ass and she screamed and laughed at the same time.

Cass: you're such a perv!

Me: njani ngoku?

Cass: why did you do that?

Me: grabbing OUR ass?

Cass: yhu uyadika shame.

Me: says a person who's laying her entire weight on me.

Cass: weight yam zintwez'ncane kuwe nje. Uqhele izinto ezingaphezu kwam.

I wasn't gonna answer her on that one, women and their silly traps. I just kissed her, saqikaqikeka kula couch kissing and playing around. I slowly pulled up her vest, threw it aside and continued kissing her. She lifted my arms as she slid up my own vest, now I was left with just my sleeping shorts. She kissed my chest...

Cass: when was the last time you hit the gym?

Me: am I fat?

Cass: I'm just asking.

Me: baby?

I bit her bottom lip...

Me: I'll go back to the gym if you ask nicely.

Cass: I'll ask nicely if I can join you.

Me: babe, you don't need the gym, you've got a great body as it is.

Cass: thank you, but, I want to.

Me: yes ma'am.

We kissed, one of my hands found comfort between her thighs and she found pleasure as the hand did what it was meant to do down there. She dug her nails on my breastplate as her teeth sunk into my skin, moans filling the room. She buried her head deeper almost as if uyifaka phantsi kwe khwaphalam as ecstasy ran through her veins... My other hand grabbed her buttcheek as one of my legs spread her legs apart, making room for my hand that was in there. After a few minutes, I felt her body shudder as the walls came crumbling down. I was so damn sure that I had a mark where her teeth had sunk...

She lifted her head after a few seconds and kissed me full on the lips, I turned us both around so she could be beneath me. As soon as she lay on her back, I took charge of her body, her mind and her soul.

As I dived between her legs, I knew she's gonna be all mine but for some reason she didn't want me to dwell too much in there. She pulled me up and kissed me, leading me where she wanted me to go and I followed. We made love and cuddled afterwards... As she closed her eyes while on my chest, I heard a hooter outside. I ignored it and just played with her ears, ass, hair... Anything I could play with. The hooter went off again...

Cass: Yho ii chomi zakho ke.

I didn't answer her... Then my phone rang, I looked

at the screen and answered.

Me: Sandile.

Sandile: khaw'vule igate man.

Me: Andifuni.

Sandile: heh Nkosinathi yintoni wangumfazi khaw'vule le gate.

Me: inoba awundivanga the first time Sandile, andifuni.

He laughed and kept quiet for a second...

Sandile: uhleli nenkazana?

Me: uzandenzantoni ba ndihleli nabani?

Sandile: you do know that Ase does have your gate remote, right?

Me: but she doesn't have my house key, she's gonna open the gate for ya'll gqiba nithini?

Sandile: we're gonna patronize you in your own yard.

Me: ayt. As you please.

Sandile: heh, icingba ndiyadlala le.

He hung up...

Cass: your friends?

Me: yep.

Cass: maybe you should just let them in.

Me: kuzonxilwa and I can't drink namhlanje kodwa I'll be driving for a long distance tomorrow, and besides, I'm spending the day with you.

Cass: bathi bazongena njani?

Me: they'll go fetch my sister just got the gate.

She just laughed...

I left her and went to lock my doors, closed the windows all over the house and returned to the

couch. She was up, cleaning and collecting our clothes. It wasn't long when I heard the gate ivuleka, I went to check it out on the window. There were three cars driving through... I just laughed because I knew abazongena kwam namhlanje tu.

Cass: zi serious ezi chap.

Me: aw'lambanga?

Cass: you wanna cook?

Me: I was gonna warm something up, you're cooking today.

Cass: heheheeeee!

Asenathi called Cassandra's phone...

Sandile called my phone, we looked at each other.

Cass: where did she get my number?

Me: ba zange umnike then surely she stole it when I

left my phone kokwabo. Ignore her.

We put our phones down and went into the kitchen, they started knocking and calling my name loudly. I could tell half of them were already drunk...

Sandile: heh kwedini Nkosinathi!

Me: uyangxola Sandile.

Sandile: khaw'vule man yintoni.

Me: khaw'goduke uyolala Mfethu.

Sandile: hay Sese khaw'thethenalo bhuti wakho.

Cassandra laughed...

We were now eating.

Asenathi: Nathi?

Me: yintoni?

Asenathi: Haibo bra, khaw'vule.

Me: Andifuni.

Asenathi: uphi u Cass andra?

Me: andimazi... Ebephi?

Asenathi: then who are you hiding in there? Dude, unenye icherrie?

Me: ewe.

Asenathi: Rha Nkosinathi! Phu mani.

Me: stop acting, uhleli ungamthandi u Cass anyway.

Asenathi: hay fuck man, khavule elicango.

Me: la gate ningene ngayo, nizophinda niphume kwa ngayo. Sandile: I'm gonna kick this door open yazi.

Me: if you can afford it, go ahead buddy.

Sandile: yerr kwedini uyazithanda iimpundu.

He cursed and kicked the door, I just left u baby in the kitchen and put on music ndawunyus a kakhulu,

ndabuya sagqibezela ukutya. After about 30 minutes they drove out, we waited for some time then I lowered umculo. We walked upstairs and lay in bed... Yazi all this time we were still naked. I lay on my belly between her legs as she played with my head coz it lay on her bosom.

Cass: unes'bindi kodwa.

Me: I told you, bafuna uzonxilela apha kwam bashiye kumdaka qha aba.

Cass: are you sure you're not hiding anything from me ibizovela if bebengenile?

I lifted my head...

Me: baby are you accusing me of something?

Cass: nope, I'm just asking.

Me: u sure?

Cass: do you have anything to hide?

Me: hell no.

Cass: then ubilis wa yintoni?

I did say ingathi ikhona into ayaziyo yazi u baby this is no way a coincidence, surely Nthabi said something to her when she called. I sat up, supporting my face with both hands. Not moving from my blissful position.

Me: uthini baby?

Cass: you tell me.

The most confusing shit right here was that she was chilled. She wasn't angry, she wasn't upset, she was just chilled. I wanted to confess, but I couldn't stand losing her right now. We had a great week ahead and I was looking forward to it nyhani.

Cass: look, I know you love me. You make sure I

remember that all the time so quite frankly, I am sure that you love me.

Me: but?

Cass: you have some secrets.

I swallowed...

Cass: tell me the truth now, before I leave my comfort zone ndiye nawe kwindawo endingayaziyo. Who exactly is Nthabiseng to you? What did you do with her when I was home?

Okay... It was either now or never.

I got up from between her legs and sat down next to her as she also sat up supporting her back with a pillow.

Me: I'm so ashamed of myself baby.

Cass: so she's your sidechick?

Me: no.

Cass: then what?

Me: she's my ex...

Cass: heh man ubolile, how many exes do you have kanti?

I exhaled...

Me: she's thee ex. The one I was upfront about.

Cass: wait what? Thee ex? Wow... So what did ya'll do while I was home?

Okay... How do you answer that?

Cass: you had sex with her, didn't you?

I looked away and nod.

Cass: that's why she had an attitude on the phone with me. You had sex with her.

I didn't answer her...

Cass: when were you planning to tell me? I mean, I'm your girlfriend, I have sex with you, we just had unprotected sex right now.

Me: I used protection with her.

Cass: so that's supposed to make me feel better? That you had sex with your ex girlfriend but used protection?

I looked at her...

Me: nd'cela undixolele mntu wam.

Cass: you're actually not answering my questions.

Me: no it's not supposed to make you feel better baby.

Cass: mh?

Me: I wanted to confess, trust me... I just didn't

know how to tell you and still maintain our relationship.

She laughed...

Okay, shit was about to hit the fan now. Whenever a Xhosa woman laughs like that, that crazy laugh... I just know that shit's about to hit the fan. I'm a dead man.

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_14

I have never seen her angry, and right now my bet was that she's not just angry. She's livid. She had this crazy half-laugh that she kept on doing as everything I've just said began sinking in.

Me: I'm sorry baby, I won't lie and say I don't know what came over me. I knew exactly what I was doing.

Cass: you knew? Yet waqhubekeka?

I nod...

Cass: wow. So what came over you ke babe? Since you knew what you were doing.

Me: greed.

Cass: so you tryna tell me that you had sex with your ex because uye wanyolukela iimpundu Nkosinathi? Seriously?

Me: that's the only explanation.

Waphinda wahleka...

Me: I'm sorry baby.

Cass: why are you sorry? I didn't ask you to apologize.

Me: I know... Oko bendifuna ude ndiyithethe lento qha bendikoyika.

Cass: awundoyiko baby, if ubundoyika ubuzokoyika ulala nenye intombi even in my absence. Don't lie to me.

I didn't have an answer for that... She was right.

Cass: yazi I knew you did something kwalento uvele ujike a weekend away to be a week without properly communicating it with me, next thing your friend calls you up ebusuku asking you to pay him a visit esibhedlele kodwa ubuhleli naye emini or whenever it was when I called and you couldn't answer your phone, right after that, your ex comes into town and calls you up, next thing, you are locking your friends out of your house. Come on now... Surely yonke lento is not purely a coincidence.

Why the hell was she adding these things up?
Everything was a coincidence... Well most of everything was. But, why was she adding things up?

Cass: I'm not that stupid, you know?

Me: I know. And I'm sorry if I made you feel that way.

Cass: you can't make me feel anyway honey, don't give yourself too much credit.

I nod...

Cass: after I got my first love heartbreak I trained myself to only love a man and not allow their actions to make me question my own worth. Andizogala kuwe ke to question my worth, I know I'm not stupid and I know so damn very well that I didn't push you to another woman's arms.

I didn't answer... My fear yet again, was her breaking things off with me. Inggondo yam ibivele ithathe iyeka the minute I thought about that possibility. I could literally hear intliziyo yakhe

having concluded that she didn't wanna be in this relationship anymore...

Cass: so how do we move on from this? How do we do this?

Me: I'll take whatever punishment you suggest.

Cass: in your past relationships beniqhele ukwenza njani kanene? You cheat, she cheats? Right?

I snapped and looked at her...

We'd never survive if she were to return the favour, the thought of someone else's hands all over her body. No.

Me: baby I'm really sorry and believe me, it will never happen again. I vow, asoze ndiphinde.

Cass: awsoze uphinde why? Kuphele amantombi that you can cheat with? You've run out of exes?

Me: no, ndizibonile ukuba ndi rongo. Cheating

doesn't only affect me but it affects the people I love as well.

She laughed...

Cass: you tryna be clever with me right now and it's not gonna work babe. Not today. Most definitely not right now.

Me: okay ke babe, what do you want me to do?

Cass: you haven't answered me, what do we do, moving forward?

Me: kaloku ndixhomekeke kuwe mna. Ndim obe rongo kuyo yonke lento so I'll do whatever it is that you want me to do as long as sizoba grand afterwards.

She didn't answer me...

Me: I wanted us to go away from all of this, maybe

I'd have had the courage to tell you upfront xasingekho apha and maybe besizoba ne chance to work this out sikude... That's what I wanted to do but now that you know, I just wanna know, do we still stand a chance? Are you willing to forgive me? Can we work through this?

Again... She didn't answer me.

Me: baby?

Cass: uthetha nam?

Me: baby please. If you want us to cancel the trip then it's fine, I'll cancel.

She stood up and went to get her clothes, ezi ebezinxibe izolo.

Cass: worry yam kuba andizokulahla tu. But you will have to prove yourself, obviously.

Me: anything.

Wanxiba wagqiba...

Turned to look at me.

Cass: she's still in PE, right?

I nod.

Cass: great, let's go meet her.

Me: what?

Cass: I'd like to see her, there's always two sides to a story.

Me: so you wanna ask her about this? Baby why?

Cass: you're asking me why? Are you fucking crazy?

Okay... She definitely was mad.

Cass: I won't ask her anything, I just wanna see if your fuckbuddy has any morals whatsoever.

Me: baby please.

Cass: if I hadn't put two and two together do you know that she'd have blackmailed you ngalento? Andenzele amayelenqe ne styles?

Me: we agreed to stay out of each other's lives permanently.

Cass: now you must be stupid. You can never have sex with a woman and expect her to not retaliate when you leave her.

Me: she's now dating Masixole, that's why we agreed on that.

Cass: yeke, now we have an excuse to go visit your friend together. See? Nxiba sambe babe.

She left with her phone... I sat there not really sure what to do. So I called Mas'x to give him the heads-up.

Masixole: ntwana?

Me: ekse, are you still at the hospital?

Masixole: ewe Mfethu, but ndiyaphuma ngoms o.

Me: okay... We're on our way over there. Uhleli nabani?

Masixole: ndihleli ndedwa mts hana.

Me: sharp ke.

Masixole: sharp mfethu.

It's only after I've hit the call button that I realized that he also doesn't know that Nthabi and I had a hook-up before she rocked up here in PE. I got up and got dressed, followed her down the stairs and found her waiting for me by the door.

Cass: which one of them did you inform?

Me: Masxi. I had to find out if he's still at the hospital.

Cass: or, you had to make sure that he doesn't break the bro-code. Either way, mas ambe.

She walked out...

I followed and locked the door, we got into my car and drove in silence. I kept on stealing side looks at her but I couldn't bring myself to say anything. And on top of that, she was soooo focused on her phone...

I parked near the hospital entrance and we walked out. As we walked down the foyer, she slipped her hand into mine so we walked hand-in-hand as we walked into the ward. Really, Masixole was on his own. We greeted and I introduced them then she kept quiet while Masixole and I continued our conversation.

Masixole: you're too quiet, are you okay?

Cass: I'm good, andizazi kaloku iindaba zenu that's

why I'm quiet.

Masixole: ooh I see... It's sad that we meet under these circumstances.

Cass: we can meet up after you get discharged kaloku, just to make up for seeing you like this.

Masixole: now you're talking.

She just chuckled...

Me: so Kuthwa u grand?

Masixole: yep, the doctor is satisfied with my recovery. I'll just come for checkups every three weeks.

Me: ukhe uphumle kutywala.

Masixole: alcohol was not the problem here, a woman was.

Me: u Mbali didn't stab you, a man did.

Masixole: Mbali's man did. See the diff?

Cass: ngubani u Mbali?

Me: girlfriend yakhe.

Cass: I thought you said he's dating Nthabi?

Masixole: you told her already? Do they know each other?

Cass: we haven't met yet. But yes, he told me.

Masixole: oh haikhe, that means you really have no problem with me dating her.

Me: I really don't.

Two women walked in...

Masixole: ah, and here she comes.

Cass and I were on opposite sides, this was advantageous for her because she could see my every reaction and facial expression and unfortunately I had none. Nthabiseng walked in with her sister... Her sister froze when she recognized me, Nthabi looked at Cass and quickly looked at

Masixole smiling.

Nthabi: molweni... I didn't know you had visitors.

Masixole: you didn't say you were coming, I would have told you.

Awkward silence...

Masixole: Cass, this is Nthabiseng and her sister Vuvu. Ladies, this is Cassandra... Cherrie ka Nko.

Cass got up from her seat and went to hug a stunned Nthabiseng, I swear I was close to shitting myself. Who does that? Vuvu looked at me awkwardly but quickly looked away.

Cass: nice to finally meet you, Nthabi.

Nthabiseng giggled nervously...

Cass: Nkosinathi has told me a lot about you.

Nthabi: good things only I hope?

Cass: well, we all need a bit of sugar and some spice so he kinda told me a bit of both.

Nthabi: right.

Cass took a step back and sized Nthabi up as she sat down.

Cass: good choice ta Mas'x, she's really pretty.

Masixole: I like you already yazi Cass... I don't know why Nko never introduced us earlier than now.

Cass: he's got a very secretive side to himself, surely you know that?

Masixole: Nathi, secretive? Never!

Cass: don't you agree Nthabi?

Oh hell no!

Nthabi froze.

I froze, looking at Nthabi and waiting for her reaction and answer. She was suddenly cutthroat. The silence in the room could be cut with a knife... Did I say silence? I meant tension!

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_15

Masixole cleared his throat, Vuvu coughed looking at her sister who eventually gathered up some courage to speak up and answer Cassandra.

Nthabi: uhm, I wouldn't really know.

Cass: but you dated him for what, three years? Surely you should know.

Nthabi: uhm... Yes I dated him, but as I said, I wouldn't really know. That was a long time ago, people do grow.

Cass smiled, she was enjoying keeping all of us on our toes.

Masixole: oh-Kay.

Me: babe, we should really get going.

Cass: yeah... Mas 'x, mas ikubone xas ikubona.

Masixole: once I'm out of here, I'm taking you out for lunch.

Cass: uzocela ipermission mos? Okanye ya'll really don't mind sharing.

Me: we wouldn't really be sharing you, he just wanna get to know you better.

Masixole: or if you're uncomfortable nam ndedwa ke we could do a double date?

Cass: you think Nkosinathi would be okay sharing a table with his ex-girlfriend and his best friend?

They all looked at me.

Cass: or better yet, how does Nthabiseng feel about it? Double dating with her ex-boyfriend and his best friend who happens to be her new boyfriend?

Now we all looked at Nthabiseng, for some reason, Masixole was the most uncomfortable zezi questions. I was actually okay because I knew what Cassandra was doing so I let her do it if izamxolisa, otherwise ebengandixakanga tu.

Nthabi: I wouldn't mind, we've moved past our past. Right, Nathi?

Me: right.

Masixole: both parties concerned seem to be okay with the idea, now question is: are you okay with it Cass?

Cass: I'll have to think about it.

Masixole: take your time sisi.

Cass: enkosi... Baby mas ambe.

Me: cheers guys.

We walked out...

She walked ahead, waited outside the car until I opened it then we both got in and we drove.

Cass: she's beautiful.

Me: baby please.

Cass: pity she has no self-respect, including you.

Okay...

Me: so siyaphi?

Cass: siyothatha iimpahla zam endlini, or have you canceled the trip?

Me: no.

Cass: mmh.

We drove to her place, she got out and went to pack. She literally packed for an hour and a half and I sat in that car wondering what the hell was going on in her head. Ewe Xhosa women can be crazy but this one? She must be their mentor, why the fuck wasn't she throwing a fit? Why wasn't she dumping me ke (at least I'd know how to beg) but now akhonto that I could say that she won't question. None whatsoever. She came out with her bags and loaded them at the back, she joined me in the front passenger seat. I drove to my place, she left her bags and went inside, I carried them and followed her in. She was in the kitchen, I went upstairs and put her bags in the closet ndakhe ndahlala pha for a few minutes just trying to get my head around this whole dilemma. Asenathi called...

Me: hey?

Asenathi: bra, were you serious when you said you have another girlfriend?

Me: no.

She exhaled...

Me: why?

Asenathi: no man, akhange indiphathe kakuhle.

Me: I was with Cassandra man, relax.

Asenathi: ooh okay, but why didn't you want to open for your friends?

Me: uyafika u Cassandra uvela kokwabo, she still has a wound to nurse and the guys would have wanted us to have a dop which I wouldn't have minded if ebengekho.

Asenathi: but you should have at least told them mntase.

Me: they never asked, Sandile never asks. He just rocks up emzini womntu with an entire entourage

and then expects you to go along with his nonsense.

She laughed...

Asenathi: other than that, are you okay? You sound tired?

Me: I'm fine.

Asenathi: Nathi?

Me: seriously, I'm fine.

Asenathi: okay ke...I'm going away for about two weeks. Can you organize someone to look after your businesses while I'm away?

Me: and you're only telling me now?

Asenathi: I only got told izolo kaloku nam that's why I'm telling you now, and andizokwazi ungahambi sana. Siyayidinga le trip no baby.

Me: you're going away nini?

Asenathi: next week Thursday.

Me: khamcele nihambe next week Saturday
xandibuyile.

Asenathi: awuyi Canada kanti?

Me: no, I'm going away with Cass ngoms o sizobuya
next week.

Asenathi: oh okay, I'm sure we can wait.

Me: thanks.

Asenathi: u sure u right?

Me: haike bye bye.

She laughed as I hung up...

I got up and went to join Cass andra in the kitchen.

Me: need help with anything?

Cass: do you have a problem with chilli?

Me: no.

Cass: sure.

She shopped seven green chilli peppers ndimjongile, I don't know what she was cooking but I knew izoba very hot. Since she didn't answer my question, I left her there and went to watch TV in the lounge. After about fifteen minutes ndihleli pha she came to join me, drinking wine...well joined me in the lounge not in the same seat. She took three sips, focused on the TV even though I could tell that she wasn't necessarily watching what was playing...

Cass: so tell me...uyafuna siye kule double-date ne ex-yakho ne friend yakho?

Me: if uyafuna then I don't see a problem.

Cass: you're not answering my question.

Me: andifuni Cassandra.

Cass: hay sundinyanzela nge mpendulo kaloku.

Me: ingaske ude uphume entweni yazi, uyeke undenza nervous oko. I know I wronged you, now can we move on? Are we gonna move on at some

point phofu?

She threw that glass of wine at me, and I jumped.

Me: what the fuck?

Cass: sundiqhela njandini, sulinge undiqhele.

I charged for her, well for the glass because my fear was that glass being thrown to my face, she ran to the kitchen and grabbed a bowl of chakalaka. Yonke yangena on my chest and I just stood there feeling the pain and trying to breathe at the same time because the contents of the bowl were still hot from the stove...I quickly removed the t-shirt and stood there shirtless.

Cass: yintoni wandijamela? Do something, stop being a fucken ass and do something.

Me: nd'cela uyeke lento uyenzayo.

Cass: or what? You're gonna run to Nthabiseng again for some ass? Huh?

Me: baby?

She threw that empty casserole dish at the wall and it smashed.

Me: baby please calm down.

Cass: don't you fucken baby me!

Me: ba-

A glass went across the room just above my head and it scattered...okay, lady was mad mad now. I took a few steps towards her and she took a couple of steps backwards, she had nowhere else to go but she had everything she could break and when she saw those things, she began throwing everything across the room. She broke glasses, cups, bowls, plates, dishes...anything her hands touched, she threw across the room. I wasn't really concerned about the waste she was doing right now, but rather

my concern was ndim lo uzoklina yonke le mess and I'd have to be extra careful when I do because it was a bloody mess usuka kweli kits hi ukuya e lounge. There was no more room behind her...I saw her eyeing up the gap between me and the kitchen counter so I quickly closed it and went for her. Now she got a chance to release punches, I grabbed her and constrained her arms. She was kicking and screaming, almost biting me but after some time she calmed down and broke down immensely.

Me: I'm sorry baby.

She just bawled.

We slid down the cupboard corner together, I hugged her until her cries died out and we just sat there. I pulled up her vest and cleaned her face with it, mine was very far from where we sat. We sat there in silence...now eyonanto ibihlungu was listening to isingqala sakhe in that silence.

Cass: I want to hate you right now, I s o o o o badly want to hate the fuck out of your stupid ass but I can't. Instead I hate myself for loving you as much as I do.

Me: baby please don't say that.

Cass: please book us an HIV test before we go ngoms o.

Me: done.

Cass: I don't get how you can say you love me and then risk my life like that, even if you used protection...you still put my life at risk the minute you had sexual intercourse with another woman.

Ndathula...

She got up and tried walking out of the kitchen, but she stepped onto broken glass and cut herself.

Cass: ouch!

I jumped and carried her up to the couch because I had shoes on, but the one I previously sat on was wet because umntu ebegalelwe nge wine.

Me: ndikuse upstairs? I have to clean this up.

She nod with tears in her eyes...

I carried her up the stairs ndambeka on the bed and went to get my first aid kit, cleaned up her wound in silence and returned the kit to its cupboard. I came back and she was already under the covers...

Me: baby?

Cass: khandiyeke.

Me: I was gonna ask akhonto uyifunayo na?

Cass: I want you to leave me the fuck alone, I wanna cry in peace, get angry in peace and break anything that I can break...in peace. Is that too much to ask?

Me: please stop breaking stuff, you almost hurt

yours elf down there.

Cass: don't tell me what to fucken not do Nkosinathi.

Me: Cassandra, don't fucken break stuff haibo, suba si spoilt brat apha. yintoni ngoku wangathi uyinj'omlungu? hay fuck man!

She lifted the cover and looked at me.

Cass: uthini?

Me: hay khaw'lale man. Tyhini.

Cass: hehe! Uyandiqhela kodwa, yazi uyandiqhela Nkosinathi.

Me: break one more thing uyeva? Break one more thing, ndisayo klina la mess uyenze pha ezantsi... you've got vases, mirrors, windows, everything breakable in here. J ust break one more thing in this house.

Then I walked out...

I wasn't gonna do anything yaz, qha bendimqobisela because I was fed up yilento ayenzayo.

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_16

I left her and went downstairs, I cleaned up everything, vacuumed the floor and removed the rug in the lounge and the one up the staircase, put them in the car because I wanted to take them to the laundry. I decided to rather clean the entire house because going back to her right now wasn't gonna help me in any way. She was still mad at me and she could be breaking stuff kula room or even worse, avulele amanzi from the bathroom.

When I was done cleaning I finished up the pots coz she wasn't done cooking, dished up for her, in fact, for both of us, took the food up with painkillers and a glass of water. She was fast asleep, I put her food next to her with the glass of water and pills then I went back down the stairs ndatyela khona. When I

was done, I drove out and went to drop the mats then drove to the beach and just took a breather... Nthabiseng called me ndisamamele ingqondo.

Me: Nthabiseng?

Nthabi: what the fuck is wrong with your girlfriend?

Me: what the fuck did you say to her?

She went silent...

Me: first you tell me not to say anything to Masixole then you fucken go behind my back and say something to my girlfriend that ticked her off and you expected her to just swallow that up? Are you sick? Are you fucken insane Nthabiseng?

Nthabi: I'm sorry.

Me: don't fucken I'm sorry me here, don't you fucken dare sorry me. I kept my end of the deal but you had to fucken vomit your bitterness to her?

Usisibhanxa man nawe yazi.

Nthabi: don't insult me Nkosinathi, I apologized.

Me: bendithe kuwe delete my number, right now is the right time for you to do that. Trust me.

Then I hung up...blocked that second number as well.

Decided to just return home and wait for Cassandra to wake up, maybe she'll be in a better space for us to talk our way forward if ikhona. I parked the car and stayed in there for a few minutes then gathered my courage and walked in, I was surprised that the house was still in one piece. I went to the attic and took out an extra mat for the lounge, lay it out under the table and then put on the TV. Azange ndingabubaweli utywala njenga ngoku, I didn't even want ivumba lotywala right now. Come to think of it, baby wasn't just asleep...itiphile le coz ibisela ibhotile ye wine while cooking!

Cass: hey.

I looked back...she was up, and even more calm.

Me: hey.

She stood there as if thinking whether to join me or not, so I got up and went to her by the stairs.

Me: I'm sorry for hurting you like this, ndiyaxolis a nyhani Tshawekazi. Please find it in your heart to forgive me, I know ayikho lula lento ndiyicela kuwe but please...forgive me.

She didn't answer...

Me: baby...

She still didn't answer, but I saw a tear coming out. I

quickly wiped it off, it pained me to see her cry.
Seeing her tears broke my heart. I walked her to the
couch and we shared it. Not lena ayigalele utywala.

Me: I'm really sorry.

Cass: I uhm, I forgave you the minute you told me
the truth.

Me: but...(I looked around)

Cass: breaking those stuff was my way of releasing
the anger...forgiving you wasn't enough, I had to
release the anger, the sudden resentment.

I nod...

Cass: now the only question I have is what if you
repeat this, andithi a cheater will always be a
cheater? So what do we do now?

Me: ndive baby xandisithi andis oze ndiphinde, that's
the honest truth. I'd never cheat on you, ever again.

Cass: I kinda have no choice but to believe you.

She sniffed...akhonto ibuhlungu ngathi kuyazi ukuba umntu omthandayo uliliswa nguwe.

Me: I'm sorry baby.

Cass: it's cool...have you booked the appointment yet?

Me: yes, nine o clock.

Cass: thank you...I need to warm my food.

Me: I'll warm it up for you.

I went upstairs and took her food and a fleece blanket, gave her the blanket then I went to camp in the kitchen while I warmed the food, when it was warm enough I took it to her. She must have drank the pills coz they were not on the tray and the water was half-drunk.

Cass: enkosi.

Me: no sweat.

Cass: so sew'tyile wena?

Me: yeah.

Cass: kay.

Sathula...

I didn't know what to say that wouldn't provoke her again.

She ate finish wayobeka isitya then she came to sit with me, wombatha ifleece yakhe and watched the TV in silence.

Me: are we still going?

Cass: do you want to cancel?

Me: I don't know, what do you want to do?

Cass: after this, I actually am looking forward to going.

Me: even if you'll be stuck with me the whole week?

Cass: even if I'll be stuck with you the whole week, I still wanna go. If I have to drown you in the pool or drive over you just to release my anger then I'll do just that, but I still wanna go.

Me: thank you.

I ignored everything she said about drowning me because hey, but I was happy that she still wanted to go with me. My phone rang...Asenathi. Again? Haibo.

Me: hello?

Asenathi: ndiza apho kwakho.

Me: ufuna ntoni?

Asenathi: I need to speak to you about something.

Me: now is not a good time bra, can I come to you k'sasa before ndihambe?

Asenathi: why is now not a good time? Bra this is

urgent.

I sighed...

Me: does it have anything to do with my businesses?

Asenathi: it has everything to do with you.

Me: mxm, okay yhiza.

Asenathi: thank you. Yhu hay suka uske wa strict ububhanxa mvanje.

I hung up...

Me: Asenathi is on her way.

Cass: kay.

It wasn't long when I heard the gate opening, I went to open the door for her and as I returned, Cassandra was getting up to leave.

Me: you don't have to leave.

Cass: I am not in the mood for your sister, or anyone for that matter.

Me: kay.

Asenathi walked in and closed the door as Cassandra was reaching halfway the staircase. She called out to her...

Asenathi: molweni...hay Cass uyaphi?

Cassandra didn't answer...

Asenathi: heee hayini, what did I say wrong? Uyaphi? I thought I'd speak to the two of you ke sana.

Me: she's not feeling well.

Asenathi: nyhani? Or udikwe kufika kwam.

Me: either one you wanna believe bro, what's so urgent?

She looked up the stairs and sat down...

Asenathi: I uhm, I need help with a couple of things?

Me: how much money are we talking about?

Asenathi: caba kwasoloko ndikufuna imali?

Me: money is the only language the both of us understand better, now how much?

Asenathi: I'm getting married.

I looked at her. Shocked, but not showing any facial expression.

Asenathi: u Mawethu is looking into asking for my hand in marriage this coming weekend ekhaya.

Me: and you're only telling me this now? Uyayazi ba

I have plans, andizobakho kule weekend.

Asenathi: but akazondicela kuwe mos, uya kutata.

Me: aw'muncu, uzakucela kutata eyedwa? Did you tell utata?

Asenathi: that's one of the things I need help with... khamxelele ngokwakho mntase.

Me: so that he asks me to cancel my own plans for this? No can do.

Asenathi: haibo Nathi, are you really that petty?

Me: If your Mawethu cannot wait for me ndibuye then ya'll can go ahead with your plans while I continue with mine. Simple.

Asenathi: awungo tatam you know that?

Me: precisely, but unfortunately for you as your brother, and the other man in the house, I have to be there xa uyocelwa.

She sighed...

Me: have you even told your other brothers?

Asenathi: I didn't think I'd have to, thought ngu tata yedwa who needs to know then ke yena anixelele.

Me: then tell dad ngokwakho, ngoku.

Asenathi: hay sungcola bra.

Me: sisi, call your father...and uyazi mna I won't be cancelling my plans ngenxa yakho.

She mumbled and took out her phone, dialed her dad and called him...

I left her ebila zi nerves and went to check on my girlfriend who was in bed watching something on her laptop.

Me: hey, you still okay?

Cass: yep.

Me: akhonto uyifunayo?

Cass: I'd love some hot chocolate...if awukho busy.

Me: you do remember that you have chocolate in that gift bag, right?

Cass: oh, I forgot.

She got up and went to her gift bag, took out the chocolate and went to bed again.

Me: shout if you need anything.

Cass: sure, is she still here?

Me: yeah. She might take a while.

Cass: ebendikhwazela ntoni?

Me: I didn't ask.

Cass: mmh.

I walked back out...

Asenathi was still explaining lento yakhe kutata...I went to get water from the kitchen then I sat across her...andigqibanga ne five minutes ndihleli phantsi

and dad wanted to speak with me so I took the phone.

Me: taima.

Dad: ithini lento ithethwa ngu dad'wenu?

Me: akathi uyats hata na tata?

Dad: umntu uvele athi gqi ses ithi uyats hata na Nkosinathi? Sesibekela ne date ngokwakhe?

Me: haike tata, andikats hati so I wouldn't know?

Dad: xa uhleleli ntoni wena?

I burst out laughing... ndingenaphi?

Dad: uhleka ntoni kwedini?

Me: hay tata ndingenaphi mna? Andithi umntu otshatayo ngu Ase?

Dad: ndivile kaloku, now I want to know when are YOU getting married?

Me: when I have enough money.

Dad: money for what?

Me: yolobola tata.

Dad: inoba wenza amazimba ngoku? Heh kwedini uyawze utshate phofu? Uyazibona ukuba umdala?

Me: tata, masiqale sigqibe eka Asenathi, we can later come back to me.

Dad: okay...so she's set the date yozocelwa this coming Saturday, fortunately for her I don't have plans for this weekend. Will you be able to come around?

Me: I have already told her that I'm busy for this coming weekend, she said I'm not needed. You are.

Dad: wazintoni lomntana ngo who's needed kwi negotiations and who's not?

Me: beats me.

Dad: uyaphi wena? Can't you cancel or reschedule?

Me: unfortunately, I can't uxolweni.

Dad: uyaphi?

Me: I have some personal appointments to attend to tata...founela oo Mkhusele beze noo malume.

Dad: bayaphi oo nyoko lume bekhona oo tatomncinci bakho?

Me: yeke, yenza njalo ke xhego.

Dad: ndikufuna apha Nkosinathi ngo 8 k'sasa ngomgqibelo, andingeni ndawo mna kwezi personal appointments zakho.

I didn't answer him...just passed on the phone emntwini wayo.

She finished the conversation with dad...on a high note, shame.

Asenathi: thank you mntase.

Me: for?

Asenathi: sacrificing your plans for this, I owe you big time.

Me: I'm not sacrificing nothing, told you I've got

plans. That hasn't changed.

Her jaw dropped.

Asenathi: but dad said-

Me: what's important right now is what I said...dad will do whatever needs to be done for you on Saturday, I'm not your father. Ulibebe?

She cursed as she made way to the kitchen waziphakela embhombozela.

Didn't care one bit kemna, I had enough problems I wasn't gonna add her onto the list.

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_17

She ate mumbling...at some point I laughed at her, watya wagqiba and just stared at me.

Asenathi: can I talk to Cassandra?

Me: no.

Asenathi: why?

Me: because I said no.

Asenathi: why kaloku?

Me: uzamthini?

Asenathi: I wanna talk to her, maybe yena uzovuma that ya'll should reschedule this trip eniya kuyo. At least nihambe Sunday ke?

Me: no, you should reschedule your lobola negotiations for when we return. Izemva eyakho into so surely it can wait.

Asenathi: eshe.

She left me there and ran up the stairs, I only caught up with her as she stormed into my bedroom, Cass just looked at us without saying a word.

Asenathi: uzimince nge movies apha kanti?

She looked at Asenathi then she looked at me and then she paused whatever she was watching.

Cass: oh-kay...what's going on?

Asenathi: I need a favour. Please, I wouldn't ask if I wasn't desperate.

Cass: you need a favour from me? Or your brother?

Asenathi: both of you.

Cass: oh-kay.

She sat up and put the laptop next to her, Asenathi sat next to her while I stood leaning by the door listening to these two.

Asenathi: mamela neh, my boyfriend wants to pay lobola for me and the only weekend he has free

before the engagement and everything else we have planned is this weekend. Utata says that all the men in my family need to be present at the negotiations... but Nathi says he won't make it because you two have trip planned already.

Cass: unyanisile.

Asenathi: can you guys not reschedule?

Cass: reschedule our trip?

Asenathi: yes, please.

Cass: surely the negotiations can continue without him though.

Asenathi: that's what he says too, but he's my brother and I know that dad also wants him there.

Cass: kutheni ke wena ne boyfriend yakho ninga tshints hi idate?

Asenathi: we are going away next week for two weeks, after that funeka sibuye sibe sesi plan'a umtshato, on top of that his parents are very religious so we kinda have to do the engagement at their church.

Cass: so let me get this straight...you want us to reschedule our trip so that your brother can be present at your negotiations?

Asenathi: yes.

Cass: but in that same sense you cannot reschedule your own trip for your own lobola negotiations?

Asenathi looked at me...

Cass: if he wants to stay then he can stay, mna ndiyahamba ngoms o.

Asenathi: haibo Cass andra.

Cass: you can't really expect me to drop my plans for you when you cannot do that for yourself, no. but, because I see that this is important for you, I'll go, then he can either go with me and come back Friday night then rejoin me Saturday night or Sunday morning.

Asenathi: Nathi, can you do that?

Me: which part?

Asenathi: uye kule trip yenu Sunday morning?
Please?

Cassandra was looking at me...the devil is a liar!
I wasn't gonna trip right now tu.

Me: andizokwazi...I've already promised her this. So
the only thing I can do is to drive back here
Saturday morning, then go back to her after the
negotiations. That's the best I can do.

Asenathi: I appreciate it, enkosini guys.

Cass: sure...

Asenathi stood up and went for the door, then
turned and looked at Cassandra.

Asenathi: thank you.

Cass: sharp.

Who says 'sharp' to a thank you? This woman was dead cold. I laughed to myself as I walked Asenathi out, and out the actual house. Honestly speaking, I was happy that we all reached an agreement. I kinda wanted to be part of her negotiations but I didn't wanna have to break Cassandra's heart again, she did mention that she's looking forward to this trip. After Asenathi drove out, I warmed up some meat and took it up the stairs because it seemed someone was planning to stay in bed kude kuhanjwe. On my last step...my phone rang, Sandile.

Me: Sandile?

Sandile: heh kwedini kwenzeka ntoni kuwe?

Me: haha, uzoyazi ukuba xa usiya emzini womntu you call.

I walked into the room and put the plate down next

to the bed...

Sandile: hay fokof kwedini, since when do we call when we want to come to your house?

Me: since I'm telling you to.

Sandile: rha Nkosinathi mfethu utyiswe I bloomasi wena.

I laughed...

Sandile: yikaka ivelaphi le kucaba I must report xandifuna ukuzo kuwe ngoku? Heh?

Me: yintoni ithukisela?

Sandile: hay fokof man, voets ek! Yintoni ingathi uyaqala ubona iimpundu ngale way? Hay voets ek kwedini man.

I couldn't stop laughing, mainly because I knew undithuka ngoku kuba ezazi ukuba ngoms o he's gonna do the same thing. Uzoza kwam

engats'hongo, anqandwe liqhaga. I joined Cassandra who was already eating inyama...

Me: ndingakunceda ngantoni mfethu?

Sandile: hay suka man, tshi.

Me: tyhini Sandile, you called me just to swear at me? Seriously?

Sandile: ndifuna ubona lenkazana intsha ikwenza intaka kwedini.

Me: andina nkazana mna, uthetha ngantoni bra?

Sandile: yazi uzakunya Nko mfethu, xa unosivalela kwakho sesingenile e yardini. Rha uzakunya kwedini.

I couldn't stop laughing, and eyona nto that was making him more furious was okukumhleka kwam.

Sandile: iyahleka lendoda.

Me: bye bye Sandile, uyandiphazamisa.

Sandile: tyhini le rubbish! Heh Kwed-

I hung up and put my phone next to me ndatya inyama le...he called again and I ignored him.

Me: what are you watching?

Cass: was watching Venom, sephelile.

Me: mmh.

I ate my meat in silence.

Cass: so uzandishiya ndedwa umgqibelo wonke?

Wait, didn't she agree to that kanti?

Me: but I'll be spending the entire week with you, it's just a few hours on Saturday qha.

Cass: so ndizokwenzani mna in the meantime?

Me: you'll go sights eeing, shopping, anything.

Cass: mmh.

Me: you don't want me to go?

Cass: I don't think I care yazi but I saw how you tried to make me look like the bad pers on to your sister.

Me: haibo, what are you talking about?

Cass: eshe.

She got up and went to the loo.

When did I try to make a bad pers on ku Ase?

I waited for her to come back azocacisa lento ayithethayo because as far as I could remember, I only chipped in kwinto ebebeyithetha. That's it. She came back and packed up the lap then removed her phone from the charger and undressed wanxiba ii pj's then got in bed. Her sister called so I left her ethetha with the phone...

I got downstairs and called Masixole...

Masixole: ek'se, u sharp ntwana?

Me: moja mfethu hoezit?

Masixole: moja.

Me: were you guys serious about that double date thing?

Masixole: ewe bruh, I mean, you've moved on naye u baby has moved on. I don't see a problem.

Me: I think it's still too soon, for Cassandra.

Masixole: she said she'd think about it, has she decided yet?

Me: yes. Can we give it some time, maybe a couple of months?

Masixole: oh okay...hay akho ngxaki chap, akukho apho sileqa khona.

Me: dankie mfethu.

Masixole: it's been confirmed, I'm being discharged

ngoms o.

Me: I'll probably come around and see you next weekend mjita, I have a trip coming up with u baby so I won't be available the whole of next week.

Masixole: hay akho stress ntwana yam, see you then.

Me: sure ndoda.

I hung up.

I wanted to tell him about Nthabi having a fiancé in Canada...but I figured it's actually none of my business yazi. Makhe ndijongane nale into ndiyenzileyo and its consequences, let him figure lento azingenis a kuyo. Mbali called ndisathi ndizobuyela upstairs...

Me: Mbali, hey.

Mbali: Ta Nko khaw'thethethe ne chomi yakho torho.

Then she broke down...

I waited for her to be calm down...

Me: what has done to you?

Mbali: u Masixole has chosen your ex over mna?
After all we've been through bra? Nawe uyayazi
we've been through a lot, how can he do this to me?

What was I supposed to say to her?

Mbali: hay Ta Nko khaw'thetha naye mhlaw'mbi
uzakuva wena.

Me: eish Mbali mfethu, you do realize that u Mas'x
uhlatywe ngenxa yakho?

Mbali: I know...

Me: then how do you expect me ndikuthethelele
kengoku after that? He could have died.

Mbali: but he didn't, and I have apologized. On top

of that, he was cheating as well.

Me: right, so instead of hiding it from you further, he has decided to let you go. Which is fair on both of you.

Mbali: it's not fair on me?

Me: at some point Mbali you have to take responsibility here. You did him wrong, he did you wrong. He then made his choice. Which I believe nawe instead of ube uleqana naye, move on.

Mbali: so you mean to tell me you don't mind your ex sleeping with your best friend? Really?

Me: ulala ngomzimba wakhe nje.

Mbali: what about morality?

Me: Mbali, what your boyfriend does is none of my business. He's a grown ass man and I'm pretty sure he knows what he's doing, if akasakufuni ke myeke. Vuma ulahlwa nawe.

Mbali: wow.

Me: I'm really sorry andithethi lento ubufuna ukuyiva...I really am.

Mbali: hay akho stress, thank you for listening.

Me: good luck.

Mbali: sharp.

She hung up.

I put my phone down and just lay on my back, on the couch. I resented going upstairs because of the tension and I was tired of begging, I just wanted to get into bed ndilale qha so the plan was to spend as much time possible down here ade alale u Cassandra ndithethe ngofika ndingene ezingubeni qha nam.

I must have fallen asleep there, she must have come down to check on me but ke wafika ndilele wandivusa.

Me: oh, hey. What time is it?

Cass: 12.53 am.

I got up and stretched...

She went to the kitchen and made tea, I left her there and went to bed. Uthe ebuya wabuya sendisezingubeni, she got in her side and sipped on the tea, gave me a look and put the cup down.

Cass: it doesn't necessarily have to be tense between us if we're really sure we still wanna continue with this relationship. This tension is making me feel awkward.

I didn't answer her...

She was making it tense ngongathethi and I didn't know what to say without provoking her all over again, and I wasn't blaming her. That was her way of dealing with this.

Cass: I am hurt yes, and trust me I can see you're trying to make up for what you did. You're trying to

show me you're sorry.

Me: but?

Cass: I don't know...I mean, I have forgiven you but you've planted a seed of doubt in my head ngalento. Maybe I wouldn't care as much if it was just anybody, but it's your ex. Umntu owawude wahlalisana naye, it does come across that ya'll do have unfinished business.

Okay I sat up kengoku...

Me: baby we don't, trust me. It was just silliness and greed on my side. Nothing else.

Cass: I get that, but, she's now dating your friend who doesn't know that nikhe nabana...don't you think she has some sort of agenda? Why would she choose to date in your circle?

Me: I don't know...but, she's no longer my problem now. Masixole will deal with whatever agenda she might have. Eyam ingxaki ndim ndawe qha.

Cass: oh-kay.

Me: and I do hope sizobuya kule trip si right baby. Honestly speaking, andiyithandi lento yokuba ndikukhumbule kodwa ukhona right next to me.

She smiled...

Me: I love you, with every ounce in my body, I really do love you.

Cass: ufane wa serious, I'm not gonna cry tu yaz.

I laughed at her and she blinked a multiple times and finished off her tea salala.

[06/26, 14:53] : #Nkosinathi_18

#Asenathi

Mawethu surprised me when he said he wanted my hand in marriage, I mean, we've been together for

as long as I could remember and in all the years when I raised the marriage topic he'd change the subject so I never really thought he would was gonna man up about this. Even when he told me, it was past 3 in the morning, I had woken up for a pee ndavuka ehleli kucaca ukuba he had not slept at all.

Me: you okay?

Mawethu: mh.

I left and went to the bathroom, came back and he was still up. Okay I was bothered, judging by the time and seeing that akakhangeleki engathi ebekhe walala.

Me: baby?

He looked at me smiling...

Me: are you sure you're okay?

Mawethu: I'm very much okay.

Me: oh-kay.

Mawethu: baby what are you planning ngobom' bakho? I know you have a degree qha kunqabe umsbenzi but what else are you looking forward to in life?

Me: we really have to talk about all of this, ngoku?

He nod...

I sighed,

Me: okay, ekhaya I'm being forced to go back to school, maybe upgrade my degree or choose something else.

Mawethu:baby, what are your plans?

Me: okay, I wish I could work. Like, ndiyeke u manager ii businesses zika Nathi but nam ndibe employed like abanye abantwana.

Mawethu: okay.

Me: I would also love to own a car, a house... things I worked hard for not ezi ndinazo just because my brother has enough money to buy for the both of us. I also want to point at something and say I bought that.

Mawethu: I am not employed by anyone, kutheni ufuna uqeshwa wena baby?

Me: you have your own businesses kaloku, asifani.

Mawethu: you've been managing your brother's businesses since we started dating, that means you have the ability and skill of managing businesses. That is something you can start working on if nawe uyafuna ukuba nezakho ii businesses.

Okay... maybe he had a point. Especially now that Nathi wants someone else to manage his businesses. Maybe having my own businesses wasn't such a bad idea after all, but where do I start with capital? Personnel?

Mawethu: okay, let's move away from career for a sec.

Me: okay there's more?

Mawethu: when do you think you wanna get married? I know uyafuna uts hata, you've made that clear sis aqala udibana, but when would be the ideal/time age for you?

Me: I don't know...I don't think I've thought of marriage in a long time.

He kept quiet...

Me: utheni, ufunu ts hata ngoku?

Mawethu: I'm not getting any younger Sese.

Me: uziqaphele nini?

Mawethu: haike.

Me: hay kaloku you never wanted umts hato, why

now?

He laughed at me...but I was right.

Mawethu: I couldn't talk marriage and excite you for nothing, I knew I wasn't ready. But now I am, question is, when will be the right time for you?

Okay...I shut up.

Mawethu: basically what I'm asking right now is, can we get married? Are you ready for marriage ngoku?

Me: umntu uba ready njani baby for umts hato?

Mawethu: financially baby mna ndi ready, emotionally and spiritually wena unjani?

Me: well...I don't know Mawethu. Hay andiyazi shem.

He looked at me, I know I sounded crazy but I really didn't know.

Mawethu: while usacing, can I at least go tour family ndiyokucela ke? Then sobuya ngawe nongabikho sure kwakho?

Me: wait, you already that ready, with lobola and everything?

Mawethu: so awundiva all this time baby?

Me: noooo man sthandwa sam ndiyakuva, like... okay, I thought yinto ese kwi future kaloku le uthetha ngayo.

Mawethu: ukhe ube slow xa uthanda.

I threw him with a pillow.

Mawethu: uxolo ke mnt'wam, but on a serious note. Please talk to your dad.

Me: I'll have to talk to Nathi first, utata uyam'mamela yena.

Mawethu: u Nko akazobana problem. We both know that.

Me: kaloku he's going away with his girlfriend next weekend, wena ubufuna ukuya nini ekhaya? We have to plan around that.

Mawethu: yhoouuu! We have to go before our trip kaloku. Kham'cenge ahambe after the negotiations man.

Me: uzandicap'kelisa ngo Cassandra ke yazi baby. Uhleli engandiphawanga kakade.

Mawethu: ha.a baby, suxoka.

I looked at him, I actually gave him the evil look.

Mawethu: nditya nawenkomo kanti.

Me: what do you mean ndiyaxoka?

Mawethu: baby you never spoke very good of her

usaqala umazi lamntana, then you went ahead and befriended your brother's ex. What do you mean akakuphiwanga when you actually went out of your way to belittle her and her relationship?

Okay...he was right.

Mawethu: I love you but I have to tell you the truth, sometimes you do get extra.

Me: you don't have to rub it in, you know?

Mawethu: the same way okwaziyo ucela uxolo kum when you've wronged me should be the same way okwaziyo ulucela uxolo on anyone else.

Me: eshe.

Mawethu: baby...

Me: I get your point, I get it. Now can I get back to my sleep for now?

He didn't answer, so I turned and faced the other

way ndalala. Tyhini, bendixoxa uchuku ekseni...
ndiyivile mos lento ebefuna ukuyithetha: Mtshato.

Mawethu: I love you.

Me: u right.

He chuckled and kissed my cheek naye walala.

When it really dawned, I woke up and went to make us breakfast, set the table and waited for him. He's not those "bring breakfast to bed" kinda men. He gets up and eats where food is meant to be eaten.

Mawethu: s is aqumbile?

Me: good Morning Wera.

He came to kiss me, held my waist and kissed me for a while. Then he looked me in the eye...

Mawethu: ndiyakuthanda, uyayazi mos lonto?

Me: yes.

Mawethu: then suqumba when I correct you.

Me: andiqumbanga yazi baby. Ndiyacinga.

He didn't ask further, but we sat down satya.

Me: have you told your daughter and her mother about us getting married?

Mawethu: huh?

Me: have you told u Olwethu nomamakhe that we're getting married?

Mawethu: I've told umamakhe, I'm still waiting on her atsho ukuba umxelele na or ufuna simxelele ngokwethu na.

Me: when did you speak to her?

Mawethu: izolo, she's gonna call me today.

Ebets hilo.

Me: okay.

Ndatya ndithe cwaka.

It was very important for me that abaxelele even though I know that u Pinkie doesn't have a problem with our relationship or rather with my relationship with her daughter but it was very important for me that bayazi. Kids sometimes have dreams that abazali babo would one day get back together, in such cases, we have to be honest with them about the future ahead. His phone rang, he checked the screen and put the phone on loud speaker.

Mawethu: molweni?

Pinkie: molweni emaJ warheni, ninjani?

Mawethu: siyaphila thina, ninjani nina?

Pinkie: we're good. Umntanakho ufuna uthetha nawe.

Mawethu: mnike iphone.

Olwethu: tata ka Olo?

Mawethu: Olo ka tata, unjani baby?

Olwethu: ndiphilile tatam unjani wena?

Mawethu: ndiphilile nam, what's up? Uthi umama ufuna uthetha no tatakho?

Olwethu: uthi umama utatam no sisi Sese bayatshata.

Mawethu looked at me...I was anxious yo.

Mawethu: ewe baby.

Olwethu: so am I gonna be a flower-girl at your wedding tata?

Mawethu: is that you saying you want daddy to get married?

Olwethu: ewe kaloku daddy, as long as I'm gonna be a flower-girl.

Mawethu: haike, izophendulwa ngu sisi leyo.

Olwethu: uphi yena ndicele kuye?

He looked at me.

Me: hey baby.

Olwethu: hello sisi, are you excited?

Me: haha! Nothing's been finalized yet, but yes I am excited.

Olwethu: I am excited too, now can I please be a flower-girl? Please.

Me: of course, that's a no brainer. As long as you give me the go-ahead to officially be your stepmother then we're cool.

Olwethu: its official then, I have two beautiful mothers.

We (Mawethu, Pinkie and I) laughed.

Mawethu: bye bye ke baby, ufunde kakuhle
eskolweni.

Olwethu: thank you daddy. Love you.

Us: we love you more.

She hung up...

Mawethu called them again,

Pinkie: hi?

Mawethu: thank you.

Pinkie: haha, thank you. She got the charisma from
you anyway.

Mawethu: eshe, bye bye.

Pinkie: nizo sithumelela an official invitation mos?

He looked at me...

Me: of course.

Pinkie: haikwe we're good. Ndiyanivuyela man.

Me: thank you babes.

Pinkie: sharp ke guys.

Mawethu: cheers.

Now we really hung up.

Mawethu: step one done.

Me: she's really excited, wodlula nam.

Mawethu: umntanam uvuyela nokuba noomama ababini, nizothi shun dine worry yenu.

Me: she'll get away with anything kum.

Mawethu: hay hay hay, don't spoil u Olwethu unnecessarily.

I burst out laughing, I was joking. Akhomntana uzofumana yonkinto out of the blue. We had

breakfast, then he took me to my place. As we drove encokola edwaba...I really wanted to ask him again, was he serious ngalento yomts hato?

Me: baby u sure?

Mawethu: I expected this, ewe baby I'm sure I want to marry you.

I laughed...yes he gets me.

Mawethu: just get your family to agree on coming Saturday so that we can conclude on this before we go away.

Me: okay, I'll try. Now, another thing...now that we're gonna get married, we should also discuss living arrangements.

Mawethu: can we take things one step at a time?

Me: yes. Sure.

He dropped me off at work and went on his way.

Now I had to figure out a way to tell my family that lo guy is actually serious ngo girl.

[06/26, 14:54] : #Nkosinathi_19

We woke up the following morning, bathed and packed our bags in the car then we headed to the doctor because she requested we do an HIV test. We requested for the rapid HIV test that would initially take about 20 minutes, then I asked the doctor to also package a home HIV testing kit for future purposes in case we don't have time or we can't come for the second test which would be after three months. The doctor left us for a few minutes...

Me: do you mind if we do the rest of the tests now?

Cass: as in, everything? Now?

Me: sesilapha...I'll go first, if you're not comfortable.

Cass: okay.

As I was about to go ask the doctor, he walked in so ndamcela right in front of her. He made sure that she was in agreement with this before doing the tests. After we were both tested, he gave us a date to fetch the results then we left, I drove to Wimpy so we could have breakfast. We ordered and waited sipping on juice.

Cass: I received a text from sis Asanda last night.

Me: uthini?

Cass: she's just appreciating that I dropped the charges, nothing much.

Me: is she sincere?

Cass: she sounded sincere...so I'd like to believe she is.

Me: that's good.

She half-smiled.

Me: hey, what's wrong?

Cass: nothing.

I stopped eating and just looked at her. She laughed and took a few mouthfuls before looking at me and smiling.

Cass: your sister is getting married, and you don't

even look excited.

Me: I am excited yaz, just that you cannot show Asenathi that you're excited for her. She'll use that against you.

Cass: haha, spoiled brat sakokwenu.

Me: niyafana ngoba spoiled.

Cass: haiké don't ever compare me to your sister.

Then she pulled a serious face...

I burst out laughing at her, after having breakfast we got on the road. Having pits top every now and then, as we drove further, I could tell she was melting, we were having fun. Taking pictures

whenever she saw the landscape beautiful enough for pictures, then as she saw the welcome board and screamed.

Me: oh-kay!

Cass: baby! Uve ngabani ba kudala ndifuna ukuzapha?

Me: why didn't you say? This place is just 3 hours from endlini?

Cass: I guess I never really had a chance. Oh my goodness.

We parked, now I really had to endure the part yokubayi photographer yakhe throughout the journey. I was taking pictures of her from the parking, to the front desk, up the stairs, to our room. When we got

to our room ndambona ba akanamazwi. The view was epic. We could see the beach, the area was just beautiful...

Me: so, I guess you won't really mind being left here wedwa Saturday?

Cass: unghamba nangoku if you want. This, this is home to me.

She went to check out the bathroom, the lounge and mini library then came back and flopped on the bed.

Cass: I'm in heaven, and to think I'll be here for the next seven days? Wow.

I put our bags in the wardrobe then joined her, she was on her back, I just sat there.

Cass: pity I can't really go for a swim.

Me: you'll dip in your legs kaloku.

Cass: and take pictures in a bikini... Yes.

Me: you see? Now can we try and be positive?
Being shot doesn't change who you are, you're still
beautiful and sexy.

She looked at me and smiled...

Cass: I can try, question is: can you?

Me: easy.

Cass: done, now can we try and switch off our
phones while we're here?

Okay... I'm a business man. I don't just switch my
phone off.

Me: phones?

Cass: please, I know personally ba iphone

iyandiphazamis a on a lot of things but we came here for a reason.

Me: I know baby, but I'm a business man. I use my phones for business purposes.

Cass: Baby surely your business partners will know what to do when they can't get hold of you?

Me: Okay ke can I at least check on my emails every other day?

Cass: ewe kaloku, and you'll have your phone imini yonke ya Saturday xa ugodukile mos.

Me: okay, so sizifakaphi?

Cass: in my suitcase... Lemme text my lil sister kqala coz I know she's gonna be texting and calling iveki yonke.

She texted her sister while I notified the twins (Khaya and Khanya) when we were both done she unpacked everything in her suitcase and revealed a secret ally if I may call it that. It had a zipper and a lock. She unlocked it, we put our phones in there

then she locked it and put the key away.

Me: let's change into comfortable clothes sithathe
iwalk.

She didn't hesitate, she quickly got into shorts, a vest and flops then we hit the beach. Saw an ice cream vendor and bought some as we walked alongside the beautiful sea waters, hand in hand. We found a stone in the middle of some water and we simultaneously walked to it and sat there. For a while we just admired ubuhle bendawo, well that's what I was doing, apparently she wasn't.

Cass: did you enjoy it?

I looked at her hoping akabuzi ngo Nthabiseng tu.
Now wouldn't be the right time.

Me: enjoy what?

Cass: having sex with her? How many times did ya'll f-

Me: baby please stop this. Ndiyakucela, stop it.

Cass: we are not fighting, I'm just asking.

Me: Cassandra ndiyakucela torho, do not do this.

Cass: okay fine. Yho caba ayithetheki sana.

I couldn't believe this.

After that question ndashiyeka ndimathile. Why would she wait for such a beautiful moment just to ruin it? Kanti le gender injani nah? We didn't do much sight-seeing, she said she was tired and she just wanted to chill so we headed back to our room walking alongside each other in silence.

Unfortunately our phones were buried deep into her suitcase I couldn't even call amajita to be updated on anything while she "chilled", by chilling I mean after everything, the taking pictures, the screaming at beautiful views, the cuddling on the fresh white

linen, she decided that ufuna ulala for a bit. So I let her.

When she woke up I was downstairs drinking...what else was I supposed to do?

Cass: baby ndilambile.

Me: oh ude wavuka?

She flopped next to me sulking.

Me: rested enough?

Cass: yep, now I'm hungry.

Me: I requested for self-catering ke apha.

Cass: with hopes that who's gonna cook for the entire week baby?

Me: us.

Cass: okay, have you cooked ke?

Me: masambe baby siyotya.

She laughed as she got up and led the way to the door, I followed her and stopped at the door.

Me: so awuzofota?

She stopped...probably doubting her response.
Then she turned smiling...

Me: gotcha!

Cass: actually, akho need. We're here to have fun, not to show people that we're having fun.

Me: eshe.

Cass: gotcha!

I caught up with her as we headed towards some food places, she opted for traditional meals why I went for sea food. When we were done eating we went for a walk in the beach, a long walk in fact then as the sun was setting we went back to our room.

She went to take a bath, I would have joined her but I decided not to, so I waited for her to come out then I went in for my own turn. When I came out, she was having a glass of wine in bed. I joined her wearing just briefs, she had put my whiskey next to the bed, we made conversation while drinking. I put my glass down and kissed her, she kissed me back. As we allowed ourselves to enjoy the moment, our hands doing the works, everything was going smooth. I mean, we were both in the zone when she suddenly stopped me and got off the bed waya e bathroom. After a few minutes ephaya I followed and realized that she had locked herself in there and I could tell she was crying.

Me: baby ndcela uvule.

She didn't answer me.

I kept on knocking, tu uphakama azovula so I just waited by the door until she was calm enough wavula and just walked right past me wayongena

ezingubeni. I followed her..

Me: baby please talk to me, what's going on?

She ignored me.

I kept on nagging and nagging, hay umntu walalela kulonto yocengwa ndim so nam ndamyeka even though it was extremely difficult for me to sleep. Kwas a phandle ndibukele yena, I couldn't help but wonder what happened. What made her withdraw all of sudden? I mean, I thought we were good.

[06/26, 14:54] : #Nkosinathi_20

In the morning, I woke up and went to make breakfast. She woke up an hour or so after I've woken up, I could hear the TV in the room playing but I decided not to bother her. I dished up separately for both of us, okwakhe ndakucika pha and took mine to the poolside. I was also here for peace of mind, to detox nje ngaye but instead we've

just been drawing backwards. When I was done eating I just removed my vest and got under the water for some time, when I had swam enough, ndaphuma and took a walk back to my room. There were a lot of people at the pool and I kinda felt like she would be upset that I left her ndayoqubha while I knew why she couldn't. When I got inside she was eating...

Me: hey?

She looked up...

Cass: hey, kushushu phandle?

Me: yep. Was hoping we can go up the mountain today.

Cass: mmkay.

Me: lemme just take a shower then sihambe.

Cass: sure.

I ran up the stairs, got in the shower and I took my damned time. For some reason. I don't know why but I took my time. When I came out, she was already, ready. Minimum and all. I got dressed, grabbed my wallet and then we walked out, fortunately for us, there were instant photographers throughout the trail. Ngoku ebezenza ngathi akafuni ufota apha, she was the first one to run after the photographers when I spotted them, not that I'm complaining. After some hours later, in the actual late afternoon, we went to eat at a restaurant that was on top of the mountains...there were quite a few. One she started eating, I decided to bring up what had happened last night...

Cass: you're not hungry?

Me: what happened last night?

She looked at her plate.

Me: baby?

Cass: can we not talk about last night? Please?

Me: at some point we have to.

She sighed.

Me: is it me? What did I do to you ke le iyokukhalisa a toilet of all places baby?

Cass: awundenzanga nto...that moment phofu.

Me: oh?

She stopped eating and looked at me.

Cass: I just had this picture of you two as we kissed, I couldn't take it out of my head. Trust me I tried.

Me: but baby why are you torturing yourself like this?

Cass: exactly, why are you torturing me like this?

Why did you do this Nkosinathi?

Me: I'm sorry.

She blinked and looked away.

I touched her hand, she let me. But she was still looking away, I saw a tear running down her left cheek.

Me: If I could, I'd take back every moment of that day, trust me I would. Please stop crying baby, please.

Cass: stop crying because people are looking at us?

Me: I don't care about people looking at us, I care about you.

She didn't answer me.

Me: nd'cela sitye sihambe ke.

Cass: kay.

We ate up in silence, I paid then we made way back to our temporal home. When we got there it was almost dark and I was tired from walking, she went to the kitchen while I just waited for her in the lounge. She came back with bottled water and sat right next to me.

Me: do you need time alone? I saw a glow in your eyes when we drove into this place, I saw peace in you. I don't mind leaving you here until you heal. Is that what you want?

Cass: I don't know.

Me: aw'zazi ufuna ntoni?

She drank her water totally ignoring me.

Me: baby?

Cass: look, this is not as easy as you want it to be

okay?

Me: I don't want it to be easy, but I want us to move on. Is that too much to ask?

Cass: ewe Nkosinathi. Right now? Yes that is too much to ask.

Me: okay, I am sorry again. And I'll probably apologize nangomsa and any other day until ude uxole, ude undixolele.

Cass: I have forgiven you, ndits hilo nje.

Me: then what's the problem?

She got up and paced the room then stopped, looked at me throwing her hands in the air and I could see ubindekile.

Cass: the problem is that I want to be intimate with you, I literally want to feel your arms around me, I want to lay naked on your body, I want to snuggle up on you...like, that's the fairytale I have in my head but the minute I get close to you kuvela kuthi

gqi ubuso buka Nthabis eng. Like...oh God! Do you know how frustrating that is?

Well...there was literally nothing I could say because this was an internal battle, one that I caused yes, but all I could do was pray and hope that she'll finally heal and get over it. I got up and went to her, took both her hands onto mine

Me: I love you, I really do and it kills me seeing you like this. If there was any medication for healing intliziyo I'd go buy it now. I don't even know what to say anymore, andiyazi nyhani.

Cass: guess we heal as we go, right?

I nod.

I just pulled her close and hugged her, she melted and cried her heart out.

That moment I realized how much damage unfaithfulness causes, not only kwi relationship but emntwini who is mostly affected. I walked us back

to the couch and we sat there in silence. Still in each other's arms, she had a hiccup. I kissed her forehead...She looked up, cleaning her face.

Me: I love you.

Cass: I love you too.

Me: nyhani?

Cass: you think I'd be hurting like this if I didn't?

Me: probably not.

Cass: exactly.

I cleaned the corners of her eyes...

Me: I love you and I'm sorry for putting you through this. I really am.

She smiled taking in a deep breath.

Me: trust me when I say I am willing to do anything

to show you that I am sorry, that I want us to be okay again.

Cass: it's late, masiyolala. Tomorrow is another day.

Me: yes ma'am.

She walked away, I locked up, closed all windows and turned off the lights. Then I walked up right behind her, she was already in bed, putting the doek on. I undressed, got in my bedtime gear and joined her. As soon as I lay on my back, she came closer and lay on my chest. My hand automatically went over her body and pulled over the covers on her back.

Me: what are we doing tomorrow?

Cass: can we camp in? Uhleli ungazobakho imini yonke following day.

Me: you know I haven't checked my emails since we got here.

Cass: you will check ngomso, seku late ngoku

anyway.

I kissed her head...

Cass: now that the tests are done, what do we do?

Me: I meant to talk about that, didn't wanna come across as insensitive since you were uhm...

Cass: it's okay.

Me: so, now that we're done with the tests, and everything is looking up. I want to pay lobola...but I understand that the timing is not perfect.

Cass: how?

Me: I don't want it to look like I'm buying your forgiveness ngomtshato.

Cass: kuhleli kungazovunywa lonto ekhaya, I still have to graduate, then find umsebenzi, then maybe get married. I really love you, but trust me it's not gonna happen right away tu.

Me: I know that...but-

Cass: my advice?

Me: sure.

Cass: choose one of my brothers and talk to them, whatever they say to you, work around that.

Me: okay, personally speaking...how long do you think we should wait before we sit together?

Cass: at least let me graduate, then everything will fall into place.

Me: okay.

Cass: don't forget to go fetch the results xasibuyele eBhayi.

Me: we'll go together.

Cass: mmh.

We both didn't say anything further on.

I wouldn't have wanted the day to end any other way, at least I knew she was still hurting and all I could do was to prove to her how sorry I was, daily, and love her as she deserves to be loved.

[06/26, 14:54] : #Nkosinathi_21

In the middle of the night, I woke up and went to the kitchen, I was thirsty. Got a bottle of water and walked back to the room, she was up.

Cass: 'bani xesha?

Me: 12:16

Cass: and why are you up?

I showed her the water.

She got up and went to the bathroom, came back and got in bed.

In a normal world, I would be checking my emails right now but I figured ucela iphone ngoku izobangathi kubaluleke umsebenzi ngaphezukwakhe so I pushed the thought aside and joined her.

Cass: ucingaphi?

Me: hm?

She didn't repeat herself and I wasn't gonna bring work up right now...I smiled and pulled her closer, she came lips first. So we kissed, as soon as I noticed where this was headed I stopped her...

Cass: please...don't.

Me: are you sure you wanna do this?

She didn't respond.

I mean she didn't respond verbally, her lips found mine and we kissed. For obvious reason I was very cautious but as soon as I loosened up I began to flow with her pace. I pulled off her pyjama top and threw it across the room, I wanted every piece of her, this whole time.

As soon as my chest got in contact with hers, I turned us both around so she could be in the bottom. Or underneath as the learned would say.

I worshipped her body, from toe to head, I worshipped her body. Her comfortability under my touch was contagious. I could feel her heating up, melting on my every touch, every kiss, every bite... and deep down I prayed that she doesn't pull out this time. Having fun in the bedroom is not as one-sided as it's made out to be, both parties have feelings and needs that they lay out in the process. That moment. As I kissed my way up her midsection, she pulled me to her face and we kissed passionately. I stopped and looked deep into her eyes, uyakwazi uthanda umntanomntu, her eyes were filled with love.

Me: ndiyak'thanda, kakhulu futhi.

Cass: ndiyak'thanda nam.

No further conversation was needed, we got on and did the deed, three rounds down I fell on her chest and we cuddled in our ecstasy. Ek'seni she woke

me up wanting more, two more then we fell asleep in each other's arms. Again. This time around when I woke up, she was not in bed, since I had requested a self-catering, I guessed she was in the kitchen. I got into my shorts and slops then went to join her... she looked up as I walked in

Cass: morning?

Me: a good morning it is.

I hugged her from behind and kissed her, we fooled around for a bit and then I went to taste the pans...

Cass: hayike sizoxabana!

I laughed as I backed away from a flying dish cloth.

I grabbed her hands, kissed her full lips while she was laughing then I let go.

Cass: set up, please.

Me: yes ma'am.

I set up the table for two, she plated up and we had breakfast.

It felt like it had been ages since we had such a peaceful environment around us, it was refreshing. So refreshing. We had breakfast inside, she did say we're camping in mos since ndizomshiya imini yonke yangoms o, when we were done I asked for my phone wandinika without any arguments. She also took hers...

Cass: fifteen minutes qha ke baby.

Me: uhm...

Cass: you need ten?

Me: no fifteen minutes I right.

The minute I put my phone on, messages flooded

from all sides. WhatsApp, S's , Facebook, emails. I started with emails, responded to all of them as quickly as I could, then I went on to the missed calls, those were just from friends. But one caught my attention...an SMS and missed call from Sandile. I called him back,

Sandile: Nkosinathi Dakumba!

Me: yes kwedini.

Sandile: uphi mfethu? I called you Wednesday nayizolo k'sasa, ndazincama ndaya kwakho. Cwaka.

Me: ndise Tsitsikama ntwana yam.

Sandile: wenzani apho?

Me: ndisazikhuphile.

Sandile: uyawahambe nalomntana?

Me: my girlfriend yes.

He cursed.

But why? I hadn't noticed that Sandile had issues until I dated Cassandra, whenever I had to spend time with her, do things with her, he'd act up as if he's my girlfriend. Yes I was laughing at him, as I normally would but haibo, this guy was acting creepily now.

Me: sela amanzi Sandile uzots arhwa.

Sandile: hay voets ek man kwedini.

Me: Saida, I have a girlfriend mjita. Like, ndine cherry, you get?

Sandile: inoba mna andinayo caba?

Me: then what is your problem? Why are you always on my back?

Sandile: because ever since you started dating this chick you no longer have bro-time, yonkinto ingalomntana kuwe, oko. Hay voets ek man.

Me: hahaha! Haike chap, bye bye. See you next week

Sandile: before you go...

Me: mh?

Sandile: I saw Nthabiseng with Masixole...

Me: they're dating now.

Sandile: and you approve of that?

Me: it's actually none of my business bro... seriously, it's none of my business.

Sandile: lamntana uyamdlala uMas'x bra and you know that.

Ndathula...

Sandile: I did some digging on her, she's married to some dude in Canada.

Me: you mean engaged.

Sandile: I have a marriage certificate as proof Nko mfethu.

Me: well she told me she's engaged, I didn't bother digging.

Sandile: khaw'xelele lo meck mfethu.

Me: nope, he's your brother, izongena fani xa ivela kum and ke andifuni kwa drama in my life right now uyamazi lamntana unjani.

Sandile: hela khaw'yeka uba muncu, lamntana usakufuna. That's the only reason she's dating u Mas'x, she's tryna get close to you.

Me: that could be true, but, again andingeni ndawo.

Sandile: Nko mfethu lamntana uyam'us er u Masixole.

Me: siyayazi nje sonke lonto, and ke oyena mntu who can talk sense into him is you. Ndibaxelele mna they can go ahead with their relationship because I have my own to work on.

Sandile: hay uyand'phoxa mfethu ngoku, lomntana ukwenze ibhari nyhani.

“lomntana” walked in...caba I 15 minutes iphelile for me.

Me: ntwana, I have to go. We'll talk xandibuyile ne?

Sandile: where the fuck are you going sithetha?

Me: I'm on baecation kaloku, we had 15 minutes to spend on the phone each and iphelile.

Sandile: yho yho yho, umanzi umanzi man kwedini.

I laughed and hung up.

Cass: they're probably cursing you.

Me: Sandile is the worst.

I threw the phone closer to her...

Me: thank you.

Cass: ubulisile u Onele.

Me: oh hi...

She took the phones and went to put them back in their dungeon. I followed as we got in bed, put on the TV and camped in, that was the idea for the whole day. Olamba kwethu I went to make food for us since she cooked breakfast. The whole day, we watched movies, ate junk food, and the movies watched us, by the time I woke up, she was still sleeping and it was night time so ndamvusa...

Cass: mh?

Me: hay vuka.

She sat up.

Me: uzotya ntoni, I'm ordering food.

She stretched and just looked at me. I kissed her pouted lips.

Me: hello earth?

Cass: pizza. Sour chicken.

Me: sharp.

Ordered pizza for her and ribs for me.

Cass: do I have to shower? Ngubani ixesha?

I looked at the time...and laughed.

Cass: yho hay andizovasa mna, if ndiyakunukis ela ke uhambe uyovasa babe.

Me: kuyovasa mna? Kunuka wena?

Cass: and nawe khange uvase futhi.

Me: ndivuke k'qala kunawe though.

She looked at me and I saw doubt in her eyes...then she just fell on her back.

Cass: izapha baby.

I didn't move...she looked at me, I laughed and moved over her body, supporting my body with my elbows.

Me: what's up?

Cass: I think ndifuna umntana.

I looked at her, the shock written all over my face.
She burst out laughing.

Cass: hay fok ndiyadlala, yhu!

Ndazihleka-hlekisa...I was shocked nyhani.

Cass: I'm joking man, loosen up.

Me: bra! I almost got a heart attack.

Cass: you don't a child?

Me: at the right time yes, not now. A child is not gonna fix things between us, time will.

Cass: ukhe ubhadle xa uthanda kanti.

I bit her lip and she giggled.

Her legs locked me in place, she played with my head not saying a word. I lay my head on her chest ndimamele uphathwa kamnandi, then I remembered that she called me, she obviously wanted to say something. I lifted up my head and looked at her...

Me: thetha.

Cass: my birthday is coming up, what are your plans?

Me: what do you want my plans to be?

Cass: I want another getaway.

Me: done.

Cass: you haven't heard the location yet.

Me: it's done anyway, its your birthday, you get anything you want.

Cass: even if I say Bahamas?

Me: erh...

She laughed.

Me: now you want me to budget kak'hle.

Cass: all I know is I want another week away from normal people.

Me: caba ndilihlanya mna?

Cass: you don't want me to answer that.

I squeezed my eyes and looked at her, she laughed her heart out.

She was now in a happy place, she had this beautiful, peaceful aura around her.

[06/26, 14:54] : Good morning...

It's unedited so there could be a lot of spelling or grammatic errors.

#Nkosinathi_22

We made love the entire night, when we finally fell asleep salala in each other's arms. I woke up Saturday morning and bathed, prepared for ugoduka. Went to buy her breakfast, wrote ipin ye card on a sticky note and put it next to her phone ne bank card since I promised her she will go shopping ngoku mna ndisagodukileyo for lento ka Asenathi. I grabbed my stuff and went to the car...

As I started the car, I cut the engine off and went back inside. Cassandra will throw a major fit if I were to leave apha ndingamvusanga ndimxelele ba ndiyahamba. When I reached the bedroom, she was

still fast asleep, ndamtyhila and saw bits of blood
kwelicala alele ngakulo

Me: baby?

She opened her eyes kancinci...

Me: I uhm, think your wound is bleeding.

She closed her eyes again and tried to breathe while turning, I could tell she was in pain. She knew she was bleeding yaz, maybe she was hoping for me to go angandixeleli. Lanto yakhe yongafuni usokolisa bantu...she eventually sat up and cleaned up her eyes.

Cass: you're ready to go already?

Me: baby, you're bleeding.

Cass: I know.

Me: you look like you're in pain though.

She faked a smile

Cass: I'm fine, you can go. I'll clean this up.

Me: I think we should head to the doctor.

Cass: the nearest hospital is in PE and that's plus minus three hours from here.

Me: I know that, better we drive now, u ten uzobetha sesifikile...just call your doctor and notify him that we're on the way.

Cass: it's really not necessary yazi babe, I have meds and I'll clean the wound, put on some antiseptic ndibe grand.

Me: Cassandra.

Cass: kay fine, yho you can nag!

She got out of the bed, pulled the sheet with as she

went to the bathroom. I looked for a spare one in the wardrobe and there wasn't one so I called the front office to send housekeeping with an extra sheet. They came knocking after about ten minutes, I went to take the soiled sheet from Cassandra in the bathroom ndafika evasa landawo ine gazi, I made the bed while she was getting dressed. She gave me my phone...

Me: yho, bes endiy'libele.

Cass: I know. Masambe.

Me: I'll drop you off then you can call me xa ugqibile.

Cass: sure.

We left the house as soon as she was done, I drove as fast as I could on the highway. She was quiet, I could tell she was listening to the pains and enduring them. We were playing her phone on the music player and it rang while connected there...

Cass: hello bhuti?

Steve: Cassandra, unjani?

Cass: I'm good, unjani wena bhuti

Steve: I'm okay. Your doctor called izolo and I tried calling you andakufumana.

Cass: oh, what's up?

Steve: I don't know, something about a checkup that you missed or something.

Cass: I didn't miss it, he wasn't there. Some other doctor did the checkup on me.

Steve: ooh, otherwise u grand wena, the wound is healing?

Cass: kind of...

Steve: what do you mean kind of?

She swallowed and looked at me, I was ready to speak up if she doesn't.

Cass: ndivuke lisopha namhlanje.

Steve: inoba kuqhaqheke izitis hi. When are you going to the hospital ke?

Cass: I'm going there now.

Steve: okay, text me xa ufika I'll pop in.

Cass: okay bhut.

Steve: sharp.

They hung up...

Cass: oh bawo.

Me: what?

Cass: I didn't know he's around...he's gonna make a big deal out of this.

Me: he should. Unenkani kaloku.

She rolled her eyes at me and kept quiet, we drove straight to the hospital, I only left her at the

consultation room because I knew ugqirha will soon attend to her. I drove home, fika sebekhona oo tamnci kucaca ukuba this is gonna be a very long day, there was some excitement. Oomama nomfazi ka Bhuti and other younge women were cooking, I went to dad's room and found him getting ready...

Me: taima.

Dad: ngoku ibangathi awuzoza?

Me: you kinda forced me to be here nje taima.

Dad: mmh.

I sat there not saying a word...

Dad: you look disturbed, what's wrong?

Me: I left my girlfriend at the hospital just now.

Dad: haibo Nkosinathi, utheni?

Me: her wound is bleeding...she was shot some

time ago, when we woke up today, it was bleeding.

Dad: and you're here? Do you really love lomntana Nkosinathi?

Me: haibo tata, andithi ndize apha kuba nguwe uthe undifuna apha? Bendits hilo ba andizokwazii mna ukuza apha.

Dad: mnkq!

And he didn't say another word...

Now I sat there not knowing whether I should leave ndiye kuCassandra or I should just sit this negotiation out ndihambe when the inlaws are gone. He walked out wandishiya pha, so I called Cass...

Cass: babe?

Me: has the doctor attended to you yet?

Cass: yes... uhm, I might be admitted.

Me: is it that bad?

Cass: kuqhaqheke iizitishi so ndophele ngaphakathi.

Me: so now they need to drain the blood?

Cass: yep. But he's gonna do an x-ray just now abuyele kum ba is he admitting me or what.

Me: I'm sorry I'm not there with you.

Cass: hay don't worry, ubhuti sekufuphi.

Me: okay... please keep me updated.

Cass: will do, bye now.

Me: I love you.

Cass: love you too.

I hung up...

A few hours later the negotiations started, I was actually glad I was part of them because nam ndizofuna utshata and this whole experience was an eye opener for me. I sat throughout the whole negotiations and only left in the evening when

everything was done, went to check on my girlfriend, she had sent an sms earlier that she was indeed admitted so she also sent the ward number. On my way there I grabbed flowers from the florist, bought a box of chocolates and pizza then I went to see her. She was resting, with eyes closed but she wasn't asleep.

Me: hey.

She opened her eyes and smiled, tried to sit up as she took her flowers.

Cass: bes endikuncamile.

Me: I'm sorry.

She smiled again...

There was something different about her...I couldn't pin it out what exactly it was but she had a sudden

glow. That's not what you would expect from someone who just got admitted at the hospital... she looked...happy or maybe in love? I don't know. I sat down next to her, on the bed

Me: so, how mad is it?

Cass: I don't really know...I'm gonna be drained tomorrow morning, then re-stitched and this time I have to spend a week here so that I can be monitored properly.

Me: an entire week?

Cass: yeah. I'm sorry the vacation will have to be cut short.

Me: we can always go back anytime of the year don't stress about it.

Cass: thank you for understanding.

I kissed her...we sat there in silence, she asked me to lie down next to her uyozele, and I did. About an hour later, I heard her snoring so I slowly moved out

of her embrace and went to look for her doctor. I only found a nurse...

Me: I'm looking for Dr Mpumelelo...I forgot his surname.

Nurse: he just knocked off, you're with the young lady with the bullet wound?

Me: yes.

Nurse: he'll only be back tomorrow morning sir, his shift starts at 4:30am

Me: okay, thank you very much.

She smiled and walked away...

I went to check on Cassandra for the last time then I drove back to the Tsitsikama, packed our stuff and went to check out, drove back to my place in PE and slept there. I was woken up by Khanya's phonecall asking me to send him some documents, apparently ebebehamba kakuhle kula Canada. While sending him the documents I got a request to

go to Jo'burg. I took a bath and headed to the hospital first, she was awake. Having breakfast...

Me: hey, you look fresh.

Cass: I must have had a good night sleep.

Me: yeah neh, so have they drained the blood yet?

Cass: yes, early this morning.

Me: and sewusitya already?

Cass: andikhutshwanga sisu kaloku babe, kuklinwe igaze qha eli lophele ngaphakathi.

Me: ooh okay.

She laughed at me.

I watched her smiling. I couldn't help but notice that she seemed more calm here, more at peace than when I thought she was at peace on our vacation. So I wasn't seeing things last night when I saw that she was happy here.

Cass: why are you giving me that look?

Me: I could be wrong, but you look happy here.

She blushed.

Me: so I'm right? Is there something you wanna tell me?

Cass: is it a sin to be happy when I spent the day with my brothers?

Me: both of them were here?

Cass: yes...and Aphiwe, they're probably on the way here even now.

Me: ah, makes sense.

She laughed...

Me: I have to rush off to J o'burg, if I'm not back this

evening then I'll be back tomorrow morning.

Cass: okay.

Me: okay?

Cass: yep, okay.

I took a minute ndamjonga...

Cass: you can't expect me to protest noms ebenzi wakho while I'm lying on this hospital bed now.

Me: us uke walula u okay wakho.

Cass: haha! Haike baby you don't know what you want from me. Suhamba ke, hlala nam apha.

Me: that's what I expect you to say the first time.

Cass: hewah!

We laughed about it, I left bengekafiki oo brother bakhe, rushed off to Joburg hoping ndizobuya kwa the same day.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_23

#Cassandra

After Nkosinathi dropped me off, Dr Mpumelelo Sirhonyi attended to me. He walked in carrying coffee

Dr Sirhonyi: Miss Mzayi long time, how are you feeling today?

Me: a little in pain, but I'm okay doc.

He offered me the coffee..ndayithatha, I was hungry. Coffee was very much thoughtful of him that exact moment.

Dr Sirhonyi: you said you're bleeding?

I nod and lifted up my vest, he touched around the wound and wrote down in his notepad then he walked out, came back with an injection and

explained that it was just an antibiotic to help prevent infection but he'll book me for a scan later on. As soon as he left, I texted my brother ndimxelela ba uthini u Gqirha then I asked him to come with food if useza. Dr Sirhonyi came back..

Dr Sirhonyi: Miss Mzayi?

Me: please call me Cassandra doc.

Dr Sirhonyi: nawe ke please call me Mpumelelo.

Me: I'm not allowed to, you're a doctor by profession.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm allowing you right now.

We stared at each other in silence.

I would have thought that this would be uncomfortable, it normally is uncomfortable but right now it wasn't. After a few seconds, he cleared his throat and continued with whatever he was doing in my wound.

Dr Sirhonyi: your first scan will be at 2pm then we'll see if you need another one, but if not, you will be discharged kwa namhlanje.

Me: is there a possibility that I could be admitted here?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes.

Me: oh wow!

I looked away...

Dr Sirhonyi: you don't like it here?

Me: hospitals are never pleasant, I'm sorry.

Dr Sirhonyi: maybe we can change that.

Me: how?

Dr Sirhonyi: you tell me what you need to make your visit a pleasant one, I'll do my best to get it for you.

Me: anything?

Dr Sirhonyi: anything.

I took a minute to think...

He was testing my pressure engalweni and he smelt very good.

I closed my eyes and took a very deep breath in...

He laughed...I blushed, didn't mean to make it too obvious.

Me: andizazi ba ndifuna ntoni, but, hospital visits are very much unpleasant how much more now that I have to spend an entire week here.

Dr Sirhonyi: okay then. See you later.

Me: you're done?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes Ma'am.

Me: oh, that was quick.

He smiled, packed up and left. I closed my eyes and

rested a bit.

Next thing I heard my brothers behleka...I sat up just as they walked in, with my sister's son.

Aphiwe: hay lonto!

Me: Fokof!

Lionel: uyathuka geli!

Me: xolo bhuti.

They laughed as they all came to hug me... sancokola, satya because they obeyed and came with food. They actually cooked for me, ezi chap kodwa shame. After about thirty minutes befikile, a nurse walked in with a bouquet of white and dusty pink roses, she put them in a vase with water then walked out.

Aphiwe: and that?

Me: what?

Aphiwe: who bought you flowers?

Me: I don't know, she didn't say.

Steve: it could be her boyfriend.

Me: I thought nini ke yazi, I'll ask her when she comes back.

Lionel: is there no card apho Aphiwe?

Aphiwe went to check it out, he shook his head.

Lionel: inoba ngu Nko.

Me: definitely.

Somehow, I knew it wasn't my boyfriend.

He doesn't buy me ii flowers ezinjena, and his flowers are usually accompanied by chocolate. Oo bhuti only left after I came back from the scan, they waited because they wanted to know whether I'm gonna be admitted okanye ndizophuma na so that if

ndiyaphuma ndingadingi transport.

Steve: so you're gonna need impahla nantoni?

Me: I'll ask Nko to bring izinto zam bhuti, zipha kuye.

Lionel: siyakwazi uya outa wethu Cassandra, don't remind us.

Aphiwe: oops!

Me: haha! Haike andiyazi benifuna ndiphendule ndithini kanti?

Steve: hay nam andiyazi mntaka tata.

Lionel: you're on her side?

Steve: akho sides to apha.

Me: heh bhuti? Whaphelelaphi u bhut'Ginger?

Then there was total silence...

I looked at both of them...they were not gonna answer me right now tu.

Me: oh-kay, forget I asked anything.

Steve: right.

Lionel: sizobuya late neh.

Me: alright, ihamba nini le chap?

Aphiwe: Monday late, hopefully uzobe sew'phumile apha.

Me: because you wanna see my place, I get it.

Aphiwe: eshe, mh.

We laughed...hugged and then they left.

I got up from my bed and went to stand by my flowers, they looked beautiful. I took a picture and saved it, then I walked to the bathroom, came back and my doctor was back.

Dr Sirhonyi: thought you'd have left with your brothers.

Me: am I permitted to?

Dr Sirhonyi: for all we know, you could have snuck out.

Me: haha! Yeah right.

I walked over to my bed and sat down facing him...

Dr Sirhonyi: we're admitting you.

I looked at him in silence.

Dr Sirhonyi: we have to drain the blood inside of you, give you a day or two and see if we need to re-stitch you or not.

Me: so I'll be here for how long?

Dr Sirhonyi: a week or two.

Me: yho hay sana I'm gonna fail ungats ho nje.

Dr Sirhonyi: you're gonna fail because you said you're gonna fail not because you're dumb or incompetent. It's the power of words, use your

words wisely.

Okay...man was captivating me nge sentence ey'one emuncu nje.

I swallowed and ignored what he just said, I looked at the flowers then back at him.

Me: thank you for those. Brought some colour into this room.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm glad you like them.

I was flippen blushing...and before I knew it, he kissed me. I didn't push him back, I just let go of everything, I felt my chest and shoulders loosening up as if I was carrying some blocks all this time. It felt like some ice was melting especially between my shoulders. He pulled back, not moving away from me, just looking deep into my eyes, I was melting already. I was the ice that melted between my shoulders...tyhini ndaske ndaxakana nam

esibhedlele.

Dr Sirhonyi: kudala ndifuna ukuyenza lento, from your first visit.

I didn't answer him...instead I just pulled him closer and we kissed, he stood between my legs as we kissed. I was so comfortable in his arms it didn't even feel like I was doing anything wrong. His hands moved from touching the sides of my face straight down my body, to my waist and they found comfortability there. He pulled back again, then pecked my lips looking straight into my eyes...

Dr Sirhonyi: umhle Thixunathi.

Me: I thought I said you can call me Cassandra.

Dr Sirhonyi: I prefer eli.

Me: Enkosi...

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm knocking off now...see you in the

morning?

Me: see you in the morning.

He smiled and walked away...

As soon as he walked away, pulled a pillow over my face and screamed!

I couldn't believe I just kissed a doctor...wait, my doctor. MY doctor? No the doctor. Okay, whichever it is. I lay on that bed smiling...oh my word! I was still overwhelmed.

I kept looking at the flowers he bought me, somehow, I was smitten. By another guy..here I thought Nkosinathi was a romantic, clearly I haven't been around. U gqirha wasn't necessarily a better kisser than my man, I won't lie but his poise, attention, command and accuracy as we kissed was most flattering. I closed my eyes and just enjoyed the moment...

As soon as my boyfriend walked in, the ward was filled with his perfume. I still had my eyes closed but I knew it was him who had walked in.

Me: hey.

I opened my eyes and smiled, tried to sit up as I took my flowers. He put the pizza and chocolate next to the flowers that Dr Sirhonyi had bought for me earlier.

Me: bes endikuncamile.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

I smiled at him...

He had this look of suspicion in his eyes, maybe because he saw the flowers? I don't know, but I asked him to join me in my bed so we sat together.

Nkosinathi: so, how mad is it?

Me: I don't really know... I'm gonna be drained tomorrow morning, then re-stitched and this time I

have to spend a week here so that I can be monitored properly.

Nkosinathi: an entire week?

Me: yeah. I'm sorry the vacation will have to be cut short.

Nkosinathi: we can always go back anytime of the year don't stress about it.

Me: thank you for understanding. Can you lay with me? I think the meds are working already.

Nkosinathi: you won't eat first?

Me: I'll eat ovuka kwam

He kissed my forehead ndalala.

When I woke up, he was gone.

I went to ask the nurse to warm my pizza, ndatya and went back to sleep only to be waken up again ngu Dr Sirhonyi ba we have to go to the theatre to for the draining, like, it was past 4 in the morning. I was even grumpy as they pushed my bed to theatre,

I was drugged, didn't even feel or see a thing but when I woke up, I was back in my room no longer with a bandage but with just a patch. I went to bath in time before breakfast was served ndafika ndilindwe yipapa yam on my return from the bathroom. And then boyfie came back...he was looking dapper, I felt my thighs squishing together just by looking at him. He looked so damn yummy nyhani.

He asked about the draining, how I was and all that stuff but I saw this look again from him, look of suspicion.

Me: why are you giving me that look?

Nkosinathi: I could be wrong, but you look happy here.

I blushed.

Kanene how do you tell your boyfriend that you might have a crush on your doctor? Or that your

doctor might have a crush on you? Or that you and your doctor kissed? The question here is: HOW?

Nkosinathi: so I'm right? Is there something you wanna tell me?

Me: is it a sin to be happy when I spent the day with my brothers?

Nkosinathi: both of them were here?

Me: yes...and Aphiwe, they're probably on the way here even now.

Nkosinathi: ah, makes sense.

I laughed...I don't even know why I was laughing but for some reason I was really happy. I had butterflies in my tummy. He told me he had to go to J o'burg and I said it's okay.

Nkosinathi: okay?

Me: yep, okay.

He raised a brow.

Me: you can't expect me to protest noms ebenzi wakho while I'm lying on this hospital bed now.

Nkosinathi: us uke walula u okay wakho.

He definitely was suspicious of something, he just didn't have the guts to ask me. After something like a mini-argument (lack of a better word) about why u okay wam elula xa esithi uyahamba he kissed my lips and left...I after my tray was collected, I just lay there looking forward to my doctor's next visit.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_24

#Cassandra

I so wished u baby ebets hilo ba uyahamba so that ndimcele eze nempahla yam, yes there are hospital gowns and stuff but my toiletries and socks. Yho I wanted socks sana because my feet were very quick to catch cold. But now all I could do was to wait for him abuye and I didn't want to disturb him

ndimfounele ngoku. Before lunch time, the same nurse who delivered my flowers came with a gift bag.

Nurse: Dr Sirhonyi said I should give you this.

Me: uhm, thank you.

She smiled and walked away...I sat up and opened the bag, there were two pairs of socks from Cotton On, two face cloths, one bigger than the other and a toothpaste and tooth brush. How did he know I didn't have these things? Or maybe the nurse told him? I smiled and wore the socks, destroyed the giftbag and put the remaining items in my handbag. Aphiwe walked in ndisanxiba ezo socks, struggling on the injured side...he rushed and helped me then sat next to me on the bed.

Me: baphi oomalume bakho?

Aphiwe: bazoza late, they borrowed me the car

bandikuphathele these things.

Me: oh wow. Thank you.

Another bouquet of flowers, I asked him to put it next to the other two then I unpacked what he had in the brown shopper bag with a smile. Oo bhuti really know me...

Me: so niye endlini nyhani?

Aphiwe: uyabazi oomalume, but we couldn't find your laptop.

Me: it's at my boyfriend's place.

Aphiwe: ooh okay. So how are you?

I breathed out...

Aphiwe: wait before you answer that, what got you here? Who shot you? Why?

Me: I uhm, I don't like discussing this.

Aphiwe: why?

Me: because it's still sensitive kum.

Wathula...

I could tell he knew something, I even wondered if uyinikwe nyhani na imoto or uyithathile and just decided ukuza apha yedwa? So that he can talk nam without his uncles?

Aphiwe: makazi utheni?

Me: Aphiwe please.

Aphiwe: you've never hidden anything from me, why would you start now.

Me: because I don't want you getting involved. I'm protecting you.

Aphiwe: from who?

I threw my hands in the air, why was he pushing to know the truth when he surely already knows it?

Aphiwe: makazi I know that mom is the reason why you're in this place.

I didn't answer him...

Aphiwe: dad told me everything.

Ndamjonga.

Me: what do you mean your dad told you everything?

Aphiwe: I mean exactly that, his fear was that ya'll are gonna poison me against him. He was actually shocked when I told him no one had said anything about this.

Me: mh, poison you against him. Wow.

Aphiwe: that's not the point, the point is, why are you protecting umama kuyo yonke lento?

Me: can we please not go back there? Please.

Aphiwe: makazi ulele esibhedlele and umama notata are out there having the time of their lives gqiba uthi mas iy'yeke lento?

Me: Aphiwe?

Aphiwe: hay makazi, I love you but they have to pay.

Me: APHIWE!!!!!!!!!!!!

He stopped and looked at me.

Me: stay out of it, please, stay the hell out of this. It is none of your business.

Aphiwe: kodwa makazi why ar-

Me: I'm not gonna repeat myself.

Wathula.

Me: if you can't respect my wishes I don't know

what else you want here.

Aphiwe: I'm sorry.

Ndathula...

Aphiwe: I'll drop it, I have no other choice but to trust that you know what you're doing.

Me: thank you. I know this is also hard for you, but trust me, this is the best way.

He threw his arms around me, thank God he was not near the wounded side.

Me: drop it sonny, yiyeke, in fact yikhuphe kwalapha entliziyweni yakho.

Aphiwe: okay makazi. I love you.

Me: ndiyakuthanda nam. Now stop crying.

He laughed and moved back, cleaning his face.

Me: how was the tournament? Didn't even get to see your pictures.

Aphiwe: I'll email you the pictures, it was epic!

Dr Sirhonyi walked in...

Dr Sirhonyi: good afternoon.

Us: hello doc.

Dr Sirhonyi: how is the patient feeling?

Me: better, no pains and definitely no excess bleeding so far.

Dr Sirhonyi: that's good...I just have to do some check-ups then I'll leave you two to it.

Me: thank you, doc.

He smiled, looking at my feet...then he did his

checks, wrote something on his pad and told me the nurse will be back with my medication. He walked out,

Aphiwe: he looks young.

Me: neh?

He looked at me wahleka.

Aphiwe: forget about u Doctor, when am I seeing u s bari?

Me: I don't know...khaw'me ndimfounele futhi.

I took out my phone and called u baby.

He answered immediately.

Nkosinathi: baby?

Me: babe, unjani?

Nkosinathi: tired, was sup?

Me: I miss you..and umtshanam wants to see you so when are you coming back?

Nkosinathi: ndingena endlini ngoku, thought you might need your toiletries. But ndizoza just now.

Me: please bring my laptop and charger as well.

Nkosinathi: okay babe, see you just now.

Me: love you.

Nkosinathi: love you baby.

We hung up...

Me: uyeza ke so you might as well wait.

Aphiwe: I hope akayo Godzilla ke makazi. Ucingele nje abantwana.

Yho ndaphela yintsini...

Me: me? dating a Godzilla? Hay ndijonge right mts hana.

Aphiwe: kaloku nithi ubuhle bendoda zinkomo.

Me: pha kwa heleni...yhini, ndizoyithini into yoxakwa kuteketisa abantwana bam ngoku?

He couldn't stop laughing, my nurse came back with an injection then she walked back out after injecting me. all this time Aphiwe was standing by the flowers. After she left...

Aphiwe: so many flowers?

Me: yeah yeah.

Aphiwe: this guy has a great choice two.

Me: u romantic ubhuti wakho, he doesn't fail one bit on that.

Aphiwe: maybe I should take some tips then.

Me: you have a girlfriend?

Aphiwe: kinda...

Me: kinda?

He came back to sit down...

Aphiwe: we like each other, but she's a PK so our time together is strictly monitored.

Me: and that's a problem for you?

Aphiwe: makazi, we literally go out for about three hours before her dad calls to come pick her up. Every single time. What is that?

I laughed...he sounded frustrated shame.

Me: he's protecting her, and it's good.

Aphiwe: oh-hoo!

Me: think teenage pregnancy? Young parents? And you said she's a PK.

Aphiwe: we've had sex already though, if that's what he's protecting her from.

Me: you what?

Aphiwe: we had sex, haikhe makazi, don't act old school now.

I looked at this kid...

Aphiwe: two times.

Me: did you at least use protection?

Aphiwe: of course.

Me: wow Aphiwe, and you're so casual about this. Does your mother know that you're already sexually active?

Aphiwe: uzoxelelwa ngubani?

Me: nguwe tshini!

Aphiwe: hay wethu makazi, you're the only one who knows about this... andiyifihli yona kodwa ke it's not

something I can openly talk about with umama.
Uyamazi uphila kweyakhe iplanet.

Me: hehe ndiyayazi nenye i planet.

Just then...Onele called...

Me: baby!

Onele: Sissy

Me: haha, unjani?

Onele: yhu hay buya ngoku ndiyakukhumbula.

Me: haha, andinobasa buya u Aphiwe elapha nje.

Onele: yhu lowo!

Aphiwe asked me to put the phone on speaker..and I did.

Me: wenzeni?

Onele: akaxelanga apha ba uhamba no bhuti, sive ngoske utata afounele ubhuti ambuze.

Aphiwe: bendimxelele umakhulu.

Onele: eshe, ukuthisile kenanye uzenza ongazinto.

Aphiwe: hay suxoka!

Waske wahleka u Onele...my boyfriend walked in.

Me: onele bye bye.

Onele: haibo, ndim ofounileyo kaloku.

Me: we have a visitor, will call you later.

Onele: eshe, okay.

I dropped the call and accepted a kiss from bae after he greeted umts hanam.

Me: thank you for these, how was your trip?

Nkosinathi: argh, business trips are not as enjoyable as leisure...otherwise, all went well. Unjani wena?

Me: all's good...and here, meet umtshana wam Aphiwe...aphiwe, Nkosinathi.

They shook hands again

Aphiwe: the incredible boyfriend.

Nkosinathi: haha, is that what she says?

Aphiwe: most times yes.

He looked at me wahleka...

Nkosinathi: nitya ntoni? I'm hungry.

Me: there's food there...okanye I can send Aphiwe to the canteen for you?

He got up and went to look for food, took the left over slice of Pizza was itya wasiqgiba eme pha and looked at me.

Nkosinathi: who bought you these?

Me: these what? You bought me flowers.

I could feel my palms sweating...I pinched Aphiwe, I had no choice but for him to save me here. That's if he's clever enough to get it.

Nkosinathi: yes I bought you flowers but I didn't buy you the pink and white roses though.

Aphiwe: bezize nam ezo izolo.

Nkosinathi: oh, I didn't notice them.

Me: bezikhona nangoku ubulapha ke yazi.

Nkosinathi: mmh...kuthengiswa ntoni e canteen baby?

Me: I don't know...I haven't been there but I know ikhona.

Nkosinathi: lemme rather drive out man.

Aphiwe: you just said udiniwe, lemme drive out for you.

Me: uyiphethe leaners yakho?

Aphiwe: eshe.

Nkosinathi: there's a braai place about 10 minutes from here, khaw'ye phaya mts hana.

I reached for my bag and removed a R200 note ndanika u Aphiwe, he looked at Nkosinathi who laughed at him.

Nkosinathi: she said she's buying me food.

Aphiwe: wow...okay.

Me: cela zuthenge i-Stoney.

Aphiwe: sure.

Nkosinathi walked him out since he doesn't know his car, then he came back and stood between my legs coz I was sitting with my feet hanging. As soon as I touched his jawline, we headed for the kiss. It was like our minds are thinking of the same thing...while we were kissing, my doctor...I mean, the doctor came back and cleared his throat. We stopped, but my boyfriend did not move from where he stood.

Dr Sirhonyi: good afternoon sir.

Nkosinathi: afternoon doc, how's the patient?

Dr Sirhonyi: she's doing quite well...but as I said to her, we have to keep her here for a while. Until we're sure she's fit enough to go back home.

Nkosinathi: mmkay.

Then he kissed my lips, I caught Dr Sirhonyi eyeing us, when our eyes locked, he smiled and continued

with what he came here to do. He then asked my boyfriend to move so he could assess and redress the wound, when he was done, he walked back out.

Nkosinathi: unenkathalo lomjita.

Me: kakhulu, he doesn't knock off without informing his patients.

Nkosinathi: uyabonakala.

If only you knew.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_25

I flew to J o'burg and went to attend two of the most urgent meetings that I was called up for...when I was done I went to some "prospective" business meeting with someone who portrayed themselves as interested in partnering, as I got to the place they sent me GPS directions for, I saw a familiar car and I sighed. Why the hell was she obsessed with me?

Ndimyekile mos wathandana no Masixole knowing fully well that she's just playing with his feelings, now yintoni le ingaka ayifuna kum?

Me: fuck Nthabis eng! Fuck it!

I started my car and revved out of that place, she called while I was driving away and I ignored the number even though it was private, I knew it was her. It wasn't long when I saw her car following me, I drove faster but she caught up with me at the traffic lights...she lowered her window as she stopped in the opposite lane.

Nthabis eng: come on Nathi, please.

Me: hay voets eek man!

As soon as the lights went green I drove away ndamshiya apho, the motherfucker followed me to my place. I parked on the driveway and just waited for her to park coz she was already in. She parked

her car right next to mine and got out...

Me: what the fuck are you doing? What the actual fuck do you want from me?

Nthabiseng: I just wanted to see you...

Me: what the fuck for? Dude, you're dating u Masixole ngoku. I'm deliberately not gonna mention that you have a fiancé. I'll just cut that out of my mind.

Nthabiseng: so would it be any different if I wasn't with any of these two? You mention them as if if bebengekho you wouldn't mind us getting back together again.

Me: no.

Nthabiseng: no?

Me: NO!! It wouldn't make no difference.

Nthabiseng: I still love you.

Me: Halala. Are you done?

Nthabiseng: Nkosinathi, please...

Me: ume ngoo Please abaninzi and I don't even know what you're begging me for. I do not love you anymore, you know that. I'm inlove with someone else, like I really moved on.

Nthabiseng: I want us to try again, ndingabuya nakula Canada if you could just say you'll give us another try Nathi, please.

Me: you're clearly on drugs or something stronger.

Nthabiseng: mncinci lamntana kuwe, she's gonna leave you for iintanga zakhe at some point.

Me: good, then I'll move on again. As long as I'm not gonna go back to you.

Nthabiseng: please don't talk like that.

Me: I'd never, ever sleep with a woman who sleeps with my friends. Not now, not ever.

She stood there looking like inja enethiweyo...

Nthabiseng: I'm gonna prove to you how serious I

am yazi. Andimthandi u Masixole and you know that. I have always loved you, do you know how difficult it is uzinyanzela uthande umntu ongamthandiyo just for the sake of trying to forget lo umthandayo? Do you know the pain?

Me: khaw'fokofe kwam sisi!

She turned and walked away...

I couldn't believe this... Isn't she supposed to be in Canada khona? What the hell was she still doing here? I went inside and grabbed water...Asenathi called ndisacinga.

Me: Sese?

Asenathi: mntase uphi?

Me: I'm in Pretoria, what's up?

Asenathi: Yeke! Can you pick up something for me in Soweto?

Me: what's something?

Asenathi: a dress.

Me: kubani? Please don't send me to Katlego.

She burst into laughter...Katlego was her varsity friend, she's a fashion designer and we didn't get along throughout her stay in PE.

Me: fuck no Asenathi! No!

Asenathi: please torho, ndiyakucela mntaka tata.

Me: fine..mxelele ayizise kum yena.

Asenathi: you know she's not gonna do that.

Me: oh, so I must go to her? Hay sanundiqhela ke.

Asenathi: I'm the customer here, please.

Ndathula...

Me: khandiphe number yakhe.

Asenathi: okay. Enkosi.

Me: sharp.

She sent the number...so I called lo swine.

Kat: Tlego hello?

Me: Katlego, it's Nathi.

Kati: Nathi from?

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba.

Kat: oh. Hi. How can I help you?

She sounded like she was either shocked or she was having hiccups.

Me: u Asenathi uti you've got a parcel for her that you need to give to me.

Kat: ewe her dress.

Me: how am I getting it?

Kat: you can e-wallet me the balance or come with cash when you're coming to fetch it.

Me: I'm in Pretoria and you want me to come to Soweto?

Kat: she didn't tell you that you're fetching it ekhaya?

Me: she didn't even tell me that there's a balance.

She laughed...

I waited...

Kat: yho haike.

Me: so sizokwenza njani?

Kat: ndizozama ukuza kuwe bhut'Nathi.

Me: thank you, yimalini balance? Us ole undithumelela ne bank account yakho.

Kat: I'll sms you everything just now.

Me: enkosi.

I hung up and waited.

I wanted to call Cass but I thought I should let her rest a bit...when Katlego finally came through, I had already paid her the balance so I hit the road and rushed to the airport just in time for my return flight. Landed and went to drop the dress ku Asenathi, went to my place and then headed to the hospital. Baby was with her nephew..after the formal greetings I gave the kiddo money to go buy us food, I was hungry and I knew umntu wam uyakuthanda ukutya. I sat next to her...not really content with the roses standing between the two bouquets I bought her.

Me: so uphuma nini apha?

Cass: maybe next week, maybe that week. I don't really know.

Me: uthini yena ugqirha?

Cass: uthi ndizophuma when he's content ba

alizophinda lophele ngaphakathi.

Me: mmh.

We sat in silence...I was tired, if she wasn't here I would just got in bed ndilale.

Cass: uzithathile intozethu eTsitsikama?

Me: yeah, kwayizolo.

Cass: enkosi...and I'm sorry we had to cut the vacation short.

Me: it's not your fault babe, we can always go back whenever you're fit.

Cass: thanks.

I looked at the roses again...

Me: so your nephew has a very good taste.

Cass: why do you say?

Me: the flowers.

Cass: oh that, yeah well.

She couldn't really look me in the eye...that alone made me uncomfortable. What was she hiding from me? Aphiwe returned with food, we all dug in, he then said he's going home...

Cass: haibo, just like that?

Aphiwe: it's not like I'm leaving you alone, come on now.

Cass: eshe, hamba ke Aphiwe.

He looked at me and shrugged.

Me: it's okay, uyakutefela nje lo makazi wakho.

Aphiwe: I love you, see you ngoms o.

Cass: whatever!

He laughed and walked out...

Me: is he driving?

Cass: I think so.

Me: he's very humble.

Cass: takes after me.

Me: you? The same you who smashed everything breakable at my place not so long ago?

Cass: you provoked me though...I'd never just do that nje out of the blue.

Me: and I regret it.

Cass: it's water under the bridge wethu...we'll heal as we move on.

Me: can I ask you something?

Cass: sure...

Me: who really bought you those roses? Please be honest with me.

She looked at the roses and then back at me, this time she looked me straight in the eye.

Cass: Aphiwe bought them, wait, you don't believe me?

Me: I just have an uneasy feeling about them that's all.

She looked at me, quizzically as if asking in her mind "uneasy feeling? Really?".

Me: I believe you babe.

Cass: mmh.

Me: hey, come here...

I believed her...and I kinda felt like an ass now for not believing her or APhiwe when he said he bought

the flowers. I kissed the side of her head as we side hugged.

Me: I'm sorry. Ngaske ude uphume apha man.

Cass: feel the same way too...but I have to swallow noba kukrakra kangaka nani, can't put my life at risk like that again.

Me: I know. Andizobakhona uqala ngoms o...I have to go to Canada to close off the franchise deal. La chap doesn't want to close off the deal with my business partners, ifuna mna ubuqu.

Cass: yho, ubuye nini kengoku?

Me: I don't really know...but I'll call you every day.

She didn't respond.

Me: hay kaloku suqumba.

Cass: so if he called while we were on vacation would you have upped and left?

Me: njani kodwa we had our phones switched off and ditched in the bottomless pit of your travel case.

Cass: so you would have missed this business opportunity?

Me: kind of.

Cass: it's a yes baby...yho mmh.

Me: well what matters is that I haven't missed it yet, I have booked my flight so I will come in the morning on my way to the airport.

Cass: kay.

We sat in that ward, each in their own world.

I was sad that I'd be going to another country leaving her esibhedlele, but the business-world is merciless when it comes to deadlines. Lamjita just wants to look me in the eye as I sign the dotted line, and I understand him, they have trust issues abantu, they want things done authentically. Me going away right now felt like I didn't care about her, or what she was going through...maybe naye that's

what she thought qha uzixelele ba akazothetha nto yaz.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_26

#Lisakhanya

I really didn't know that Asanda was Cassandra's sister...now that I knew, they did look more alike. But that's not the point, point is, I didn't know. But ke that didn't mean now that she knows about my relationship with her sister we were going to stop... after I tried calling Cassandra to make her understand but akavuma, I called her sister.

Asanda: hey?

Me: hey.

We both went silent...I had a lump in my throat so cleared it.

Me: why didn't you tell me she's your sister?

Asanda: Lisa.

Me: you knew who she is, I told you everything about your husband even if I didn't know he's your husband but the point here is that you knew.

She didn't answer me...

Me: why didn't you tell me?

Asanda: I don't know.

Me: you don't know?

Asanda: I just... whenever you mentioned her name I didn't connect the dots, I thought she'd tell me when she encounters such things.

Me: but Asanda I told you, in detail, everything.

Asanda: I'm sorry babe... guess I wasn't really paying much attention at the time you were telling me.

Me: wow.

She sighed...

Asanda: I'm sorry, really, I am.

Me: it's cool.

I could tell there something going on with her, she really wasn't okay. Must have hit her hard to realize that your man has actually been hitting on your lil sister.

Me: so uhm, what happens now?

Asanda: with us?

Me: yes.

Asanda: you can't ask me that right now babe, like, there's a lot going on...I have a lot to process.

Me: so in the meantime ndithini mna?

She didn't answer...

Me: Baby?

Asanda: can you come to my hotel?

Me: when?

Asanda: now...if you can.

Me: send me the location.

Asanda: okay. See you.

Me: cheers.

We hung up...I got up and took a shower.

Got out, and went to find the laciest lingerie in my suitcase, then I pulled over a denim dress, wore sneakers and grabbed my handbag while calling an Uber. In fifteen minutes I was on my way to her hotel room, and I knew I'm having a passionate sleepover there. I rocked up emnyangweni wakhe

and knocked, she opened the door and made way. I walked right in and threw my bag on the couch as she closed the door and came to rip my clothes off. I ripped hers off and as soon as she noticed what I had on underneath that dress she stopped to breathe...

Asanda: you sure damn dressed up to the occasion.

Me: are you complaining?

Asanda: the fuck for?

She grabbed the strap on my waste as she pulled me towards her, our lips smashing together. We were not in love that very moment but we were exploring and adhering to our lustful needs. She wanted to have sex so that she could forget everything, I wanted to have sex so that I fill the void inside. Two different people, two different motives but both under one roof with one mission in mind.

She pinned me against the wall and spread my legs apart, I immediately released a moan as my body reacted to her sensitive touches. Her lips were glued to my neck as her hand worked magic between my thighs, I grabbed her ass and pulled her closer to my body.

Me: I missed you.

Asanda: don't talk.

We kissed and made out, she carried me to bed and by now we were both fully naked and we made love. For some reason she was in control this time around, all the time I've known her, or rather, all the time I've had sexual intercourse with her, I have been the once in control in the bedroom. But, I wasn't complaining...once we had exhausted all our energy (and lust) we cuddled. I was on top, my head between her breasts.

Asanda: I love you...I just need time to process everything that has happened.

Me: meaning?

Asanda: I accidentally shot Cassandra, and she's now in hospital fighting for her life.

Me: accidentally?

Asanda: yes.

I lifted my head and looked at her...why didn't I believe her?

She sat up...

Asanda: believe me it was a mistake, I would never do that.

Me: what provoked you? I mean, she's YOUR sister.

Asanda: I was mad, angry at myself mostly that I didn't see all of this coming. And on the other hand,

she was upset that I seemed to have chosen a man over her, kanti it's not even like that.

Me: did you tell her that?

As anda: I don't know how to face her, even now I'm heading back home. I can't look her in the eye.

Me: you have to reach out, at some point.

She wiped a tear...

Me: Cass has a good heart indalo, she'll forgive you as long as you swallow your pride and apologize to her.

As anda: yeah, I know.

We cuddled salala.

In the morning, we did it again then I accompanied her to the airport, when she boarded, I went back to my place. As soon as I got home, my boyfriend called.

Me: baby?

Him: hey, I miss you. Where you at?

Me: I'm home, where you at?

Him: I'm on my way... can we do breakfast?

Me: sure, how long will it take you to get here?

Him: about two hours max.

Me: ayt, see you.

Him: cheers.

I quickly bathed, got dolled up and waited for my guy to come through. While waiting, I got a call from home...

Me: hello ma?

Mama: hello nono wam, unjani?

Me: ndiphilile mama, unjani wena?

Mama: ndiphilile nam, uphi na sisi?

Me: ndis endlini mama, just woke up.

Mama: that's good to hear, ndis endleleni eza kwelocala ke, maybe we can do brunch?

Me: of course ma, no need to ask.

Mama: hay kaloku nis uke nibe busy kakhulu so I have to ask.

Me: hay mama, yhiza akhongxaki.

Mama: sure ke mntanam.

As soon as we hung up, I called my boyfriend.

Him: baby?

Me: hey, can we rather do dinner? My mom is in town and she wants us to do brunch.

Him: hau!

He was upset...

Me: I'm sorry babe.

Him: hay mfethu, can I at least come through and just see you ke?

Me: ewe baby.

Him: this is so disappointing.

Me: I know and I'm sorry, look, I'll spend the weekend with you. Okay?

Him: you always have something come up Lisa whenever I suggest that.

Me: yho hayike baby ufuna ndithini?

Him: I want to see YOUR commitment in this relationship, is that too much to ask?

Me: but I am committed.

Him: are you? Really?

I sighed...are we really gonna fight so early in the morning?

Him: you always put other people first and I have to be okay with that. Always.

Me: my mom is not other people.

Him: you know very well that this is not about your mom though.

Me: okay fine, I'm sorry.

He said "mxxim" and hung up...kanti ngubani ofounileyo apha?

I called him again, he took his time answering this time.

Him: Lisa?

Me: oh, andis engo baby ngoku?

He didn't answer me...

Me: are you still coming?

Him: didn't you say we're meeting for dinner?

Me: but you said you'd come, just to see me...like now?

Him: nah, I'll pick you up tonight.

Me: baby please don't do this...I also miss you, noba ke yi five minutes?

Him: I'll see.

Me: can you see while driving this way?

Him: bye.

Me: baby?

He hung up...

I sat on my bed sulking...

In about fifteen minutes, I heard a knock on my door, got up and opened and there was the man. Sulking himself. I hugged him as we closed the door.

Him: you made me drive all the way here knowing fully well that you have plans?

Me: I'm sorry.

Him: you're not sorry.

I kissed his cheek and he smiled, his hands on my hips.

Him: I really don't like what you're doing, seriously.

Me: I am sorry babe, I promise...our relationship comes first from now on.

Him: promise?

I kissed his lips, he bit my lips and that led to our clothes flying across the room.

Yes, we had make up sex while passing time for my mother to arrive, he knew his story and as much as I

loved Asanda, I wasn't gonna dump my boyfriend for her. This guy had my back when no one else was there for me, and more than that, he really loved me.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_27

I left the hospital feeling all sorts of uncomfortable, I still couldn't pin down why. There was something off with Cassandra today but she was just too good in hiding it, I didn't wanna push but I still had a bad feeling about those roses. Honestly speaking. I drove to Sandile's place and called him sendiphandle...

Sandile: ola?

Me: uphi?

Sandile: ndikwam, uzandithini?

Me: I'm outside.

Sandile: yeke! Hlalapho.

Then he hung up.

I knew he was paying me back for what I did to them but unlike me, he's got a very soft heart. I turned off my ignition and waited for him coz I knew uzandivulela anyway...my phone vibrated, he was calling

Me: Sandile?

Sandile: did you call xa usiza kwam?

Me: am I supposed to call?

Sandile: andiyo cherrie yakho Nkosinathi, you don't just rock up and tell me you're outside.

Me: alright...zuvule ke xa ucingile.

Sandile: uzophola kwedini, yerr ifike msinya lemini.

I laughed at him as he hung up...it wasn't long when I saw his girlfriend opening the gate, I laughed as I drove in. Parked in the driveway and walked to the

front door...she greeted me and disappeared to another room leaving us sijamelene, well bendingajamanga mna iyindoda yakhe ejamileyo.

Sandile: it can only be girlfriend stress that brings you here unjena.

Me: khandiphe amanzi.

Sandile: you mean whiskey?

Me: water, I'm traveling k'sasa I can't drink alcohol.

Sandile: shem.

He went to the fridge and brought me bottled water...then joined me on the couch.

Sandile: what happened?

Me: I cheated on her, she found out.

Sandile: what were you thinking? Women always find out about these things.

Me: I don't know what I was thinking.

He looked at me in unbelief...

Me: undixolele mfethu, like, she did but now I feel like there's something she's hiding from me.

Sandile: you believed her when she said she forgave you?

Me: I still believe her mfethu, I really do.

Sandile: then you're more stupid than I actually thought, women don't forgive mfethu, bayaphindisa and when they do, uzohambe uchola amaphepha kodwa nguwe oqalileyo.

I didn't answer him...

Sandile: what are you suspecting?

Me: uses'bhedlele mos, she was shot...long story short, I had to rush her to the hospital because her wound was bleeding. So I found roses next to ezi

flowers bendimthengele zona and when I asked about them umts hana wakhe said zithengwe nguye but there's something off about them.

Sandile: you think she's seeing someone else?

Me: I think someone else might have bought them, and I suspect la gqirha wakhe.

Sandile: but u gqirha is not allowed to have any relationship with his patient.

Me: exactly my thoughts, but I can't put it past him. I don't know why.

We sat there in silence...

Sandile: heh mfethu, angayenza lonto lamntana? Like, nyhani?

Me: I don't know Sandile mfethu, she was hurt when she found out I cheated on her so she could act kuba ese hurt but I know she'd never do that in her right minds.

Sandile: who did you cheat with?

Me: that's not important.

Sandile: ngula Nthabis eng. Ndiyaxoka?

I kept quiet...

Sandile: I knew it.

Me: it was a mistake, that I regret nangoku.

Sandile: I told you to tell Mas'x lamtana uyamdlala...

Me: I'm not gonna do that, makazibonele.

Sandile: I understand mfethu and I won't push, ningamadoda nobabini and niyayazi into eni yenzayo...and ndiyakubona mfethu ikuphethe kakubi leeway.

Me: iyandi stress'a bra. And I'm going to Canada ngoms o kuyo yonke lonto.

Sandile: do you want me to keep an eye on her? See what I can find?

Me: what if she sees you athi uyam'stalker or ndimlandelisa ngabantu so that means I don't trust her kodwa ikwandim ommoshileyo?

Sandile: awundithembanga na Nko mfethu? Why would I sabotage you ndizibhaqise?

Me: mfethu, this is not easy kwa ukuyicinga kwamna. Ndiyamthanda lamntana Sandile bra, ndimthanda nyhani.

Wathula...

Me: I wouldn't really blame her if she found comfort in someone else but unlike anyone I've ever dated, she's one that I'd fight for. I don't really care what are the costs kodwa trust me mfethu, I cannot and will not lose her.

Sandile: ndiyakuva mfethu.

Hay u Cassandra akanondenzela lonto kodwa.

Me: khayeke mfethu ndihambe...do what you can do, angakubhaqi qha otherwise kuyaw'be kuphele umzi.

Sandile: ndithembe mfethu, I'll never do anything to jeopardize your relationship. I hate seeing this side of you noba ke ndingakuthuka ndithini.

I picked myself up and walked out the door, nigga walked me to my car, we hugged as I left his house and drove to my place. Ndafika and packed my bags, made food, had ukutya and just lay on my bed. I decided to call Cass...hay I had uvalo olungavumiyo tu uphela, the more I think about the tense atmosphere we had earlier, the more everything just made sense ngale logic ndinayo.

Cass: baby?

Me: hey...

Cass: hey...utheni wa down kangaka?

I sighed...

Me: I don't know.

Cass: are you nervous about your trip?

Me: I think I'm nervous about leaving you esibhedlele, I mean, as your boyfriend I'm supposed to be there with you.

Cass: but kaloku you're not just my boyfriend. You're a businessman as well.

Ndathula...

Cass: don't worry about it baby, I'll be fine and I understand lemali yezi baecation ayiveli izizele you have to work for it.

Me: baby?

Cass: mh?

Me: there's something bothering me and I just wanna clear my conscious not that I don't trust you but it's bothering me. Okay?

Cass: oh-kay

I sat up...

Me: what's going on?

Cass: where?

Me: with us?

Cass: last time I checked, nothing was really going on besides us being in a relationship. Or am I missing something?

Me: baby ngoku bendilapho you seemed too happy for me to go, and I know you said that your nephew bought you the roses but umoya wam awuvumi tu. Kwenzeka ntoni Cassandra?

Cass: okay, please make me understand this... you tell me that uyahamba for a business trip, and you

expected me to cry?

Me: no I didn't, but you were just too happy baby and nawe you couldn't hide it.

Cass: suhamba ke Nkosinathi.

Me: you know andizokwazi unghambi.

Cass: kanti ufuna ndithi ke?

Ndathula...her reaction was really sending red flags in my head.

Cass: xa uzond'bona k'sasa please buy me the pink and white roses, ziyafa ezi zilapha, and instead of chocolate please buy me a book to read for xandidiniwe kubukela ii movies.

Me: ba-

Cass: oh and, please bring me your hotwater bottle, it gets cold here at night.

I sighed...she was doing this deliberately ngoku ayaziyo ukuba andizokwazi ukuza nazo zonke ezi zinto athetha ngazo. She was just throwing me off on purpose.

Cass: hello?

Me: I'm still here.

Cass: dude what's wrong? What's bothering you le ikwenza undi doubt'e all of a sudden?

Me: baby asizange sanqatyelwa ncoko, no matter how many days we spend together, ngoku bendizokubona kwavela kwathuleka nje ngathi mntu ngamnye ukwiingcinga zakhe. That doesn't bother you?

Cass: what bothers me is that I'm in a hospital bed kodwa abanye abantwana bayafunda. Qha.

Me: I'm sorry, I know akhange uzicelele ukubalapho.

Cass: exactly, akhange ndizicelele but I'm here and I have to put on a brave face nakuwe ke mvanje so that ndingacaci ukuba I'm hurting because it might

make you wonder how committed I am kwi relationship yethu.

Me: baby that's not what I said.

Cass: I get it, I really do and it's okay wethu.

Me: Babe?

Cass: look, go to Canada and let me recover.

Hopefully by the time you return ndizobe sendiphumile apha because I feel like even if you do trust me (which I've never given a reason not to) but you somehow do not trust lendawo ndikuyo.

Me: I didn't say I don't trust you.

Cass: but you're making me feel like I've been dishonest with you or rather in this relationship.

Me: last time I checked we were open and honest in this relationship, so because of that I have to tell you xandinezinto ezindenza ndinga feel'I right. Likewise with you.

Cass: so the roses make you uncomfortable? Is that what you're saying?

Me: yes. Because I didn't buy you roses, and I have

a strong feeling that u Aphiwe didn't buy you roses too qha he was trying to cover up something.

Cass: yintoni ke babe isomething?

Me: yilento ndingayaziyo babe.

Cass: okay fine, I'll dispose them.

Me: why?

Cass: because they make you uncomfortable.

Me: you don't get the point, do you?

Cass: I don't think you get it yaz baby, but as I said before, it's okay.

There was really no point of this conversation...she wasn't budging and I didn't have proof of what I was feeling, I had no leg to stand on.

Me: I love you.

Cass: wow.

Me: ukuthetha ngento engandihlelisanga kakuhle

doesn't mean I love you any less, ndiyakuthanda and that is not gonna change.

Cass: okay.

Me: ulale kakuhle.

Cass: travel safe.

Me: enkosi.

I hung up...I have a feeling that we hung up at the same time though. Uyazazi ii red flags? Mnk.

[06/26, 14:55] : #Nkosinathi_28

I think ndiye ndalalela kulonto yocinga lento ndiyivayo, when I woke up, I prepared for my trip and left. In as much as I would have loved to see her before ndihambe I just decided not to, I went straight to the airport, flew to Canada and proceeded with my business. After signing with the franchise owner we went on to a bigger deal and that's where we spent most of the day, I knew I wouldn't be reachable as yet because I had not activated my Canadian number, so my work mode

was activated. I single handedly closed off three more deals, in one day while the twins went together to close off a club deal. We gathered in my hotel room to celebrate...

Khanya: you ordered a Moet?

Me: it's celebration time, why not?

Khanya: uy'thanda unje imali, you're not one to celebrate before we see the digits in the bank.

Khaya: khamyeke mfondini yho.

Khanya: hay suka he's got women stress lo.

Khaya: hahaha!! Haike, andingeni ndawo.

Me: Khanya mfethu hlukana nam.

Khanya: but I'm right, right?

Me: yes, you're right.

They both looked at each other without saying a word...

Me: I think ndishay'wa nge stina gents.

Khanya: why do you say?

I narrated the story to them...

Khaya: and you came here, leaving whosoever is buying her roses with her? So vele ubanika ichance to do lento yabo?

Khanya: u right wena mfethu, you're not giving them a chance to do anything they don't wanna do. You're merely carrying on with YOUR life, akho business zizakuma just because a woman chooses to be ungrateful and unfaithful.

Khaya: Khanya uyamva phofu uta Nko or you're just talking to sound relevant?

Khanya: ndimvile mos ba uthi he cheated first, she said she forgave him...kengoku yintoni emenza ukuba a cheat'e when she said she forgave him? xa ezazi ukuba akaxolanga she should have just

dumped him qha.

Khaya: mh.

Now that they were quiet, I chipped in my two cents...

Me: I am here because I had to be here.

Khaya: okay, you're done here. Hamba ke?

Me: nah, not here.

Khaya: why not?

Me: I need a break, I'm tired.

Khanya: I know you said you still love her but do you still want to be in that relationship with her?

Me: that's what I want to establish, I know I came here saying ewe ndisafuna but now that I'm here, I have to think about that. Like, really think about it.

Khaya: then we need to give you time, you need time to weigh your options. Nguwe umntu

othandana naye, thina iingcebiso zethu don't really matter. The final decision lies with you.

Me: thanks gents.

Well we soma had dinner, drank that bottle of Moet in celebration of our winnings and signings then they went their separate ways. I was left alone in my hotel room, I drank more alcohol the whole night because I knew I had no other meetings following day. I was a man drinking his sorrows away, in peace, in a foreign country. I woke up the following day with loads of messages from her ku Whats App, asking ndihambe njani, why are my phones on voicemail...she left loads of voicenotes. I went to shower, brushed my teeth and then ordered breakfast...then I called her

Cass: Cassandra speaking, hello?

Me: hey.

Cass: Nkosinathi? Wow, hey.

Me: I just saw your messages, sorry I didn't call yesterday, I got busy.

Cass: I can imagine...you sound tired. You okay?

Me: I'm cool. You good?

Wathula...

Me: babe?

Cass: I'm okay...ndiyakukhumbula qha. Ingathi kudala umnkile.

Me: ndiyakukhumbula nam...

Cass: but?

Me: I still feel like there's something you're hiding from me and I don't know how to feel about that.

She sighed...

Me: I'm not planning a fight here, I'm just being

honest with you.

Cass: I understand, and I'm sorry.

Me: for what?

Cass: for what I'm about to tell you.

I froze...

Suddenly ndavela ndabila...just in time as my food was delivered.

Me: oh-kay.

Cass: good news first or bad news?

Me: bad k'qala.

Cass: okay...I kissed another man.

Me: who? When?

Cass: my doctor...I mean, the doctor.

Me: wow.

Cass: and yes, he bought me the roses, I just didn't

want to upset you.

Me: why?

Cass: I don't know.

Me: you don't know why you kissed him or why he bought you roses? But you accepted them and lied straight to my face without even blinking twice.

Wathula...

Me: baby you didn't lie once, you continued to lie to me trying by all means to make me feel stupid ndibe ndikuxelela what I'm feeling.

Cass: I didn't try by all means to make you feel anyway rather than that I just wanted you to feel what I felt when I found out about you and Nthabiseng.

Me: so you didn't forgive me, you were just playing mind games?

Cass: you want an honest answer babe?

Me: heh haikengoku. Are we playing mind games now, again?

Cass: okay. Truth is, I forgave you, but when he made advances I didn't see the need to not entertain him...he made me feel good.

Me: are you happy now?

Cass: can we move on to the good news?

Me: before that, are you happy now that the scores are settled?

Cass: not really...

Me: why?

Cass: it's not like I cheated on you...I only kissed the guy.

Me: and that should make me feel better?

Cass: no, but babe...I didn't sleep with him, at least that should count for something.

Hehe!

Hay I knew that exact moment ayikho into yokuthi umntu uyamazi, to think that she lied straight to my face without blinking twice, with no conscious, nothing. She blatantly lied with a straight face and now she thinks akufani because she didn't sleep with the doctor?

Me: so what do we do now?

Cass: andiwuva lombuzo wakho.

Me: Cassandra you just admitted to me that you have been frolicking your doctor, who bought you the roses in your room right now and you expect us to just continue as if nothing happened? As if all is well?

Cass: oh...so what do you suggest we do?

Me: I don't think we want to be in this relationship altogether, maybe we should just take a break and reevaluate.

Wathula again...

Me: obuya kwam I'll bring the rest of your things.

Cass: wait...help me understand this: you cheated with your ex and I forgave you, I kissed a man and you're dumping me?

Me: its not about the kiss...its about you being comfortable in speaking lies straight to my face.

Cass: but you were also not upfront with your cheating, I had to hear it from her!

Me: but when you asked, I confessed! That's the difference between us, I didn't lie to you, I admitted my mistake...wena you lied to me meaning it wasn't a mistake, you were intentional.

Cass: so that's it?

Me: yes...I'm sorry but hay shame I can't. I don't wanna wonder what else you're lying to me about every time we have a conversation.

Cass: you're not even willing to try?

Me: no babe, I'm sorry.

Cass: hm...okay.

Me: see you when I come back.

Cass: kay.

I hung up and I felt my eyes prickly as tears came out of the corners...I knew I wasn't seeing things, I wasn't being stupid or unreasonable. My instinct never lies to me it wasn't gonna start now. After a few minutes I collected myself and called Sandile...

Sandile: ntwana!

Me: abort mission.

Sandile: heh?

Me: Cassandra has confessed to my suspicions so drop whatever digging you were gonna do.

Sandile: so you were right? La chap iyamfumana?

Me: khayeka bra, I'll talk to you obuya kwam.

Sandile: harde mfethu.

Me: sho ntwana.

I hung up...

It is only after that phone call that I remembered she also had some good news to share...so I called her back, just out of curiosity. And she answered.

Cass: mh?

Me: you had good news to share?

Cass: no, I'm good.

Me: I know you're good, but you wanted to share the good news with me, you can still share.

Cass: I no longer wanna share them with you kaloku ngoku so...

Me: u sure?

Cass: pretty much.

Me: okay then, cheers.

Cass: sharp.

She hung up...

You know I expected those loooong texts ze breakup imini yonke but andafumana nenye, like she didn't even contest the breakup. I felt used and tossed into the rubbish bin. I kept on checking my phone, social media accounts, nothing. No update, no inbox yezithuko...nothing. I won't lie, I was disappointed. I thought she'd react in a much emotional way than this cold one...but then, it is what it is. Right?

[06/26, 14:56] : #Nkosinathi_29

I spent about three weeks, close to a month in Canada. Knowing that she's in hospital wasn't reason enough for me to rush home, she was no longer my responsibility now. The doctor can take care of her all he wants... I actually didn't give a rats ass what happened to her because kucacile that she's vile. Worse part of this is the fact that she didn't apologize, she didn't seem remorseful one bit.

Yes, I cheated but when she found out, I apologized... I might not have done it immediately, but I eventually did. I didn't continue lying to her face as if she's stupid... I respected her to some extent.

When I eventually decided to go back to South Africa, I just decided to start at the hospital ndiyobona le chap, I knew that Cass could have been released already. I just wanted to see the guy and maybe hear his intentions ngo Cassandra... I'm not really sure but I drove there, parked and walked up to the reception desk.

Receptionist: Hello sir, how can I help you?

Me: I'm looking for Dr Sirhonyi.

Receptionist: oh he's not available sir.

Me: when will he will be available?

Receptionist: I can't really say, but he's not booked for this week at all.

Me: he only comes to work when he's booked?

Receptionist: he doesn't work here, he's only available here on call sir, can I take a message for him and pass it on when he comes around?

Me: so he's not a resident doctor?

Receptionist: no sir, Dr Sirhonyi has his own practice. He only comes in when he's called for special cases.

Me: where is his own practice located?

Receptionist: here's his business card sir, you can call him.

Me: thank you...

She gave me the card, I took it and walked back out. Drove to my place and went upstairs to start packing impahla zika Cass ezi bezishiyekile only to find them gone. I looked everywhere, there was no trace of her, not even an earring so I called Asenathi kuba ndiyazi that she's got the gate remote and I knew that Cass had her own spare key for the front

door.

Asenathi: someone is back in town.

Me: yep, unjani?

Asenathi: I'm relaxed and happily engaged, wena unjani?

Me: I'm great.

Asenathi: you sound great.

I chuckled.

Me: listen, did you by any chance come to my place while I was gone?

Asenathi: no but Cass came to fetch the remote ndamnika she wanted impahla zakhe uthe unas o esase mnyango. But uye wayibuyisa same day.

Me: ooh okay, haike sharp.

Asenathi: sho, uzaw'za nini ngapha?

Me: ndizojikela today.

Asenathi: sharp ke.

I hung up...went back downstairs, grabbed my keys and as soon as I took a step outside, I decided not to. I was gonna go fetch my key from her...so instead of driving all the way, I called her. It rang for long and she didn't answer until it went to voice mail, but I called again, she answered... Whispering.

Cass: Nkosinathi?

Me: why are you whispering?

Cass: because I'm in class.

Me: oh...sorry.

Cass: ufuna ntoni?

Me: my key?

Cass: under your welcome mat. Front door.

Me: oh, thanks.

Cass: sharp.

Me: are yo-

Then she hung up.

That shit hurt, it cut deep.

I swallowed that lump and walked back to the door, found my key under the mat as she said. I went back to my couch kwangona ingenayo yonke lento.

Me: so nyhani we broke up? Nje kanjalo?

Ndavela ndayinto ethetha yodwa...

Me: and she didn't even fight for us?

I really didn't expect lendlela izinto ziphele ngayo...

Now that I'm back, I didn't even have that IDC attitude anymore. I knew deep down that I still loved

her and for some reason I wanted to go to her and plead that we make things right... I wanted to fight for us but the fact that she lied kept on springing up to the front of my head. How could she be so chilled exoka? Fuck!

I avoided going anywhere near her campus or her place for a month, eventually went to Pretoria for about two weeks and Cape Town for three weeks meaning for three months (plus) I didn't see her. I decided that it was really over and this time around bendingafuni kwanto ezandidibanisa namantombi, all I vowed to do was to grind harder and make money qha, money made me happy even though I couldn't cuddle it at night but it sure made me happy. That's a fact. We prepared for umts hato ka Asenathi... She sent out invitations and on the day of the wedding I rocked up with my friends, no girls in sight. As Asenathi othanda iindaba she looked at me and called me aside...

Me: what's up?

Asenathi: please don't tell me you broke up with her.

Me: I did.

Asenathi: why?

Me: we cheated on each other, broke the trust.

Asenathi: she'd never cheat on you unless you cheated on her first.

Me: what difference does that make, point is, we both broke the trust in that relationship and we called it quits.

Asenathi: wow, and you're so chilled about it.

Yenzeke nini lento?

Me: while I was in Canada... Three months ago.

She didn't answer me but she looked upset... Well she was upset, she left me standing there and walked back to her people. It was no longer hurting ngoku so I didn't give AF.

Second day of the wedding, which was traditional wedding I was sent to Greenacres to buy izinto that were short for ukupheka... Bonke oomakazi bethu were home, kupheka bona ne friends zabo. It was pas dt 12, drove out and went to get ezizinto... I bought everything, ndayozifaka in my car then I went back to grab myself something to eat on the way, and then I bumped onto Cassandra and his sisters: Siki, Cindy and Onele. My eyes locked with Cindy's eyes and I felt hatred in there... Her eyes were fuming, I swallowed hard and greeted them...

Me: molweni.

Siki: Nko, u sharp?

Siki and Onele responded... J ust the two of them.

Me: ndi sharp sisi unjani?

Siki: all good... Kuhle ukubona.

Me: Kuhle ukunibona nani. Cass?

Cass: Nkosinathi.

Me: u righ-

And then my eyes fell onto her belly... She was pregnant and showing. Even though it wasn't big but it was showing. Ndavela ndanesifuthufuthu. I looked at her, she didn't blink one bit she just looked at me with that "what's your game" attitude.

Me: you're pregnant?

Cass: yes and bye... Masambeni guys.

She tried to walk away, I grabbed her wrist and her sister jumped in.

Cindy: don't you dare!

I immediately let go of her hand...

Me: I'm sorry... Can we talk, five minutes?

Cindy: we don't have five minutes to spare you. You know where she lives, you know her campus... Find her there when we're not there.

Me: Cindy please.

Cindy: hay fokof, get lost or go back to Canada. You're not needed here.

She pulled Cassandra's arm and they all walked away... I couldn't believe what I just saw. Even though Cass might have looked at me with that "what's your game" face but I could tell when her sister shut me down she got upset but ke she couldn't stand up for me... Or she didn't want to. Andiyazi.

I didn't even buy lento bendizoyithenga, I just went back to my car and drove home. Imini yonke ndingulowo ke unengcwangu... Until past eight in

the evening ndazincama and drove to her place, I knew I would never be able to sleep ndingathethanga naye. I stopped at the gate and called her... She took her time but she answered.

Cass: Nkosinathi?

Me: ndcela uphume or undivulele I need to talk to you.

Cass: I'm in bed already, what's so urgent?

Me: bab- Cassandra please.

Cass: yintoni le ingaka sizothetha ngayo now all of a sudden? You broke up with me three months ago. Remember?

Me: who's the father?

Cass: that's none of your business.

Me: Cassandra who's the father of that baby you're carrying?

Cass: I'm carrying the baby, right? So wena uhlupheka ndawni?

I felt my chest closing in... She was just trying to tick me off. Deliberately.

Me: Cassandra?

Cass: Nkosinathi, ndcela ulala kwam torho. I'm writing a test ngoms o.

Me: the question is very simple, ndikuyeke.

Cass: and I answered you, ungenaphi? Ndim omithiyo, not you, not Nthabis eng and certainly not your sister. Ungenaphi kengoku?

I hung up.

I was angry because I knew she's carrying umntanam... These were the good news she wanted to share with me before I broke up with her and now she was gonna use lomntana to punish me. Ndingabikho ebomini bomntana... In his development. That's the only explanation... And maybe that's what her sisters adviced her to do. I

started my car and drove off...

Me: ndizobuya... If that's my child I'm gonna be involved, one way or the other.

Again, I'm talking to myself.

Iyanqwakuzisa nyhani into ye relationships mos.

I drove to one of my nearby clubs ndanxila kwasa phandle, a cab was called for me and it took my home ndafika ndalala on one of the couches.

Utywala baphela entloko towards the late afternoon approaching evening...

I went to bath, cleaned up and drove to her place again. As I drove closer, a car was driving out so I waited for it then I drove in right after it. Parked and walked up to her door, locked. So I called her because she should have already been out of class by then...

Cass: I'm gonna block you kes ana if uzandihlukumeza in my own phone kanjena.

Me: I'm at your place, thought we could talk ngoku kusemini since you couldn't talk last night.

Cass: I'm not home.

Me: I've already established that, ndilapha e mnyango. What time will you be back?

Cass: I will not be back.

I swear my heart stopped beating... So uzo outa nomntanam? What the fuck?

Me: pardon?

Cass: I will not be back.

Me: why?

Cass: that's none of your business.

Me: Cassandra?

Cass: Nkosinathi.

Me: awuzobuya uzoyaphi?

Cass: that's none of your business, as stated before.

Me: so that's how it's gonna be now?

Cass: that's how it's been for the last three months babe, I've learnt to survive in your absence and I've realized that I can actually do it.

Me: okay fine... Then please answer me this one question ndikuyeke.

Cass: shoot.

Me: am I the father?

Cass: no.

Me: are you sure?

Cass: that's a second question.

Me: fuck it man Cassandra just answer the damn question, are you sure na? Because if I'm the father, I demand to be involved in my child's life. You can't use umntanam to get back to me, akangeni ndawo kukwahlukana kwethu.

Cass: go home, take a cigar and a glass of whiskey on the rocks, blow off some steam and go to bed.

Then she hung up...

I walked back to my car.. Got in and started the engine, only to realize that I didn't have indlela yophuma... I got out of the car and went to knock in one of the flats closer to the gate ndacela uvulelwa and the lady was kind enough. I drove out and went to Sandile's place... I parked on his front gate but before I even called him, I decided to just drive home. There was nothing he could do for me right now.

[06/26, 14:56] : #Nkosinathi_30

When I got home I didn't know whether to cook, go to the gym or just take that cigar and whiskey she suggested in sarcasm to blow off this steam. I sat down on the stoop with bottled water trying to think how I'm gonna do this...I was now even more convinced that she's carrying my child. Believed

her when she said she only kissed the doctor, I honestly believed her and judging by ubuncinci besisunyhani it had to be mine. Somehow in all of this, I felt like she was also hurting, ekugqibeleni kwe voice yakhe while we were talking on the phone even though she kept on shutting me out, I felt like she was hurting. I texted her...because I knew she's not gonna answer my call now.

“Cass please, all I wanna do is be there for you and the child, yes s/he might not necessarily need me right now but you will. The doctor's appointments, medication, cravings? Please. I want to do all of that, when s/he's born I want to play my part even if we're not together but please do not shut me out of my child's life ndiyakucela. Despite everything we've put each other through I still love you, you don't have to admit it...but I know you also do. Of course that's beside the point, can we meet so that we can talk? Please?”

I clicked send and waited...

Uyakwazi ukulinda ukuza kuka Nxele?

I waited ndancama and decided to just hit the gym because this whole thing was stressing me out, came back and attended to my laundry, cleaned my house and cooked. Later, I decided to call one of her brothers..that was my last resort. My last hope.

Lionel: heita Nko, u grand?

Okay, the enthusiasm indicated that he could not know what's going on. Which would be an advantage for me.

Me: Groot man, ndi grand. Unjani wena bhudda?

Lionel: I'm good my man, what's up? Unqabile.

Me: ey kuxakeka mna bhuti...I need your help though.

Lionel: okay, shout.

Me: I uhm broke up with Cass, about three months ago...

Lionel: oh-kay.

Me: I just found out that she's pregnant, I know the child is mine even though she's not coming up-front with that information.

Lionel: mh.

Me: I just need to confirm this...I want to be part of the child's life, kakhulu and she knows that. Please talk to her, ndiyakucela bra.

Lionel: hay ndiyakuva ntwana, and I can tell you're hurting.

Me: yho bra!

Lionel: she's a difficult one to deal with ndiyamazi..so tell me, where have you been for the past three months? Lento kungona uyaziyo ngoku ukuba she's pregnant?

Me: I stayed in Canada after we broke up...I needed time off, to breathe and evaluate things with a cleaner and fresher mind. Away from everything.

Lionel: Undive kakuhle I'm not attacking you nor am I taking sides but I personally think your timing was off kuyo yonke nje lento. You went to Canada, obviously for business reasons, whilst in Canada ke nohlukana...ngoku nohlukanyo uyay'khumbula mos she's still in hospital? Ewe she didn't go there ngenxa yakho and ke akayo responsibility yakho but she knew that noba awukho phambi kwakhe, she has your full emotional support. Uyamazi akangomntu uthanda uxhomekeka but it was easier for her to depend on you because you're her boyfriend. I mean were. From inxeba lakhe being drained uye wakhutshwa I think a week after nohlukene only to be admitted again because it had an infection and this time around she spent an entire month getting fungus removed from the wound, treating it.

I didn't know this...phofu bendizoyazi njani? Mnxim.

Lionel: she's one of those people ke ekuthiwa

banomlambo, umntu nje ngeqhakuva elincinci sebhidla ide ibengathi lithumba so I understood why engena ephuma esibhedlele ngenxa yelinxeba lakhe.

Me: I'm sorry I wasn't there for her...

Lionel: it's okay ntwana, bes enohlukene. We cannot hold that against you.

Me: but when did she find out about the pregnancy?

Lionel: immediately after you left, apparently she was gonna tell you the day you broke things off so she decided not to.

Me: why? I mean, she knows ndiyamfuna umntana, and ndimfuna naye more than anyone else.

Lionel: when u Steve embuza ke kutheni engakuxeleli she said she doesn't wanna trap you into this pregnancy.

Me: trap me?

Lionel: she's got this idea that you want a perfect family, it's something you've always wanted she says. To have a child in a stable relationship which

she doesn't think ya'll can have since ya'll broke up. Uthi ke akafunanga ubangathi ufuna imali yakho or ufuna nibuyelani...last time I spoke to her she was even considering to abort.

I felt a sharp pain in my heart...

Why would she wanna put me through that?

Did she hate me that much? Uyayazi what I went through u Cassandra, why would she even consider an abortion? I had this huge bitter lump in my throat.

Me: but that's being unfair, why would she conclude for me eyazi ba ndiyamfuna umntana?

Lionel: I cannot answer for her ke ntwana...what I know is that akafuni noba lisiwe ityala kokwenu because last week ebethethe notata and she asked us to respect her decisions most of which asikazazi ukuba ude wagqiba entweni.

Me: ndcela umzame ke bhuti avume uthetha nam... that's all I'm asking. Ndfuna nje uthetha naye,

akafuni, I've been trying since I saw them at the mall akafuni tu.

Lionel: I'll talk to one of her sisters, baselapho e Bhayi.

Me: ingabingo Cindy, I don't think I'm her favorite right now.

Lionel: hahaha! Don't mind that one, she's only mad that you got her lil sis pregnant a few months before her graduation. I'm also mad at you for that, I trusted nizoba responsible, this came as a shocker.

Me: oh crap! I'm sorry. We're sorry.

Lionel: sekwenzekile chap...asinobasathini.

I felt his disappointment in my heart...that shit hit hard. We concluded on our conversation, he promised to get one of Cass's sisters to convince her to talk to me. That was my only hope because I didn't want to be dramatic about this, I didn't wanna go wait for her on campus or at the library coz ndiyawazi amaxesha wakhe.

To think she wanted to abort...oh my God. I checked my phone, she still had not answered me. still sitting there feeling numb, a call came through from an unknown number.

Me: Mr Dakumba speaking, ndingakunceda njani?

Onele: ta Nko, u right?

Me: ndi sharp, u right wena?

Onele: I'm good, uthetha no Onele.

Me: Onele... Cass's sister?

Onele: yes.

Me: oh Great! Uphi u Cassandra?

Onele: that's why I called you...she's at the library bane group project that they are busy with.

Me: oh-kay, uzophuma ayephi? I really need to talk to her Onele.

Onele: yhima kaloku bhuti...I called.

Me: okay... uxolo. What's up?

Onele: She's got a booking e Marie Stopes ngoms o... ndibhage i-confirmation letter in her laptop bag just now.

Me: kwenziwani ke apho?

Onele: oh God... you can Google the clinic in your own time ke bra just try by all means to get to her namhlanje before she goes there. Please, and don't mention this call.

Me: okay... enkosi.

Onele: sharp bra. Remember not to mention me, angandibulala u Cassandra if she finds out I called you.

Me: I promise I won't. Enkosi Onele, kakhulu.

She hung up...

I went on Google and my mind almost blasted when I saw what was done kule Marie Stopes, I grabbed

my keys and drove to the library ndalinda pha. I was really having mini-panic attacks ngoku ndihleli kula moto. I was feeling hot even though all the windows were open...I drank the entire bottle and took a few breathing exercises just to calm me down. I spent about an hour sitting there waiting...she came out alone and walked towards the bus stop. I drove slowly out of where I had stopped and went to park right in front of her...I saw her facial expression and felt weak in the knees. Got out of the car and went to where she stood.

Took a deep breath...

Me: I'm sorry.

She looked up...her face cleared lanto ibindenze ndano valo while I was in the car.

She sat down and just looked down at her feet.

Me: I'm really sorry about everything that we've

gone through...that you've gone through. I'm sorry I wasn't there when you needed me and I'm actually sorry that I couldn't be there with you to celebrate the good news.

Cass: ufuna ntoni bra?

Me: I just want to be part of my baby's life...your life.

She looked up, my heart sank. She was hurting, maybe that's the reason she didn't wanna see me... akafuni ndimbone ba she's hurting yet pulling this strong façade over the phone.

Cass: you don't know what you want, ndcela undiyeke torho Nkos'nathi.

Me: Cassandra ndiyakucela, you know I love you.

Cass: so you're here NOW because you love me? Really?

Me: Yes, and because of the baby.

Cass: I told you this is not your baby.

Me: please don't say that.

Cass: there's my lift coming...see you around.

She got up and walked away...

Me: I know about your appointment at Marie Stopes ngoms o.

Cass: good for you.

Wakhaw'lela imoto ka sister wakhe, got in and drove away.

Azange ndaphelelwa ngamandla kanje.

Khona i-abortion iba legal at how many months?
She could be five months for heaven's sake?!

[06/26, 14:56] : #Nkosinathi_31

I got into my car and followed them, they drove around for about an hour and then she called...I

answered obviously. She was laughing so hard she had to take a breather in between her words and I could hear in the background her sister was spitting fire.

Me: Cassandra?

Cass: don't you have anything to do bra?

Me: I'm doing it right now.

Cass: you've been following us for the last hour, what exactly is your problem?

Me: Mamelala, I'm gonna follow you, I'm gonna stalk you, I'm gonna be a pain in your ass until you sit down and talk to me like a grown ass adult!

She laughed!

She fucken laughed, out loud!

Why the fuck was this entertaining to her?

Me: so this is funny to you?

Cass: you're funny, trust me.

Me: we'll see who's funny, wait and see.

I hung up.

And continued following them.

Because of traffic stops they lost me for about fifteen to thirty minutes so I located her by using "FIND MY FRIENDS" App...easy peasy. I found them parked next to a bus station this woman was driving such a big, beautiful black Chev, they were both outside of the car and she (Cassandra) was puking. I parked my small car right behind them, grabbed my water bottle and went out to her, Cindy came charging for me and slapped me right between my eyes. I only realized segqibile ba undiqhwabile but she wasn't my focus right now so I just grabbed her wrist and swayed her out of the way. I'm sure uyobetheka kula moto yakhe course I had enough strength to lift up a tow-truck. Ubetheka oku ubethekile, I heard the sound accompanied by a

cursing word.

I got to Cass and offered her water, well there was a bottle of water next to her but hey...

She took the water, drank and looked up shaking her head with a small laugh. She drank again and I was just mesmerized by the pregnancy glow, her skin was radiant and she had no make-up on. She sat down on the pavement a bit further from where she had puked, her sister came forth...

Cindy: yintoni ingxaki yakho Nkosinathi?

Me: right now? Nguwe.

Cindy: uyinja engena mqolo man, sies.

Me: is that what you tell your man as well?

Cindy: my man is a man honey, uyonela yinto anayo he doesn't go back to what he vomited.

Me: ah, so she told you about that? Did she also mention that she cheated as well? Since ya'll were

sharing?

Cindy: yep, she mentioned that she kissed that doctor and it felt good. And you know why? Because revenge is sweet.

Me: oh, so that's why she wasn't even apologetic about it? It seems like birds of the same feather flock together here.

Cindy: uphambene kodwa, ungavela unyamalale for an entire three months uthi gqi sew'funa kuviwe ngawe? Who do you think you are?

Me: Cindy, please neh, if you have nothing better to say shut up.

Cindy: fokofa Nkosinathi, phindela apho ubunyamalelele khona! We don't need you here, we've been doing great without you.

Me: kuthini unyamalala? Why are you talking as if I knew she's pregnant and then I decided to run away?

Cindy: if you wanted to know you would have known man, bloody excuse of a man.

I laughed and looked at her...

She was provoking me on purpose lo.

Me: okay first of all, awundazi Cindy neh? And nam andikwazi so don't you dare call me a bloody excuse of a man. Uyandiva? Secondly, andifuni kwa wena, ndifuna u Cassandra, lo umithi umntanam. Andikwazi ke njeng'ba ungu sebekhoinja yabafazi ukuba ungenaphi. Thirdly, ungaze uphinde, I mean it, ungaze uphinde ucinge okanye uphuphe ngokundifaka impama ever again. That would be the last thing you do ngezozandla zakho zicekeceke ingathi zidinga idrip, trust me on that. Lastly, khaw'fokofe I wanna talk to your sister without your shadow shading us from the sun.

Cindy: yinkunkuma owawuthande ngantoni lena wena?

Me: isendim inkukuma?

Cindy: hay voets ek zinxibe ukuba ziyak'lingana.

Me: iyakugezisa imali, okanye le blesser wendele

kuyo.

She laughed hysterically...typical Xhosa woman.

She looked at Cassandra...I could see unomsindo but uzibambile for some reason.

Cindy: uyafuna ush'yeka nalento yakho?

Cass: haike sisi.

Cindy: phendula umbuzo nontombi.

Cass: it's okay.

Cindy: call me when you're done.

Cass: sure. Love you.

She got into her car without responding...did I mentioned that she's driving a Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 Bison? Mathafakha reverse that fucken car straight into the GTi I was driving, I saw my bonnet

flying to the air...okay I knew she was mad but I didn't know she was that mad. I didn't even have the energy to run after her I just exhaled and sat down next to Cassandra in silence, she on the other hand was shocked. Her mouth hung open.

Me: caba ni spoilt pha kokwenu.

She didn't respond...qha ujonge imoto.

Cass: uhm...sorry about your car.

Me: she's gonna fix it, myeke.

Cass: yho u sisi.

After a minute, she drank water again...

Me: what's going with you? Why are you puking on the side of the road? U right?

Cass: I'm okay...just got dizzy and nauseas from lento beniyenza.

Me: okay...so are you now willing to talk?

She nod.

Me: sizothethela apha?

She took a deep breath, looking into space.

Me: I can call someone to come fetch us and tow the car.

Cass: what do you want us to talk about?

Me: everything.

Cass: nd'cela ube specific bra.

I took a breath...

Me: what will it take for us to be in the right place again?

Cass: yintoni i-right place kanene?

Me: I want us to try again...I would like us to try again.

Cass: as in relationship try again?

Me: yes.

Cass: yho.

Me: wothuswa yintoni kodwa uyayazi sohlukene ndisakuthanda, qha zizinto ke ezi ziye zenzeka ezibangele sohlukane.

Cass: and here I thought ufuna sithethe ngomntana.

Me: that too, you know how much I want kids, you know how much a want a family. Nawe, not with anyone else but nawe and now we've been given a chance ngalomntana to try again. Ndiyakucela ke baby, can you just go home and think about it.

She sighed...

Cass: I know how much you want a child, like, I know how much you want to make a family of your own. Ndikubonile kweza tests oko wawufuna sizenze...but I am not ready to have a child yet. I'm not fit enough even. Ewe we had unprotected sex, but I didn't think...I wasn't thinking ngalamzuzu man. I'm so angry at myself futhi because now I will not be able to graduate coz kaloku ndingulowo uzobe ephusha isis u esikhulu.

Me: you're not ready ewe I get that, but can I ask: are you keeping the baby?

Cass: ewe. Who said I'm not keeping the baby?

Me: kanti uyothini e Marie Stopes ngomso?

Cass: I have a check-up, utheni kuwe u Onele?

Me: uOnele?

She laughed...I tried my best not to give away.

Cass: she asked to use my laptop and I know that confirmation letter in in my laptop bag and besides, she's the only one who's on your side right now amongst my siblings. So obviously she told you about it.

Me: ebesoyika that you were going to abort...she said I should Google the clinic and nam that's what I saw first. Please don't shout at her.

Cass: hay wethu andinobasa khupha sisu mna ngoku noba ke andikho ready, I initially wanted to, after you said we should break up. But then, I decided if there's anything endiphuma nayo kule relationship, nantsi, ngulo mntana.

Me: thank you...for reconsidering.

Cass: I didn't do it for you.

Me: I know...but thank you anyway.

She smiled...looking at her belly.

I just looked at her...

Cass: he's moving.

Me: it's a boy? He's moving right now?

Cass: yeah...look

I looked at her belly, I saw movements and then she laughed touching her side. My hand automatically touched the same place and it felt magical. The movement lasted for a minute and then it died down...

Me: wow...isn't it too soon for movements?

Cass: movements start between 16 and 25 weeks, so no.

Me: and you are on?

Cass: 20.

Me: that's four months, right?

Cass: yes.

Me: I missed four months of my baby's

development.

She looked at me and then looked ahead...not saying a word. But I knew uyathetha ngaphakathi, I've been dating lomntu so I knew uyathetha and uphendula e left kwalento ndiy'thethayo qha she's probably not saying it out just for the sake of peace ngalomzuzu.

Me: what did you tell your siblings? I mean, you said I'm not their favorite person right now.

Cass: everything.

Me: and I happen to not be their favorite?

Cass: yes, they're MY siblings, not yours.

Me: kodwa barongo, before judging me they should put themselves in my shoes.

Cass: you had sex with your ex, and not once. Then you came back, pretended nothing happened, booked us a week away, making me believe that it's for us kanti you knew it was your way of easing

your guilt. Yeah, they should put themselves in your shoes.

Me: you kissed that dude and didn't show remorse. That's my problem, you didn't show remorse
Cassandra...awukho ngcono tu. In fact siyafana.

Cass: I never said ndingcono kunawe mna and andihoyanga kuba ngcono ke futhi.

Me: good now can we forgive, forget and move on?

Cass: a lot has happened in your absence...I don't think I want to be in any relationship right now. I'm sorry.

Me: what happened?

Cass: can we just focus on this child ngoku? That's why you're here, right?

Me: Cass, what happened?

She tried to get up, I helped her.

Wavuthulula ilokhwe yakhe as she took out her phone, I held her hand in an attempt to stop her coz

I knew she was gonna call u Cindy to come fetch her.

Me: please, tell me what happened?

Cass: it's nothing to concern yourself about...

Me: nd'cela ume ngofounela u sis wakho.

Cass: I'm tired bra and ixesha lam lotya ii meds lisondele so I really should get going.

Me: I'll take you home...just lemme talk finish.

She looked at my car and laughed, okay I laughed too but I was gonna call someone to come fetch us anyway.

Me: I said I'll take you home, leave my car alone.

Cass: I don't want you to take me home, ufuna uvele uthi gqi whenever you feel like it.

Me: as if andikwazi uhlalaphi?

Cass: that's part of the "a lot has happened"
kesana...

Me: so awusahlali kulandawo? Where have you
moved to?

Cass: I'm not telling you Nkosinathi, let's leave it like
that.

Me: okay...can I come with you ke ngomso to your
appointment?

Cass: to make sure I don't abort? Sure.

I ignored that silly first answer...

Me: have you thought of names?

Cass: no...not yet.

I wanted to ask her why she didn't want her family
iyofaka ityala...qha I didn't know how to. I didn't
want to fight with her and for some reason she
wasn't as mad as I thought she'd be, she was more

calm and chilled today.

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She put her phone back in the bag.

Me: I uhm, spoke to your brother, Lionel.

Cass: mh.

Me: uthi you don't want your dad ayofaka ityala.

Cass: then I'd be accused of ufuna imali yakho ngomntana. Never, makangayi nangoku.

Me: you'll be accused by who?

Cass: uqala kula sister wakho and whoever feels like accusing me, including you.

Me: hay awuphilanga kodwa. Okanye kokumitha?

Cass: uthini?

Me: ndithi awuphilanga. Kutheni ndizoqala ngoku ucing'ba ufuna imali yam when I've had to force you most times to take it? Even at the beginning of our

relationship?

Cass: hay andikwazi wethu Nkos'nathi. But I know that my child will be fine with or without you in his life.

Me: uzoba fine with both his parents in his life lomntana Cass andra, kutheni uthetha as if I'm not gonna be in his life? Or are you planning to restrict me?

Cass: ndizothi ndiyenzela ntoni lonto kanene?

Me: I don't know...for whatever reason you can think of.

Cass: khaw'bize umntu chap azokuthatha, I'm calling my sister mna ngoku I'm done for the day.

Me: so you really don't want me to know where you live?

Cass: no...and stop that shit of tracing my phone kula Find Friend crap, stop it.

I smiled...I wanted to laugh, but I just smiled. I didn't know that she knew about the app.

She called her sister while I called Masixole to come fetch me, I couldn't call Sandile, ugqibele ngoku izinto bezi sour so ebezofika andithuke right in front of her for ukumenza muncu.

Me: what time is your appointment?

Cass: 9 am.

Me: okay.

We stood there...her phone rang, I figured (based on what I heard) that her sister was either not coming right now or she had a problem somewhere. Mas'x arrived in a Merc...I went to him,

Masixole: ola nja yam, iyeza i-tow bagqibo founa for directions.

Me: dankie chap. New car?

Masixole: my car is at the car wash, ndithathe eka Skhura upha endlini.

Me: ooh,thank you man.

Masixole: aningcembhe kude. Uhamba ngantoni yena u girl?

Me: she's waiting for her sister to pick her up.

Masixole: okay, khame ndiyogalela ifuel I'll be back.

Me: sharp.

I went back to Cass who was now standing there looking distressed.

Me: what's up?

Cass: she burst a tire, but uzo founela u Sis Siki adlule ngam.

Me: adlule ngawe evelaphi?

Cass: from work.

I looked at her, I thought these people came to visit but now if she's coming from work then she's

obviously living here.

Cass: don't ask.

Me: you can ride with us, if you want to.

Cass: if Ta Mas'x won't mind dropping me off at Greenacres.

Me: uyothini pha kodwa ugqibothi you need to get home in time for your meds?

She rolled her eyes...

Me: okay fine, he won't mind.

Cass: thanks.

Me: kutheni ungafuni ndikuncede?

Cass: oh Nkos'nathi torho, when I need help I know where to find you, trust me.

Me: you need help now, or awuziboni ba you need help?

Cass: you know what? Yeka, I'll catch a taxi to Greenacres.

Me: haibo!

Cass: but thank you for the offer... ungajike uthi I'm ungrateful.

Me: you're just being stubborn for nothing kengoku, you know very well that andizokwazi ukushiya apha.

Cass: I'm very much capable of waiting for a taxi ndedwa, I'm just pregnant, not paralyzed nor am I incompetent.

Me: I never said you're any of that... okay fine, we'll drop you off at Greenacres, no questions asked. No arguments.

Cass: no, sendi right. I'll catch a taxi.

Fuck!

Why the fuck was she doing this?

Masixole came back in time with the towing truck, my car was loaded and it left.

Masixole: masiyeni ke.

Me: babe?

Cass: hambani.

Me: sihamba nawe, please get in the car Cassandra.

She looked behind my shoulder and spoke to
Masixole

Cass: please tell your friend to go with you, I'll catch
a taxi.

Masixole: why? I don't mind taking you home.

Cass: I want to catch a taxi.

Me: it's late, andizokwazi ukushiya apha Cassandra.
Haibo!

Masixole: unyan'sile umjita, kulate ngoku let me
drop you off.

Cass: so nobabini aniyiva lento ndiyithethayo?

Masixole looked at me, I shrugged and got in the car.

He drove off sams hiya pha...after 5 minutes of driving in silence Masixole spoke up.

Masixole: nibuyelene?

Me: sizama lonto.

Masixole: ngowakho umntana? She looks pregnant.

Me: yeah, ngowam.

Masixole: u sure ngantoni kodwa usandobuya and you've been away for iinyanga ezintathu? And you said she cheated on you njena.

Me: I never told you anyth- oh u Sandile!

Masixole: haike uyayazi akhonto andifihlela yona umkhuluwa.

Me: mxm...yeah well I know.

Masixole: maybe you should ask her nenze i-DNA

mfethu, zikhohlakele ez'way, and uyambona nawe
ba udikiwe nguwe mhlaw'mbi uyamazi oyena tata
womntanakhe.

I didn't answer him...

Masixole: and nangoku angafunuhamba nathi
maybe uyayazi uzothathwa nguye.

Me: khaw'jike lemoto and take me back to her.

Masixole: what?

Me: ndizokubhatala the wasted petrol.

Wajika imoto...

Masixole: ufunum'bamba red handed kengoku?

Me: no, it's not safe for her to be there alone, if
anything happens to her I'll never forgive myself.

Masixole: akho nix ezokwenzeka yaz, kodwa ke
masambe boy.

We got there and she was still sitting there waiting, for some reason ii taxi beziqabile and it was getting cold. I got out of the car and told Mas'x to go then I went to sit next to her, ndamnika jacket yam and didn't say a word. She wore it...it might have been my imagination but I think I saw some change in the puffiness of her eyes, as if ebelila or something. But I wasn't gonna ask her that, I was actually hungry ke kuye wonke lo up and down bendimenza

Cass: thanks...

Me: sure.

She looked at me,

Cass: ubuyele ntoni?

Me: didn't want your sisters to find a reason to burn my house down.

She smiled, glad she found it humorous because I wasn't being serious.

Me: can we take a walk? I'm hungry.

Cass: sure.

We walked our two minute walk to Cassies Fast Food, ordered chicken burgers sobabini and we sat down.

Me: aw'zofuni drink?

Cass: nd'bawela ikofu. Or tea, anything warm.

I got up and went to the vending machine, came back with hot chocolate.

Cass: hehe! Burger ne hot chocolate? Enkosi

Me: it's the thought that counts actually, because

caffeine is bad for the baby.

Cass: uh-oh. Here we go...

Me: hay hay sundenza loomntu, I read that up. And andikho rongo for looking out for you nomntana wethu.

She drank up and didn't bother herself answering me...then her phone rang, she walked away towards the ladies room wahlala for more than 10 minutes. All this time ndiyatya mna, okutya kufikile mos, nguye ongekhooyo. She came back...sat down and started eating, her phone rang again, this time she answered while eating, I figured it's her sister because she told her where we were. Which now made me wonder who called before, lo umenze wahamba wayosabela iphone etoilet? Wathetha wagqiba, watya...then she took a breather

Cass: usisi will be here in about fifteen minutes use garage.

Me: no problem.

Cass: will you catch a lift with us?

Me: which one of your sisters is this one?

Cass: Siki.

Me: sure, if she won't mind.

Cass: she won't mind.

I looked at her, she was eating so carefree as if I don't even exist. That's the Cassandra I knew, she's a food lover. Always has been.

Cass: why are you looking at me like that?

Me: while I was gone, did you and the doctor do more than kissing?

She looked at me and laughed, what was funny?

Me: you keep on saying a lot has happened in my

absence and that's the only thing I can think of.

Cass: heh sana uxakekile.

Me: andixakekanga as such qha ndifuna uku understand'a where you're coming from nje'ba usithi you don't want to be in any relationship right now.

She stopped eating, cleaned up her mouth and looked at me.

Cass: it's no use trying to understand me.

Me: it's actually very useful, to me.

Cass: Okay mamela, I don't mind you coming to my check-ups with me, I don't mind you being excited over this, I don't mind you checking up on us every now and again, as long as you won't be a nuisance. I just do not want any commitment to anyone or anything right now.

Me: Cassandra I want us to date again, I want us to be abazali aba full time sobabini not leyokuba

omnye wethu abe ngumzali on weekends and on holidays.

Cass: our relationship has taken a lot from me Nkos'nathi, andikho ready. Emotionally and spiritually andikho ready nyhani.

Me: so how long must I wait for you to be ready ke?

Cass: you don't have to wait, you can go on with your life like you had for the past three months. As long as whoever you're dating or going to date will be okay when my son visits, and'funu hlukunyezela umntana mna.

Her sister walked in...

Me: I'm not satisfied zezi answers, but we'll continue le conversation ngomsa.

Cass: there's nothing more to say ke yazi.

Siki: molweni.

Me: Siki...

She looked at me with open arms, and a smile so I got up and hugged her as she congratulated me on becoming a father. Well, expectant father. We were almost done, so we finished up sahamba, they dropped me off and left...seemed like Cindy might have been the only sibling whom I was not a fave to. Unlike what Cassandra said, that Onele was the only one on my side.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_33

After they dropped me off, I took my other car the Ranger, and drove home. Ndimithisile mos, so mandiyozixela ke. When I got home ndafika kukho umama qha, she made food, couldn't say no. You never say no to moms food noba ungabe kanti uhluthi kangakanani you never say no to mom's food. After ndityile...

Mom: kutheni uxhwalekile nje? Uhlutshwa yintoni?

I chuckled † ♀ umntu uyamazi umntana wakhe.

Mom: Nathi?

Me: ndimithis ile mama.

Mom: kengoku kutheni wathi khunubembe? Umdala kaloku bhuti, kwakunini ngoko ndandilinde umzukulwana?

I didn't answer her...

Mom: Nkosinathi?

Me: ma?

Mom: yintoni le kanye kanye ikuhluphayo?

Me: ndifuna ukumts hata lomntu ndim'mithis ileyo.

Mom: qha?

Me: akafuni... She keeps on saying a lot has

happened since I left.

Mom: ngubani yena?

Me: Cassandra, the girl I came with pha kwa bhuti when kuqhekeziwe apha.

Mom: ooh mhle ke lamntana, and she's very calm. Ne character yakhe nje is very inviting... Kutheni engafuni ukuts hata?

I put the story down, every single detail. When I was done, she went to the kitchen, returned with her special chocolate cake and warm milk. That's all I needed, my heart was broken and her very own home baked cake was all I needed to feel better. My worst thought was u Cassandra saying she's now dating lagqirha okanye she's considering lonto I knew I'd never be able to handle that.

Mom: wagqibela nini u Sivu?

Me: yhu, it's been a while.

She nod...

Me: ubuzis wa yintoni mama?

Mom: ngoku ubumnkile, us ephes heya pha. Kufike abazali bakhe apha bezise umntwana.

Me: umntwana kabani?

Mom: wakho.

Me: andina mntwana mna mama.

Mom: aw'notsho xa unokum'bona... Ufana nawe nangonyathela.

I put my cake down and looked at her, she wasn't making any sense.

Me: Sivu was never pregnant mama, umthathaphi umntana ofana nam?

Mom: apparently she was pregnant but because

wawumane umkhumbuza ngo hlabisa, umnika ke nemali ye after pill, when she fell pregnant she decided to break up with you. Wemnika singekaveli isisu and luckily for her she had a premature delivery so umakazi wakhe offered to take the child azikhulisele because she couldn't have kids of her own, yavumelana ke ifamily kuba u Sivu wathi xa ebuzwa umithiswe ngubani akamazi utata womntana. She was asked kuba uyise wayefuna uzofaka ityala, as per norm apha ke esi Xhoseni.

I was looking at my mother... Iindlebe ezi zam ingathi zikhala umoya.

Mom: so umakazi wakhe ke uye wasweleka, she had cancer. Now the family had to decide ba uthwani umntana... Kanti ke ukufa kuka makazi akubanga na timing because she passed away a week after uSivu elotyoliwe ngokokuva kwam ke ebengakhange atsho kulendoda yakhe ukuba she has a child.

Me: yhima mama... U Sivu uyats hata?

Mom: utshatile.

Me: and then umntana?

Mom: simthathile kaloku, what choice did we have?

Me: where is he?

Mom: it's a she. Ukwabhuti wakho... Bendingekho this week ndibuye last night so I asked your brothers wife to watch over her, and when I called she seemed happy because bakhona abantwana bodlala phaya. Akufani nalapha.

Me: heh. Hay I don't believe this.

Mom: you can still do DNA tests to confirm everything, but ke ngowakho mntanam. Akabuzwa.

Me: how old is she mama?

Mom: I think una two years. I'll look for her birth certificate xa ebuyile.

Hey hay andiyazi....

Mom: u Dad'wenu ke ngondweba kwakhe she took a picture nalomntana and posted kwezizinto zenu yabonwa ngu Cassandra.

Me: what???

She didn't answer...

Me: mama uthi u Asenathi wenze ntoni?

Mom: calm down kaloku Ndoda... Seyidlulile yonke lento so it's no use getting upset over it now.

Me: I'm calm ma, trust me. I just wanna know what did Asenathi do?

Mom: ufotile no Sinathi wafaka kwezizinto zenu ebhalile ke ba "umntana ka bhuti wam", kuts ho yena ke xa ezozixela.

Me: U Sinathi ngu lomntana mama?

Mom: ewe bhuti.

Me: why would Ase do that singeka confirm anything? What if Sivu lied, that child is not mine?

Mom: I doubt it's a lie. But uzazibonela nawe.

This could be the reason why Cass endijikelezisa in one place.

Me: uthi u Asenathi what did Cass say?

Mom: she asked ba ngowakho na and Asenathi uyamazi ke nawe, wayitsala yande, yane frills...

Me: oh my God!

I got up and walked around the room...

Mom: in an attempt to make peace I called her here. Bendifuna uthetha naye in person ndimcacisele ngalomntana since ke sembonile and we didn't

know uzobuya nini kwa wena.

Me: you called who? Sivu?

Mom: Cassandra.

I stopped walking and looked at my mother... She called u Cassandra? To explain to her that I have umntana endingamaziyo? That I haven't met? All of this happened in just three months?

Mom: sambona ngoko ukuba she's pregnant, after ndithethile naye ndizama ke ukumcacisela that you also don't know about this child so she must not hold it against you, your brother asked her who's the father of the child she's carrying watsho wathi nguwe then we asked her what she's planning to do ngaye now that kukho lona umntana and seeing that abantu bakokwabo abakezi. I think ipotyeke apho ke...

Me: wait wait, you asked her what? What answer were you expecting guys? Hayini mama, hayini.

Haibo.

Mom: we wanted to know ukuba uyamfuna na lomntana, if akamfuni she had options on whether to abort kwangokuya inyanga bezisephantsi okanye athwale full term then andinike umntana ndizikhulisele as my own seeing that she's also a student.

Me: I don't believe this... Are we in some movie script or something?

Mom: Nathi, we cannot afford a repeat of this?!

Me: so mama beningenokwazi ukundilinda ndibuyeke?

Mom: sikulinde ithree months yonke kusonakala? Uphilile kakuhle?

Me: andalinto mama ni right ngomthatha umntana but to speak to Cassandra ndingekho? Niyiqale ngaphi?

She didn't answer me...

I sat down...

Mom: utatakho kind of had a fallout with one of her brothers ebemzisile when we called her.

I looked at her, my eyes almost as if they are gonna pop out.

Mom: he kind out said she must make an intelligent choice because you already have umntana, you don't need a second one. Your love for her child won't be the same as it will be for this one... Since lona ke eyilo special case.

Me: oh no! No! No!

Mom: u brother wakhe uphambene xakulapho ke... I didn't even know she was shot. You never mentioned that.

Me: mama umyeka njani utata athethe lonto?

Mom: but I don't have a remote control for your father's tongue, he speaks whatsoever that's in his mind.

Me: oh my God! That's why engafuni kuzofakwa ityala? That's why she said umntanakhe will be fine with or without me. Flip!

She looked at me... I was shaking ngumsindo. Utata uy'thetha njani into enjalo, in fact bonke man, banjani na abantu bas ekhaya?

Me: ngomphi lo brother wakhe who was here with her?

Mom: he introduced himself as Lionel. Well built and well spoken.

Yho haike aphela amathemba, so lo bra chose to tell me everything else but this one. Like, I thought ngu Steve lo.... Yho haike kwavela kwanquma yonkinto.

Me: hay andiyazi ke ba yinto endizoyithini lena mama, andiyazi tu.

Mom: did she decide to keep the child?

Me: yes mama, she even allowed me to go with her to her check up qha into angayifuniyo yinto ezomdibanisa nam nemali yam. Yazi it all makes sense now... Yhima mama, did utata by any chance accuse her of wanting to use umntana to cash in?

Mom: useke wabuza kaloku utatakho ba does she have a budget and enough funds to finance umntana seeing that she didn't use any methods to prevent her from getting pregnant. Wathi ke u brother wakhe instead of bamamele uku insult'wa they'd rather go home and if all goes his way soze simve umntana yena noba sesimhlawulile.

Me: Kuthwa ucele utatakhe u Cassandra ba malingaziswa ityala. For obvious reasons. Wow.

Mom: I'm not surprised, but ke Ndoda yonke lento ndiyakuhlebelala. Ndifuna ubene background when asking your father.

I didn't answer her... She was wrong here, like, she didn't stand up for my girlfriend ex girlfriend in

my absence. I don't care how she should have done it but she should have just stood up for her. For me. Umyeka njani utata to say such things to Cass?

Me: uhm, mama... I have to go. I'll see you noba kunge weekend.

I kissed her cheek and left her there... I drove to my house ndafika ndasela amanzi. I wanted to go see Cass but how do I do that when I don't know where she lives?

I called her...

She answered immediately...

Cass: hello?

Me: I need to see you... As in now.

Cass: for ntoni?

Me: Cass please, I need your location. Ndifuna ukuzakwenzeka ndithethe nawe in person.

Cass: Nkos'nathi I've just taken my meds, I'm in bed. Why do you have to see me now? Like, right now.

Me: I wanna talk about lento yalomntana ka Sivu and everything else surrounding it.

Cass: oh, you heard?

Me: yes ndisuka endlini ngoku, now location?

She sighed...

Cass: ngowakho nyhani?

Me: I haven't seen her...

Cass: Yho hay mts'hana...

Me: I'm just messed up right now and shocked.

Kodwa kqala I need to talk to you.

Cass: ndcela sithethe ngoms'o? I really don't have the energy ngoku I know nawe is entsha yonke lento

kuwe but... .

Me: it's okay... Look, I love you, you don't have to respond to this. I'm really not expecting an answer I'm just letting you know.

Cass: okay.

Me: goodnight.

Cass: Night tatakhe.

I smiled at "tatakhe" as I hung up... But I realized that I must smile now nyhani ndonele futhi and not expect her to be in this same mood nangomso. I sat down and planned a way of calling my dad....

Me: mxm, mandiyе kwa bhuti man. I have to see lomntana for myself.

I grabbed my keys and drove to my brother's place.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_34

My Ranger was a beast for some reason namhlanje and the highway was not as jammed and “trafficky” as usual. I drove to my brother’s place, and walked in as Liyema was dishing up supper.

Liyema: yhu, samgqibela nini lomntu?

We hugged, ndabuza nje impilo then she said I should go to the lounge uphaya u bhuti. I went in there, he was playing with the kids, and yes my heart stopped for a second when I saw the little girl looking exactly like me. She had my eyes, nose and ears. I was literally looking at my mini-self. I sat down after shaking hands with the big bro...

Me: ni grand bra?

Ta Nko: kakhulu ndoda, you look good yazi.
Uncedile ukhe unyamalale for a while.

Me: I felt good yazi, well until I went to visit mom.

He looked at the kids and told them to go play in their bedroom...

Ta Nko: ukuxelele ngo Sinathi?

Me: I still don't understand yonke lento.

Ta Nko: but uyam'bona uyafana nawe.

Me: that's the shocking part. But my question when was Sivu pregnant? Like, the kid is what, two years old? Thina sohlakana like what, three years ago.

Ta Nko: uthi u Liyema it's possible that nohlukana semithi u Sivu kula on-and-off benimenza, maybe a week or a month pregnant.

I looked at him... thinking.

Thinking ntoni ke when my mind was running around in circles not even registering into ey'1.

Ta Nko: what's your way forward? Or ucinga ntoni?

Me: andiyazi bra...like...jonga ne, Cassandra is pregnant, and bendisazama ulungisa izinto naye and then this comes up. Like...hay andiyazi.

Ta Nko: that shouldn't change things though, it's not like ubumfihlele lomntana. You also didn't know.

Me: awumazi lamntu wena bra.

Ta Nko: but you cannot neglect your child because of a woman, any woman. If she loves you, then she will find a way to see past this and try to work things out. For the sake of her child as well.

Me: I hear you...

Liyema came with the food, I declined mine.

Bendisandotya mos anyway...

She went to serve the kids then wabuya and joined us.

Ta Nko: so uzokwenza njani ngomntana, lona phofu.

Liyema: ukhona nomnye?

Ta Nko: haibo, I did tell you his girlfriend is pregnant.

Liyema: ooh liyena utata ebesithi may'khuphe isis u?
I thought she went ahead with that idea.

Me: why would she?

Liyema: she was offered a mil mfethu, who wouldn't?

Me: a what?

Liyema looked at her husband...guess she didn't
know that I wasn't told that part.

Liyema: uhm...forget I said anything.

Me: Liyema uthe u Cassandra was offered what?

Liyema: forget I said anything Nathi, it doesn't
matter now. Andithi she kept the child?

Me: Liyema?

She nervously looked at her husband, who was
eating.

I waited on her...she whispered her response

Liyema: A million rand...please don't say I told you that.

Me: an entire million rand? What the fuck??!

Ta Nko: he was just trying to do what he thought was right, you've never had a child before, now all of a sudden uzoba nabantwana aba bini.

Me: why didn't he offer that money to Sivu's parents then?

Ta Nko: haike, I cannot and will not advocate for him. Yiya kuye umbuze.

Ndathula...

Liyema: what are you planning to do ngomntana ke? Losekhona.

Me: umama uthe uzamthatha, ahlale kuye.

Liyema: and you?

Me: I don't know...I'll pay maintenance.

Liyema: what about your relationship with her? For two years she didn't have a father, now sewukhona, are you telling me that she must continue not having a dad?

Me: Liyema I didn't say I don't want her, yonke le two years. She was hidden from me.

Liyema: I hear you, but now nanku ulapha. Silapha ngoku, what are you going to do now?

Me: I need whiskey.

My brother laughed.

Me: I need a whole bottle of whiskey Liyema, can you organize that k'qala? Then you can ask me all these questions you're asking me right now.

Liyema: hahaha! Go home, sleep and then come back with answers mntakwethu, this child cannot

be neglected ngu nina, kanti nawe uzokwenza the same thing to her. Go back, re-evaluate your life choices and see where you can make right, especially when it comes to her. Please.

Hay mts hana I grabbed my car keys and walked out...my brother followed me to the car.

Ta Nko: don't be too hard on yourself, you didn't know.

Me: now I know, but I still don't know what to do.

Ta Nko: the right thing to do is to be a parent to her, be a father to her.

Me: Ta Nko, what is it to be a father?

He looked at me...

Me: what is it ke nyani? I'm literally in a journey to discover that, with lomntana uku Cassandra and

now I'm expected to just adapt with a two year old daughter? Guys, seriously?

Ta Nko: go home, sleep on this. I'll call you k'sasa.

Me: ndidinga i-glass ye 50 year old Glenfiddich bra, not ibhedi.

Ta Nko: ayondawo yokhuphela ii ztress ke utywala, buzakubulala ba aw'bhadranga.

I opened my car and got in..lowering my window.

Me: rather ndibulawe butywala kunoba ndibulawe nini fam. Thank you very much.

I rolled the window up again, leaving him laughing there.

Drove to my place and all I wanted was to call Cass sincokole...but she said she's taken pills so...when I got home, I went to the cellar and grabbed my whiskey, had about three glasses then I went to bed.

I woke up the following, made breakfast and prepared to go to the doctor's appointment with Cass, I left my house at 8 ndafika engekafiki pha, she only walked in ngo 8:45, with Onele.

Cass: hey...

Me: hey...

I got up, we hugged, I also hugged Onele.

Me: nileli grand?

Cass: yeah, you? You look tired.

Me: I had a late night...but I'm good.

Cass: mmh.

She walked ahead of us, Onele nudged me with an elbow I smiled at her, as we walked to the receptionist, Cass gave the letter to the receptionist

then we were told to follow the porter. Once we got to the room we were told only two people can go in. Meaning, Cass and someone else between Onele and I. She looked at me...

Me: haike.

Cass: uhm, mntase, do you mind?

Onele: ha.a mntase...I'll wait here.

Cass: enkosi.

We walked in together, she went to undress and then lay on the bed in just the clinic gown. The doctor walked in, greeted and got into the business of the day. We did the ultra sound first, I saw him... his tiny body in that screen and I felt so emotional.

Cass: haike ungazolilisa nam please.

Me: he's beautiful...enkosi baby.

She cleared her throat.

Doc: see right there...that's the fibroid, still growing.
I looked at the doctor and then at Cassandra...

Me: wait wait, she has fibroids?

Doc: yes...

Then the doctor looked at her...

Cass: yes.

Me: but you never said anything about that.

Cass: besizolicholaphi ixes ha to dissect everything
kanene?

I looked at the doctor...

Me: will she be able to carry full term?

Doc: for now we are not sure because they grow simultaneously as the baby grows.

Me: you mean she might miscarry? Or, you'll do a c-section?

Doc: okay so this is what I can tell you right now. These are the following effects that fibroids can have on pregnancy:

1. Fetal growth restriction. Large fibroids may prevent a fetus from growing fully due to decreased room in the womb.

2. Placental abruption. This occurs when the placenta breaks away from the uterine wall because it's blocked by a fibroid. This reduces vital oxygen and nutrients.

3. Preterm delivery. Pain from fibroids may lead to uterine contractions, which can result in an early delivery.

4. Cesarean delivery. Womens Health.gov estimates women with fibroids are six times more likely to need a cesarean delivery (C-section) than women who don't have these growths.

Breech position. Because of the abnormal shape of the cavity, the baby may not be able to align for vaginal delivery.

5. Miscarriage. Research notes the chances for miscarriage are doubled.

I looked at the doctor, yonke lento ayishwaqayo imbeka ndaw'ni umntanam? That's all I wanted to know.

Cass: so we're still good for now?

Doc: yes, we'll monitor the growth and then as soon as we see danger, we'll have no choice but to do a c-section.

Cass: okay then...

She sat up...

Doc: how are you? You do seem a bit lighter in spirit than the last time you were here.

She smiled...

Cass: I'm okay, I guess. Oh, this is the baby's father Nkosinathi...

Doc: nice to meet you, I'm doctor Fortune.

Me: nice to meet you too doc.

Doc: are the anti-depressants doing the work? You haven't complained much, lately.

I froze...She was taking anti-depressants? Since when?

Cass: I think I complained a lot the first few weeks because my body was actually not used to them. But now I'm okay...haha, I have my sisters constantly reminding me whenever it's time to take the meds.

Doc: good, I like that. You have such a great support system, I thought I'd see Cindy today?

Cass: she had a fall-out with this guy...she's trying her utmost best to avoid him.

Doc: even missing your appointment?

Cass: they sent out Onele to come with me, because I told them he wanted to tag along for today's appointment. At least she's a huge fan of him.

They were talking about me as if andikho in the same room with them, doctor smiled at me...I smiled back but at the back of my mind I wanted to ask ngezi pills and the diagnosis. After a few more minutes besenza their regular checks, we walked out. Apparently she had paid when making the appointment.

Onele: that was fast.

Cass: yeah well, all's good.

Onele: u grand Ta Nko?

Me: yeah...I'm good.

Onele: you sure? You look depressed, for some reason.

Cass: he's just shocked that I take anti-depressants and that I have fibroids growing in my womb. He'll be fine wethu.

I didn't find this funny at all, and I blamed myself a lot for not being there when the news of her pregnancy came out. Maybe ikhona into engendiyenzile, I don't know. She's four months into pregnancy yet she's got so much to deal with on the side as well? How much more can she take though? Like, couldn't God give ezinye izinto to someone else? We walked to the parking lot...

Me: can we grab a bite before ya'll head home?

Onele: we're heading to the shopping center first, wanna tag along?

Me: if your sister doesn't mind.

Cass: I have an assignment to submit, hambani

nobabini I'll catch you guys there.

Me: we can start at the campus kaloku, akhonto imoshakeleyo.

Cass: u Onele uyaleqa.

Me: concern yam nguwe, uzohamba ngantoni if we go together.

Onele: she's driving imoto kasisi...masambe bra.

Wait, she can drive?

I felt stupid, it's just been THREE months, yet everything that has happened in my absence ininzi ingathi yeyonyaka or two.

Me: when did you learn to drive? Hey ndishyekile man.

She laughed...

Cass: I passed my drivers' license a week ago, so

I'm still a new driver.

Me: wow...okay, see you at the mall.

Onele: don't go AWOL on us!

Cass: whatever!

She laughed and walked away, we (Onele and I) walked to my car...

I legit missed out on a lot.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_35

I drove with Onele in silence for a while, I was still trying to wrap my head around this whole thing. Like, everything. I looked at her, she was busy on her phone...

Me: aren't you supposed to be in school?

Onele: kuyabhalwa, I'm only writing next week so ndizoguduka either ngomso or ngoms'omnye.

Me: mmh.

Onele: how was Canada?

Me: haha! Bekumnandi, to be away from everything and everyone.

Onele: everyone being my sister?

I took a moment to think about my answer...

Me: yes.

Onele: you think you made the right decision? I mean, now that you're back?

Me: honestly? No.

She laughed...

Me: I missed out on so much all because I couldn't stand the fact that she kissed another man and lied about it.

Onele: okay ta Nko, ndcela ubuza.

Me: shoot.

Onele: you guys broke up because she lied okanye because you felt that her kissing the other man was the same as you sleeping with your ex?

Me: both...but most importantly, the part where she lied without remorse. Like, she lied straight to my face.

Onele: were you expecting her to tell you the truth? Immediately?

Me: not necessarily, mxm...akusenani man Onele, sesilapha ngoku.

Onele: mmh haike, xa usits ho.

She said that as if there was something else she was gonna say...but I didn't wanna pry. I just drove to the mall and then we went to grab a bite.

Me: how long will she take?

Onele: I don't know, mfounele.

Took out my phone and called her...

Cass: hello?

Me: should we order for you?

Cass: nizoqala ngotyala?

Me: ewe... andimazi noba uzothini u Onele apha kaloku.

Cass: xelela u Onele to go with her plan, nawe ungakhabe uqoshelisa ezakho izinto then we can eat ofika kwam.

Me: okay, so how long will you take?

Cass: about an hour, max.

Me: I thought you're only submitting an assignment?

Cass: and I have another stop to make before I get to you guys, so yeah, an hour max.

Me: okay. Sharp.

Cass: sure.

She hung up...

Me: uthi masiqos helise ii plans zethu sigqibele ngokutya, she'll prolly take an hour to get here.

Onele: alright then, mandiye kwa Telkom... ndizakufumanaphi?

Me: before you go...

Onele: oh-kay...

Me: is your sister dating anyone?

She laughed...bahle man oo Cassandra kokwabo.

Onele: I like you ta Nko neh, but you should direct such questions to her.

Me: yes or no? It's that simple.

Onele: I don't know.

Me: you're lying.

Onele: she doesn't tell me much, because uyayazi I like you so after she told all of us that you guys broke up, some of us were on your side and some on hers...she decided not to ever tell us iindaba zakhe. Like, sonke. Even oo bhuti bebemane bebuzapha kum thinking that siyathetha kanti siyafana sonke.

Me: mh.

Onele: u worse ngoku ane license...akaxeli naxa ehamba she just goes out, come back ngexesha lakhe and ke akhomntu uzam'buza nto. Mdala.

Me: I see...I know she said she's not ready for any commitment when I asked her sibuyelane but I'm getting some weird vibes from her.

Onele: well, you can only know if you ask her.

Me: ayt...call me when you're done or when she's here.

Onele: sharp.

We both went our separate ways.

I went to Sandile's work place...he was on tea time, I saw him smoking as I drove in. He came to my car, greeted as I also came out of it soyama kwi bonnet.

Me: you only smoke when you're stressed, what's up?

Sandile: mfethu!

Me: yintoni?

Sandile: ufikile umyeni ka Nthabis eng ezomkhangela.

I froze...

Sandile: yinja lamntana bra! Yinkukuma laway, ingaske ndimfake kwi kiriva ndiyomphosa kwa Grineker qha.

Me: when did this happen?

Sandile: izolo...he's still around nangoku.

Me: unjani u Mas'x?

Sandile: uzaw'ya e psychiatric hospital lowo...
akamameli. Stru, uzo admit'wa u Masixole bra.
Watch and see.

Me: I'm sorry.

Sandile: akho way mts hana...

Me: so bamkile?

Sandile: bamkile kwa Masixole, I don't think
bamnkile aph'eBhayi.

Ndathula...

Me: Cassandra's is pregnant with my son.

He looked at me...

Me: and apparently I have a two year old daughter
with Sivuyise.

Sandile: tyhini Nkosinathi! Hay uyinja wena kengoku!

We just stared at each other in silence.

Sandile: so niyathini, niyabuyelana no Cassandra?
Simyeke ke u Sivuyise because u out kule question.

Me: that's what I want.

Sandile: u sure? Do you trust her now?

Me: I can't run away from the fact that I still love her,
surely we can work on trust.

Sandile: uthini yena?

Me: uthi she's not ready to commit on anything.

Sandile: ukhona ke umntu ajola naye.

Me: nah, she's... I just found out today that she's on
anti-depressants.

Sandile: while pregnant?

Me: yeah, apparently they are not as harmful as I
assumed...she's been through a lot bra. I feel sorry
for her that I am the cause of most of the things

she's been through these past three months.

Sandile: help me get this, do you want to work things out because usamthanda or because you feel sorry for her?

Ndathula...was I even sure why I wanna work things out ngoku?

Sandile: or you just want your child to grow up with both parents?

Me: that, I want.

Sandile: but it's not gonna be a healthy home if both parties are not in the same understanding.

Me: eish bra.

Sandile: hlala naye phantsi and ask her what does she want, see where you fit in what she wants, then take it from there.

Me: akathethi u Cassandra bra, like, she's got fibroids growing in her womb, she's currently on

some anti-depressant meds yet I had to hear all of this when I accompanied her to the check-up namhlanje. Like, these things she could have told me before she agreed that I can go with her to the doctor but she chose not to. Ndiyamazinge independency yakhe and nam ndiyamthanda for it but that shit grates my tits man, fuck!

He laughed...

My phone rang...

Me: speak of the devil.

Sandile: caba niyafounelana?

I rolled my eyes at him...why won't we call each other when we're having a son together? Ucinganjani na u Sandile?

Me: hey?

Cass: niphi?

Me: ndims hiye e mall u Onele, uphi wena?

Cass: almost at the mall.

Me: okay ndiyeza...

Cass: if ubusy akho need, go on with your business.

Me: I said I'm on my way.

Cass: eshe, okay.

Me: sure.

We hung up...

Me: I have to go.

Sandile: nine date?

Me: nah, but I have to go.

Sandile: before you go...

Me: hm?

Sandile: xa engafuni nibuyelane will she allow you

to have a relationship with your son?

Me: that's one thing she pointed out from the beginning that she doesn't mind at all, she won't stand on my way if nam ndiyafuna ukuyakha loo relationship. Hence ndiyile naye kwa gqirha namhlanje.

Sandile: whatever you do, don't neglect your daughter...she needs you the most.

Me: mh, khaw'yeke mfethu. Yenye nje leyo.

Sandile: do not neglect her. That's all I'm saying.

I got into my car, started it and drove back to the shopping mall. She was still in the car, I parked right next to her...it was a coincidence though, our parking because I only parked there because it was a quicker way of coming out of the mall. She stepped out and locked the car. I did the safe...

Cass: you really came back.

Me: because I want to talk to you, akhange sigqibe

uthetha nayizolo.

She smiled and fixed her dress.

We walked together to either go find Onele or find indawo yotya then she can find us...

Me: why didn't you tell me that my dad offered you a million rand to get rid of the baby?

Cass: hay wethu Nkos'nathi ndiyeke ngabantu bakokwenu mna.

Me: why didn't you tell me?

Cass: tell you when? Like, I don't understand you. Bra you chose to shut the world out of your life for three months, not me. Anything that happened in that three months, you cannot really expect me to be a cassette and playback everything for you at the same time. Obviously ezinye izinto I'll block out because soze ndizibulale nge stress ndimncinci mna, ndistresswe bubu careless bam, phinde ndi stresswe by grown men who are used to throwing

money at their problems zinyamalale. Hay never.

Me: I get that but you should have told me this part.

Cass: I didn't want to, I wanted your family to tell you ngokwabo because ngabakokwenu.

Me: but Cass...

Cass: and sana sebencede bakuxelele ngokwabo...

heh bra, does your father know I have trust funds waiting for me? Like, does he know that I really don't care ngemali yakho, neyakhe for that matter?

Does your brother know that I don't care whether they recognize my child as their own or not?

Ngumntanam lona guys, I wish they can get that into their thick skulls that whether they recognize him or not, it doesn't change the fact that ngowam.

Does your sister know that I don't give a rats' ass whether I get married to you or not? In fact, abantu

bakokwenu bayayazi ukuba there are people out there ngaphandle kwabo? Ngaphandle kwenu?

Ngaphandle kwakho? Like, there are human-breathing-beings apha elizweni ngaphandle

kwabantu bakwa Dakumba.

Me: I didn't say brag...

Cass: I'm allowed to, I'm also informing you kaloku ba I actually do not need you guys. Nonke. Even if awunomondla lomntana bra, like, asoze ndikuse nase court. Uzotyala lento ndiyityayo noba yintoni.

I swallowed whatever I was gonna say to her. She was furious all over again, enganaxesha lokuba we're walking in a shopping mall egcwele abantu.

We walked in silence...she was on her phone, texting oko. We got to Wendy's and she ordered lemon water singena nje. Then we found an open table, her water came through with Menu's

Me: where's your sister?

Cass: she'll be here in about five minutes.

Me: okay...that's enough time to tell you that I don't care about your trust funds, I don't care if a million rand yi change kuwe, I don't care if you can afford lomntana uwedwa. What I care about is that I'm

gonna be part of his life as well. One way or the other, I'm not gonna be utata wofaka imali qha but I'm gonna be a visible father to my son.

Cass: as I have said before, I will not stop you from doing any of that, but khaw'be u practice'a pha kulo ka Sivuyise ke ntwana yam. When you see pha kulowa umntana that you can do zonke ezizinto uzithethayo then you can start not caring about what I said.

Me: kutheni unjena nje Cassandra?

She chuckled, eating a slice of lemon...

Cass: ngxaki yam bes endizixelele I'm past you and your family, I was okay with you in Canada now you want me to open up old wounds which I'm not gonna do. Sorry to disappoint you. Andizi.

Me: I am not responsible for my family, what they do or what they say. But you can hold me accountable for what I do, or say ngalona wam

umlomo. That, you can do.

Cass: hayi Nkos'nathi, hayi. Yiyeke lento uy'thethayo singekaxabeneli kulemall. Yiyeke bhuti.

Her sister walked in...I could feel that she blamed me for everything but hello? I was freaken not there! I would have stood up for her if bendikhona, why can't she understand that part ke? Like, I didn't say ku Sivu naye lowo ba makafihle umntana. We ordered food, she just order Buffalo salad and water...

Me: when can I expect your family ekhaya?

Cass: for?

Me: bayofaka ityala.

She laughed...joined by Onele.

Me: nihleka ntoni?

Cass: itya mfethu...yiyeke lento uy'buzayo man. Eat your food.

Me: ndiy'yekele ntoni when we both know it's supposed to be done?

Cass: Bra, eat your food.

Me: Onele zundiphe inumber katatakho.

Onele looked at Cassandra...

Cass: nam ndingakunika...in fact, sapha iphone yakho ndikufakele.

I gave her my phone, why was she so eager? She knew I'm gonna be roasted by her dad but I didn't care...all I wanted was to do the right thing for my son's well-being. When she was done she gave me my phone back...

Me: Thanks.

Cass: thank me later.

Onele just laughed...and excused herself.

Cass: uyaphi?

Onele: ndiyabuya ndiya ku sisi...she's at Edgars.

Cass: oh.

She walked away...

Me: you know...I do get that asizobuyelana ke, like, uyayicacisa ngendlela oyiyo noba awude ulikhuphe phandle even though iyinto endiyifunayo leyo but ndiyakucela, can we do the right thing for our child?

Cass: bendits hlo mna I don't mind you being involved in any way you see fit.

Me: kaloku into yokuqala kukuhlawula, then ezinye will follow suit.

Cass: that you can speak with my dad then,

andizingeni.

Me: okay then, I'll speak to your dad.

She smiled...touching her belly. I figured he's kicking again.

Cass: iyayithanda indawo enawe le chap...oko endenza iboxing ring yakhe.

Me: uyam'va utatakhe.

She rolled her eyes at me then looked at her belly smiling. Both her hands touching it.

I could watch her all day...they looked beautiful and at peace. Uy'yeke le part where Cass just got provoked wandigcwalisela...but whenever she looked at her belly she looked at peace.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_36

She offered to pay, asked for a doggie bag for Onele's food then we walked out.

Me: so...when is your next appointment?

Cass: I'll text you once I check, I left my bag in the car.

Me: thank you.

Cass: thank you for tagging along.

Me: no sweat...can I ask a favour?

Cass: sure, as long as it has nothing to do with your family.

Me: can you please tell me izinto before we go to the doctor? So that ndingabi ngu domie during the people.

She laughed...

Me: like, anything that I need to know, yithethe

ngoku.

Cass: alright let's see...I'm moving to Cape Town immediately after I graduate. I haven't really decided whether I'll give birth that side or at home but yeah.

Me: what? Why?

Cass: I got an internship phaya...but I told them about my situation so they're willing to wait until I give birth.

Me: and then umntana?

Cass: u Sis Cindy has offered to take care of him, but I'll take him back once I've settled that side.

I looked at her...she had concluded already.

Ngaphandle kwam.

Cass: settled being, I can afford my own place, transportation and kindergarten. But oo bhuti will most certainly be responsible for ezinye izinto zomntana so I just need to sort myself out.

Me: and then where do I fit in this whole arrangement? Knowing that your sis Cindy hates my guts?

Cass: okwangoku asemncinci awuzokwazi umthatha ewe uzambona but not kuthwe uzamthatha for a weekend or anything longer than a day...but after his first birthday we can make visitation arrangements ke.

Me: uyaziva Cassandra?

Cass: kakuhle...he's prolly gonna be born before his time anyway and if ndibeleke ndiselapha then uzaw'mane ujikela coz andizohamba ndimbona ba usandidinga nam. But for his sake, and for peace's sake I'd suggest umbone xa eye kumama or xandikhona...then, after eggibe at least one year then ndingakunika ke amane ebakuwe noba kunge weekends or holidays. I don't mind.

She was reasonable...

Me: why can't you give him to my mother?

Yho waphela yintsini wade walila...we were walking towards the parking lot. I stood next to her like an idiot because I didn't find this funny at all.

Cass: give who to who? How? When? Why?

Me: give our son to my mother to take care off.

Cass: hay bra, abanomtyis a ityhefu umntanam?

Me: haybo Cassandra?!

Cass: dude! They wanted to PAY me to abort, an entire MILLION RAND on offer, in exchange for my son. Hello? Now you want me to give them umntanam on a silver platter? Haibo Nkosinathi!
Hayi hayi hayi zazi izinto zodlala.

Okay I shut up...

Cass: yhu hay zazi izinto zodlala mntaka bawo, if it were up to me ngengayi noba senangaphi kokwenu lomntana but I cannot deprive him of that. He deserves to know both his families no matter how much I hate the idea.

Me: okay, point taken. Akazogcinwa ngumama umntana. Point taken.

Cass: enkosi. Yhu hay. Yhu.

She was not angry now...she was hurt.

She got into her car...she wiped her eyes, blew her nose and started her car.

Me: sulila kaloku.

Cass: bye bye bra...I'll text you xandizoya kwi appointment elandelayo.

Me: can I call you later?

Cass: this is enough for one day...and please neh, sibeke isigezo ke ecaleni. Your daughter needs you,

please find it in your heart to accept that she exists and that she needs you to love her. The fact that u Sivu abandoned her and didn't give her uthando lomzali esemncinci is already a scar kulamntana, don't add on to it. Please.

I looked at her...

As she drove off I knew that very moment ba andilogeza xandisithi I want her to be my wife. She's got a big heart and even if besixabana but she still felt the need to point that out, that I needed to take responsibility of my child irregardless of the circumstances zokuvela kwakhe okanye zokumazi kwam.

I got in my car and drove to my place...I got my whiskey next to me and called Sivuyise. Yes, I still had her number...for some reason.

Sivuyise: Nkosinathi Dakumba?

Me: Sivuyise, unjani?

Sivuyise: get to the point please, I don't have all day.

Haike ndamhleka...haibo, nje njalo?

Me: heh Sivu, ubuyaw'ndixelela nini ukuba ndinomntana?

Sivuyise: unomntana? Umthathaphi?

Me: Sivuyise, your family brought Sinathi to my family because your aunt who was looking after her passed away.

Sivuyise: ooh that.

Me: yes, that.

Sivuyise: hay wethu khandiyeke mna.

Me: Sivuyise?

Sivuyise: you told me to leave you alone, and I did. Now nguwe lo uleqeka emva kwam over a child you didn't know existed for the past three years? Really?

Me: I didn't know because you didn't tell me...now back to my question. When were you going to tell me?

Sivuyise: I wasn't going to tell you. Period.

Me: why Sivuyise?

Sivuyise: because! She didn't need you haibo. She survived ngaphandle kwakho, she was fed, clothed and happy. So bendizokuxelelela ntoni?

Me: aw'philanga kodwa wena.

Sivuyise: alright then, ndiyeke nongaphili kwam. Ondla umntana lo wohlukane nam, if there's anything else you need regarding her, uyaw'sole uyibuza kulomtu umzise kokwenu. Bye Felicia.

Then she hung up...

Hehe!

Some women are crazy kodwa, and I happen to know where to find them.

On one hand I have Cassandra who wants nothing

to do with my family, on the other hand I have Sivuyise who wants nothing to do with her daughter. Like, seriously? Where did I find them?

I lay on my back thinking...

Then I heard a knock outside...

I went to open up, only person who had my gate remote was Asenathi and yes, it was her with two of her friends, one of them being Katlego. Like, they had the worst timing ever.

Me: what's up?

Asenathi: are you not gonna invite us in?

Me: I am not in the mood for people...nifuna ntoni?

She walked right past me, called her friends to do the same ndashiyeka ndisisibhanxa kula mnyango.

Asenathi: don't tell me you're moaning over
Cassandra.

Me: if you have nothing to say, shut the fuck up.
Okay?

Katlego: yhu!

Asenathi: don't mind him...

They went to the lounge and put their bags, one
went to the laundry room while the other went to the
kitchen leaving one to start cleaning from the
lounge, dining area towards the kitchen. I wasn't
surprised by this, but I wasn't in the mood for it. Not
today...

Me: Asenathi?

Asenathi: mntase?

Me: patio. Now.

I walked out...

She followed behind me...

Me: what's your game now? Ubasaphi aba bantu apha?

Asenathi: we'll just clean for you, sipheke then sikushiye in peace.

Me: I don't want any of that bra, ndcela nihambe.

Asenathi: I'm not gonna allow you you to kill yourself nge stress mntaka mama ndikhona, I know I cannot help you with anything when it comes to your relationships but at least let me do what I can do.

I looked at her and just walked away...grabbed my keys and drove back to my brother's place. Parked and went inside...

Liyema: soze ke uze kwam iints uku zilandelelana

uphaca!

Me: awus angxoli bra...uphi umyenakho?

Liyema: he's at the back with the kids.

I went to the back yard, they were building something, the kids saw me first and all came running to me. Sinathi included...

Ta Nko: you're back.

Me: yep...I was hoping I'd get to take someone out for lunch.

He looked at Sinathi, I nod. He smiled...

Ta Nko: Sinathi?

Sinath: tata.

Ta Nko: izobulis a utatakho mntanam.

She smiled and walked up to him, extended her hand and he shook it. That tore me apart...she must have heard his kids saying tata to him waqonda naye makatsho athi tata. He bent down still looking at her and their hands still shaking...

Ta Nko: good girl, now jonga lo usemvakwakho utata.

She turned around and looked at me.

Ta Nko: nanku ke owakho utata nontombi.

She smiled at me...

Ta Nko: now bulisa utata.

She extended her hand, I extended mine...I cannot begin to explain the feeling I had.

Sinathi: 'njani tata?

I cleared my throat...

Me: ndi philile mntanam, unjani wena?

Sinathi: philile nam.

Then she just stood there smiling...I was literally looking at a younger (female) me.

Me: would you like to come have lunch in town me?

She didn't respond...

Ta Nko signaled that I shouldn't speak English...

Me: uyafuna uhamba nam siye etown?

Sinathi: zondithengela icake nonodoli tata?

Me: ewe mntanam.

Sinathi: yhima ke.

She ran inside...I remained in that squatted position and shed a tear...

Ta Nko: don't be too hard on yourself. Akazi nto.

Me: ikhona into ethi ebekhe waqala e day care? Like, any records indicating that?

Ta Nko: no...ebehlala endlini.

Me: yho hay u Sivu ngumntu onjani?

Ta Nko: kuthwa wagqithisa ngaye esandqomzala... so yeah.

Sinathi came back out... With Liyema and the other kids.

Liyema: uthi u Nana niya e town?

Me: yeah...ndizombuyisa kwamsinya wethu.

She gave me a list...

Liyema: tak your time ntwana, just add those things wethu kulento niyoyenza etown.

Me: sure. Masambe Nana.

She same running and grabbed my two fingers into her full hand.

I strapped her e back and drove to town, we went to eat first. Bought her a burger and juice while I just had water. I wasn't hungry...she ate so passionately ngathi ngu Cassandra xa esitya engqengqe ngecala. I took out la list ka Liyema...it was a list of clothes, mostly wam clothes and shoes, ne toiletries. Like, she compiled a list of things that Sinathi needed. When we were done eating sahamba sayothenga impahla, she came alive when she saw the clothes... her eyes lit up and her step had a skip/beat to it. I

did my best to buy everything (and more) that was on that list...then we went to buy take-aways for everyone else then I took her home. She had her black afro girl close to her heart.

Liyema: thank you bhuti, kakhulu.

Me: ndcela undikhangelele ii documents zakhe so that I can start looking for a day care for her.

Liyema: oh really? Linda ndiyozithatha.

She rushed to the room...I was left with my brother.

Ta Nko: I'm proud of you man.

Me: I'm proud of myself too...but it's all baby steps, right?

Ta Nko: yeah.

Me: talking about baby steps, what's this thing that you told Cassandra you will not recognize my son as our blood when she refused to take the mil you

and dad offered her?

His eyes almost popped out, I knew right then that she wasn't exaggerating. Her reaction and everything else, she was not exaggerating.

Ta Nko: mfethu, our emotions were high...like, we didn't mean yonke lanto sasiyithetha pha.

Me: hay guys, first ya'll offer her a million rand for ukhupha umntana, next thing nithi kwalomntana might be a bastard? Seriously fam? Like...

Ta Nko: I'm sorry.

Me: it's okay bra...qha ziyandothus a izinto enizenzayo ne taima...ndis aqweba isibindi for yena coz I will not let this go.

After I received the documents, I went back home.

I was done for the day, now I needed to gather isibindi to face my dad.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_37

#Cassandra

After Nkosinathi left I found out that I'm pregnant. I was mad at myself for being careless and for not having anyone to blame. Like, ndim wonke lo who did this to herself, there was nobody to blame, I knew about contraceptives yet I chose not to take them, I knew about protection yet I chose not to use it. I knew the circumstances of unprotected sex yet what did I do? I went ahead and had unprotected sex, no condom, nothing. In as much as I blamed myself for this pregnancy, I knew how much he wanted to be a father and he was deprived of that from his previous (serious) relationship so I was willing to give him that. He's been good to me all this time that I've known him so I wanted to give him lomntana and allow him to be the father he's always wanted to be. So, when I he called me while he was still in Canada obviously I was excited and I wanted to share the good news with him but he dumped me so I just shut the hell up and decided

not to tell him coz he's proly gonna think ndifuna singabisalahlana or something along those lines.

I got discharged from the hospital neh, then came back because apparently I had grown some infectious fungus or something. I spent about a week ndingamboni u Dr Sirhonyi while hospitalized and I didn't even tell my family this time around, I just wanted to be alone. On the fourth day, of my second admission, Dr Sirhonyi came through...I was having breakfast, alone kwela ward.

Dr Sirhonyi: hey now?

I looked up...

He walked in and came towards my bed.

Me: hey stranger.

He smiled and came to hug me, I swear his lips brushed the side of my head deliberately.

Dr Sirhonyi: ubuyele ntoni apha?

Me: I seem to enjoy the pampering I get here.

We both laughed...

Dr Sirhonyi: on a serious note now, why are you back?

Me: check my folder, andizazi mna ezizinto zenu zi khumshileyo.

He grabbed the folder and read through it, then put it back down.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm sorry..and congratulations on the

baby.

Me: thank you.

Dr Sirhonyi: you don't look excited.

Me: haha, am I supposed to be?

Dr Sirhonyi: you're bringing a human being to earth, that should be exciting as it is.

Me: well... the only person who would have wanted the child just dumped me so...

Dr Sirhonyi: oh man... I'm sorry.

I shrugged...

Dr Sirhonyi: but that still doesn't mean you shouldn't be excited, you're going to be someone's mother.

Me: and because of that, I won't attend my graduation ceremony.

Dr Sirhonyi: but you will still get your degree,

whether you wear the gown or not. And even if you don't wear it, your family can still make an intimate ceremony for you after you've given birth.

Okay...he was making sense.

Dr Sirhonyi: smile, it's not the end of the world.

Me: thank you.

Dr Sirhonyi: ndiyekile ke ukuba ngu Gqirha wakho, I just popped in to collect my things ebezilapha then I heard you're back so I decided to come say hi, and bye.

Me: uyekele ntoni?

Dr Sirhonyi: I uhm, when we kissed. I realized that if I wanted to pursue this crush I have on you I wouldn't be able to.

Me: oh, so you have a crush on me?

Dr Sirhonyi: haha as if you had not established that already.

I smiled...I wasn't blushing but I smiled.

Dr Sirhonyi: you know, the doctor-patient restrictions.

Me: ooh that. So wavela wayeka nje umsebenzi over a crush?

Dr Sirhonyi: nah, not necessarily over a crush but also to move on to another city.

Me: you got a job offer?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes, to manage a private practice in Cape Town.

Me: wow, congratulations mfondini.

Dr Sirhonyi: thank you...now that's the attitude I was expecting when I congratulated you ngomntana.

I sighed...

He held my hand.

Dr Sirhonyi: you're going to be a great parent, that I know.

Me: you happen to have too much faith on me. awundazi nondazi but you already know I'm gonna be a great parent? Yho.

Dr Sirhonyi: trust me, I know and I'm willing to help you wherever you need help during this pregnancy.

That sounded like music to my ears, it's something I've been longing to hear.

Me: but, where's your wife? Kids?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm looking at one.

Ndamhleka!

Me: uthini? You're looking at what?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm looking at my wife, right now.

Me: you cannot be serious. Like, you just cannot.

Dr Sirhonyi: why not?

Me: I'm pregnant with someone else's child, I just broke up with the father of the baby wena all you see is a wife? Utshaya ntoni Doc?

Now was his turn to laugh...

Dr Sirhonyi: my mother taught me to claim what I want, when I want it and let the universe and God do the work.

Me: wow umamakho sana. But ke masibe serious...

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm serious, okanye ubona lento ndihleka?

Me: I don't wanna jump from this relationship to another. I need time to heal first and possibly find direction, seeing that I'm gonna be a mother too.

Dr Sirhonyi: so there is a possibility of mutual feelings somewhere?

Me: hahaha! Can we focus on what I just said?

Dr Sirhonyi: okay, I understand all of that, and I'm gonna give you the space you need as long as you know that in you I see my wife.

Me: caba ndiyi wife material bethuna.

Dr Sirhonyi: haha, your ex said that as well?

Me: every chance he could get, and trust me...he meant it.

Dr Sirhonyi: but he dumped you.

Me: because I told him I kissed you.

Dr Sirhonyi: umfazi akakhiwa mthini ke Thixunathi, njengoba naye wabona umfazi apha kuwe, nam ndizibonele.

Me: hay sana join the line...now is not a good time.

Dr Sirhonyi: can I just give you my number? Please call me when you need anything.

I gave him my phone, he saved his number as Doc then gave it back to me after calling himself so he could save mine. After that, wanyamalala...I figured he went back to his new job post andam'phazamis a kenam because I didn't see a need. I told my family about everything, pregnancy and all. On the day of my final discharge, I got a call from mama ka Nkosinathi to visit her there's something urgent to discuss so I went there with my brother...we later regretted that. Ever since that day, both my brothers distanced themselves from anything relating to Nkosinathi. Eyonanto yacaphukisa u Bhut' Steve is how money was thrown at me to abort...he was livid. Wafika endlini wabalisela utata yonkinto, bekhona noo sisi... I was crying, like, the disrespect? My dad had his arm around my shoulder as he asked...

Dad: so ufuna sithini ke mntanam, going forward?

Me: sanulifaka tata ityala kulamzi.

Dad: but it's the right thing to do, they've wrong us

now mabahlawule.

Me: tata those monsters wanted me to flush my child down the drain for a million rand? A mere million rand for the life of my child?

Steve: bayayazi ababantu bakho Sandra ukuba uyi million wena kulendawo ukuyo?

Lionel: I support u Cass tata...asizoxakwa ngumntana. Whether bamhlawule or not, akazosixaka tu.

Me: enkosi bhuti.

Cindy: la rubbish ithe nqeke izisini ezibolileyo ngapha e Canada while you have to deal with his fucked up family? Yhu nihamba nikhetha nani man Cassandra.

Dad: hay uyathuka Sindiwa!

Cindy: xolo tata but nala nkukuma yendoda iyandicaphukisa, couldn't he wait abuye ke then akwale? Me: I don't mind ukwaliwa ngu Nkosinathi guys, like...yhoooo ndi grand. I just want nothing to do with his family.

Siki: if we decide that ityala malingafakwa then that's what we, as a family decide on. Ungathi naw'lungisa izinto ujikele ngapha kwethu kwa wena.

Me: never.

Lionel: if he comes back and wants anything to do with umntana he will have to come to utata.

Akhonto imdibanisa no Cassandra mos ngoku?

Siki: ayingenwa into yabantu ababini bethuna, all I'm saying is that kwa u girl angakulinge asenze amalokonya xa ehlele amagwebu.

Steve: mh, saw'bona.

So that after that day... Life continued as normal as possible.

I was later diagnosed with depression, so I was put on anti-depressants and then on my first check up with my mother, I was told I had fibroids growing in my womb. Fortunately for me I had the best support structure right when I needed them...my brother, Steve wahamba ne CV yam when he returned to

Cape Town ezondifakela that side coz he wanted me to live with him ndimke kweli Bhayi line bad memories. Fortunately for me, three weeks later I got called for an interview so I flew up, had an excellent and successful one...then ndabaxelela nge situation yam bathi they don't mind, I must give birth then ndiyophangela. I signed my contract and received my letter of appointment which stated my first day at work would be two months after I've given birth (if I carried full term). While there, I decided to call Mpumelelo...

Dr Sirhonyi: mh, what a nice surprise.

Me: haha, yeah right. How are you?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm happy, like...my heart is floating. How are you?

Me: I'm enjoying the Cape Town seas, seems like they breeze different from PE seas.

He laughed...

Dr Sirhonyi: alright, now I know ulapha. Where can I join you?

Me: ndise Waterfront, if awukho busy.

Dr Sirhonyi: noba bendi busy, for you ndingashiya ne patient e theatre.

I laughed and gave him directions...he really arrived and we had lunch, he wanted to know how I've been so I told him. then, he suggested I change the dose I was given esibhedlele apparently you can get hooked onto it, we had to go to his practice so that he could give me a proper dose of anti-depressants which were not harmful to the child.

Dr Sirhonyi: uya kwey'phi clinic?

Me: Marie Stopes.

Dr Sirhonyi: good, next time usiya phaya ask for Doctor Fortune, we're good friends. Umnike le prescription and umxelele that I changed lena

yokuqala.

Me: oh-kay doc...

Dr Sirhonyi: other than that...you good?

Me: very much, my family is supporting me, the baby is growing graciously and ndiyapasa eskolweni. Ndi grand nyhani.

Dr Sirhonyi: yabona ke ba there's always light at the end of the tunnel?

Me: yeeeeees! And I just scored myself a two year internship...signed everything today, will start working obeleka kwam. Like, ukhona u Thixo somewhere in heaven.

Dr Sirhonyi: and he's looking down on you smiling.

Me: dude!

He laughed...funny enough, after he told me he sees his wife in me this was basically the first time we sit down sijongane and there was no sexual feeling anywhere in the atmosphere. Like, zilch! It was like we were old buddies or cousins. We had

lunch, he paid then he called an Uber for me
ndabuyela kwa bhuti. Following day I returned to PE.

[06/26, 14:57] : #Nkosinathi_38

#Cassandra

I returned home and I struggled adjusting to the new meds, so ndavela ndangulowo ke uquqa e clinic until I stabilized on the meds. My sister, Cindy, got paid ngu Forex, like millions of rands then she bought a house in PE where she moved with her family bathengisa the other houses, bought a holiday home in Cape Town and then settled ph e Bhayi. Her husband suggested that I live with them seeing that I'm pregnant and renting then they pushed me to make my drivers' license. Imoto zikhona, but there was no one to drive me around kwezi appointment zam ne check-ups so ke I did as I was motivated to do. Got my licence and then I was given moto...nice life problems. Siki and Onele came to see the new house bakhe bahlala nathi for some time kwamnandi to a point that I literally

forgot about my problems. But I couldn't forget that I was depressed because...medication was a constant reminder. I had a day when I just wasn't feeling okay, I think...I was just tired of everyone. I had no class so I stayed in bed the whole day...well until Onele came to check up on me nge past eleven wafika ndisalele, curtains still closed.

Onele: Sandra?

Me: mh?

Onele: your breakfast has gone cold.

Me: not hungry.

Onele: aw'funi ne cereal?

Me: no.

Onele: smoothie?

Me: no. thanks.

Onele: okay I'll bring you rooibos tea ke.

Me: Onele I said I'm not hungry, can you please just gimme a break? Please?

Onele: uxolo.

She walked out and closed the door... I cried.

No one hurt me, but I just cried.

Maybe because I realized that she was just trying to look out for me, she was just being caring and I threw that back at her. I had so many emotions bottled up and I didn't know how to handle them as they were piling up on a daily basis...I woke up at three and went to bath, when I came out of the bathroom Cindy was making my bed. I didn't even greet her, and she didn't bother saying a word. I got dressed ndamshiya pha and went to the kitchen. The house seemed empty, I made myself food, drank the meds and took a jug of water to the poolside ndahlala pha. About thirty minutes later she came to join me...

Cindy: how you feeling now?

Me: I'm tired.

Cindy: wanna talk it out?

Me: there's nothing to talk about...I'm just tired.

Cindy: I'm sorry.

I felt a lump rising up to my throat so I gulped down some water...

Cindy: I spoke to Siki and she thinks we need to organize you some therapy sessions.

Me: how will they help guys? Like...

Cindy: it's a start...I also don't know how will the sessions help but I think its something we can try.

Me: I feel like it's a waste of money. I've wasted enough money ngalo in and out ndimenza esibhedlele and to add to that ndimithi so yenye nje iwaste naleyo...now ya'll wanna add therapy?

Cindy: well-being yakho ayo waste kuthi.

Me: Sisi...

Cindy: please sleep on it. Yes I am still taking umntana, I'll look after him but we want you to be in a better place kwangoku before he gets here. And, ufumene umsebenzi, you need to be in the right mental state for that.

She was right...

Cindy: don't worry about money, just allow us to be there for you. Asoze sixakwe nguwe thina naninina.

Okay now I cried...they were just amazing.

What did I do to deserve them?

She came to hug me, ndalila ndaxola then she bullied me ba masiye kwi movies ndavuma nam I didn't even ask ba baphi abanye abantu, we went to watch movies, then Onele and Siki joined us for dinner then we bought food for the hubby and kids sagoduka. I went up to my room while they played

cards, changed into my PJ's and walked out to join them qha ndagilana no Onele.

Onele: nd'cela ulala nawe tonight?

Me: huh?

Onele: ndicela uzolala nawe namhlanje.

Me: why?

Onele: I miss you.

Okay that shit hit me hard...I walked back to my bed and sat down. She closed the door and joined me.

Me: I'm sorry about this morning.

Onele: I understand, you don't have to apologize.

Me: I have to, awenzanganto irongo ngozondivus ela ukutya...I'm sorry nyhani for snapping at you.

Onele: mntase, undicacisele u sis Siki what you're going through so nyhani I don't mind. If you need to

snap at anybody so that you can feel better then I'm
I'll avail myself as your snap-buddy!

Okay I laughed...

Onele: see, that's what I miss.

Me: akunzima uhleka mvanje kum...like, andisayazi
noba yinto eyenziwa xakutheni leyo.

Onele: okay so you don't only need a snap-buddy
but you also need a laughter-activator? Noted.

Me: a laughter-what?

Onele: a laughter-activator. Someone to tickle your
funny bone.

I just laughed at her...like, does that even exist?

Me: okay fine, yes you can sleep with me tonight.

Onele: thank you...ubuphuma?

Me: yeah..sambe.

We both went down, played cards with the big sisters until it was way past our bedtime.

I survived the worst I could ever survive in a short space of three months two weeks. Every day I thanked God for my siblings, even though my parents were disappointed at me for falling pregnant now...they saw the unit we have become bavela baxola. Unit obviously excluding sis Asanda ke because she was nowhere to be found and no one bothered to check on her. Okanye ke they did, just not in my presence?

A week after I got my driver's license I realized that Nkosinathi is back in the country, all over again I felt rage from deep within my loins nda worse after he saw us at the mall and he kept calling me. I knew akandenzanganto its his family that I should be angry at but sana ukuzibhaqa sew'sitya umgquba

wepilisi all of sudden all because of human beings?
Yhu. Even his name irritated the heck out of me.

Having big sisters sometimes kuyanceda because Siki convinced me to see him, like sithetha to a point that I allowed him to come to my check-up at Marie Stopes. We agreed that ndizokhats hwa ngu Cindy since Siki was now working apha e Bhayi (that's a story for another day) but because Siki convinced me ukuba ndivumele u Nkosinathi to be a part of this journey, that had to change. Instead, they said mandihambe no Onele okwangoku akhoyo then after the appointment Siki will meet us at the mall to buy Onele some clothes before agoduke because she had to go home, they were writing final exams.

In the morning of my appointment I got a call from Mpumelelo...

Me: Gqirha, good morning.

Dr Sirhonyi: good morning to the two of you...
ninjani?

Me: we're tired...but healthy. You?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm good...I'm in town for a few hours,
can we meet up?

Me: we have an appointment with Dr Fortune, what
time are you leaving?

Dr Sirhonyi: my flight is at one.

Me: okay, we'll see you right after the appo.

Dr Sirhonyi: alright, do you have anyone
accompanying you to the appointment?

Me: yes, my lil sister and Nkosinathi is back in the
country and he wanted to tag along.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm glad to hear that he's being there for
you.

Me: haha, he's being here for his son. Nothing else.

Dr Sirhonyi: oks alayo he is manning up, that's what
matters.

Me: uzamthethelela?

Dr Sirhonya: no andimthetheleli kodwa iyanconywa into entle...I know how you feel but ilungile into yokuba abe involved in this pregnancy. Trust me on that.

Me: yeah well...

Dr Sirhonyi: obviously xa uhamba naye awuzoba na chance to meet up though, should we reschedule for xandiphinde ndajikela?

Me: we broke up, remember?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes I remember...you know what, ndizova ngawe when you're done.

Me: sure...thanks for the call.

Sr Sirhonyi: anytime.

I hung up and went to bath...Onele was fast asleep, or pretending to be.

When I came out, she was up...

Me: morning sleepy head.

Onele: morning.

I lotioned my body...

Onele: who are you seeing right after the appointment?

Me: so you were not sleeping?

Onele: you woke me up.

Me: mmh.

Onele: so?

Me: I love you baby but, sit this one out.

Onele: hehe! U girl une ou already?

I laughed...

Me: how much is he paying you to spy on me?

Onele: who? Ta Nko?

I shrugged

Onele: yhu I'd never spy for him noba angandinika i million wethu.

Me: hahaha! It had to be a million? Really?

Onele: hay bra banemali aba bantu. Like, they wanted to pay you a whole million? I think we must name this child Million. Or Milli... Ewe, Milli Dakumba.

I couldn't stop laughing.

Me: banganya! Akho kwamntanam uzothatha surname yabo apha.

Onele: even if utata eventually agrees that bahlawule?

Me: even if he makes them inkomo yomdongo I don't give a rats ass, akho mntanam uzoba ngu Dakumba apha. Yhu bandigezele abantu balamzi

unyana wabo epholelwe ngamalanga e Canada
elala nge Poutine avuke nge Maple Syrup.

She burst out laughing...

Me: you're not good for my health shame, khaw'de
ugoduke.

Onele: ok'salayo we're going to the appo with Mr
Dakumba the runaway bride. Ah u sbari wam
madoda.

Me: did you just say bride Onele?

Onele: akayo groom mos.

Yho lomntana!

She ran to the shower ndisahleka, when I was done
I made the bed and went downstairs ndayotya. She
joined me after an hour because u Onele ngu Onele
then we drove to the clinic and found Nkosinathi
already waiting on us.

[06/26, 14:58] : #Nkosinathi_39

#Cassandra

After the appointment I let Onele to go with Nkosinathi while I went to see Mpumelelo, texted him where he'll find me, at a restaurant close to the sea. Wafika ngathi kudala endilindile. We hugged, for an intense minute...then we sat down, ordered juice and a slice of cake.

Dr Sirhonyi: you're glowing.

I blushed.

He laughed.

Me: what are you doing here?

Dr Sirhonyi: I came to sign off some medical equipment that I had ordered from China.

Me: mh...

He laughed, I wanted to ask something and he knew it.

Dr Sirhonyi: you can save that question for another day, right now is about you. Unjani? How are you holding up?

Me: I am good yazi... I'm doing better than I expected.

Dr Sirhonyi: that's good to hear, and see.

Me: I try for my problems not to be written on my face.

Dr Sirhonyi: that's good, as long as you know I'm here whenever you need some cheering up. Or anything else for that matter.

Me: thank you, that means a lot.

Dr Sirhonyi: uthe uyaphi?

Me: I didn't see a need to report to anyone, andithi

into esidibanis ayo ngumntana?

Dr Sirhonyi: don't be too hard on him.

Me: I'm not, okay I'm trying not to...but the minute he mentions his family ndivele ndibe naar bengaske ndigabhe nokwa last week ukutya.

Dr Sirhonyi: I hope ya'll can do this co-parenting thing peacefully once the baby gets here, whatever it lena niyenzayo ngoku is not healthy for him.

Me: we'll be fine, as long as naye engathethinto nge family yakhe or uhlawula...like, yho ha.a sana. And'funi kwanto ezandidibanisa naba bantu... Andiziboni futhi ndijongana nabo for anything.

Dr Sirhonyi: uzokwenza njani when you have to give them umntana for holidays?

Me: bazomcela kutata umntana anytime bemfuna, ngoka tata mos ayingowam. I'm not married to their son.

Dr Sirhonyi: mmkay.

I took a sip and closed my eyes...the sea was

refreshing.

Dr Sirhonyi: uzoqala nini to look at baby clothes and stuff?

Me: I think on the sixth month if ndifkile, why?

Dr Sirhonyi: ndibawela ufaka isandla, if you will allow me.

I looked at him...he was asking for permission?

Wow.

Me: as long as you won't give me money, I don't mind.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'll buy a gift card, I'm clueless when it comes to baby clothes so you'll see what you need.

Me: you know awunyanzelekanga neh?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes, that's why I said if you will allow me. I know akazodinganto umntanakho especially now that utatakhe is back and hands-on but I still

wanna buy noba sis'peliti ke.

I smiled...

Me: okay ke...I'll tell you when I'll be going shopping then you can do the gift card and send it.

Dr Sirhonyi: Cape Town is just behind the house, I'll bring it here.

Me: haiike gqirha!

He laughed...we chilled for a bit then ndabuyela ku Nkosinathi no Onele.

After that sagoduka, from that day I vowed that I'm gonna enjoy my pregnancy. No matter what, like, I'm gonna enjoy it. Yintoni lento mna kwas oloko ndis okola before I can be happy? Why not create my own happiness ke? I bumped onto Sivuyise in town ehamba yedwa and of course I wasn't gonna say anything to her, I walked right past her and bought myself ice cream, found a seat ndahlala.

She turned back and came to where I was sitting...

Sivuyise: Cassandra?

I looked up and rolled my eyes...

She chuckled...

Sivuyise: you finally gave him what he wanted.

I ignored her...she pulled a chair and sat down.

Sivuyise: I wanna talk to you, woman to woman.

Me: I didn't invite you to sit with me.

Sivuyise: hay suba tjatjarig, I don't wanna sit with you anyway qha ndiyakucingela.

I just looked at her.

Sivuyise: if you really love your boyfriend, like, you really love him. you better do everything in your power to separate him with Sinathi.

Me: what kinda mother are you?

Sivuyise: one that knows what right for her daughter.

Me: hay Sivuyise.

Sivuyise: I left her with my aunt because I knew very well that was right for her, le yenziwe ngoo tata to take her to Nkosinathi will do nothing but break her and give her false hope and trust issues ubomi bakhe bonke.

I sighed...

Me: actually, what you're telling me right now is none of my business.

Sivuyise: I know that, but u Nkosinathi uyakumamela. Go to him, tell him that Sinathi is no

his daughter, makohlukane nala trap afakwa kuyo yi family yakhe. If she was his daughter, surely he should know I would have told him a long time ago and I would rub it on your face as well.

Okay...makes sense.

But still, Nkosinathi uthi umntana ngowakhe mos and uthi uyafana naye.

Me: u Nkosinathi mdala, I believe he knows what he's doing.

Sivuyise: you do know that I'm telling you this because I'm looking out for you. Not necessarily you but lomntana umthweleyo, akazofumana naphantsi kumalungelo akhe because they will split what's his, with a child who's already got her own fair share of inheritance secured.

Me: huh?

She chuckled and got up...

Sivuyise: brace yourself ke bhabha. Be on the lookout for anything, ndiyabazi abantu bakwa Dakumba ngokuba ruthless mna.

Then she walked away...I was left thinking about this whole conversation. Like, she didn't sound bitter, this was a whole new Sivuyise. Anyway, a month later, after the final exams, Aphiwe decided that he wants to spent holidays with us, I was gonna go home but usisi wathi masimlinde avale... this other day, he (Aphiwe) wathi masiye etown, he's taking me out for lunch. Kanti lo swine had booked me in for a full body hotstone massage...

Me: haibo Aphiwe!

Aphiwe: you need a break makazi haibo.

Me: uzokwenzani ke wena in the mean time? Bra, aw'sebenzisanga pocket money yakho yonke apha?

Aphiwe: can you go and get dressed into those silky gowns makazi? Please?

I wanted to cry...I was so emotional.

Like, my family was really coming through for me, even abantwana abangoo APhiwe no Onele. I didn't think of taking myself to the spa, not even one day but when I got there I realized that I actually needed this. Unfortunately it couldn't be a hot stone, but a "pregnancy" massage...I didn't care, I was in it without blinking. They offered me a bubbly, and chocolates while doing my mani and pedi after the massage, then I did a facial...I felt lighter, I felt like a brand new human being. By the time I came out he wasn't there...so I had to call him coz size ngemoto enye...

Aphiwe: you done already?

Me: yebo bhuti, uphi?

Aphiwe: I'll be there in about, ten minutes tops.

Me: uphi?

Aphiwe: I'm just around the corner dude, chill.

I laughed and hung up...

Iyageza le.

While sitting I couldn't help but wonder how Nkosinathi really feels ngayo yonke lento yenzekayo. I mean, he was not here when everything transpired and even when he came back, I didn't bother to find out how he feels. Which is not my problem practically but... I took out my phone and texted him, then I deleted the text and called him. He didn't answer his phone... so nam ndamyeka. Aphiwe finally came, picked me up and drove to the park... I knew already without asking that we came here to chill, what I didn't know was that they had planned a surprise picnic "baby shower" for me. My entire family was there: all my sister including sis Asanda, my two friends from varsity that I made after the Lisa situation, my mother and Nkosinathi... I was shocked to see him there. Shocked! Whoever organized this was surely

not Cindy... Okay so I was an emotional wreck of course, like, ndavela ndayi ngxididi all of a sudden.

Aphiwe: okay I'm done here, bye bye ke.

Me: dude!

He laughed as he hugged me and left...

I had a feeling that my brothers were around too... even though they were not present at the picnic.

I was taken to a seat at the far end of the setting, I sat on a gold throne surrounded by flowers and balloons...I saw some of my cousins as well, from both my parents' sides. You know the cousins eniba close kakhulu nazo only when they wanna visit on holidays? All of them were there, I sat down and cleaned myself up. Baqalisa i-program yabo and everything was nice and it went well...like, Cindy and Nkosinathi didn't fight. That was a miracle on its own. After the gifts, kwatyiwa and then

Nkosinathi asked to talk to me ecaleni and we went aside sayothetha...

Me: hey.

Nkosinathi: you look beautiful.

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: I wanted to see you before I leave...

Me: you're going already?

Nkosinathi: yes...I have a movie date with Sinathi and my brother's kids.

Me: oh okay, thank you for coming and for whatever you contributed.

He smiled...

Nkosinathi: I was surprised when they asked if I wanted to come.

Me: who called you?

Nkosinathi: Siki obviously.

Me: why did I even ask...what's up? Oh wait...I also meant to talk to you.

Nkosinathi: okay uhm, bendicela uthetha k'qala.

Me: no please, allow me to talk first.

Nkosinathi: okay...

I took a deep breath...

Me: okay so I uhm, I wanted to apologize to you for the past few weeks events.

Nkosinathi: you want to apologize?

Me: yeah I mean...okay, masiqale pha kula confession yala kiss no gqirha. I'm sorry about that, I know that shit hit you hard.

He sighed...I could see that he's blown. His hand went over his face wakhe wathula wandijonga...

Me: and I wanna apologize for what my sister did to your car.

Nkosinathi: don't worry about the car, can we just go back to that kiss? Why did you do it? Why did you kiss him and lie to me about it? I mean...I don't think I would have minded if you told me immediately, what killed me the most was that you lied about it straight to my face.

I took a deep breath...

Me: I don't really know, but I think at some point I wanted you to feel the same pain I felt when you cheated.

Nkosinathi: but I apologized!

Me: I know...but I didn't want to. Well until now of course.

Nkosinathi: why now all of a sudden?

Me: it doesn't matter why now, what matters is that I want to say I am sorry for hurting you like that.

He didn't believe me.

Nkosinathi: heeeee Thixo!

Me: apho bendisiyakhona ke ngale apology kusekubeni when you got back, I needed someone to use as a punching back for everything and you were the relevant person for that, seeing that half of what I've been through was caused by your family, people I know through you.

Nkosinathi: kodwa you know I would have stood up for you if I was here?

Me: I know that, I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: wow. Okay, apology accepted. Are you seeing la gqirha? Is he the reason why you don't want us to try again?

Me: thank you...no he is not, we are just friends ngoku.

Nkosinathi: how can you be friends with him though? You practically cheated with him.

Me: he confessed his feelings yes, but I told him andikho ready for any kind of relationship right now and he respects that. I am friends with him because he was there when I needed someone, he helped me with the depression meds, ebendizinikiwe k'qala were not making any difference so he made a suggestion ndatsho ndancedakala. So we basically talk every now and then.

He nod...

Me: I'm really not in any place of relationship trust me, I would have loved to get back with you because we shared great times together, and because we'd be building a strong family front for our son but the thought of your family really maaks my naar I won't lie. And kwamna I am not emotionally ready for any commitment so I can't really expect you to wait for me to be ready, I'd be

wasting your time. Askies.

Nkosinathi: thank you.

Me: you don't have to thank me...it was long overdue.

He looked at me...

Nkosinathi: kutheni uthetha ngathi ungumntu ohambayo nje? Like, I'm not gonna see you again?

I smiled...trying to hold back my tears.

Me: andiyi ndawo, I just had to say that. Ubuzothini?

He just stood there and tried to read my mind...and he wasn't gonna get anywhere with that though.

[06/26, 14:58] : #Nkosinathi_40

I received a call from Siki...they were planning a baby shower for Cassandra.

Me: so what do you need from me? I've never done these things kaloku.

Siki: we just need you to be there, if you want to phofu. We've got everything else covered.

Me: hay Siki, you want me to just rock up ndiphaca? Can I at least pay for something nam? I know ya'll have enough money to do everything but please, can I at least do something for her?

She went silent...

Me: please?

Siki: okay...as I said, we've got everything covered, my brothers are buying the meat, thina as the ladies sohlulelene ngento yonke.

Me: okay, gifts?

Siki: you can buy umntanakho whatever you want to buy him kaloku bhuti. Or you can go to a baby store and buy a gift voucher.

Me: okay, thank you. That's it?

Siki: yes sir. The theme is "All shades of Blue and a Touch of gold" so you can wear anything along those lines. I'll send you location, we're doing it at the park.

Me: okay...but what can I do for your sister ke?

Siki: buy her a Spa voucher, and flowers, getaway voucher, book her a hotel room for the night, take her to dinner the following day...you've been dating lomntu mfondini you know what she likes. Yenza lento intliziyo yakho ithi yenze. And if you decide ukumnika ngokwakho, don't involve my name please.

Me: I can do the Spa thing...I don't wanna book her away from you guys ngoku she needs to be around people, I won't say a word as long as you won't tell her the Spa voucher is from me. For some reason I'm not her favourite person right now.

Siki: hay kaloku you know the reason, su actor apha.

I laughed...

Me: but Siki andenzanganto mna...ewe I get that my folks, in fact my family did whatever they did to her. But that's not my fault.

Siki: thenga ivoucher chap, enye nenyene andingeni ndawo mna kuyo.

Me: okay, I'll buy and send it to you?

Siki: I'll send Aphiwe to come fetch it, he wanted to take her out for lunch anyway so he can use nalo voucher bengathi nguye owenze yonk'into since ke ungafuni ayazi.

Me: perfect. Thank you bra.

Siki: no worries.

Okay...

I would have loved for my family to be part of that celebration as well but that would agitate u
Cassandra more. Like...she made it clear where she stands ngento edibene ne family yam. I was excited yazi...I went online shopping and bought a car seat, the most expensive for the little guy. And because I still had a month in advance I decided to go buy her a car as well, why buy a car seat and not a car? Ndithi makakhwele emotweni kabana ndimazi unina ba akana moto? I was looking for something simple...but how do you go simple when the woman you love is bearing you an heir? I went for the Jaguar I-Pace, a darkish-silver one...I now had to find a way to give it to her without her thinking it's a bribe. Once everything was paid for I made arrangements for it to be delivered to my place since I still didn't know where she lived, and I didn't wanna pry, otherwise ukumazi apho ahlala khona wouldn't be a problem. I wanted to give her the space she needed, away from me.

I knew Sandile was gonna chop my head off, but he's my blood so I spoke to him about this car thing eye pha endlini.

Sandile: uyakhula umntana?

Me: Siyakhula isisu, if that's what you're asking.

Sandile: anikenzi scan?

Me: ebethe uzosenza on the next appointment, so I'll wait for that.

Sandile: mmh, kengoku whats bothering you?

Me: I bought her a car...as a gift.

Sandile: uphambene?

Me: she's gonna need a solid mode of transport when the baby is here bra.

Sandile: ubungathanga her sister will be living with umntana? And she's going to Cape Town?

Me: she can take the car with, when the baby visits her she's still going to need a safe mode of transport.

He looked at me and laughed...

Sandile: uphambene wena Nko mfethu, imali iyakurakisa. Lamntana akakufuni, buying her a car will not change that.

Me: I know that and I am content with it...but I have to make sure that my son lives a comfortable life, I want him to have everything I never had and everything I had and more.

Sandile: what are you going to do next? Buy them a house?

Me: if they have no roof over their heads then yes, I'm gonna do that. Dude, my son cannot suffer because his parents are no longer dating, he didn't ask for us to part ways.

Sandile: wakutyisa ntoni u Cassandra bra?

Me: it's not even about utyiswa but it's about inkathalo.

Sandile: usamathanda lomntana wena? After

everything, us amthanda nyhani?

Me: I never stopped.

Sandile: funeka ndikuzamele icherrie, uzoraka njengala Masixole wena. Wakhe wayivaphi lento uyenzayo? Wakhe wayibonaphi? U ta Nko uyayazi ba uhambe udlala ngemali kulamankazana?

Me: the day ubanomntana bra you will understand lento ndiyenzayo...it's all for umntana, and of course umamakhe because she also deserves imoto too but most importantly, it's about the lil kid.

Sandile: deserves? Lomntu kissed her doctor now she deserves?

Me: at some point I have to be accountable bra, I cheated on her first.

Sandile: mnxim, I'm not even sure why you're telling me this xa ungazondimamela.

Me: I'm telling you because you're my friend.

Sandile: next time don't tell me into when you know you won't listen to me, rather go to Masixole coz niyafana. Ningabafazi xaninoba bini man, fok!

I just laughed at him...he later went to his place.

Aphiwe came to fetch the Spa voucher, a box of chocolate then gave him money to buy her flowers, not roses but flowers. The ones I usually buy...she can get the pink and white roses from her doctor.

The actual day for the baby shower came, I had the car seat for umntana and a pair of sneakers and the small box with the car keys was inside the shoes co I knew she's not gonna open the shoes apha, she'll open it at home.

We passed the gifts, the event was very light and airy...I actually enjoyed myself. After the event I wanted to speak to her...apparently she also wanted to speak to me so I let her talk first. Ladies first, right?

Cass: hey.

Me: you look beautiful.

Cass: enkosi.

Me: I wanted to see you before I leave...

Cass: you're going already?

Me: yes...I have a movie date with Sinathi and my brother's kids.

Cass: oh okay, thank you for coming and for whatever you contributed.

I smiled...if only she knew I couldn't contribute because her family had everything covered.

Me: I was surprised when they asked if I wanted to come.

Cass: who called you?

Me: Siki obviously.

Cass: why did I even ask...what's up? Oh wait...I also meant to talk to you.

Me: okay uhm, bendicela uthetha k'qala.

Cass: no please, allow me to talk first.

Me: okay...

I took a deep breath... whenever she decides to talk, I feel something going up my chest.

Cass: okay so I uhm, I wanted to apologize to you for the past few weeks events.

Me: you want to apologize?

Cass: yeah I mean... okay, masiqale pha kula confession yala kiss no gqirha. I'm sorry about that, I know that shit hit you hard.

I sighed...

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

My hand went over my face and I just looked at her, you know when you've accepted an apology even before you're offered it? Besendixolile... nyhani but for her to actually apologize was mind blowing.

Literally!

She apologized for everything, her sister crashing my car (which she was paying for right now) and everything else. She said something that rested my heart a bit, that she would have loved to get back with me if she was in a good space for relationships but she wasn't. I believed her, she had no reason to lie to me about that but even then, I didn't wanna give myself high hopes because ebengathembisi nganto for the future.

Me: I uhm, bought you these... think they'd be comfortable.

She took the bag, I had already given her the car seat when the gifts were handed out.

She peeped inside and smiled...

Cass: sneakers, thank you. Ndizakufotela when I get

home.

Me: please do...lemme run then.

Cass: yeah, can't keep a princess waiting.

Me: hug?

She smiled and opened her arms, we hugged, I got to touch the belly for a second.

Me: I don't know why I feel like uyahamba man. I can't shake this feeling off.

Cass: haha, whether I go or not, you'll see your child when you need to. Chill out.

We broke the hug...

Cass: thanks again, for the gifts and for coming.

Me: aw'kafuni ndikwazi apho uhlala khona nangoku?

Cass: nope.

Me: ayt, cheers then.

Cass: sure.

I left her there, she must have joined the rest of her family.

[06/26, 14:58] : #Nkosinathi_41

#Mpumelelo

I remember the first time I saw Cassandra on that hospital bed I had flash-backs of my mother on her deathbed, being a first wife who was not a favorite in the family, no one bothered themselves with her health. I grew up with my sister, Nokuthula, older sister, who eventually became a deputy parent in as we grew up because my dad chose the second family over us and they lived just up the road, closer to the schools. My mother used to sell chips, ice and fruit at the local primary school yet my father was a teacher at that same school engamphi ne cent. He would only give me eloshumi xa ecacile

but even then, I loved him.

My friends from school never knew that he's my father, they thought we're just from the same family, because of our surnames but other than that, I never told them because my sister hated him and she expected me to hate him as well. Okay I don't think she hated him per se but she hated the fact that sikhula sisokola ekhona, singabina lunch esikolweni, ekhona. She had no relationship with him whatsoever...I remember one Christmas ukuqala kuka mama ukugula, waqala ngo September but wanyamezela because kukho thina and funeka avuke ayothengisa egula enjalo ukuze sibenento yotyaph'endlini. From September to November wenza lo on and of wongena ephuma es'bhedlele until the schools closed. That specific December we had no new clothes, nothing. The cent that she made kwezinyanga ebegula ngazo had to be saved for my sister who was starting high school following year.

Kwafika u Miss Zanele on the Christmas day sisitya iinkobe sigade umama who was now really sick on her bed. Lo mama ufika imoto yakhe igcwele ithe qhu kukutya, she came with her two sons and a daughter who was my sister's age nomyeni wakhe behamba nge bhaki. Ukuvasa ngamazi abandayo yinto esasesiyiqhelile so when she said I must bath and fit impahla ndavela ndayovas a emlanjeni, came back and my sister helped me get dressed. She had bought three big plastic bags from Pep for me and three for my sister, some of the clothes were big, which was fine because ndizokhulela kuzo. If I had not known happiness before that day, surely that day could attest that I was happy. U Miss wapheka, and told us to play outside, sent my sister and her daughter on some silly errands...while playing outside kwakho into ethi mandiyokroba kwenziwani endlini, only to see that kuvaswa umama. Until that day, I had not realized that she was really ill, I mean, oko wayezama to be strong for us. I quickly went back to playing, sabizwa when all was done and we had Christmas lunch no Miss ne family yakhe, after that bagoduka.

For once my mother was smiling imini yonke ebalisa namabali as we got ready for bedtime.

Thula: utata kutheni engasithandi nje mama?

That one question killed the vibe, I could see she was hurting when she asked that question but mom was hurting the most.

Me: ngubani othe utata akasithandi na wena?

Thula: awumboni wena utata ukuba akasithandi?
Kude kuze u mis i ne family yakhe utata ekhona?
Ephangela enemali?

Mom: he doesn't hate you mntanam, akazenzi.

Thula: hay mama, when was the last time he checked up on us? When was the last time he spoke to you?

Well...what would a young me say to defend the man I love?

Mom: mhla ndemnka uboze uthathe ezancwadi ziphantsi kwempahla yam Nokothula, xa ufumene ithuba uye kwa Old Mutual...ubanike nje ezoncwade bazakuninceda.

Thula: mama kwa Old Mutual? Aw'soze kaloku mama ufe ngoku tu.

She laughed and kissed her...she wasn't gonna die yet, but she was preparing us for the unknown.

So from that day we never spoke about utata, years later, when my sister was in grade 10 utata retired waphunyelwa zii mali zakhe. He rebuild umzi wakhe with umamomncinci nabantwana babo who also knew of our existence but kept their distance. Now my mother was no longer vendering, ukuze siteye I had to go to the nearest farm every morning at 4am ndiyokhaphela iinkomo zakhona nee gusha, come back and prepare for school then ndibatalwe

ngenxowa yombona ne 5L yamasi every Saturday. My sister would work there every weekend in the fields, from 6am to 6pm in the afternoon. Sometimes during the week ahambe esenza iwashing kwimizi ekufuphi so that azobhatalwa because e farma you never got pain imali, they'd give you food instead. Some problems ke zazingadingi kutya they needed money so ebesithi xa efumene lo job ye washing, ndimkhaphe ukuya emlanjeni, sometimes xa izingubo abantu would bring them ekhaya. Sizivase sobabini, I'd help her with fetching the water and then before we go to school sizoneke...that became normal for us because mom now dependent on us, tables had drastically turned and we had the two of us. No one else.

Umama simane simkhapha ke ukuya e clinic, sinedisane ukumfunqula simfake kwi kiriva because we didn't have money to hire a car... Wanyamezela lamfazi until the day matric results were issued. My sister had passed her matric with

exemption but she didn't get a bursary, meaning she wouldn't be able to proceed with her studies. As if that wasn't painful enough, my mother called us to sit with her that night with one candle lit...

Mom: Nokuthula mntanam, ndidiniwe ngoku.
Eyonanto bendinyamezele, ndilinde wena ufunde
ugqibe ukwenzela uzokwazi ujonga u Mpumelelo.

Thula: haibo mama, andikagqibi ufunda I still have
to go to varsity.

Mom: ndiyayazi kaloku Thulas, kodwa ke awufani
nalo.

She looked at me, took my hand into hers and
kissed it.

Mom: ungayeki ukus ebennis ana naye, uyakudinga
kakhulu.

Me: okay mama.

Mom: kuyo yonke into eniyenzayo, ningaze
nimqumbele uyihlo.

Thula: hayike mama!

Mom: Nono, ingqumbo ayisi mntu ndawo mnanam.

Thula: hay mama asina tata thina.

She smiled and held both our hands and asked my sister to pray...we prayed every night, right? But umntu ebethandaza kumondlalo wakhe so vele tonight's prayer was different. While my sister was praying I felt my mom's grip loosening on my hands so I opened my eyes, her eyes were shut but her breathing was weird, she took one last breath as my sister said Amen and it was over.

Me: Nok'thula umama ulele?

She looked at me and then at umama...I quickly felt her pulse, we get taught these things at school, yes I was five years behind Thula but I knew that umama has died.

Thula: ndcela uyobiza utata ka Mvelo torho khaw'leza.

I ran out, and went to the neighbours. Utata ka Mvelo and his wife baya endlini but she asked me to stay behind. You know those neighbours who know everything about your family but cannot help you because they don't wanna get involved in family politics? They were those tupa people...

I counted to ten before I ran back home, ndafika ekhala ekoneni u Nokuthula while some men were carrying mom's lifeless body out of the house.

Me: kwenzeka ntoni tata ka Mvelo? Ukhalelani u Thula?

He took my hand and we went to sit with Nokuthula...

Tata ka Mvelo: umama wenu uswelekile banta bam.

Me: as in died?

He nod.

Me: yho...kengoku sizomngcwaba ngantoni? Thula?
Sizamthini umama?

Thula: Mntase khawume torho...please.

Me: maybe funeka ndiyoxelela utata khe? I know
uzasanceda yena.

Tata ka Mvelo: sizomxelela ngokwethu mntanam
utatakho, hambani iyani pha endlini.

Thula: si right apha tata.

She stood up and wiped her tears, grabbed my hand
and led me to my bed.

Thula: lala.

Me: haibo Thula.

Thula: Mpumelelo lala.

Me: umama uswelekile, sizomngcwaba ngantoni?

This is not a time to sleep.

Thula: hewethu sizamgrumbhela umama, unalo elinye ithemba?

Me: can we at least tell dad?

Thula: where has your dad been all this while? Hay ungandiphambaneli ngobusuku Mpumelelo.

Utata wabantu wathi chuuiu uphuma, I peeped through the window ndambona indlela inyuka ilali and I knew uya kutata so I closed my eyes and slept...well, cried myself to sleep because now that everyone was done, it dawned that sishiyeke sodwa. We had no one now.

Ekuseni I was woken up by ingxolo yabantu

abathetha phandle, got out of bed sekuvulwe nomnyango and saw my mother covered in a blanket being carried to ezantsi kwi gardi. I looked around for my father and he was nowhere to be found, I looked for Thula and our eyes locked. I went to her...

Me: uphi utata?

Thula: uphi ke?

Me: kwenziwani kengoku?

Thula: siyongcwaba umama...nxiba izihlangu sihambe.

There was no time for that, I just followed that small crowd to the hole that was already dug. Three guys got in and helped each other to put the body kwi khuko. That was all we had, the blanket that covered her nekhuko qha. After a short prayer, wagqunyelelwa and we returned home. Those people spent the whole day cleaning landlu inye

sasihlala kuyo, they brought food from their own houses and cooked for us, few of them would come the entire week to check on us and not even one day did we see our father, his wife or any one from his family. It is after that week that my mother's brother came to see us, he must have heard of the tragedy but we had healed already so there really was no need for him to come kodwa ke weza wasithatha and left with us sayohlala ne family yakhe e Monti.

[06/26, 14:59] : #UnEdited

#Nkosinathi_42

#Mpumelelo

When we got to East London, we struggled to adjust because I for one was used to being a loner all my primary school years. U mfazi ka Malume wandifunela iskolo, but Nokuthula had to find a job...there was no money for her to go to varsity. We lived well for the first six months, comfortable

and all...until about the 8th month waqala umfazi ka malume to query ngokutya, she started having bad treatment towards us to a point that Nokuthula had to move out the second year ayohlala ema kitchini awawakhangelelwa ngu mmelwane wakwa malume. I was now in the 9th grade and I was trying my best to manage intlalo. Yahamba iminyaka ndihleli loontlalo yokuba xa engekho umalume funeka ndilinde abantu batye before I can eat, then I'd eat whatever is left over, clean the house while they go to bed kubengona ndiyolala emva kwabo. Xa ekhona umalume ke I knew treatment would be better so ndandivele ndizixolise in his absence that all will be well obuya kwakhe. I failed eventually failed my matric, I begged umalume to accommodate me for another year because I wanted to repeat it wavuma, only for him to get umsbenzi e Gauteng that year, right after he left, ndagxothwa nam so I went to live with Thula at her work.

Living there wouldn't be free obviously so that

meant I was a garden boy on Saturdays then Sundays we all went to church. This other Sunday after we had returned from church, Thula remembered eza ncwadi zika mama and we searched for them only to find out that umama all these years ebevalela imali yokuba sifunde. Some education savings for both of us...

Thula: and we suffered all these years umama egcine lemali?

Me: she knew we'd need it after she's gone.

Thula: it's too late for me now...ewe iright for wena.

Me: you passed with flying colours, surely applying now won't hurt sibone ba awuthathwanga na.

She seemed to be considering...

Well we eventually went to Old Mutual, we got our money and we applied for school. We both got admission, but now we had to move to

Johannesburg because I was admitted, we rented one flat to share, I studied medicine and she studied hospitality because she had fallen in-love with cooking where she worked. We both had a vision, and for that first year we had no one but each other. Second year in a foreign city umalume came looking for us...he had nowhere to begin but I was so grateful that he actually got up from wherever he was and came looking for us, we heard around campus that kukho this old man from the mines who said he heard that his niece and nephew were students here so he wanted to be helped to locate them. U Nokuthula unenqala ke, she wanted nothing to do with him...

Me: kodwa Thula zange asenze nto umalume, I'm quite sure he didn't know that sihleli kakubi phakwakhe.

Thula: he should have done something, he should have asked.

Me: can we atleast call him, because inumber

uyishiyele yona.

Thula: call him for ntoni Mpumelelo? Call him for ntoni?

Me: Nokuthula umalume is all that we have, awumfuni utata, ngoku awumfuni no malume? Ayikho boy inkomo edla yodwa aph'ebomi. We need to have some sort of family ke.

I could tell she was angry, and I didn't blame her. We had been through a lot but it wasn't his fault, we couldn't hold that against him.

Thula: fine, mfounele ke.

Me: enkosi.

Later that day I called him and he really came to see us, umalume bought us groceries, he made sure that we had clothes, like...he played the role of a father wabe ecela namaxolo ngendlela esasiphethwe ngayo ngu nkosikazi wakhe.

Nokuthula broke down, I think she broke down because she had all these childhood emotions bottled up from us being rejected by our father to having to take care of our sickly mother, moving to EL and having to work when she had a dream of studying engineering and then uphathwa kakubi kwam in her absence...all of these things she had to bottle up emncinci. But now u malume consoled her, I wasn't alone with her we had our uncle in our corner.

The following months, umalume would come to us on his payday and buy groceries athi we should save whatever we were gonna use for ukutya to help us in the future, I knew that what he was doing yayimxabanisa endlini because now uzothumela imali encinci kunale ebekade eyithumela.

Fast forward to my sister's graduation, she personally asked umalume to accompany her, I was just there to take pictures. After her graduation she

went to work in Dubai as a sous chef, leaving me to finish my medical degree.

In finishing my medical degree I met Asenathi and we dated for a year before her brother Nkos'ehlanga found out and he ordered us to stop. Of course we didn't stop, we continued dating but secretly until she told me that she's pregnant...

Hey I was excited more than stressed ba kuzothwani kokwabo or ndizothini kumalume, I was really excited that I'm having a baby and the worst part of it all was that I knew about the pregnancy before her. Ndamxelela and she didn't believe me until her friend Katlego pushed her to take tests and then it was confirmed. I remember coming late from the library ndifika es endlini yam, akaphekanga but she was cuddled in bed, I uncovered her and kissed her forehead...

Me: hey you?

Asenathi: mh.

Me: feeling under the weather?

She nod...

Well I put my laptop away, my book on their desk and went to make food. She would usually cook when she comes over so I didn't mind that today she didn't. I made pap, cabbage and meat with a lot of gravy, she liked gravy so this was me trying to be a good boyfriend because u baby is not really feeling well. While the pots simmered I went to sit next to her...

Me: baby?

Asenathi: mh?

Me: u sure you're just feeling under the weather qha?
There's nothing more?

She sat up and cleaned her eyes...

Asenathi: I'm pregnant nyhani.

I smiled...I felt some excitement from deep within, but something in her eyes made me holdback.

Me: you look sad.

Asenathi: ndizothini ekhaya? Ndizothini kubhuti?

Me: abazokubetha kodwa babe. I'll tell umalume sihlawule and I promise you, ndizakumhoya umntana.

Asenathi: you don't get it Mpumi.

Me: then explain it to me.

Asenathi: we weren't supposed to be dating in the first place, remember?

Me: your brother just bullied us into that separation.

Asenathi: I live with him here in this Joburg, the least I should have done was to respect his wishes.

Okay ndathula ke...

Asenathi: baby he's gonna find out and force me to abort.

Me: please don't tell me you're going to allow him.

Asenathi: ndiyoyika ngoku ugoduka, ndizothini kubhuti Mpumi?

Me: okay, can we eat first? Then we can think of something?

Asenathi: I'm not hungry.

Me: have you eaten anything today?

She didn't answer...

I got up and went to plate up for the both of us.

I served her, she ate up and seemed a bit happier after etyile. I took a shower and joined her in bed, I

had an exam coming up, so my plan was to wait for her ulale then ndivuke ndifunde.

Me: ucinga ntoni?

Asenathi: ndicinga ubuyela eBhayi, give birth ndisekhaya and then apply e NMU next year.

Me: you wanna quit school?

Asenathi: I'd rather quit school kunoba kuthiwe I must abort, umama uzandishout'a ewe but she will take care of my child.

Me: I'm sorry I put you in this position.

Asenathi: I also should have used contraceptives baby, ayo fault yakho wedwa.

Me: my problem is that you're gonna quit varsity while mna ndifunda.

Asenathi: haike baby don't think like that, I can still return to varsity next year...I don't really mind.

Me: u sure?

Asenathi: I am sure, trust me.

Me: okay ke...uzohamba nini so I can book you a flight?

Asenathi: ndizoyoba impahla yam ngoms o when ubhuti is at work, ndize nayo apha. After that, we can make bookings.

Me: alright.

She smiled touching her belly...

Asenathi: lomntana is gonna be blessed to have you as his or her father.

Me: I'm already blessed knowing that ndizoba nomntana nawe, that's all that matter kum.

I kissed her cheek, we ended up kissing salala.

Midnight, I woke up and studied. I had more than my dream to work hard for, I had a little human being who was gonna need a father onengqondo nozamayo to make ends meet.

[06/26, 14:59] : #Nkosinathi_43

I left the baby shower and went to my brother's place ndathatha abantwana and we went to watch movies. I think we watched about two movies before they started crying ngolamba then we went to eat out. When the kids had eaten we went to play for about an hour at the park then I returned them home...my brother was home, smoking in the porch alone. The kids went inside so I sat with him...

Me: what got you so stressed?

Ta Nko: you don't wanna know.

I looked at him...

Me: mfondini what's going on? Ndingabuza kanti I don't wanna know?

Ta Nko: we have a problem.

Me: Sivuyise uzothatha umntana?

Ta Nko: huh?

Me: forget what I said, what's the problem?

Ta Nko: uLiyema uthi ubone utata ka Amohelo with your girlfriend, I mean ex-girlfriend.

Me: huh?

Ta Nko: uthi uLiyema ubone u Cassandra nalomjita having lunch.

Me: where? When?

Ta Nko: Two days ago? I'm not even sure...bra lomjita ufuna ntoni ku Cassandra?

Me: I don't know...

Ta Nko: you don't know?

Me: haibo bra, ndohlukana nini no Cass? How am I supposed to know who she meets and why? Did Liyema take a picture?

He looked at me.

Me: well andimazi kaloku mna lamjita waziwa nguwe. In fact waziwa nini.

Ta Nko: that doesn't really matter, what matters right now is that he's back again. And this time he might not leave without his son.

Me: maybe that's not a bad thing, minus one problem for you.

Ta Nko: are you even listening to yourself Nkosinathi? Uzimamele?

Me: Well thing is, I still don't understand why ya'll took his son away from him in the first place.

Ta Nko: hehe, heh Nko uyaphambana?

Me: haibo bra, if u Asenathi was old enough to have unprotected sex then, surely she was old enough to take care of her own child. In fact she still is old enough to take care of her son, nangoku.

Ta Nko: and why didn't you tell your dad this?

Me: nanigqithe kum when you took the decision yothatha umntana?

Wathula...

Me: you guys heee, lento benifuna uyenza ku Cassandra kuyacaca ukuba yinto eniyiqhelileyo mos. Beningaqali obviously.

Ta Nko: shoot us for trying to protect our family.

Me: hayi bhuti you guys are just selfish, how is taking away umntana from umzali wakhe trying to protect our family? Did you guys even give that nigga a chance to be a father to his son? Was he given an opportunity akayifuna?

He stood up and walked away from me...

I watched him leave, I wasn't gonna run to him andingomkakhe mna.

Asenathi did her first year of varsity in J o'burg living with Nkos'ehlanga and Liyema because he was

working there and I was working in the family business in Cape Town, so when she fell pregnant she was with him pha e Rhawutini and she knew the rules zakwa bhuti so she ran away wagoduka phakathi enyakeni. I heard she was honest kumama about the pregnancy even before she started showing coz I remember bendixelela I looked at her andabona nix, it is only when they told utata that I felt her uncomfortable about this whole pregnancy situation then they eventually decided that they'll give ubhuti umntana as his first son because he had been married for years already qha bengafumani bantwana no Liyema and they came to the decision to tell uyise womntana that Asenathi miscarried. So that he won't claim him? Andiyazi. Like, I didn't really put this into mind until they tried doing it kowam umntana...made me wonder kengoku ngokabani umntana kabhuti wesibini? Because they have been trying all these years mos, so who is the real parent to his second child?

I got up and went inside, he grabbed his car keys

and left as I walked in.

Liyema: what's up with him?

Me: u Cass ubumbonephi?

Liyema: kwa Mugg and Bean...is that why he's so uptight?

Me: yep.

Liyema: why though? I mean, umntu wabantu wasn't bothering anyone except for having lunch with your ex.

Me: he thinks the guy might be planning to come for his son.

Liyema: but he doesn't know he have a son, right?

Me: do you trust Asenathi that much though?

Nabohlukanisa bethandana ababantu, remember that?

Liyema: she's married now and loyal to her husband...I should think.

Me: alright then...let me leave ya'll to fix your mess.

Liyema: haibo ndisapheka.

Me: no thank you madame, my house misses me bekunini ndise s'thubeni.

Liyema: eshe, okay ke. Drive safe.

I grabbed my keys and left.

On my way home I received a call from my dad...I just looked at it and drove on as if akhonto yenzekayo and then mom called, so I answered.

Me: Ndlovukazi?

Mom: ndoda, uphi?

Me: I'm driving from Ta Nko's place to mine. What's up?

Mom: heh, ukushiye apho kanti?

Me: ewe mama, wait, how do you know? Ulapho?

Mom: that's why I'm calling you, he was involved in a car accident, we are on our way to him right now.

I sighed...wow!

Mom: uthi he's not badly injured qha imoto iphelile.

Me: okay, I'll call you. I'm on my way.

Mom: please drive safe.

Me: bye ma.

I hung up.

Something said I should drive past my mom's place but I shook the feeling off because I wanted to rush off to the hospital. So I didn't drive past her house, I went straight to the hospital and just sat in my car in silence xandifika e parking lott. I decided to call Asenathi, I knew they might have not told her what was going on yet.

Asenathi: mntase?

Me: unjani?

Asenathi: I'm great, yourself?

Me: all good...can you talk?

Asenathi: sure, why?

Me: where's your husband?

Asenathi: he's still at work, what's going on? Why do you sound so tense and serious?

I took a deep breath...

Me: your baby daddy is apparently in town.

Asenathi: my baby daddy? Who's that?

Me: haibo, awuzazi ukuba unomntana nomntu?

She went silence...

Me: Asenathi?

Asenathi: Did you see him?

Me: do I know him k'qala?

Asenathi: oh that's why, uhlala apha nje u Mpumelelo.

Me: uhlala apha?

Asenathi: ewe, he's been living here for some time now but last time I saw him at the airport ebesithi he has opened a new practice in Cape Town so he's trying to move there until it stabilizes

Me: wait, you're too fast for me right now.

Niyathetha?

Asenathi: heh haikengoku, zange sixabane kaloku.

Me: yhima Asenathi, does he know he's got a son. A living son?

Wathula...

Me: awuzokwazi ke uthula. Aw'zondenzela lo nonsense yothula mna.

Asenathi: he knows mntase and he's tried all means

possible to get umntanakhe back qha utata nobhuti have been ducking and diving.

Me: what the actual fucking pit are you saying????

She sighed...

Asenathi: he's known now for the past three years, remember when ubhuti said he's going for some hiking trip ne friends zakhe? He was going to ixhwele to fight off this guy's interest ku Amo because he feels like he's invested so much in u Amo. And utata supported him.

Me: and you never said a word kum?

Asenathi: I thought you were also part of the plan until last year I realized that you actually don't know anything, you're as naïve as I am. I'm sorry that is not meant as an insult.

Me: don't worry about it... Tell me something, niyathetha nje okanye nisaqhuba?

She laughed...jonga, I knew basaqhuba.

Me: you whore!

Asenathi: sisaqhuba xa ekhona, if that's what you're looking for.

Me: niqqa you're fucken married!

Asenathi: and happily so, but Mpumi will always have a place in my life. Zange ndohlukane naye kuba ndifuna kaloku, I was forced so intliziyo yam ayikaxoli.

Me: but now you have a choice, to be with him or to not be with him.

Asenathi: I wanna be stable, he wants to be stable too...but not with me.

Me: he told you that?

Asenathi: yeah, he's in-love with your ex. Your baby momma.

Me: what?

Wahleka lomntana.

Me: what did you just say?

Asenathi: he's in love with Cassandra, and kudala. I don't know where they met though.

Me: ngubani lomjita?

Asenathi: Mpumelelo.

Me: surname?

Asenathi: Sirhonyi.

Me: that surname sounds too familiar man.
Usebenzaphi xa elapha?

Asenathi: kula private hosp-

Me: Fuck no! That doctor?

Asenathi: uhmmmm yesss, I said he's opened his practice in Cape Town nje, or awundivanga?

Ndaphuma kwas e motweni...I didn't believe this.

So Dr Sirhonyi was my sister's ex-boyfriend and

baby daddy, yet at the same time he's into my own baby momma? Lomjita could he really be into Cass okanye he's just using her to get back at my family for what they did to him?

Asenathi: usekhona?

Me: yeah uhm...I guess I know him now. Wow. This is a shock.

Asenathi: oh well, you were gonna know him anyway because uti he's coming for his son and he's ready to knock off anything and anyone who dares try to stop him.

Me: why doesn't he just go to the cops and lay charges?

Asenathi: utatakho bought off two station commanders when he tried that two years ago...

Me: mmmh, yazi I have this strange feeling that something is gonna happen pha endlini. Oko namhlanje.

Asenathi: guys, as long as kungazofa umama I'm

cool with anything, abantu bas endlini are selfish wolves in sheep skin. But as ikholapho broer.

Me: wow.

I was speechless, for once I was speechless.

Me: does Amo know that he's got another father besides ta Nko?

Asenathi: yep.

Me: Hay Asenathi!?!

Asenathi: bra, I had to. Haibo.

Me: when did you tell him? How did you even begin with this? Hela why umntana nimenza lento? Like, what's going on kokwenu Asenathi?

Asenathi: Yho mntase uyabuza... U Amo mdala, he knows what's going on. I was compelled to tell him about his dad because of the treatment he was receiving pha kwa bhuti...so yeah, he knows. They know each other.

Me: kengoku why didn't lomjita just take Amo ahambe naye?

Asenathi: utatakho orchestrated a death trap for Mpumi's sister who lived in Dubai at the time.

Me: what????

Asenathi: so I begged him abuyise umntana...yho bra siyadina esi story man. Khayeke I need to make supper

Me: I'm just surprised that you're always there for me but you decided to go through this whole situation alone. You left me in the dark.

Asenathi: I'll come to your crib ngoms o, uzoba khona?

Me: yeah.

Asenathi: alright ke, go to bed. It's gonna be a long day.

Me: I'm actually at the hospital parking lot.

Asenathi: who you visiting?

Me: your other brother, he was involved in a car

accident a few minutes ago.

Asenathi: yhu hay wethu I'll see him ophuma kwakhe.

Me: he's still your brother.

Asenathi: as I said before, I'm all about umama. Anything concerning anyone else then they can take the backseat.

Me: sure. See you ngoms o.

We hung up...

I got into my car and drove to my house, yi movie yase Japan mos lento yale family yam. I got home, got a glass of whiskey and went to bed with my phone off.

[06/26, 14:59] : #Nkosinathi_44

When I woke up, I turned my phone on and it was flooded zi missed calls zika Cassandra.

I went to the bathroom, came back and called her...

Cass: Yho, awufumaneki.

Me: good morning, ulele njani?

Cass: I didn't sleep a wink ku busy apha.

Me: why? You're sick? Is the baby okay?

I knew it's the car keys...

Cass: no the baby is fine, we are fine man they're just preparing his nursery.

Me: oh-kay.

Cass: look you left some car keys in the shoe by mistake, besikwakho sizisisile when I called.

Me: oh.

Cass: I'll drop them off later today after my library session.

Me: there's no need for that...I bought the car for you, I just didn't know how to give it to you without

you thinking I'm bribing you or something.

She went silent.

Me: I would have delivered the car to your place had I known where you live.

Cass: Nkosinathi Dakumba, you bought me a car?

Me: yes.

Cass: a whole car bra?

Okay I smiled, she wasn't mad at me.

Me: Yes I bought you a car, a brand new car.

Cass: a brand new Jaguar Nkosinathi? Why? Like, why would you go through all the trouble?

Me: to say thank you for the little one, and for everything you did and you're still doing to protect him.

Cass: a simple thank you was enough.

Me: I know, but I also know that awukaphangeli so you are going to need a form of stable transport when the child is with you.

Wathula again...

Me: I hope you like it, whenever you're ready, I can bring it. I have the spare key with me.

Cass: I'm still shocked. We're talking about a car here. Like, the shoes were enough for me, seriously, but now we're talking about a car.

Me: please think of umntana, he's gonna need this.

Cass: I'm trying my best to...like...yho!

I gave her a second...

Cass: enkosi.

Me: so you're taking it?

Cass: can I sleep on it?

Me: you know you don't have to consult your sisters, right? It's just a gift for you and the child.

Cass: I know that, and I'm grateful trust me I am.

Me: but why do you need to think about it?

Cass: I don't need a car now, I'm only gonna need it in Cape Town obviously and andiyi ngoku e Kapa.

Me: then I will have it delivered there. Period.

Cass: wow.

I chuckled.

Cass: you really bought me a car? Like, you went there and bought your ex-girlfriend a damn J aguar?

Me: correction, I bought the love of my life, my baby momma a damn J aguar!

Cass: hahaha! Yho bruh enkosi.

Me: you deserve it.

She released a whole chunk of breath.

I saw an opportunity to ask about the doctor kengoku.

Me: I uhm, have a lil something to ask you.

Cass: okay, shoot.

Me: u Doctor Sirhonyi...your friend, unomntana?

Cass: haha, you had to emphasize on my friend?

Me: ewe, you said you're friends, kaloku or have things changed?

Cass: alright before we start fighting over this, why are you asking?

Me: I just wanna know, please.

Cass: yes he does. A boy.

Me: does he talk about his mother?

Cass: you mean your sister? Yes he does.

Shit!

She knows?

Me: so you know? How long have you known?

Cass: he told me a few days before the baby shower, ebezise igift ka boy so we kinda spoke about the serious stuff.

Me: oh wow.

Cass: you sound like you didn't know.

Me: I didn't, I mean I just found out he's the father last night.

Cass: I know I've got a shitty family, heck I was shot by my own sister but your family takes the cup.

Me: please don't.

Cass: dude! Taking umntana from uyise and faking his death for so many years? Yhu bra abantu bakokwenu are toxic, it pains me that umntanam at some point he's gonna have to get to know them.

Me: alright...can we drop the conversation right here?

Cass: uh-oh.

Me: when you have a chance, please send me the address I should deliver the car to e Kapa.

Cass: sure, enkosi once again.

Me: sharp...have a great day.

Cass: nawe.

We hung up,I threw my weight back and lay there thinking.

My phone rang, I looked at it and put it back down. It was my brother, I wasn't in the right minds to see him yet. I just wanted to lay in my bed all day, I guess I was having one of those days where I'd cuddle up in bed all day and watch sports. Or eat junk food, or anything but be with my family. I ordered pizza, got my bottle of wine in ice next to me and stayed in bed the whole day. Yazi now that I knew everything, I didn't blame Cassandra for how

she felt nge family yam, I understood her every emotion. She was right, my family was toxic but I wasn't gonna agree with her endive.

Asenathi came through as she promised, we finished the pizza then we started cooking up a storm.

Me: I called Cass about your baby daddy.

Asenathi: mh, what did she say?

Me: she knew.

Asenathi: see, he doesn't make it a secret.

Me: I'm still surprised...

Asenathi: what's surprising though? Him being back for his son or other people knowing?

Me: you seeing him behind your husband's back above everything else.

Asenathi: is he officially dating your ex?

Me: you're dodging me right there.

She laughed.

Asenathi: bra, ndis amthanda lamntu but ke akasekho kulo way.

Me: so he's using you?

Asenathi: we're merely looking out for each other. Now back to my question.

Me: uthi they're just friends, but I don't believe her. They kissed at some point.

Asenathi: he told me about that, he really does love her shame ndiyambona naxa ethetha ngaye he glows, uba excited.

Me: and you're happy about that, as long as she won't be with me.

She stopped what she was doing and looked at me.

I shrugged.

Me: you seemed upset at your wedding when I didn't come with her yet we both know you never liked her one bit.

Asenathi: true...but I had now grown to see that she loved you and I could see that you're happy with her. Your happiness matters to me more than anything or anyone you're dating.

Me: mh, ndiyakuva.

Asenathi: but you don't believe me.

Me: it doesn't really matter now...nantsi into; Cassandra could possibly be your son's stepmother. How about that?!

Asenathi: DUDE,IN MY FACE!!!!!!

We both burst out in laughter...

Asenathi: no seriously, Mpumi is mad about her, but

akafiki kuwe so I don't really know ba izophelelaphi into yabo if she decides to give it a try coz uthi u Mpumi she said she's not ready for any relationship right now.

Me: if she ever does decide to commit with him, I know she's got a big heart so your kid is in good hands.

Asenathi: you sound like you've given up on your relationship with her.

Me: ndiyamthanda but I'm not gonna push her or fight, she needs to see the world and if it's meant to be, we'll be together again.

Asenathi: yho u brave.

Me: I'm not, I tried fighting for her and instead that drove an even bigger wedge between us. So I'm letting her go.

Asenathi: and your son?

Me: I'm gonna be in his life.

Asenathi: isn't she gonna live in Cape Town? I heard something like that.

Me: she is, ufumene ums ebe- wait wait wait, you said he's got a practice in Cape Town?

Asenathi: and she's moving to Cape Town, yes.

Fuck!

Me: why would she lie to me about this though?

Asenathi: what did she lie about?

Me: dude, Cassandra nalomjita baya mets ha. Why the sudden move to Cape Town? So they wanna continue nalento yabo away from us?

Asenathi: away from you, niqqa I'm married.

Me: fuck!

She giggled and went back to the pots.

But why would Cassandra lie if she's really going to Cape Town to be with this guy? She didn't have to lie about it, I'd have made peace with it if she was

just honest and upfront to me about it. Like...the truth was all I asked for! Damned women!

[06/26, 14:59] : #Nkosinathi_45

-Two months down-

I finally decided to move on from Cassandra because she clearly was moving to Cape Town to be with Dr Sirhonyi ingxaki kukuba atsho kum ndisiva and in as much as I wanted to not give her the car anymore I just decided that I should. I didn't buy the car to win her back, I had to remind myself of that, I bought the car for umntana qha qwaba. The franchise business overseas was picking up so I flew there and spent about a month, just so I could understand the country's cuisine and stuff wabe u Sinathi sendimbhalisile esikolweni for the following year, yonke into yakhe iready for yena but I wasn't gonna live with her. She was gonna live with my mom while I supported the two of them with whatever they needed.

Okay so I was away as usual, doing business (and pleasure) in a foreign city, with a sexy English girl, Tammy (We had known each other for about a year now but only decided to give our romantic relationship a try now) , when Cassandra texted to tell me that she urgently needs a lift to the hospital... I called her because she didn't have this number and because I was nervous ingathi kanti she's in labour or something.

Cass: hello? .

Me: hey it's me, uphi? What's going on?

Cass: oh hey, I'm at home...I'll send you location just now. Wait, why is your number weird?

Me: dude, I'm in France.

Cass: oh fuck!

Then she hung up, when I called her back, her phone was engaged.

Tammy: is everything okay?

Me: yeah uhm, the woman pregnant with my child needs a lift to the hospital.

Tammy: where's her family?

Me: they're obviously not around.

Tammy: then why are you stressing? You're in France, there's nothing you can do.

Me: can you give me a minute?

I got up from the bed and went to the lounge of the air bnb I was living in for my France stay. I called Asenathi...

Asenathi: Hello?

Me: dude, uphi?

Asenathi: ndise J oburg, why? Hewethu where are you? Yi number yaphi le?

Me: ndise France bra.

Asenathi: ooh, why do you sound anxious kengoku?

Me: Cassandra just texted me uthi she needs a lift to the hospital, she didn't know I'm not around.

Asenathi: where's her family? Why would she text you in the first place?

Me: because I said I'd be there if needed me?

Asenathi: well you're not there, I'm sure she'll find someone wethu une family lamntu.

Me: mxm, you're not helping.

Asenathi: uske ubenjena kewena, tell her you're not around. She'll find a way to the hospital.

Me: Thank you for nothing dawg.

I hung up and tried calling her back but her phone went straight to voicemail, I tried calling both her brothers but their numbers were "non-existent" all of a sudden. Tammy came to look for me

Tammy: babe?

I looked up...

Tammy: do you want us to fly down to SA?

Me: well I have no choice but to.

Tammy: what do you mean when you say I?

Crap!

I held her arms and kissed her on the lips.

Me: I'm sorry, we have no choice but to fly down to SA as soon as I know what's going on.

She looked at me without smiling or blinking.

Me: what now?

Tammy: what do you mean "I"? I thought we're in

this together?

Me: I'm sorry, I mean we have no choice but to fly to SA right away. That's what I meant, WE.

Tammy: do you still love her?

Me: I never said I stopped.

Tammy: so I'm the rebound here?

Me: no you're not, babe, I love you but I never said I stopped loving her.

Tammy: Nathi you cannot have your cake and eat it, choose your story and stick to it.

Me: I have chosen you, don't you see that?

Tammy: no you haven't, whenever her name is mentioned you lose focus, you lose your mind.

Me: Tammy, she's carrying my baby for heavens sake!

Tammy: exactly, she is pregnant not sickly or even dying, she's just pregnant.

I let go of her and went to the window...

Me: you wouldn't understand even if I were to explain to you why I'm so anxious about this whole situation.

Tammy: I actually do understand that you still love Cassie, is that her name?

Me: Cassandra.

Tammy: yes Cassandra, and it pains me to think over these two months we've been together all you ever did was either talk about her or make reference to her in anything and everything we do.

I walked back to her...

Me: I hear what you're saying, I do but right now it's not important. What's important is that she needs my help and I cannot help her. That's it.

Tammy: YOU ARE IN FRANCE FOR CRYING OUT

LOUD!!!! Surely her family or anyone in South Africa can get her to the hospital † ♀

Then she stormed out, back to the bedroom. I tried calling Cass again but her phone went straight to voicemail ndamncama for now but I went online to search for available flights to South Africa... I couldn't believe that there was nothing. The only available flights were due to be in three days time.

I walked back to go find Tammy...

Me: are you going with me?

Tammy: do you want me to go with you?

Me: why wouldn't I?

Tammy: is that your answer?

I sighed and sat down, did the booking for the both of us and put my phone down ndahlala pha in

silence. That entire day we were tense, and that entire day I couldn't get hold of Cassandra.

Two days later, as we prepared to head for the airport, Cass sent a text. Well she sent a picture, she had a given birth the day before to a healthy baby boy but she said she was too out of it to send me the picture same day. I cried my son's existence was confirmed while I was away working, now even in his birth I'm away working. I couldn't be there to welcome him or be there to assure umamakhe that all will be okay through all the agony. Hold her hand in that maternity ward, those are the things I had wished for when I said I wanted to have babies with her. Those are the things I had hoped to do. I got up from the bed and went to the garden, called her...

Cass: hello.

Me: congratulations.

Cass: Thanks.

And then we had an awkward moment. I cleared my throat.

Me: uziva njani?

Cass: tired, but I'm okay.

Me: was the fibroid removed?

Cass: yes, successfully so.

Me: that's good.

Another awkward silence....

We both spoke at the same time, but she said I should go ahead anyway.

Me: I'm sorry I couldn't be there when you needed me.

Cass: it's no big deal.

Me: u sure? I mean, I feel bad.

Cass: we're not married and you're a traveling businessman so I can't expect you to always be available ngexesha lam lothanda.

Me: usiwe ngubani ke esibhedlele?

Cass: Siki had to leave work phakathi because my water had already broke so bendingazokwazi ukuziqhubela.

Me: yho I'm sorry.

Cass: It's really not a big deal bra stop apologizing.

I sighed...

Cass: uzobuya nini ke?

Me: I'm flying out today so I'll come see you guys as soon as I land.

Cass: okay. Inoba uzofouna ke coz I think we'll be discharged by then.

Me: uhm... I'm coming with my girlfriend, I hope you don't mind.

Cass: you have a girlfriend?

Me: yes.

Cass: mmkay. I don't see any reason why that should be a problem.

Me: thank you.

Cass: sharp.

Me: are you guys still at the hospital?

Cass: yes we're waiting for the birth certificate then we'll leave.

Me: about that, who named the child?

Cass: Onele and my dad.

Me: both of them had the same name in mind?

Cass: utata uthe ngu Thix'ukhona, u Onele uthe ngu Milli so he's got two names.

Me: just like her mother... Yhima ke, what is Milli? What does it mean?

Cass: It's short for million

Me: Million? Haibo Cassandra why in the world

would you allow your sister to name our child Millio-
oh fuck no! No! So because you were offered a
million he must pay for that all his life?

Cass: say it properly, because I was offered a
million to kill him. That's the proper way to say it.

I didn't believe this.

Me: Cassandra?

Cass: Nkosinathi.

Me: please tell me this is a joke.

Cass: it's not a joke, don't worry, you won't have to
explain anything to him about the name. When the
time is right, I will.

Me: Cassandra please don't do this.

Cass: please call for directions when you land, if
you still wanna see Milli.

I cursed and hung up.

I sta there for close to ten minutes thinking about this Milli name, like, kutheni abantu bakulo Cassandra be petty nje? Umntana akezanga nto but now he must carry the burden ubomi bakhe bonke because at some point they will tell him why he was named Milli and at some point he's gonna hate my family for what they tried to do. Why did they have to involve umntana kulento?

I walked back into the house and made breakfast, Tammy came down packed and ready to go.

Tammy: morning.

Me: morning.

She went to the fridge and made herself salad watya while I was fruing eggs and Russians. She at in silence...

Me: you okay?

She nod.

Me: you sure?

She sighed and out her fork down.

Tammy: are you sure you want me to go with you to South Africa?

Me: we're gonna be living together in. J oburg anyway once your boutique is up and running so why not?

Tammy: did you tell her I'm also coming along?

Me: yes.

Tammy: okay, then we also need to come bearing gifts for the little one.

Me: we'll buy them once we land, for now let's eat and head to the airport.

Tammy: cool.

I watched her while making breakfast, she was nervous and I understood why. We had breakfast, packed our bags and headed to the airport. We flew to SA and landed in Johannesburg where we went shopping for umntana ke then we headed to PE. Got to my place and we freshened up then I called Cass yangena kwi voicemail iphone.

Tammy: she must be sleeping, and I'm kinda jetlagged can we not go see her tomorrow?

Me: lemme try her again.

Tammy: sure.

I did, same thing.

Me: okay, tomorrow it is then.

We both went to bed but I didn't sleep a wink, all I was thinking of ngu mntanam. I was nervous and

excited at the same time and I wondered what it utata ka Cassandra is still around? Ndiyobona umntana endingamhlawulanga? Ndizoyqala ngaphi lonto if he were to bring it up? Okay from being nervous now I was becoming stressed because there was no way I wasn't gonna be involved in my son's life because of my family. No way.

[06/26, 14:59] : #Nkosinathi_46

Ekuseni ndavuka ndavas a, woke Tammy up and we left the house. I called Cassandra yaphumela.

Cass: Nkosinathi?

Me: hey, we're on our way, sicela ilocation.

Cass: sure.

She hung up and sent me location ku Whats sApp.

Tammy: does she sound excited?

Me: she sounds irritated.

Tammy: maybe me coming along was not a good idea babe.

Me: why not?

Tammy: I don't know, I already feel uncomfortable yet we're not at her home yet.

Me: relax.

She sideeyed me, I smiled and kept on driving. We got to the gate and hooted, gate opened and we drove in came out with gift bags, and went inside. Safika umntana efunqulwe ngu Cindy e lounge phofu sivulelwe ngu Onele emnyango, I greeted and Tammy followed me as we went to sit down. There was no sight of Cassandra

Me: ni right Cindy?

She totally ignored me. I should have known.... I

sighed and tried again.

Me: Cindy, nivuka kakuhle.

She looked towards the kitchen, looking at her younger sister.

Cindy: Onele khaw'bize u Thix'unathi phezulu.

Onele: okay sisi.

Okay that was it, I just sat there in silence and waited. Onele came down alone...

Onele: usavasa sisi.

Cindy: okay.

Onele: Ta Nko, coffee, tea or drink?

Me: water please.

Then I looked at Tammy, she shook her head.

Onele: water coming right up.

Cindy switched on the TV and watched in silence, it wasn't long when the door barged open and her brothers walked in. I mean both of them

Lionel: makazi ka Milli

Onele: malume, ndiphathelwe ntoni?

Steve: siphathele u Milli ii gifts siphinde siphathele nawe?

Onele: Hayini ke bhuti, I'm not just umakazi kaloku I'm his Godmother as well.

They laughed pha e kitchen and came to the lounge.

Lionel: molweni.

Us: eweke.

He went to Cindy and peeped behind ibhayi lomntana, I saw him smiling.

Lionel: he looks like me.

Cindy: hahaha you wish!

Steve: uphi utata?

Cindy: he's gone to see the doctor, ebethe he'll call you to pick him up.

Steve: u Thix'unathi?

Onele: uyavasa.

Steve: ooh.

He saw me, but he just didn't even bother. He walked back out while Lionel took the baby and sat down with him eteketisa. I don't know how many

times my heart broke into peaces that moment.
Cindy got up and left us right after I got my water...

After a while, Lionel looked at me.

Lionel: have you seen him?

I shook my head.

He got up and brought the baby to me, I opened my arms and held him. I had so many emotions that moment, looking at his beautiful face and innocent eyes...

Me: feels like I'm looking at myself.

Lionel: neh?

I looked at him..

Lionel: ayikhali indoda kwedini.

I chuckled, cleaning my eyes with the back of my hand. Cassandra came down fully dressed.

Cass: Good morning.

Me: morning.

She looked at Tammy and extended her hand.

Cass: I'm Cassandra, but I'm sure you already know that.

Tammy smiled and extended her own hand for the handshake invitation.

Tammy: I'm Tammy, Nathi's girlfriend.

Cass: I figured, sorry to keep ya'll waiting.

Tammy: don't worry about it, I know it gets hectic most specially in the mornings.

Cass: I'm still yet to find out.

Then she looked at me as she sat on the opposite couch, next to her brother.

Cass: tata ka Milli.

Me: Mama ka Thix'ukhona. Unjani?

Cass: we're good, I see you're good too.

Me: I'm great.

She smiled.

Then looked at her brother...

Cass: uphi u Ta Steve?

Lionel: I don't know.

Onele brought her porridge.

Onele: he's with u sis Cindy phandle.

Cass: phandle?

Onele: emotweni ka bhuti.

Cass: oh... Enkosi mntase.

Onele came to sit on the armrest next to me and peeped on her little nephew, this positioned seemed to make Tammy uncomfortable but now was not the time.

Me: Tammy suggested we come bearing gifts.

Cass: that's nice of her.

I looked at Tammy, she gave the gifts to Cassandra who seemed a lot more relaxed and welcoming than her other siblings. She ate her porridge while Tammy and I were admiring umntana.

Me: so is he fine, like... Everything?

Cass: yes, he's fine.

Me: thank you... I uhm, I'm gonna need his documents for ukumfaka kwi medical aid.

Cass: that's sorted.

Me: huh? How?

Cass: utata uyofaka yena as we speak kweyakhe.

Me: oh... Okay, so what can I do? Nishota ngantoni?

Cass: I think for now si covered, I'll spend the next three months with him then fly off to the Mother City so you might just have to transport my car down there.

Me: no problem... So akhonto ayidingayo umntana?

Cass: ha.a because akatyi kutya mos and he won't be needing milk until he's three months old.

Tammy: nappies?

Cass: we have enough from the baby shower.

I nod...

I felt useless.

Lionel's phone rang so he walked out, leaving us with Onele. Who then also walked out, I figured they were just giving us some privacy.

Me: awukafuni lisiwe ityala ekhaya?

Cass: Tammy, do you understand Xhosa?

Tammy: not one bit.

Cass: Dude, don't be disrespectful now. Speak English.

I looked at her was that necessary? Ungenaphi u Tammy kulento ndiyibuzayo?

Cass: to answer your question, no. I'm cool with where things stand right now.

Me: so when will he be allowed to visit my family?
For them to see him?

Cass: they don't need to see him, you're the father
and you've seen him. That's enough.

Me: Cass please don't do this.

Cass: I don't know what you want me to say, you
know how I feel about your family yet you keep
pushing for this.

Me: okay okay, I'll drop it for now.

Cass: thank you. Tammy, do you live here in PE?

Tammy cleared her throat as she sat up...

Tammy: no I uhm, I'm originally from the US but
now I'm gonna open up a boutique in Joburg.

Cass: clothing or beauty?

Tammy: beauty, aesthetics and all.

Cass: that's nice, once it's established, consider

bringing it down to Cape Town.

Tammy: Cape Town is such a beautiful city but I don't see it's business sense. I once lived there for a year.

Cass: for real?

They went on and on, like a petrol and fire while I was just admiring my son in silence. Then Cassandra's dad walked in, after a few minutes of conversing, he asked his daughter and Tammy to excuse us.

Cass: let's take a walk in the garden.

Tammy: sure thing.

They walked out, I feel myself being swallowed into a huge dark hole. I knew I'm about to get my blows very soon.

Tata: eeeh mfo ka Dakumba, ndiyakubona uphillile.

I just nod, my throat had suddenly run dry.

Tata: how does it feel to hold him in your arms?

Me: I don't know how to explain the feeling tata, I'm just overwhelmed honestly.

He nod and took a sip of his glass, water, then he put it down.

Me: tata there's uhm, something I feel I should just say to you. Since we're both here.

Tata: okay.

Me: I know ndimos hile apha and I haven't rectified my mistake, I have been asking u Cassandra ukuba lizofakwa nini ityala but she's adamant that she doesn't want ba lifakwe ityala.

Tata: mh.

Me: so I was wondering if it's possible if I can just pay the damages kuwe even if aniyanga ekhaya?

He seemed to be thinking... For a long minute.

Tata: I have a proposal for you.

Me: oh-Kay.

He sat up straight and looked me straight in the eye without blinking, I felt my inner intestines twirling and curling to a knot.

Tata: I wanna offer you one million rand to stay out of Milli's life.

I froze.

I didn't even know whether to blink or swallow, I just

froze.

Tata: do you want it cash or Cheque?

Me: Haibo tata, u serious?

Tata: do I look like I'm playing?

Well he didn't... But...

Tata: what? You cannot decide?

Me: I am sorry but I don't want your money.

Tata: why?

Me: because, I want to be in my son's life tata. You can't buy me out nge million rand Haibo.

Tata: okay, so should I up the price to a billion then?

Me: a bill-? What?

Tata: if your father can offer my daughter a million rand to terminate her own pregnancy then surely I can offer you the same amount and more for you

not to be part of my grandson's life.

Me: but I want to be in my son's life, I didn't ask my father to offer her a million rands for extermination. I wasn't there.

Tata: she also wanted her son, she didn't ask your father to see her as a gold digger and yes, you were not there when she needed you.

I sighed...

Me: I'm sorry.

Tata: I'm sorry, I'm sorry that my daughter had to bear you a son.

I didn't know what else to say.

Tata: since you won't take my money, you can keep yours. I don't need it, I'm going to take care of my grandson the best way I know how. I get that you

nothing to do with what your family did to my daughter in your absence but my question is: what did you do when you came back? What means did you try to make peace between these two families after you found out what your parents did to my daughter?

Well I did make peace with Cass, not with her family. First fault.

Tata: since you seem like the cat caught your tongue let's get this straight. Milli is OUR son, he gets to keep OUR last name, you get to see him when WE allow you to. Le yokuba uthengele unina imoto is nit gonna rectify anything, if I die he won't lack, bakhona oomalume bakhe they will play my part.

Me: tata ndicela uxolo ngento yonke, ndingenza nantoni oyifunayo to be part of his life. Please do not lock me out. Please.

Tata: what do you propose to do? I mean, he's

already on medical aid, he's got clothes, he's got an account, he's got roof over his head, he's got love, he's got family. So where do you see yourself fitting in this equation?

Me: he has everything except for his father, that's all I wanna be allowed to be in his life. Utatakhe. I just wanna be there at his soccer matches, I wanna be there kwinto yonke but I do get where you're coming from tata trust me I do... Kodwa ndiyakucela ungandivaleli ngaphandle. Ndiyayazi my family was wrong and I'll forever apologize for that on their behalf kodwa mandingabhataliswa amatyala endingawenzanga. I am sorry for everything.

He went silent for a few minutes...

Me: ndizokwenza nantoni na to rectify this, to make you trust me ngo mzukulwana wakho tata. Honestly, I just want to be part of his life. I don't know how else to show you how much I want this.

Again wathula utata ka Cass...

Tata: uyindoda Nkosinathi. I'm happy to hear lamazwi uwathethayo, even though you don't want me to buy you out of my grandson's life I have respect for you. You know you're supposed to be uyise walentwana and you're ready for that. I'm gonna give you another chance, I'll be watching you closely... One slip up, I'll personally get a restraining order against you. No lies.

Me: I believe you and I promise I won't do anything to jeopardize this opportunity you're giving me.
Enkosi tata.

Tata: haike, mandikunike umzuzu nonyana wakho.

He extended his hand for a shake, I literally jumped and shook it. As soon as he walked away, I wept. This was emotionally draining yet refreshing because I saw umzali kutata ka Cassandra, he made me realize how hurt his daughter was when my family offered her money to exterminate the

pregnancy. That shirt hurt like hell.

[06/26, 14:59] : #Nkosinathi_47

I didn't even have the heart to take pictures of the baby, all I wanted to do was to cuddle him and just lay him on my chest in that silence. After a few minutes ndihleli naye, his mother and Tammy walked in.

Tammy: aaw, ya'll look so cute.

I looked up...these two were like old friends.

Tammy: can I take a picture of them please?

Cass: sure as long as he won't post it on Facebook.

She took out her phone and took a picture of me and the baby then joined me on the couch.

Cass: u sharp?

Me: yeah, I uhm, I'm okay.

She looked at me quizzically. I chuckled.

Me: I'm really okay, don't look at me like that.

Cass: oh-kay then. Can I go change him please? I'll bring him back to you.

Me: can I help you?

Cass: I was gonna change him upstairs, it's warmer there than here.

I looked at Tammy..she smiled

Tammy: ya'll can go, I'm sure you won't be long.

Cass: you don't wanna come with?

Tammy: I have to call my sister in Cape Town, I haven't told her that I'm in SA so I'll do that while ya'll change the baby.

Cass: okay.

She led the way, I followed behind her carrying the baby.

We got to the nursery, it was beautiful. All shades of beautiful blue and hints of white here, it was so beautiful man. I put the baby on a single bed next to his cot while his mother gathered the nappies and wipes, I watched how she composed iintlungu as she sat down.

Me: still painful?

She chuckled and didn't answer me.

I just helped her change the baby, when she was done she let me dress him and she went to dispose the nappy emgqomeni. I left the baby and went to her, we met at the center of the room. You know when you know that you're minds are in sync? That's what I felt, I touched her waist and she

looked away almost blinking tears away. I didn't need to say anything I just hugged her and let her cry onto my chest. We were both so emotional and for once, I really understood for once how she felt. I was angry at myself for not confronting my father about what they did to her and also angry at myself for not realizing that yonke nje lanto could lead to the possibility of me being excluded ebomini bomntanam. I was really upset, for real and I couldn't hide it.

Me: I'm sorry.

Cass: please don't.

Me: I really am, if I didn't dump you over the phone that day yonke lento wouldn't have escalated to this. We wouldn't be here right now, maybe we wouldn't have broken up even.

Cass: Nkos'-

Me: I'm sorry I wasn't there when you needed me, not once but twice.

She didn't answer, I loosened the hug and kissed her on the lips, that was an impulsive act, I didn't even think about it and even though we had said we've broken up and moved on...it felt right. We didn't move for a second then she breathed in and took a stepback.

Cass: this is not right.

Me: but it feels right.

Cass: it does, but Tammy doesn't deserve this. She's too nice of a person.

I tried holding her again but she moved back and cleaned her face using the back of her hand.

Cass: can we do this co-parenting ish for umntana and not our selfish reasons?

Me: you know how much I want to be part of his life,

I'd do anything, sell all my companies if that's what it will take then that's what I will do. As long as your family can grant me access to him.

Cass: I've spoken to utata even before you got here, he's willing to give you another chance.

Me: utshilo nakum, but it gets tense with your sisters around.

Cass: I'm sorry man, you'll get used to them, they'll get used to you being in your son's life.

Me: can you also talk to him about the medicalaid thing? Ndifuna ibekhona nam into endiyenzayo in his life.

Cass: ndizomfaka kweyam once I start working, you can pay maintenance if you wanna?

Me: straight to you?

Cass: no, I'll give you his bank account. We opened it after the baby shower savalelal lamali naniyidlalapha.

Me: okay thank you.

She looked at me and smiled as she opened the door...

Me: and that smile?

Cass: thatha into yakho siphume, umntanabantu angade abe neengcinga ezigwenxa.

I laughed and went to take the baby, we followed each other back to the lounge. Tammy was outside talking on her cell...

Me: we should get going.

Cass: I can't even offer ya'll anything, I'm not allowed to go anywhere near the stoves engakawisi inkaba.

Me: it's okay, we'll get something on the way home.

Cass: thank you for coming.

Me: thank you for being so accommodative, even of Tammy.

She chuckled.

Me: and that?

Cass: she seems like a nice person, she said she's got a son too so I think we might just get along if ya'll wanna take this relationship of yours seriously.

Me: we are serious.

Cass: if you say so.

Me: if I say so?

Cass: yep. Phakama ndikukhuphe...

Seemed like she knew more than what I know but I wasn't gonna ask anything further. I followed her out while carrying umntanam, she stopped at the door and took the child.

Me: please call me xa kungekho bantu ndizonibona again.

Cass: after that stunt you pulled upstairs you think I'm gonna?

I laughed because she was smiling.

Me: I'll be expecting your call..mama ka Ukhona.

Cass: bye bye tata ka Milli.

Me: oh flip! Please tell me you were joking about this Milli name being in his official documents.

Cass: why?

Me: Cassandra please.

Cass: hay wethu bye bye tata ka Milli.

I swallowed and left her house...I was hoping this was just a stupid joke they were pulling on me. Seriously. Tammy waved at her, she waved back then we started the car and went to have lunch. She wanted sea food so we went for that, I was in a happy place wethu, I'd eat anything without arguing.

We ordered and waited for the food over drinks.

Tammy: she's nicer than I thought, makes me regret shouting at you when you were anxious about not being there for her.

Me: she is a nice person.

Tammy: figuratively, right?

I laughed throwing my yes in there.

Me: you guys had a chat?

Tammy: yeah, when her dad asked us to give ya'll a moment.

Me: about?

Tammy: she wanted to know me, so we kinda had some introductory session. Told her about me, what I do, what my life goals are and so forth. And she did the same.

Me: did she ask about us?

Tammy: nah, she's just more concerned about me. And I understand, she doesn't know me and I'm instantly part of her son's life.

Me: mmh.

Tammy: so what did her father say?

Me: a lot...but he's okay with me being in the child's life. If I slip up at any point in this lifetime, he's gonna get a restraining order against me.

Tammy: what? Can he do that?

Me: I don't know, I don't wanna know.

Tammy: don't let them pull you by the nose, you have every right to be part of your son's life.

Me: I know that, but I actually am cool with the way things are right now. I'm glad I finally met him, I was afraid he'd do more than the talking.

Tammy: mmh, just don't be a pushover.

I smiled...

Tammy: well, hello? I'm looking out for ya!

Me: and I'm grateful for that, I really am. Thank you for coming with me today.

Tammy: any day.

We had lunch and then went back home, we still had a lot of unpacking to do.

[06/26, 15:00] : #Nkosinathi_48

When we got home, Tammy wanted to shower first and I didn't feel like taking a shower. We bathed mos in the morning before we headed to Cassandra's place.

Me: babe, why are you showering again?

Tammy: I'm going out later tonight with my sister.

Me: your sister? Isn't she in CT?

Tammy: oh I forgot to tell you that she's here

accompanying her husband to some convention, they're flying back home tomorrow.

Me: mh.

Tammy: I hope you don't mind, it will be two hours max.

Me: take your time.

Tammy: thank you baby.

She kissed my cheek and ran to the shower, so I went downstairs and made calls. Well, I first called the same Cassandra esivela kuye because my heart was just forcing me to... Don't ask!

Cass: tatakhe?

I froze... I didn't know what to say to her. Because honestly, why was I calling her in the first place?

Cass: hayike Nkosinathi Dakumba!

Me: I don't know why I'm calling you.

Then she went silent for a second before asking...

Cass: where's your girlfriend?

Me: she's taking a shower.

Cass: oh-Kay...

Me: I uhm, ndibawela uzokubona later on.

Cass: uzobe uhamba naye again?

Me: no, her sister is taking her to dinner.

Cass: okay, what's so urgent?

Me: nothing much. Can I come over? Is it safe?

Cass: well... the fam will be in church ngo 6 to 8, sis Siki uphuma u 8 emsebenzini. Andikho sure if Onele will be around okanye naye she'll go to church ke. Is that safe enough for you?

Me: uOnele akayongxaki.

Cass: oh-Kay. Why are we creeping around kanene?

I chuckled...

Me: because, I was there just now, kuzothwa ndizothini okwesibini same day?

Cass: nyhani ke uzothini?

Me: uzobona ngoko.

Cass: bring me something nice, will you?

Me: ndikwazi uthanda ukutya ke, yintoni isomething nice?

Cass: I don't know, anything.

Me: can we call it cravings even if you've given birth?

Cass: hahaha!!! Maybe, yazi... And because I never bothered you nge cravings zam, maybe now I should use that against you.

Now I laughed...

Me: okay mamakhe, what do you think you're craving?

Cass: andikho sure, something meaty, something greasy oh and something chocolatey.

Me: Yho... Okay. I'll try to bring something, andiyazi le mess uyifunayo but I'll come with something.

Cass: thank you sir.

Me: sharp.

I hung up and called Asenathi...

Asenathi: brother brother?

Me: someone's in a happy mood.

Asenathi: because my favorite brother is back from France and because my son got four academic awards today.

Me: you lie!

Asenathi: haha seriously, he's obviously humbled kesana akavezi kwa excitement.

Me: are you with him? I'd like to take him out.

Asenathi: umnke notatakhe... Bakwi celebration mode.

Me: omphi utatakhe?

Asenathi: u bhuti kaloku, the real one is taking him for December holidays.

Me: Haibo! Uyayazi ubhuti lonto?

Asenathi: ndithe uya nam emzinam, they didn't argue.

Me: Yey uya riska man wena.

Asenathi: anything to make sure he's happy and content. I'm sure that's not why you called.

Me: yeah uhm... Cass gave birth three days ago.

Asenathi: I figured, so when are we visiting her?

Me: you want to?

Asenathi: Haikaloku ndingu Dabs bra, andizokwazi

ungayombona umntana.

Me: I already went there today.

Asenathi: alone?

Me: with my girlfriend.

Asenathi: lamlungu?

Me: she has a name bra.

Asenathi: dude, how can you allow a stranger to visit your newborn baby engakagqibi neveki?

Me: Tammy is not a stranger, she's gonna be part of his life anyway.

Asenathi: I wonder bacinga ntoni abantu balamzi ngawe because wow.

Me: Cass didn't mind, ndimxelele before ndiye naye phaya u Tammy.

Asenathi: if she minded you would have said she's jealous that you finally moved on. Andithi?

Okay ndathula...

Asenathi: senenzile wethu it doesn't matter, so when can we, your family visit umntana?

Me: I don't know about others but I'm sure I can arrange for you uyambona as soon as ewisa inkaba.

Asenathi: okay ke, lemme go shopping.

Me: shopping for ntoni ngoku?

Asenathi: andizoyobona umntana ndiphaca kaloku mntase.

Me: he kinda has almost everything, that's what I was told.

Asenathi: then he'll have double of almost everything. Simple.

I smiled....

This is the reason why bebengavani aba, they are both stubborn AF.

Me: okay bra.

Asenathi: uyoxelela abazali bakho ke ba imillion yabo didn't work.

Me: yayazba kuthwa ngu Milli umntananam pha kulamzi?

She burst out laughing

Asenathi: as in Milli for Million? Yho ba cruel ababantu!!!

Then she burst out laughing again.

Me: uyadika uyeva?

Asenathi: this shit is funny bra, or should I say tata ka Million? Yho hahaha.

I gave up and hung up, called my mother. I still

wasn't ready to speak to my dad. I needed to see him face to face, leye phone wasn't gonna help right now.

Mom: Hello?

Me: Nozidla, unjani khehlekazi?

Mom: andifreshi mntaka bawo for uba likhehlekazi.

We both laughed.

Mom: awunqabe Nkosinathi mntanam, caba yakucaphukisa nyhani lento idibanise no Cassandra.

Me: I've been busy mama.

Mom: I know, but I also know that you're ignoring your dad.

Me: I need to face him, man to man. We can't speak over the phone and pretend like things are okay between us because they are not.

Mom: come home ke, he's coming home tomorrow evening.

Me: okay, but first. You have a grandson.

Mom: Cassandra gave birth?

Me: yep, two days ago.

Mom: hapona ke bethuna, yhu umakhulu needs to go shopping kengoku.

I laughed...

Umakhulu needs to go shopping? Njani? Shopping for who?

Mom: awumfotanga na Ndoda?

Me: yhima kaloku sthandwa sam notata, you're going shopping for who?

Mom: for u mzukulwana wam kaloku.

Me: the same mzukulwana esingeka mhalwuli?

Mom: that can be arranged, utatakho uyabuya

ngoms o.

Me: utata uzokwazi uhlawulela umntana whom he wanted to pay a million bucks for his extermination?

Wathula....

Me: kaloku mama beningamfuni lomntana, ndiyabhidwa ngoku yi excitement yakho. Kanti wawutheni ku Cassandra?

She didn't answer...

Me: okay masiy'bambe apho, ndcela ke umxelele utata ukuba ndiyenza ngoms o, we need to have a meeting. You might as well inform oo bhuti that we're having a family meeting as soon as dad lands here. I need to see all of you.

Mom: okay Ndoda.

Me: ubenemini emnandi ke xhekwazi lam.

She mumbled and we hung up...

I put my phone next to me and sat there thinking.

Tammy came down and lay her body on mine.

Tammy: you need to relax a but, and rest. I'll bring you supper.

Me: I have to go see my friends while you're gone.

Tammy: that's okay, as long as you'll be home by the time I come back.

Me: done deal.

Half past five her sister came to fetch her, they left. I left my house before 6 and went to buy "Death by chocolate" cake, ribs and double cheese burger for Cassandra because I promised I'd bring her something. Anything.

I drove to her home and saw that the driveway was clear so I texted and then the gate was opened. Onele stood emnyango while I walked up to her with the shopping bags.

Onele: twice in one day, someone is lucky.

Cass: shut that pipe up and give us a minute!

Onele: ndipheni imali I'll give you more than minute.

I gave her R100 that was in my pocket.

Onele: haike tata ka Milli, ihundred qha?

I laughed and gave her two.

Onele: Thank you, now please, don't do anything you know I'd do. Me: okay Onele.

Cass: so we're gonna take your advice?

One: I was just saying!

She shrugged and went out. I walked in and the baby was fast asleep on a small cot next to his mother's couch, I gave her the food and she smiled.

Cass: enkosi.

Me: you're welcome.

Immediately she warmed her ribs and plated up satya sobabini making small conversations about the baby. When we were done I took the plates to the kitchen and came back, we were in one couch and again, the instinct and urge to touch her sprung up and I did. Touched her arm, her skin so warm and soft under my hand... She looked at me and I knew this is what we both wanted. This is the reason why I had to come back, I needed to be sure of what happened earlier, was it me or were we both

into it and her response to my touch was exactly what I had hoped for.

Cass: please don't do this.

Me: what, touching you?

I released my hand from her arm and just went in for a kiss, this time around we kissed. Her hands were all over my face and neck while mine were on her waist... I lay her down on the couch and we kissed, I was careful not to lay my weight on her as I noticed earlier on that she was still in pains xa ehlala phantsi. After some time I got us back up, not breaking the kiss and then stopped. She wiped her lips and looked at her baby without saying a word.

Me: I still love you, and the sad part is that I don't think I'll ever stop.

Cass: why are you with Tammy?

Me: asithethi nga Tammy ngoku.

Cass: see why I said if ya'll are serious? You're not serious about her and I'm worried that she might invest all her feelings into this relationship and end up getting hurt. By you.

Ndathula....

Me: this uhm, Cape Town thing... Is it still on?

Cass: yes.

Me: will you be staying with your brother?

Cass: until I can afford to rent, yes.

Me: umntana umthathe nini?

Cass: beginning of next year, he'll be close to one year so uzokwazi ukuya e crèche while I go to work.

Me: you don't want me to accommodate ya'll?

Cass: what?

Me: I have a hou-

Cass: I know you have a house in Cape Town but I

don't get why you want to accommodate us.

Me: I just want my son to have an assured shelter, roof over his head.

Cass: and you will visit whenever you feel like?

Me: no.

Cass: cummon I know you, and based on what transpired today, I don't think we can be in one room alone nje.

Me: I didn't force myself on you though.

Cass: I know, we're both all over the place. At least I don't have a boyfriend that I'm stringing along but wena, ndcela ube honest no Tammy nesiqu sakho torho.

Me: how can I be honest with Tammy when you haven't agreed that we can try again?

Cass: hayini! So uzomgcina umntanabantu de kuthini?

Me: that's for me to decide on, now back to us.

Wakhala umntana, we both got up at the same time and went to him.

Cass: I told you I'm not ready, and I gave you the go ahead to date anyone else.

Me: okay ke ndizokulinda.

Cass: uzondilinda ngo Tammy?

Me: u Tammy une agenda yakhe, I'm just entertaining her. Nothing serious.

Cass: Nkosinathi u Tammy uyakuthanda, like... The girl loves you. She glows up when she talks about you and the plans ya'll have.

Me: what plans? We've just been dating for two months.

Cass: please don't do this.

Me: okay ndizokuyeka for now, but you and I both know that we'll end up together at some point in this lifetime.

Cass: that's if you don't eventually fall in love with

her while you're thinking you're entertaining her.

Me: Oksalayo when you're finally ready to commit I'll be here. That's all that matters.

She sighed.

Me: uphi u friend wakho?

Cass: which one?

Me: the doctor?

Cass: I'm not sure, last time I checked he was in Joburg with your sister.

Me: wait, what?

Cass: yeah, bafunela umntana iboarding school.

Me: and you're comfortable with that?

Cass: with what?

Me: the two of them being that close?

Cass: Haibo Nkosinathi, akhonto indidibanisa ne personal life ka Mpumelelo kaloku. And besides,

Asenathi has every right to be working with him for the betterment of their son's future.

Ndathula... Something wasn't making sense. She looked at me and laughed.

Cass: please tell me you don't think I'm dating him? Please.

Me: well...

She burst out laughing...

Cass: which part of I'm not ready didn't you get?

Me: bra uya eKapa, the dude stays in Cape Town as well.

Cass: ndiyay'bawela ke yazi lento uyits hayayo because I told you everything you needed to know about this Cape Town thing. For the last time, I'm not dating Mpumelelo, I'm not going to Mpumelelo

eKapa and I'm most certainly not gonna be saying this again.

I smiled...

Cass: wipe that smirk off your face bra, iyadina lento uyenzayo. Now it all makes sense why you want us to live in your house eKapa. Yho hay Mfethu.

Me: I'm not gonna apologize for anything kengoku, not for jumping into conclusions and certainly not for wanting what's best for my son.

She looked at me...

Me: and I'm not gonna apologize for loving you.

Cass: Yehovah ndikhuphe kulengxokolo!

I laughed... She was serious.

It is only now that I finally got the message, she really wasn't ready for any commitment. Not just commitment nam but for commitment on its own, this was music to my ears... At least I'm not in competition with my sisters ex ku mama womntanam. Minus one problem .

[06/26, 15:00] : Nkosinathi_49

After an hour ndihleli pha I decided to go home...

Me: nd'cela i-account number ka Boy.

Cass: please pass me my phone.

I gave her the phone, she sent it on WhatsApp.

Me: thank you.

Cass: sure.

Me: u Asenathi would like to come and see the baby.

Cass: not now.

Me: I told her I'll ask you xa ewisile umntana.

Cass: with regards to anyone else from your family besides you, funeka badlule kutata kaloku.

Me: oh okay, so kuzofuneka ndicele kutatakho?

Cass: ewe tatakhe, but still not ngoku. Utata just gave you eyakho ichance, that doesn't mean he's okay with what happened but he acknowledges that you had no control over it, that's why it was easy for him to be convinced yi apology yakho.

Me: I understand.

She looked at me, cockily.

Me: what?

Cass: I was just pulling your leg with the food request, but thank you. I'll have the cake tomorrow.

Me: I know, but I wanted to bring you something.
Wayeka ucela kwanto kum even before we broke up.

Cass: oh well...

I stood up.

Me: ndizokhapha u Tammy ngoms o she's going to
J o'burg to sign the lease agreement for her
boutique, I think I'll see you guys in two days.

Cass: no problem. Uhm...there's something I was
meaning to ask you, qha andifuni ubenezinye ii
thoughts.

Me: ask.

Cass: have you done DNA ku Sinathi yet?

Me: why should I?

Cass: you don't think you should?

Me: hay bra, uyafana nam lamntana, ewe ke it
doesn't make sense iminyaka yakhe and compared
to my relationship with her mother but ngumcephe

ucandiwe.

Cass: okay...okay.

I bent down and kissed my son on the forehead, looked at his mother and she laughed backing her head against the couch ndamhleka because she knew what was on my mind so I just walked out, she opened the gate for me and I drove back to my house. Kwavela kwakho into ethi I must call Tammy before I even get home..so I did.

Tammy: baby?

Me: what time will you be back?

Tammy: I don't know yet, we just had dinner and we might hit the clubs.

Me: do you have a driver?

Tammy: my sister is driving.

Me: I think if it gets quite late rather sleep at her place and come back in the morning.

Tammy: why?

Me: because I'm on my way to my mom's house right now, thought you would not take long so we can go together.

Tammy: oh babe... I'm sorry.

Me: so will you talk to your sister?

Tammy: you know I'm flying out tomorrow, right?

Me: your flight is at 1:30pm, yes.

Tammy: what time will you be back home?

Me: by eleven I think.

Tammy: alright, enjoy.

Me: be safe.

Tammy: I love you.

Me: love you too.

We hung up, I drove home.

Hooted for the gate to be opened and it was, after a few minutes of waiting. I got out of the car and

walked up to the front door, before I even knocked, my dad opened the door.

Dad: hey kwedini.

Me: xhego.

He walked away and I followed behind him closing the door. Got to the lounge and he was there with his wife, and Asenathi and Ta Nko.

Me: mh, ya'll are playing family bonds without your favorite boy. What's up with that?

My brother chuckled nervously...

I sat down and looked at all of them, they must have been discussing something serious, they way they were so tense.

Dad: ungaphaka ke Nkosikazi, baphelele abantwana bakho.

Mom: yhiza Sese.

Me: ndi grand mna Ase ningandibali.

Mom: kuthini uba grand Nathi?

Me: ndihluthi mama, enkosi kakhulu.

Dad: hay kwedini, mphakele Nkosikazi.

Me: I'd actually appreciate a glass of whiskey bantu benkosi. Not food.

My mother cleared her throat and walked away...
Asenathi followed.

Dad: uthi unyoko you want a family meeting?

Me: kunjalo taima.

Dad: yintoni edla umxhelo?

Me: zininzi but I must say that I'm glad we're all here, we might as well have it tonight.

Ta Nko: I still have to drive home, ubuthe imeeting uyifuna ngoms o kumama.

Me: I'm going to Joburg ngoms o, we're having the meeting tonight. Silapha sonke mos.

Ta Nko: so sizova ngawe ngoku ba masithini?

Me: unengxaki bra?

Ta Nko: watch how you talk to me Nkosinathi, andiyontanga yakho.

Me: you better watch what you say next, I'm not in the mood for your bully tendencies tonight, I'm actually not in the mood for you uphefumla nje at all.

Ta Nko: sukundiqhela kwedini!

Me: oyena mntu uqhela omnye apha nguwe.

Ta Nko jumped out of his couch and came charging for me ngempama, I didn't wait for him, ndamfaka impama wayowa phambi kotata, laxhuma ixhego.

Dad: Nkosinathi hayi man, hayi!

Me: phakama and try that again.

Dad: Nkosinathi!

Me: Nkosiyohlanga Dakumba phakama and try that shit again, sulinga undiqhelikaka mna. Ndakukhaba unye nalento uthembele ngayo.

Dad: kwedini don't bring your foul tongue emzinam!

I looked at him...

Dad: yey, yeka le nonsense uyenzayo wena.

Me: nonsense? Yi nonsense le tata? Uyayazi i-nonsense tata k'qala?

Dad: ndakucubha kemnake kwedini ndikubulale uyandiva?

Me: undibulele ndiphila wena tata, already so le ntsomi uy'thethayo ayenzi sense as it is.

Mom and Asenathi followed each other...

Mom: nenza ntoni? Kwenzeka ntoni apha?

Dad: ayingo Nkosinathi obetha umkhuluwa wakhe.

Mom looked at me, Asenathi just stood there in silence.

Mom: haibo Nathi!

Me: ndimbethe xa ebesenza ntoni yena k'qala? Tata hlukana nalento yakho yokukhetha. Yintoni lento kucaba yonkinto concerning ubhuti ithathelwapha phezulu? Heh? U special ngantoni kuthi u Ta Nko tata?

Dad: Nkosinathi ingenaphi yonke lento uyithethayo?

Me: ya'll are unbelievable! Are you serious?

Mom: hayi hayi hayi andikukhulisanga ngalondlela Nkosinathi, ubetha njani ku Nkos'ehlanga?

Me: so ngendimyekile andibethe? Ekhaya?

Mom: kukokwabo naye, don't use that word here!

Asenathi: tata, ndcedisa ubhuti ingathi uzama uphakama.

I sat down, and waited for him to do something, anything.

He didn't.

He was helped up and just sat on the couch without saying a word, I got up and went to dad's cellar ndabuya ne whiskey ne glass yam ndedwa. While they ate, I sipped on my drink ndabalinda bangathi bayagqiba and started my meeting.

Me: u Cassandra ubelekile, but I'm sure umama senixelele.

Dad: sistya Nkosinathi, where are your manners?

Me: ifan'ba kudala nigqibile ukutya ngoku, ithirty minutes iphele oko nifunqule ezi tray. Hayini yibani neentloni.

Dad: ndakukhaba Nkosinathi, uyeva?

Me: andityanga nokutya kwakwakho ke taima andiyazi eyona uzandikhabela yona.

Dad: buyakugezis a obutywala ne?

Me: oooh uzandikhabela leway? Ndizay'buyis a wethu.

Mom: Nkosinathi hayi, law'leka.

I ignored her...

Me: Bendis atsho ke, u Cassandra ubelekile.

Ta Nko: besesivile, now carry on.

Me: good ta Nko, lemme proceed.

Dad: ngubani igama lomntana?

Me: interestingly, ngu Million.

They all stopped eating and looked at me.

Me: why are you all shocked? Weren't you the once who offered Cassandra a million rands to abort? Abantu balamzi are so innovative they decided to use that as the name, so that he'll be reminded of what his father's family think of him, every day of his life.

Mom: balifake kwi certificate eligama Nathi?

Me: does it matter, oksalayo bamnikile elogama umntanam.

Dad cleared his throat...and shifted from his chair.

Dad: uhm, bathe singaya nini uyohlawula?

Me: niyohlawula ntoni tata?

Dad: umntana, ayinguwe kanti omithisileyo?

Me: khanime ngezinto zamva man tata, niyayazi ukuba kulamzi I was offered one billion rands to stay away from my son's life?

All of them: WHAT??????

I just laughed...

Me: mamelani ke, nonke.

Dad: Nkosinathi you cannot address me like that, not now and not ever.

Me: yazi tata uba unokhe undiyeke ndithethe, ingaphuma msinya kwale meeting?

Mom: myeke tata.

Dad: akanambheko uNkosinathi, suthi mandimyeke akanambheko.

I watched them arguing over my disrespect so I poured another glass, bathula as mom came to snatch my bottle from me.

Me: okay, nigqibile?

Ta Nko: Nkosinathi, hayi!

Me: unqanda kweliphi icala kewena bhuti?

Ta Nko: ayondlela yothetha le uthetha ngayo no matter how hurt you are, be respectful.

Me: I was disrespected by all of you right here, ya'll offered my girlfriend money to abort my baby. MY baby, gqiba nizondixelela nge respect? Hayini man don't fuck me up the wrong way, don't you dare! Not tonight.

Asenathi: mntase...

Me: khawume wena, hold it right there with your own insensitivity.

Asenathi: oops!

Dad: I understand that you're upset bu-

Me: I am not upset I am livid! I am fuming ngumsindo.

Dad: I understand that, but, we did what we thought was right at the time and we can still amend what we broke.

Me: njani? What's your action plan?

Dad: I'll speak to her father.

Me: ooh, uyamazi apho ahlala khona?

Dad: I'll find him.

I laughed...

Dad: what's so funny?

Me: you...this whole family is a joke.

Ta Nko: uyaqhuba kwedini ukuba disrespectful awubuyi ngamva.

Asenathi: but he's speaking the truth, we are a joke of a family.

Mom: haibo Sese!

Asenathi: haike mama, wena yey'phi ifamily eright oyaziyo eyenza ezizinto sizenzayo aphekhaya?

Mom: zinto ezi kucaba siyazenza?

Me: buying people to abort, taking children from

their parents for our own selfish reasons, faking children's death and possibly fabricating death certificates because everything has to look legit. That's what we do kule family...want to add anything else Asenathi?

Asenathi: ewe mntas-

Mom: nithetha ngantoni?

Me: ngomntana ka Asenathi lo ukhule ecing'ba ungumntana ka Liyema no Ta Nko! That's what we're talking about now.

Ta Nko: wow. Really now?

Me: what, you didn't think we'd go there? Wait, can we also talk about who are the real parents to all your children? Now that we're here?

Kwathulwa...

Dad: imbheko yona ndandikugqibele unayo, uyandixaka namhlanje. I will make means to go and make peace with Cassandra's family coming

weekend, ingabe kanti we acted out of heart in your absence kodwa ke umntana yena ngokwakwa Dakumba. We will make a plan for him to be part of this family. Eyendlu ka Mkhuluwa wakho ke awungeni ndawo kuyo.

Asenathi: kodwa mna ndiyangena.

Dad: I wasn't talking to you.

Asenathi: well I'm talking to everyone in this room tata, ndiyangena mna anywhere and everywhere where my child is concerned.

Dad: Asenathi?

Mom: khaw' thule Asenathi kusathetha abantu abadala ngoku.

Me: haibo mam-

Ta Nko: Can you just for once shut the fuck up!!!!!!?
Nitheni na nina namhlanje? Why ya'll such ungrateful brats all of a sudden?

Asenathi: before I shut the fuck up lemme tell you something, I know how your wife has been treating my son all these years. Yes, I also know the real

reason why ningafuni aze kum on holidays while ya'll hide behind isiyalu and all those senseless reasons you gave me.

Mom: Sese yhi-

Asenathi: yhima mama sendizogqiba, mamela ke bhuti. Umntanam ndiyomthatha kwakho as in right now. In case you didn't know, he knows his real father, all those years wena notata nimvalela u Mpumelelo ukuba angadibani nonyana wakhe were just a waste of your time and money because u Amo akayi kwase Mzini wam these holidays uya kuyise eKapa.

Kwathi cwaka...

Asenathi: eyonanto ke ibalulekileyo kukuba akukhomntu uzaw'fa apha, if anyone related to Mpumelelo dies then I'm going straight to the cops and all of you here will be the prime suspects.

Me: in conclusion ke, I have a son and andifuni

nomnye wenu to go near him. Not even one soul, if I could ngendithatha no Sinathi from you people but I would like to believe ba umama will do the right thing.

Dad: Nkos’-

Me: yiyeke injalo taima. You have failed me this time around, and I am now paying for what you and did. I thank God for utata ka Cassandra that even in his anger towards how you people treated umntanakhe he still became a father and granted me access to my son. Andimfuni umntanam anywhere near all of you...u right abengu million pha kulo nina ngoba bayamthanda khona, abazenzisi kuba sekhona. Something I can’t say about the rest’o’yall.

I grabbed my car keys...

Me: aw’hambi wena?

Asenathi: asihambi ndlela inye chap.

Me: phakama kaloku, andifunukushiya apha bakunqunqele izinja abantu balapha.

She quickly stood up and grabbed her bag, we both walked straight to our cars and drove off.

[06/26, 15:00] : #Nkosinathi_50

I took a drive to my house, my mood was directing me to my club ndiyonxila kuse but my mind was not even bothering so I just went home, took out my laptop and got busy. I called Cassandra because I really needed ii documents zomntana for ezinye izinto and not just for medical aid...

Cass: it's late.

Me: I know but this is important.

Cass: please give me a minute, ndizama ulalisa umntana.

Me: okay. Sorry.

I hung up...

I had to write over the franchises overseas ngomntanam, now that he had his own bank account that meant imali yonke eyenizwa zizo izongena kuye and hopefully umamakhe will use her brains and not use lamali but invest it. Well, we were gonna have a meeting about that, but hopefully she'll be wise when it comes to it anyway. While waiting for her I drafted my will...as I was about to write Sinathi my mind went back to Cassandra's question earlier. Why would she think I should do a DNA test? It didn't make sense but my sixth sense didn't allow me to go ahead ndimfake ezintweni zam u Sinathi just yet so I didn't. After a few minutes, Cassandra called me back...

Me: hi?

Cass: okay, what's so urgent?

Me: I need your son's documents ndifuna ukumfake kwizinto zam.

Cass: but we spoke about this.

Me: I know kodwa I need them for other reasons, not just for medical aid.

Cass: you couldn't wait till ngomso kengoku?

Me: I'm busy with my things now, and I thought I should call you now because ndingulo uya e Gauteng ngomso. Please.

She sighed.

Cass: I don't have them in PDF ke Nkosinathi, you'll have to wait till k'sasa.

Me: you can take a picture or scan using your phone, and email them to me.

Cass: mnkq, okheyi.

Me: enkosi, I'm sorry for ukusokolisa.

Cass: sure.

She hung up.

After fifteen more minutes I received the email and I was relieved to see that lento ka Milli was not a registered name at all. He was just Thixo-ukhona and ofcourse he took her surname which I wasn't complaining for because yeah, I expected that. I started getting busy, arranged izinto zomntanam za kwi order then in the wee hours of the morning I woke and prepared for J ozi, got a refreshing call from Khanya while having breakfast.

Me: Khanya, khawenze kukhanye mfethu.

Khanya: Molo Nkosinathi unjani?

Me: I have a son, that should tell you.

He laughed.

Khanya: uyaw'ze uphinde ubhadle ke?

Me: I think ndiyabhadla man mvanje, oko

ndinozibona sendilungisa nee will.

Khanya laughed again well I actually joined him.

Khanya: I'm glad to hear that having a son has changed you, but now let's talk business.

Me: music to my ears.

Me: xa ucinga ungase Jozi nini?

Me: today.

Khanya: time?

Me: before 3pm, what's up?

Khanya: I need you in Joburg by 12pm, ikhona iproperty ethengiswayo. I'm not interested in it, but the dude who's selling is someone I'd like to do business with in the future so I want you to put in an offer uyithenge.

Me: okay wait...what kind of property are we talking about?

Khanya: a block of flats...you can revamp them and make ii rez zabantwana besikolo or urentise. It's your kinds thing, you'll love it.

Me: okay, okay.

Khanya: can you make 12pm eJ ozi nah?

Me: well i-business jet izulazula nina apheresithubeni, I first have to check if I can change my flight times then I can confirm.

Khanya: call Khaya, he's with the Jet in Durban.

Me: kanti uphi wena?

Khanya: that's all you need to know...bye now.

He hung up.

I laughed and called his twin brother and he said he would pick us up. Lomjita talks like he's coming nge Taxi "sure mjita I'll pick you up at 10" mnkq, so I called Tammy and she arrived just in time. We quickly made way to the airport and flew out to Joburg, I left her at my place and went to see this property with my lawyer and oh my God! It was

worth every cent...I signed the documents, my lawyer made arrangements to pay the owner then I registered it under my son. You know it felt good to buy something for someone else besides myself or my family...but to buy it for the legacy. As I left the meeting, my dad called me.

Me: Hello?

Dad: are you feeling better today?

Me: ndiphilile tata, ninjani nina?

Dad: we're good, have you left already?

Me: yes.

Dad: when are you coming back?

Me: I don't know, I have business meetings lined up apha. Why do you ask?

Dad: Sifuna uyocela uxolo kulo Cassandra, we were hoping you'd be here when we go there.

Me: nifuna uyocela uxolo?

Dad: ewe.

Me: wena nabani?

Dad: thina, amadoda alapha kokwenu. Yintoni le undibuza yona?

Me: why?

Dad: what do you mean why?

Me: exactly that dad, why? Why now all of a sudden? Eight months yonke benithuleleni?

He sighed...

Me: whether you go there or not, you and I mean all of you are not permitted to be part of my son's life. I don't care how much you offer that family and I pray to God that this time around babekleva and take it bayitye and pull out a protection order against all of you ogqiba kwabo.

Dad: I guess you're not feeling better, I'll call you again later so we can talk, man to man.

Me: I will not change my story, andinifuni tata

ebomini bomntanam, phumani kuye myekeni elahlobo alilo akazondixaka.

Dad: uthethiswa bubuntwana mntanam, umntana lowakho uzodinga amasiko apha ekhaya, one way or another we will be part of his life. Ngcono ke silungise izinto kwangoku kunoba simlinde abemdala kubengona sifuna ulungisa.

Me: akunyanzelekanga enzelwe nini kwanto lamntana tata, uzokwenzelwa amasiko akulonina ngumntanentombi into ayiyo. Ukuba uthe akonela ngawo, bakhona oo tamnci bazomenzela awasekhaya.

Dad: Nkosinathi, I get that we messed up... Ufuna silucele kangaphi uxolo ukuze uxole?

Me: benikhe naqala?

Wathula...

Me: I didn't hear one of you apologizing sincerely for the evil ya'll have done mna unless I need a

hearing aid aphebudaleni.

Dad: we're sorry.

Me: is that your idea of an apology tata? Seriously?
Yho hay bye bye. Call me again taima when you're
really serious about this.

Wathula... I gave him about 30 seconds and hung
up.

It wasn't long when mom called...

I ignored her ndaqhuba, got home and found
Tammy ready for her own signage. We drove out to
where she was gonna be renting, I stayed in the car
while she went inside, after about two hours she
came out with a white envelope and the most
excited face I've seen of her in a while.

Tammy: baby!!!!

Me: it's a done deal?

Tammy: yessssss! Oh my God it feels so unreal.

We hugged...

Me: congratulations baby, now the work begins.

Tammy: yes, but still this feels surreal. Oh my God!!!!

After a moment we drove out for some celebration lunch... I really wasn't feeling "peopley" but I didn't wanna be the party pooper. We ordered food and a champagne, while waiting...

Tammy: how was your meeting?

Me: progressive.

Tammy: you don't look like you had a progressive one.

Me: I'm sorry.

Tammy: maybe we should just take the food and

eat at home.

Me: babe, this is your moment, let's enjoy it.

She waited for our waitress to come then she asked them to make takeaways for us and we took our champagne with. When we got home I went to put my documents in the safe in my bedroom, she must have followed me because after I locked the safe, I turned I saw her in bed, in her underwear only.

Tammy: come join me.

Me: I thought we were eating.

Tammy: we are, aren't we?

I laughed and stripped off all my clothes as I made way to her, we made love emini, we made love for all the days we didn't and I'm always prepared. I always have condoms in my drawers which was a frustration for Tammy because she doesn't like condoms but ever since we decided to take this

relationship serious, I made it clear to her that I actually enjoy condoms.

After about three rounds we lay there... Not cuddling. She's got this idea that I don't like cuddling.

Tammy: do you always have to have a condom everywhere you go?

Me: yes.

Tammy: you're so boring, you know that? What happened to being spontaneous?

Me: Haibo, I'm not ready to be a father to another kid yet, I'm still adjusting to Milli as it is and on top of that, there are so many diseases out there you can't just trust someone just because they're beautiful.

Tammy: so you think I'll infect you with diseases?

Me: that's not what I said.

Tammy: what are you saying then? Please tell me.

Me: babe, all I'm saying is that it's better to be safe than sorry, that's all.

Tammy: I see.

I sighed...

Got up and went to shower, I heard my phone ringing so I quickly came out but when I checked it, there was no missed call.

Me: did my phone ring?

Tammy: I didn't hear, is it on silent?

Me: no... Maybe it's in my head.

I left it there and went to lotion up, got dressed and returned back to her.

Me: what do you need, I'm going out for a bit.

Tammy: a box of chocolate and flowers.

Me: that's it?

Tammy: yes baby.

Me: kay.

I kissed her on the lips and took a drive to the office. I knew there should be no one there, which was what I was looking for. An empty space for me to think. The massive building was really empty and locked, used my tag to open the sacred emergency entrance then I went to my office, on the 8th floor. Last floor of the building...got myself connected and started working. Asenathi called me.

Me: 'Senathi?

Asenathi: uphi?

Me: I'm in Joburg, why do you sound anxious?

Asenathi: Cassandra is trying to get hold of you.

Me: no she's not, I haven't received a call from her.

Asenathi: uthi she called you wathi umntu wakho awukho and she doesn't know where you went but you left your phone behind.

I cursed under my breath.

Me: did she tell you what's the problem?

Asenathi: she wouldn't say but she sounded like she had been crying.

Me: okay thanks chap... I'll call her just now.

Asenathi: sure.

I hung up and called Cassandra...

Cass: Hi Tammy, did you eventually find him?

Me: hey, what's up?

Cass: oh hi...

Me: hi... You called, what's going on?

Cass: uhm... Don't worry about it, sesi grand.

Me: Cassandra?

Cass: okay fine umntana akekho right we're at the doctor, silinde ileta we're being transfered to the hospital.

Me: what happened to him?

Cass: he's heating up, I don't know.

Me: okay. Ndiyeza.

Cass: aren't you in J oburg though?

Me: I am, but ndiyeza.

Cass: we understand you have businesses to run, it's okay. We'll just keep you updated.

Me: dude, I can't always be away when you need me, this time around business can wait.

Cass: okay. If you say so.

Me: sho.

I hung up and called Khaya... He was still around, I

drove straight to the airport and gave him my car keys leaving him behind because he's not a pilot but he enjoys flying around with the dude. I rushed home nge cab, texted Cassandra to send me location and as soon as she did I took my Ranger and drove like a maniac to the hospital. I found them just as they were being given a room, all her sisters were there... Well except for Asanda.

Me: molweni.

They looked up...

Siki: hey, that was fast. Ubungekho se Rhawutini na?

Me: I was, but I'm here now.

Siki: oh that's sweet, we also just got here.

Me: really? So what's wrong with him?

Cindy: we should be asking you that.

Me: what? Why?

Cindy: eversince you came to see him he's been

crying non-stop, which has caused this heating up
shit.

I looked at Siki, she wanted to say something but
she just shrugged. I went to him on the bed,
touched his forehead and it was blazing hot.

Me: I'm sorry.

Cass: it's not your fault don't mind her, uthe u gqirha
he'll be fine.

Me: if he's gonna be fine why ni admitiwe kengoku?

Cass: they have to monitor him, nangoku kuthwe
mandimkhulule sizoya kwi room ebandayo just to
cool him down.

I didn't know what to do or say.

She looked at me, I could tell uyaziqinis a umntana
bantu.

Cass: thank you for coming.

Me: I'll come anytime, any day. Don't hesitate to call me even if it's an awkward hour.

Cass: andifunukwalis a ke but I'll keep that in mind.

I didn't answer her... Tammy still had to tell me why she answered my phone and didn't tell me, lied to my face when I asked her about it. When she was done I just walked with her to that room, the nurse suggested that she also undress ambeke esifubeni for a bit of warmth but umqolo wakhe umntana shouldn't be covered.

Me: he won't be suckling mos?

Nurse: no, it's just for body to body warmth.

Me: I can do that, I don't think umamakhe uzokwazi ugodola she's still recovering from birth pains.

Nurse: no problem, come let me help you sir.

I lay on the bed and they put the baby on my chest, did all their things and left us there. Cassandra was just watching us, I could see pain in her eyes so I reached out and touched her hand.

Me: nothing is gonna happen to him.

Cass: why are you doing this?

Me: doing what?

Cass: this, I'm supposed to be lying on this bed.

Me: babe you didn't ask to be pregnant, it was our irresponsibility that got you pregnant so I can't expect you to pay the price oko.

She wiped a tear...

Cass: I'm scared yazi... I mea, I thought I loved you, until I laid eyes on him I realized that I didn't know what love was all these years. Now each and every day I'm falling in love with him and it's beautiful and

pure. But what pains me the most is the fact that abantwana bayafa sebezelwe...

Me: hey, hey... don't think like that.

Cass: I can't not.

Me: Cassandra...

Cass: for me to even call your sister bendizincama, it took yonkinto engaphakathi kwam... like, I just wanted you here afe ukhona ke ba uyafa. I could not handle the...

I sat up, slowly...with my legs dangling

Me: come here... Sondela.

She came close, sat down next to us and cried onto my shoulder. One hand on the baby, the other hand on her so I just let her cry. Until the nurse came back...

Nurse: I'm sorry to disturb.

Me: no come on in, maybe your report will calm her down.

She smiled and checked the child while Cass cleaned herself up.

Me: any progress?

Nurse: fifteen more minutes then I'll come fetch you guys, he's doing quite well.

I looked at Cass...

Me: see? Uzoba right u Milli wakho.

She laughed and waited until the nurse left.

Cass: you must be relieved that name is not on his documents.

Me: you have no idea, I was jumping up and down.
Figuratively of course.

She smiled wearily.

Me: he's not gonna die Cass, he's got a whole future ahead of him and I'm busy making sure that he gets all that he needs kwangoku esemngaka.

Cass: huh?

Me: we might as well talk about it now...

Cass: talk about what?

Me: I bought property under his name, once it starts operating, all profits made off it will go straight to his bank account.

Cass: oh... Wow.

Me: so all I'm gonna ask of you is to use that money wisely. That's all.

Cass: I don't see why I'm gonna need to use it if you'll be paying maintenance.

Me: then let me pay maintenance straight to your bank account, siyaziba leyakhe is just for business and investments for his future.

Cass: okay... No problem.

Me: I'd like this to stay between us.

Cass: I wouldn't have it any other way.

Me: not even Onele can know about this.

Cass: relax, I don't want people flocking around my son thinking he's some sort of a millionaire. I know my sisters ngemali.

Me: we seem to be agreeing more these days.

Cass: don't start getting ideas now.

I chuckled and looked at the tiny body on my chest...

Me: he's so perfect.

Cass: Yho heee.

I laughed as the nurse came back in, she checked the temperature and allowed us to go back to the ward. All of her sisters were still waiting there, I put the child on the bed as Cindy took him and dressed him ndanxiba mna.

Siki: Nathi can you please take me to work? We came with one car and my shift will be starting soon, I don't wanna leave them stranded.

Me: sure masambe.

She grabbed her bag and followed me out.

[06/26, 15:01] : #Mpumelelo_02

I woke up in the morning and went straight to Shoprite, got a 2pm bus and then went back to my place. I called my supervisor Bara and informed him of the situation I was in, he seemed to understand so I was let go that easily. I packed, and waited for 2pm, still couldn't get hold of Thula and I

figured she was busy. When she has a chance, she would call me back.

Half past twelve I made my way to Park Station to catch the bus, I didn't even have enough money to buy "journey foods" but I didn't care about that, I just wanted to get to Asenathi. Hug her. Obviously, I was waaay too early so I had to wait... I called her, in the meantime just to find out how's she's doing. Has she been discharged yet? Where am I meeting her? All those things...

Mama: Asenathi's phone hello?

Okay, I didn't expect that.

Mama: Hello?

Me: uhm hello mama, ninjani?

Mama: si right unjani wena?

Me: ndiyaphila nam, bendicela uthetha no Asenathi mama.

Mama: usayovas a ndoda, ndithetha nabani mna?

Me: Uthetha no Mpumelelo mam'

Mama: okay ndoda I will tell her to call you back.

Me: ndiyabulela ma.

Then I hung up...

She sounded like she wasn't told about me, or my name didn't ring a bell... or, she was just too distracted to match the name? I don't know. I sighed and looked at my phone for a very long minute... I still couldn't believe it. How the hell did Asenathi lose the baby after such a healthy pregnancy? Was it the doctor's carelessness? What? Someone had to explain this whole thing to me, it really didn't make sense.

The bus came through so I got in, and rode to the Eastern Cape. A place that I wasn't really fond of, it held sour memories for me especially the lingering

memories after mom's death. I didn't bother calling Ase again since I knew she's with her mother, I figured that she'd call when she can so in the meantime I slept throughout the ride. I was actually avoiding thinking... I just didn't want to think at all. After a few hours, she called... She being Thula... I took a deep breath in and exhaled.

Me: biggie?

Thula: hey you, why do you sound like you're sleeping?

Me: I was just taking a nap. What's up?

Thula: I thought you said you're volunteering at Bara?

Me: I was... I mean I am, but today I took a day off.

Thula: why?

I sat up...

Me: I'm on my way to see Asenathi. She gave birth.

She screamed in excitement and my heart shattered.

Me: Thula...

Thula: oh my God! Please send me pictures, oh my God I'm an aunt!

Me: Thula...

Thula: heeee I sooo wish mom was still ali-

Me: Nokuthula Sirhonyi!

Thula: yhu yintoni na wandikhwaza?

Me: he didn't make it.

Thula: who didn't make what?

Me: the baby... The baby didn't make it.

Thula: what does that mean na Mpumelelo?

I sighed and wiped my eyes, I was tearing up again.

Thula: but Asenathi was healthy njena, the baby was fine. Right? The baby was fine... So what do you mean the baby didn't make it?

Me: I mean exactly that... You're not an aunt anymore, I'm not a dad, Asenathi is not a mother. Singo not nje babantu mntaka mama.

Thula: No... No... I don't believe this. No Mpumi, there must be a mistake.

Me: I wish...

Nokuthula broke down on the other end of the phone, she broke my already shattered heart all over again because I knew that she was looking forward to this baby just like me. We had hope of healing with this baby, we thought mom and the heavens were smiling down on us ngalomntwana and this happens? It felt like someone had ripped my chest open and had my heart in their palms, squeezing the blood out of it. But I had to be strong for Thula, I had to be strong for Ase. Breaking down wasn't an option for me right now.

Me: sulila kangaka mntase.

Thula: what have we done to God Mpumi? Why does God hate us so much? Izinyanya nazo zisijikele kanjalo nje?

Then she broke down again...

Me: God will heal us Thula, trust me. I know He will.

Thula: when Mpumi? When? How many times must we cry for Him to react? How many times must we get hurt azovakalelwa?

Me: I don't know... But I know He will. One day.

Thula: uyaziphambanisa wena, akho Thixo ngandawo apha.

Me: I love you, I'll call you once I get to her.

She didn't answer... She was also now mad at me

for ignoring her last remark.

Me: sharp.

Thula: sharp.

I hung up.

There was no missed call nor a text from Asenathi so I went back to sleep, up until I got to her hometown. Remember I don't have a cent to book myself a motel or a bnb, I'm as broke as a begger, I sat down on the bus station security guys seats and called her. The phone rang once and cut... I tried again, two times and then the third time the call just didn't go through. I sat there without a way forward, it was still very early but I knew I wasn't gonna go to my uncle's place whether Asenathi calls or not. I'd rather find means to return to Joburg ndingambonanga kunoba kuthwe mandiyе kwa malume worse malume ngulo ndimshiye e Joburg. It was past 6 to 7 in the morning so I just took a walk to the beach with my backpack on my back.

There I found peace just by watching the water toil back and forth... Past 10, four hours after my arrival, Asenathi called. I would have been mad at her for switching off her phone knowing fully well that I'm coming to see her but I was now calm...and I had no fight in me. I was emotionally famished, even spiritually.

Me: hello?

Ase: baby... I'm sorry for taking so long to get back to you.

Me: mh.

Ase: xolo kaloku baby bekukho abantu apha I didn't want them asking ba ndithetha nabani so early.

I sighed... Like, it's been four hours. Not fifteen minutes, thirty minutes but four full hours.

Ase: uphi?

Me: I'm at the beach.

Ase: okay, please send me your exact location I'll come fetch you.

Me: you'll come fetch me?

Ase: I've asked my neighbor kwaphezolo to help me so she will come fetch you, not me.

Me: sure.

Ase: I'm sorry.

Me: it's cool.

Ase: Kay... Send location.

I hung up and sent her location, she sent me her neighbors picture. I didn't wait long and the neighbor arrived, we had a brief greeting then hit the road. I was nervous first but ke...

We got to Asenathi's home and no one was home. Not even a sight of cars... The neighbor left us and I just sat there looking at Asenathi. She didn't look as hurt as she was on the phone... Or was it me?

Me: u right?

She nod... Suddenly her eyes teared up.

Me: nyhani?

She looked at the ceiling without saying a word. That was a common gesture to stop tears, when she did this I moved from the couch I was in, across from where she sat and joined her. Her arms flew over my body and we cried together silently until I had no tears left in me.

Me: I'm sorry you had to go through this alone.

She sniffed and cleaned her face up. But not moving an inch away from me.

Ase: you're here now... That's all that matters.

Me: can't be here for long though...

Ase: I know...

She stood up and left me there, came back with food and gave me.

Me: thanks but... I don't really have an appetite.

Ase: what did you eat? When?

Me: Ase.

Ase: please eat something, you've been traveling throughout the night. You need the strength.

Me: I'm good bra, I'm just not hungry.

She seemed hurt by this but I wasn't about to force food down my throat just to please her. I love her but I'm not hungry. She put the tray in front of me and sat down next to me...

Me: so... What happens now?

Ase: with?

Me: the baby's body.. Do we do a funeral or?

Ase: my parents thought it would be best if we leave him there...

I nod...

Ase: I'm sorry, I know how much you were looking forward to being a dad.

Me: I'll be fine, as long as you're okay.

She smiled and slid something into my hand, I opened it. Money.

Me: and this?

Ase: mali yakho yojika, please book a flight.

Me: where did you get this?

Ase: it doesn't matter babe, just don't take a bus

again. Uzodinwa yet you still have to go back to work.

I didn't answer... I had no option but to take it, I only had lena bendize ngayo qha.

Ase: you don't have to repay me, I know uthule nje ucinga indlela yondibuyisela lemali ngoku.

Me: I know you mean well baby... I just... It's making me uncomfortable.

Ase: money coming from me makes you uncomfortable now?

Me: that's not what I meant and you know it.

She looked away...

Me: I'm sorry ke, come here.

I pulled her in for a hug and she snuggled up my chest, breathing against my neck.

Me: I love you.

Ase: I wanna go back to J oburg with you so bad.

Me: you need to heal first, you just gave birth.

She didn't answer me...

Me: you're allowed to follow me anytime after you've healed.

Ase: the way my family is watching me after this pregnancy, I don't think that will ever happen.

Me: what do you mean?

She didn't answer...

I retracted from the hug and looked at her.

Me: uthini Ase?

Ase: they want me to break up with you.

Me: what? Why?

She sighed...

Me: babe?

Ase: ubhuti told them about my disappearing acts, obviously ke wafakelela so now dad has me grounded. If I wanna go back to varsity I must forget about Joburg, rather Cape Town or PE and that's it.

Me: where does that put our relationship?

She shrugged...

Me: you cannot be shrugging right now... Thetha

Asenathi where does this whole shit put our relationship?

Ase: su shout'a mna kaloku Mpumi, I'm also caught between a rock and a hard place here.

Me: why do I feel like you've already made a decision nje?

She started sobbing... Typical.

Me: wow!

Ase: this is difficult for me too Mpumelelo but my education, my career? Those come before anything and everything else.

Me: and I suppose I'm part of the anything and everything else, right?

Ase: put yourself in my shoes.

Me: you couldn't wait until the pain of losing my firstborn subsides?

Ase: I lost a child too! Come on baby!

Me: you're not acting like you've lost anything right now... You know what, it's okay.

I grabbed my backpack and headed for the door, she grabbed my arm, her face messy with tears and runny nose.

Ase: please don't leave like this... Please.

Me: please let go of my arm.

Ase: baby.

Me: Asenathi Dakumba... Let... Go... Of my arm.

She didn't, instead she smashed her lips on mine. I kissed her back obviously but I felt nothing. I was empty inside I couldn't even feel my hands on her body... She stopped and touched my jaws

Ase: I love you okay, this is as difficult for me as well. I wish there was another way around this...

Me: I can't believe you're dumping me... Like right now babe. Right now?

Ase: I'm sorry.

I wiped a tear that had found its way down my cheek, she saw it and tried kissing my lips but I looked the other way.

Me: I have to go.

Ase: baby.

Me: I'm sorry about the baby, you'd have made a great mother I know that without doubt.

She didn't move...

Me: I guess this is really it huh...

Ase: I'm sorry.

Me: don't be, just go back to school and chase your

dreams. I'm sorry that I became a stumbling block on your way, sorry that I got you pregnant and wasted a year's worth of your time.

I kissed her cheek...

Me: bye.

Then I walked out... I could hear her bawling as I walked out the gate. My heart was too hurt to turn back, she had made her decision and I wasn't mad about it. She shouldn't have to choose between me and her career anyway while I'm chasing mine but the timing of it all .

After about ten minutes of walking I realized that I was struggling to breathe so I sat down on the pavement and cried my heart out. I didn't really care who's watching me I just had to let it all out. When I was content, I picked myself up and continued

walking to the taxi rank, got a taxi and went straight to the bus station. I needed that bus ride again, a flight would be too quick for me. I needed the bus ride to mourn both my son and my relationship. I needed it.

[06/26, 15:02] : #Mpumelelo_03

After getting my bus ticket I sat there and waited, eventually fell asleep and was woken up by the security officer saying the bus had arrived, got in and went back home. Throughout the ride, I had my phone switched off. Once I got to Jo'burg I just went to my place and cried myself to sleep all over again, woke up the next day and went to work, life had to go on. Good thing I didn't do layby for umntana, good thing I didn't do anything in fact for umntana...that would have hurt the heck out of me.

I decided to block her for a while, I needed to breathe man.

I needed to heal away from her.

A week passed without us having any sort of communication. And I was okay with that, my heart was at peace. After about two weeks, my sister called just to check up on me.

Me: hey...long time

Thula: yeah hey, I've been struggling to come to terms with this thing.

Me: what thing?

Thula: the loss of your baby.

Me: oh that...

Thula: wait, you've forgotten so easily?

I sighed...

Thula: what are you not telling me Mpumi?

Me: Asenathi broke up with me when I visited her.

Thula: what?

Me: exactly.

Thula: why would she do that?

Me: I don't know, think she said something along the lines that her family made her choose between our relationship and her career.

Thula: so she chose her career?

Me: yes, and that's understandable.

Thula: is it?

Me: Nokuthula would you choose a man over your career? Over your work?

She took a while to answer...

Me: the mere fact that you have to think so hard about it makes me wonder.

Thula: I guess I wouldn't, but...

Me: look, I'm not mad that she chose her career

over me, it's the timing of it all that pisses me off.

Thula: yeah.

Me: but kuzodlula man, yonkinto izoba grand.

Thula: akhonto ingadluliyo mntase...heh man, when last did you see u malume?

Me: it's been a while, why?

Thula: I don't know. Oko bendimcinga lately.

Me: I'll check up on him once I'm done with today's rounds.

Thula: okay, enkosi. Ube right man.

Me: I'm good Charlie, good.

We spoke for a few more minutes then hung up.

I worked my ass off both at school and as a volunteer at Bara, because I needed good recommendation. One year passed and then I forgot that there was ever a person names Asenathi. My focus was just my studies and work, Nokuthula was away in a foreign country doing what she loves

so I was overheard doing what I loved as well. Life's great.

- After my graduation –

I traveled to Cape Town for an internship interview that I got from my Baragwanath manager, I told Thula about it and she sent me enough money to travel to Cape Town, book a hotel for the weekend and enough money for food. Luckily for me the interview was successful, I now had to travel back to Joburg for my belongings, but first...I needed to walk around the big city and obviously find myself a good place to stay at though I was already organized indawo yohlala emsebenzini for the first three months. After going around for a few hours I went to chill and eat at the Waterfront...

While eating, I heard a familiar voice laughing loudly...so I turned and looked at her.

Asenathi Dakumba.

Wow.

She looked so beautiful, hair let loose, wearing a flowing dress and sandals. She was so free, and beautiful at the same time. One of the ladies she was with must have noticed that I was staring at them, she nudged the other one saying something and then all three of them turned and Asenathi froze. The other two girls walked but she got stuck there and my eyes wouldn't move away from hers, I had difficulties swallowing my saliva, I watched her probably telling the other two to go ahead as she came towards my table. I stood up and met her half-way, we hugged for an intense moment and then she broke down.

We stood there hugging, I had no tears.

When she stopped crying, I pulled a chair for her and we sat down. Called the waitress and placed an order for her...

Me: how have you been?

She took my glass of water wasela and kept quiet for a while.

I waited, I had grown to be a very patient young man.

Ase: I thought I was okay, until I saw you.

Me: I'm sorry for bringing you bad memories.

Ase: don't do that.

Me: don't do what?

Ase: you know very well you don't bring me bad memories Mpumelelo.

Me: but you froze and cried when you saw me, and you just confirmed that you were okay all these years we were distant.

She sighed...her order arrived.

Ase: you look good, and grown.

Me: so do you, as beautiful as ever.

She smiled.

Me: what are you doing in Cape Town?

Ase: I'm visiting my other brother. What are you doing here?

Me: ndifumene i-internship kwelicala, I'm starting next month.

Ase: serious? Congratulations, I saw your graduations pictures on Facebook.

Me: mmh...

She stopped eating and looked at me

Ase: I'm sorry for how things ended.

Me: I thought we were passed that now.

Ase: we are, but now that we are here I feel like I should really apologize for everything.

Me: it's cool bra, sibadala. We hurt and heal along the journey of growth.

Her friends came to check on her, she told them they can go she'll find her way back home so we had lunch then headed to my hotel room. I guess we never really stopped loving each other, the spark was there...we both couldn't deny it.

[06/26, 15:03] : #Mpumelelo_04

We got to my room and she went straight to the window watching the beautiful views while I was standing by the closed door watching her. She was still as beautiful as the last time I saw her, maybe even more. There was a sexy atmosphere all of a sudden, I felt like ripping that dress off her body and working my magic on her... But I controlled myself.

She turned and saw the room's telephone...

Ase: can I order a drink?

Me: sure.

She ordered a bottle of wine... Okay, hopefully she knew I ain't paying for that. I'm here for ums ebenzi not to misuse the little that I have. She sat down on the chair next to the dressing table, I walked over and sat on the edge of the bed, closer to where she had sat.

Me: why are you suddenly sad? Uburight earlier on.

She tried to smile, and then she shrugged. As if shrugging a thought off.

Me: ngobani aba ubuhamba nabo?

Ase: girlfriend ka bhuti and her sister.

Me: Your brother has a girlfriend?

Ase: u Nathi not the older one, use se Joburg lo umaziyo.

Me: mmh, so you won't get into trouble for being here?

Ase: Nathi is not as strict as the older one, as long as I get home qha he's fine.

I nod...

Ase: how's Thula?

Me: she's good.

Ase: just good?

I smiled...

Me: she's doing well for herself, she's happy and

that's what matters. Her being happy, after everything.

Ase: she blocked my number, I tried calling her after you left my home.

Me: do you blame her?

Ase: no... J ust that, I needed her. You know, I needed a friend.

Me: Thula loves you, but she is my sister. Obviously she's gonna stand with me.

She nod...

Me: are we really gonna talk about the past right now? Do you really want us to go back there?

Room service delivered her wine so she jumped up and went to pay for it, took it with the two glasses it came with. Poured for me and herself then she drank her glass down in one gulp while standing by

the same window she stood by when we came in. I put my glass down and went to her...

Touched her shoulders and smelling her hair, it smelt of citrus.

Me: hey, what's going on now?

Ase: I just... I never thought I'd ever see you again. I'm shocked and happy at the same time, actually I don't know how I'm feeling... Like...

Then she cried, she literally broke down and cried so I turned her around so she could cry on my chest. When the tears subsided I cleaned her face up and kissed her soft lips.

Me: stop crying, oko ubulila namhlanje. I'm sorry if I'm the rea-

Ase: please kiss me again.

Oh... I did as instructed, she closed her eyes and sucked my bottom lip pulling a chunk load of breath at the same time. This whole situation revoked all the forgotten and buried feelings, the pace we were both going at had a clear indication. We walked backwards to the bed, our clothes already flying across the room and once we hit the bed, she switched things up and worshipped my body. I allowed her to, I knew how it made her feel... And then I flipped her over and did the same on hers. Her walls shut immediately and I could feel the first of many showers was very close. But I stopped at the realization that we had no condoms, I didn't plan on having sex on Cape Town and I don't go around carrying condoms.

Me: we have no protection.

Ase: I'll get an after-pill.

I didn't move...

She opened her eyes...

Me: pregnancy is not the only problem we could have here.

She sighed...

Ase: well you're the last man I slept with, does that at least put you at ease?

Me: I'm the last? Are you serious?

Ase: Mpumelelo, you're seriously killing the mood right now.

I chuckled as I made way to her lips, bit her corners and kissed her fully as she loosened up. We hit it raw, three times and then our bodies gave up on us. She slid her body onto mine and pulled the sheets closing her eyes. I kissed the top of her forehead and just looked into space....

Who would have thought that this day would come?
Wow. Her phone vibrated, I checked the screen
"Nathi" so I put it back, must have been her brother.
After an hour, he called again so I woke her up. She
just looked at me...

Me: your brother has been calling you.

Ase: please pass the phone.

I gave her the phone, she texted and put it back
down. Then she went to the bathroom, came back
and got into my bed, cuddling up on my warm
body...

Ase: this feels like a dream...

Me: I hope the dream doesn't get you in trouble.

She kissed my chest and didn't answer...

Her phone Rang again...

Ase: hello?

Nkosinathi: uphi?

Ase: I'm with friends bra I texted you nje.

Nkosinathi: since when do you have friends in Cape Town?

Ase: I don't have friends in Cape Town, we just happened to be here at the same time.

Nkosinathi: Asenathi ngath'kanti usendodeni apha.

Ase: even if ndikuyo dude, I'm nobody's wife.

Nkosinathi: ufunumitha again?

She sighed...

Nkosinathi: if that's your attitude ndcela ubuye ndikugoduse mtshana.

Ase: you're worse than your brother, do you know

that?

Nkosinathi: your carelessness will also drag my name, do you know that?

Ase: mxm, ndiyeza.

Nkosinathi: uyaphi u mxim kengoku?

Ase: Kaloku ndilibanjwa laphakokwenu mos mna, I can't go anywhere without bodyguards. I can't have friends eningazaziyo, I can't even go to the fucking shopping mall alone. Ndiyeza ke.

Then she hung up...

She didn't move an inch.

I was also lost for words.

Why would she feel like a prisoner kokwabo? Why would she be made to feel like a prisoner in fact?

Her phone rang again... She answered immediately.

Ase: ndithe ndiyeza bra yintoni ngoku?

Nkosinathi: I don't like the way othetha ngayo nam.

Ase: is that all you wanna say?

Nkosinathi: Ase uyayazi I didn't make the rules, I don't even know why you can't be on the streets alone. Don't be mad at me, I'm just doing as I was told.

Ase: and I told you, I'm fucking coming kaloku. Ndim ibanjwa lenu so ndiyeza ke... In fact, you can call your pilot friend izondithatha man. Ngcono ndiye kumama ku nalena into.

Then she hung up.

Me: kwenzeka ntoni kokwenu?

Ase: they're treating me like a prisoner, andinoya ndedwa e mall, andinoya kwi movies, I can't even go to church alone mvanje because I'll bump into a

man ndilale nayo ndiphinde ndimithe.

Me: so yonke lento is because of a pregnancy?
Seriously?

Ase: my father and big brother are the biggest hypocrites kulamzi.

Me: I'm sorry... I don't even know what to say.

Ase: it's fine wethu, at least you were my highlight for this Cape Town visit.

Me: so uzobuyela e Bhayi ngoku?

Ase: it's better that way, I thought Nathi would be better than Ta Nko and my dad but I guess bayafana bonke.

I kissed the side of her head...

Me: we should shower, I'll call you a cab.

Ase: we're calling no cab here, I'll call Nathi to come fetch me.

Me: u sure?

Ase: I'm sure.

She lifted her head and kissed me. One peck at a time....

Me: wish you could spend the night.

Ase: wish I could spend a couple of forever.

Me: are we trying again?

Ase: do you want us to?

Me: it will never be the same but I think we can try. My only problem is that we broke up because your family ordered us to.

Ase: you're in Cape Town, I'm in PE so they won't know.

Me: how are we going to see each other?

Ase: ndizoza kuwe mna every other weekend, but if you do decide ukuza kum we'll have to be discreet

about it.

Me: okay.

She smiled and bit my bottom lip...

Ase: now please unblock my numbers.

I laughed.

Ase: you thought I wouldn't know?

Me: I wanted you to know that I want nothing to do with you.

Ase: that shit hurt.

Me: I know, but it eventually healed. Right?

Ase: it didn't, I ended up stalking you on social media just to be at ease that you're okay and doing well even in my absence.

Now I kissed her...

Pulled her towards the bathroom so we showered together, we got dressed then she called her brother who came to fetch her.

We texted throughout the drive, on her way to the airport and when she landed at home.

I couldn't help but feel like she lied to be about why her family didn't want her to go anywhere alone, it seemed like it was a much bigger deal than what she was giving me and now I was more determined to find out the real reason.

Following day I flew back to Joburg, I had about two weeks to pack my things and just bring my life into order... But I also had to tell Thula of the new developments in my love life so I called her.

Thula: baby brother.

Me: big sis... Unjani mfondini?

Thula: hay mtshana I'm homesick yoh ha.a

Me: apply for leave and come back noba yi vekhi.

Thula: done that already...

Me: pity we have nowhere we call home.

Wathula...

Me: but with my new job and your job, we can surely change that.

Thula: OMG you got the job?

Me: Yebo yes mntaka mama, I'm starting next month.

Thula: that's in two weeks time.

Me: yes.

Thula: so ndizofikela eKapa?

Me: ewe kaloku.

She screamed in excitement...

Me: and there's something else.

Thula: please tell me you have a girlfriend?

Me: I might.

Thula: you might?

Me: please don't be mad at me for what I'm about to tell you.

Thula: you better not tell me you're back with that selfish spoilt rat of a witch! You better NO!!!

I burst out laughing....

Thula: Mpumelelo are you insane?

Me: Ndiyamthanda.

Thula: uyamtha- uyaziva? Are you listening to yourself?

Me: Thula, I know why you're upset with me but I never really stopped loving her.

Thula: I am not upset mntaka mama I am livid with you, lomntana wakutyisa wena stru. Soze.

I smiled...

Thula: Mpumelelo u serious bra?

Me: yes.

Thula: rhaaaaaa! Phuuu!

Me: anyway, I miss you. Utshe when your leave has been approved so that I can prepare for you.

Thula: you're gonna switch the subject nje kanjalo?

Me: there's nothing to talk about... We're done.

Thula: Mpumelelo lamntana ungcolile bra, I have been having weird dreams ezinaye phakathi.

Me: what dreams?

She sighed....

Me: Nokuthula.

Thula: I think your son is still alive bra.

Me: what do you mean you think my son is still alive?

Thula: I've been having dreams ezinomntana phakathi, no Asenathi...

Me: dude! Give me into ebambekayo, what dreams are you talking about?

She sighed...

Thula: okay, in the first one I saw you and Asenathi crying and a man was taking away a baby, a week after that I saw Asenathi evalelwe in this dark room and all she could hear was a crying baby. It was like uyaphambana man, crying and drawing hearts emadongeni. Maninzi man bra I'm just telling you anga ingathi a serious.

Me: mh.

Thula: then last week I saw her and this toddler, it was as if they are reuniting. But everytime I try to look at the childs face ndivele ndothuke ebuthongweni.

Me: and you're only telling me this now? After all these years?

Thula: it's partly why I'm coming home... I wanna meet up with her.

Me: and say what?

Thula: I don't have to say anything, I just wanna feel her energy.

Me: uyathwas a Nokuthula Sirhonyi?

She laughed....

Thula: andithwasi mntaka mama kodwa amawethu anam, I feel like if I can be around her and grasp her

energy I'll get all the answers I'm looking for.

Me: okay...

Thula: please don't ask her anything.

Me: I won't... J ust pray your leave gets approved.

Thula: you're strangely calm about this.

Me: I'm just connecting the dots...

Thula: what dots?

Me: just get here bra.

She mumbled, I laughed and concluded on the conversation then we hung up.

Was it possible though? For my son to be alive all these years and Asenathi to keep him from me? Could she be that evil?

[06/26, 15:03] : #Mpumelelo_05

#Cassandra

After Siki left accompanied by Nkosinathi, I realized that all my siblings were here. Except for Asanda ke because she lives in Pretoria but all the others were here...

Steve: how is the little guy?

Me: they're running the final tests now, sizova ngogqirha.

Steve: mmh.

He came close to us and peeped at his mts hana smiling and playing with his peachy cheeks.

Steve: you've made peace with this goat?

Cindy: akandikruqule Steve you have no idea.

Lionel cleared his throat.

I sighed and looked at them, all of them.

Me: I'm not dating Nkosinathi again, I'm merely communicating with him for the sake of his son.

Steve: he suddenly has a son?

Me: he's always had a son bhuti.

Cindy: are we talking about the same son whose life is worth a million Rands?

Me: he had nothing to do with that guys, that was his family.

Steve: oh, so he cannot be held responsible for his family's actions towards you and your son?

Ndathula...

Lionel: do you still love him Sandra?

Haibo u bhuti... How could he ask me that question?

Me: huh?

Lionel: do you still love him? Nkosinathi.

Steve: ukuvile, she's just thinking of a lie.

Me: no I don't love him.

Lionel: are you sure?

I nod, not looking at them.

Cindy: she's lying, she still loves him.

Lionel: khawume Cindy.

Steve: then stop acting like a teenager esandovuma indoda apha, stick to your story.

Me: I am sticking to my story bethuna, I never said he won't be part of his son's life I just said I don't want ityala liyofakwa because I want nothing to do with that family.

Cindy: you do know that Nkosinathi is the son of the same man who offered you money for

extermination? Nkosinathi is the brother of the same man who hurled insults at you and your unborn son? Nkosinathi is the same fucked up man who cheated on you with his ex, then dumped you over the phone for kissing another man? Nkosinathi is the same man who caused you depression, same man who left you for three months while pregnant, same man who wasn't there to defend you when you needed him, same man who wasn't there to help you when you were in labor, we are talking about the same man here. Nothing has changed.

I didn't answer her...

All of these things were still hurtful, I was depending on them and the meds but they were taking me back there right now. I could feel myself going back into that dark, icy room.

Lionel: tell me something, are you considering giving him full access to Milli?

Me: he has a right to be part of his son's life.

Lionel: you could have just said yes uyeke undenza muncu.

I swear they were tearing my heart into pieces right now ... I felt like they were ganging up on me and they were doing so knowing fully well that u Siki akekho. She always stands up for me (and for Nkosinathi sometimes).

Me: andikwenzi muncu bhuti... Uxolo.

Steve: did she just say he has a right?

Cindy: ndandits hilo mna sizobamuncu sedwa apha.

Steve: heh Sandra help me understand this, emva koko ndizokuyeka.

Me: Kay.

Steve: you know these people abamfuni umntana wakho, right?

I nod...

Steve: okay, so if you're telling us about ii rights zika Nkosinathi right now... How sure are you that abanomtyisa ityhefu lomntana when he visits them? How sure are you that abanokwenza nayphi na indlela to execute him now that they couldn't touch him engekazalwa?

I swallowed... I wasn't sure of anything yazi. Except the fact that I believed Nkosinathi would rather die for anything to happen to this child. But I couldn't tell them that now, ingangathi ndiyamthethelela all over again.

Steve: mh?

Me: andikho sure bhuti.

Steve: but bane right?

Me: uNkosinathi une right, not his family members.

Steve: you seem to have this whole thing figured out, I guess we just have to sit this one out and

watch you from the benches.

Lionel: good thing she's going to Cape Town soon.
Away from these selfish bullies.

Cindy: you think Cape Town is overseas ebantwini
who can throw around a million bucks?

Lionel: uba bakhe bamlandela kaloku bayawbe
bazikhangelela ibhokisi Cindy, ayixoxisi.

Me: guys, there'll be no need for that. Yho hayini.

Cindy: nanko ke.

Steve: usenza muncu u Cassandra.

Cindy: iphinde ibekwandim u drama queen neh?
Alright.

I just rolled my eyes and kept quiet... My phone rang.

Me: hey.

Nkosinathi: I'm on my way back, ndikuphathele
ntoni?

Me: I'm not hungry, thanks.

Nkosinathi: why do you sound like you're crying?

If only he knew that I had this huge lump in my throat, I wanted to cry for days but not in front of these three. I cleared my throat and sat up, avoiding eye contact with anyone in the room.

Me: I'm cool, thanks.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra.

Me: see you in a sec.

Then I hung up and put the phone away. The doctor came in and released my family, the child needed to stay overnight for a proper evaluation and if he's still fine the following day we'd go home.

Cindy: should I book myself that empty bed or uzoba right?

Me: hay sisi ndizoba right, enkosi.

Cindy: u sure? I don't really mind.

Me: I'm sure, you can come before dinner and tomorrow morning again.

Cindy: alright ke... Bye bye'ini Milli.

She came to kiss him,..

Lionel: what should we bring you later on?

Me: utatam.

Lionel: heeee Tyhini Yehovah.

Steve: sizomthathaphi uyihlo thina?

Me: andinazi, just bring me my dad.

Lionel: awumbi xa utefa, xhekwazi ndini.

I smiled as they came to hug me and walked out, bagilana no Nkosinathi at the door and they totally ignored him.

Nkosinathi: and that?

I ignored him...

He came to sit next to me, looking at his son.

Nkosinathi: why do you look upset? What happened while I was gone?

Me: nothing.

He looked at me... Almost touching my hand but I quickly removed mine.

Nkosinathi: Cass, please talk to me.

Me: there's nothing to talk about... Oh uhm, siyalaliswa.

Nkosinathi: I thought he's fine nje.

Me: he is, but the doctor wants to monitor him

throughout the night.

Nkosinathi: okay.

He removed his jacket and hung it on the pedestal.

Me: and that?

Nkosinathi: I'm staying here with you guys.

Me: don't you have anything better to do?

Nkosinathi: there's nothing better than my son's life right now.

Me: he's fine bra, you can go back to your life. I'll call you should there be any changes.

Nkosinathi: I said I'm not going anywhere, which part of that didn't you understand.

I swallowed whatever argument I was about to throw his way. Grabbed my phone and stood up

Nkosinathi: uyaphi kengoku?

Me: I'm going for a walk, will you manage?

Nkosinathi: sure, just don't go too far. I don't have breasts to feed him.

I walked out and took a walk in the hospital garden at the back, found an abandoned broken wooden stool and sat on it and cried the lump out. I cried until I had no tears to cry, went to the tap and washed my face then went to sit on that chair again.

Mpumelelo called... I wasn't even sure I'm up for a conversation so I just ignored his call. He called again...

Me: Doctor Sirhonyi?

Doc: Mama ka Bhabha, unjani? You sound tired.

Me: I'm quite good actually, never been better.

Doc: nyhani?

Me: yep, unjani wena gqirha?

Doc: I'm good... Qha ndikucingile.

Me: akumnandi uba ndim.

Doc: uyaz'bona?

I chuckled.

Doc: now on a serious note bra, utheni? I'm not buying what you're telling me.

Me: ndi right kanti nyhani.

Doc: you want me to come to PE and see for myself that u right nyhani Cassandra?

I didn't want that... Especially not with Nkosinathi here. No I didn't want him to come here.

Me: okay fine, I'm fine but Milli has been admitted at the hospital for the day and possibly night.

Doc: utheni?

Me: he's heating up, but ungcono ngoku.

Doc: who's the doctor attending to him?

Me: Yho akhange ndimjonge negama ke yazi.

Doc: ukwes iphi isibhedlele?

Me: the usual.

Doc: okay I'll call and check.

Me: I believe he's in the right hands though, so don't stress about it.

Doc: I just wanna know who's attending to him, I know 90% of doctors apho.

Me: eshe.

Doc: have you informed his father?

Me: yes, ukhona.

Doc: that's great... I'll check up on you guys later on. Worry yam kuba andizokwazi ukuzonikroba ngoku.

Me: I understand you're busy, so no bad blood.

Doc: alright then... Later?

Me: later.

We hung up...

I took a walk back to the ward and found these two asleep on each other's chests. For a split second I felt jealous of Milli this used to be MY chest. I used to lay like that on this guy's chest for days on end, he never like cuddling but would do it because I loved it. He'd cuddle me noba ndiqumbile because he knows I love it...

Nkosinathi: you're back.

I almost jumped back but I composed myself and tried smiling, to which I was unsuccessful because he knows me. He sat up and put the child on the bed, making space for me to sit next to them.

Nkosinathi: what's bothering you kangaka

Cassandra?

Me: who's said anything is bothering me?

Nkosinathi: I can see you're restless. Something is obviously bothering you.

Me: are you here for your son or to interrogate me?

He didn't answer...

I got on the bed and rested my legs.

Nkosinathi: did you eat anything today?

Me: I'm not hungry.

Nkosinathi: you need something to keep you strong for umntana Cassandra haibo, you need to eat. Your body needs food to generate ubisi olu luzoncancwa ngumntana. Do you at least understand that part?

I just looked at him.

Is he really gonna preach kum? About what's good for my child? Yena?

Nkosinathi: can you at least eat for the child's sake ke? I know you're not hungry, oko ubusitsho but can you try to eat for the sake of my son?

Me: are you done?

He sighed...

Nkosinathi: babe, I'm not trying to fight with you here.

Me: kodwa uyandi shout'a?

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry, I'm just frustrated. Forgive me.

Ndamjonga... Mh.

Nkosinathi: I'll go get us food, okay?

Me: fine.

Nkosinathi: you're not dismissing me are you?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: okay.

He grabbed his keys and walked out... I breathed!
For a second there I felt like I was suffocating.
Onele called

Me: Onele.

Onele: yhu, udikwe yintoni?

Me: Onele u Nkosinathi is getting on my nerves bra!
That Nkosinathi Dakumba is getting on my flippen
nerves today, successfully so!

She burst into laughter....

Me: uhleka ntoni kengoku?

Onele: mntase, you and sbari just need to kiss and makeup. It's obvious nisathandana nina.

Me: and you came to that conclusion how?

Onele: I watched you two when he came to visit Milli for the first time, and honestly, akho kwanto ekucaphukisayo other than the fact that uyamthanda but you can't go back to him because you fear your other siblings.

Me: uyay'thetha irubbish xa uthanda yazi Onele.

Onele: mntase, did you see his body? Haike ngonuka kamnandi. Fuck, for a second even I drooled over him.

I sighed

Me: you're a hopeless case, andisena worry yabazali bakho who think you're their little angel.

Onele: we will not talk about me, sithetha ngawe ngoku nendoda yakho e hot.

Me: why did you call me? Can we talk about that.

Onele: I wanted to know unjani umntanam?

Me: he's better.

Onele: where's his dad?

Me: I think he went to get us food.

Onele: you think?

Me: Onele?

Wahleka.

Again.

Onele: okay uxolo ke, but where's his Caucasian girlfriend?

Me: I don't know, he came alone here.

Onele: you didn't ask?

Me: no, why would I?

Onele: are you enjoying the fact that you can

actually have him for yourself? Even if nizobukana ubusuku bonke and pretend nibuka umntana?

Me: you're really fucking with me right now bra, you really are.

Onele: but I'm being honest with you here.

Niyathandana nina noythu.

Me: bye bye mntasekhaya.

Onele: I love you, all three of you.

Me: fuck the third person you love mna no Milli qha. Nonsense ye three of you.

Onele: hahahaha!

I hung up.

Rubbish ye third person nangoku tshi! Third person yobubhanxa.

[06/26, 15:03] : #Mpumelelo_06

#Cassandra

I sat there and wondered what it would have been like had we not broken up, had he not hurt me, had I not hurt him. Surely I wouldn't be on antidepressants, surely I would have had him by my side every step of the way from discovering the fibroids to everything else. He would have stood with me, side by side. Held my hand and assured me kuzoba right, and excited whenever we visited the doctor...

I would have a great pregnancy I know I would have. But still, I wouldn't exchange the experience I had in his absence, with anything. For anything. That experience built the Mother in me, it sharpened me for parenthood.

Lionel: we are not blind, nor are we stupid.

I looked up.

Why did he come back?

How long has he been standing there?

Me: what are you talking about bhuti?

He walked in and carried his nephew on his chest and didn't answer me for a couple of seconds.

Lionel: I'm talking about you and Nkosinathi.

Me: but there's no story there.

Lionel: so you don't love him anymore?

Me: you want an honest answer bhuti? Like, for real?

Lionel: would I ask if I wanted you to continue lying to our faces?

I sighed... But I have not lied. Or so I think.

Me: okay fine ke, I have never stopped loving Nkosinathi but we broke up anyway. Ndisamthanda

bhuti and that may be the hardest and most difficult feeling to surpress or fight right now but I love him. I still do.

He laughed at me, looking me straight in the eyes. I felt like he was mocking me in some typa way.

Me: I know it's not what everyone one of you wants to hear but I tried guys, I seriously tried to not act on what I'm feeling and I'm literally failing. Him being here even now is not helping the situation, kungona ndibawela abese Canada ngoku so that I can find myself without constantly seeing him. And with you guys constantly watching me as if I don't have enough problems, like a 12 year old teenager, is exhausting.

Ubhuti just chuckled.

Me: I'm not saying I'm gonna go back to his arms...

Lionel: more like jump back into his bed?

My eyes almost popped out...

Lionel: that's how you came up with Milli. Am I lying?

I ignored him...

Me: I'm not gonna go back to his arms but, I'm just being honest with you that ewe I still love him, and I hate myself for it already so ndicela niyeke ukundibuza ngalento ngoku. Ya'll should know better, feelings are uncontrollable and love is love... You guys have been young too at some stage.

Lionel: some of us were young alright, not stupid.

Me: so I'm stupid for falling in love bhuti?

Lionel: no you're not, but you would be stupid if you were to go back to this dude because of these fairytale stories ze happily ever afters. Especially

after kuzelwe umtwana, enixokis ana ngazo noo ntanga bakho.

I didn't answer him... Purpos efully.

Lionel: uyakuthanda naye okanye nguwe lo une feelings ze balloon?

Me: I feel insulted by that bhuti.

Lionel: you have control over your own feelings baby, that's none of my business.

I exhaled...

I was getting angry, slowly.

Lionel: I can see you're getting warmed up, now this is life baby girl. This is life.

Me: to answer your question, uyandithanda.

Lionel: you seem so sure.

Me: because that's what he's been saying oko ebuyile.

Lionel: ooh nguye lo udlala ngengqondo yakho now all of a sudden?

Me: oh bhuti.

Lionel: you know what? Enza Cassandra lento ucing'ba iright for wena.

Me: but I'm not doing anything bethuna, I'm just telling you about how I feel.

He didn't answer me... Wadlala no mts hana wakhe and totally ignored my presence until Nkosinathi came back. Babulisana again and then after a few minutes later, ubhuti said he's leaving.

Me: ndcela undicelele u sisi noba ngomphi na ozoza andiphathele ii meds nento yonxiba ngoms o.

Lionel: sure. Cheers.

Me: bye.

He walked out...

Nkosinathi looked at me quizzically.

Nkosinathi: are your siblings fighting with you because I'm here?

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: all of them?

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: oh... Wow.

Did he just ask me those questions to say wow? I took the juice he came with and poured a glass...

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry for putting you in this position.

Me: sure.

Nkosinathi: but I'm not sorry for being here, my son needs me as much as he needs you.

I didn't answer him.

Nkosinathi: if I was able to make peace with your dad then I can work through them. Surely.

Me: good luck with that.

Nkosinathi: they have to accept that I'm gonna be a present father, one way or another I'm gonna be around you guys. Nothing and no one is gonna stop that.

Me: they don't have to accept anything, but I hear you.

Nkosinathi: so you are on their side?

Me: would I be talking to you right now if I was on their side? In fact can we just eat? Please. Because I'm on my son's side, whichever is right for him I will allow, and whichever is not... I will not tolerate.

Nkosinathi: okay.

We dug in, I only ate about two pieces of the meat and one roll then nda right.

My sisters came to see us for the last time for the day, they were not impressed to find out this guy was still here but I wasn't gonna start a fight with them as well. After some time they indicated that baya hamba...

Cindy: can you give us a minute Nkosinathi?

Nkosinathi: sure.

He took his jacket and car keys waphuma.

Cindy: and then lona? Ithini into yakhe?

Siki: nibuyelene Cass andra?

Me: uze umntaneni wakhe, and no, asibuyelenanga sisi.

Siki: u sure?

I looked at her...

Siki: Look, we get that you once loved him but all we're asking is that if you've changed your mind about him... Tell us. Don't keep us in the darkness.

Me: we are not dating, there's not even a chance for us to date. He's got Tammy in his life now, I'm not looking to date anyone anytime soon. As I said before, he's merely here for his son... Once we get discharged he's gonna go back to his life nathi sibuyele endlini. Liphele ibali.

Cindy: I'll wait in the car.

Me: you don't believe me?

Cindy: I don't have to believe your words Thixunathi, I'm watching your actions qha.

Then she walked out...

Siki came to sit next to me. I wiped a tear that was quick to run down my cheek, she just hugged me and I kind of cried.

Siki: you're taking strain nana.

Me: you guys don't understand.

Siki: we do, trust me we do but sonke we feel like you are too lenient with him.

I moved away from her embrace.

Me: I called him because I thought Milli was dying, it's not like Milli had flue or something... He looked like he's dying for heavens sake.

Siki: I know...

Me: but all of you are on my case as if I called Nkosinathi to come here over a child who had a cough.

She didn't answer me...

Me: the way everyone feels the need to remind me of everything I've been through for the past months as if I would forget, guys, I went through those things. Me. Now it's like everyone of you enjoys seeing me in pain, I can't smile for a second without being reminded that I'm on antidepressants. I cannot smile for a second without being reminded that Nkosinathi's family offered me a million to abort... Hayini, utatu Dakumba offered ME the million, mna ME. So how could I forget?

Cwaka...

Me: I've never told anyone that I stopped loving Nkosinathi, I just said we broke up and after that I told everyone that I'm not ready to date again. He also knows I'm not ready to date anyone yet and

somehow he understands that more than my own family.

Siki: we love you, and we are doing all that we're doing to protect you. We don't want to see you hurt all over again. Especially not by the same person.

I poured myself a glass of water...

Siki: all of us, including your brothers... We care about your well being.

Me: and I appreciate that, but ndcela ninike u Nkosinathi a chance emntaneni wakhe bethuna.

Siki: We don't mind him being here for his son as long as he stays away from you.

Me: Mandide ndihambe ndiyophangela shem.

She laughed....

Me: ya'll are suffocating me.

Siki: Oksalayo uzamshiya u Millia for the first 6 months.

Me: usathi 6 months usisi, kuthwe unyaka kulandlu.

Siki: that's good, it gives you time to adjust and look for the right kindergarten for him without any pressure.

Me: unyaka wonke without seeing umntanam?

Siki: you'll fly in nge weekend o off ngayo kaloku... Cape Town is just down the road.

I nod...

Siki: we are not trying to fight with you, this is us loving you.

Me: I understand sisi, even if it's too overwhelming at times.

Siki: don't mind Lionel...

Me: he told you?

Siki: yep.

Me: Yho.

She smiled and offered a hug, I went for it. We hugged, she kissed her nephew and then left.

[06/26, 15:03] : #Mpumelelo_07

#Cassandra

All my siblings left so I just lay there with my son, he was playing and the heat had cooled off a bit. His father didn't come back but Asenathi called...

Me: hello?

Asenathi: Hey, unjani?

Me: I'm good, unjani wena?

Asenathi: I'm alright sisi, unjani umntana?

I sighed...

Me: he's okay, but silalisiwe for an overnight observation.

Asenathi: oh really? Can I come see you guys?

Me: I don't think that's wise, my family isn't really keen on seeing you guys.

Asenathi: are they there now?

Me: no.

Asenathi: I can come now torho...noko sekusebusuku ngoku and its past visiting hours.

Her brother walked in ndisacinga...

Asenathi: I know we are not the best of friends and I have not been the best sister to Nathi when it comes to you or your child but please, can I just see the little one? Noba yi five minutes will be enough torho Cassandra.

Me: fine.

Asenathi: enkosi, please text me the ward number.

Me: sure.

I hung up and looked at Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: what?

Me: your sister wants to come and see Milli.

Nkosinathi: oh.

I looked at him...was that all?

Okay.

I texted her the ward number and just lay there in silence.

Nkosinathi: you okay?

I nod...

Nkosinathi: u sure?

Me: does Tammy know you're here?

Nkosinathi: yes.

Me: and she's okay with that?

Nkosinathi: yes.

Me: okay.

We sat in that awkward silence...I don't know how he thought he's gonna sleep on the hospital bunk chair but he sure wasn't gonna share the bed with us. After about an hours of silence, his sister came through carrying flowers and a fruit basket. Fruit basket that I knew I'm gonna give away to the ladies next door xasihamba k'sasa, aint taking no fruit basket home, especially evela kuye.

Asenathi: molweni.

Me: hi.

Nkosinathi: buddy.

They hugged...

She gave me the flowers, putting the basket next to Milli's medical folder.

Then she came to peep at him...

Asenathi: akase cute bethuna... can I hold him?

Nkosinathi: ulele bra, and no, you cannot take pictures of him.

Asenathi: aw's engcole. It's just pictures.

Nkosinathi: no pictures Asenathi.

Asenathi: okay ke...

Then she looked at me.

Asenathi: u right?

I nod...

I wasn't up for this small talk conversation, we both knew where we stood with each other. So this really wasn't necessary.

Asenathi: niphuma nini?

Me: ngoms o.

Asenathi: ooh I told mom ya'll are hospitalized, she was gonna drive this side tomorrow morning.

Me: drive to where?

Asenathi: to come see you guys.

Me: mxelele akho need.

Asenathi: haibo Cassandra, lomntana ngumzukulwana kamama kaloku at some point my family will have to see him.

Me: lomntanam ngumntana wam, your family doesn't have to do anything when it comes to him.

Asenathi: so akazoyazi ifamily ka yise?

Me: Asenathi, I don't want your mother anywhere near my child, in fact I don't want any of your family members anywhere near my son. You included.

Asenathi: he's not just your son kaloku sisi, he's also Nkosinathi's son. In him flows igazi lakwa Dakumba.

Me: igazi lakwa Dakumba eli contaminated you mean?

Asenathi: contaminated or not, that doesn't change the fact that your son is a Da-

Me: fuck that bull, I don't want ya'll near my son, what's so difficult to understand there?

Asenathi: oops, why are we being so hostile?

Me: yazini, your 5 minutes is over, you can leave.

She looked at her brother who wasn't saying anything.

Asenathi: what's your problem kanti Cassandra?

Me: oh my God, why did I even let you come here?

Asenathi: why wouldn't you let me come here? What have I done to you?

I looked at her and laughed, she seemed confused...
lost even.

Asenathi: Nathi?

Nkosinathi: masambe ndikukhapha.

Me: thank you.

Asenathi: you're taking her side?

Me: you expected him to take yours? Over his son?

Asenathi: you're not his son, you're a bitter baby
momma qha.

Me: uyaw'tsho kunyoko ke nontombi.

Her eyes almost popped and Nkosinathi jumped up

from where he sat.

Asenathi: what did you just say?

Me: ndithe le shit uyithethayo uyaw'yits ho pha kunyoko, awuvanga nangoku?

Asenathi: Nathi, uyayiva la rubbishhkazi yakho ithuka umama right in front of you?

Me: he heard me, but he's minding his own business. Something you fail at doing.

Asenathi: rha ukwada man, sies! Andiyazi le ibonwa ngu Nathi no Mpumi kuwe uhlaza unjena.

Me: something they clearly don't see in you.

Asenathi: hay nono make no mistake, ndithanda ndingabuyelana no Mpumelelo anytime kuphele nalonto ibingathi ingaqala phakathi kwenu, to think he wants to make you my son's stepmother?! Rha!

Me: ndithanda ndingasiso eso stepmother somntanakho and give him all the love you failed to give him from birth, and trust me, you and your mother would have no say whatsoever. Neither

would your dad and his filthy money.

Wathula...she seemed like ubindekile.

Nkosinathi walked out, Asenathi walked right behind him, she couldn't believe how this visit transpired or, she was acting dumb. Nkosinathi came back after a while but he came back while I was on the phone with Onele, I had a gut feeling that he overheard us but I didn't care wethu. I actually didn't care about anything except for my son...his wellbeing was all that mattered. He slowly walked in as I hung up from that phone call...I turned around and just cuddled my baby. I didn't want to talk about my rudeness towards his mother via his sister...

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: can we talk?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: why not?

Me: ndilele.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: I don't appreciate what you did or said today, especially about my mother.

I ignored him...

Nkosinathi: I get that you're upset, I get that you're tired of everything concerning my family but I will not tolerate lento yenzeke namhlanje. Let today be the last day I ever hear you speak ngomamam the way you spoke about her. You gave Asenathi permission to come here, no one forced you to and even if you had not given her, no one was gonna be

on your case.

I wasn't gonna argue with this guy though...didn't he catch on? I know I was wrong but hey, I was provoked and I wasn't about to start an argument with him this late over what transpired between his sister and I.

Nkosinathi: so you gonna ignore me?

Me: it's late bra, surely we can talk about this tomorrow.

Nkosinathi: no Cass we need to talk about this now, tomorrow we start afresh. New day, no grudges.

Me: I ain't grudging with no one.

Nkosinathi: you just insulted my mother.

Me: I didn't mean to.

Nkosinathi: but you're not apologizing too.

I sat up and looked at him...

Me: the only thing I'm gonna apologize for is allowing your sister to come see my son, I thought she'd be appreciative of the opportunity to see your son but she wasn't. She was the usual bully that she always has been and you expected me to just sit there and smile at her? Seriously?

He didn't answer me but I could feel he was angry.

He was pissed off.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_08

#Cassandra

He got up and walked out

Came back about ten minutes later and pulled a chair so he could sit in front of me.

Nkosinathi: you know this shit of yours not willing to apologize when you know you're wrong is part of the same reason why we're not together anymore. The same reason why my son has been caught in the middle of everything.

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: had you apologized to me the first time I asked you about Mpumelelo we wouldn't have broken up, my child would not have to choose between his fathers' family and your family. Had you just been upfront with me regarding that kiss, the very first time I asked you about it...you should have just been honest about it. If you wanted to you could have been honest about it.

Okay fine I was dozing off...his voice was sounding like a drum and it was sending me away and he kept on going on and on. He was raving, fuming but I was falling into this deep sleep. Gradually.

I eventually did fall asleep and he must have realized that ndilele nyhani and maybe shut up. Milli woke me up, so I sat up and fed him. His dad wasn't around but his jacket was on the chair he had sat on before I fell asleep. I changed my son and checked his temperature, he really fine. I wished there would be a way to get us out of here right now, while his dad has gone AWOL. My phone rang...
Mpumelelo

Me: Doctor Sirhonyi, why you calling us so late?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm up and I thought of you.

Me: really now?

Dr Sirhonyi: did I wake ya'll?

Me: nah, I'm feeding him.

Dr Sirhonyi: can I video call then? I'd like to see him.

Me: sure.

He hungup and video called us, I had my boob

covered with the baby's face towel so he could only see that he's suckling but not see my entire breast. That would understandably upset Nkosinathi if he were to walk in on us during this call. We spoke for a while, laughing and him updating me on the happenings of his busy life...when my child was done I burped him and lay him on the bed because Mpumelelo wanted to see him, as if Milli could talk back to him. Lol.

Dr Sirhonyi: akas emhle, but akafani nawe.

Me: he took those people kakhulu.

Dr Sirhonyi: a slap in your face?

Me: kancinci, but I don't really mind...at least they'll see that ngowabo.

Dr Sirhonyi: they doubted you?

Me: I don't care, what I know they pissed me off and even talking about them still pisses me off.

He smiled.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm glad you stood up for yourself, at least you didn't lose a family member over this whole thing.

Me: It must still hurt you, I'm sorry.

Dr Sirhonyi: it's cool, at least now I have my son.

Me: and u malume.

Dr Sirhonyi: yes, and u malume...that reminds me, I have to check up on him. I haven't told him about Amohelo.

Me: hayibo njani?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm taking baby steps on everything and I don't wanna overwhelm my son. But if we do get a positive response from the school he chose in J o'burg then I'll take him to go and meet umalume.

Me: ooh okay...

Dr Sirhonyi: uphi u tata ka Milli?

Me: he must have taken a walk I don't know. He was here when we fell asleep, and his jacket is still here.

Dr Sirhonyi: so ni right?

Me: yeah si right.

Dr Sirhonyi: Asenathi told me (in passing) about your quarrel earlier on.

Me: haha! So she ran to report to you? Classic.

Now he laughed...

He had beautiful teeth yazi, hadn't noticed that all this while.

Dr Sirhonyi: I think she wanted to badmouth you kum.

Me: did it work?

Dr Sirhonyi: nah, I know her.

Me: but you don't know me.

Dr Sirhonyi: what matters is that I know she could have easily been the cause of it all. Asenathi attracts drama babe, I know her.

Me: mmh, she said ethanda angabuyelana nawe.

How true is that?

Dr Sirhonyi: uyaziphambanisa u Asenathi man, don't mind her.

Me: u sure? She seems so sure that she knows where she stands with you.

He sighed...

Me: aha!

Dr Sirhonyi: thing is, before I got to know you besibana behind her husband's back. That was my plan to get closer to my son, now that I have him, full access I mean, to him akukho kwanto ezondidibanisa naye. So no, there's no truth to that.

Me: you were sleeping with your married ex, behind her husband's back?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes.

Me: for your child you say?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes.

Me: does that make sense to you?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes.

I laughed...

Dr Sirhonyi: she's vulnerable when it comes to me, maybe it's because of how we broke things off back then but when I realized that she had indeed hid my son from me I made a decision to use her vulnerability to get what I want.

Me: which is your son?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes.

Me: any feelings attached to all of this?

Dr Sirhonyi: none whats oever, I know what I want and it's not her.

Okay...

Dr Sirhonyi: I told you I want you to be my wife, and I haven't changed that statement.

Me: you think after what you just told me I'd still agree to be your wife?

Dr Sirhonyi: no, but that doesn't mean I'll stop caring for you nor does it mean I'll take back that statement.

I didn't answer him...

Dr Sirhonyi: I know you said you're not in a good space for relationship right now and I respect that, hence I don't even wanna mention it in our conversations anymore but that does not mean I have changed how I feel about you. I'm just ignoring them because I respect you.

Me: I don't feel like you respect me enough xa uzokwazi ukuthi you want a future with me and then go behind my back to sleep with the mother of your child. Regardless of the reason behind your actions.

Dr Sirhonyi: are we becoming jealous now?

Me: no, we are communicating.

Dr Sirhonyi: okay I'm sorry about that.

Me: an apology, good boy.

He laughed...

Dr Sirhonyi: no seriously now, are we really jealous?

Me: not necessarily. I guess I just got pissed off at the fact that she knows she can go back to you anytime whenever she feels like. And she'll find your arms welcoming and warm, waiting for her.

Dr Sirhonyi: okay, I'll put a stop to it.

Me: don't.

Dr Sirhonyi: why not?

Me: you see nothing wrong with it so don't allow my insecurities ruin what you got going there, and besides, we're not dating.

Dr Sirhonyi: if you're concerned then it shows you care, meaning there could be something to look forward to in the future.

Me: just like her I can go back to my baby daddy... you know that right?

Dr Sirhonyi: hundred percent, but that doesn't faze me because even if you do, it won't last long.

Then Nkosinathi walked back in...he intentionally came to pick his son up, he was still awake and playing on his own. Obviously the back of his head showed on my screen. Mpumelelo covered his mouth laughing, I smiled at him and eyed Nkosinathi.

Me: we gotta bounce.

Dr Sirhonyi: alright, see ya'll around.

Me: cheers.

He smiled and hung up.

That was the most uncomfortable 5 seconds ever.

I got up and went to the loo because there was someone to watch over my son

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_09

I didn't want to rush her yazi, in as much as the possibility of her hiding my child away from me pissed me off, I still wanted to act cool and not rush this. It was clear that something was most definitely up, kwalento she cannot go anywhere without being supervised. Did they fear we'd bump onto each other and she'd slip up and tell me? Or, did they fear she'd run away? And, if this was true, who was looking after my son all this time? Where have they kept him?

I was gradually running myself mad here because I had all these questions and no answers.

I decided to start off with my packing (well not start off, but pick up where I left off) I packed everything, cleaned up the whole flat, ate and rested. Following day I went to visit my uncle, he was at work so I decided to go to his workplace and wait there for his lunchtime. He was told I'm around so he came out...he was soooo happy and excited that I actually came to see him, he cried real tears when I told him about my Cape Town move. Not bitterness tears but tears of joy that both my sister and I were able to beat the odds. I after that, I headed to CT still without contacting Asenathi...I wanted her to reach out to me first.

I eventually headed to Cape Town, had my own fully furnished flat, own car (I had my license while volunteering at Bara) and I was ready for everything. A week after I had settled in, Asenathi called...I was excited, not because she called but because Thula's arrival was a week away and if all could go well I knew I could get Asenathi to come up before Thula arrives so that afike ekhona.

Me: Asenathi Dakumba, finally.

She laughed, I just smiled.

Me: how have you been?

Ase: I've been on survival mode, honestly.

Me: why? What's up?

She sighed...

Me: come on, you know you can tell me anything.

Ase: I miss you.

Me: come to Cape Town.

Ase: u sure you want me to come?

Me: I wouldn't joke like that.

Ase: okay...I'll call you again.

Me: sure, I'll be waiting.

We hung up...she was stressed out about something and she probably didn't want to tell me over the phone. I got up from my bed and started cooking for her, I quickly prepared my stuff and cleaned up the flat, opened all windows and when all was in order, I got into my car and went to buy her wine. I don't drink, unless I have someone to drink with, that's why I didn't have alcohol in my flat. I bought her wine and condoms, we can't risk it twice now, even if I happen to be the last man to hit it..on my way back from the stores she called me...

Me: babe?

Ase: I'm coming, I'll be there in about 1 hour 15 to 30 minutes.

Me: uza ngantoni?

Ase: I spoke to the family pilot, he was around so I'm on my way to the airport right now.

Me: alright, call me to pick you up when you land.

Ase:no, rather text me your location. I'll find my way to you.

Me: Asenathi...

Ase: please...

Me: alright...I'll send you the location just now.

Ase: thank you.

We hung up, I sent her my location...then I texted Thula, she called...

Me: hel-

Thula: uyaphi lomntana kuwe?

Me: we're dating, she's paying her boyfriend a visit.

Thula: how many times do I have to warn you about her Mpumi?

Me: not more than once, and you already warned me so that was enough. All you have to do now is to

come back home, pay your brother a visit.

She sighed...

Me: trust me, I know what I'm doing.

Thula: are you sure? I don't wanna see you get hurt all over again.

Me: I'm sure, trust me...I'll get to the truth about your nephew, just have a lil faith.

Thula: and if you do find out, what are you going to do about it?

Me: can we take it one step at a time?

Thula: oh-kay...I really have no choice but to trust you here.

Me: yes ma'am.

She laughed...

We continued with our conversation and then she

had to go.

Exactly after 1 hour 30 minutes Asenathi texted that she had landed, and I waited in anticipation as she was making her way to my place. She arrived with just a handbag, haha! A handbag, not a weekender, but a handbag. We hugged, walked in and she removed her sneakers as she got comfortable on the couch, I served her food and drinks then we chilled. After some time we made out on the couch, as it heated, I stopped and just kissed her forehead.

Me: uthe uyaphi kokwenu?

Ase: ndithe ndiya e town.

Me: hence the handbag?

She laughed...

Me: you're still as sneaky as hell!

Ase: I just needed to breathe yhu ha.a

Me: wanna go to the movies?

Ase: right now?

Me: yeah, right now.

She looked hesitant.

Me: you fear your brother might see us?

Ase: kind of.

Me: well, you can't run away from home and still be caged nalapha.

Ase: true.

Me: let's go out, breathe some fresh air.

She smiled...

Ase: okay.

She quickly went to the room, apparently she was able to pack sandals into the handbag, I grabbed my wallet and car keys. I had enough cash for a drink and the movie tickets. We went off, watched a movie that she picked, and yes, she fell asleep halfway through the movie. When it was over I had to wake her up, we went straight home, she went straight to bed while I went to iron my clothes. I was gonna go to church the following day.

She eventually woke up and I was just chilling on the couch...she lay her body on mine, I was laughing so hard because ndothukile, last time I checked on her she was snoring, gqi ngomntu sezondisinda on my couch.

Me: and then?

Ase: kutheni undilalisa ndedwa?

Me: nguwe odiniweyo nje.

She sighed.

Me: what's really bothering you baby?

Ase: nothing's bothering me.

Me: u sure? You are so tense.

Ase: I'm just tired, I'm sure I'll be fine by tomorrow.

Me: do you want a massage?

Ase: are you offering?

Me: sure, why not?

She jumped off my body, I lead her to the bedroom and massaged her with baby oil. She was really tense...

Me: you need to visit a spa, you're really tense.

Ase: I'm sure you'll do a much greater job, sabu happy ending kanje.

I laughed at that...happy ending?

We obviously ended up massaging each other...the happy ending she wanted, delivered with sweat and moans right through. Her head lay on my chest, one of my legs between hers...

Me: you okay?

Ase: there's something I wanna tell you.

Me: oh-kay?

Ase: please promise you won't hate me.

I shifted...

Ase: please.

Okay she was crying now, my chest was already becoming wet.

Me: I promise.

She sat up and wiped her face using the back of her hands but the tears kept on coming.

Me: hey, I promise I won't hate you. What's wrong?
What have you done?

Ase: I lied to you.

Me: about what? Coming here?

She cried again and looked down at her fingers...

Me: babe?

Ase: I lied to you about something very important and I hate myself for it...I wish I could take it back, I wish I could go back and undo everything but I can't.

Me: okay you're scaring me now.

She grabbed the glass of wine that she had left

when we walked in her for the massage. Downed the contents and breathed out.

Ase: I'm sorry.

Me: for what? Dude you're really scaring me now thetha, what are you sorry for.

She looked at the window...

“you have a son”

I swear I went deaf.

She looked at me...seeing that I kind of did not get what she was saying.

Ase: the child never died as I said he did..I was instructed by my dad to lie to you.

So Thula was right all along?

I felt numb, I didn't know how else to feel.

For a second I think my heart stopped beating or I stopped breathing, but I had shocking chest pains.

I didn't even know what to say, how to respond to her.

To this revelation.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_10

I sat there looking at her...

She was cleaning up her face.

Me: Asenathi' what did you just say?

Ase: you have a son.

Me: I have a son?

Ase: yes, his name is Amohelo.

Me: but you said my son died, after you gave birth to him.

Ase: I know.

Me: then where is this one coming from?

She got up from the bed.

Me: sit the fuck down and answer the damn question!

With all the shock in her eyes she sat back down. Quietly.

Me: all these years, you have kept my son a secret?

Ase: it wasn't me... Ngu tata.

Me: I wasn't dating your dad, and I never impregnated your dad.

Ase: Mpumi....

I looked at her...

Me: where is he now?

Ase: uhlala kwa bhuti, e Joburg.

Me: the same one who wanted nothing to do with me?

Ase: yes.

Me: why?

She sighed...

Me: in fact save it, I want to see proof of what you're saying.

Ase: you don't believe me?

Me: would you believe me? Had positions been exchanged?

She shook her head...

Me: proof.

She took her phone and went to her images, picked a folder and gave me the phone. I couldn't believe my eyes, it felt like I was looking at my younger self. I suddenly felt emotional and overwhelmed, aphela amazwi emqaleni... I broke down and cried.

Ase: I'm sorry.

I didn't know what to say to her...

I was mad, I was livid, I was fuming. My stomach was boiling inside, my chest was closing in ingathi ndibekwe igaqa lelahle inside.

Ase: he's the reason why I am caged in that house, they fear me bumping kuwe and telling you the truth

or running away from home.

Me: yonke lento undishwaqela yona makes no sense to me right now, what I wanna know is where my son is, how do I get to him?

Ase: you can't get to him, they'll kill you.

Me: who's they?

Ase: utata no bhuti.

Me: they'll kill me because I wanna meet my son? Is your family really that fucked up?

Wathula...

Me: ya'll deprived me of meeting my son, ya'll allowed my sister and I to grieve for a living human fucking being and now you're telling me that your father is gonna kill me if I reach out to my son?

She didn't answer me...

Me: ukuba nithwele phakokwenu anizothwala ngomntanam. That, you should know.

Ase: asithwelanga Mpumi man.

Me: then what is it?

She sighed...

Me: you're gonna make a way, I don't know how but you're gonna make a way so that I meet my son.

Ase: baby...

Me: do not baby me,

Ase: please listen to me.

Me: don't patronize me Asenathi. Not now.

Ase: yonke lento is not as easy as you make it to be.

Me: if you are really serious about us, then this shouldn't be hard. We could finally be the family that we've always wanted to be.

Ase: seriously?

Me: what could stop us?

She exhaled....

Ase: okay, I'll make a plan. Give me a week or two then I'll call you.

Me: that's all I wanted to hear, that you'll make a plan.

I got up and walked away from her, I had mixed feelings about her as a person. A part of me wanted to strangle life out of her, a part of me wanted to chase her out of my place, a part of me wanted to drag her to the railway and make her stand there naked waiting for a train to come smash her into mince meat but another part of me wanted to torture her for life, each day every day for the rest of her life. That would be ideal, to torture her for life.

Me: that's what I'm gonna do... That is what I'm going to do.

I grabbed my car keys and drove to the beach with my phone. Well I had to confirm to Thula that what she suspected was indeed true so I called her...

Thula: Mpumi ndilele mna Haibo.

Me: I have a son.

Then she went silent.

Me: his name is Amohelo, he's alive and breathing just fine wherever he is.

Her response was whispered...

Thula: she finally came clean.

Me: I'm gonna make her pay for what she did to me, for the rest of her life. Trust me on that.

Thula: don't do anything until I come home, my leave has been approved.

Me: okay. Bye.

Then I hung up

She called me back

Me: Thula?

Thula: I repeat, don't do anything until I come back home.

Me: I heard you.

Thula: but you will do something, you have an icy edge on your voice right now.

Me: bye bye Nokuthula.

Thula: Mpumi.

Me: love you.

I hung up again...

I sat there and orchestrated a plan on how to make Asenathi and her family pay for what they did to me. She called but I ignored her... She called again so I rejected it.

I only went back to the flat when it was darker, walked in and slept on the couch because she was already fast asleep. I didn't sleep much, I was thinking of a perfect payback plan.

In the morning I woke up before her and prepared breakfast, she came out of the bedroom with puffy eyes. It was clear that she was really sad so as she walked to where I was, I put the spatula down and lowered the heat of the stove...

As e: Mpumi I'm sorry.

Then I went to hug her.

She broke down and cried, I let her cry until she had no more tears left in her then I kissed her forehead.

Me: I know.

Ase: you do?

Me: and I forgive you.

She looked at me...

Me: you were only a child, you couldn't stand against your father's will so I understand.

Ase: baby...

Me: go take a shower, come back so we can have a breakfast.

She smiled and nod.

I kissed her on the lips and watched her go before

going back to my brekkie preparations. I set up the table very nicely, plated up on for both of us, had her ice cold wine there and waited for her to join me and she did. Looking all fresh and smelling good, but with the eys bags and puffy eyes.

Ase: this looks nice.

Me: you look beautiful.

Ase: andifakanga ne makeup though.

Me: you don't need it, umhle without it.

She blushed satya making small conversations avoiding the child topic. When we were done she washed the dishes while I went to shower, I came back and she was on the phone. Probably with one of her siblings, I wanted to take her out on a movie date but I didn't want to spend all the little that I had on one weekend... Ndisafika apha.

Ase: that was my brother.

Me: is he sending a search party to look for you?

Ase: nope, he just asked why ndifuna ubulala umama ngentliziyo and I told him my heart is the most important right now.

Me: mh.

Ase: I think he's gonna track my phone and come fetch me.

Me: do you want to be fetched?

Ase: bendithe kwi pilot yabo izizondithatha ngoms o so no, I don't want to be fetched. I know my way home.

Me: gimme your phone.

She gave me her phone, I turned everything off and removed her Sim card then ndayifaka in the wardrobe.

Ase: oh-Kay. Can we go out today? Please?

Me: I would love to, but I don't have enough money

to go out.

Ase: you've done enough already, this one is on me.

I looked at her...

Ase: seriously, next time ndisiza I'll allow you to spoil me but for now, I know you just got here for umsbenzi and awukapeyi so please let me.

Me: okay.

Ase: say that with a bit of excitement.

I laughed and went to hug her, she turned around to run but I caught her which ended up as a hug from behind. We played around for a while, kissing, biting and just laughing.

We prepared to go out... And we went out. My first project on the Amohelo issue was to hire a private investigator, I needed facts first before I do

anything. I knew very well that after two weeks I was gonna meet him but I didn't wanna get excited as yet.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_11

#Cassandra

I returned to the ward and these two were having meaningful conversations like they were serious nyhani. I got in bed and tried sleeping since he's here for his son I might as well get some rest.

Nkosinathi: Cass?

Me: mh?

Nkosinathi: bendi serious, I don't like what you said.

Me: I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: you know you're only apologizing because you want to shut me up.

Me: I don't know what you want from me ke.

Nkosinathi: I want you to know you were wrong.

Me: I know I was wrong, I insulted your sister and used your mom now I'm apologizing and you're not accepting the apology, kanti ufunani kum?

Nkosinathi: sincerity?

I sighed and kept my eyes closed.

A second passed.

I turned and faced him...

Me: tatakhe, I wish I could stand on top of the tallest mountain in Africa and insult your entire family...

Trust me, that I wish I could do because they deserve it. But I know how you feel about your mother, what I said to Asenathi was unintentional, it just came out. I know you're gonna ask but why repeat it? Well I felt provoked... Ninayo la sense of entitlement pha kokwenu, bendisusa yona ke phaku dadwenu. She is allowed to bully you however way she sees fit but angafaki mna nomntanam,

that's all. But honestly, I am sorry for what I said.

He nod.

Nkosinathi: thank you.

Me: me apologizing doesn't mean I won't cuss when I'm provoked again, maybe this time it's gonna be bigger than what I said. Maybe ndizohlaba umntu just to get the message across. I don't know.

Nkosinathi: it won't get to that.

Me: good, nd'cela ulala kengoku?

Nkosinathi: sure.

I turned around and fell asleep, when I eventually woke up they were fast asleep. His son on his chest, it was morning so I went to bath. Prepared water for my son then ndamthatha and bathed him... His father helped with getting him dressed, the doctor came to check on Milli then discharged us. Because

I didn't drive myself to the hospital I now had to either ask Nkosinathi to take us home or wait for my sisters to come fetch us

I grabbed my phone and dialed Siki...

Siki: baby? Hey, ninjani?

Me: good morning sis, we are good. Are you at work already?

Siki: yes, what's up?

Me: we just got discharged.

Siki: okay call Cindy to come fetch ya'll.

Me: Nkosinathi is here, I don't want that tension so early.

Siki: then ask Nkosinathi to take you home.

I looked at him... And sighed.

Siki: give him the phone.

I did.. He agreed to take us home then gave me my phone back. Ndayithatha and started packing, we went to fetch some meds for u boy then headed to his car, he gave me the key to drive his Ranger. I panicked a bit because it's a big car but... I could see he enjoyed having his son so close to his heart. I started the car and drove home in silence...

Nkosinathi: kutheni undiphakamele nje Cassandra?

Me: huh?

Nkosinathi: you know there was no need for you to ask your sisters to come fetch you when you know I came with a car here.

Me: I didn't want to impose.

Nkosinathi: andiyithandi lento uyenzayo.

I didn't answer him, he plugged his phone and

played music... The phone after a short while, he answered it while still connected to the music player so all of us could listen to his conversation.
Mnkq!

Nkosinathi: Tammy, hi?

Tammy: babe, where are you?

Nkosinathi: I'm in Port Elizabeth.

Tammy: I thought you were going to the office around Joburg though.

Nkosinathi: I was, until I got a call that my son was admitted at the hospital.

Then there was silence...

Nkosinathi: you still there?

Tammy: year uhm, how is he?

Nkosinathi: he just got discharged so I believe he's

better.

Tammy: are you with his mother?

Nkosinathi: yes, I'm with them.

Tammy: oh... Did you spend the night with them as well?

Nkosinathi: we spent the night at the hospital, if that's what you're asking.

Tammy: oh he spent the night? He must have really been serious. I'm sorry.

Nkosinathi: cool... How's your day planned out?

Tammy: I'm meeting the painters for the boutique today, later have a meeting with two of my suppliers then I'm done for the day.

Me: hope all goes well for you.

Tammy: baby are you mad at me?

Nkosinathi: why would I be?

She didn't answer...

Nkosinathi: Tammy?

Tammy: didn't Cass tell you that she called and I answered your phone?

Nkosinathi: no, when did she call?

Menemene lendoda!!!

Tammy: when you were in the shower.

Nkosinathi: oh, when I came out and said I heard my phone ring and you said it didn't?

Her answer was very low, as if whispered.

Tammy: yes...

Nkosinathi: why did you do that?

Tammy: I'm sorry baby, please forgive.

Nkosinathi: ayt, we'll talk when I get back.

Tammy: when are you coming back?

Nkosinathi: I'm not sure yet, I'll call you tonight.

Tammy: oh okay.

Nkosinathi: cheers.

Then he hung up...

He resumed the music, until we got home and there was no one. I didn't have keys because I was hospitalized I didn't think I'd need my keys. I called Cindy...

Cindy: baby?

Me: sisi... Are you at work?

Cindy: ewe girl, niphumile?

Me: ewe sisi.

Cindy: okay I'll call u baby to fetch you now.

Me: uhm, sesi sendlini sisi just that I don't have my

own key with me.

Cindy: oh okay... Let me check where he is akuzisele.

Me: awuzokwazi uphuma wena?

Cindy: ndise Kapa nana, I'll be here the entire day. Senza i induction in our branch.

Me: ooh okay.

Cindy: I'll check and call you back in a minute.

Me: enkosi.

We hung up...

Nkosinathi: what's up?

She's working in Cape Town the whole day.

Nkosinathi: u Siki uphi yena?

Me: uphangele.

Nkosinathi: we can go wait endlini.

I didn't answer him...

My phone rang again...

Me: sisi?

Cindy: baby, can you ask Nkosinathi to go fetch the key at Siki's work place? U baby uthi use East London.

Me: okay sisi.

Cindy: I'm sorry for this.

Me: hay sisi akhongxaki. Usebenze kakuhle.

Cindy: thank you, I'll call you when we are on break.

Me: sharp.

I hung up and threw my head on the headrest...

Then I started the car.

Nkosinathi: where are we going to?

Me: to fetch the key from sis Siki.

Nkosinathi: can you drop us endlini ke and drive to your sister's workplace wedwa?

Me: why would I leave you at your place, wedwa with my son?

Nkosinathi: what would I possibly do to MY son in your 15 minute absence na Cassandra?

Me: Yey!

Nkosinathi: drop me off at my place.

He wasn't asking me.

I drove, fast without answering him, took the turn to his place and dropped them off at the gate. Wohlika without saying a word. I drove to Siki's work and got the key.

Siki: uphi umntanam?

Me: uku tatakhe, ndizodlula ngaye ngoku.

Siki: kwakhe okanye kokwabo?

Me: kwakhe.

Siki: so he gave you his car to drive?

Me: he's tired, he didn't sleep at all last night... And he wanted to carry Milli.

Siki: ooh.

There was doubt in her eyes.

Me: bye bye.

Siki: be safe.

I chuckled, la be safe was not a "drive safe" kinda be safe, I knew what she meant and I wasn't gonna go into it. I drove to Nkosinathi's house and the gate was closed so I called and before he could answer his phone, the gate opened so I drove in. Only to realize when I was getting out of his car that his sister was behind me, she had opened for me, and

there were two other cars behind hers. I went straight to the house ndafika enxibe just shorts and flops, guessed he took the time to freshen up. Maybe that's why he wanted to come to his place kwakuqala. He wanted to freshen up shem umntanabantu.

Nkosinathi: hey, uvulelwe ngubani?

Me: hey uhm, you have visitors.

Nkosinathi: I have visitors?

Me: yep, your sister and two other cars.

The house smelt of good meaty food, I salivated but took my child, his bags were still in the car. Luckily. Maybe I would have stayed to eat if his sister had not just rocked up.

Me: we'll wait for you in the car.

Nkosinathi: you're not hungry?

Me: I'll eat at home. Thanks.

Sams hiya, only to bump onto his sister, mother, elder brother and wife, two other elderly men and his dad. I think Liyema greeted me, but I didn't respond. My eyes locked with Asenathi's for a second then her dad, I immediately felt sick. I wanted to puke right at his face. Nkosinathi's sister swallowed hard and tried to say something but I just walked past them and went to the car... I got in at the back and waited for Nkosinathi impatiently. After a few minutes bengenile endlini Liyema came out to the car, she got in the front, the passenger seat and looked at me smiling. Mxm.

Liyema: hi Cass... Ndikubulisile ketana but I think awundivanga.

Me: bendikuvile, I just didn't answer you on purpose.

Liyema: oh... Okay.

I looked at her.

She cleared her throat.

Liyema: uhm, can I carry him?

Me: no.

Liyema: can I at least see him?

Me: no.

Liyema: oh I see.

I just stared at her... What the heck was she doing here? Was she really being the devil's advocate right now?

Liyema: I was uhm, asked ba ndikucele ungene ngaphakathi.

Me: who sent you?

Liyema: ngu mama.

Me: uthe yintoni into yakhe ekum?

Liyema: I think bafuna ubona umntana.

Me: bafuna ubona umntana? Umntana kabani?

Liyema: lo wakho, unyana ka Nkosinathi.

Me: baxelele I sent him down the drain.

Liyema: oh hay Cassandra, xola kaloku sisi. Sonke siyazenza iimpazamo.

Me: njengale yohambe nisiba abantwana babantu nibakhulise as abenu?

Hey eyes almost popped out...

Me: u right? Need water?

Liyema: what are talking about?

Me: tell your mother inlaw that I said, her grandson went down the drain. Piece by piece.

Liyema: I never took you for the petty type.

I laughed and took out my phone and called

Nkosinathi. He answered almost immediately...

Nkosinathi: Cass?

Me: if you do not come out right now, and take us home, you'll have to go fetch your car ekhaya.

Then I hung up.

Liyema: so that's a no as well.

Me: please excuse us before I say something I'll later regret.

Liyema: mmkay.

She walked out... I got out of the car and went to where she had sat, made my child comfortable on that seat with his pillow and blankets gqiba ndangena on the driver's seat and started the car. Turned it around so it faced the locked gate...

Nkosinathi called me, I could see him on the rear view mirror ephuma ebaleka, so I answered his call

Me: Tatakhe?

Nkosinathi: a lil patience would do.

Me: I understand you have guests, please open the gate.

Nkosinathi: can you just stop? Geez man.

Me: Haibo I've stopped, now please open the gate.

He hung up and ran to the car. Asenathi was on the porch with her hands covering her mouth. This guy got to the car and tried to open the door where Milli was but I had locked it so I lowered the window.

Me: what's up?

Nkosinathi: uphi umntana?

Me: nanku, he's safe. Hop in at the back.

Nkosinathi: awuphilanga kodwa Cassandra, uyabona ba my parents in fact my family just

walked in and you expect me to run after you?

Me: all I asked was for you to open the gate, you chose to run after me.

Nkosinathi: Couldn't you wait in the car until I attend to them? Like you said you would?

Me: I tried, but Liyema and your mother tried my patience so here we are. And I'm not sorry for this time around.

He got in at the back.. Opened the gate ndaphuma. He took his son while I was driving, he was mumbling, endishout'a but engakhwazi coz he knew I'm gonna answer him. Ndaqhuba ndayofika ekhaya and I took my son and his bags, all at once. I didn't want him to come in. At all. He must go back to his family. He stood there watching my stubborn ass walking away from him...

Nkosinathi: you're one of a kind yazi.

Me: I gave you a son, nyhani I am one of a kind. You

better remember that.

He laughed, I smiled and kept on walking away from him.

Nkosinathi: I'll be back later.

Me: uze ne nomojo.

Nkosinathi: uyaw'bhejwa yilandodakho u video caller nayo ezanzulwini zobusuku.

Me: ayifunwa ndim ifunwa ngu mntanakho, cimba ndicenge inyama yakho mna?

Nkosinathi: umntanam akatyinyama Cassandra.

Me: uyincanca emabeleni, refined and sifted bhuti, zange uyenze i biology eskolweni?

He laughed again, I also wanted to laugh because I didn't know what I was saying qha bendingafuni uhleka apha phambi kwakhe or endiva.... I walked in ekhaya and locked all doors, I heard him driving

away and breathed out. That was close. Nothing made me happy than depriving his family the chance of seeing my son selapha phambi kwabo, that took me straight to cloud 9.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_12

#Cassandra

Mpumi sent me a text asking unjani umntana so I told him we got discharged, he didn't respond. Guess he was busy.

Lunch time he texted and asked for my home address, I sent it to him and about two hours later, there was a pink roses delivery. Roses, a box of chocolate and a gift bag. I knew it's him so I called him right after the delivery guy left...

Dr Sirhonyi: Mama ka bhabha.

Me: Uncle Mpumi, thank you for the gifts.

Dr Sirhonyi: I hope the booties look good on the Lil chap.

Me: you bought him booties?

Dr Sirhonyi: you didn't open the bag?

I laughed and opened it, they were cute, like really cute. Expensive fabric too.

Me: thank you, they're cute.

Dr Sirhonyi: you're welcome. How is he?

Me: he's okay, kwa last night he was fine.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm coming to PE next weekend, I hope I can see you two.

Me: if you don't mind seeing us with aunts and uncles then you will definitely see us.

Dr Sirhonyi: I don't mind, he's too young to be going around catching weird spirits.

Me: aaaw.

He laughed.

Me: wenana!

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm a doctor Cassandra, doctor.

Me: hahaha! I can tell, otherwise how are you?

Haikwe we hit it off, we spoke for more than two hours then he had a patient to attend to so we hung up. I took my gifts to my room, including the roses. Then I came back and cuddled my baby sazinokolela. My phone rang... The screen popped up a picture ka Asenathi so I muted the phone. It rang again, for about three times so ndazincama ndamphendula. Nge cheek enjani yona?

Me: Asenathi Dakumba?

Asenathi: hey, Cass?

Me: ufuna ntoni kum ngoku? Asigqibanga

ugrwangxulana?

Asenathi: I want to apologize to you.

Me: for what exactly?

Asenathi: for being selfish and inconsiderate.

Me: and being a bitch ass bully.

Asenathi: yes, and for being a bully.

Ndathula.... J ust for a second.

Me: so what do you really want?

Asenathi: Cass... I know what you're going throu-

Me: you have not told me what you really want.

She mumbled.

Me: please speak up, I don't have all day.

Asenathi: look, I was just fighting for my mom, I

know how much your son means to her.

Me: you know how much my son means to her?
How much does he mean to her?

Asenathi: a whole lot, I know you don't believe that
but that's the truth.

Me: wait, balance me real quick. Are we talking
about the same mother of yours who told me to
either abort or give her umntanam once I give birth?

She coughed....

Me: that cough trick ain't gonna work right now.

Asenathi: she was under pressure, she always has
to pick up the pieces when the men in my family
mess up.

Me: I don't give a fuck.

Asenathi: I know you're probably still upset, maybe
even seeing us upsets you. But ndicela uvumele nje
yena to see u mzukulwana wakhe.

Me: you mom doesn't have a grandson engu mntanam Asenathi. She was part of the one million offering and she didn't stand up for me, engu mama. Umamakho wayicinezela inimba yakhe and watched me being humiliated by the men in your family.

Wathula...

Me: jonga ndiyanizonda kokwenu, I don't know how I'm gonna survive the lifetime yomntanam onegazi lenu seriously and akhonto indonyanyisa ngathi kuyazi ba at some point in life I'll have to allow him to see you guys, to have a relationship with ya'll. That alone irks me.

Asenathi: I'm sorry.

Me: sorry doesn't cut it. And you can't be the one apologizing when all the people who wronged me are chilled as fuck, having the time of their lives proly sipping wines and smoking cigars.

Asenathi: bayafuna uyoxolis a kokwenu, u Nathi akafuni baye.

Me: and ya'll are surprised?

Asenathi: apparently he's cut them off.

Me: good for him.

She went silent for a bit...

Asenathi: uhm... utata uthe mandicele inumber ka tatakho bazoya kokwenu.

Me: ah, so the real reason for this call comes out.

Asenathi: Cassandra please.

Me: bathi bafuna uyothini ekhaya?

Asenathi: they wanna make peace. For the sake of the child.

Me: are you sure they wanna make peace okanye bafuna uyovingcela utata pha?

Asenathi: Haibo Cassandra.

Me: your father's hands are full of blood Asenathi and you know that. Don't act surprised here.

Asenathi: I'm sure he wouldn't do anything stupid though.

Me: just like you were sure he wouldn't do anything stupid to Mpumelelo but then he turned around and killed Mpumelelo's sister.

Wathula...

Me: cela inumber ka tatam pha ku Nkosinathi, unayo.

Asenathi: enkosi.

Me: you're welcome, please don't call me again unless Nkosinathi is dying.

I hung up...

All of a sudden I was sweating kengoku. And then I realized that nooooo man, these people are really

setting me back. They are not good for my health. While I was still thinking, I heard a car hooting outside so I just opened the gate while sitting down, I was expecting Nkosinathi later on not now... But it could also be sis Siki. After a few minutes I heard voices walking towards the door...

"surprise"!!!

Bam!

Aphiwe!

My day got even better, Aphiwe was with two other guys. He came to hug me then took the baby, we made conversation until the entire family came back, bazenzela ukutya. We stayed up until very late but Nkosinathi didn't come through as he had promised he would. I wasn't mad about it, I figured he has got a lot in his plate as well. His family's sudden interest in his son, Tammy, business...

Shame umntanabantu. I eventually went to bed with my son and left the rest of the family bonding downstairs, the flowers made my room look pretty beautiful though. I bathed the little one, got him in his sleeping clothes, fed him and put him to sleep then I went to shower ndabuya ndalala. Mpumelelo sent a text asking if we're sleeping, I video called him...

Dr Sirhonyi: anilali nina.

Me: we just bathed, but ulele yena ngoku.

Dr Sirhonyi: how are you?

I smiled...

Dr Sirhonyi: Thixunathi?

Me: I think I might have anger issues, and I don't know how to keep myself in check.

Dr Sirhonyi: why do you say that? What's going on?

Me: it's these people man... Phew, every time I see baby daddy's family I get triggered.

Dr Sirhonyi: oo Dakumba, makes sense.

Me: ivumba labo nje lilodwa triggers me.

Dr Sirhonyi: identifying and acknowledging a problem is the first step towards healing.

Me: Will it ever end though?

Dr Sirhonyi: forgive them, that's the only way you'll stop getting the triggers, release them so they don't have a hold over you or your life.

Me: are you speaking from experience?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes. I forgave them a long time ago, I'm just playing them at their own game now so that I can have my son's full custody.

Me: Asenathi will never allow that.

Dr Sirhonyi: if she allowed her family to play me dirty, then she'll play a similar role when I play them dirty. Including herself. Trust me on that.

I looked at him...

Me: who are you?

Dr Sirhonyi: hahaha! My name is Mpumelelo, and I love you.

I laughed at his sarcastic answer.

Dr Sirhonyi: uza nini khona eKapa?

Me: in three months time.

Dr Sirhonyi: mh, have you looked for indawo yohlala? Transport?

Me: I have a car, ndizofikela kwa bhuti so I'm sure it won't be difficult looking for indawo yohlala xasendilapho.

Dr Sirhonyi: you have a car?

Me: yes, I was bought a J aguar ngu tata ka Milli as a thank you gift.

Dr Sirhonyi: this niqqa is leveling up so fast now.

Me: If you're not careful uzokwedlula.

He laughed.

Dr Sirhonyi: I told you before that I'd never compete with him kuwe, he'll always have a place in your heart and in your life.

Me: is that the case with Asenathi as well?

Dr Sirhonyi: it could be, but that's not what we are talking about right now.

Me: mmh.

Dr Sirhonyi: you cannot fault Nkosinathi on anything with regards to his son, I can't say the same thing for his sister. Two different cases, same last name.

Me: yhu mnkq!

He laughed.

Me: I really have to release them from my heart,
bandenza umntu o bitter man aba bantu.

Dr Sirhonyi: suvuma, they'll feed off your anger and
use it against you.

I kept quiet...

Dr Sirhonyi: get some sleep, you look tired.

Me: you can tell?

Dr Sirhonyi: yes... I'll call you tomorrow.

Me: ayt, thanks for listening.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm always available, no matter the time.

I smiled.

Me: good night.

Dr Sirhonyi: night.

He winked as he hung up... I put my phone away and looked at my son. He looked like me at first glance yet when you take a good look at him he looked like Onele and Nkosinathi at the same time. He had Nkosinathi's head though, undoubtedly... But everything else was a mixture and combination of everybody. I decided to sleep... Face tomorrow with a new attitude and gratitude to the Provider of life. I had this little human being to be grateful for, to work my ass for, to live for.

I'm as much as I had loved Nkosinathi with all my heart, I couldn't see myself being in a relationship with him anytime soon. It would take a lot of convincing, a lot of counseling and therapy. It would just take a lot man we're too toxic for each other. On the other hand, our families were also too toxic for each other.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_13

#Cassandra

A week later I was woken up ngu Nkosinathi...

I had actually forgotten about him. No, I had shut my mind of his existence since he didn't keep his promise a week ago when he said he'd come back later that day. Siki mus have sent him up, Cindy would never do that. I yawned as I sat up and just looked at him, cleaning my eyes in silence. He decided to come to my house, without calling. Asikavasi, siyanuka...but he decided to come here. Talk about ego.

Nkosinathi: Good morning?

I just nod...

Like, yes my room looked pretty because I had received a hundred more pink and white roses

again this week, courtesy of the Dr Sirhonyi but the bed and surroundings were not so pretty. We had clothes, water bottles, baby titties and nappies lying around (used and unused), I don't have time to pick those up ebusuku mna.

Nkosinathi: you don't seem like you wanna talk, alright. I'm going to J o'burg namhlanje but I wanted to find out what do you guys need before I go.

Me: we're good.

Nkosinathi: nappies? Wipes? Anything?

That "anything" cut deep...it felt like he was begging me to say ikhona into esishota ngayo but there wasn't any. Honestly speaking we lacked nothing. I grabbed my gown and went to my son's closet to look at the quantities we had left of everything then I came back to him.

Me: andiyazi bra what you can buy, as ikadingi nto.

We are still using the things we received kwi baby shower.

Nkosinathi: does he have enough meds, antibiotics and stuff?

Me: yes, he gets his prescription from the doctor.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Me: but enkosi for enquiring.

Nkosinathi: kinda feels weird not being able to buy him anything oko ekhona.

Me: it's not like you're unable to, he just has enough at the moment.

He didn't answer me, I picked Milli up and wiped his neck, his entire face. Good thing he had a clean nappy on,

Me: want to hold him?

Nkosinathi: please.

I gave him his son ndabashiya and went to prepare bath water for Milli because sesivukile mos anyway. I came back and made the bed while they were having their moment. Cleaned up then brought Milli's water to him amvase ngokwakhe...I was hungry.

Nkosinathi: azange ndavas a mntana kemna.

Me: I learned, surely you can also learn.

Nkosinathi: well be a good teacher will ya?

I showed him what to do, then gave him to do the rest of it. Milli seemed to be enjoying every little minute of what was happening.

Me: can I leave you to dress him?

Nkosinathi: haibo uyaphi?

Me: ndilambile bra.

Nkosinathi: I didn't wake you up for uyokutya.

Me: you didn't wake me up to bath my son so early either so chill.

Nkosinathi: you're still not a morning person?

I took the baby's bath and put it at a distance from them then I went downstairs, not a glimpse of my family. I quickly made a sandwich and rooibos tea then walked up those stairs already halfway done. They were almost done getting dressed so I just sat where he had sat before I gave him the duty to prepare his son, and watched them. He was very precise and accurate on every little detail, he enjoyed this...I was enjoying my sandwich. Omnka kwakhe I was still gonna go down and make myself cereal coz Milli was going to eat and go back to sleep.

Nkosinathi: Done.

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: Can I send you money ke to buy anything you will need in my absence?

Me: ubungazothumela imali ye maintenance nge month end kanti?

Nkosinathi: ewe but what if ya'll need stuff ndingeka thumeli mali?

Okay this was a bit too much... I just looked at him.

Nkosinathi: what?

Me: si grand bra.

He didn't answer me...

Me: I get that you want to do something, from the bottom of your heart you want to give us something but for now we are good. When we need something I will call or text you.

Nkosinathi: will you ever need anything?

Me: haibo, what do you mean will we ever need anything?

Nkosinathi: your family is always providing for the child, ndifika sebethenge yonkinto. Sebenze yonkinto, leaving nothing for me to do, kanti why am I even here?

I exhaled...

Lo uzoqala ifight nam ehamba?

Nkosinathi: when you gave birth you people made it clear ya'll don't need me, anidingi kwanto esuku kum and now niyandibonis a. I don't understand ba umntana uzongadingi njani esitya, enxiba, ethambisa. Like , I don't get it.

Me: did you just say you people?

Nkosinathi: that's beside the point.

Me: so you did, uthe singo you people?

Nkosinathi: you're ignoring the matter at hand here.

Me: Yazi yintoni bra, hamba yiya kwa J nJ ,
Ackermans, kwa Pick and Pay or whichever shop
tickles your wallet uyothenga yonke lento ufuna
ukuyithenga for umntanakho I will not stop you.

I got up and wrote down his sizes on a piece of
paper ndamnika...he took the paper.

Nkosinathi: bendingathi khalala.

Me: I gave you what you wanted Nkosinathi now go
ahead and go shopping. I told you we have not
bought anything for umntana yet because people
bought quite a lot at the baby shower, you were
there, you saw everything they bought, but now
you're here twisting that to make yourself feel better
by insulting my family as if my family is preventing
you to provide for your son?? Seriously? Hamba ke
bhuti, go shopping.

He didn't answer me...

I finished my food and breastfed my son in silence... my phone was ringing, Mpumelelo was calling me and for once, I decided I might as well answer his call because kwalo Nkosinathi ndimane ndimsizela brought his own girlfriend to my house when he came to see my son. Even if he told me before-hand, but he brought her so...and anyway, I knew Mpumelelo was gonna ask me about therapy, he had suggested that I attend sessions for my anger towards myself and the people around my life.

Me: Gqirha wase mthola mpilo

He laughed, I smiled.

Dr Sirhonyi: I don't feel like I woke you guys up.

Me: we're up already, Milli has a visitor.

Dr Sirhonyi: mmh, so early?

Me: yeah, daddy is going away so he wants to make sure his son is well provided for in his absence.

Dr Sirhonyi: that's a man right there.

Me: listen to yourself.

He laughed.

Dr Sirhonyi: unjani kodwa?

Me: ndi right man.

Dr Sirhonyi: what have you decided on nge therapy?

Me: I've scheduled an appointment, I will check my emails for the first session and get back to you.

Dr Sirhonyi: you still don't want me to pay for you?

Me: haha! Uyayazi ingxaki yam.

Dr Sirhonyi: I do...it's cool, ndaws'ke ndimane ndikuthengela ipetrol qha ke.

Me: enkosi ntwana.

Dr Sirhonyi: ilele le chap?

Me: uyalala...he just had his morning bath, uyatya ngoku uzolala.

Dr Sirhonyi: alright ke, I'll call you guys later on.

Me: sharp sharp.

We hung up...

Nkosinathi was still sitting there just watching me.

I removed Milli from my breast and burped him, he burped gqiba ndambeka ebhedini ba makalale.

Nkosinathi: so you've moved on?

Me: I thought you were here for Milli.

Nkosinathi: I can't help but notice that you've now become a florist, so many flowers? Roses.

I laughed...okay it wasn't that funny but the jealousy in his voice was.

Nkosinathi: I hope he treats you well.

Me: I hope you treat Tammy well, she really does love you despite you thinking she's got some agenda.

Nkosinathi: are you always gonna bring Tammy up whenever I comment on your love life?

Me: maybe you should not comment on my love life.

Nkosinathi: I see.

I didn't answer him, he got up from where he sat and headed for the door...

Nkosinathi: I really thought when you've finally decided to date you'd give us another chance.

Me: I thought I'd do that too...

Nkosinathi: but your family convinced you otherwise?

Me: I can make my own decisions you know?

Nkosinathi: I know that, but your family is very influential. We both know that.

Me: so you'll stand at the door of my bedroom and undermine my intelligence bra?

Nkosinathi: this has nothing to do with intelligence Cass.

Me: you're assuming I cannot make decisions for myself.

He sighed...

Me: Nkosinathi, I suggested that you move on and you did. You introduced me to your woman, but kwa wena you have a problem when I bring her name up in our conversations? I don't get it. You moved on, why now do you feel some sort of entitlement?

Nkosinathi: you wouldn't understand.

Me: haike mjita.

He opened the door and walked out.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_14

We enjoyed the movies, came out and went on the table mountain ride.

Our weekend, was a bliss. Or so she thought because even after that confession I kept my cool as long as she kept her promise of bringing me my son. Sunday morning I drove her to the airport, she was in a better state than she had come,

Ase: I'm gonna miss you.

Me: you'll be back in two weeks.

Ase: I know but still, I'm gonna miss you anyway.

Me: come here.

I wrapped my arms around her waist and kissed her

lips, she blushed, so I kissed her again and again until I felt her warming up to this PDA.

Me: My sister will be here in two weeks time, so I do hope you will really come through with your promise.

Ase: I will do my best...I just have to find a way to explain this whole situation to Amohelo without making it obvious to the other parties involved.

Me: okay, I'll be patient then.

Ase: thank you.

We kissed again.

Her flight came through, she boarded and went home, I got in my car and went to the beach. I started making phonecalls, I didn't live in Joburg all those years doing nothing, I made friends, I made acquaintances. One of them responded to my calls...

J ared: Sirhonyi kwedini, what's poppin?

Me: I need help, obviously.

J ared: before you need help, how is Cape Town?

I laughed and started telling him about everything...

J ared: that's good to hear, now what do you need from me?

Me: I happen to have a son.

J ared: haibo, how?

Me: haha! Remember my girlfriend?

J ared: the one who was pregnant and lost the baby after giving birth, yes I do.

Me: turns out she lied to me.

J ared: what do you mean she lied to you bra?

Me: the boy did not die, he's alive and kicking.

Jared: Fuck no! NO!

Me: yes, now I want you my man...to do your research on this family for me. I want to know everything about them.

Jared: that's easy.

Me: Jay, I want to know the type businesses they do, where are their businesses, who do they do business with. How many properties do they have, where are these properties, who owns what in shares.

Jared: you meant it when you said you want to know everything.

Me: everything Jay, allas.

He took a deep breath.

Jared: it can be done, I just need time.

Me: can I give you three months?

Jared: that will do...I can work with that.

Me: thank you, your boy is employed now so when you're done, you can send the invoice.

Jared: I don't care about the money bra, let us get your son man.

Me: thank you.

Jared: shit, woman is crazy!

I laughed.

He doesn't know half of it.

After our conversation I headed home, I sat on my couch and replayed the entire weekend. How the hell am I gonna pretend I'm not mad at Asenathi kweziveki zizayo was only known by the gods but all I knew was that I was gonna do everything in my power to get my son back. Everything possible.

ONE WEEK LATER

My sister called to tell me that she's flying out of Dubai, gave me time to pick her up at the Cape Town airport. Another great thing was the new employment, I felt like ndifikile apho bendibhalela khona all these years, like even the environment was awesome, the people...yonkinto was just incredible. At the foretold time I went to pick Nokuthula up, the hug we shared at that airport was an emotionally engulfed one. It had been a while, and with everything that was going on around my life she came at the right time. We loaded her bags in the car and went to grab a bite...after ordering food, I looked at her and just smiled.

Me: mom would be so proud of us.

Thula: bendimcinga izolo sani, like we have grown. Despite everything that was thrown at us, here we are.

Me: successful and still holding hands like we used to in the dusty villages we grew up in.

Thula: andis amkhumbuli umalume.

Me: we'll go up next weekend.

Thula: or we can call him aze ngapha, andithi your son will be coming as well?

Ndathula...

Thula: he is still coming, right?

Me: I hope so.

Thula: you hope so?

Me: yes.

Thula: kanti what did ya'll conclude on?

So I explained the whole situation to her, she seemed to understand but she was pushing me to push Asenathi to find a way. We've been in the dark for too long now we shouldn't really be expected to do any favours for her. When we were done eating we went home, my flat, she freshened up and got in bed...I used that time to speak to Asenathi. Call her

I mean.

Ase: baby?

Me: unjani?

Ase: I'm okay, unjani wena?

Me: ndi sharp, uphi?

Ase: ndikwa bhuti, ndizothatha u Amo.

Me: bavumile?

Ase: yes, ndicele umama amboleke so they said I should come fetch him.

Me: so how are you going to come to us?

Ase: I'll fly from J o'burg straight to Cape Town kaloku, mom has this idea that the three of us need a weekend away from the rest of the family so I told her I need time with Amohelo alone before she can join us so she will fly in Thursday night.

Me: meaning I will have had him for four days?

Ase: that's the best I can do.

Me: it works out fine for me.

Ase: okay ke, I'll call you ngoms o xasifikile apho.

Me: sure.

Ase: did you say US somewhere?

Me: yes, Thula landed today.

Ase: does she know the whole story? Yho she must be hating me right now.

Me: she knows the whole story and she doesn't hate you.

Ase: thula is a very straightforward person, I know she hates me.

Me: are you really going to tell me about my sister?

She sighed

She was panicking.

Me: relax, I've spoken to her and yes she might not understand but she doesn't hate you.

Ase: okay. Thank you babe.

Me: I love you, both of you.

Ase: we love you too, cannot wait to be there.

Me: cannot wait to meet the little guy.

Ase: I haven't told him anything ke, I wont have a chance ke futhi because I'm being watched like a hawk here.

Me: baphi njeng'ba uthetha nam ngoku?

Ase: they went out for lunch, ndithe ndizopakisha mna they can go ahead.

Me: ooh okay. Be strong babe, izodlula yonke lento.

Ase: thank you.

We hung up.

Just then, Jared called me. I've never been that excited about anything, in my life.

Me: Jay Jay?

Jared: niqqa, are you ready for this?

Me: I was born ready.

Jared: okay, first things first, are you still using your old email address?

Me: yes, why?

Jared: okay I sent you some documents there BUT...

Me: here comes the juicy part!

He burst out laughing, I joined him. Have you ever had a conversation with a coloured guy and then they get to that BUT?

Jared: die ou man has bloody hands my niqqa.

Me: how bloody are we talking here?

Jared: check your emails, the niqqa kills whosoever stands on his way, when he needs something he usually gets his way.

Me: oh kay.

Jared: and, the older brother. Phew that one is the worst.

Me: you bet?

Jared: okay so here's the deal...Nkos'ehlanga is his name, the dude got married to his wife after their varsity days but because he was soooo hungry and desperate to make it he got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Wrong crowd being his dad's friends, he snooped around his dad's connections and found the secret to making money.

Me: secret being?

Jared: he had to sacrifice one that mattered most to him, either by killing or providing a part of it.

Me: mh.

Jared: so he couldn't kill it, it being his wife, but instead, he brought forward her womb!

Me: lies Jared, lies man!

Jared: read those fucken documents that emailed to you, watched those videos I sent you.

Me: fuck! So they cannot have children?

Jared: and she doesn't know it's his fault, she was made to believe that she has cervical cancer or something close to that. That's how they removed the womb and sacrificed it. She cannot bare him children.

Me: that's why they took my son, for her to raise as her own. Fucken bastards!

Jared: take your time, go through all that I sent you, I still have a lot more digging to do.

Me: dude, you're working overtime here! I appreciate it.

Jared: anything for a brother man, anything.

We hung up.

Me: I really underestimated these fools.

I really did.

But first things first, preparations on meeting my

son for the very first time.

[06/26, 15:04] : #Mpumelelo_15

#Asanda

I knew I was being a hypocrite for shooting Cassandra and not Sithembele at that safe house but the pain of my younger sister being more attractive and more wanted than I ever was, by the same man I had given my all since my varsity days was the worst feeling ever. I had noticed a few times when Cass was visiting, S'thembele would go an extra mile to make sure she's comfortable, he was her favorite uncle even because he never hid his love for her. He never hid love for all my siblings man, he loved Onele because she was wild and talkative about almost anything, she challenged him on the most controversial topics whenever they visited us. He Cindy because of her "no nonsense" character, he once said she reminded him of his late mother. He loved Siki for being the sound one amongst all of us, like u Siki was just the deputy

parent and he loved that about her. Then there was Cassandra whom we all assumed was an introvert because she was just best friends with her phone, ahleke xakuncokolwa or umve ethetha looonto inye that will leave us mind blown. He loved that she was not of many words but when she spoke, as young as she was she would speak words that were expected from an older person. That would be my breakdown of his love for my siblings, the sisters ke... Unbeknownst Cassandra was his fantasy as well. I would have never imagined.

I remember this one time I didn't tell him that she'd be visiting, we had enough of everything at home. The fridges were full, like, everything was in order. I think it was the second to the last time they visited if not the last time. He had gone to work, Cassandra and Onele arrived while he was at work obviously I picked them up from the airport. Aphiwe was at a gold tournament he was to return in three days after their arrival, the younger kids were at a friend's place for a sleepover... I entertained these two, they

got comfortable and then I went about my errands then later came back to prepare supper. My husband came back from work, walked inside the house while Onele and Cass were playing in the pool, it was summer so obviously some jights are hotter than others. Apparently while he was taking a shower he heard voices and looked out wababona, he came down engathi uyatsha...

S'thembele: As anda?

Me: baby?

S'thembele: who's at the pool?

Me: oh I forgot to tell you, Onele and Cass are here.

He looked at me without a response...

Me: I was gonna tell you after your shower.

S'thembele: you had the whole day to tell me, and you didn't.

Me: oh babe, it slipped my mind. And I didn't think you'd mind.

He sighed... Looking uncomfortable.

S'thembele: I don't mind, I just wish you would have told me before.

Me: I'm sorry, now go get dressed. Dinner will be done in a few.

He hissed and walked back to our bedroom, for some reason his behavior or rather his reaction raised red flags but I brushed it off. I dished up and went to call these two to come eat bathi bayeza so I left them. My husband joined me, they walked in and as usual they went to hug him (still dressed in swimwear... Wet swimwear)

S'thembele: so anisats ho xanisiza ngoku s bari?

Onele: we wanted to surprise you kaloku.

They all laughed...

Me: ambano tshintsha nizotya.

Cass: sizophinda siyoquba yazi sisi.

Onele: well just grab gowns yabo?

Then they ran up to their room, he watched them until they disappeared. I cleared my throat, he returned his attention back to me.

S'thembele: they'll never change.

Me: kuzoba worse when Aphiwe comes back.

S'thembele: Baphi oo Sinawo?

Me: haike baby.

He looked at me confused. Then a light bulb came on, he laughed.

S'thembele: I'm sorry I forgot about their sleepover.

Me: Yho hay namhlanje are you sure you had a good day at work?

S'thembele: hau babe, it just slipped my mind come on.

Me: you didn't even kiss me oko ungenile, did that also slip your mind?

He laughed, got up from his seat to come and kiss me. These came down exactly that moment

Onele: mmmh, maybe we should have stayed in the pool. Don't you think?

Cass: we might as well go back in there.

S'thembele: don't be silly, come join us.

They giggled and joined us.

Me: ya'll better pray for a husband like this one.

Cass: no offense Ta Sthera but andimfuni mna umyeni onjengawe shame.

S'thembele: Haibo nditheni mna?

Me: Hayike Thix'unathi, utheni umyenam?

Cass: he doesn't give you room to grow, to hustle, to stand on your own two feet.

Me: huh?

Cass: look around sisi, you have everything you want and need, like you don't lack anything and he makes sure of that. You drive any car you want, go to the best vacations around the world and all you have to do is be his wife.

Onele: but what's wrong with that?

I stole a look at my husband, he was watching these two, studying each and every word that came out of their lips. His eyes had a glow that I had not seen before, he was mesmerized by this conversation...

Cass: nothing wrong guys but mna andimfuni umyeni onjengo Ta Sthera. I also want to hustle and bring in something, noba ndizithengele ipozzie encinci andiyeke ndiy' transform'e ndiyakhe kancinci kancinci until it becomes a mansion like this house.

S'thembele: we have a little Ms Independent here.

Okay now I was uncomfortable, he was suddenly complimenting this?

Me: I do bring in something into this marriage as well, it's not like I'm just a housewife waiting for u baby enze yonkinto.

Onele: even if you were just doing exactly that, akho

kwanto irongo sisi. Not everyone one of us was built to work hard, we do need a Lil someone to do the extra work for us.

Me: exactly.

Cass: guys, I said mna andimfuni umyeni ofana nobhuti, I didn't say there was anything wrong with what he's doing or how yena no sisi choose to provide for their household.

S'thembele: ndiyakuva mna Cass bayeke aba, and ndikuva kakuhle.

Cass: awukho offended?

S'thembele: why would I be when you're talking so much sense?

Onele: hooo Bawo, sisi angakumos heli umendo lo.

Me: soze.

S'thembele: haha uske ubenje kewena Onie, relax man. I just like how your sister's mind operates.

I tried to change the subject so that we can all focus

on food, they left us when they were done. They returned to the pool, I cleaned up, my husband offered to wash the plates so I let him.

Me: do you agree with her?

S'thembele: agree with who? On what?

Me: Cass... Everything she said today.

S'thembele: I like her independency if that's what you're asking.

Me: so I'm not independent enough?

S'thembele: how did we get to comparing you with her?

Me: I'm your wife, but you like how my sister's mind operates.

S'thembele: wait, so I'm supposed to be on your side? I can't have an opinion now?

Me: that's not what I said, but you agreeing with her translates differently to me.

S'thembele: indulge me.

We both stopped whatever we were doing and looked at each other.

Me: maybe you feel like I don't bring in enough or I don't have enough to offer or I'm just a trophy housewife waiting for handouts to do anything and everything in this house.... And here comes my Lil sister with her independency and you're suddenly smitten.

He burst out laughing....

Me: what's so funny?

S'thembele: you and jealousy. You're jealous, aren't you?

I looked at him without moving or answering him.

S'thembele: baby, I married you not your sister. Isn't that enough?

Me: but still...

S'thembele: Cass is young, she'll outgrow that mindset when she realizes that life isn't what she thought it would be.

Me: but?

S'thembele: but I'm still fascinated by her mindset. I won't lie about that, I love the fact that she's not shy to state her case. She's confident.

I sighed...

S'thembele: I didn't say you're not confident baby, I was just pointing out the obvious on your sister.

Me: I know... Can you finish up? I'll wait in bed.

S'thembele: wait in a sexy number will ya?

Me: haha! Whatever.

S'thembele: I'm serious.

I didn't answer him.

I got to my room and took out my certificates, degrees... Maybe if I started following my dream I wouldn't be an example in future conversations. I heard these two laughing outside, I exhaled and packed my documents back into their hiding place then I went to shower. I took my time in there trying to replay everything that was said around the dinner table, it was all innocent though. There really was nothing to analyze. Cassandra was just being her usual self, so was Onele but I was the problem here because I didn't wanna admit that I had allowed a man to work for me. Everything Cass said was true, I had everything I ever wanted and I wasn't gonna feel any apologetic about it.... I deserved every little bit of it.

[06/26, 15:05] : #Mpumelelo_16

#Cassandra

Nkosinathi returned with countless shopping bags, and his sister. He called for the gate, I was in the kitchen warming Milli's water mixture even though I was trying to put him to sleep but I needed that water to be warm so that ancance wona and not my breastmilk. I opened the gate, they walked up to my door together in silence, Milli was on my back.

Nkosinathi: hey.

Me: hi.

He kissed Milli and walked past.

Asenathi walked in and looked at me, not knowing whether to follow his brother or stand there. I turned around and rinsed my hands in silence...

Asenathi: molweni Cass.

Me: hi.

Asenathi: uhm, u Nathi ebecele ndiyomthengisa ezizinto zomntana. I hope you don't mind.

I didn't answer her, she knows I mind. She damn well knows I do, her brother came to her and helped her with the rest of the bags so that was her chance to follow him to the lounge. Where the heck was my family kanti? Abantu bavele bamshiye njee umntu bangatsho babayephi? I grabbed a Yogi Sip from the fridge then joined these two e lounge with my son on my back.

Nkosinathi: we might have gone overboard a bit.

I nod looking at everything... They had gone waaaaaaaaay overboard but I wasn't gonna say that, upset him again? Nope. Uyoske ave xakuthwe siphise ngazo qha because zizobancinci engazinxibanga nakakhulu umntana ezampahla okanye ke they remembered to buy bigger sizes. Hopefully.

Nkosinathi: you're not gonna take them out?

I went for one bag and viewed... I knew he'd go for quality over anything, its hamba lakwa Dakumba.

Me: zintle. (they are beautiful)

Nkosinathi: you're not just saying that?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: u sure you like them?

Me: andikoyiki kaloku tatakhe, bendizots ho if I didn't.
(I'm not afraid of you, I was gonna tell you if I didn't like them)

Nkosinathi: haha, okay.

I packed them back into the bag...

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: sure, ndcela umothule. (can you please

take him down)

Me: ndizama ukumlalis a funeka ndivas e impahla yakhe. (I'm tryna put him to sleep, I need to do his laundry)

Nkosinathi: you'll be using the machine? I can do that for you.

Me: no, impahla zomtana azivaswa ngo machine zivaswa ngesandla. (His clothes are washed by hand)

He looked confused.

I didn't feel like explaining.

Asenathi was making me sick by just sitting there, I had not forgotten our last encounter at the hospital. One of us had to apologize to the other, but it seemed like we both were not going to, and ke I was just erasing them from my head... Gradually.

Nkosinathi: so you mean to tell me you've been doing his laundry by hand all this time?

Me: ewe tatakhe, and it's no big deal.

Nkosinathi: maybe you should look into hiring a helper.

Me: I have only three months here then I'll be moving, a helper will not be necessary. But thank you for thinking of that.

Nkosinathi: and who's going to be helping you in these three months?

Me: we take turns, my sisters and I.

He was about to say something...

Me: please... We're coping, and I don't mind doing all of this. I actually enjoy it.

Nkosinathi: oh okay.

Me: thanks... I didn't even offer ya'll a drink. Nifuna ntoni? Juice or coffee?

Nkosinathi: we won't be staying for long, it's okay.

Me: sure.

Then we sat in that awkward silence. My phone rang at that perfect moment and it was charging right beside him

Me: please pass me that.

He did, didn't even check the screen as I thought he would. It was my dad...

Me: tatam.

Dad: Ntombi yam, nihleli njani no mzukulwana wam?
(how are you, and my grandchild doing?)

I smiled and walked away from the Dakumba's.

Me: si right tata, uyakhula no mzukulwana wakho.

(we are okay dad, he's also growing)

Dad: you should send me pictures kaloku

Thix'unathi, okanye ufuna ndize kwelo Bhayi? (or do you want me to come to Port Elizabeth?)

I laughed....

Me: I'll send you pictures tata, don't worry.

Dad: baphi oo sisi bakho? (where are your sisters?)

Me: I don't know, we woke up sihleli sodwa apha.

Dad: I thought Aphiwe is visiting you?

Me: he is.

Dad: oh Bawo umntana ka Asanda nge mischief.

I laughed...

Me: I'm quite sure oo sisi are at work, he came with friends so inoba usababonisa iBhayi tata.

Dad: please call and find out where he is.

Me: will do, uphi umama? (where's mom?)

Dad: she's on her way over there.

Me: uza apha? (is she coming here?)

Dad: ewe. (yes)

Me: is she driving?

Dad: yes, why do you sound anxious?

Me: utata ka Milli ulapha. (Milli's dad is here)

Dad: hahaha andingeni ndawo. (that's none of my business)

Me: Haibo tata awungcole. (dad, you're so evil though)

He just laughed at me...

Me: dad are you serious?

Dad: I am serious.

Me: mom doesn't like driving, especially not alone a long distance.

Dad: she's with Asanda and her kids.

I sighed....

Dad: you're not excited.

Me: no I'm not, uyaphi u sisi? (where is she going?)

Dad: she's coming to see umtshanakhe uMilli.

Me: gosh!

Dad: she's still your sister, you can't love Aphiwe and still hate his mother.

Me: you meant hate both his parents? I think I can yazi tata.

Dad: Thixunathi.

I sighed...

Dad: I love you, you know that but I don't like this animosity between you guys. I hope it can be resolved some day.

Me: I forgave her a long time ago tata as long as she will stay far away from me.

Dad: forgiveness and love have no condition.

Me: tata wandidubula usisi, instead of shooting that monster of a husband she chose to shoot me. Her own sister and now I must act cozy cozy with her?

Dad: I get that mntanam, but always remember that we are stronger together as a unit.

I didn't answer him...

Dad: I will not put you under any pressure, and don't allow anyone else to put you under pressure too. Take your time.

Me: enkosi tata. (thank you dad)

Dad: now smile.

I murmured

Dad: Port Elizabeth is right next door, you do know that. Right?

I laughed

Me: I'm smiling kaloku Tamkhulu.

Dad: good, now send those pictures.

Me: okay xhego lam

Dad: and don't tell your mother I told you bayeza, they wanted to surprise you.

Me: haha I'll act surprised, no problem.

He laughed as we hung up. Nkosinathi walked up to where I was standing, I was about to call Aphiwe

Nkosinathi: we have to go.

Me: oh okay, uhambe kakuhle. (travel safe)

He peeped behind me so I turned bajongane nonyanakhe. He planted soft kisses on him, until Milli moved uncomfortably on my back

Me: okay you can stop now.

Nkosinathi: I'm gonna miss him.

Me: are you sure you're just going to Joburg?

He laughed

Nkosinathi: I know I can fly in whenever I miss him too much.

Me: exactly.

Nkosinathi: okay fine, bye bye'ini ke.

Me: bye bye.

He wanted to kiss me I took two steps backwards and looked at him quizzically.

Me: don't.

Nkosinathi: please.

Me: no.

He cleared his throat.

Me: xelela u dadwenu ndiyahamba. (tell your sister you're leaving)

Nkosinathi: Ase masambe. (Ase let's go)

She quickly got up and came to the door, I was already holding it for them. He had already walked to the car...

Asenathi: Cass.

Me: bye.

Asenathi: can I come see him before you leave for Cape Town?

Me: I thought you asked for my parents numbers from your brother?

Asenathi: yes I did, but dad wanted them. Not me.

Me: make use of them, I only carried the child for 9 months, he's not necessarily mine.

She swallowed...

Asenathi: so I must ask your folks permission to see him?

Me: yes, and good luck with that.

Asenathi: so you're sending me to them knowing fully well that they won't allow me to see him?

Me: you don't deserve any special treatment here
Asenathi, I told your brother anyone from your family who wants to see Million must go to my

parents. That includes you.

Asenathi: that name doesn't sound right.

Me: tell him when he's 10 years old we gave him that name.

Asenathi: you need to heal Cassandra.

Me: the day ya'll stop pestering me ngo mntanam is the day I'll get my total healing.

Asenathi: I don't mean to fight with you but you're very bitter girl, it's not good for the child. It's not good for you even.

I smiled at her...

I could feel my chest closing in.

Asenathi: anger and bitterness are not healthy Cassandra, they are not good for you. Heal sisi.

Me: baby, you sleeping with your child's father behind your husband's back is not good for you. You confusing your child with three fathers in his

life is not good for your child. You sitting with your degree at that Tshisanyama is not good for you, you enjoying being a fat trophy housewife to a hardworking man is not good for you. You enrolling your son, whom you abandoned at a young age, at a boarding school in another province instead of a school near you where you can show and give him love is not good for your son. Should I continue?

She didn't move, didn't say a word. Her eyes were glowing, tearing up.

Me: you spending your husband's money on trips to see Mpumelelo in Cape Town instead of investing that money for your son is not good for both of ya'll, you not telling your husband the truth about your supposed infertility is not good for you. You hating your father but pretending to love him so that you don't lose out on the perks of being his daughter is not good for you. You telling your child about hating your brother and his wife is not good for your child

because those are the only parents he knows. You and Mpumelelo thinking money can buy wasted time, money can buy love, money can change lies to become your truth is not good for you. You thinking Mpumelelo loves you, is not good for you. You thinking you could have a future with him worries me kengawe... You need mental evaluation babes. Like you need time off the drugs you're feeding yourself when nobody is watching ... Hahaha hay fokof khaw'hambe ekhaya man. Acting perfect when you are a walking closet crawling with rotten skeletons.

She was now crying, hysterically.

Me: your brother is waiting for you babe, tell him to drive safe.

I turned and walked inside locking the doors and switching my phone incase Nkosinathi starts calling and asking what I said to his sister. I opened

the gate and waited for him to drive out, he didn't. The gate closed so I opened it again, and again... Up to three times then I saw his car driving out.

[06/26, 15:05] : #Mpumelelo_17

#Asanda

I remember when we had visited his family, my inlaws, a year later.

S'thembele brought up this conversation while we were with three of his brothers and their wives. I actually didn't mind because all his brothers' wives were housewives, we were the women who let men lead, who allowed men their rightful positions in the house as the heads and leaders of the family so him bringing it up was not a problem at all. But it made me wonder..many times, it made me wonder...

S'thembele: Heh bafo, kukhe kwafika oo sbari pha endlini...

He went on and on, his brother who is older than him chipped in.

Themba: I like how her mind works bafo, but she is young. She doesn't know a damn thing.

Me: exactly what I said.

Sisanda (themba's wife): was your sister suggesting that you're useless to your husband?

Me: huh?

Sisanda: if she thinks that you're not independent, like you're just a housewife waiting for your husband to do everything than that's what she was saying.

S'thembele: women with blowing things out of proportion!

Viwe(younger brother): I'd like to meet her someday, she sounds interesting.

Me: oh Viwe ngumntana u Cassandra!

Siviwe (older than Viwe): hahaha why does Viwe wanting to meet her make you emphasize on her age?

Sisipho (Viwe's Wife): uyamazi ngorhaqaza la Viwe.

Viwe: baby?

Sisipho: don'ts start acting innocent, you know yourself.

We all laughed at him.

Well we knew very well that our husbands were not as faithful as we would wish them to be, but that didn't mean they loved us any less. My needs were taken care off, my kids were in good schools getting good grades, we had more than enough...so why would I now cry over a man who wants to share a piece of his meat with another woman?

I'm the kind of person who will know when my husband is cheating, I will know when he is thinking of cheating, I know him very well because he is

such an open book. After he brought this conversation up with his brothers, I got bothered a little because it showed that he had been thinking about it. When we went to bed that night I decided to ask him out about it...

He was busy on his laptop as usual and I was already in bed...

Me: baby?

S'thembele: mh?

Me: khandikhangeli se umsebenzi.

He stopped working and looked at me.

S'thembele: huh?

Me: please help me look for a job. Employment.

S'thembele: since when do you work?

Me: well, I think it's time I put my degree into practice.

He looked at me for a long minute before answering...

S'thembele: do you really wanna work or is it because of that conversation we had with the guys earlier?

Me: maybe both.

S'thembele: babe, you haven't worked in like, the past 15 years. Come on now.

Me: so you recon I wouldn't know what to do?

S'thembele: that's not what I meant, but look, I like things the way they are right now.

Me: oh, so you like me dependent on you?

He put his laptop down and came to lay down next to me, kissing my nose and smelling so good .

S'thembele: you're not dependent on me, you have the power to do anything you want to do whenever you want to do it and you know that. Don't let this put you under pressure.

Me: this conversation was had a year ago, for you to bring it up again, it means for some reason it stuck with you.

S'thembele: for some reason I love you, for some reason I don't mind doing all the hardwork for you, for some reason I wouldn't mind getting a piece of that ass...right now!

With that he grabbed the covers and threw them across the room. He came onto me and kissed the lights out of my brains, biting my lips, leaving marks on my neck, down my arms and all over my boobs. He suckled on my boobs for a while before going down on me and he spent his time down there making sure I empty myself all over his mouth and when he had fed his ego, he knelt between my legs

and let himself in. I felt my insides grasping his girth... He felt that too, the smirk on his face was proof enough.

We danced to the same tune until I passed out, when I woke up after midnight he was fast asleep right next to me. I kissed him on the lips, his hand found my ass and he grabbed it while sleeping, I giggled and cuddled up on him until dawn.

[06/26, 15:05] : #Mpumelelo_18

#Cassandra

I sat on the couch and just looked at Milli, my eyes started watering. I felt empty inside, like, I felt empty. I felt as though my insides were like an audition hall with just the mic stand in the center, the mic stand in this situation being my heart. I felt empty and lonely and for some reason the lashout I gave to Asenathi just made the damage worse.

I let my tears flow in silence, my chest had this painful thing of closing up as if I wasn't getting enough oxygen or my bones were closing in on each other. I stood up and opened a window, stood by it trying to normalize my breathing and when I felt a bit calm I sat down. Milli started crying, I got up from my couch and went over to him, gave him his dummie but he didn't want it, gave him my breast but he also didn't want that so I just looked at him for a few seconds before picking him up and shushing him on my chest. Instead of calming down he just escalated his volume and cried louder, I walked around the room, eventually went to the door and opened it for fresh air because the window didn't seem to be working for him the way it had worked for me. I could tell he was heating up so I quickly went for his meds and gave him as per prescription. Now I had to switch my phone back on, immediately as I did, messages from Nkosinathi flooded in. At first there were missed calls followed by messages where he was asking what I said to Asenathi, then there were messages where he asked where I got all that I had said to her, then the

last lot were just insults from him, not in writing anymore but voicenotes which I couldn't listen to for long because I had a crying baby who needed my attention more than his angry father. I called my sister...

Siki: hello?

Me: Haibo niphi bethuna?

Siki: hello I'm at work, ukhalelani umntana?

Me: I don't know. Uphi usisi yena?

Siki: wait, you don't know why the child is crying?

Me: he doesn't want to eat sisi, so no I don't know why he's crying.

Siki: did you change his nappy?

I didn't.

So I didn't respond.

Siki: or bath him again, he'll calm down after that. If he doesn't calm down call me again ndizobuya.

Me: okay, thanks sis. But uphi u sisi?

Siki: she must also be at work, or she went out with Aphiwe. I don't know. I left early.

Me: Mnk okay.

Siki: sure.

I hung up and put the crying Milli on my back, just as I put the phone down I received a message from Asenathi but I only opened it as I made way to fetch Milli's bath kit and fresh clothes:

"You don't know how much my past hurts me, but you have found joy in mocking me ngayo. I don't wish any woman's daughter to go through what I went through, not even you.

All I was doing was looking out for my brother, I know how painful it is not having access to your child, not seeing him when you want to, not being

there when he takes his first steps or utters his first words. I've been there, no matter how much you know my story you can never tell it like I would and you can never retell it to me.

If Mpumelelo is building a relationship with you by gossiping about my past then I feel sorry for the both of you, ya'll have a long way to go. As a matter of fact, if my name still finds its way into your conversations then he must deal with his feelings because I've dealt with my own. Truth is, I might still love him but after what happened today I've decided to stay committed to my husband at least I know he really loves me, he's not trying to make anyone jealous or get back at anyone using my feelings in that process. You two deserve each other.

Again, whatever you do, go seek help. You need help, I won't stop saying that. You need help Cassandra. If you don't want to do it for yourself then do it for your son, you don't want him growing up to be bitter because you are bitter. A good parent shows the child indlela and then allows the child to

decide which way to go. You don't choose for your child, no matter how much you hate my family, he is at the end of day part of my family. I know you really hate me but your son shares the same blood with me, he shares the same blood with my father your arch enemy.

For your information, I don't hate my father I just hate his control and greed and what I tell my husband including my so called infertility is none of your business. Please do me a favor and tell Mpumelelo to move on, if your pussy has the capability to replace mine then congratulations to him, and good riddance for my brother. He's better off without you. "

I put the phone down and bathed my child, he played in the water. I didn't lack an answer for Asenathi but my child was more important right now. His father called, I ignored him and he called four more times but I just continued doing what I was doing nomntanam and when I was done I dressed him warmly, fed him his breastmilk and

then we just cuddled until he fell asleep. I left him on the bed and cleared up my room, washed all his clothes that were soiled then made myself food. I was impatiently waiting on mom I couldn't call her because this visit was meant to be a surprise so I just lay there in silence and waited. Mpumelelo called, I ignored his call, Nkosinathi called again I just cut his call and he sent messages again. A whole lot of them and I wasn't going to cause a headache upon myself ngaye tu so I just ignored his messages, didn't even open one.

I decided to call Aphiwe... I did promise dad I'd do that. His phone rang for a while before he answered...

Aphiwe: hello Makazi?

Me: uphi?

Aphiwe: I'm at the beachfront, what's up? Lil niqqa misses me already?

Me: you don't report xa uhamba mvanje?

Aphiwe: you guys were fast asleep, and besides, ndimnke ngemoto ka makaz' Cindy so she knows where I'm at.

Me: Mnk.

Aphiwe: ndizobuya xa ephuma espan, what should we bring you?

Me: red wine and cigars.

Aphiwe: whoah whoah hold it, you must be having a really shitty day there.

Me: and lots of chocolate.

Aphiwe: I saw a chocolate box next to your bed though.

Me: oh that, forgot about it.

Aphiwe: are you serious about the wine?

Me: very serious.

Aphiwe: so the Lil niqqa will drink some winery milk?
Yhu Makazi uzobanjwa!

I laughed and hung up.

This was his way of telling me he won't bring me wine. I looked at Milli...he was sleeping so peacefully.

Me: I don't know how I'm gonna cope without you for the next three to six months mntanam. You seem to be my only sanity.

I got up and grabbed that chocolate box ndayingunqutha while wathhing my son sleeping. Mpumelelo sent a text:

"Mama ka Milli ... I miss you, tried calling you and I guess you're either sleeping or attending to the little guy. Please hit me up when you can"

I put the phone away and just lay there... My phone

rang, I thought it's Mpumelelo so I just ignored it. It rang again... I picked it up and my my heart jumped, it was my brother...

Me: Ta Steve?

Steve: mamncane, ninjani?

Me: haha haike bhuti since when am I mamncane ngoku ?

Steve: mamncane, young mother. Suba slow mfondini yintoni ngoku?

I just laughed.

Steve: where's our son?

Me: he's sleeping right next to me.

Steve: khamvuse.

Me: yhu bhuti us andolala andicingi tu.

He laughed at me.

Steve: I'm on my way coming over, kushota ntoni endlini?

Me: Yho andiyazi bhuti... J ust bring braaied meat and red wine for now you'll see enye nenye when you get here.

Steve: what's your business with red wine kengoku?

Me: ask no questions, here no lies.

Steve: andizokuphathela tywala Thixunathi.

Me: awus abhori bhuti Yho utheni?

Steve: ndikukhabe kemnake zunxanelwe apha kum.

Me: wond'ba uzoqala ngaphi ukhaba u mamncane sani.

Steve: heh Thixunathi ndaw'kukhaba.

I laughed, he said "tshi" and hung up on me. I just laughed at my blank screen, he was in a good mood

and he probably knew his mother is also coming hence he was asking kushota ntoni. Umama is priority to all of us, all we ever want is to make her comfortable whether she's at home or not so this house was not gonna be any different.

[06/26, 15:05] : #Mpumelelo_19

I could tell Amohelo was taken ngu Dabawo wakhe, he seemed more comfortable around her than around me and I wasn't offended by that, rather I was glad because at least he was warming up to the idea of having another family besides the one he was familiar with.

Ase: you seem to be deep in thought.

Me: I missed out, on a lot of the important stages of his life.

Ase: I know, but he's here now.

Me: I'm grateful for that but it doesn't take away anything.

She didn't answer...

Me: to say I'm angry at you and your family is an understatement.

She lifted her head and looked at me...

Me: you said you loved me Asenathi, is this what you do to people you love?

Ase: baby, I had no choice.

Me: you always have a choice bra, and you made yours. Just that it wasn't in my favour.

She moved from where she sat and joined me...

Now teary.

Ase: please find it in your heart to forgive me, I'm sorry Mpumi. I really wish I had a voice back then

and a backbone but the possibility of my future being snatched away from me hindered my eyesight to anything but agree to what was being proposed to me. I'm sorry I implicated you in that process... I really wish there was another way but...

Then she broke down... I guess I had really hardened my heart against her because as she wept, I just felt irritated and I thanked the heavens when my phone rang so I just got up and walked away from her, went to the car because it was one of those conversations.

Me: hello?

Leroy: Mfethu.

Me: what's up buddy?

Leroy: I have new info.

I breathed...

Leroy: are you ready?

Me: yeah sure, bring it on.

Leroy: obviously I've emailed you the hard copies but listen to this... Mr Dakumba is still married to Nkos'ehlanga's mother whom he sent to live in another country and faked her death and burial in order to remarry his current wife.

Me: huh?

Leroy laughed at me.

Me: no man, this shit makes no sense.

Leroy: apparently she had inheritance.

Me: the new wife or the old wife?

Leroy: the new wife, she was a king's daughters daughter but out of wedlock. Apparently the king of their village was really fond of his daughter that he lawfully adopted his granddaughter as his own,

gave a portion of his inheritance to her and a portion was divided amongst his biological children.

Me: so Asenathi is of the royal lineage.

Leroy: yes.

Me: but wait, what happened to the first wife? Like, is she still alive?

Leroy: she is still alive, has an entire family in Senegal and your father inlaw still visits her.

Me: uyaXoka kwedini.

Leroy: jy dink jy weet daai mense ek se vir jou. (I'm telling you, you think you know these people)

Me: send me proof of what you're saying.

Leroy: will do that just now... How's the process of meeting your son coming together?

Me: they are here... Him and his mother.

Leroy: so she wasn't joking?

Me: no she wasn't, but I want to do DNA tests but I don't want to offend them.

Leroy: you don't believe he's yours?

Me: he's mine. I'm hundred percent sure of that but I feel like I need a backup for the future. Her family won't just allow me to take him, it's gonna be a war so I need everything to fight with. Every little bit.

Leroy: ek hoor jou... Nee moenie worry nie, ek sal alles doen on my side as well to make seker dat jy het al dit jy genoedig. (I hear you... No don't worry, I'll do everything on my side to make sure that you have everything you need)

Me: Dankie broer(thank you brother)

Leroy: don't mention it. Good luck buddy.

Me: Thanks boy.

I waited for about ten to fifteen minutes before his email came through. This man had an entire family in Senegal † ♀ a wife, two daughters and son. All in Senegal, and according to what was in front of me it seemed like he visited them as often as possible, maybe he would skip about three months

then go spend two to three weeks with them then come back home. Obviously kwakhe waziwa ephuma ne business when he visits his other family.

He got his capital to start his businesses from Asenathi's mother, she gave him money, she financed his businesses from the beginning and that's why he married her. He didn't love her per se but he saw a way of making his livelihood better and he sacrificed his own family (the one in Senegal) for money, which in turn resulted in him building another family here with the woman he thought he was just using for money.

Me: this man is sick!

After a few minutes I got out of my car and walked back to the flat...

Thula: hay uvelaphi?

Me: I needed some air.

I went to my room, passing Ase and her son on the couch. Nokuthula followed me.

Thula: you okay?

I turned and looked at her, kinda shocked because I didn't hear her footsteps behind me.

Thula: What's going on?

Me: uhm, I think I'm just overwhelmed man. But I'll be fine, I just need a moment.

Thula: are you having second thoughts?

Me: about?

Thula: everything.

Me: no no, I'm good.

Thula: Asenathi is concerned about you. She thinks you hate her.

Me: I do but I'm sure I can work on that.

Thula: did you tell her that?

I sighed and sat down on the edge of my bed.

Me: I can't even look her in the eye.

Thula: you asked her to bring your son here, what were you expecting?

Me: I don't know. For some reason I thought she was bluffing but now that the reality is as real as they come it's hard to process everything in one moment.

Thula: I get that, but you need to get your act together or she will walk out of that door and out of your life with your son and you'll never see him again.

I didn't answer her...

Thula: I'm not saying fall inlove with her again but dude, this is your only chance to work your magic on her so that you keep being in your son's life. I know you're hurting but you gotta do whatever it takes, momma raised no cowards boy. Momma raised no weaklings.

Then she walked out... I lay down on my back thinking. In a few minutes with my eyes closed, I heard someone walking into the room so I opened my eyes and saw Amo, I sat up

Me: hey.

Amo: bhuti... Can we talk?

Me: sure. What's up?

He sat next to me.

Amo: why was Ase crying?

Me: uhm I don't know. Did you ask her?

Amo: I did, but I know she's lying to me.

Me: she is?

Amo: what did you say to her?

I breathed.

Momma's boy lentwana.

Amo: we left you with her but when we came back you were in your car and she was crying. What happened?

Me: you want the truth?

He nod.

Me: okay here's the truth. I was telling your mother u Asenathi that I'm mad at her for keeping you away from me all these years.

Amo: that's it?

Me: practically yes, she was crying because she's also hurting. Keeping you away from me was nit her decision, yes she had a choice but the final decision was not hers to make.

Amo: ooh okay.

Me: I'm sorry if seeing her cry hurt your feelings.

He smiled.

Amo: don't worry about me bhuti I'm a man, I don't easily get hurt.

I laughed.

He exhumed so much confidence.

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_20

#Cassandra

My mom and brother finally arrived.

Oh and mama ka Aphiwe and his younger siblings also arrived. After the formalities, I gave umama her grandsons and everything I knew they might need then I told them I'd take a nap. I went to my room, drank my meds and got under the covers.

Nkosinathi called again and I just looked at the phone for a few minutes before it stopped ringing and then he called again so I answered.

Me: hello.

Nkosinathi: why have you been ignoring my calls?
Cassandra can you just stop being dramatic and selfish for once nje in your life and think of other people?

I didn't answer him.

Not that I didn't have an answer but I was experiencing an excruciating pain in the center of my head or brain... I don't know. So I was listening

to it more than listening to him.

Nkosinathi: kunini ndikufounela? Why were you ignoring my calls and mizing my texts?

I didn't answer him and that made him worse.

Nkosinathi: fuck Cassandra hay fokof mani. Kanti what's wrong with you? Did you really pick up this call just to ignore me undiyeke ndibesisibhanxa ndithethe ndedwa?

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba?

Nkosinathi: what?!

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba?

He sighed...

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: how can I help you?

Nkosinathi: are you for real?

I didn't answer him.

He breathed. Again.

Nkosinathi: Cass... What's going on?

Me: where?

Nkosinathi: with you? You sound weak, tired.

Me: is that why you called?

Nkosinathi: that's not why I called obviously but it can wait, are you okay?

Me: I'm fine. How can I help you?

Nkosinathi: babe... I'm sorry.

Me: Nkosinathi, how can I help you?

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: you're not even gonna ask for what?

Me: I know you're gonna tell me.

Nkosinathi: the messages, I was angry, upset... But I totally understand where you're coming from and I'm really sorry. I didn't mean anything I said there.

Me: I haven't read them.

Nkosinathi: you don't have to... Just delete them.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: can I come see you?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: baby please.

Me: andingo baby wakho.

Nkosinathi: you know what I mean.

Me: aren't you supposed to be in Joburg?

Nkosinathi: I didn't go, I sent Khanya and Khaya on my behalf.

Me: and your girlfriend?

Nkosinathi: what about her?

Me: mh, okay.

Nkosinathi: now can I please come and see you?

Me: no. My mom is here.

Nkosinathi: are you sure you're okay? Your vocabulary sounds a bit blurred now.

Me: can we talk ngoms o? The meds are kicking in.

Nkosinathi: oh okay. Sure.

Me: sharp.

I hung up.

Since when does he call me baby ngoku? Yho amadoda kodwa! I fell asleep right after talking to him.

Three days later...

My mom and all her kids were still around and the vibe was the best, Asanda was getting ready to leave with her kids including that ratchet favorite

nephew of mine, Aphiwe, because they had school. She walked in while I was getting dressed and sat on my bed.

Asanda: I feel like my apology will never never be enough.

Me: what are you talking about?

Asanda : the incident.

Me: oh, you mean the shooting?

She nod.

Asanda: I still regret that day, it might not show on the out side but trust me. It eats me up everyday.

I didn't know what she wanted me to say, like already I had a lot going on in my life.

Asanda: I just pray that one day we will get back to

how we were before everything else happened.

Me: I forgave you a long time ago.

Asanda: but I still make you uncomfortable.

Me: yes you do still make me uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean I haven't forgiven you. I just haven't forgotten that you chose a man over your own sister. That, I will never forget ke.

She nod...

Asanda: I understand. See you ngo December ke.

Me: nihambe kakuhle.

She got up and left... I finished up and went to relieve umama ku Milli but she had him on her back so ndabayeka and decided to just take a drive. But I had to inform ubhuti because he was on my case about being a loner...

Me: Ta Steve?

Steve: andinamali.

Me: mali yantoni ngoku?

Steve: ndibizwa kamnandi xa abantu befuna imali kaloku.

I just laughed at him.

Steve: what's up?

Me: I'm going for a drive, wanna come with me?

Steve: uphi u Millz?

Me: usemqolo kumagogo.

Steve: ooh mas ambe... And we're not taking my car.

Me: usisi always leaves her car for me, but since we're not taking yours then you're buying the fuel for this drive.

He burst out laughing....

Me: I'll wait outside.

Steve: what if I'm no longer going?

Me: hlalapho ke!

I waited for a few minutes in the car, he came out and stood by the veranda

Steve: hamba sisi, andinamali ye petrol mna.

Me: ciao!

I started the car...

Steve: oh so you do have petrol money?

Me: you thought I wouldn't go because of your sabotage?

Steve: heh Thixunathi?

I laughed at him and drove out... I went to the beach. I just needed some fresh air man, I needed to breathe nje kay' one. I parked the car and took a walk in the beach... I don't know how far I walked but I eventually went into the water until it reached my knees and I exhaled and breathed in the fresh air that went through my hair and my loose fitting dress. I felt renewed, this small exercise was very healing. It was soothing and for some reason I didn't even have tears anymore, I guess nyhani I was growing through the pains, through the challenges. After a few minutes I walked back to my car and saw Nkosinathi at a short distance walking towards me, barefoot.

I tried to change my way but apparently he had seen me first and he was trying ukundivalela indlela so I just stopped walking and waited for him to do whatever it is that he was thinking of doing.

Nkosinathi: Mama ka Milli.

Me: Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: it's so good seeing you.

Me: thank you.

So I walked, he closed my way again and just stood there.

Nkosinathi: I miss you.

Me: oh Nkosinathi bawo wam.

Nkosinathi: tell me you don't miss me.

I breathed.

I had such a lovely walk and now this? Kanti u Thixo ndimenze ntoni to deserve this?

Nkosinathi: you don't miss me?

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra you know we had plans, even before yonke lento yenzekileyo we had plans for the future. Our future. We had plans that included the two of us and maybe a possibility of additional people abanjengo Milli.

Me: well plans do divert sometimes.

Nkosinathi: but we can still change the diversion Cass and go back to the original plan.

I walked ahead... He followed me and walked right next to me.

Me: bra please leave me alone.

Nkosinathi: I want to leave you alone, trust me I do. But I can't... Kudala ndizama Cassandra but andikwazi.

Me: uxakwe yintoni?

Nkosinathi: ndixakwe kukuba ndisakuthanda.

Me: you have a funny way of showing it.

Nkosinathi: so all this time wena awboni ba ndiyakuthanda?

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: each day that passes I'm going insane, I cannot think past the life we would be living right now.

Me: you need to step out of that fantasy world and live in the now. Live your reality.

Nkosinathi: even my reality doesn't make sense without you in it.

Me: Yho hay inoba Kuthwa kokwenu ndakudlisa.

Nkosinathi: uba wandidlisa andinandaba masambe ke siyohlaziya.

I stopped and looked at him.

Hay man, u Nkosinathi akekho njena, why was he like this all of a sudden?

Me: are you drunk?

Nkosinathi: I haven't drank anything in a while, nothing makes sense any more . Andisabuva notywala noba bubheka ngaphi.

Me: u sure you're not drunk?

Without thinking he grabbed my face and kissed me, I quickly moved back and pushed his chest.

Me: dude!!!!!! what was that for?

Nkosinathi: did you taste alcohol?

Me: seriously? You kissed me so I could taste alcohol in your mouth?

Nkosinathi: andithi you don't believe me when I tell you I'm not drunk.

I sighed.

Me: please do me a favor torho, ndiyakucela. Just leave me alone. I'm not asking for much here, ndicela nje undiyeke. Release me from your heart, go on and live. Love someone else with all your heart and forget I ever existed.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry, I can't. In fact I won't.

I shook my head in dismay and disbelief.

Nkosinathi: I'm prepared to lose everything but you.

Me: you can't be prepared to lose everything when you have a son who's entrusted to us by God.

Ucingba uzotyantoni afunde ngantoni when you do lose everything?

Nkosinathi: If I have to go against la gqirha then I'll do that but I want you to know that no other woman has ever captured my heart the way that you have. Kudala ndizixokisa, kudala ndiziqhatha ndisithi I can actually live without you... That you're not the

only woman to ever exits but guess what? I've been lying to myself all this time. I still love you, I still want you, I still smell your perfume on my sheets, I still hear your laughter when I close my eyes to sleep and I still see you in my dreams every fucken night. My heart longs for you Cassandra and ndaw'ze ndixole mhla wasinikeza elinye ithuba to try again. This time around no family, no extra person. Just the two of us and our son.

I looked away because I had a lump in my throat... All that he was saying sounded and felt so authentic. So real. He reached for my hands...

Nkosinathi: I know you said you're not ready for a relationship right now but can you allow me to be there for you? Not just for our son but for you as well. I hate that I can't take you to your checkups, that I don't know what's going on in your life. I hate being in the dark when it comes to you and I hate myself that I played a part in you being on

depression medication. It kills me knowing I could have done better but I chose the easy way out.

I sniffed.

Nkosinathi: Ndcela undixolele mama ka Thix'ukhona. For everything I did that I should not have done and everything I didn't do that I should have done. Please, forgive me.

I just nod... I didn't plan to cry here.

I just came to breathe and refresh my soul. I didn't plan any of this to happen.

Me: I have forgiven you.

Nkosinathi: no you haven't.

I chuckled.

Nkosinathi: I know you haven't. I've seen love and I've seen resentment in your eyes.

Me: Nkosina-

Nkosinathi: go home, think about everything I said today. I'm not rushing you into anything. Just think about it.

I blinked away iinyembezi.

Me: phew, okay.

Nkosinathi: can I hug you?

It took me a long damn minute to consider this offer because I knew I'd melt the minute my head hits his chest then we'll be back to square one all over again but I eventually smiled and opened my arms, he hugged me. A tight yet tender hug and he kept it tight until I felt my inside walls breaking, suddenly I

broke down and cried. Suddenly I was vulnerable at his touch all over again, like I was putty or clay at the hands of the Potter. For a split second I hated myself for doing this, being vulnerable under his touch but for another second I was glad that I'm vulnerable before him of all people. I felt this amazing safety in his arms. He let me cry until I had no tears left to cry then he cleaned up my face with his handkerchief not saying a word.

I soooo badly wanted to kiss him right now, and I had every opportunity to do so but I had to control myself, I had exposed too much of myself to him the last few minutes, too much of my vulnerability I just couldn't continue doing that or else he would have the upper hand here. Which didn't really matter but... Ay!

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_21

We had arranged indlela yokulala so when the time came, there were no hussles, we just did as

arranged. I could hear all of them snoring, sleeping peacefully yet all I could manage that night was to lay my body on the bed but not my mind. I eventually got up and went to review the information in my laptop, word by word, paper by paper. I had to admit though, this time around the guys had outdone themselves, they even had names, schools and all. The beauty of working with Leroy and Jared was that everything was discreet. I asked Jared to help me because I was there when he helped us trace Leroy's dad. I knew that somewhere somehow they'd end up working together hence I wasn't surprised when Leroy called me instead of Jared.

I must have fallen asleep by the desktop coz when I woke up I could smell bacon, I went to shower then went to the kitchen only to find Asenathi making breakfast....

Asen: morning.

Me: good morning, baphi abanye abantu?

Ase: kusalelwe.

Me: mmh.

I grabbed the blender and made a smoothie then I went to work. I just needed to clear my mind of everything and I knew thula would entertain them the whole day it wasn't like I'm leaving them all alone.

During my lunch time I called Thula.

Thula: small?

Me: nise grand?

Thula: we're good, what time do you knock off?

Me: at 12,why?

Thula: we wanna go to the beach.

Me: surely ya'll can walk to the beach, it's not even

30 minutes away.

Thula: yhu akus hushu for uhamba.

Me: mnkq, lindani imoto ke but I have other commitments. I won't be joining ya'll.

Thula: sure.

We hung up

I continued noms ebenzi until knock off time then I drove home, they were playing chess when I walked in. I greeted and went to my room. Asenathi followed me after a few minutes

Ase: can we talk?

Me: I have somewhere to be can it wait?

Ase: no it can't. We have to talk now.

I looked at her...

Me: okay. Talk.

Ase: I understand you're hurting and all but can you try to prioritize here? We have only three days left before mom comes up here and then we have to go.

Me: I'd like to believe that I am aware of that.

Ase: Can you at least reach out to your son? Try to make time for him?

Me: we shared the same bed, ain't that a start?

Ase: we're taking him to the beach, you have somewhere else to be. Explain that.

I smiled.

I was irritated but I just smiled at her.

Me: do you want to take him nigoduke?

Ase: what?

Me: I understand that you made a sacrifice for me to meet my son but that doesn't mean I'm literally dropping everything just to sit and watch his every move. He has easily adjusted and warmed up to

Thula and that's a good thing, it should be commended.

Ase: you're missing the point here, I didn't bring Amo here to play family bonds with your sister but with you.

Me: he doesn't have a Dabawo kokwabo and so he immediately grasped the idea of having one here. He already has a father kokwabo and you want me to force myself into the child's mind?

Ase: I'm not saying force yourself but baby awenzinto wena at all.

Me: I tried and he said he's comfortable calling me bhuti... And I fully understand him because he's got a father already.

Ase: you shouldn't be comfortable being u bhuti Mpumelelo. Awungobhuti wakhe.

Me: Amohelo is only a child for heavens sake! All these new changed and additions into his life need time to adjust. What happened to taking baby steps ngayo yonke lento?

She exhaled...

And paced around.

Me: is this really about Amohelo or you're just worked up because I didn't have breakfast with ya'll?

Ase: you were rushing to work so I understand.

Me: then what is it?

Ase: why can't you go with us to the beach?

Me: I said I have commitments elsewhere.

Ase: kuphi e elsewhere Mpumelelo?

Me: kuse none of your business Asenathi Dakumba!

Shu gulped.

Me: umama ndam'ngcwaba kudala girlic, I won't answer to you noba akunyanzelekanga.

Ase: we are raising a child together, I have a right to know the things that seem important to you more than spending time with your son whom you've just met. Might I add.

Me: my son whom I've just met because of who?

She looked at me without giving an answer.

Me: my son who was raised by another man for so many years while I mourned for him? Are we now raising that same son? Is that who you're talking about?

Ase: baby....

Me: we haven't even discussed the way forward into all of this yet you're already using Amo as a blackmail tool.

Ase: you're misunderstanding me.

Me: Asenathi you better stop mothering me, stop being so demanding, stop being a bully. I know what I'm doing, I know how much time I have

getting to know Amo so please stop pushing me.

I grabbed my phone, laptop and a file then I walked out, leaving her in the room. As I opened the door I bumped onto Amo...

Me: hey.

Amo: hey, I'm looking for Ase.

Me: she's in there.

Amo: okay thanks.

Me: see you later, enjoy the beach.

Amo: thank you bhuti.

I went out dailing for an Uber/ Cab and found Thula packing their baskets in the car.

Me: I'll see ya'll later.

Thula: aren't you going with us?

Me: I have a meeting to attend to, I'll join ya'll if my meeting ends early.

Thula: sharp ke.

I took a walk to the gate and waited for the cab there. My cab arrived and took me to my appointment, meeting. I was meeting a private doctor to find out Amo's paternity. I knew he's mine, but I needed hardcore proof because I knew his grandfather would try by all means to snatch him away from me like he did all these years. So should everything head to the court I was gonna need valid proof to present at the court. I presented his toothbrush which I stole on my way out, then they took my own DNA and told me when to fetch the results.

This was going to be a long and difficult journey and I had all the energy that I'd ever need for it. I just wished Thula wouldn't get too attached ade alibale ba we are in a warzone because the minute

we get too comfortable, latata and his goons will attack us singacingelanga. On top of that we had to introduce u Amo to umalume who was legible to introduce him to the rest of the family and our ancestors should he see the need but one thing I was looking forward to was doing my mother's tombstone unveiling ekhona u Amo. That would be a deal breaker.

Just as I left the paternity offices I received a call from an unknown number.

Me: hello?

Man: if you know what's good for you you'll send Asenathi and that boy back to where they belong.

Me: ndithetha nabani?

Man: I repeat, if you know what's good for you you will send Asenathi and that boy back to where they belong. Now.

Me: who am I speaking to.

Man: we wouldn't want anything to happen to any of them, as chilled as they are at that beach right now.

Me: if you dare touch them! If you dare!

Man: there's nothing you can do boy boy, absolutely nothing. But be warned.

Then he hung up.

I had to find a way to get them away from the beach kengoku because clearly someone was watching them, could Asenathi really be that careless as to not clean up after her act? How else could her father or brother know where they were unless they followed her? Or her devices are tracked. Goodness!

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_22

#Cassandra

I finished up cleaning my face with the back of my hand. He just stood there waiting for me to say something, do something. I looked at his hands on

my other free hand and for some reason my heart skipped a beat. I don't know why.

I cleared my throat.

Me: I uhm, I have to go.

Nkosinathi: okay, but think about what I said. Please.

Me: you said quite a mouthful though.

Nkosinathi: you know what I mean.

I chuckled.

Me: I will.

Nkosinathi: sure.

I took a few steps away from him and stopped....

Me: do you mind walking me to the car?

He chuckled and walked towards me, I smiled and carried on walking. We walked besides each other but in silence, I was contemplating on a lot of things. I'm quite sure he was just glad to be walking right next to me without us fighting each other or trying to bite each other's heads off over his family. We got to my sister's car so I turned to face him...

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: anytime.

Me: enjoy whatever it is you came to do here.

Nkosinathi: ndiyagoduka nam, I just decided to come for a walk and clear my mind... Inoba bekufuneka ndibone wena ke.

I smiled.

Me: maybe.

Nkosinathi: drive safe.

Me: thanks, nawe.

I got in the car and drove off, he watched me until I turned around the corner. I drove home feeling renewed, like a new person and I couldn't explain why because it's not like ndithethe anything to him but I just cried on his chest. Qha.

When I got home mom and her grandkids were fast asleep in the spare room so I went to my room and decided to check the messages this dude sent to me.

I couldn't believe my eyes, and ears since ezinye he sent via voicenotes. I did what I thought was best for me, I deleted them, and put my phone away. Yes for a second I was mad at him, the next second I was upset that he would say such hurtful words to

me then the next I just didn't give a fuck! So to protect my piece, I deleted the messages. Knowing myself, I was bound to remind him of what he said the minute we have another heated misunderstanding.

A month later...

I was feeling much better, emotionally. That beach walk followed by many others helped kancinci but I had Mpumelelo book me a therapist in Cape Town since I now had less than a month left in PE and he did shame without asking questions. A week before ndihambe I realized that I'm mostly home alone that week so I figured that would be an opportunity to invite Nkosinathi azobona umntanakhe since it's been a while and it's gonna be a process and a hassle for them to see each other when I'm gone. So I called him...

Nkosinathi: Mama ka Milli, this is a nice surprise.

Me: Nkosinathi, how are you?

Nkosinathi: I'm well thanks for asking, wena unjani?

Me: good, I'm okay.

Nkosinathi: u sure?

Me: yes I'm sure.

Nkosinathi: ooh-Kay. You missed me?

Me: no I only called bec-

Nkosinathi: so you don't miss me?

I sighed... I was smiling. Good thing he was not in front of me.

Nkosinathi: be honest.

Me: uhm, look, I am only left with a week here.

Nkosinathi: oh really? That was fast.

Me: yeah ... I figured I should ask you when you have a chance to please do come over and maybe spend an hour or 30 minutes with Milli. If you want

to phofu.

Nkosinathi: what do you mean if I want to? You know I won't say no to this.

Me: kaloku you could be busy, like you've been busy for the past month.

Nkosinathi: I wasn't really busy, I just didn't wanna visit ya'll ekhona umamakho. I don't know how she feels about me.

Me: mmh. So uzoza ku Milli ngoms o?

Nkosinathi: where are your sisters? Mother?

Me: they're at work, mama ugodukile.

Nkosinathi: okay... Are they all working morning shift this week? I don't want surprises.

Me: Cindy is working overtime this whole week and she's actually working in Cape Town, Siki has three double shifts and three morning shifts.

Nkosinathi: Okay, I'll come ngoms o ke. I'm in Durban today.

Me: oh okay, sorry for disturbing you.

Nkosinathi: you're not disturbing me Cass, I wasn't busy when you called.

Me: you said you're in Durban so I guessed you're busy kaloku.

Nkosinathi: I'm just in Durban for business which I wrap up today ndibuye.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: what do you need me to do for you?

Me: for me?

Nkosinathi: yes, you.

Me: can make sure I get my car as soon as I land in Cape Town?

Nkosinathi: done. What else?

Me: that's it, nothing more.

Nkosinathi: u sure?

Ndathula... I wanted to see how far I could go with him spending anything on me but I decided not to

even go that far. The car was enough.

Nkosinathi: have you thought about what I said?

Me: yes, I'm still thinking.

He laughed.

Me: you said no pressure.

Nkosinathi: and I meant it.

Me: so I'm still thinking.

Nkosinathi: you won't take more than six months thinking, right?

Me: I don't know... I am still not ready for a romantic relationship.

Nkosinathi: uthetha ngongathi I'm a stranger.

Me: you're my ex who left me because I kissed another man bra.

Nkosinathi: and I'm sorry I mis handled the situation

alongside my emotions during that period.

Me: you don't have to keep apologizing, I was just pointing it out that you might not be a Stranger but you're someone. I think of you and remember what we've put each other through.

Nkosinathi: so because of that it's gonna be difficult to love again?

Me: I'm toxic to you right now, there's a lot of things I feel like you've failed me on and every little argument will turn into a fight because I have not really kept my emotions in check. I'm literally gonna lash out on you for every little thing and that's not fair on any of us.

Nkosinathi: you said I failed you?

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: njani ngoku?

I closed my eyes.

Why was I even doing this?

Shouldn't I wait until I've decided whether I'm giving us another chance or not before raising such issues again?

Me: masiy'yeke.

Nkosinathi: babe...we are not going to argue, I just wanna know why you feel like I failed you. Maybe I can rectify that.

Me: what have you done regarding how I was treated by your family when I was pregnant?

Wathula.

Me: why do you keep bringing your sister when I've told you how I feel about all of your family members? I vividly remember telling you that besides you, anyone else from your family will have to ask for my folks permission when they want to come see the child.

He didn't answer me, again.

Me: tell me how do you expect me to "heal" properly when you side with the same people who treated me like trash? I'm the one who was told to either terminate or my child will be a bastard kokwenu for the rest of his life, I was even offered money, yet you still expect me to play happy families with your sister whom you went shopping with for impahla zomntanam ungakhange ugale kum. The same sister who found amusement in the disclosure of your daughter's existence via WhatsApp eyazi ba I'm in or rather was in a romantic relationship with you so obviously I'm gonna be hurt that you suddenly have a daughter yet your family doesn't want my unborn child. She then finds it her responsibility to come here and tell me about my bitterness and when I respond to her insults by showing her that she's also not as perfect as she thinks she is then I'm the bitter person?

I literally felt him exhaling... Slowly. It sent chills up my spine. He wasn't mad, he was just absorbing everything I was saying to him.

Me: you say you love me, ndiyakuva but you've failed at one thing that my family has been doing quite well all this time and that is protecting me.

This was no time to cry tu namhlanje... We were talking. We had to talk. Or I had to talk, since he was just listening.

Me: so yes, I do feel like you have failed me. I'm sorry but that's just how I feel.

Nkosinathi: thank you for not keeping this inside. I'm sorry for undeliberately pushing you to forgive them, us... I share almost every thing with Asenathi and when I told her I'm going shopping she was excited to come along ndalibala tu about what you said. I'm sorry for that. For my ignorance.

Me: Kay.

Nkosinathi: please give me time to work on the rest, I have not forgotten anything. I'm just working on something, please be a little bit more patient with me.

Me: maybe we shouldn't even consider this trying again thing, I have a lot of baggage that I need to deal with before I can add somebody else into my heart.

Nkosinathi: please don't say that. Please.

I sighed.

Nkosinathi: please just Cassandra... I get that you're not ready now but please, we can't throw the possibility out of the window just yet.

Me: oh Nkosinathi, oh bawo wam.

Nkosinathi: I love you... And I regret indlela izinto ezenzeke ngayo. But I'm ready to rectify my mistakes, all I need is a chance to do so.

Bendingaxoki ngoku bendisithi we can do this sobathathu qha, no families involved.

I sighed...

Me: Okay.

Nkosinathi: Please get ready immediately after your sister leaves ngomso.

Me: get ready for what?

Nkosinathi: we're going shopping for izinto zomntana, and you need some time out anyway.

Me: I need time out?

Nkosinathi: your head seems to function quite well outside your family environment , I think we can conclude this conversation ngomso xa ungekho lapho.

Me: eshe, hay bye bye.

Nkosinathi: haha, bye.

I hung up.

He sounded so relaxed... I had not heard him sound so peaceful in a while. Like, even after I pointed out ezazinto he sounded so calm.

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_23

I called the cab and while waiting I tried calling Thula and her phone went straight to voice mail, so I called Asenathi and with one ring she answered.

Ase: baby?

Me: niphi?

Ase: sise lwandle haibo besithe siyaphi kanti?

Me: ndcela niye endlini, right now.

Ase: what? Why?

Me: can you please just do as I say Asenathi, I'll explain everything when I get there.

Ase: Amo is swimming with Thula so wena ufuna mna ndiyobakhupha emanzini for into endingayaziyo?

I sighed.

Me: Asenathi Dakumba.

Ase: Mpumelelo Sirhonyi.

Me: get my son, and my sister out of that beach.
Ngoku.

Ase: why are you ordering me around Mpumelelo?

Me: because you fucken father is knows where you fucken are and is fucken threatening me!

I heard her gulp.

Me: now, before something happens to any of you get the hell out of that beach!

Ase: okay, askies.

I hung up and walked to get a taxi because the cab was taking its time. I hitchhiked and got home before them, I paced around the patio for about fifteen minutes before I saw my car at the boom gate and I exhaled in relief.

I watched them park the car... My phone rang...

Me: Ma se kind?

Jared: dude, I just found out your nemises is in Cape Town.

Me: I got called not so long ago, I think they might have chipped Ase's phone or the pilot spoke.

Jared: I think its a chip.

Me: you think?

Jared: 100 percent, just keep them indoors for now until I give you a clear indication of their safety.

Me: okay, thanks buddy.

Jared: Leroy is on his way to Cape Town right now, he wants to get up close with the guy.

Me: he better not underestimate the dude. I know Leroy with his cockiness.

Jared laughed

Jared: don't worry, he knows what we're up against.

Me: ayt, lemme go.

Jared: cheers.

Nokuthula walked in first... She looked irritated. She walked right past me and went to the room, I sat down and waited for all of them to walk in. Amo followed...

Amo: hello bhuti.

Me: hey big guy.

Amo: uphi u Dabawo?

Me: she's in the room.

He smiled and went to her... Ase walked in with the rest of their picnic things. She joined me on the couch

Ase: what's going on?

Me: your phone is either hacked or your pilot spoke.

Ase: he wouldn't speak about anything.

Me: he's not your employee but your dad's.

Ase: okay fine, what now?

Me: now ya'll have to be indoors for the entire day. Ne yangomso, in fact until your mom gets here then nihambe niye kuye.

Ase: oh.

Me: ya'll are obviously safer with her,

akazonenzanto u tatakho ninomamakho. Umntu angamfuniyo ndim.

Ase: I know.

Me: good.

I got up and went to Nokuthula.

Me: can we talk?

Thula: please excuse us boy.

Amo: okay Dabawo.

He walked out.

Thula: what the hell is going on?

I told her what happened.

Thula: uthini u Asenathi xa umxelela!?

Me: she doesn't think the pilot would speak, she didn't answer le part yoba hacked.

Thula: you think she knew?

Me: I think she's not shocked.

She sighed.

Thula: there's a lot she's not telling you.

Me: huh?

Thula: Asenathi knows a lot more than what she's giving away ngotatakhe. She knows who you're dealing with, I just hope she can be totally honest with you. Even at the beach when we got there she was uneasy, kept on looking around as if someone is watching us or she's expecting someone to pop up somewhere.

I looked at Thula without saying a word.

Thula: just be careful.

Me: he'd never hurt her or his grandchild, abona bantu bas engozini here ndim nawe.

Thula: exactly, we are in danger.

Me: umama is guiding us Thula, she'll never let anything happen to us.

Thula: I know Mpumi, I just... I don't know man. Something is up.

Me: I'll get to the bottom of it. Ungambonisi nawe ke ba uyambona.

Thula: you want me to pretend?

Me: I want you to work with me.

Thula: okay.

I got up and hugged her, Amo knocked and walked in while we still hugged.

Amo: can I sleep with u Dabawo namhlanje bhuti?

Me: of course, but can I take you to the movies first?

Amo: just the two of us?

Me: yes, just the two of us.

Amo: deal.

Me: ayt then.

I got up and left them, went to Asenathi who was taking a shower. I waited for her in my room, she eventually came out draped in a blueberry scent

Ase: everything okay?

Me: yeah, I'm taking the big boy to the movies.

Ase: I thought it's not safe out there?

Me: it's just the two of us, your dad won't come for me and jeopardize Amo in that process.

Ase: you don't seem to have a clue who you're dealing with here.

Me: care to enlighten me?

She chuckled and got dressed in pj's.

Me: you find this amusing.

Ase: it's not, but I don't wanna talk about my dad right now.

Me: even if it means endangering our lives?

Ase: he was just scaring you and he succeeded because you're jumpy right now.

Me: I'm jumpy?

Ase: yes.

Then she walked out.

I sat there... What if that was a prank call done by her? But what would she gain in that process? Why didn't she seem moved or fazed for lack of a better word by this? I either had to work my plan on her or

I was going to lose this battle. One had to give away.

I followed her ndafika ese kitchen, I walked up to her and wrapped my arms around her waist, she laughed, I kissed her neck seeing that this move was making her happy.

Ase: I wonder ufuna ntoni?

Me: what do you mean?

Ase: oko ndifikile apha this is the first time you're showing me affection. What do you really want?

Me: I want you.

She froze.

Me: you've just gone stiff, why?

She cleared her throat.

Me: baby?

Ase: uhm... You said you wanted me?

Me: and that's a shocker?

Ase: Mpumi you say something else and then the next day you do the opposite of what you said. You have no consistency so excuse me for being shocked instead of excited.

I kissed her neck, all around to her lips as I turned her around so we faced each other.

Me: I want you, and only you. Do you believe me?

Ase: yes but...

Me: no buts.

We kissed, right then.

She loosened up and melted like butter on hot bread.

We kissed until Thula cleared her throat, Ase hid her face on my chest in shame and I just laughed

Thula: singabantwana ke thina to see ezizinto nizenzayo.

Me: we apologize, next time, we'll get a room.

Thula: please.

Then she walked away, looked at Ase who was now shy.

Me: your sister inlaw uyatsha.

Ase: she like order, I love that about her.

Me: and our son is very fond of her.

Ase: because she speaks English like a white person, and she told him she knows French so obviously he's going to like her more than the two of us.

Me: more than me.

Ase: he likes you, but he won't show you just yet. Wait till he returns home and he gets access to his phone, you'll see your phone blowed up zi messages zakhe.

Me: as I said, I'm taking him out tonight, for a movie or two.

Ase: just be careful out there.

Me: I will.

She kissed my cheek and walked away, following Thula to the lounge. I stood in that kitchen with sweating palms because first of all I was nervous. Nervous of pulling Asenathi and her feelings just to get closer to my son, secondly I was nervous about this whole thing of reuniting with Amo. The Dakumba's obviously won't take it sitting down kuzoliwa but I had to take the risk, go the extra mile and see how far can I actually go. Honany ties can I actually step onto.

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_24

#Cassandra

Mpumelelo called right after I spoke to Nkosinathi...

Me: aw, Doctor Sirhonyi.

Dr Sirhonyi: baby momma, how are you? Are you ready for the big move?

Me: I'm ready, trust me I very much am. You sound like you're also in a better space.

Dr Sirhonyi: I couldn't be happier, my boy is making amazing progress at the boarding school.

Me: that's great news!

Dr Sirhonyi: tell me about it, mamela I don't have much time but I called to inform you that your therapy session is booked for next week Saturday 1 pm and it's only for two hours .

Me: thank you, and where's the bill?

Dr Sirhonyi: let me handle that.

Me: haike uyazibona?

Dr Sirhonyi: I'll handle the first six sessions then you can take it from there.

Me: why are you doing this?

Dr Sirhonyi: we are friends and I wanna help you while I can, no strings attached.

Me: u sure?

Dr Sirhonyi: 100 percent sure.

Me: enkosi ke.

Dr Sirhonyi: no need for that, I know if tables were turned you'd do the same for me.

I smiled to myself...

I was suddenly surrounded by such amazing people in my life. We said our goodbyes, I returned my attention to my son. I missed Onele so I called her, she's never this scarce no matter how much the books have her attention she always texts or send a

please call just to show she's thinking about her big sis and nephew Her phone rang for a few minutes before she answered.

Onele: mama ka Million?

Me: makazi we millionaire, unjani? Unqabile sana lwam.

She burst out laughing, I missed that.

Onele: haike toto, haike nono, haike sana lwam!

Me: Yhini bhabha, Yhini ngxingxi, Yhini sthandwa sam!

Onele: oh marara, oh maroza, oh panini.

Me: Tyhini mamase, Tyhini noriza, Tyhini maroza.

We both laughed.

Onele: Hayini guys andisa gowi.

Me: ugowa njani wena wonke?

Onele: mntase, you have no idea.

Okay, she sounded serious.

Me: what's going on?

Onele: indodam imithisile mntase.

Me: uthini Onele?

Onele: Yho mnkq, I don't even know what to say. Or how else to say it.

Me: so ya'll broke up?

Onele: I don't know. I love him, but I can't get passed the fact that some other woman from down his street is pregnant with his child.

Me: down his street? So how long has he been cheating on you? Coz wena awuhlali down the road.

Onele: and I'm not available every time he wants me

to come over.

Me: exactly.

Onele: but mntase I do make time for him. Honestly speaking he's on my top three priority list.

Me: I'm sorry Nana.

Onele: Like, moguy couldn't keep it zipped in? Like... He couldn't control his libido na bethuna?

Me: I'm sorry babe. I wish I had all the answers.

Onele: and he says it was a one night stand. How do I know he's telling the truth? How do I know that he's not been sleeping around all the times I wasn't available? When he pretended like he understood, how do I know he didn't go knock on her door?

This was hectic, she was really hurt by this.

Me: did you find out on your own about the pregnancy or did he tell you?

Onele: he told me.

Me: then believe him.

Onele: Mntase, I want to. But ha.a sana, akuvumi.

I kept quiet...

I wasn't in a position to give out any relationship advice kemna. Ndingulowo uxakene namadoda amabini abona u mfazi wawo xa ebona mna, on top of that one of them is suddenly saying the right things at the right time and the other is doing the right things at the right time. Like, I wasn't the right person to advice Onele on anything relating to relationships right now.

Onele: it's been three weeks endixelele but it feels like he just told me a minute ago.

Me: I'm sorry, I have nothing else to say to you. But I'm sorry that you're hurting.

She didn't answer...

Me: if you think ya'll can still work it through then try to forgive him. I know it won't be easy but sometimes the heart wants what it wants.

Onele: yeah ne.

Me: I just hope the girl is not tjatjarig akungcungcuthekise kwi relationship yakho after sekhona umntana.

Onele: she's tjatjarig tripled mntas ekhaya but I can handle her, I just need to get my story right ku landoda ndingahlaleli ububhanxa kwi relationship.

Me: but I know the guy loves you.

Onele: ukwazile uyomithisa somewhere else mntase nalo love yakhe. Asoze ndikwazi kaloku tu unyamezela ububhanxa mna emaninzi kangaka amadoda out there.

Okay I laughed at that one.

Onele: aw's onwabe unjani u s bari wam?

Me: andimazi.

Onele: awumazi nyhani or uziphoxela mna?

Me: andimazi nyhani Onele.

Onele: es he. Mxm.

I laughed at her... Why was she asking me ngo Nkosinathi enayo inumber yakhe?

Me: you have his number, call and ask him unjani.

Onele: when last did you see him?

Me: andikho sure, I think last month.

Onele: Haibo, he has n't seen his son over a month?

Me: Nkosinathi is a businessman Onele so he travels quite a lot, he doesn't have to see Milli every day.

Onele: when last did he call?

Me: he calls every time he gets a chance. Again, I

don't expect him to call me every day, he's got a life you know.

Onele: yhima ke mntaka mama, since when do we speak so good of him?

Me: oh God!

Onele: mntase!!!!!! Are things looking up? Haibo halala halala!!!

I sighed.

With a smile.

Me: I don't know.

Onele: it's either a yes or a no.

Me: okay fine, he wants us to try again.

Onele: he finally came to his senses wathetha. So, what do you want?

Me: I want to find myself again.

Onele: I thought you're going for therapy.

Me: I am, starting next week.

Onele: so with that out of the way, are you giving sbari another chance? Yes or no?

Me: I don't know Onele. What could be different this time around?

Onele: uthetha ngathi the guy cheated on you.

Me: he didn't but bra...

Onele: mntase can I tell you one thing?

Me: even if I say no uzandixelela nje so qhabalaka.

Onele: you know me too well... Mamele ke I love you and I know I'm younger than you but I'll speak my mind right now. If you love u sbari and you want to try again, go ahead. Don't hold back because oosisi babethe uzobenza muncu and go back to him xakulunge izinto. Aba bantu banamadoda abo a cheat'ayo wona kqala and we've never told any of them to leave her man. Even oo bhuti, when last did you see umfazi ka Bhut Steve? What's making her neglect the family?

Me: I don't know.

Onele: good, now follow your heart. If you get hurt then so be it. You won't be the first nor the last person to get hurt kwi relationship.

Me: but I can't survive another heartache right now Onele.

Onele: haikhe Cinderella kamama,hlala ne ntliziyo yakho ye glass. I hope it keeps you warm at night especially on rainy days and in winter, oh and I hope it buys you gifts on Valentines day and on your birthday.

Me: fokof uyeva?

She started laughing.

Onele: uyamfuna wena u sbari and you can't deny it, worry yam kukuba uzodikwa kukucenga nokulinda when there's actually quite a lot of fish to fry.

Me: then makayoloba kaloku andiyeke mna.

Onele: akanuki kamnandi Nkosiyam nalo sbari, ibengaske ndizicelele ihug net angene. Andithethi

ke ngofaneleka, umntu abemhle enxibe nje u shorti ne vest. Rha abanye oomama benezibeleko ezi grand man.

I laughed, she was trying to remind me of what I'm missing. She knows I loved his cologne, I used to rave about it kaloku.

Onele: Andithethi ke nge sasifuba, his biceps, hands. Gosh!

Me: phu Onele!

Onele: mntase, you're really gonna lose a man over pride? Seriously? Or you think the doctor can match up to u sbari?

Me: ungenaphi u Mpumelelo kanene?

Onele: exactly, akangeni ndawo. Now focus on the Billionaire dad of the Millionaire qha qwaba.

Me: bye bye Mfethu. Undidwabela nge airtime yam qha ngoku.

Onele: ndiyadwaba xa ndithetha inyani mntase, I love you too. Not as much as you love u s bari wam kodwa.

I hung up.

Milli was awake, I attended to him and gave him all my attention. He was the most important human being in my life right now, if I chose to get back with his father it would be partly because I want him to grow up with both his parents but the "under one roof" part was not guaranteed because getting back with Nkosinathi didn't necessarily mean we're going to get married. On the other hand, I didn't wanna go back to his dad and let my child grow up in a toxic environment.

Me: I wonder what was the rush for bringing you into this world mntanam, now I have to think everything considering two people instead of just myself. Ndiyazithanda kodwa nam izinto.

He laughed...

I smiled, it was as if he understood what I was saying. He opened his eyes and laughed again, he was probably enjoying the attention more than what I was saying.

Me: mamakho loves you.

He mumbled something as his fist went in his mouth, I took my phone and ordered death by chocolate cake for delivery. I needed some really delicious junk food to help me ponder on my thoughts properly.

My dad sent a please call... I placed my order then called him.

Me: Haibo Tamkhulu?

Dad: bendiba ndiyafouna ke andiyazi ndicofe ntoni.

Me: no akho stress tata, what's up? How's the old man doing?

Dad: I want to offer my services ndikukhapse xa uhamba.

Me: seriously?

Dad: yes, don't you need a chauffeur?

Me: well... I'm flying to Cape Town but if you wanna go with me I won't say no.

Dad: when are you leaving then?

Me: Wednesday afternoon, Thursday I'll visit the office to finalize a couple of things, Friday I have a therapy session booked then following week Monday I'll be starting at my work place.

Dad: alright, I'll fly from here. We'll meet at the Cape Town Airport then.

Me: alright then, ask mom to bake some goodies for me please.

Dad: will do, kiss my grandson for me.

Me: will do dad.

Dad: okay bye bye ke.

I laughed.

Me: bye tata.

He hung up

He hung up kodwa I called? Mnkq.

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_25

#Cassandra

Following day right after my sister left I woke up and bathed my son, fed him and put him on the bed while I bathed and got ready because daddy said we're going out. When I was done I put him on my back and cleaned my room and bathroom then I went down and made a banana shake while cleaning the lounge, dining room and kitchen then I took my shake and went to sit down with Milli now on the couch next to me.

My phone rang...

Me: hello?

Tammy: hey Cassandra, how are you?

I looked at the screen again...

Me: Tammy, hi, I'm alright how are you?

Tammy: I'm great.

Me: oh-Kay...

She cleared her throat.

Tammy: I'm trying to reach Nathi but his phone is on voice mail.

Me: mh.

Tammy: so I just wanted to know if you haven't seen or heard from him today or yesterday?

Me: no I haven't, I'm sorry babe.

Tammy: he didn't come see his son or call you?

Me: he hasn't seen his son for over a month now.

Tammy: what?

Me: but I understand he's a busy man. He's got you and his businesses so... It's quite understandable.

Tammy: Nathi hasn't seen his son over a month? That's so unlike him, he's always raving about him.

Me: maybe he misses him, I don't really know.

Tammy: maybe he does.

Now I cleared my throat... We ain't friends, she can't just call me up to discuss my son. Surely.

Me: was there any specific reason for the call Tammy?

Tammy: uhm no, I just wanted to reach him and I thought you might know his whereabouts.

Me: you can call his sister.

Tammy: nah it's alright, I'll try him again later.

Me: you do that, tell him I say hi.

Tammy: will most certainly do.

Me: ayt then, bye.

Tammy: bye.

I hung up rolling my eyes.

Nkosinathi better not be ghosting umntana bantu in pursuit of me. Haha, that would be nice though... But he better not! And for some reason I also wasn't honest with her, I had spoken to Nathi the previous day mos. Why didn't I tell her that? Heee hay nam.

I missed Lionel qha ubhuti when is one of those people whom you have to wait akukhumbule ngokwakhe. Infact bayafana but most times Steve

is better, all my siblings except for Onele are like that. They must miss you more, nam ndinjalo phofu. We must have gotten it from mom. Talking about mom, I called her... Uyayazi i half-ring? It's like she was expecting me to call

Me: Haibo girl!

Mom: haha, I was about to call you.

Me: Yhini I got shocked, ingathi kudaaaala undilindle.

We both laughed.

Me: unjani salukazi?

Mom: Andis amkhumbuli Haibo ndikhumbula umntanam bethuna.

Me: lo undim mos mama?

Mom: indoda kaloku.

Me: how can you miss Milli who cannot speak and not miss me kodwa I'm the one calling you?

She laughed at me... Haibo but how?

Mom: yhe Thixunathi?

Me: mama?

Mom: umngakanani ku Thixukhona?

Me: but mama?

Mom: see?

I mumbled.

Mom: I knitted a beanie and booties for him, I'll bring them next week.

Me: I'll be long gone by then.

Mom: ndiyivile le agreement yakho noy'hlo.

Me: unjani ubanomona ungena tata?

Mom: andinavalo ngoba ndamtya kaloku mna ngalandlala inkulu.

I laughed at her...

Mom: yazi usile Cassandra, I hope you do realize that I can say one word and your plans with MY husband would come to a stand still.

Me: whoah whoah sisi, that husband of yours is my dad kaloku yhima.

Mom: kubekho bani kqala mna nawe?

Me: mama this game you're trying to play ain't fair.

Mom: keep on being silly to me, I'll show you who's boss.

I laughed.

Me: khawenze umphako kaloku boss Lady.

Mom: kanti uzokwenzani utatakho?

Me: Haibo mfazi!

Mom: hey uyatefa mfondini wogqitha no Onele kodwa uze ne additional member.

Me: additional member has two parents, two grandparents, four aunts and two uncles izotefa kuzo.

Mom: aw'selociko.

Me: you still have my bank account neh makhulu?

Mom: Mnk mnk, ewe wethu. I'll send you money just now.

I screamed, waking my son up in that process.

Mom: ingxolo ngathi uyathwas a!

Me: sorry madam, sorry boss Lady. Enkosi.

Mom: I'm only sending you money because you

have to buy new clothes for umsebenzi. That's it.

Me: I love you Mamam.

Mom: but you love my money more, I know. Don't argue. And bye.

Mom hung up on me ndisamhleka. Oh well, I had money for shopping. I had money! I heard a hooter outside so I looked at the window and saw Nkosinathi's VW and opened the gate. He drove in, parked and walked up to the front door which was opened. He knocked and came to the lounge, as soon as he walked, his scent filled the entire front house. Obviously in my mind I could only think of my conversation with Onele

Nkosinathi: molweni.

Me: hey.

He went to Milli first, took him up, lay him on his chest and came to me offering a hug so I stood up

and we half-hugged. (Milli was taking up all the space)

I sat back down.

Nkosinathi: how are you guys?

Me: we're fine, we're good. You?

Nkosinathi: ndi grand. Akas emhle, and mkhulu ngoku since the last time I saw him.

Me: well uyatya.

Nkosinathi: solid foods?

Me: no not yet, breastmilk and we've just started him on babies milk last week to get him used to it since I'll be gone with his natural supply.

He chuckled...

Nkosinathi: looks like ni ready.

Me: yep. Awufuni juice or water?

Nkosinathi: I'm okay thanks. Mas ambeni.

Me: sure.

I took my handbag, Milli's bag, stroller and car seat. Followed them out and locked the door, he strapped Milli on his seat while I put the stroller in the boot... I felt like it's too soon for the car seat, I guess it just felt risky, but I didn't wanna ruin the moment for him. He was all in and Milli on the side was laughing and having the time of his life. We got in the car and drove to the shopping center...

Occasionally he would steal a sidelong look at me and I wasn't busy on WhatsApp or anything, I was just playing games on my phone. I let him do that three times then the fourth time I stopped and looked at him, he laughed.

Me: please don't creep me out.

Nkosinathi: oko bujonge kwi phone yakho when we left your house. Am I that boring?

Me: I'm playing Solitaire.

Nkosinathi: surely you can play that on your own time not when you're with us.

Me: Milli doesn't mind.

Nkosinathi: I don't like this name.

Me: it's not yours, you don't have to like it.

Nkosinathi: Cass?

Me: are we gonna fight over this?

Nkosinathi: akho need ye fight, I'm just saying I don't like how you call our son.

I sighed and stopped playing the game on my phone. He probably wanted my attention. Okay fine.

Nkosinathi: kids grow to ask a lot of questions, what will you say to him when he gets to the stage to ask

why he's called Milli?

Me: you want me to stop calling him Milli so that he doesn't get to know how malicious your family is?

Nkosinathi: this has nothing to do with my family.

Me: really now?

Nkosinathi: he has a beautiful name already, can't you call him by it?

Me: I can't be calling you Nkosinathi and still call him Thixukhona every day. Yhu, the marathon.

Nkosinathi: you could call me Nathi, just like everybody who seems to get tired of calling my full name.

Me: I'm not everybody.

Nkosinathi: you're a fine one to talk, Thixunathi and Cassandra are very long but you don't hear us complaining.

Me: have you ever called me Thixunathi?

He coughed.

Me: exactly, and you only call me Cassandra when you're either mad at me or you wanna get your point across. So that doesn't count.

He smiled. Again.

Nkosinathi: I'll never win with you.

My turn to smile.

Me: I'm glad you noticed. Now when last did you speak to your girlfriend?

Nkosinathi: two days ago, I think. Why?

Me: she called.

He looked at me.

Me: uthi she can't reach you, so she wanted to find out when last did I speak to you.

Nkosinathi: she can't reach me phi when she hasn't called me?

Me: I don't know.

Nkosinathi: zumbuze when she calls again.

Me: hayinike bethuna.

He drove in silence for a while.

Nkosinathi: I told her my intentions ngawe, well I practically broke things off with her.

Me: oh shucks!

He laughed at that.

But men play around with women's feelings man, he knew from the get go that he's not over me but he kept on stringing her along. But hey † ♀

Me: why are you laughing?

Nkosinathi: I don't see why I shouldn't. I know you don't want to be in a relationship with me right now and with the little progress we've made I'm okay with that. It gives me hope, I had to set her free.

Me: I feel bad.

Nkosinathi: why?

Me: you broke off with your girlfriend over me?

Ndibe mna ndingazokunika yonke lento ebekunika yona?

Nkosinathi: I'd rather wait for you ndindedwa, than wait for you while pushing a wheelbarrow that has no wheel.

Okay I laughed at that.

Nkosinathi: it will also help clear and detox my mind before we can try again.

Me: Mnk.

He smiled.

Nkosinathi: so from now on, I'm all yours mamakhe. Your man, is yours alone. Anytime of the day, or night whenever you need me, I'll be there.

I looked at his cocky ass, the smirk on his face geeez! Yes I laughed at what he said but haibo, uyazits hela nanku umntu. We parked and he took his son... Strapped him on his stroller and then we went shopping.

[06/26, 15:06] : #Mpumelelo_26

#Cassandra

He must have been having the best day of his life, he was all smiles throughout our shopping center stroll. He offered to changed Milli at some point, then after some time he suggested we grab a bite

so we found the KFC and went to sit down.

Nkosinathi: uzoya ntoni?

Me: sweet chilli twister with sparkling water please.

Nkosinathi: that's it?

Me: yes.

He got up and went to the counter, placed our order and waited for it. Bekungagcwelanga so...

I was facing the entrance and he was going to sit, with his back against the entrance. He came back with our food satya and made small talk. I saw his sister and her husband walking past, xabezakusithela Asenathi wabheka (which was unintentional, like it's common for anyone to look around when walking anywhere. So it wasn't a shocker) and our eyes locked. She walked on, and a few seconds, she walked backwards just to make sure she saw correctly.

Me: don't turn, but I think your sister is about to burst your ass.

Nkosinathi: uphi?

I didn't answer him.

Mainly because Asenathi and her husband had just walked in kulo KFC and her face had such shock and disgust I actually wanted to laugh because according to her I'm good riddance for her brother, yet she finds the same brother with me. Eating out. Like, I just saw myself being that weekly trash yabona? Trash that was taken out Monday morning, only to see that the truck didn't even come by to pick it up so because you don't want dogs to tear it up and mess around your yard, you end up taking it back indoors.

They reached our table, her husband greeted us and went to place his order, by now the que had increased so he had to wait inline for some time. Asenathi stood right next to her brother, her

arm/ elbow on his shoulder...

Asenathi: yi family outing, akus emnandi mntakabawo.

Nkosinathi: anisebahle, beniyephi?

Asenathi: we went to the spa, then we watched movies, now we were on our way to Macro for his gym supplements when I spotted you guys.

Nkosinathi: mmh, have a bite while waiting for him.

She took a piece, ate it while looking me up and down with disgust written all over her face. I said a small internal prayer to God just to get my mouth shut, nothing else. Just for my mouth to be shut kuyo yonke into azothi ayithethe because I'm always the bitter one at the end of the day.

Asenathi: when last did you speak to mom?

Nkosinathi: last week, why?

Asenathi: just asking, she wasn't feeling well last night. Some pain in her abdomen.

Nkosinathi: I didn't know that, I'll call her later today.

Asenathi: how were you to know when you're busy chasing after women?

Nkosinathi: huh?

Asenathi: you haven't checked on your mother for over a week yet your mother is not feeling well and you're here having brunch, unqekekile with a woman.

Nkosinathi: so because my mother is not feeling well my own life must come to a standstill? Umama unomyeni, he can take care of her.

She didn't answer him.

Nkosinathi: and you spoke to her, you know she's not feeling well yet you're here watching movies and going for massages with your husband? Why aren't you babysitting her at home then?

Asenathi: at least I didn't ignore her for an entire week, my husband and I are actually on our way to see her.

Nkosinathi: good, send her my greetings.

She stopped chewing and looked at him.

Nkosinathi: what?

Asenathi: you're not serious.

Nkosinathi: if umama wanted me to know she's not feeling well she would have called me. She's got all my numbers.

Asenathi: she's under the impression that you're busy.

Nkosinathi: and I am busy, as you can see.

She rolled her eyes.

Asenathi: u busy no Cassandra? Really now?
Kunqabe amantombi bra? I thought you were over
this.

Nkosinathi: ewe Asenathi I am busy with Cassandra,
yes really, no akunqabanga mantombi and no I'm
not over anything. Next?

She laughed.

Asenathi: uyi rubbish yomntu mntaka tata. Rubbish,
trash.

Nkosinathi: I don't wanna do what my mind is telling
to do to you right now, so if you'll excuse us please.

Asenathi: so you're just gonna dismiss me?

Nkosinathi: disrespect Cass once again, right now
Asenathi and see if dismissing you is the only thing
I'll do to you. Just try.

She laughed.

Hysterically.

I felt the hair at the back of my neck stand, my palms were sweating. I put my food down, grabbed a tissue from my bag and walked to the loo without saying a word. I found an empty cubicle and just sat there, I felt like crying, but I didn't allow myself to. I wasn't going to allow myself to cry, not now. Not here. After a few minutes I flushed and looked at myself in the mirror, my cheeks were bloodshot.

Me: calm down babe, calm down.

I smiled at myself and walked out, they were still at it. Her husband was the fourth in the receiving line. I sat back down and checked on my son in silence.

Asenathi: I'm convinced now more than ever that umdlisile umntaka mama wena.

Because I'm not "wena" I ignored her. Wandinyola

emlenzeni ngeenyawo just to get my attention... I didn't even bother to look up.

Me: Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: Asenathi please leave.

Asenathi: haibo mntakza, ubizwa kubekanye nawe ugragrame? Yho Yho Yho uyitye nentshwela.

People were starting to get drawn to us because she was raising her voice. Nkosinathi got up and took our things, her husband was now approaching us

Asenathi: Nathi?

Nkosinathi: phakama Cass s'hambeni. Please push Ukhona out.

Me: thank you.

Asenathi: Nathi don't allow her to do this to you, why are you allowing yourself to be hurt all over

again when you know she's sleeping with Mpumelelo?

He didn't answer her, the husband got to us sesihamba on some lousy "Haibo guys, what's going on?" we didn't answer him, we just walked out and went straight to the parking lot. I got in the front and lowered my chair so I could sleep on my back, he strapped his son, packed our things in the boot.

"Sbari... Heeey Sbari... Yhimani apho Ndoda.... Heh Nko mfowethu khawume mfondini"

We both could hear Asenathi's husband calling after Nkosinathi but he got in his car anyway and drove in silence for the first fifteen minutes. After a short while he found a bus stop and parked the car, his head found rest on the steering wheel for a couple of minutes then he looked sideways at me.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: please take me home.

Nkosinathi: ndcela uxolo nyhani for what just happened.

Me: Please. Take. Me. Home.

He started his car and drove at the slowest pace to ever exist. After about 5 minutes sihamba in one place I spoke up, looking at the road ahead. I wasn't upset, I wasn't irritated but I was something... My stomach was heating up and in knots.

Me: if you'll be driving like this until we get home you might as well take us to the taxi rank.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: I heard you, now can you drive? Or usapha ndiziqhubele ke.

Nkosinathi: you heard me but you've not forgiven me.

Me: for what exactly?

Nkosinathi: putting you through that. I know we just spoke about this Asenathi issue and I will deal with it. Not at a public place.

Me: you're still going to drive me home right? At the appropriate speed?

He sighed and drove ngo 80, I lay on that chair weighing this whole "let's try again" bulls hit. Was it really necessary? Like, did we really have to try again? Couldn't we just part ways and avoid the drama altogether because days like these were a guarantee. This wasn't the last of them, there were more packed somewhere and for how long would I be able to control myself when I'm around her? No man, we didn't have to.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_27

#Cassandra

We got to my house and he parked, helped me with

the child and the shopping bags. He made Milli comfortable and sat down waiting for me while I went to put Milli's bags in his nursery, my shopping bags in my room and then I went to grab a bottle of water from the fridge, joined them ndasela amanzi ndithe cwaka.

Nkosinathi: she feels betrayed seeing us together after what transpired between the two of you that day we were here.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: I promise, I'll deal with her. I promise you that.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: can you stop saying that?

Me: what?

Nkosinathi: "okay"

Me: sorry.

He looked at me... Irritated.

Nkosinathi: babe.

I sat properly...

Me: mamela neh, thank you for today, you probably made some sacrifices, skipped some meetings just to be here so enkosi. We appreciate the effort.

Nkosinathi: I'm not here because I wanna be applauded for being a responsible father to my son. I'm here because I want to be here with the two of you.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra please man, please.

I chuckled and got up from where I sat, I took a stride across the room.

Nkosinathi: baby pleas-

Me: will you stop begging me!

He got up from where he had sat and took a few steps towards me, then stopped.

Nkosinathi: no I won't, I won't stop begging you until you see what I see.

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba stop fucking begging me and start facing the reality that I'll never be friends nor will I ever be civil with your sister. I'll probably never want your family near my child, ever. Do you get that??? Does it make sense???

Nkosinathi: yes it makes sense, I might not totally agree with it but based on your reasons yes I get it. It makes perfect sense.

I hissed.

He was acting smart on me.

He took two more steps towards me. He was acting like he's scared of me, or was he thinking of cornering me like a predator?

Me: it took a lot for me to allow myself to go out with you today, I was willing to see what you keep saying you're seeing but for some reason I keep on seeing reality. Our reality.

Nkosinathi: Asenathi is married, she has a life of her own. She's not our reality.

Me: but she's your sister, and awuna NO ku Asenathi bra. Even when we were dating bhuti ndini wawungena hayi ku Asenathi, what makes you think uzobanaye u hayi ngoku!?

I don't know how he skipped a thousand steps but I found him right up my face and as our eyes locked, something in the depths of my heart moved. I couldn't say another word, one would say I froze in the moment. Paralyzed. Yes, that would be the right word. Paralyzed. Seeing how he looked at me that

very moment , I knew that if we were both to die I'd die knowing that I loved him and he loved me.

Something in his eyes took me back to that beach walk I took the day I met him, some sort of longing, affection that was deeply buried in his eyes had me weak. It's highly possible I wasn't breathing at all that moment. Highly.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra I love you. Do you believe that? Does that make any sense to you?

My heart answered him but my lips were dry, my throat was dry. I couldn't even find the words. He touched my face and kissed my lips, automatically my eyes closed and I fell into that trap, I was like putty in his hands. We kissed until I stopped him (well not immediately but hey, I did eventually stop him. That should count for something, right?) but he didn't give me room to move. I moved backwards...

Me: we keep going back and forth.

Nkosinathi: I'm here. Full body, mind and soul I'm here with you and our son. Where are you?

I swallowed hard.

Where was Ike?

Akere na was all over the place? Everything nje ngam was a mess.

Nkosinathi: I'm willing to get you the best therapists money could ever buy, I'm willing to run away with you siyohlala naphi na apho ufuna sihlale khona sikhulise umntwana wethu sobabini, I'm willing to leave everything behind and start afresh with you. But the question here is: What are you willing to do?

Yey!

That moment I felt lento iya iqina mos, he wasn't just saying we should get back together, if he's

willing to go the extra mile then he must have been serious from the word go. And the most painful part about this conversation was that I felt pain in each and every word he uttered his heart was shattered. I don't know why but every time he spoke, I felt his pain.

He kissed my forehead, down my nose ridge and onto my lips then he stopped and removed his wallet from his pocket, I just stood there looking at him. Out of his wallet he removed about 6 cards, out of which 2 were black cards.

Nkosinathi: I know you're not after my money but take these, go to any sales agent that sells izindlu anywhere and buy a house.

Me: what?

Nkosinathi: it will be in your name, I won't take it back should things not work out between us. But I'll sleep peacefully wherever I end up knowing that my son has a place he can call home, I don't.

My heart broke.

Before now, I had never considered his feelings in all of this. I had e never thought of how he felt about his father, his relationship with both his parents phofu. This strife between mna no Asenathi, I had never considered him in any of these things or how these things affect him until now.

Me: I'm sorry...

He smiled and nod.

Me: I really am, about everything.

Nkosinathi: you did nothing wrong, nothing is your fault. J ust do me one thing and build a home for my son. A house is not a home, money doesn't make a home. It's the warmth of the heart and peace that does.

I nod, almost sobbing.

He lifted my chin and smiled.

Nkosinathi: sulila, I don't want you to feel sorry for me over this. I told you I'll sort everything out and that's what I'm doing but when doing so I have to make sure my son is secured in every way possible.

I closed my eyes... Trying to breath, but I was experiencing pains like pins were pricking my chest.

Nkosinathi: I know about Sinathi. I still love her even though she's not mine.

My heart almost stopped and my eyes popped.

Me: what!?

Nkosinathi: I took your advice and had a DNA test done discreetly, she's not mine. I called Sive about it and she confirmed....

Haike I broke down again, now I wished I had told him ayive ngam, maybe instead of this betrayal he would have not invested so much of his love and time on her. He hugged me ethe cwaka...

Nkosinathi: you seem to be the only person who has my best interest at heart, you seem to be the best person I can trust with anything right now. Please, ambo phangela eKapa as per your plans but take all these cards with you, look for a house uthengele umntanam indlu umenzele ikhaya Thixunathi. That's all I'm asking of you.

I moved away from his chest and looked at him, wiping my face with the back of my hand. He never calls me Thixunathi, never!

Me: uzazibulala Nkosinathi? Kutheni uthetha kanje?

He smiled.

Me: wipe that smirk of your face mani, you're not gonna do that to me. Soze undenzele lonto mna not now.

Nkosinathi: I'm not gonna kill myself, I'd never do that.

Me: then what? What's going on?

He took a deep breath and sat down, I sat next to him

Me: tatakhe?

Nkosinathi: calm down.

Me: Nkosinathi don't tell me to calm down mfondini,

what the hell is going on with you?

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I know that, but what is going on?

Nkosinathi: so you don't love me?

I closed my eyes and tears streamed down the corners of my closed eyes....

Nkosinathi: it's okay, you don't have to say it.

Me: I love you, but don't you see that? Und'xelel'ba all this time you weren't seeing that?

He laughed...

Me: Nkosinathi please don't do this to me torho, whatever it is that is going on with you ndcela iphele ke. Find a way to sort it if it needs to be sorted but just don't do this to me.

Nkosinathi: I'm not dying.

Me: then what?

Nkosinathi: I uhm... I don't know how to tell you this.

Me: you wanna write it down?

Nkosinathi: I uhm... I have a problem with my heart. I wasn't on a business trip in Durban but I went to see ugqirha who confirmed that I have a heart problem.

Me: no.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry, you already have a lot going on for you I didn't wanna add to it.

Me: how bad is it?

Nkosinathi: we took tests to be sure, but next week I'm flying to the UK to have an operation, anything ke might happen but all we can do is pray and hope for the best.

I sat there feeling numb.

I didn't know what to say to him, how to make him

feel better. I didn't even have tears but my heart was sooooo painful. I held onto my chest as I felt my own heart beating fast...

Nkosinathi: See why I didn't wanna tell you?

He grabbed my bottle and gave me, I drank the whole contents and put it down.

Me: I'm sorry. I'm really sorry I know I also contributed to this I am really sorry.

Nkosinathi: don't do this Cassandra, don't. It's not your fault.

Me: but it is... To some extent.

Nkosinathi: can you cry ugqibe for today? Like, I need you to be in your senses. I need you to be strong right now.

I looked at him.

He wasn't joking, he was commanding me to pull myself together. Phew! What does being strong mean kanene? Where do we begin? Where do we start being strong?

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_28

#Cassandra

I sat there not knowing what to do nor what to say. I felt numb.

Nkosinathi: Cass?

Me: ubuzondixelela nini?

Nkosinathi: I wasn't gonna tell you.

I looked at him.

Nkosinathi: you're fragile, I really wasn't gonna tell you.

Me: you were mad at me for not telling you everything I was going through yet kwa wena you hide such things from me? Like, right now of all times?

He sighed and stood up, took his son and put him on his chest. I watched them in silence. For some reason I felt like Milli brought him so much peace, I had noticed a couple of times when he would walk in, take Milli and put him on his chest but I didn't make anything out of that until now.

I got up and went to make Milli's bottle using his formula. They came to stand by the kitchen entrance...

Nkosinathi: ayiqumbisi neh?

I ignored him.

Nkosinathi: mamakhe?

Me: Nkosinathi?

Nkosinathi: please don't do this.

I sighed.

Me: I'm just... I'm upset with you, and at the same time I'm worried about you, all together I'm mad at myself because there's nothing I can do to help you.

Nkosinathi: don't be mad at yourself.

I didn't answer him.

Me: did you at least tell Asenathi what you're going through?

Nkosinathi: no, I don't want anyone else to know.

Me: why not? I'm sure she will support you. Like you've always supported her.

Nkosinathi: I'm sure too but andifuni.

Me: why kaloku?

Nkosinathi: can you just trust me?

Me: I trust you.

Nkosinathi: no you don't, please just trust me and allow me to do this ngalendlela endifuna uyenza ngayo.

Me: okay I'm so sorry.

Nkosinathi: it's okay.

When I was done I decided to cook for the fam while he had Milli in his arms. We made small conversations every now and then until I was done and then he left. I took my son to my room and we had a nap. My sisters came home then we joined them for dinner and chilled for a while before we all went to bed. Cindy apparently missed Milli to such an extent that she asked to sleep with him for the night. I didn't mind.

At about 10 pm I just thought of checking up on his father so I called him and he didn't answer. I called him for more than six times but he still didn't answer and I started panicking. I got out of bed and went downstairs...in just short pj's and slippers.

Siki: hay uyaphi elixesha?

Me: uhm...

I thought she'd be in her bed kaloku, I mean it's very late.

Siki: Sandra?

Me: I need to go out for a few minutes sisi.

Siki: it's late, uyaphi?

Me: I'm going to check on Nkosinathi.

Her eyes almost popped out as she titled her head

to the left.

Siki: uyataka Cassandra? Really?

Me: Haibo sisi.

Siki: Haibo ntoni?

I sighed.

Me: he was here earlier and he's not feeling well. I called him just to find out how he's feeling now but he's not answering his phone so I need to go check up on him.

Siki: doesn't he have a family?

Me: he does, but they don't know he's not okay. He didn't tell them.

Siki: but told you?

Me: he wouldn't have told me if Milli could talk.

Wathula...

Me: I won't be long, I just wanna make sure if he's fine.

Siki: I'll wait up.

Me: no problem.

I grabbed the car keys and drove like a maniac to Nkosinathi's house. The lights were on so I called him again... He still didn't answer. I sat there wondering what to do. Then Siki called.

Me: sisi?

Siki: how far are you?

Me: I just got here, his lights are on but he's still not answering his phone.

Siki: are the gates locked?

Me: ndoyika ukwehlika and go check le incinci but

I'll keep calling.

Siki: or call his friends, maybe he's not even home.

Me: neh? Lemme drive to Masixole and find out.

Siki: Cass ku late and kuse Bhayi apha. It's not safe for you to do yonke lento uyenzayo this time uwedwa in a car.

I sighed.

Me: okay I'll hoot while calling him ke, maybe uzode avule.

Siki: okay, I'll call you again.

Me: sure.

I hung up and called Nkosinathi, hooting. I didn't care about his neighbors anymore ke. On the third hooter he answered his phone.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: vula igate.

Nkosinathi: what?

Me: vula. Igate.

I could hear his footsteps over the phone and then the front door opened, he stood outside the door shaking his head.

Nkosinathi: what are you doing here this time?

Me: are you gonna open this gate or not?

I watched the gate open as I hung up the call and drove in and parked, got out and walked up to him.

Nkosinathi: and then?

Me: why weren't you answering your phones?

I asked him while walking right past him, into his house. Uninvited. He just followed behind me.

Nkosinathi: I was busy in the study and my phones were charging e lounge.

Me: you're lying.

He chuckled.

I looked around and saw that he was lying. He was actually stuffing himself with junk food.

Me: kutheni uziminca nge cake? Mmh ne ribs... Oh and chips, obviously ne whiskey accompanied by a cigar. Akumnandi, uthi ubusenzani e study?

He just smiled and looked at me.

I stood there, finishing up his chips.

Nkosinathi: I just wanted to be alone.

Me: you could have picked up the phone, lied to me and say you're home safe and okay. Ndilale, I wouldn't have argued with you. I wouldn't have come all the way here.

He looked around and laughed.

Me: feeling sorry for yourself now?

Nkosinathi: not really. I just felt like being irresponsible for one night.

Me: good thing you didn't choose drinking and driving.

Nkosinathi: I'm not planning to kill myself.

Me: that's good to hear.

I picked up everything that was scattered on the ground and he just watched me for the first few seconds then he helped me. We quickly cleaned up

his lounge, cake back in the fridge and everything else back into its rightful place. I looked around, it was better than when I walked in...

Me: okay, you're alive and still smiling. Lemme go back home.

I walked out.

He followed behind me until I got to the car.

Nkosinathi: thank you.

Me: for what? Ruining your plans?

Nkosinathi: for not giving up when I purposely ignored you.

Me: you ignored me nge mini erongo, try again ngoms o mfethu.

He laughed.

I started the car and reversed out of his property.

Me: see you around.

Nkosinathi: see you ksasa. Text me when you get home.

Me: sure.

I drove back home and he locked his gates. After parking the car I texted him "home safe" and walked inside, my sister was really waiting up.

She jumped off her seat as I walked in...

Siki: umfumene?

Me: yep, all alive and wallowing in his sorrows.

Siki: what's wrong with him.

I grinned.

Me: I can't really tell you.

Siki: Haibo why, is he dying?

Me: he asked me not to.

Siki: you said his family doesn't know.

Me: yes, he doesn't want to tell them.

Siki: why not? What if he really dies ke? Akuzothwa ubulewe nguwe?

Me: I don't know. I'll see that if it gets to it.

I switched off the kitchen light...

Me: goodnight sis.

Siki: heeee mnkq, night.

She switched off the lounge lights and we went our separate ways. There was nothing she was going to do for him even if I told her, she's not a heart

surgeon.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_29

I went out with my son, made him choose the movie we were going to watch for the night and then we grabbed our popcorns and went in. I informed my friends (Jared and Leroy) about our whereabouts since they are the men in the forefront of this tracking ish. They would know if I'm in danger or if we're being followed. It wasn't even fifteen minutes into the movie when Jared sent me a location... Followed by a text "ya'll are being followed" but I didn't panic, I wasn't gonna panic ndihamba no Amo anyway. We watched our movie and then headed home, went to the fuel station first, I bought him juice while I bought myself coffee and condoms then after filling up the car we went home...

I looked at him, he was quiet.

He looked happy hut he was quiet. Like he was deep in thought or just weighing down some things.

Me: you okay?

He nod smiling.

Me: you sure? You've been too quiet.

He looked at me...

Amo: am I allowed to visit you again?

Me: do you want to?

Amo: if you want me to, yes.

Me: you can visit anytime you want to visit my boy, even for weekends.

Amo: yhu u Tamkhulu would never allow weekend visits, maybe school holidays.

Me: and your dad?

Amo: dad doesn't want us to visit at all. But he allows us to visit grans.

Me: why?

Amo: he says we eat a lot, he'd rather have us empty his cupboards than go hungry in other people's houses.

I laughed.

Amo: nomama agrees most times.

Me: alright then, anything that works for you I'm game.

Amo: okay. Does u Tamkhulu know you?

Me: yep.

Amo: are you friends with him?

Me: let's just say he doesn't really like me.

Amo: is that why they never told you about me?

I nod...

Me: but please don't hold that against them, I'm

sure they had their reasons.

He nod...

Amo: well at least I have an aunt now, I only have uncles back home.

I laughed.

Me: and I've noticed that you love your aunt.

He laughed.

Amo: she's fun and she allows me to watch YouTube on her phone.

Me: and you're her favorite I can tell.

Amo: she said if I pass with at least 3 distinctions end of the year she's buying me a PS3.

Me: you think you can match up with that?

Amo: 3 distinctions? Yep.

Me: aw, cava the confidence boy!

We both laughed out loud.

I enjoyed the ride home more than the movie date.

Amo: last year I got 2 so I'm sure I can work hard enough to make the third one.

Me: haiké bhuti put in the work. Nothing comes free in life.

Amo: even an allowance?

Me: you want me to give you an allowance?

Amo: I already get one at home but it wouldn't hurt having a second one.

Me: what would you do with the second one?

Amo: save it, I'll need it when I go to varsity.

I looked at him...

Amo: I have a chickens at home, I wanna start poultry farming but Tamkhulu said I can only make business decisions after my 18th birthday and he's willing to invest if I put in the work now.

Me: I see... Well, when you have time, draw up your business plan. I might wanna invest into this farming of yours as well.

Amo: when I get home I'll email it to you, I already have it.

Me: Yey uyay'thanda imali Amohelo, you've got everything in place.

Amo: Haibo bhuti who doesn't love money?

I laughed at him, clever teenager!

He smiled and took a sip of his juice as we parked. We walked inside the flat and Jared sent another sms... "drop the kid and leave" so I drop Amo with his aunt and asked his mother to walk me out, she

was Thula when we walked in. We got to the lounge...

Ase: ya'll are all smiles.

Me: can we go for a ride?

Ase: I thought it wasn't safe.

Me: I'll protect you. Come on.

She chuckled, I opened the door for her, she walked out and then we got into my car. I called Jared while driving out...

Jared: Boy.

Me: what's up?

Jared: go to the nearest hotel and leave your car there, they managed to get to it when you were watching movies and it will blow up in the next hour.

Me: mmkay.

J ared: it's insured, right?

Me: I think so.

J ared: let's hope so.

Me: ayt, Thanks buddy.

J ared: cheers.

I drove to the Sea Point, Ase saw the beach and smiled.

Ase: siyaphi?

Me: siyataka.

She burst out laughing.

Ase: you're mischievous Mpumi.

Me: spontaneous, romantic. Yes.

She blushed.

We parked, I made sure I took out everything from the car as we went to the reservations and luckily there were available rooms. I used my work allowance to pay for the room, I had enough on my card for food. We went to our room and I showered first, she had showered earlier when I told her I'm taking the lad out. By the time I walked out of the shower she had already ordered wine and our dinner...

Ase: I hope you don't mind.

Me: not at all.

I walked up to her and kissed her, she kissed me back giggling. I kissed her, her body slowly going for the bed until it hit the white sheets and we just soaked ourselves in the atmosphere of kisses and lust. I went down on her, she was clean and trimmed as if she came here expecting to get some. Well, after her two climaxes I kissed my way up. She

slid down and went down on me, and she swallowed. Came back up and looked at me...

Ase: I didn't expect this.

Me: so you shaved your pussy because you had nothing to do?

She giggled, biting my lips

Me: like, seriously?

Ase: I shaved because it's hot, and pubic hair makes me uncomfortable.

Me: yeah right, come here.

I smacked her ass and we kissed again, turned her over so she was beneath me again.

Ase: I'm serious.

Me: u yaxoka, you were hoping to get some.

She blushed, looking away.

I kissed her neck, down he boobs and focused on arousing her nipples. She unintentionally released a moan, I chuckled.

Ase: staaaaap.

Me: mh?

She giggled... "aaah my nipples baby" I stopped and kissed her on the lips. I knew that when aroused, nipples can be sensitive hence I didn't stay long after that soft outcry. I grabbed my jacket and took out a condom ndamnika...

Me: care to do the honors?

Ase: why not?

She took the packet, removed two and put one on the pedestal next to the bed while removing the foil from the other one. I moved and lay on my back, giving her full access... Just as she finished inserting the condom on me, we heard a loud burst and screams. We both jumped and ran for the window. Then we looked at each other when we saw the smoke coming from where we had parked the car...

Ase: oh no.

Me: it can't be.

Ase: oh fuck No!

She quickly got dressed and ran out, I pulled the hotel gown and ran after her safika sekugcwele the hotel management around the car. It was still in flames, but they were trying to put the fire out using extinguishers while waiting for the fire trucks. I was

so calm, yes everyone was shocked, panicking and running around and I just stood there watching it burn to ashes. She walked up to where I was standing and hooked her arm onto mine.

Ase: I'm sorry.

I didn't answer her... I wanted her to have the impression that ndothukile. You know some people don't really talk when they are shocked or upset? I was tapping into those kinda people that very moment, I couldn't afford for her to know that I knew all along that this would happen. All I was praying for was that the car was insured espan so that the insurance pays out ndingabhatali into endingayenzanga ngabom.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_30

The fire trucks came but it was already good enough for u Tshiks, the policemen arrived and

asked questions...

The management didn't actually know who the belonged to and they were giving their own statements when Asenathi left me and walked up to where the managerz and the police stood, after a few minutes they walked up to me.

Detective: Meneer, is dit jou kar?

Ase: uhm, it's a company car sir.

Detective: Kan hy nie praat vir homs elfie?

Manager: uhm detective, maybe we should go inside. He doesn't look okay.

Detective: hy lyk stoned eks e.

Me: either you do your work properly or you shut the fuck up, detective!

His eyes almost popped out, I walked behind the manager and went to the reception area. The receptionist made me El Grey tea, I took two sips

and looked at the detective.

Me: are you gonna stare at me the whole night, detective?

He cleared his throat.

Detective: uhm, Mr?

Me: Mpumelelo Sirhonyi.

Detective: Mr Shihlonyi, would yo-

Me: its Sirhonyi, detective.

Detective: that's what I said, Shihlonyi.

Me: Si-rho-nyi.

Detective: Mr Shihlonyi.

I rolled my eyes...

Detective: I'm sorry I cannot pronounce your surname properly sir, my apologies. Can you tell me what happened?

Me: what happened where?

Detective: to your car.

Me: I don't know. I was in my room, heard a burst and walked out to find people surrounding my burning car.

Detective: that's it?

Me: yes.

Detective: do you know if your car had any faults?

Me: not that I know of.

Detective: when last was it serviced?

Me: I don't know, I just got it.

Detective: got it from where, sir?

Me: it's a company car detective as the lady told you outside.

Detective: oh sorry, I apologize. Are you sure you

know nothing about what might have happened to your car sir?

I looked at him...

Detective: I'm sorry Mr Sihl- uhm sir, I understand you're in distress but I'm just doing my job here.

Me: good, now can I go back to my room?

Detective: please take my card, just incase you remember something that might help us.

Me: yaske yayi murder case le. Mxm.

I took his card and went to my room. Asenathi stayed behind for a long while, I got to the room and removed the condom while calling Jared.

Jared: Sirhonyi.

Me: iphelile.

Jared: I know, but I checked. It's insured.

Me: huh?

Jared: I'm at the crime scene too, I saw your calm ass acting shocked to that detective.

He burst out laughing, I smiled, I wanted to laugh but Asenathi couldn't walk in on me ndihleka after this. That would be suspicious.

Me: you're sick.

Jared: you're worse.

Me: haha yeah right, so what's next?

Jared: just make sure you inform your boss right now about the incident, so he can claim and call his insurers to send a tow truck to fetch the car.

Me: I'm on it. Thanks buddy.

Jared: I'm flying out to Joburg tomorrow, but Leroy will hold the fort until Saturday when I come back.

Me: ayt man.

We hung up.

I informed my boss, they promised to send a tow truck within an hour, Asenathi walked back in while I was having a glass of her wine. She sat down in silence for a few minutes...

Ase: babe?

Me: mh?

Ase: have you uhm, called the insurers?

Me: was it your father?

Ase: huh?

Me: undivile.

She stood up and walked around...

Me: you know he's around, you know he knows your

whereabouts right now. Was it him?

Ase: I don't know.

Me: you don't know? Really, you don't know?

Ase: baby...

Me: don't you fucken baby me! Don't you fucken dare baby me right now.

Ase: I'm so-

Me: what if this car burnt while I was out with Amo?
What if it burnt while I was driving with you?

Ase: why are you making this my fault?

Me: who's fault is it? Mine?

Ase: baby... Trying to blame each other is not gonna help us right now. What matters is how we fight back, if we are fighting back and if not. What do we do now?

I downed that glass, removed my gown and got in bed ndalala mna. I don't know how long she sat there but when I eventually ran out of sleep, she

was softly snoring right next to me. I got up and went outside, I went to check on the car and it was towed, they left a receipt with the hotel manager for me. I got it and went back to my room and just watched Asenathi.

I couldn't sleep, kuse ndihleli and she eventually woke up sendivasile but ndingeka nxibi. I was practically just waiting for her ba avuke sihambe. She sat up and looked at me as I stood by the window, having bathed already but still in the morning gown. I could feel her eyes on my back..

Ase: morning.

Me: good morning.

Ase: did you sleep at all?

I shook my head...

She sighed and got out of bed, went to the loo and came back. I turned to look at her.

Me: you hungry?

Ase: no.

Me: u sure?

Ase: yes I'm sure.

She got in bed again and didn't say a word. I sat next to her...

Me: look, I'm sorry about last night.

She just looked at me.

Me: I shouldn't have said the things I said to you, we are both victims here. I guess I just reacted out of shock and anger. I'm sorry babe.

Ase: you shouted at me. Like, you literally raised your voice at me over something I didn't do, something I had no control over.

Me: I know, and I'm sorry.

She didn't answer me...

I tried to kiss her, she ducked.

Me: I'm sorry... You're not really gonna let your dad get between us now, will you?

Ase: my dad is not the problem here, we are.

Me: okay, can I be given a chance to properly apologize then?

Ase: you've apologized already, I heard you. I've forgiven you last night already, I just don't like being blamed for things I didn't do. Things I'd never do.

Me: okay, noted.

Ase: especially since we both know who's resp-

I just kissed her esadwaba.

For some reason this morning I just wasn't in the mood for talking too much but I had to apologize so that we could keep the peace and because I have to be on her good books. All until I have full access and custody of my son.

I removed every piece of fabric that she had on her body and worshipped her body like it was the last meal on earth. Her subtle moans and soft pushes were motivation enough for me to keep going, I tore the condom foil myself this time around and went on with the business. Two the second one and did what I do best, tore the third one and flipped her over so she could ride while I rested a bit and ride did she!

Either she had lied to me about being the last man in there or she was watching way too much porn but either way, I wasn't complaining. She knew what was required of her and she delivered a hundred and fifty percent. After all was done she lay on my

chest and shut her eyes while I lay there wishing I had a cigar and a shot.

Ase: I'm afraid you might be the only man to ever be able to quench my thirst.

Me: you'll never know until you meet other men.

Ase: true, but I'm okay right here.

Me: u sure?

She kissed my breastplate.

Ase: very sure. You complete me.

Well... I didn't respond.

Had things not reached the stage that they had reached, regarding Amo's existence, maybe I'd say the same but because I now know more. I couldn't lie to her just to make her feel better, not saying

there won't be a time when I'll actually do lie to her to make her feel better but right now was not it. I wasn't here to complete no one's puzzle of a life,i was here to get my son. That's it.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_31

#Cassandra

In a few days after Nkosinathi told me about his heart problem I had to leave for Cape Town to start over. Start at a new job, new province, new life. Dad accompanied me as promised and he stayed for a few days pha kwa bhuti, Mpumelelo had gone out of the country so I didn't see him. As soon as I told Nkosinathi that I've landed he asked for my address so he could deliver my car and he did...

Dad: Tyhini lentwana. An entire J aguar Cassandra?

I laughed at my dad's exclamation.

Me: he said yeka Milli, but I have to maintain it while Milli is still in the EC.

Steve: uyaxoka wathi yeyakho, ngu enkosi for giving him u Million.

Me: same difference.

Steve: uzuze no Billion next time, maybe kuzothengwa i Lamborghini.

Dad: ndikukhabe xakulapho ke mntanam, ndikudibanise no Nkosinathi ngapha koko.

My brother and I laughed at dad. Obviously, I wasn't gonna get myself pregnant again, not in a million years. I endured iintlungu ndindedwa ku Milli and his dad was busy eating sushi across the globe with white women, never again. Yhu never again. I'd rather sell my womb or donate my eggs other than falling pregnant again.

I stayed with Bhut Steve and his wife. Yes, Steve had a wife who wasn't really fond of visiting us in the EC or she was fond, just that she was always working. Anyone between those two... We never really asked further xa kusithiwa she's working. I began on Monday emsebenzini and all I could off was my son it was the first time ever, after his birth that I was going to spend the whole day without seeing him.

I struggled, I struggle adjusting to the lovely environment. I just wanted to pack my things ndiye emntaneni wam mna. When I got home after work I went straight to my room and cried, Nkosinathi called while I was crying so I ignored his two calls and only answered when he called the third time. But now, he didn't just call, he video called.

I answered the call but didn't say a word to him. Until he spoke up first.

Nkosinathi: why you crying?

I just shook my head.

Nkosinathi: babe? What's going on?

Me: I miss him.

Nkosinathi: who? Ukhona?

I nod, he smiled.

Nkosinathi: that's understandable njena, but you gotta remember why you're there. It is for him as much as it is for you.

Me: I know but I'm sure lama card wakho can sustain us for a while yazi.

He laughed.

Me: I'm serious.

Nkosinathi: I know you are, but that's not you talking.

That's the part of your heart that misses your son.
You would get bored, living off someone else's
money and sitting on your potential to succeed.

I sighed.

Nkosinathi: it's still day one, you will get used to this
change and so will he. Don't be too hard on yourself.

Me: mh.

Nkosinathi: how was work?

Me: ku right. Friendly staff.

Nkosinathi: that's good to hear.

Me: uhamba nini?

Nkosinathi: Thursday evening.

I nod... I wanted to ask him ebengonoza apha
ndimbone kqala before he goes to the UK ,but I
didn't know how to put that into words without

sounding clingy. Or without giving him false hope, about anything.

Nkosinathi: you think we can meet up before I leave?

Me: you wanna come to cape Town?

Nkosinathi: and fly straight to the UK from Cape Town, yes.

Me: uhm, okay. Sure.

Nkosinathi: I'll fetch you from work Wednesday.

Me: so I must leave my car endlini ksa a.

Nkosinathi: yes.

Me: okay.

Nkosinathi: sharp.

Me: sure.

We hung up, I smiled and threw my head back. Why was I suddenly excited to see him? Heh!

Following morning, the same routine transpired but work was much better than the first day. I was adjusting.... I didn't wanna call oo sisi ndimbone qho u Milli, I wanted it to be a weekend thing so this was me practicing self discipline in all kinda ways. Wednesday morning I left my car and took a cab to work, my brother called me nge tea time to ask why I left my car endlini...

Me: akhonto bhuti I just wanted to catch a cab.

Steve: do you have petrol?

Me: ewe bhuti.

Steve: okay, u sure there's nothing wrong with the car?

Me: I'm sure bhuti, okay ke I'm meeting a friend later on and we'll come back home a bit late so I thought I should leave my car endlini since sizohamba ngeyakhe u friend imoto.

Steve: oh okay, that's good to know you're making friends.

I laughed.

If only he knew the friend.

Steve: haike sharp.

Me: sure bhuti.

We hung up, I went back to work.

Nkosinathi landed and asked for my work address and I gave him. He sent flowers just to confirm (that's what he said) and his flowers were always different from Mpumelelo's roses and I appreciated that he never succumbed to the pressure ye roses, his flowers were my favorite since we started dating and he had kept the consistency even when he had walked in my room that was filled with pink roses. He never saw the need to change and start buying me roses naye.

I took a picture and sent it to him, he responded with a smiley. Later on, when we knocked off, he was already there at the gate waiting for me. Driving a one of S-series. I put my bags at the back passenger seats and joined him e front... He started off the car smiling.

Me: why you smiling like that?

Nkosinathi: you look good, very professional.

Me: oh, thanks.

Nkosinathi: eshe.

I laughed.

Nkosinathi: sea food or burgers?

Me: sea food is healthier.

Nkosinathi: ayt.

He drove to the Fish Market, parked and we walked together and found an empty table. We placed our order but mna I wanted wine shem. He wasn't allowed to drink so he got himself lemon water while we waited for our food...

Me: feeling nervous?

He chuckled.

And nod.

Me: ubukhe wayomkroba umntana?

Nkosinathi: yes, before I boarded.

Me: bakuvumela?

Nkosinathi: bekukho u Siki.

Me: your favorite.

He laughed...

Nkosinathi: awusemhle man mamakhe.

I blushed.

Nkosinathi: you look like a millionaire.

Me: I'm mothering one, that should count for something.

He stopped grinning.

I laughed.

Me: you should loosen up, Milli is a millionaire in the making especially with some of your businesses under his name.

Nkosinathi: I thought you're referring to...

Me: even if I was, you can't keep changing your face everytime I mention that. It happened, we got mad, we cried and we put it behind us. We didn't forget, but we put it behind us.

Our food came...

Nkosinathi: can we try to not talk about it namhlanje?

Me: do you want us to talk about your heart then?

Nkosinathi: no.

Me: your money?

He shook his head, chewing.

Me: oh wow, what's there to talk about then?

Nkosinathi: us.

Me: us?

Nkosinathi: yes us.

I sighed.

Nkosinathi: I'm not getting any younger Cass, I can't still be playing around at this age.

Me: mh.

Nkosinathi: obuya kwam e UK we need to be on a mutual understanding about the future.

Me: we can't do that now?

Nkosinathi: ndifuna ukuthata.

I stopped eating and just looked at him.

Nkosinathi: andiyazi wothuswa yintoni kulento ndiyithethayo but I wanna marry you, live with you and our son under one roof sakhe ikhaya.

Me: and what answer are you expecting from me?

Nkosinathi: honesty.

Me: I think you were right when you said we should talk about this after your return from the UK.

Nkosinathi: but you already know what we'll be

talking about.

Me: yes, but your trip will give me time to think about what I want.

Nkosinathi: mh?

Me: kaloku I could still love you bu-

Nkosinathi: you said you still loved me. Not could.

Me: yes I still love you but that doesn't mean I wanna get married to you, especially not now.

Nkosinathi: okay. Lemme give you the time you need, maybe when I come back you will know what you really want siyeke lo dum'tiriri simenzayo.

Me: enkosi.

I ate up in silence.

Nkosinathi wouldn't go die kula UK endishiyapha, right? Like he wouldn't dare do that to me. Kutheni eske wathetha izinto ezindoyikisayo mvanje? He's suddenly too serious ngo life and it scared me.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_32

#Cassandra

After lunch we went to his hotel room to fetch his business phone that he had forgotten there, the plan was to fetch the phone and then go watch movies, then andigoduse. The idea of a hotel room made me uneasy and unfortunately I wasn't gonna let this one go tu in as much as it was none of my business. I wanted to ask him why did he book a hotel room enekhaya apha? We walked in and he went to his bag to look for the phone while I sat on the chair near the big window overlooking the sea...

Me: I thought you had a home here.

Nkosinathi: I have a house here, have you forgotten?

Me: exactly, so why did you book yourself a room?

Nkosinathi: inabantu indlu and I don't feel like mingling with them right now.

Me: inabantu?

Nkosinathi: umama no Liyema balapha, she's here

to see a doctor.

Me: who, your mother?

Nkosinathi: Liyema.

Me: is she sick or what?

Nkosinathi: I didn't ask, I gave them the house for the two weeks she's needed here.

Me: I don't know how you can trust them with your space.

Nkosinathi: I didn't have much of a choice, indlu ka mama is under renovations and I won't need mine because I'll be away for those two weeks as well.

Me: so they know you're here, right now?

Nkosinathi: no.

Me: no?

Nkosinathi: akhonto bandidinga ngayo mamakhe.

Me: Nkosin-

Nkosinathi: please. Not today, not now.

I nod...

Me: its nice of you... To give them your house.

He found the phone... And totally ignored that remark.

Nkosinathi: so which movie are we going for? I think sizofumana eka 7.

Me: I don't know. Anyone you like.

He looked at me.

And sat down next to me.

Nkosinathi: do we really have to go for a movie or uya kuba the idea ize nam?

I smiled... I didn't wanna offend him.

Nkosinathi: hello? .

Me: I didn't wanna offend you, uyandazi andim'danga kwi movies nje. But don't fret, I'll go, just for you.

Nkosinathi: oh wow.

Me: I'll go, seriously. I'm cool with that.

Nkosinathi: it's not a must.

Me: I know, but you want to watch a movie so let's go watch a movie. No big deal.

Nkosinathi: nah, I don't wanna put you through that. But what else can we do?

Urgh!

He seemed a bit disappointed about the change of plans, but, I'm an open book sometimes.

Me: sityile, and ndikubonile ba u right, nawe wabona ba I'm good. Maybe you can take me home?

Nkosinathi: you're joking, right?

Me: I'm not.

Nkosinathi: what's the rush?

Me: it's late.

Nkosinathi: Didn't you report ba uzobuya later than usual?

Me: I did. But still...

Nkosinathi: can we just chill here ke, or take a walk to the beach? You used to love the beach when we first met.

I didn't answer him...

He touched my hand and played with my fingers.
Not removing his eyes from me.

Nkosinathi: look I know your brother is very strict but please, can we spend another hour together? If you don't feel comfortable being alone with me in my space we can just take a walk on the beach, get drinks and that's it. After that I'll take you home.

Me: it's not that I'm uncomfortable in your space
bra...

Nkosinathi: so what is it?

I closed my eyes...

How do you tell a man that you wanna run away
from him because you're protecting the two of you
from making the biggest mistake of your lives in an
already messed up situation?

I opened my eyes and met his gaze... I swear my
nipples hardened immediately, the way they were
hard they actually made me uncomfortable against
the bra fabric. I swallowed as my throat went dry, I
cleared it.

Me: I uhm...

Nkosinathi: I can see you're uncomfortable. You
don't trust me?

Me: actually, I don't trust myself right now.

Nkosinathi: you don't trust yourself ngantoni
Cassandra?

Me: I...

I couldn't put it to words, but I reached out to him and we kissed. Yes I initiated the kiss but we kissed. He embraced the moment and made it his... And once I realized that we were actually kissing, I quickly broke it off and went to stand by the window, with one hand over my head thinking "what the hell are you doing"? He walked up behind me and I felt my whole body shiver at his touch... His hands ran from my shoulders to my hips and there they found comfortability and squeezed.

Nkosinathi: you don't trust yourself you say...

Me: don't.

He chuckled...

Nkosinathi: don't what?

Me: that right there was a mistake, can we pretend as if that never happened?

Nkosinathi: that, being the kiss?

Me: yes, the kiss.

Nkosinathi: oh unfortunately, no we can't.

Me: Nkosinathi no, we can't.

Nkosinathi: why not?

Me: because....

Nkosinathi: because what?

Me: because siphambene xasisobabini, asikho ready, awukho ready for any of this. Don't you know that?

Nkosinathi: so nam ndiphambene?

Me: that's besides the point. Dude!

Nkosinathi: okay, what's the point?

Me: the point is...

I turned to face him and he smashed his lips on mine without even allowing me to chip in another word. Okay fine I kissed him back, I melted on the palm of his hand. I felt my body become like clay on the potter's hand, my insides were aroused, I was alive and excited. One minute my back is against the wall and one of this man's legs is between my legs, the next minute my back is against the sheets and my clothes are flying across the room. Did I ever mention that Nkosinathi was a good kisser? How did I forget that all this time that we were not dating? How did I forget this whole thing? This whole feeling. We went at time for a while, not rushing anywhere but taking time into consideration. It is only when I was left in my bra and him in his trousers, but topless, that I remembered: CONDOM!

I abruptly stopped him and almost jolted up from the bed, he looked up at me from between my belly confused...

Nkosinathi: and that?

Me: we can't have sex singena protection.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Then he continued as if I didn't say anything...

Me: Nkosinathi... I can't afford to be pregnant again.
Please.

Nkosinathi: I heard you.

Me: then stop.

Nkosinathi: I'm quite sure I know how to quench
your thirst without having sex with you. Chill.

Me: huh?

He went down on my, slid my pants to one side and buried his head between my thighs, I knew he's the greatest at what he does even from the beginning of our relationship but for some reason his tongue

seemed to be more skilled now. Maybe Tammy taught him a thing or two, I was gaping for air while bucking to the motion of his head between my thighs and suddenly, the walls were about to scatter. I felt him slowing down, I couldn't afford that. I knew I had a crazy one coming so I pushed his head back in there and only then did it rain down like a waterfall. He watched me for a few seconds with a look of pride and satisfaction while my body convulsed and shuddered. Then he cleaned me up making sure he gets all the juices with his tongue, slowly kissing me all the way from the coochie to my lips. After that he just cuddled me from behind... I turned around and kissed him, deeply. I felt sorry for him because he wasn't going to get any, but most importantly, I felt home in his arms. Yes we had a long way to go, heaven knows we had ourselves to fix, we had our child to consider in whatever we do but what mattered that very moment was that I felt home in his arms. I belonged there. Always have.

He stopped kissing me and looked straight into my eyes, I felt weak.

Nkosinathi: this feels like a dream.

Me: I'll surely remember this dream xandikhatywa kulamzi ndihlala kuwo.

He smiled.

Nkosinathi: you haven't forgotten the plan, right?

Me: to look for a house?

He nod, kissing my nose.

Me: no... But I wanna settle in at work k'qala and then start looking.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Me: awuzoba na input?

Nkosinathi: I already have a house here, ya'll don't

need my input in anything.

Me: u sure?

Nkosinathi: I'm sure. Yes I'll help you in choosing and deciding if you want me to but the decision should be entirely yours.

Me: okay.

He kissed me again... And stopped to wipe my lips with his thumb.

Me: I had almost forgotten this feeling.

Nkosinathi: almost.

Me: haha, yes almost. Lonto I should get going nyhani ngoku ndingade ndizolandwa.

Nkosinathi: I'll take you home in 15 minutes, can we just enjoy the moment?

I didn't argue.

You don't argue nomntu one ntliziyo kaloku... And kengoku that very moment it was clear that le yakhe intliziyo belonged to me. And kengoku mna I was worried ngo Tammy wabantu yazi.

[06/26, 15:07] : #Mpumelelo_33

#Cassandra

We eventually got up and went to shower, together. But he came out first. I followed after a few minutes and got dressed. He then drove me home... On the way,

Nkosinathi: awufuni nto? Food, drink, anything?

Me: nah I'm cool.

Nkosinathi: u sure?

I nod.

He drove me home emva koko without saying another word. We parked at the gate...

Me: thank you.

Nkosinathi: thank you for today.

I didn't move...

Nkosinathi: what's up?

Me: I wish I could accompany you.

Nkosinathi: To UK?

Me: yes.

Nkosinathi: going there knowing there's this much peace between us is enough for me, you don't need to be there physically. I know you'll be praying for me.

I looked away...

Nkosinathi: babe.

Me: promise me one thing.

Nkosinathi: okay?

Me: promise me you will come back to us, to Milli.

He touched my hand, I removed it and looked at him.

Me: Nkosinathi promise me you won't die on that operation bed mfondini!

Nkosinathi: but I won't be operating myself.

Me: I know that but you have to fight Haibo!

Theth'ba wena ke uzovele uthembele koo gqirha nje and relax?

He didn't answer me... But he looked a bit sad.

Me: if you go in there defeated already then you

might as well not go, you have to brave up and get your fighting spirit on track. Ucingba u Milli uzomcholaphi omnye utata xa utyhafe uselapha?

He smiled...

Nkosinathi: uyandithuka kodwa ufuna ndibe strongo.

Me: hay suka I want you to have reason to fight, it's fine if I'm not reason enough but your son? Would you rest peacefully knowing that your folks never wanted his existence, gqiba wena ufe ngoku engekakwazi nothetha? Engekakwazi nokuzilwela?

Nkosinathi: I'm not gonna die Cass.

Me: you better not, otherwise you'll never rest shem ndim. I'll make sure you don't rest at all.

He laughed... I wanted to cry.

What was making me angry was that I felt his heavy

heart while we sat there. He was already defeated and that pissed me off because he's still on SA kodwa he's already given up, why the fuck?

Me: this ain't funny, I'll legit go and dig up your blutty grave mna uzukhe ufe nje.

Nkosinathi: kuzothwa uyaphambana ke, with reason.

Me: I don't care, I'll dig you up ndikushiye, everytime bekugqumelela I'll come back and dig you up. Soze ufumane peace, trust me on that.

Nkosinathi: Saturday uzofonelwa ndim. Just keep your phone with you all times.

Me: see now you're talking, I'll do that. And if you don't call me?

Nkosinathi: I will.

I looked at him, he was smiling. He obviously wanted to laugh at my outrage but he just smiled.

Me: okay. Now can I go home?

Nkosinathi: can I get a kiss?

Me: you got enough kisses for one day, go home mfondini.

Nkosinathi: one more, that will carry me through the op.

Me: Nkosinathi andingo mamakho mani sunditefela mna.

He grabbed my arms and pulled me to him, I laughed as he kissed me. We kissed, and then I got out of His car and went home. My brother was cooking, his wife was on double shift.

Steve: Thixunathi Mzayi.

Me: Ta Stephen Mzayi.

He burst out laughing

Me: uphi u sisi?

Steve: use span, akafikanga umntu who was supposed to relieve her so she's on double shift.

Me: yhooo shem... Yeka ndigqibezele.

Steve: yhu enkosi chap. I have to take her a jacket and slippers uthi nyawo zakhe zidumbile.

Me: why ungasose ulinda ukutya?

Steve: she's already bought herself something, that's what she said when I asked.

Me: ooh okay ke.

Steve: lemme dash.

Me: sharp.

I took over from him and finished off the pots, when I was done I went straight to bed. I switched off my phone so that no phonecall would disturb my sleep.

In the morning I woke up and went to work,
Nkosinathi called to tell me he'd left so I wished him
luck.

Two weeks later...

He had called on Saturday as promised but not to
tell me he's coming back home but to inform me
that the operation had been postponed to the
following week. It was now two weeks after he had
left Cape Town and he called to say that he was still
in UK for observation... I couldn't get it. A part of me
wanted to say there was no heart problem in the
first place, he just wanted pity from me but another
part was stuck on how sincere he was throughout
this whole thing.

Me: okay... So bathi uzophuma nini?

Nkosinathi: I'll know in two days after the lab issues
out my results.

Me: Kay.

Nkosinathi: don't sound sad now. It's just a minor setback.

Me: it's been two weeks already... If the operation was a success why are they still keeping you there?

Nkosinathi: they can't just release me right after the operation, they have to know and be certain that I have no clots, I have no swellings and stuff. So all of that requires time and patience. From you as well, a Lil patience please.

I sighed.

Nkosinathi: I did promise you I won't die, and I intend on keeping that promise.

Me: you better.

He laughed.

Nkosinathi: how's Ukhona?

Me: I'm visiting him month end, I'll Skype you when I'm there if you're not back by then.

Nkosinathi: enkosi.

Me: did you uhm, eventually tell your family?

Nkosinathi: no, and you won't tell them as well.

Me: babe..

Nkosinathi: no.

Me: not even your mom ke?

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: okay fine. Yho.

He chuckled.

Me: Khaw'leza ubuye ke sizokhangela indlu ka Million.

Nkosinathi: I hate that name, yeerrr!

Me: you could be utata ka Million if you wanted to, qha ungu stiff neck ke hlala ungu tata ka Ukhona.

Nkosinathi: is e ndim no stiff neck?

Me: tata ka Sinathi.

Nkosinathi: Hayini. Baby utye ntoni?

Me: baby wakho ufana nam?

Nkosinathi: ungakulinge Cassandra, ungakulinge undibuze lonto mna.

Me: haike tata ka Million caphukisi tu.

Nkosinathi: Why is it so difficult to call him by his name again?

Me: hahaha, because uyi Million yam you wouldn't understand ke because ezakho ii millions azithethi azityi asihambi.

He laughed.... But evakala ba akahleki ncam.

Me: Bye bye wethu, ungeka nyukelwa ngamahlwili.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra uyenza ijoke yonke lento.

Me: our sense of humors won't just die because you have heart problems kaloku bhuti, clot'a wena while we laugh.

He repeated "clot'a wena" and laughed out loud.

Nkosinathi: and I'm out here worried about you, kanti wena uzonwabis a ngentlungu yam. Somebody remind me why do I love you kanene?

Me: you love me because the rest of your girlfriends couldn't keep up with you, and I gave you a handsome and talking Million.

Nkosinathi: you're crazy.

Me: yet you still love me. Who's the real crazy ass then?

Nkosinathi: the one with a bigger ass.

Me: fokof!

We both laughed as I hung up.

He was in a better place, maybe he was just entertaining me or he was really hopeful.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_34

We eventually got out of bed and went home via cab. Amo and Thula were busy baking when we walked in...

Me: nkqo, molweni.

Amo: haibo.

Thula: nivelaphi?

I looked at a blushing Asenathi. She cleared her throat...

Ase: so mvanje xanibuliswa that's how you answer?

Amo: I thought you guys were in there.

Thula: kanti nimke nini? In fact nivelaphi?

Oh so they didn't notice that we weren't here at all?

Me: this morning, we went to get some air.

I left them bes asijongile...

Ase: I'm hungry and I need a bath. Later guys.

She also left them pha and followed me to my room.
I was on my bed swicthing on my laptop...

Ase: how busy are you today?

Me: I'll be out in a few, probably for the rest of the day.

Ase: Haibo, u busy yintoni imini yonke?

Me: I just have to do a follow up on the car, then I'm working a night shift. Why are you asking me so

many questions?

Ase: I got a message from mom on our way here, she's landing today so...

Me: ya'll will call a cab, right?

Ase: yes of course...

Me: okay.

She didn't move, so I looked up at her.

Me: what's up?

Ase: that's all you're going to say? Okay?

Me: kanti ifanba ndithini?

She chuckled and got undressed, grabbed the gown and went to run herself a bath then came back while running the bath.

Ase: Mpumi what are we doing?

Me: you and who?

Ase: mna nawe, senzani? Yintoni igama layo lento siyenzayo?

Me: undilahlile kengoku.

Ase: are we dating, are we just shagging because of convenience, what are we doing?

Me: oh that's what you're asking?

Ase: yes.

I typed in my password...

Me: ixhomekeke kuwe, whatever you feel comfortable in calling it. Yiyo.

Ase: are you being serious right now?

Me: you're the one who wants to label it Ase, not mna. So whatever name you see fit, I'm okay with it.

Ase: so basically we could be sex partners ndibe mna ndicingba sikwi relationship?

Me: why would you assume though? Aren't we communicating ngoku?

Ase: but you're not cooperating here.

Me: I am, I'm just not saying what you want me to say. But I sure am communicating.

Ase: Mpumelelo!

I looked at her....

She huffed

Me: Why do you have to be so dramatic so early in the morning?

Ase: so I'm being dramatic?

Me: We had a great morning babe, why are you so determined to spoil it? Or ufuna uhamba sixabene so you can have an excuse as to why I won't see my son for another 10 years plus?

Ase: that's cold. Even for you.

Me: then why are you picking a fight unnecessarily?

As: because...

Me: please go bath before this get worse.

She turned around and stormed to the shower. I sat there wondering what happened to her, ebe right at the hotel room njena and I didn't promise her umts hato so why was she out here acting like I did? Her phone rang and the screen revealed "Daddy" so I just put it back there. Her phone rang again, same number. Something told me this wasn't her father because she normally called her father "dad" and not "daddy", but I didn't want to pry. This damned phone rang again, but this time it rang once and then a message came through. I picked it up and read the message on the screen

"babe, are you still with baby daddy? I hope you are not giving him my coochie. I've topped up your wallet, call me"

I laughed alone.

Like, she's outchea catching feelings on me kanti she's got u daddy on the side who owns her coochie? Kanti lomntana thinks I'm stupid? I put her phone down, changed into comfortable clothes and packed my uniform for the night shift then I walked out to these two chefs.

Me: boy.

Amo: bhuti?

Me: ingathi niyahamba namhlanje, unfortunately I won't see you guys. I have work to do.

Amo: sihamba namhlanje?

Me: yes, umakhulu wakho is landing today.

Amo: Yho.

He didn't look like he wanted to leave as soon.

Me: I'll get your account number from your mom neh?

Amo: for the investment or undipha ipetty cash?

Thula: investment?

Amo: he also wants to invest in my poultry business.

Thula: heee! Young businessman you managed to lure in another investor?

Amo laughed.

Amo: no problem bhuti, enjoy your day at work.

Me: thank you buddy. Hug?

He moved from around the kitchen counter and came to hug me.

Amo: haike I've got flour all over me.

Me: I don't mind.

He laughed.

After that moment I left them, went to attend to the insurers, then I went to Leroy. We ordered food and had a sit in...

Leroy: okay so this is what happened.

He detailed down what Asenathi's father got his men to plant a liquid bomb in my car while I was out with Amo. He obviously didn't necessarily want to kill Amo, but wanted to scare me because he must have calculated enough time difference kwalento ilaste until we got to the hotel.

Leroy: his next set up is at your workplace. He's got an inside man there.

Me: what?

Leroy: what you're going to do is tell your boss you don't feel safe here, maybe he will consider appointing a driver for you or he can send you to his other branch in Joburg.

Me: but I just got here dude.

Leroy: I know... But this is something we cannot negotiate. Your life is at risk here.

I looked at this guy.

Leroy: and he's communicating with his daughter. She knew about the bomb.

Me: uyaXoka.

Leroy: she knew.

Me: I asked her, she didn't know.

He pulled his laptop and showed me conversations between Asenathi and her father. I stopped reading when I realized that this guy could be lying, when

would he had gotten a chance to hack into Asenathi's phone? Or her dad's phone?

Me: how did you hack into his phone?

Leroy: we hacked into her phone using the same chip he's using to track her movements. Not the chip but the code buried in the chip.

Me: this shit is crazy. I actually don't believe this

Leroy: I don't blame you.

I read again a part of the conversation...

Her dad: If you don't come home right now I will blow that boys head to pieces.

Ase: you wouldn't dare tata.

Her dad: are you daring me now? Asenathi Dakumba are you daring me us endodeni no mntanam?

Ase: oh tata torho, Amo needs to know his real dad. What's wrong with that? Why are you so against this?

Her dad: because Amohelo is a Dakumba. He already has a dad, why would you want my grandson to be associated with paupers?

Ase: Mpumi is not a pauper and you know that

Her dad: buya nalomntana Asenathi, I'm giving you the next six hours.

She didn't respond further than that. I closed the laptop and looked at Leroy

Me: so this conversation could have taken place while they were at the beach. Based on the hours he gave her.

Leroy: yes.

Me: fuck lomntana! Fuck!

Leroy went to get us two beers from the fridge, I knew I shouldn't be drinking because I was working late but I needed it. My head needed it.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_35

#Onele

After Sandra gave birth to Milli obviously we were all excited about the new member of the family so we went down to Port Elizabeth to spend a week or two with them. Well, I wasn't entirely there for them, I had met a friend on Facebook and agreed to meet up with him on that week. He wasn't a stranger to the family hence I couldn't let anyone know about my meeting up with him, they'd want to involve me in their drama which is actually none of my business. He never did me any wrong, and anyway, I was attracted to them darker and violent.

I've always made it known that I love my sister's relationship with Ta Nko. Like, every one was aware of that. Despite everything that was happening

between them I still believed that they belonged together because I knew how much they loved each other. I knew how much Sandra loved that guy and it pained me to watch her hurting because Ta Nko was busy nomlungu ending amaziyo ba udibene nayephi. How the fuck do you visit your baby momma ne cherri? Okay fine une cherri ke but does it have to be umlungu? Black brother, what are you trying to say about us? I was hurt I won't lie. But then she (Sandra) Put me at ease when she said she didn't mind what he was doing with his love life as long as he's sincere with his feelings towards her angenzeli just to spite her because she was over that. This day of meeting up with this guy I got dressed in denim dungaree shorts, white sports bra and matching kicks. I went to my sister's room and she was just lying there admiring her son, I sat just below the lil kid and put my bag on the floor.

Me: mntase... Would you give Ta Nko another chance, if he were to ask for it?

Sandra: what?

Me: would you consider giving your relationship with Ta Nko another chance?

Sandra: why are we talking about this?

I sighed....

Me: I watched him when he accompanied us to the doctor's appointments after he found out about the pregnancy, the guy still loves you.

Sandra: he never said he has stopped loving me, but he has moved on.

Me: kaloku if he were to come to his senses and ask for a love back, would you consider?

She didn't say anything.

She just stared into space.

Me: I know you still love him.

Sandra: if he were to want that now, no I wouldn't

consider.

Me: why not?

Sandra: a lot has happened, and I'm in no space to be in a relationship at all right now.

Me: maybe three years down the line?

Sandra: I can't put a time frame to it, just as long as it's not now.

Me: so nawe us amfuna?

She smiled.

And sat up.

Sandra: we had plans for the future, it would be nice to see if they could still come to fulfillment.

Me: with Milli in the picture?

Sandra: he's always wanted to have kids with me, that's all he could talk about. We even went further to take tests to see if siyazala na sobabini.

Me: you're joking, right?

She laughed... I could see it all over her face, she was still madly inlove with him as she was when she first told me about him.

Sandra: we took all tests trust me, we were planning towards this whole parenting thing but the deal was we would commence with our plans once I graduate.

Me: qha u Milli wangxama sana.

Sandra: he was too forward yho, but I'm grateful that I had him now. Now I have someone to work for, come back home to.

Me: I'm still in the picture ke sisi.

Sandra: you have two parents, Milli has one.

Me: Ta Nko is present Sandra, he just isn't under the same roof with ya'll. Uyayazi nawe he'd be here at a blink of an eye if you were to call him regarding umntana.

She smiled.

Knowingly.

Me: that white girl...

Sandra: Tammy.

Me: yes lont'iyiyo. She's into him.

Sandra: haike Onele, why wouldn't she be into him?

Me: so you wouldn't mind if he really dated her?

Sandra: nope, it's his life and they are practically dating already.

Me: I don't like her.

Sandra: she's not your girlfriend s thandwa sam, it's not your responsibility to like her.

Me: mntase awunaso nesikhwele esi sincinci?

Sandra: yintoni isikhwele k'qala? Because even if I wanted to, asoze ndikhweletele u Nkosinathi mna.

Me: why not?

Sandra: he broke it off with me when I needed him the most, what would make me think he's any better now?

Me: he was upset.

Sandra: he's an adult Onele, mdala nakum for goodness sake. Surely he should be able to take matured decisions upset or not.

I looked at her thinking...

I could still feel that she loved him but maybe she was disappointed by how things unfolded.

Me: kutheni khona ningena pet names kule relationship yenu?

She laughed.

Me: hay ndi serious.

Sandra: I don't know. I don't really care about pet names wethu.

Me: mntase, akukho neligama ke alibizayo xa abantu bengekho? That name when he calls you uyazi immediately what he wants without him having to spell it out?

Sandra: we never had such. He calls me Cassandra or Cass and it ends there.

Me: and you call him Nkosinathi.

Sandra: yes, and babe here and there... But that's about it.

Me: andinazi ningabantu abanjani shem.

Sandra: there are so many people who call him Nathi, I wasn't about to start calling him Nkosi. There is one Lord and that's Jesus.

I burst out laughing...

Me: pet names don't necessarily have to be cut out

of your original names, like, zange nikhe nithiyane ke amagama nje?

She shook her head.

Me: I feel like you were the boring one in this relationship.

Sandra: in that relationship, correct your tense.

Me: mxm. Oksalayo he's the only sbari I recognize.

Sandra: uva kuwe sisi, mna andingeni ndawo.

Nkosinathi has moved on with his life, so will I when I'm ready.

Me: please don't rush into anything just yet.

Ndiyam'bona la gqirha utyhulubayo.

Sandra: I said when I'm ready. Don't you have anywhere to be khona? Why are you on my case today?

I laughed and grabbed my bag.

Me: lemme leave you ke sisi, a girl has people to meet and places to see.

Sandra: enjoy yourself girl, ungavumi amadoda wase Bhayi qha kuyo yonkinto oyenzayo.

Me: ngo waphi kanene u Ta Nko?

Sandra: perfect example why you shouldn't even ngamadoda alapha.

I laughed at her and walked out, I called a cab because I couldn't drive as yet even though a car was available, and I wasn't about to walk for fifteen minutes to get a taxi.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_36

#Onele

When I got to Greenacres I texted the guy. Ginger. And he came to pick me up, we were going to have a bite at a restaurant by the beach. The drive was a

very tense one, I don't know why because we vibed just fine ku Facebook. We reached his restaurant of choice and ordered drinks while going through the menu...

Ginger: uhm, I'm glad you came through.

Me: you say that as if I wasn't gonna come through.

Ginger: I took your word yes, but there's so much that has happened in the past few years between your family and I.

Me: ndingenaphi mna?

I wasn't even looking at him all this time.

He sighed.

I looked up at him right after he sighed.

Me: how's Mozambique?

Ginger: kumnandi, but it will never be like home.

Me: kutheni ungabuyi ke?

Ginger: I can't.

Me: you can't or you won't?

He took a sip of his whiskey.

Me: are you still friends with my brothers?

Ginger: no.

Me: is there bad blood?

He chuckled.

Ginger: that's a mild way to put it. They loath even ivumba lam.

The waitress came to take our order then left us to continue with our conversation.

Me: what do you want from me?

He looked up, confused.

Me: what do you want from me?

Ginger: I told you nje Onele, ndiyak'ncanywa and I'm ready to actually settle down with one person who feels the same ngam regardless of my past.

Me: you do realize that I do have a boyfriend, and I'm not ready for no settling at all?

He nod.

Me: Ndimncinci mna, I have my whole life ahead of me, I wanna live it to the fullest.

Ginger: you did mention that.

Me: then ufuna ntoni kum?

Ginger: I want you. Ndifuna wena, there's no way I

can explain it simpler than that.

Me: but?

Ginger: ngxaki yam I don't wanna get you in trouble. After yonke lanto ka Cass I promised your brothers I'd never set foot here again.

Me: so now you broke your promise?

Ginger: because I wanted to meet you, surely you can tell that andikhululekanga nangoku because I know they have ears and eyes everywhere.

I weighed what he was saying. He did seem a bit uneasy.

Ginger: I want to get to know you yes but it's not gonna be as easy we may think.

Me: you think?

Ginger: I know but it's worth trying.

I smiled...

Ginger: you having a boyfriend is not really a problem, the mere fact that you are here with me right now speaks volumes.

Me: I could have just wanted to meet up just for closure not because I like you.

Ginger: true, but we both know the feeling is mutual here.

He seemed so sure of himself, I liked him. He wasn't any different from the Ginger I knew from Facebook to the one I was meeting now for the first time, he was confident in himself and he didn't mince his words.

Me: so what do you think we should do, moving forward?

Ginger: with regards to?

Me: you, us.

Ginger: do you have a passport?

Me: not yet, I'll only be permitted to do it xandiqala e varsity.

Ginger: well if we do decide to go the extra mile, we might have to travel between SA and Mozambique. I don't know what you're going to tell your boyfriend.

I chuckled and took a sip from my champagne...

Me: tell me... what are the chances of you ever being attracted to Cass, kuyo yonke la mess naniyenza no Bhut Sthe?

Ginger: I was never attracted to her.

Me: be honest.

Ginger: I'm actually being honest, she's beautiful don't get me wrong, but I never felt any form of attraction towards her.

I believed him.

But I didn't want him to have it easy.

Ginger: you don't believe me?

Me: no.

Ginger: I would never lie to you about this when I've been totally honest with you about everything.

Detail to detail.

Me: really?

He laid back on his chair just as our food came through.

I tasted from my plate as the waitress disappeared back into the kitchen.

Ginger: Nelle?

I looked up almost blushing... Pet names. I wasn't

new to these though, because he initially called me Nelle, and other names, pha ku messenger.

Ginger: ufuna ndithini?

Me: I don't know. But I know si attractive sonke ekhaya, why wouldn't you have been attracted to her?

He laughed at me.

Ginger: so you want me to admit to having some feelings for your sister? Really?

Now I laughed at him.

Ginger: udlala ngam kodwa ngoku because you know the truth to this.

Me: I'm just pulling your leg man.

Ginger: udlala ngam, I'd never come for you
xandandikhe ndane feelings for your sister.

Me: that's good to know, I wouldn't like being a
second option.

Ginger: even though you have a boyfriend?

Me: yi boyfriend yam mos, not eyakho.

Ginger: heheheeeee!

I laughed at him... But what's wrong with having two options? Surely with being in a democratic country we had the choice even relationshipically. We then had our meal, and drinks and then we went to watch the waves sitting on a big rock on shore. In as much as I liked this side of him, the fact that he had some gangster shit about him, about his past, turned me on the most.

Ginger: uzofundaphi, varsity?

Me: I've applied all over, but I'm hoping for Joburg.
Away from my siblings.

Ginger: why?

Me: they are controlling.

Ginger: your big sis is in Joburg, or Pretoria?

Me: andizohlala kuye, I'll rent a flat. As long as I'm far away from sis Cindy then I'm good.

Ginger: your siblings are very protective of you guys, and that's dope.

Me: hay suka bayayibaxa.

He laughed.

Me: don't get me wrong, I will tell them when you fuck me up the wrong way and they will deal with you accordingly.

Ginger: I don't plan to.

I smiled and lay the back of my head on his chest. He smelt good yazin. Very good.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_37

#Cassandra

It was now the forth week after Nkosinathi had left for the UK, he wasn't back yet but he expected to be discharged kule veki. I was finally convinced that he's there because of his heart because he initiated video calls every night so we would talk and talk non stop, until I'd fall asleep while talking to him. Most times. For some reason I was in the mood to go house viewing so I set that up with two of the best agents in the Cape but I had to go see my son first so I booked a flight to PE for the weekend. When I landed Friday evening, sis Siki went to fetch me from the airport. I was so excited to see her, to see the rest of my family and of course I was excited to see my son. We drove home oko sincokola, endibalisela about what's been happening in my absence and so forth. We walked in endlini and Milli was on the couch playing by himself with sis Cindy working on the floor right next to him.

Me: Molweni bethuna!

His head cocked as he followed the sound of my voice, Cindy stood up and we hugged. I lifted Milli up and kissed him, he just laughed. My heart melted. Oko ke ndimthe nca kum right through the catching up, the supper until bedtime.

Cindy: uzolala e roomini yakhe?

Me: sizolala kweyam yhu ndikhumbula ndinje.

Bandihleka...

We went to my room no mntanam, her aunt, Asenathi called me but because her number was blocked, it just showed on the screen and cut off. Two times she called and ended up calling me on her mother's phone, I don't know why I never

blocked hers. I really don't, I thought I did.

Me: Hello?

Asenathi: hi... Unjani?

Me: I'm good, how can I help you?

She cleared her throat.

I waited.

Asenathi: I'm looking for my brother, have you heard from him in the past week or two?

Me: no.

Asenathi: he hasn't checked up on his son?

Me: I don't live with his son, if he wants to check up on him he'll call my family.

Asenathi: oh okay. Uhm, so he hasn't called you in the past two few weeks?

Me: no.

Asenathi: are you sure?

Me: haikengoku.

Asenathi: I know Nathi would not just not call you for two weeks and more.

Me: so ndim lo uxokayo?

Asenathi: I'm not fighting with you Cass, I just need to reach him urgently and all his phones are on voicemail.

Me: obviously akekho kum, call his business partners then. Or go to his house.

Asenathi: I've been there, it looks like he hasn't been there for a while.

Me: then report him missing at the police Asenathi. I don't know what you want me to say.

Asenathi: I can't report him missing, he could have gone on a business trip. Hence I wanted to find out from you maybe ebekuxelele.

Me: unfortunately, he didn't.

Asenathi: if he does, and when he does... Please let him know we're looking for him.

Me: okay.

Asenathi: thank you.

Me: sure.

I hung up.

See why I wanted him to at least tell his mother about the heart problem? They wouldn't be blasting my phone asking for him.

I put on fresh linen on the bed and took Milli for a bath, we shared a bath and as if his father knew that we are sharing a bath, he videocalled us. I answered, Milli on my chest, looking towards the phone...

Me: Nkosinathi Dakumba?

He smiled and waved as he saw his son, he was sitting up on the hospital bed, still in a hospital gown.

Me: how are you feeling today?

Nkosinathi: I'm happy to see you two. Ninjani nina?
Ukhona has grown so much haibo.

Me: exactly what I said when I got here, he's even heavier.

Nkosinathi: hey nana.

Milli tried reaching for the phone, laughing in excitement. Obviously akhonto ayaziyo but...

Nkosinathi: I envy you right now.

Me: me or Milli?

Nkosinathi: both of you.

Me: eshe, why would you envy u Milli kengoku?

Nkosinathi: ungqengqe endaweni yam nje ndithini ungabinamona?

I laughed at him.

Me: indawo yakho is ezulwini bhuti.

Nkosinathi: I have good news.

Me: you do?

Nkosinathi: I've been discharged, so I'm coming home ngoms o. Obviously landing the following day ke.

I was happy to hear that, I just didn't know how to express it. Oko bendincumile.

Nkosinathi: someone's tongue got caught.

Me: I'm happy yazi.

Nkosinathi: you're happy that I survived the op or that I'm coming home?

Me: you're coming home to who kanene?

He laughed.

Me: I'm serious. You're not coming home to me, yes I will see you but... I mean.

Nkosinathi: you do realize that ukuba ubuvumile sits hate I'd be coming home to you?

Me: asikho ready to get married bra, and I just started working.

Nkosinathi: so?

Me: Abazali bam andikabenzeli nto, I can't just jump into umtshato right after ndigqibo fumana ums ebenzi nobe ibingenguwe.

Nkosinathi: I understand all of that, but babe... I'm coming home qha. That's all that matters.

I smiled.

Me: yes, that's all that matters, done mind me. Will you be landing in Cape Town or PE?

Nkosinathi: Cape Town because I wanna see you, then I'll go to PE after a week or two.

Me: oh okay.

Nkosinathi: when can I arrange to see my son?

Me: I'll speak to sis Siki and get back to you.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Me: uhm... Your sister called me, ebuza when last I spoke to you.

Nkosinathi: baphants'e abaqaphela ba andikho. An entire month?

Me: well you can't really blame them, uyamenza u up and down nje kwa wena.

Nkosinathi: I'm a business man, what did you tell her?

Me: told her I haven't spoken to you in a few weeks.

Nkosinathi: did she believe you?

Me: she has no choice, asina peptalk. Uthe okay and said if you do call me I must inform you bayakukhangela as your phones are all on voicemail.

Nkosinathi: I'll go to them after I've seen my son.
They won't die mabalinde.

Me: maybe you can try calling your mother akwazi
ba uright aphukhoyo.

Nkosinathi: okay.

Me: okay. Thanks.

He smiled.

Me: and that?

Nkosinathi: you, always considering my mother in
everything.

Me: I'm a mother bra, I wouldn't survive not knowing
where my son is, for an entire four weeks. I'd go
mad, trust me.

Nkosinathi: I see that, don't stress. I'll call her once I
land.

Me: enkosi.

Nkosinathi: I love you... I know I haven't told you that in a while but ndiyakuthanda nyhani.

Me: I know that.

Nkosinathi: see you in a few days then.

Me: see you.

He blew a kiss before hanging up, probably for Milli because Milli suddenly threw his hands in the air making excited sounds and laughing in between screaming. We drained the water, saphuma and went to bed. I got in bed in my birthday suit, Milli in just his nappy, the weather was permitting us and I was too tired to look for impahla anyway.

I was suddenly at peace yazi, home really is where we should find peace. Being with my son brought me so much peace, I was so calm around him ND just watching him play and laugh on his own brought me so much happiness.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_38

#Cassandra

The following morning I went shopping with my son, we actually just went out to get some air and because bendifuna uphumza oo sisi nabo khebabethwe ngu Moya even if it's just one day.

I didn't take his stroller ngabomu, I wanted him close to my chest mntakabawo and we had intimate conversations as we walked up and down Greenacres, we laughed at nothing, we agreed and argued to almost everything. But truth of the matter is, we both enjoyed this time out... Well until I went to buy dunked wings.

"Cassandra"

I knew that voice all too well. But I didn't turn tu, I was actually cussing under my breath. They waited until I paid at the counter and as I went to stand in

the waiting que, Asenathi, her brother's wife and her mother cornered me.

Liyema: Cass, hi.

Me: Hi.

Liyema: unjani dear?

I looked at all three of them briefly before answering her.

Me: I'm okay thanks. I see ni right nani.

Liyema: si right sisi... Uyakhula umntana?

Me: kakuhle.

Mam'Dakumba: khaw'mkhulule ndimbone sisi?

Me: andiva ma?

Liyema: ucela ubona umntana umama.

I smiled as my order was called before I could answer them, ndabashiya and went to fetch it. Xandibuya they lead the way until we got outside.

Asenathi: uhm Cassandra, ubude wamfumana u Nathi?

Me: yes, uthe he will call your mother when he lands between tomorrow and the following day.

Asenathi: oh, so he was really out of the country?

Me: I didn't ask.

Asenathi: but you just said when he lands.

Me: so he doesn't land xa e vela e Joburg or Durban or Cape Town? Asenathi: kanti uthe uphi kuwe?

Me: I just told him to call you or his mother when he gets a chance, andizomenzanto ba uphi or wenzani.

Asenathi: wena umfumene kweyiphi number so that I can call him?

Me: he video called ngo WhatsApp.

Asenathi: ooh okay.

No thank you? Heh. I took two steps to walk away nomntanam.

Mam'Dakumba: Haibo Cassandra, awuzondibonis a umntana ngoku sewulapha? Ukumkroba nje, andizom'bamba.

Me: ha.a mama.

Asenathi: for ntoni?

Me: Andithethi nawe, hold your tongue.

Asenathi: hay suka hold my tongue ye rubbish.
Ukumtyhila nje umntana, akathi umama mothule amfunqule mos.

Me: xa e serious u mamakho Asenathi efuna ubona umntana wam she will make means aye ekhaya, akahlali stratweni u Milli.

Mam'Dakumba: I know that, but a peak won't hurt no one sisi. Silapha sonke ngoku.

Asenathi: uyakuthanda ke ucengwa u girl.

Liyema: hay Asenathi, awungeni ndawo.

Asenathi: look at her, unqike neempumlo mntaka bawo. Whoah u Nathi wayenza into, ngesiphole entloko ba wayekhe wandimamela for once wahlala pha ku Sive.

Me: ahlale ku Sive? U Sive loh ungu mama ka Sinathi your beloved niece? Or is it your beloved sister?

She swallowed and looked around.

Me: Hay khawume kancinci wethu miss Goody-two-shoes.

Liyema: bendithe thula akuthethwa nawe.

I smiled and looked at her mother.

Mam'Dakumba: u Nathi akafuni siye kokwenu. Ukhalele.

Me: but do you blame him?

Mam'Dakumba: no my dear I don't, and the worst part of yonke lento is that I could have lost my son.

Me: your son being Nkosinathi?

She nod...

Mam'Dakumba: he no longer pops in endlini like he used to, utatakhe noticed that he's made some changes on a few of their joint companies.

Liyema: bendithe ke kumama she mustn't worry too much about that, maybe he's finally growing.

Me: or maybe, he's finally seeing his family for what it really is.

Asenathi: Cassandra, don't. Don't you dare.

Me: or what?

She looked at me fuming.

Me: see the good thing about you having this unresolved beef with me is that andiceli kutya kokwenu, andiceli manephukeni kuwe andiceli nomcinga wemats'his'i kwa Dakumba. So uzobila uphinde uzihluze coz there ain't nothing that you gonna do.

Liyema: uxolo Cass we didn't intend to cause a fight here, we just spotted you and umama was excited that she'll finally see u mzukulwana wakhe. Don't mind u Asenathi.

Me: u mzukulwana ka mama ngu Amohelo and the rest of your kids. She made that clear kwa last year.

Mam'Dakumba: oh mntanam, ndaw'hlala ndixolis'ake ngaleyo into. I still don't know what got into me.

Me: ndakuxolela kudala mama, trust me I have.

She nod... As if holding back tears.

Me: xa u ready mama for uyobona u Million, uzucele intombi yakho ikuse pha ekhaya xa ingekho busy.

I've come to understand that she's a very busy person.

They looked at her... Probably wondering u busy yintoni. Uba bebeyazi that nam andimazi ba u busy yintoni but she's a very busy person, nango hambe ezihlohla nje ezintweni zabantu. Bubu busy nobo.

Me: nihambe kakuhle bethuna, Milli is getting uncomfortable.

Liyema: nani sisi, it's nice seeing you.

Me: wish I could say the same.

Liyema: don't force it sthandwa, everything will fall into place in due time.

I nod and walked away.

I could see the pain in his mother's eyes, the longing of seeing her grandson. Touching him. But she doesn't have a grandson mos, her grandson

went down the drain as she had wished. Kwalena ndithi makaye ekhaya ibikukumsizela qha otherwise I did hope that xa enokuva nyhani afike kukho u Cindy uyaw'kwanela kukuzichaza ukuba ungubani, awubone umnyango ebengene ngawo very fast. Akats hayi ntsango usisi.

We had one more stop no Milli before heading home and that was Woolies for ice cream. Once we got that, we headed to the parking lot and got in our car... I swear there was a familiar perfume lingering around the parking lot. I just didn't know whose. Once I finished strapping Milli I got in and started my ignition,drove off.

We got home and sis Cindy was by the poolside with her man, we just waved and walked inside. I put Milli on his cot and scooped ice-cream for myself and some wings on the side, leaving some for the rest of the family.

My mind was racing... And it clicked. The perfume belonged to Ta Sthera. I caught it when they had him in that strange house for questioning, yes. That was his perfume or cologne or whatever it was that he used.

Me: oh hell no!

I immediately panicked and called Lionel.

Lionel: Mama ka Million. Unjani?

Me: I think Ta Sthera is around.

Lionel: what?

Me: bendise mall bhuti, I swear I smelt his perfume or cologne all over the parking lot where my car was parked. He is back bra.

Lionel: uphi wena ngoku?

Me: ndise ndlini I just got home.

Lionel: did you notice anyone following you?

Me: no... I didn't check.

Lionel: okay, don't panic. J ust stay indoors and don't tell your sisters until I call you back.

Me: okay. Awuzoza eBhayi ke?

Lionel: Sandra, do not panic.

I swallowed hard.

Lionel: I'll call you back just now.

Me: okay.

He hung up.

Yhu! No. Never.

[06/26, 15:08] : #Mpumelelo_39

#Nkosinathi

I had experienced pain a couple of times on my chest and I didn't take any note of it until I complained to Khaya about it while we were coming from a meeting, he then suggested I fly down to Durban and have his brother check me out.

He had booked me with a friend of his who's a cardiologist. The doctor then suggested I go have the operation in UK, at the hospital where he trained. He booked his mentor for me to do the operation so when that was done, I had to return home and see my son. He's the only reason I was determined to fight this.

I decided to stay just another week in Durban and reflect, recoup. Liyema called me three days before I headed back to PE.

Me: Nkosikazi?

Liyema: bhuti, unjani?

Me: I'm good man, can't really complain. Unjani wena?

Liyema: I'm okay.

Me: u sure?

She sighed.

Me: talk to me, what's going on?

Liyema: umama akekho right.

Me: u nantoni?

Liyema: the doctors haven't seen anything as yet, but they ran some tests yesterday I think we're going to get them back after three weeks.

Me: oh haike kuhle xas eniyile kwa gqirha.

Liyema: uzobuya nini wena? In fact uphi coz u Ase uthi awukho e Joburg.

Me: I'm in Durban, will be here for a while.

Liyema: umama oko ethetha ngawe Nkosinathi,

won't you just come back to check on her then
uphinde ke uhambe?

I coughed a lil...

Me: I'll see what I can do, but I'm not promising
anything.

Liyema: please e try bra, like, please e try.

Me: utata akekho kanti?

Liyema: he left today, with Ase.

Me: but he was there during the doctor's visits?

Liyema: yes.

Me: alright, I'll call her later today.

Liyema: okay thanks.

Me: thank you for the heads up. Sharp.

We cut the call.

Well I wasn't going to worry about anyone else but myself right now. I had always put myself second best on everything, and to everyone.

After that call I called Cassandra, just to check up on my son. And her. She didn't answer the phone immediately so I hung up after about three rings, then she returned my call.

Me: mamakhe?

Cass: you called?

Me: yes, I was just checking up on you guys.

Cass: oh... U right?

Me: yeah I'm good, ni right nina?

Cass: we're okay. U sure u right?

I chuckled...

Cass: I'm serious, you sound a bit down. Or tired.

Me: I must be tired, but ndi right.

Cass: okay ke. Thanks for checking up on us.

Me: akhonto ayidingayo umntana?

Cass: not yet, we'll go for his Immunization later in the week. Uzobakhona?

Me: uhm, no ndis abambekile ngu msebenzi.

Cass: okay.

Me: I'll make it next time.

Cass: it's just Immunization tatakhe, no big deal.

Me: but I know I said I wanted to be there, kwinto yonke.

Cass: well you can't split yourself in half. I'm here so that's okay, and besides, you've got a life of your own so I don't expect you to adjust yonkinto immediately.

I knew she'd go there....

Me: Thix'ukhona is my son, so everything else has to come emva kwakhe.

Cass: andikuphikisanga.

Me: but you're making it seem like I don't prioritize him.

Cass: did I say that?

Me: Cass please. Can we not fight?

Cass: I'm not fighting kodwa Nkosinathi, I'm merely stating facts here.

I took a deep breath... Released it and said my goodbyes.

Me: I have to go, I'll call you xandibuyile.

Cass: okay. Sharp.

Me: sho.

We hung up.

Sometimes I feel like she's just like Asenathi. Akafuni kungaxatyanwa, everytime there must be something that we're fighting over. Qho. Maybe that exactly why they don't get along yazi, banayo into efanayo. Not entirely, but ikhona.

Following week she told me that she was about to leave for Cape Town, to start at the new job so I told her ndizobuya following day so that I could spend the day with the lil guy. But before I could spend the day with them, she poured out her heart to me about how she felt ngam and how I've been neglecting her feelings in everything regarding my family and our son. After that phone call, I felt so much pain in my heart, it felt physical. So I just called the doctor to come and have a look, ndingafi umntanam e kwenye iprovince.

Doc: you're fine, you just need to take it easy.

Me: and the pain?

Doc: it might have been caused by panic. Did you argue or fight with anyone?

Me: no, I haven't fought or argued with anyone.

Doc: okay... Keep it at that.

I nod...

Doc: have you decided to tell your family?

Me: no.

Doc: Mr Dakumba, you need a solid support structure in order to come out of that operation. You need reason to fight.

Me: I have enough reason in my son doc, anyone else doesn't really matter.

Doc: have you told him?

I smiled.

Me: he's not even six months yet.

Doc: oh, are you in speaking terms with his mother?

Me: yes.

Doc: can you at least tell her? You have to at least have someone you can trust with your life besides your son.

I kept quiet...

He sat down and looked at me.

Doc: I know we have different problems within our families, and I'm not judging. But if you are in speaking terms with the mother of your child please tell her what's going on with you, she deserves to know. Whether you make it, or don't make it out of that operation. Don't let her go through the trauma of losing you not knowing what you've gone through and later on in life having to try and explain to your son what was your cause of death. Please, swallow your pride and tell her you have a heart problem. Yes we've considered a solution to it, but

this journey is much better when you have someone you can rely on in a moment of weakness.

Me: she's just been through a lot bra doc, I don't want to add all of this on her.

Doc: do you think she'll be happy knowing that you are not well but you didn't trust her enough to tell her?

Me: I'm merely protecting her.

Doc: u sure?

I swallowed hard...

Me: okay I'll think about it.

Doc: thank you. Let me now leave you, rest please.

Me: I have to go home. I'll rest when I get there.

Doc: rest now, you can fly out tonight. You're not rushing for flight times. Lala.

I laughed at him as I walked him out... After he drove out I packed, made myself food and went to lie down a bit. I had to find a way of telling Cassandra of what's going on with me, a way that won't hurt her because she's been through a lot and I wasn't there. Now ndithi gqi sendimongeza ngomthwalo umntana wabantu.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_40

#Onele

He drove me home and promised to keep in touch as he was planning to spend at least two weeks here, undercover of course, but he did all of this so we can meet and see where this relationship will take us. If we do try it.

Three days later I went to the mall again, I was giving Cass and her baby daddy time to themselves. I did a lot of window shopping, grabbed an ice-cream and as I continued just minding my own business, I saw Bhut S'thembele. I felt chest pains.

Me: kanti oo bhuti didn't deal with this guy?

I quickly walked past the restaurant he was sitting in, but then I caught a glimpse of Ginger. I walked back, yes it was him. They were having lunch. I walked away, got into a shop two blocks away from where they were eating and called him...

Ginger: baby, hey.

Me: heeey, you good?

Ginger: I'm okay, I'm good. You good?

Me: yeah.

Ginger: you missing me already?

Me: it's been what, three days?

He chuckled...

Ginger: well, I can arrange something if you're game.

Me: something like what?

Ginger: maybe late lunch or dinner?

Me: let's make it lunch. I can't be out very late.

Ginger: I'll send a car to pick you up at four then.

Me: alright... What are you doing?

Ginger: I'm having a bite with a friend.

Me: mmh, do I know the friend?

He went silent.

And cleared his throat.

Ginger: nah, I don't think so.

Me: well I hope that friend is not a harmful friend now.

Ginger: he's totally harmless, trust me on that.

Me: oh it's a he? The way you hesitated when I

asked if I know the friend you'd have sworn it's a she.

He laughed.

Ginger: I wasn't hesitant, I'm eating. So I was chewing and swallowing baby.

Me: alright then, see you at four.

Ginger: can't wait.

I chuckled and hung up.

Why would he lie about being with my brother inlaw?
Why would they be meeting here futhi? What if they were back to their old tricks again?

I panicked and went home, Ta Nko was leaving. I went to change for "late lunch", got into a Lil sexy number and put on some makeup. Ginger looked like he was gifted, and I was hoping he'd give me

some of that gift because I've been in a desert. My boyfriend back home was playing mind games with me, and yes I suspected he was cheating but at the same time I knew he'd never cheat on me. Ulungile lamntu for urhaqaza.

Cass came into my room just as I put on perfume....

Cass: weeeeh mameh!

I laughed at her exclamation.

Cass: your boyfriend followed you to here?

Me: nope.

Cass: then who are you dressed up for?

Me: a potential side.

Cass: a what?

I turned and looked at her....

Me: I'm going out for a late lunch with some guy I met on Facebook.

Cass: Haibo Onele, that's not safe.

Me: we'd be meeting in person for a second time, it's quite safe.

Cass: Onele Mzayi.

Me: relax mntase. Akho nix ezokwenzeka.

She looked at me worried.

Me: what, am I too sexy?

Cass: do you have condoms?

Me: yep, a box untouched.

Cass: okay good.

Me: why would you ask me about condoms?

Cass: because Onele, you are definitely going to have sex after your lunch. You're... Argh never mind.

I smiled.

She's always been the careful and cautious one, I wasn't. And mna I wanted to live my life to the fullest without being pressured by anyone to live according to their standards. Umama no tata did their part very well, I had the teachings at the back of my mind but my adventurous self was always ready to experiment.

Me: don't worry, we don't need another Million just yet, I'll be careful.

Cass: thanks.

Then she walked away.

I laughed at her as I followed right behind her, kissed Milli when we got downstairs and made myself juice and muffin while waiting to be picked up. I could tell Cass was uncomfortable. She wanted to say something qha kuba nguyee she was

calculating...

Me: you better stop gawking at me and say what's on your mind.

Cass: what?

I looked at her while eating, she sighed.

Cass: kutheni usenza lento uyenzayo?

Me: ndenze ntoni?

Cass: you know how much your boyfriend loves you, why would you go out with another man. A man you do not know ke futhi.

Me: I'm not married to my boyfriend mntase, ndise mncinci mna to depress myself ngee relationships.

Cass: to depress yourself?

Me: yes. I've been having online fun with this new guy for a while now, he gives me attention ukodlula

my physical boyfriend.

Cass: so all you're after is the attention?

Me: kanti kufunwa ntoni kwi relationship?

Cass: then why don't you communicate with your boyfriend?

I drank up...

Me: because, he knows what he's supposed to do. He just chooses not to do it.

Cass: I just don't want you to get hurt.

Me: I'm not gonna get hurt, but thank you for caring. Now there's my ride, see you.

Cass: you're really going out dressed like that?

Me: yep. Ciao!

I walked out...

A black Maserati was waiting for me, the guy

opened the door for me and we drove to a hotel just outside of PE. I got out and was met by Ginger at the door, we hugged and my insides turned at the smell of his cologne. He walked me to a restaurant at the back of the hotel, the weather was allowing for us to sit outside. Our drinks came through...

Me: stop staring at me.

He smiled and looked away.

Ginger: for some reason, I'm losing concentration.

I laughed at him.

Ginger: you look beautiful, sexy.

Me: thank you.

Ginger: are you comfortable?

Me: I'm breathing just fine.

Ginger: shuu! Okay.

I laughed again.

Okay maybe I was a bit too sexy, but leather is comfortable. I had a brown leather dress on, very V on the twins, "vacant" at the back from my neck to my waist and just above the knee.

I loved dressing up.

I loved dressing up for a date even more, and I was enjoying the torture he was in. It was such a turn on.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_41

#Onele

We had our late lunch, laid on a very light and easy going conversation then it started to drizzle. We quickly went inside... Along with other people who were enjoying lunch phandle.

Ginger: let's go get you a jacket before I take you home.

Me: phi?

Ginger: in my room.

Me: oh, you're booked here?

He nod as he led the way, I followed right behind him. We got to his room. Suite. And I just walked around looking at the books in the shelves, he emerged with the jacket, brown leather biker jacket for men.

I smiled as I extended my hand to take it.

Ginger: we have the same taste, yes.

Me: I'm amazed.

He laughed and helped me with the collar. Instead of my head going forward so he could flip the collar, I flipped my head onto his chest as he stood behind me with our bodies ever so close.

He chuckled....

Ginger: sizonxiba isilamba ke apha, don't get any weird ideas.

Me: and siyanxiba mos nangoku. Why would you think I'm getting weird ideas?

I slightly pushed my ass onto his crotch.

Ginger: baby!

Me: whaaat?

Ginger: yeka lento uyenzayo.

Me: Haibo what have I done?

He laughed and turned me around, there was a very small gap between our bodies. I could smell his breath, alcohol infused.

Ginger: don't you do this to me.

Me: ndikwenze ntoni?

He licked his bottom lip, I felt heat from the bottom of my belly, I crossed my legs.

Ginger: I know you're not a virgin.

Me: wawuyive ngam mos lonto.

Ginger: Yes, but I don't want to have sex with you just yet. Please.

Me: why not?

Ginger: we are still getting to know each other. We don't have to rush to anything.

Me: okay...

Ginger: and I'm afraid of getting you knocked up. You still have varsity to get to, u mncinci. You can never manage with a child right now.

Me: okay, Got it.

He smiled and pinched my cheek.

Ginger: ndiyak'ncanywa joe, seriously.

Me: ndiyak'ncanywa nam.

He kissed me, I responded and we just stood there kissing. After a couple of seconds his hand went for my waist but it landed on my butt and that's where he lost it. He grabbed my ass and pulled me even closer to him, I felt the roughness of his second hand on my thigh and I knew it's about to go down.

He pushed me against the wall and kissed heaven

out of me, he was sooooo into it and in a split second, I pushed him back a bit and fixed my dress.

Ginger: yintoni ngoku?

Me: we know where this kiss is leading to, and cannot have sex right now, we are merely getting to know each other.

He looked at me with both hands on his waist.

Ginger: Babe...

Me: especially with you living in a different country, what if nyhani I do get pregnant like... We just can't.

He stepped closer, pulling my waist.

Ginger: forget what I said.

Me: njani? When you made such valid points?

Ginger: we'll be careful baby.

Me: no babe.

Ginger: okay forget I said anything.

Me: look, I'm so sorry I seduced you. But you're right, we can't do this.

Ginger: I'm already messed up kengoku, ndenze njani?

Me: aw'na baby oil? I'm sure you can do self-service.

He chuckled as he kissed my neck, I was doing a silent prayer that my nipples don't feel as hard as they actually were on his chest because they were erect. Yonke into was erect.

Ginger: maybe I can do that self-service with you watching?

Me: what? Hell no.

Ginger: why not?

I didn't answer him, he bit my neck as he made way back to my lips then left me standing there. I followed him, he took out baby oil from the drawer next to his bed. Must have been his frequent favorite every night xa ide ibekufuphi kangaka. He went to fetch a towel from the bathroom and he looked at me as he unzipped his trousers.

Me: you better be kidding me.

Ginger: I told you I'm in a mess.

Me: surely you can do that after I've left.

Ginger: and you expect me to concentrate apha endleleni?

The guy didn't just remove his pants but he undressed totally. He was left with his boxers as he sat on the edge of the bed (what a nice body he had, dark and very masculine) ... Put on music and oiled his hands.

I slowly walked into the room, closing the door behind me. As if kungangena umntu

Ginger: maybe you could stand where I can see you properly, I need a Lil motivation here.

Me: I'm not your motivation Ginger.

Ginger: baby.

Me: hay suka where do you get motivation xa ndingekho?

Ginger: you don't really expect me to look at your nudes ukhona, right?

I laughed at him...

I put my bag on the floor and went to sit on a chair by the window, it was on a great view for him. He flipped the hem of his boxers and removed his massive joystick, I gasped. Okay fine Ginger is waaaaay older than me, which is pretty much

understandable why his manhood would be bigger than that of my boyfriend. He's obviously sent me his own nudes before but to actually see it right before my naked eyes was totally different. He stroked his stick as if he was in his own world, stealing a look at me every now and then. I was totally turned on by just watching him, minding his own business and the minute he closed his eyes with a soft breath escaping his lips, I lifted my dress to my waist and started self-servicing myself. One hand between my wide open thighs and the other grabbing vigorously on my breasts, I managed to release a moan and he opened his eyes... I stopped.

Ginger: don't stop baby, keep going.

Uts ho ku bani?

I masturbated until I orgasmed and funny enough, we orgasmed at the same time. He got up from his bed and knelt down before my open legs and without even saying a word, he buried his face in

my coochie. The 45% of morals that I had, went right through the window. I couldn't control myself, he knew what he was doing, he had experience, his tongue was educated. Harvard issues. I hated myself for comparing him to my boyfriend but hay cha, my boyfriend would come third and Ginger would take the first two spots. He made me cum in his mouth three more times before lifting me up and carrying me to his bed. I watched my dress fly across the room and he grabbed a pillow...

Ginger: turn around.

The command in his voice! Damn.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_42

#Onele

I turned around, the pillow on my lower abdomen and he bent down and thrust his hot and wet tongue down there. I was probably speaking in tongues

because some of the things he was doing to me were foreign to my body, this was a totally different experience. In as much as it was a new experience, I enjoyed it. I was happy.

As soon as he stood up...

Me: please grab my bag.

He didn't ask why, he just went to get my bag, I removed the box of condoms, opened one and gave him. He did the honors and in no time I felt him slowly taking territory. He had a great command and control, his hands rough but very much in control and soothing at the same time. I remember at some point when he flipped me around to lay me on my back, I licked off sweat from his neck and I didn't care about that being unhygienic... I was getting serviced. Properly. That's what mattered, the fact that he knew his business and he showed determination to master it was the best thing to

watch.

I felt his fullness between my thighs, in the inner depths of my womanhood I felt his full girth. After a couple of fucking, he made slow love to me. The kind that makes you catch feelings, the deep strokes, the moans, the kisses in between every struggle to breath, the ass grabs and the nipple sucks. Yes, that slow love. He buried his head on the gap between my neck and my shoulder and in the next minute, he deeply moaned my name.

Two if not three condoms later, we were both worn out. Well I was worn out, I don't know about him. He didn't seem like he was worn out at all. We laid in each other's arms and soaked in what had just happened... I'm an attention idiot ke I know. I was cuddled up against his body, he had his strong arm keeping me very close to him and obviously I was enjoying the moment. He felt like he was mine alone, I knew there was a high possibility of him having

another woman where he was currently living but right now, he felt like he belonged to me.

Ginger: your brothers can never find out about this.

Me: I didn't know uboyika that much.

Ginger: it's not even about ukuboyika baby, I broke a bro-code here. We don't date our friends sisters or cousins.

Me: but you're not friends anymore.

Ginger: I know that, but still.

I didn't answer him...

Me: they'd probably kill the both of us. I mean, I've just had amazing sex with intanga yabo. Yho!

He lifted my chin and kissed me, full on the lips.

Ginger: so the sex was amazing?

I didn't answer him, I just kissed him. Then stopped.

Me: ndive xa ndisithi they'd kill the both of us.

Ginger: but what happened to age just being a number?

Me: I'm in matric, you're old enough to be married and probably have about three children by now. Age just ain't no number here.

He laughed...

Ginger: well in that case, you can call me daddy.

I burst out laughing.

Ginger: see, it's not so bad.

Me: mmh I know.

We kissed again, his thigh was between my thighs and I rubbed my coochie against it. Sending me straight to orgasm while we were still kissing, he held my ass in place while the rest of my body shivered at the pleasure.

Ginger: you're a bad, bad girl.

I blushed and buried my face onto his chest as I cooled down.

My phone rang somewhere...

Me: excuse me. That's my phone.

I got up and looked for it, found it on the chair.

Me: Sandra, hey.

Cass: are you on your way back?

Me: uhm... Why do you ask?

Cass: because oo sisi basendleleni ebuya emsebenzini Onele. Ndizothi uphi elixes ha?

Me: I'll be home in the next thirty minutes mntase.

Cass: okay.

She hung up.

Ginger: you have to go?

Me: yep.

Ginger: take a shower first.

I rolled my eyes at him as I collected my clothes and went to freshen up, he followed emva kwam. We might have had a quickie in there, in my entire

sexual active life I have never felt such sexual attraction to anyone before. The type that even if ningavalelana endlini for an entire week, anidikwa? That's exactly how I felt, that even if we could go on exile together, we'd have sex from morning to evening without getting tired or bored. He literally took me to places I've never been to, and he was so much in control. Uyenza yonke lento yakhe epholile, akangxamanga and his deep voice of command just tops it all off. After the shower sanxiba and he took me home, we kissed and he drove away.

I walked in endlini and luckily ndafika a few minutes before the big sisters arrive. Phew. What a close call.

Me: molweni.

Cass looked up,

Me: ulele u Milli?

Cass: nope, uyadlala.

I went to kiss him, I wanted to get closer to Cass I knew soze angabinanto yothetha. And, I wanted to know if I really smelt of Ginger or it was just me since bendis ondele kakhulu kuye.

Cass: please go take a shower.

Me: I showered apho ndivela khona.

Cass: well Onele unuka indoda.

I stopped playing with Milli and looked at her.

Me: you're joking, right?

Cass: eshe, khaw'hambe uyovas a ntombi.

Me: oh boy. Hlalapha mntanam, makazi uyabuya ngoku.

I grabbed my bag and went to my room, showered and got into pj's, by the time I returned downstairs the big sisters were back.

We had dinner and played cards then we all went to our rooms. Cass came knocking on mine...

Me: you can come in if you come in peace.

Cass: mxm.

She pushed the door open and walked in, sitting on the edge of the bed.

Me: what's up?

Cass: what's bothering you?

Me: me? Nothing.

Cass: you're acting out of character Onele, meeting

strangers and having sex with them is not you.

Me: see why I said ngena if you've come in peace?

Cass: ndicingela wena apha Onele, what's going on?

I sighed....

Me: nothing is going on, nothing is bothering me, I'm just having fun.

Cass: I'm not saying don't have fun but not nge sex mntas ekhaya.

Me: we used protection.

Cass: how old is he?

Me: why does it matter?

Cass: I just wanna know.

Me: I never asked.

Cass: you're lying to me.

Me: bra, uTa Nko ukushiya ngeminyaka emingaphi?

Close to ten? Why would you care how old the guy

I'm seeing is?

She nod...

Me: I'm sorry.

Cass: it's okay, I just hope you're really being careful.

Me: I am. Stop stressing yourself.

She tried to smile...

Cass: okay ke... Goodnight.

Me: I love you.

Cass: love you too.

She turned of the light as she walked out. I breathed. Haibo, I wasn't planning to get pregnant here, I was just having fun. F. U. N. That's it.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_43

#Onele

Right after she left, I got a call from Ginger but I muted my phone just in case Cass was standing by the door. Eavesdropping.

After about 15 minutes he called again and I answered...

Me: hey.

Ginger: hey, are you busy?

Me: uhm no, I was busy when you called first.

Ginger: ooh okay. I just wanted to say good night.

I smiled and didn't answer him...

Ginger: I wish it was possible for you to sleep in my

arms, but yeah.

Me: I wish yazi.

Ginger: but I'm sure we could work something out
xa uye e Pretoria ku sisi wakho.

Me: ain't going near her house anytime soon.

Ginger: you don't struck me as a grudgy kind of
person.

Me: I don't hold grudges at all, I just don't want to go
anywhere near her personal space.

He chuckled.

Ginger: could have fooled me.

Me: meaning?

Ginger: beni tight before all of that shit happened,
now all of a sudden you don't want to be in her
personal space? Come on babe.

I chuckled and didn't answer him.

Ginger: you're obviously still grudging against her for the shooting, and maybe her husband's doings.

I didn't answer him... He was on the verge of upsetting me and I didn't know how to react as yet.

Ginger: are you still there?

Me: yep.

Ginger: oh, you just went quiet on me.

Me: I'm listening to you talking about me as if you know me all too well.

He cleared his throat.

Me: go on. I'm still listening.

Ginger: hayike babe I didn't mean it like that.

Me: I mean, just because I had sex with you don't you make the mistake of thinking I forgot what all of you put my sister through. U bhuti Sthe, u sis Asanda, nawe. I'm very much aware.

Ginger: baby...

Me: yintoni?

Ginger: I'm sorry, akhange ndiyithathe olohlobo, I was just commenting based on my observations.

Me: observations oziqale nini Ginger? We just met. When did you get a chance of observe my behavior or reaction towards u sisi?

He didn't answer me.

Me: Unfortunately for all of you I'm not like Cassandra ke, I may be a bit young and wild but I'm not as naive as I might have come across. Especially to you.

Ginger: I'm sorry.

Me: no, I'm sorry. Good night.

Then I hung up, and turned off my phone. I knew he's gonna call me back right after I hung up that's why I switched the phone off. I slept, and for three days I had my phone off until on the fourth day umama called Cass and asked for me esithi she cannot get hold of me from my own phone.

Cass: where's your phone?

Me: charging e roomini.

Cass: umama uthi she called you izolo and it was on voice mail, she called you this morning and it's still on voice mail.

I got up...

Cass: is everything okay?

Me: yep.

Cass: u sure? I mean, I haven't seen you with your phone after your date.

Me: everything is perfect mntase, usisi uzophuma bani?

Cass: u Siki?

Me: yeah.

Cass: ugodukile, Cindy use Kapa.

Me: great.

Then I rushed off to my room, I knew Ginger would want us to meet and anyway I wanted a shag too, so with oo sisi bobabini bengekho, why would I not go?

I sat on my bed and switched my phone on, his messages flooded in but I called umama k'qala.

Mom: Hewethu ubuya nini?

I laughed.

Me: hello mommy, unjani kodwa?

Mom: ndakuphoxa ke Onele.

I laughed even more, she was irritated.

Me: ndcela nindithumelele imali yobuya ndibuye ke.

Mom: eshe. Mnkq, what happened to your phone?

Me: I was having network issues izolo but namhlanje ibise charge. Uxolo ma.

Mom: ooh okay, hay I was just checking on you.
Awuzokwazi ubuya ushiye udad'wenu yedwa apho.
Linda u Cindy abuye.

Me: uzobuya nini yena mama?

Mom: ebethe end of the week.

Me: oh okay, hay akhongxaki ma. So, uzandifakela lemali?

Mom: imali yothini Onele ungekazobuya?

Me: imali ye data, ye zinto ezimnandi mama haibo.

She laughed.

Mom: uthe u Siki there's enough of izinto ezimnandi apho endlini, niba bini nizokonela.

I sulked and mumbled.

Mom: ngaske ndikuthwaxe nge faydukhwe.

I laughed at her, she laughed back and promised to send me data. I opened Messenger and read through ii messages zika Ginger, then went on WhatsApp and he was online. I didn't even spend five minutes reading ezabanye abantu ii messages, he called.

Me: hi.

Ginger: babe... I'm sorry.

Me: okay.

Ginger: can I see you?

Me: I don't feel like going out today.

Ginger: that's cool, I'm around your area I can come by your house.

Me: okay.

Ginger: sharp.

I hung up.

I went back to the lounge and Cass and her son were going to her bedroom for their mid-day nap. I grabbed an apple and waited, after 25 minutes he texted ba mandiphume. I walked out and saw his car three blocks away from endlini, so I walked towards it. Got in and greeted him... He had wings and was drinking a strawberry milkshake.

Ginger: I missed you.

Me: it's just been three days.

Ginger: why did you put off your phone?

Me: I didn't wanna talk to you. Where's my shake?

He smiled...

Ginger: you can have mine.

Me: thanks.

I took it and drank looking ahead.

Ginger: so basically umntu uyakwazi ukuba sexy noba uqumbile?

I didn't answer him, my attention was on the road in

front of us and the straw in the shake.

Ginger: Nelle?

I looked at him.

Ginger: khayeke lento uyenzayo mfondini, yintoni ngoku kwacaba ndizocengana nawe isidala?

Me: heh mfondini, xa ungazocengana nam isidala uzothini apha? You know what? Bye bye.

I opened the door and walked back home, he reversed and drove slowly right next to me.

Ginger: ufuna ndithini ke because ndilucelile uxolo and uyayazi nawe ba ndiyakukhumbula.

Me: go back to where you came from, leave me alone.

Ginger: andizokwazi ke uku leave'a alone. Bona

icebo.

I opened igate yasekhaya and walked in,

Me: nali icebo. Bye.

For some reason this was entertaining to him, he laughed at me and andajika tu ndangena ekhaya and chilled. After a while I saw his car drive away.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_44

#Onele

I ignored him yaphela imini, at night he came to my house and called me to come out. I was having dinner with Cass, Milli on my lap.

Me: hello?

Ginger: I'm outside.

Me: what for?

Ginger: Onele?

Me: hhm?

Ginger: ndithe ndiphandle.

He hung up.

I sighed... With a little bit of excitement.

Cass: and that?

Me: I have something to attend to phandle, ndcela ubambe u Milli.

Cass: at this time of the night?

I rolled my eyes at her.

Cass: hay hamba naye so that unga out'i, andikuthembanga tu.

I laughed and put Milli on his small cot.

Me: I'll be back.

Cass: Onele unga out'i.

Me: woyika ulala wedwa?

Cass: uzukhe ungabuyi nje bra uzobona I'm calling home.

I laughed and walked out with my phone. The same spot he parked at earlier, I walked to the car and he was outside this time around. Smoking.

Me: I'm asthmatic.

He quickly put out his cigarette and went for a sanitizer in his car and a bubblegum.

Ginger: sorry about that.

Me: ufuna ntoni apha elixesha?

Ginger: ndifuna wena.

Me: Tyhini haikengoku.

Ginger: ubufuna ndifune ntoni wena kokwenu
besides you?

Me: I don't have time for this.

He pulled my arm, as I yanked it he had already
gotten grip of my dress and before I knew it, I was
right under his nose.

Ginger: yintoni mfondini?

Me: ey'phi?

Ginger: lento unetali ngoku?

Me: icherrie iyacengwa, not le nonsense uyenzayo.

He kissed me, and then looked deep into my eyes. I

s swear I immediately got wet, my lower insides were craving for his fullness. Why was this man doing this to me? Yes I wanted him to come back, hence I was a bit excited when he said he's outside but this wasn't part of it. He was making me feel like he's a god that I should worship.

Ginger: ndenza i nonsense?

Me: kuyabanda for undikhuphela lento ekhaya ndis atya kamnandi.

Again he kissed me, this time his hand went up my behind and grabbed my ass, he didn't say a word but I knew that we were both building up. A lot of things were making me weak: his cologne, his breathing, his grip on my waist and his grab on my ass. Not forgetting that his thigh was between my legs all of a sudden.

Ginger: ufuna uyogqibezela ukutya kwakho kengoku

okanye??

I didn't answer him... He opened his car and I got in kungatshiwongo † ♀ he got in on his side and we drove to Nandos, then to his hotel room. Sithe singena eroomini zabe iimpahla sezibhabha right across the room, ukutya sikushiye pha emva kwecango. Either this time around he was prepared or my box of condoms was still here, I saw a glimpse of the box as he swirled me around so I can face the wall while he kissed my neck from behind and removed the last items I had on my body, then he turned me back around so we could kiss.

He pinned me up against the wall near the bathroom door, then he focused his energy on my boobs. From the licking and suckling, they suddenly got puffy and my nipples were standing to attention. As I breathed, because he had left my puffy boobs, he slid down to his knees and buried his head between my spread thighs. Only one hand of his

was on my chest, keeping me pinned to the wall while ate the lights out me. I had to grab the door post for support as my walls came gushing down, he kissed me out of the coochie, up my belly and straight to my lips as he carried me to the bed. He gave me a condom to open whole he unbuttoned his jeans, he let himself in and as soon as his whole package was inside me, he just stopped. Paused.

Then he bent down and we kissed, my body loosened as we kissed and then I felt him moving in and out. My walls must have clamped around his dick hence he had to stop and kiss me so that I could loosen up.

Once he got his rhythm, there was no stopping him. Just like before, we went for three condoms and then cuddled.

My phone rang as I was closing my eyes, face buried in this guy's chest.

Me: Cass?

Cass: Are you still outside?

Me: no, but ndiyeza.

Cass: oh my God Onele kuthethwa njani nawe kanti?

Me: eshe, ndikuphathele ntoni?

Cass: this is not a joke Onele, if you're not home in the next hour I'm calling umama, I'm not joking with you.

Me: gimme two bra, please.

Cass: did you see the time now? If I give you two more hours that means you'll be home ngo 10 pm?

I sighed.

Mood spoiler.

Me: yes.

Cass: okay fine. If by 10:15 awukho lapha then I'm calling home, and I'm calling the police to report you

as a missing person.

I couldn't help but laugh. She hung up. I put the phone away and closed my eyes, after a few minutes I looked at this guy's chest. He had beautiful tattoos, I kissed one of them, lightly bit the other and then looked up at him.

Ginger: what are you doing to my chest?

I smiled and didn't answer him. He lifted my chin and we kissed, my leg went over his body, his two hands on bit my ass cheeks and we continued to kiss. Then I stopped him...

Me: this is nice, but you have to take me back.

Ginger: yeah, can we eat first? Then I can take you home?

Me: sure, where's the food?

We both looked around, and when both our eyes met the bag by the door we burst out laughing. We went to fetch the food, my body cringed at the sight of his dick as he walked back to bed. Oh my word! Oh my goodness.

But funny enough, I was still hoping for one more round before going home. And one round did I get! After we had eaten, he suggested we "say our goodnight" nge round ey'1 and of course I didn't decline the offer. He allowed me to ride, until my body gave in to the pleasures, he turned us around and he finished off the work.. Seeing him ejaculate had to be the best sight ever especially with his entire body on mine, I got to feel it's stiffness and hear his growls. After all of that, he took me home, and it wasn't even 10pm yet.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_45

#Onele

As he parked outside, I called Cassandra.

Cass: Hi?

Me: I'm outside.

She didn't respond but I saw the curtain on the front windows open.

Me: see? I'm home, even before 10pm.

Cass: Ungandidiki kemna kodwa ndicingelana ne safety yakho.

Me: yeah yeah.

She hung up.

Ginger: so when am I seeing you again?

Me: I don't know but ndiyahamba Friday.

Ginger: this coming Friday?

I nod.

Ginger: then can we spend the day Thursday?

Me: can we make it Wednesday? Thursday I'll have to do some shopping and packing.

Ginger: okay, what time should I pick you up?

Me: I'll find my way to you.

He nod

I reached out to him and we kissed. As the kiss deepened I stopped and looked at him, smiling.

Me: I know you're seeing Bhut's the again.

Then I kissed him again, the kiss was now different.

Me: I saw you two at the mall that day.

I kissed him again.

Me: instead of you telling me the truth, you said you're having lunch with a friend.

He was now cold, but he responded to my kisses.

Me: now that's suspicious, that means you my baby... Are hiding something from me.

I kissed him for the last time, this time I made the kiss last longer. When he eventually pulled back I wiped the corner of his lips, still smiling.

Ginger: it w-

Me: I'm not asking you to tell me what you were

talking about, or why you hid the fact that you were having lunch with him. But, I want you to know that I know.

He swallowed.

Me: good night, I'll see you Wednesday.

I pecked his lips and walked out of his car, opened the gate ndangena endlini. I switched off all the lights e lounge nase dining room and went upstairs, started at Cass's room.

I opened the door without knocking, she was breastfeeding.

Me: I'm back, in one piece.

Cass: ftsek.

I laughed, still standing there.

Me: ulele ubaby?

Cass: uya lala.

Me: nide na grand notatakhe?

Cass: argh, iyandidina wethu mna yonke into edibene no tatakhe.

Me: give the guy a break.

She rolled her eyes at me.

I laughed and closed her door, went to my room, I ran myself a shower and stood there. With my eyes closed, I replayed Ginger's face when I told him I know he's seeing S'thembele. There was something that they were seeing each other for or about, and it felt serious. I quickly got out of the shower and went to fetch my phone, I sat on the bed as I called

one of my brothers...

Lionel: Onele, hello?

Me: hello bhuti, unjani?

Lionel: I'm good nontombi, unjani wena?

Me: I'm good bhuti... Can you talk?

Lionel: well we're talking now, what's up?

I sighed.

Lionel: Onele what's going on?

Me: I saw u bhut'S the e mall man aphevekini.

Lionel: what? Are you sure?

Me: yeah, I just didn't wanna tell Cass coz uyamazi uzoba traumatized all over again.

Lionel: mmh... So he's really back in PE lomjita.

Me: oh, so you knew he's back?

Lionel: I saw Ginger at the Cape Town Airport and as usual, where there's Ginger, there's S'thembele.

Oh haike.

Lionel: I'll look into it nontombi, and u right ungamxeleli u Cass. When are you going home?

Me: Friday obuya kosisi noba ngomphi.

Lionel: okay, inoba ndizofika sewumkile coz ndizoza nge weekend mna.

Me: okay bhuti. Good night.

Lionel: good night sisi.

I hung up and covered my head with the Duvet. Very soon, I was about to return to my normal life. The thought of my boyfriend who had not called me oko ndimkile (even though we were texting every day) but to call? Mxm.

And the thought that I won't experience yonke le goodness ka Ginger for almost the entire year broke my heart, I lay there. Ups et.

I sighed and switched my phone off... I knew lo uzofuna ukundi phone'ela and explain his meeting with S'thembele and I wasn't really interested, I was more worried about our "relationship" if that's what we could call it, because it would never be accepted ekhaya. Ever.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_46

#Onele

I didn't sleep much, I just tossed and turned the whole night and then decided to go and watch TV, with the heater on. After about an hour, Cass walked down the stairs with Milli...

Me: hey.

Cass: khamthathe.

I extended my arms, Milli was wide awake playing and smiling to whosoever cared.

Me: akonwabe.

Cass: kunini evukile, Yho ha.a.

Me: go back to sleep, I'll bring him if he needs uncanca.

Cass: enkosi mntase.

She walked back upstairs, sancokola no Milli lo conversation yethu ingavakaliyo but we eventually fell asleep on that couch. I felt Cass taking Milli from my chest...

Me: mh?

Cass: ungu makazi nyhani shem, go to bed. I'll take

it from here.

Me: Yho, silele.

She laughed and walked to her bedroom with Milli. I turned off the TV and went to bed, I slept for about four hours then woke up and took a shower. My body didn't allow me to sleep, I turned my phone on and just lay on my back. Trying not to think. I felt all message vibrations I just didn't want to attend to any of them as yet. As anticipated, Ginger called. I let it ring four times before answering it...

Me: hello?

Ginger: Baby... Kunini ikhala iphone?

Me: bendivasa, what's up?

Ginger: Can we meet up?

Me: no.

Ginger: why not?

Me: we agreed to meet up Wednesday.

Ginger: Onele ndiyak'cela ndifuna ukubona namhlanje, inde into yangolwes ithathu.

I didn't answer him.

Ginger: ndize?

Me: ndcela sithethe apha lento kucaba iyakutshisa.

Ginger: baby...

Me: babe I'm not feeling well, I just took meds andizokwazi uphuma and meet up with you.

Ginger: you took meds, utheni?

Me: I have severe period pains.

Ginger: I'm sorry, zinedwa yintoni?

Me: the meds I took, and staying warm in bed.

Ginger: so there's nothing I can do?

Me: nah, I'll be fine. Enkosi.

Ginger: okay ke I'll wait for Wednesday. I love you.

Me: love you too.

Ginger: sharp.

We hung up.

I didn't have no period pains mna, I just didn't want him to say "jump" and I'll ask "how high". I went to make food for myself and sis was with her baby daddy.

Me: Ta Nko.

Nkosinathi: Onele, u right?

Me: good, wena?

Nkosinathi: alright.

I went to make muesli gqiba ndahlala phandle eating. I wasn't up for any conversations today, I just wanted to be left alone. I was really in my feels.

After about two hours later they walked out of the house.

Cass: mntase, sis akhapha lobhuti.

Me: uyaphi yena?

Cass: just around the block.

Nkosinathi: I'm taking her for a drive, akafunuphuma kodwa she's cooped up in this house.

Me: good idea Ta Nko.

Cass: eshe, mxm.

I watched them as they walked to his car, and drove off. I went back to the house and went to bed. My mother called, we spoke for a while and then I just dozed off, ndavuswa yi phonecall ka Ginger.

Me: mh?

Ginger: ulele?

Me: yeah.

Ginger: ndcela uphume, I brought you some stuff.

I sat up and stretched.

Me: huh?

Ginger: I'm 5 minutes away from your house, please step outside for a sec.

Me: kay.

He hung up.

I grabbed my gown, tied it tight and wore slippers. I had that whole "I'm not feeling well" facade so perfectly. I walked out and opened the gate, I saw a car, different from the one he came with the other day but somehow I knew it's his. Or in fact, he's driving. He drove past me and stopped at the following house, I was already walking right behind

the car because I knew akazomisa at the gate. He got out of the car and came to hug me... Then he stood back, holding one of my hands.

Ginger: you really look like you're not feeling well, are you sure you don't need a doctor?

I smiled and nod.

Me: I'll be fine.

Ginger: okay ke. I brought you some stuff andikho sure if they'll help but I'm hoping they'll do.

He let go of my hand and went to the passenger side of the car, came out with a full shopping bag. He gave it to me...

Me: enkosi... You really didn't have to go through the trouble though.

Ginger: I care about you, I have to go through the

trouble to make sure you're okay.

Okay that went somewhere deeper into my heart than it was intended. I felt warm and fuzzy as he said those words.

Me: enkosi baby.

Ginger: can I get a kiss before I leave?

Me: you wanted us to meet up for something, you sounded serious.

He cleared his throat.

I just looked at him.

Ginger: it's about u Ta Sthe.

Me: what about him?

Ginger: he's not back to do any harm, he just wants to be closer to his family.

Me: he's in PE, his family is in Pretoria. How close is that geographically?

Ginger: he was meeting up with his son, a week before I came down. And we went out for lunch just to catch up.

Me: I don't believe you, but that's fine. It's none of my business.

Ginger: why would I lie to you?

Me: because Ginger, I'm just a girl you're fucking and Ta Sthe is your boss. You'll be more loyal to him kunam, you'll be more useful to him kunam. That's not scientific, that's common sense.

He didn't respond.

Me: I don't care to know what you two are up to, just know that if ever I have to choose, my family comes first.

He didn't respond.

Me: and I can promise you one thing, whatever ya'll are doing, if it has anything to do with my family or my sister nicin'g'be ya'll are using me ku lonto. You're in for a big surprise.

Ginger: so you're doubting my feelings for you now?

Me: you could be using me to get closer to my family for all we know.

Ginger: I'd never do that, I swear I'd never play you like that.

Me: oh shut the fuck up torho, I can feel you lying to me right now and it's making me sick.

Ginger: Nelle...

Me: please go.

He didn't move.

Me: Ndcela uhambe Ginger.

Ginger: Ndiyakuthanda yazi Onele, and ziyandikhathaza ezizinto uzithethayo.

Me: so ndiyaxoka?

Ginger: you're jumping into conclusions.

I sighed.

Me: ubufuna ntoni e Airport no Ta Sthe ke Ginger, and that was waaaaay before niyo "catch up'a" over lunch.

Ginger: wait, are you stalking me?

Me: are you ignoring the question?

Ginger: why am I being interrogated kanti?

Me: why are you being a jerk kanti?

He sighed.

Ginger: maybe I really should leave.

Me: drive safe.

I turned and walked back home.

After a few minutes, his car drove past without even hooting.

[06/26, 15:09] : #Mpumelelo_47

#Onele

I walked in and flopped onto the couch, I wasn't even sure of what just happened but I knew it happened. And the worst part was that I actually missed being in his arms, though I wasn't going to call him or beg him. If he can't man up then what's the use of him being a man in the first place?

He sent a text:

"I don't know what to say to you that will make you believe me, and you know what? I think it's better if we just stop whatever it is le besiyenza and just cut ties, and move on."

I called him.

He answered... Edikweeeee

Ginger: Onele.

Me: so you couldn't tell me that straight to my face?

Ginger: does it matter?

Me: kutheni ungena mqolo Ginger?

Ginger: sisi, ufuna ntoni kum?

Me: good question, I'll take a screenshot and save it for the future.

Ginger: was that all?

I didn't answer him, I just hung up.

And deleted his number don't ask me how that would help when I knew three of his numbers off heart, but I deleted them from my phone. Deleted every text, except for messenger texts. You know isummer fling? That's how it felt, like we just had a fling and it was now over. I charged my phone and then curled myself up on the couch and watched cartoons.

I just wanted to go home mna, 8 was done mos here. Unfortunately, I had to wait for Friday as scheduled and the wait was overwhelming so instead of being asked what was bothering me, I continued with the "I'm not feeling well" facade nalapha endlini to a point that my sister concluded that I was "home sick" which worked in my favor because dad came to fetch me on Wednesday evening and brought sis Siki home.

I returned home and remained in my feels until Saturday, decided to take a walk to my boyfriend's

place and he wasn't home but his flat was open so I just walked in and waited. He only came back after about 30 minutes and he was shocked to see me, we hugged and he went to fetch refreshments from the main house. His mother knew I existed, we've bumped onto each other a few times and at some stage she called me to talk to me about Preventing and stuff. Emphasized on education and that we should plan our lives properly singangxami ngabantwana, she's a nurse who happens to be a single parent so her concern was very thoughtful and understandable.

Mabhuti came back..

I took a sip and just looked at him, he was uncomfortable.

Me: wenzeni?

Mabhuti: ndenzeni nini ngoku baby? How was PE

khona?

Me: if you had taken the time to call me you would have known yazi.

Mabhuti: but you also never called, oko wawuthetha on WhatsApp.

Me: who's the man in this relationship kanene?

Mabhuti: iicalls azina manhood Onele, do unto others what you would like them to do to you.

I nod...

Mabhuti: but I'm sorry ke baby, I was busy. I got a holiday job so bendi busy yiyo.

Me: mmh.

He looked at his hands, and he only does that when he's nervous about something.

Me: is there something you wanna tell me?

Mabhuti: yes.... J ust... Please don't overreact.

Me: oh-Kay.

Mabhuti: ndimithisile.

I swear my ears went deaf.

I looked at him in silence.

I was waiting for that weird sound to stop. I could see him talking and blabbering but I literally went deaf, for a few seconds.

Mabhuti: baby?

I snapped out of it.

Me: can you repeat what you just said.

He sighed

Mabhuti: I uhm, I'm going to have a baby. I impregnated someone.

Me: wena, uzoba nomntana? With who?

Mabhuti: With Asiphe... From down the road.

Me: u Asiphe wakwa Madlamini Mabhuti? You were fucking u Asiphe behind my back all this while?

Mabhuti: baby... I'm sorry.

Me: oh my word!!!!

I got up and walked out.

Bumped onto his mother (Mandisa) at the gate...

Mandisa: Oni, awunqabe mntanam. Uvelaphi?

Me: molo sis Mandy, ndivela eBhayi.

Mandisa: ooh okay, awusemhle ntombi caba ubuhlala endlini pha.

I just casually laughed at that, she walked in, I walked out. Few seconds later her son came running after me...

Mabhuti: baby please come back. Ndizokukhapa late, we need to talk about this.

Me: ndcela ujike emva kwam or else ndizokungomba ngalamatye mna.

Mabhuti: Onele I made a mistake come on.

Me: which part was a mistake? Sleeping with her or sleeping with her without protection or making time for her when you couldn't make time for me OR just fucking lying to my face?

He kept quiet.

Me: when did this thing of yours start?

Mabhuti: baby please don't do this.

Me: you're not answering the question Mabhuti,

niqale nini?

Mabhuti: a few months back.

Me: wow, so uyamthanda?

Mabhuti: no, no baby I love you. She was a mistake.

Me: a mistake that is a few months old. A one night stand is a mistake, not an affair.

Mabhuti: baby, trust me. She's a mistake, I didn't mean for things to be the way there are right now.

Me: but she's carrying umntanakho kuyo yonke lonto. She's carrying your mother's grandchild, she's carrying your first born, she's...

I stormed off and went home, got to my house and went to my room ndazivalela pha and cried my heart out.

I wasn't really hurt because he cheated, I mean I also cheated and I enjoyed it. But I was hurt because they had a lifetime bond. Umntana. I was

hurt because even if I wanted to fight for the relationship, I wasn't ready to have umntana mna with anyone. I was hurt because I didn't have anything to fall back on, Ginger dumped me so there was no hope of any messenger texts that would comfort me and give me all the attention and compliments that I longed for. I was hurt because I realized that actually, I'm not inja ye game as I thought I was for the past few days. That reality hurt like nobody's business.

After a while, I went to wash my face and went to make dinner preparations. I only did that because cooking brought some sense of sanity to me and because I didn't want to think about anything. I just wanted to keep busy.

[06/26, 15:10] : #Mpumelelo_48

#Onele

A few weeks went by ndingathethi no Mabhuti because I was upset, a few weeks went by

ndingathethi no Ginger because I deleted his number and blocked him. Except of course , on messenger. But even so, he still had not texted me which was frustrating because it made me think that he really was using me to get closer go my sister. My family.

Two months later, while I was tossing and turning ndingakwazi nokulala, Ginger called. Using a "foreign" number....

Me: hello?

Ginger: I miss you.

I swear my heart stopped.

I had already concluded that we'd never see each other again but hearing his voice... Gosh!

Ginger: I know we uhm... Nelle ndiyakukhumbula

mfondini.

Me: two month later.

Ginger: bendis akunika ichance to think.

Me: bendithe ndifuna ichance yocinga nini?

He didn't answer me.

Me: I have a class in a few hours.

Ginger: please text me after your class, I'll call you.

Me: why?

Ginger: because I want to call you, I want to talk to you.

Me: is that your idea of cutting ties? Moving on?

He sighed.

Me: please don't call me again.

Ginger: band

I hung up.

I hung up and smiled to the darkness of the room, it felt so good ukumphoxa knowing fully well that he really missed me. His agenda aside, we had fun for those few days. He missed that.

I didn't even sleep much, when it was time to go to school I actually wanted to sleep but when you're in matric, you can't really afford to miss classes. I pushed, went to school and walked back home. As if Mabhuti is Ginger's duplicate, he decided that today would be the right day to pester me.

He ran up behind me and caught up...

Mabhuti: Baby...

I turned to look at him and just continued walking.

Mabhuti: Onele I miss you, I understand you need time to process this whole thing but I miss you.

I just walked in silence.

I saw a group of girls from Asiphe's school walking towards us. I felt my stomach turn into knots.

Mabhuti: baby?

Me: nankuya u baby wakho esiza.

Mabhuti: Onele please don't be like that.

Me: don't be like what?

Mabhuti: you know I love you, yonke lento ka Asiphe was a mistake.

Me: then go to your mistake and leave me the hell alone. Haibo!

I stormed off, passed on Asiphe and her friends bahleka.

Asiphe: hey Onele.

Me: Asiphe.

Asiphe: u right? You look constipated.

I turned, her friends were a short distance away from her.

Me: andiva?

She giggled.

Asiphe: i-ou yakho ikuxelele ba sizoba nomntana?

Me: yeeees, congratulations babe.

Asiphe: thank you sweetie, I'm sorry if I ruined your perfect lil relationship. It wasn't my intention.

The friends giggled, Mabhuti was now standing beside me. I smiled.

Me: you didn't ruin it honey, you did me a huge favour. And I should commend you, unesibindi sana...

Asiphe: I don't understand.

Me: Or, it's very much possible that nawe utya ii ARV's so before y'all go to bed beniqale nohlulelane?

Asiphe and Mabhuti: what?!

I giggled.

Me: maybe I should consider the option co-parenting that child. Depending on the gender, I'll call him Aidsy or Aidsine. What do you think? Cute ne?

Then I walked away.

I didn't have time for all of them ke futhi, they might as well go to hell. I left Mabhuti right there to explain whatever I said, I obviously said that to hurt both of them but mostly Asiphe for thinking she can rub salt into my open wound. I got home and locked myself in my room, cried my heart out. I was hurting....

My phone rang, I snapped out of my sad zone and blew my nose before answering it.

Me: hello?

Ginger: please don't hang up...

I sighed.

No man, kanti lamadoda yintoni ingxaki yawo nam?

Me: what do you want?

Ginger: ndcela uxolo.

I rolled my eyes.

Ginger: Can I come and see you? Please.

Me: why?

Ginger: I want us to talk.

Me: yey sukhuphela kum isithukuthezi sakho torho, there is nothing for us to talk about. We're done, and it ends there.

Ginger: Onele, please.

Me: andikwazi noba awuva iEnglish lena or ubhidwa sisiXhosa sam. But ikhona ingxaki and I don't have time for it.

I hung up and threw my further on the bed. He called again and I ignored it until it stopped. On the other hand Mabhuti was calling my name ngapha we gate, he knew my parents were not home during this time of the day otherwise he wouldn't dare. But

I ignored him too. Try made their beds, now they had to lie on them.

[06/26, 15:10] : #Mpumelelo_49

#Onele

On the weekend of that same week, Asiphe and her mother decided to pay my mother a visit. I was doing my laundry when I saw them walk in and I didn't pay them much attention until after a couple of minutes when mom called inside the house. I sat next to her...

Mom: uyayazi lentombi?

I shook my head.

Asiphe and her mother looked at each other.

Mom: u sure Onele?

I nod.

Asiphe: Haibo Onele?!

I just looked at her.

Mom: heh, yanzima ke lento.

Asiphe: Onele uqale nini ungandazi ngoku?

Me: Haibo sisi, wena undazelaphi ke? Maybe ndikulibele.

Asiphe: Hayini! Hay ngumhlola.

Her mom looked sad... In a way. Or unyabile.
Possible.

Me: mama why am I here?

Mom: u Madlamini uze apha ne ntombi yakhe ezocela umcacisele what you meant when you bumped onto Asiphe aphezintsukwini.

Me: I bumped onto Asiphe phi mama?

Mom: bathi on your way from school.

I looked at Asiphe.

Me: when did I bump into you and what did I say le ifuna ucaciswa?

Asiphe: wait wait wait, so you don't remember bumping onto me?

Me: nope.

She threw her hands in the air.

Her mother really looked worried as she tried to calm her down.

Asiphe: Onele you bumped onto us, my friends and I, sivela eskolweni.

Me: ufundaphi? Andikwazi pha eskolweni sam.

Asiphe: andifundi nani obviously. Hence I said sidibane endleleni after school.

Me: ooh, so what did I say ke le ikuzise aphekhaya namhlanje?

Asiphe: Onele you said u Mabhuti utya ii ARV's, and you insinuated that I also do.

Me: u Mabhuti? Mabhuti waphi ?

Asiphe: Haibo Onele ngoku awazi no Mabhuti lowo?

Me: Yey sisi, sundingxolela ekhaya. Uthetha ngo Mabhuti waphi? And why would I even insinuate that wena utya ii ARV's?

Asiphe: u Mabhuti your boyfriend dammit.

Me: hypothetically speaking, why would I tell you that MY boyfriend is taking ARV's ndingakwazi nokwazi?

She bit her tongue... My eyes were fixed on her.

Me: are we friends?

Asiphe: no.

Me: are we cousins or sisters?

Asiphe: no.

Me: am I a doctor?

Asiphe: obviously not.

Me: then why would I diagnose someone's son and tell you of all people?

Asiphe: because you're jealous of my pregnancy!

I laughed.

My mom shook her head.

Madlamini: Onele mntanam, I Mabhuti utya ii ARV's nyhani?

Me: hay andiyazi mama, I think u Asiphe makakuse kulo Mabhuti athetha ngaye nizibuzele pha kuye.

Madlamini: wena khange ukhe udibane no Asiphe tu kule veki?

Me: I'm even shocked that she knows me ade azinasekhaya mna, andimazi nyhani umntanakho mama.

Madlamini: ey mntanam, enkosi nge xesha lakho.

Mom: Onele?

Me: mama....

Mom: are you really sure you don't know what Asiphe is talking about?

Me: haike mama, andiyazi endingayaziyo.

She kept quiet for a while thinking... Then she looked at Madlamini.

Mom: hay Madlamin, andiyazi ke nam xa ingaziwa ngumntu lo nize kuye.

Madlamini: Eish, hay andiyazi nam.

Asiphe: mama uyaxoka man u Onele, she knows exactly who I am and what I'm talking about.

Madlamini: Masambe Asiphe, simkile bethuna.

My mother walked them out.

I sat behind because I knew she's gonna ask me questions. After they left she walked back inside smiling, I just laughed.

Mom: Onele kutheni urwaya umntana bantu when we both know uyamazi and uyamazi nalo Mabhuti athetha ngaye?

Me: mama, ndimazelaphi u Asiphe mna?

Mom: u libele ngoku be naniqokelelwa nonke ngu Zizipho enisa e Sunday School? Uqala ngaaaapha kwa Siyanda uyotsho ngapha ngentla?

I burst out laughing... I obviously didn't think this through. And I got caught in the lie.

Me: clearly I forgot.

Mom: and your boyfriend?

Me: andina boyfriend mna mama.

Mom: Onele?

Me: mama andina boyfriend mna.

Mom: ndifounele u Mandisa?

I laughed, haibo umama!

How did she know kuthethwa ngo Mabhuti ka sis Mandisa? WWhich means lomama knew my boyfriend all this while qha udlala ukuzifisa!

Me: okay fine, ndiyithethile lanto wethu mama just to get both of them off my back.

Mom: but Onele you don't go around saying people are HIV positive, what if Mabhuti presses charges on you?

Me: he wouldn't dare.

Mom: Onele?

Me: mama trust me, he wouldn't dare. Angafa ephila.

Wathula.

I got up.

Mom: ngowakhe lomntana?

Me: yep.

Mom: umithise omnye umntu ukhona?

I smiled.

Me: yep.

Mom: and you are still with him?

Me: not really.

Mom: it's either you are or you're not.

Me: I am not really sure kaloku mama... Uthi he's sorry, it was a mistake. But obviously I don't believe him.

Mom: a piece of advise... Never settle for second best. Ever.

Then she left me there.

I took my phone and went back to my laundry, but before continuing with it I called Mabhuti.

Mabhuti: hello, baby?

Me: icherry yakho iphuma aphekhaya.

Mabhuti: huh?

Me: Asiphe and her mother.

Mabhuti: Haibo, bafuna ntoni?

Me: bazondidlis elela ngesis u, what else would they want? Asizo friends mos.

He kept quiet.

Me: uthulele ntoni kengoku?

Mabhuti: baby I'm sorry.

Me: please do me a favor, if you really want that child she's carrying keep her away from me.

Mabhuti: baby...

Me: I don't wanna do something I'll later regret but if she keeps pushing, I will react.

Mabhuti: why are you telling me? I'm not the one who came to your house.

Me: hey, ndithi makangandiqheli kaka uAsiphe
Mabhuti!

Mabhuti: okay okay, uxolo kaloku sthandwa sam, I will talk to her. I'm sorry.

Me: tshi!

Then I hung up.

Did my laundry and when I was done I accompanied umama eyo shoppisha. I only tagged along kuba bendifuna idata and I knew she's gonna buy me some if I push the trolley for her and carry her

shopping bags.

Unfortunately for us, for me. Sithe sis angena eMall sagilana no sis Mandisa. Haike bancokola no mama ngezinto zabo until mom brought up the Asiphe issue... I don't really know why she did that.

Mom: heh Mandisa, bendiyobonwa ngu Madlamini namhlanje.

Mandisa: omphi u Madlamini?

Mom: umakhelwane wakho, ne ntombi yakhe.

Mandisa: Haibo, bekungekhonto?

Mom: besides isis u esi sentombi yakhe, hay bekungekhonto sisi.

Mandisa: u Asiphe ukhulelwe?

Whoah. She didn't know?

Mom: ewe nje, uthi uyise womntana ngunyanakho.

Sis Mandy looked at me... I was on my phone a short distance from them but I could hear everything.

Mandisa: uthini na mama ka Onele?

Haike umama wayichuba and wayenza nkulu. Yaninzi man, yane dinner sets ne desserts ngoku yonke lento and I wanted to laugh qha ndimane ndincuma ne phone yam.

Mandisa: heeeeee! Andisadane, andikayixelelwa mna yonke lento, and ndazi u Onele umntu ohamba pha kwam. Iyandothus a ngoku le ka Asiphe.

Mom: inoba usakoyika shem umntana... Mlinde.

Mandisa: andinobas akwazi nokumlinda kaloku ngoku xasele oo Madlamini beye nakwakho.

Seyivuthiwe mos yonke lento. Tyhini u Mabhuti zinkosi zam.

They departed on a lighter note.

As soon as she disappeared, I burst out laughing.

Me: Haibo mama.

Mom: you're too good for her son anyway.

Me: and if I go back to him?

Mom: inoba uyi drug yakho wena uyi addict mntanam, yitsho ba ufuna ukuya e rehab.

I burst out laughing.

I couldn't.

I didn't even think of that, but why umama enje?

[06/26, 15:11] : #Mpumelelo_50

#Onele

We shopped around, for almost two hours then a girl who wanted a pizza so we went to the car and she waited there while I went to order our pizza at Scooters Pizza. I actually waited for my order... Then my phone rang,

Me: hello?

Mandisa: Oni, unjani mntanam?

Me: sis Mandy, ndi right unjani wena?

Mandisa: ndi right nam. Sewubuyile e town sisi?

Me: ha.a mam

Mandisa: ooh okay, ndcela wethu xa ubuyile uze apha endlini.

Me: ndize kwakho sisi?

Mandisa: ewe mntanam.

Me: Yho... what have I done now?

Mandisa: hay awenzanganto sisi I just want us to

talk.

I didn't respond immediately...

Me: can I come tomorrow after church, it's already late now umama akazovuma.

Mandisa: okay sisi akhongxaki. See you then.

Me: alright sis Mandy.

I hung up... While talking to sis Mandy I saw someone who looked like Ginger walk in. But I didn't pay him much attention because Ginger isn't here. He's in Mozambique. My slip number was called so I got up and walked to the counter... And bumped onto Ginger. Yey.

Ginger: hey.

I froze.

Was he stalking me?

Was he following me around all this time?

What was he doing in East London?

When did he even get here? How long has he been here?

I suddenly felt unsafe.

But there was just this aura of warmth around him. In as much as all my internal questions made me feel unsafe, his presence just made me feel safe. Confusing, I know.

Ginger: you look beautiful.

Me: excuse me.

I walked past him and took my pizza box, and walked right out the door. He followed to swinery,

he blutty well followed me.

Ginger: got a minute?

Me: no.

Ginger: Baby please.

I ignored him but kept on walking.

Ginger: you're probably wondering why I'm here, I followed you here after you left PE. Well practically, ndifike last week.

Me: I couldn't care less what you did or what you do with yourself and your time.

Ginger: Nelle please hear me out.

Me: please stop following me.

Ginger: I will follow you until you hear me out.

Me: hay fokof ndizothini kumama?

Ginger: okay just hear me out ke, ndizojika I promise.

I walked two steps and stopped.

He was about four steps away from me.

Me: what?

Ginger: I'm sorry.

Me: is that it?

Ginger: no... I'm sorry for that text, and the things I said when you called.

Me: ugqibile mos ngoku?

Ginger: I love you Onele.

I laughed.

Ginger: I know it's hard to believe but if there's anything that ever came out of my mouth, this is the only thing you ought to believe. I love you.

I rolled my eyes at him and tried turning to walk away.

Ginger: I couldn't stay in Mozambique, oko ndicingana nawe. I know it sounds cliché but it's the truth.

Me: Yey. Congratulations.

Ginger: ndcela nje a chance to talk to you properly? Not like this. Please.

I hesitated.

He saw that.

Ginger: please.

Me: I'll think about it. Just stop following me, it's creepy and I might just report you.

Ginger: won't happen again, I just wanted to get your attention that's all.

I turned and walked away.

There was nothing to say to him, I got to the car umama was on the phone with dad and they were having a heated conversation mntakabawo behleka.

[06/26, 15:11] : #Onele_01

I got home with mamzo and she went to her room. I unpacked some of her goods and went to my room as well. I got a call from my sister...

Me: mntase?

Sandra: hey, unjani?

Me: I'm good, unjani umntana?

Sandra: he's good.

Me: uta Nko?

Sandra: he's okay wethu...we miss you, ugqiba nini ubhala?

Me: I don't know yet, but I will update you mntaka mama.

Sandra: okay ke, bye bye.

Me: kiss my baby for me.

We hung up.

She sounded down, upset but she obviously didn't want to indulge me in yet. I didn't want to pry ke.

I decided to switch my phone off, yes I wanted to go call Ginger because I actually missed him (stupid, I know) but I wanted him to suffer okwangoku.

Uyandiqhela mos.

Following morning I woke up and prepared for church, I switched on my phone while getting dressed and as if lenja knew that I just switched on my phone, it barked!

Me: hello?

Ginger: unjani?

Me: I'm okay. Wena?

Ginger: I'm good, will I see you today?

I sighed.

Ginger: please, I've already spent more than the required time here.

Me: I told you I'll think about it.

Ginger: Nelle ndiyakucela.

I didn't answer him.

Ginger: please?

Me: I'm going to church ngoku, then I'm going to my boyfriend's house after church. I will see ke ba after yonke lonto.

Ginger: okay, enkosi.

Me: sure.

I hung up engekaphindi athethe again.

I went to make myself breakfast while waiting for mom. When she finally came out of her room we left for church, she didn't normally eat before church. Church was normal, fine infact. As we walked to her car I thought of how I'm gonna leave her ndiyosabela kulo Mabhuti but fortunately, she was going on lunch with some other church ladies.

Mom: uzokwazi ukuzigodukela or should I drop you off?

Me: hay, uyaphi wena?

Mom: ndiyodlala neentanga zam.

I laughed.

Me: please drop me off. If andikukhuphi endleleni.

Mom: okay masikhawleze ke girl.

I smiled as she drove me home. She wasn't going to give me taxi fare even if I wanted to take a taxi ebezothi "okay" gqiba ahambe. I got home and changed, grabbed an apple, my phone and keys then I went to Mandy's house. She was watching TV, alone. I knocked and was offered juice, which I declined and just waited for her to come sit down, but instead, she went out to call her son who was in his flat at the back. They came back together...

Mabhuti: hey.

Me: hey.

He sat down, on a separate couch.

Mandisa: khanits honi bethuna, nenze njani? What happened?

Me: entweni sis Mandy?

Mandisa: kulento ka Mabhuti, nawe no Asiphe.

Me: ooh.

Haike I kept quiet.

Mabhuti cleared his throat.

Mabhuti: This whole thing was a mistake yazi Mandy, andiyazi nam yenzeke njani.

Mandy: how long did you sleep with her? That is what I want to know.

He didn't answer.

Me: Mabhuti?

Mabhuti: it doesn't really matter now, sekwenzekile.

Me: it matters if ibiyi mistake nyhani.

Mandisa: exactly my point.

He hesitated.

Mabhuti: a few times.

Mandisa: months? Weeks? Days? What's a few times Mabhuti?

Mabhuti: why are you meddling in my business Mandy?

Mandisa: uthini Mabhuti?

Mabhuti: why are you meddling in my business? What's in it for you?

She clapped twice and covered her mouth in shock.

Mandisa: Mabhuti kuthwa une Aids and all you care about is why I'm meddling in your business?

Mabhuti: andina AIDS mna.

Mandisa: Onele?

Me: sis Mandy?

Mandisa: uthi u Asiphe wena uthe u Mabhuti une utya ii ARV's.

Me: she keeps on saying that, andiyazi uyithathaphi ke futhi.

Mandisa: so u Mabhuti is not taking ARV's?

Me: not as far as I know.

Mabhuti: but even if bendinayo lonto, ayis osifo sazinja. Sesabantu.

Mandisa: haibo Mabhuti, why do you have such stinking attitude kodwa uzoba ngutata unplanned?

He didn't answer her.

Mandisa: Onele mntanam, mna bendine worry nguwe xa kuthwa u Mabhuti is taking ARV's. That's why I asked you to come here, enye nenyene I won't meddle in it as long as wena u safe qha.

Me: enkosi sis Mandy.

After some time I asked to leave, she walked me to the gate.

And I was glad she did that, I didn't want to speak to Mabhuti tu.

I walked home all by myself and decided to call Ginger...

Ginger: babe?

Me: I'm free for the next hour.

Ginger: I'm on my way.

Me: sure.

I hung up and took my strides, I wished he would get here quicker ndingekafiki endlini because ndingavele ndonqene uphinda ndiphume. And he did shame, I heard a car halting right next to me. he lowered the window...

Ginger: hey.

I opened the door and got in.

He made a u-turn and drove away. Looked at me sideways

Ginger: you good?

Me: I'm good, you?

Ginger: are you sure you good?

I lifted my head and looked at him.

Me: ufuna ukuthini?

Ginger: I'm just asking.

Me: siyaphi?

Ginger: kula BnB ndihlala kuyo.

Me: couldn't we grab lunch in a public place? Like normal people do?

Ginger: I thought you didn't wanna be seen with me in public.

I sighed.

Ginger: but if that's changed then you can choose a place siye, I'm game for whatever you wanna do.

Me: the BnB is fine.

Ginger: okay.

Then he drove off in silence.

We reached his BnB and I was on my phone throughout the drive, we walked to his room, he ordered food on delivery from outside since kungaphekwa during the day e BnB unless one requested. I sat down and put my phone on the pedestal. My nipples were hard.

He came to sit in front of me...

Ginger: ndicela uxolo, for everything that happened. I know I was wrong for not being honest with you from the start, we are not trying to harm your family or your sister. As I said before, ta Sthera only came down to see his son. Aphiwe has bodyguards in Pretoria ezi report'a kumamakhe hence he just pops up koo sister bakho engaxelanga, sube ezodibana notatakhe.

Me: you clearly had enough time to come up with this story.

Ginger: call him and ask him.

Me: andizoyenza lonto mna.

Ginger: I know you don't trust me, and I don't blame you.

Me: uz'qonde I don't trust you ndiyakoyika right now. Ndaziphi ba awuzondinqunqa undingcwabe at the back of this BnB?

He froze.

And there was sadness all over his face, all of a sudden.

I kept quiet.

I wasn't afraid of him one bit, I didn't care at all about his gangstariism mna. I felt like he was telling me a partial truth, but i wanted everything. All the gist, and I was going to make him tell me everything. I know I pushed a button with what I said, but I honestly just wanted to see his reaction.

[06/26, 15:11] : #Onele_02

#Cassandra

I missed him so much, and being far away from him was taking a strain on me but there was nothing I could do. He had to work, as much as I also had to work.

It felt like this time around we were genuinely inlove,

it was just the three of us. No one else mattered. Yes our families were still in the dark about our relationship, that must have been why it was exciting yazi.

I lay on that bed hoping he'd call... I was still unsure of myself in this whole situation. I didn't want to come across as desperate when I call him more than he calls me so most times I'd just sit on the urge of speaking to him and go to bed with a broken heart abe yena engayazi noba I'm heart broken because I do not communicate. I just conclude by myself.

As I put my phone away, he called and I jumped from the bed smiling from ear to ear.

Me: tatakhe?

Nkosinathi: sthandwa sam, unjani?

Me: ndi right... Okay I'm happy that you called.

Unjani wena?

Nkosinathi: I'm happy to hear the excitement in your voice.

I giggled.

Nkosinathi: I'm coming to Cape Town this weekend, can I see you?

Me: yes of course.

Nkosinathi: wavuma msinya, where's your brother?

Me: baye e Eastern Cape with his wife and children. His wife is pregnant and apparently she wants to give birth esekhaya so that azoncediswa.

Nkosinathi: is she pregnant with twins?

Me: Triplets they say.

He burst out laughing.

Nkosinathi: your brother ain't shooting blanks I see.

Me: eeew!

Nkosinathi: haha I'm sorry. Okay ke, what should I bring you?

Me: just enough kisses to make up for the time you went to New York without telling me.

Nkosinathi: we still on that?

Me: I was upset.

Nkosinathi: you're still upset, and it's okay. I'll make it up to you.

Me: thank you baby.

Nkosinathi: bendiyobona u Thix'ukhona kuthwa ukumakhulu wakhe.

Me: ubuye nini?

Nkosinathi: earlier today.

Me: use Bhayi?

Nkosinathi: yes, got back today.

Me: oh I see.

Nkosinathi: I thought I told you. I'm sorry.

Me: nah, it's okay. uMilli u kumama kaloku sis Cindy is out of the country no msebenzi. I sent you a text last week already.

Nkosinathi: you must have texted kula phone yesibini, I left it in the PJ .

Me: ooh okay.

Nkosinathi: see you tomorrow then?

Me: sure.

I hung up.

That was rude of me kodwa ayindim ofounileyo, but I just wanted to end the call. Why was he not telling me these things? We had agreed to be transparent, hence I was updating him with every little move that Mili and I were making but yena he goes to New York and doesn't tell me, comes back from New York and doesn't tell me, leaves his phone kwi Private Jet and decides not to tell me kodwa uyayazi we communicate on both his phones.

He called me back and I watched it ring for a few seconds before answering it.

Me: hi?

Nkosinathi: ndiyakuthanda.

I breathed.

Nkosinathi: I know we are taking baby steps, unlearning and learning but I want you to know that ndiyakuthanda.

Me: I know that.

Nkosinathi: you don't sound convinced.

Me: kanti ke I know that you love me, trust me.

He kept quiet for a couple of seconds.

Nkosinathi: mamakhe?

Me: it's late.

Nkosinathi: what's wrong?

Me: nothings wrong.

Nkosinathi: you're obviously upset with me, what have I done. Or not done?

I opened my mouth to say "nothing" but he cut me short.

Nkosinathi: and you better not say it's nothing because there's definitely something wrong.

Me: okay fine... Why don't you communicate the little things with me?

Nkosinathi: I apologized though for going to New York.

Me: and I texted you regarding umntana last week already, you didn't mention that your other phone is not with you. What if he was in dire need for

something?

Nkosinathi: you would have called me.

Me: or I would have thought you purposefully ignored my text.

Nkosinathi: okay ke baby ndcela uxolo.

I closed my eyes.

Bendithe I missed him.

Nkosinathi: am I forgiven?

Me: yes. Even though you sound like you're forcing this forgiveness.

Nkosinathi: I'm not, I just don't wanna fight with you tonight.

I kept quiet.

Nkosinathi: okay ke, ulala ngoku and ulale kakuhle.

Me: nawe, ulale kamnandi.

He hung up.

I stared at my screen before putting the phone away and covered my head to sleep.

[06/26, 15:11] : #Onele_03

He looked down, between his open knees for a second before looking back up at me.

Ginger: I'd never hurt you.

Me: wanna bet?

Ginger: Onele, I would never hurt you. There's no betting here, take my word. I would never hurt you.

Me: take your word?

I chuckled....

Me: what do you want from me le ikubuyise e Mozambique sewumkile?

Ginger: ndifuna wena.

Me: andimkanga nanto yakho mna Ginger.

Ginger: Yazi if you could just listen to me, just for a second ungandiva ukuba ndithini.

Me: ingxaki yakho you're going around in circles and I'm hungry. I've just come from church andikatyi ekhaya.

Ginger: ukutya kuyeza kaloku.

I got up and walked to the window...

Ginger: ingaske ndikuqhaqhele intliziyo yam uzifundele kuyo yonke lento ndizama ukuyicacisa kuwe.

I turned and looked at him, just as I was about to say something, someone knocked on the door . His

delivery. He got up and went to attend to the delivery guy... I dialed Ta Sthe, he's my nephews father obviously I still had his number.

Ta Sthera: Haibo, Onele. This is a nice surprise. I looked at Ginger... He was preoccupied, which bought me time.

Me: tata ka A. P... Yintoni unqaba kangaka?

He laughed and we spoke for a while before Ginger closed the door and walked with the food to the other room to plate up. I walked to the patio and closed the door behind me...

Me: Ta Sterha can I ask you a quick question?

Sthembele: ah, I should have known.

I giggled, rolling my eyes.

Sthembele: you can ask away Sbari.

Me: are you still working with u Ginger?

Sthembele: Yebo yes.

Me: when last did you speak to him?

Sthembele: about two weeks ago, why?

Me: yhima kaloku, when last did you see him?

Sthembele: two months ago before he left for Mozambi- wait wait, why are you asking me about Ginger Onele? Umazelaphi khona?

Me: I saw you two at the Cape Town Airport some time ago so yeah ndiyamazi.

Sthembele: and you didn't come and greet u sbari wakho kengoku?

Ginger opened the door, I turned to face him. He texted on his phone and showed me the screen

"The food is ready"

I nod and he walked back inside.

Me: I uhm... have to go, thanks for your cooperation.

Sthembele: heh Onele?

Me: bhuti?

Sthembele: what's going on? You cannot just happen to be curious about someone you're not even friends with. Your family nemes is.

Me: I'll tell you ngenye imini bhuti, bye for now.

He chuckled and then I hung up and walked into the house. Food. Oh my heart rejoiced. I joined a very quiet Ginger ndatya mna in silence, when I felt okay I drank a glass of juice in one go and poured another, ndazicutha ke kuyo ndali lady.

Me: does your boss know you're here?

Ginger: partner, no.

Me: why?

Ginger: I don't tell him anything about my personal life. Sidityaniswa yi business qha.

Me: but don't you use his private jet for traveling?

Ginger: I do, but he doesn't keep tabs. And, we are partners so I don't really have to report to him xandifuna ukuzwa kwelicala unless ndifuna yena specifically.

I looked at him, over my glass.

Ginger: why are you looking at me like that?

Me: tell me the real reason why you're back Ginger, be a man and tell me the truth.

He sighed...

Me: must be heavy.

Ginger: I'm back Onele because ndifuna wena, I want to be with you. I love you, and after spending time with you I realized that actually andina life e Mozambique. Nothing excites me, nothing makes me happy like you do.

I smiled and shook my head...

Me: let's summarize and rephrase that. "ndifuna ulala nawe Onele, nothing much"

He didn't show any emotion.

Me: this is quite simple, you just wanna have me in your fuck corner qha because you enjoyed the sex. You don't love me, you know you don't love me qha waqhela uwaqhatha amantombi ngothando which

is something I'm not thirty for. I'm very much loved ekhaya so andiphaphazeli xakuthethwa ngo thando. Ungafane ke uthethe nge attention ye Ndoda, maybe ke ndingafane ndinikezele because that's how you caught me. You gave me attention, online and offline... Until your cover was almost exposed.

Ginger: what do you mean my cover was almost exposed kengoku?

Me: my big mouth spoke too soon, so I almost exposed your motive instead of waiting for you to slip up.

He sighed and got up, walked around the room and stood at the far corner of the room looking over me.

Me: xa une chance zundigoduse ke. I think we're done here.

He didn't answer me, I drank my juice in silence. After about 15 minutes he spoke up...

Ginger: ufuna ndithini Onele?

Me: I want you to put your words into action dammit. Oko undixelela ngoku ndithanda but your actions speak otherwise. Ginger I don't trust you... Masiqale nje apho. I do not trust you.

He walked closer....

Ginger: I understand and I'm sorry.

Me: see that, I don't want you to be sorry. I want you to do what you speak.. You know what? Ndigoduse man and futhi undiyeke ndifunde mna, undiyeke ndizipholele aphebuchots heni ude uyazi into oyifunayo aphebomini because right now, awuzazi. And I'm not gonna be dragged into that.

He was already a very short distance from me, he held my hands and pulled me for a hug. I wasn't crying, I was just emotional. For so many reasons

but mostly because my period was closely approaching so my hormones were in some sort of imbalance.

[06/26, 15:11] : #Onele_04

#Cassandra

The following day I was meeting with the agent yendlu, at least now it wouldn't look suspicious into yokuba ndithenge indlu. It had been a while since I started at my job, with me not renting or buying food, any logical thinker would assume that I saved the money to buy the house, well maybe they wouldn't think "buy cash" you know? Maybe rent-to-buy or something like that. She took me to three more houses but again, just like before, one captured my heart. Meaning now we had two houses at the top, I had to decide on one. I asked the lady if she can help me show these houses to my boyfriend Saturday and she agreed, I wanted him to help me choose and he did say he doesn't mind giving me an input even though the final

decision will solely depend on me.

He arrived later that day, and as he promised, he came to see me. I had just arrived endlini from work, he hooted just as I was running myself a bath but I ignored him coz I wanted him to call. I turned off the water and waited, watching my phone but he hooted again. Only after five minutes did he call...

Me: tata ka Milli?

Nkosinathi: I'm outside.

Me: sure.

I hung up and opened the gate, walked down to the lounge and waited in excitement. He knocked and walked in, carrying a shopping bag and a very big bouquet of flowers. Okay I didn't just smile, I giggled, blushing. He laughed as he walked towards me and gave me the flowers, kissing my cheek as we shared an embrace.

Nkosinathi: yhooo andis anikhumbuli!

Me: yhoouu!

We laughed.

I was happy, genuinely happy to see him. He looked better than the last time I saw him, he looked waaay better. We remained in that hug until the excitement died down, and then I started being emotional.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I love you.

Nkosinathi: in your arms I feel at home, andiyazi man...I feel like kudala ndihamba and now that I'm here right now, I feel safe. I feel content, I feel at home.

Me: guess it's where you're supposed to be.

Nkosinathi: you guess?

I chuckled.

And stepped back.

Me: dude!

He laughed and only now handed me the shopping bag, I took the bag and the flowers and put them on the kitchen counter then I made him coffee and cookies, we sat e lounge, shared a couch and I watched him nibble.

Nkosinathi: I was hoping we could go to my house, for the weekend.

Me: on one condition?

Nkosinathi: uh-oh!

Me: I have three houses to view ngoms o and I want you to help me choose.

Nkosinathi: I told you I'm okay with whatever you choose, it's your house at the end of the day.

Me: I know that, but I still want your opinion.

Nkosinathi: alright no problem, now please go pack a weekend bag.

I didn't need to be asked twice, I skipped up those stairs and packed, came back down and he was busy on his phone so I used that time to put my flowers in water and went back upstairs ndayobeka the bag he gave me. I'd have to review the gifts obuya kwam Sunday. I made sure all windows were closed, did all security checks then we headed out. We went to buy ukutya k'qala then we went to his house, I told him I was gonna bath wathi mandiyovasa because he had a business conference call that would take approximately 30-40 minutes. I went to the bathroom, he went to his study. Ndagqiba engekagqiba so I went to warm the food...

I could tell that someone else had been here.

I know he's a man but he's a very neat and clean

man, his kitchen was dirty. Not dirty dirty but, you know when you just wipe off something from the kitchen counter and not “clean” it? Yes, there were stains on the counter and on the floor. So I decided to clean that, then emptied the fridge, some things were rotten in there. Emptied and cleaned it, cleaned the oven and he came out while I was mopping the floor.

Nkosinathi: kumdaka?

Me: yep, kumdaka sana. Sticky even.

Nkosinathi: oh wow.

Me: oko kwakuze oomamakho or someone else was here?

Nkosinathi: ngabo baby.

Me: wow u Liyema.

He chuckled and locked his doors, gates and put up alarm system.

He took the bucket and mopped the lounge...I dusted.

Me: I hope they were not sleeping in your bed.

Nkosinathi: there's a second master bedroom that I told mom she can use, but it won't hurt changing the linen.

Me: let me get into that, please mop the bathroom too. Akhange ndingene kuyo, ndiyayicingela qha.

He laughed and nod, our own bathroom (well, his own) was clean. I saw that ngoku bendiyovasa, it was spotless. I changed the bedlinen and curtains, the swept and powdered the rug powder, just for a fresher smell. When I was done I went back downstairs and he was also done, putting on some music on the theatre system.

Nkosinathi: please plate up.

Me: kay.

I served us, two different plates.

I was hungry, I wasn't about to share my meal with Nkosinathi ndilambile tu. We ate up making small conversation then he washed the dishes, I packed them sabuyela e lounge.

Me: how've you been feeling, after the Op?

Nkosinathi: better yazi...and I'm no longer taking strain with work ngoku.

Me: Meaning?

He sighed...

Me: what have you done tatakhe?

Nkosinathi: I uhm, ndiphumile kwi business zika tata.

Me: oh.. wow. When?

Nkosinathi: I finalized things after I came back from

the UK.

Me: you think it's the right thing to do?

Nkosinathi: yes baby...I don't want Ukhona to grow up and be caught up in this mess, I want to work solely for him, and maybe his siblings if we do get there but I want to work just for my children.

I breathed...

Nkosinathi: it had to be done mamakhe.

Me: I understand that, and I am proud of you.

Nkosinathi: But?

Me: But, I'm now wondering kuthiwani kokwenu ngawe. Won't your father fight you? Won't your siblings come after you? Our son?

Nkosinathi: I divided and sold most of my shares amongst my siblings so andimnkanga nanto yabo.

Me: it's all about entitlement baby, not because you left ne shares zabo. I've come to understand that

when people no longer have control over you, they tend to resort to some of shadiness.

Nkosinathi: ndi ready for whatever they come with mamakhe, I did my homework.

Me: haike ndoda, xa u ready nam ndi ready.

He laughed and kissed my cheek, again. I turned to face him and kissed his lips. He had this authentic gaze in his eyes as he kissed me again, we basically shared a moment right there.

Nkosinathi: Uyakuthanda umntu wakho.

I blushed.

Nkosinathi: And I promise you, from now on. It's just the three of us nyhani, no one else matters.

I was convinced, right that moment I was convinced he was ready for whatever his family might counteract with. Most times Nkosinathi doesn't just utter words, especially after his heart operation, he's been intentional and he was acting on his words.

Me: I believe you.

Nkosinathi: are you game?

Me: all day, every day. As long as mna no mntanam siyi priority kuwe, I'm in.

Nkosinathi: You've always been a priority baby...

I smiled.

We were not always a priority, he knows that.

We never were a priority futhi, that's why oo Asenathi felt entitled at some point. That's because he never made me a priority, maybe Milli was, but not mna.

But of course, we were not about to go into an

argument right now, yhini kus emnandi.

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_05

After a second I stepped back and wiped my eyes with the back of my hand.

Me: please take me home.

Ginger: Nelle...

Me: please...

He didn't say much, he grabbed his keys and opened the door for me. I walked out, he followed right behind me and we walked to the car. Got in and he drove to my hood in silence, safika ekhaya engekafiki umama. I was obviously concerned about him knowing ba kuphi ekhaya, but then I realized that if he's really been stalking me then he already knew his way there.

Me: thanks.

Ginger: when do I get to see you again?

Me: when you know what you really want, when you can actually put actions to your words.

Ginger: Kay... I love you.

Me: sure.

I walked out of his car, into my home yard and locked the gate ndayongena endlini without looking back. As soon as I walked in endlini, having closed the door behind my back I clapped hands for myself. Lol.

About a week later, I accompanied umama esiya eBhayi but obviously ndizojika etown mna, on my way back I found a delivery guy waiting outside so we walked in together, I signed for the parcels thinking zezika mama, walked in ekhaya and minded my own business. Two hours later, he called. He, bieng Ginger and he had left because he

was calling me ngala number yakhe inde, iweird

Me: hi...

Ginger: hi... How are you doing?

I sighed.

Ginger: Happy birthday.

I squint my eyes.

How did I miss my own birthday? How could mom even leave for PE on my birthday?

Me: it's not my birthday today.

Ginger: u sure?

I walked to the fridge to check the calendar, Haibo it's really my birthday bethuna. I cleared my throat, embarrassed.

Ginger: it slipped your mind I see.

Me: thank you, I've been swamped in school work I really didn't think it's that time of the year already.

Ginger: oh well, you're finally eighteen.

I smile.

I'm suddenly excited now.

Me: yep, finally an adult according to society, still a baby according to the Mzayi clan.

He laughed, my heart melted. No. Why am I putting myself through this? Again?

Ginger: I hope you like your gifts.

Me: gifts?

Ginger: I sent you gifts earlier today, the courier company sent me proof that you signed for them.

My eyes race back to that box that I thought was for mom.

Me: I haven't opened the box, I thought the parcel belonged to mom.

Ginger: oh okay.

Me: well, I might as well open it while you're on the line.

He didn't respond.

I went to fetch a knife and cut the tape, he bought me three pairs of shoes, two being high heels and one a very bright sneaker. Very much my personality, the sneaker I mean. Underneath that were four boxes. One was a box of chocolates, two were clothes and the last one was an iPhone. I screamed at the sight of the phone, he laughed. Pleased with himself. Then there was an envelope with two gift vouchers. One for perfume and one for lingerie. I laughed, I could tell he was nervous on

the other end of this phone...

Me: well, you outdid yourself here. Thank you.

Ginger: you actually like them?

Me: all of them, yes. I do.

He released a chunk of breath.

Me: enkosi nyhani.

Ginger: ndiyakuthanda Onele, I hope you get that.

I didn't respond.

Ginger: I will not push, but just know that I love you and ndifuna wena. No one else.

I sighed. Loudly apparently.

Ginger: just do me one favour please, keep yourself for me.

Me: andingomnkakho Ginger.

Ginger: I know that, but please.

Me: and we're not in a relationship, we were just a summer fling.

Ginger: I'm in a relationship now, andiyazi lento uyithethayo.

I laughed. Loud.

Me: uyakwazi uwuhlekisa umlomo wam.

Ginger: Nello you're going to Varsity very soon, please. Keep yourself.

Me: for you? What's so special about you?

Ginger: come to think of it, nothing, except that ndiyakuthanda and I want to build a future with you.

Okay I didn't respond.

Ginger: when you're ready, I will come back so we

can talk about us, the future and my involvement with your brother in-law. Maybe uzotsho ubone ba I'm serious ngawe, ngathi and I'm actually not hiding anything from you.

I didn't respond again.

Ginger: I do hope you enjoy your gifts, happy birthday sthandwa sam. Pity I can't give you some birthday sex.

I burst out laughing.

Me: that would be the ultimate gift yazi?

Ginger: well next year I'll give it to you, anyway and anywhere you want it.

Me: mh, I guess I should look forward to that. Thank you for these.

Ginger: you don't have to thank me. That's my job.

I smiled as we hung up.

Wait, was I not mad at him a few weeks ago? Why am I standing here blushing and smiling to myself with something tickling me between my thighs?

I grab the box and take it to my room, Cass and Cindy send birthday texts but Cass also sends me eWallet. I jump up and down, at least they didn't forget. I did.

Three weeks from that day, Gingers landed and I'm right there, waiting for him. We didn't hug, we squashed into each other. Lol. The drive to his hotel became the shortest, as soon as we get to the room, no questions asked, but our clothes start flying across the room and the next thing, my nails are deep in his skin and his groaning on top of me like a hungry wolf.

His head on my chest, I'm busy massaging his

temples.

Ginger: please switch off your phone.

Me: why?

Ginger: at least for the next hour. Please.

I did as he said, switched off nezakhe ii phones and we fell asleep in that sticky situation. He woke up before me and ordered food, he was just watching me eating an orange when I finally woke up. I blushed. He was still half-naked.

Me: what time is it?

Ginger: 5:30pm

I stretched. I should get going, I have a study session at seven. I went to the shower and showered, a few minutes after I heard a knock, he came to join me and we showered together, and we

did more than the showering.

We ate the food wrapped in towels...

Me: how long will you be here?

Ginger: I have three weeks, but I can stretch it to a month. Why?

Me: you kind of came at a very bad time, I'm writing exams.

Ginger: oh no I won't disturb you, don't worry. After today just pretend I'm still out of the country.

Me: but ndiyagqiba ubhala in two weeks.

Ginger: then we'll take off in two weeks, your excellence in education is important to me. I won't jeopardize that.

I smiled and kissed his cheek.

Ginger: khaw'lezisa. You said you have a class at 7.

Me: yep.

I quickly ate up and got dressed.

He watched me until I finished then he grabbed a vest and walked out with me to the basement of the hotel where he'll be parking for the next month. We kiss in the dark corridors as we make our way to the car, and he took me home.

Ginger: I love you.

Me: I've come to know that.

He laughed.

Me: what?

Ginger: you're supposed to say you loved me too.

Me: what if I don't love you?

Ginger: uzobe ufuna ntoni ke kum, like right now?

Me: sex, gifts, attention?

He smiled and started his ignition.

Ginger: keep telling yourself that.

I laughed and we shared a kiss. I got off and went home, dad was home. OMW. When did he come back? And he probably saw the car... Oh my God. I tried to compose myself as I walked in...

Me: ola tamkhulu?

He laughed and we hugged.

Me: ubuye nini?

Dad: about two hours ago, uvelaphi wena elixesha?

Me: eskolweni daddy, and I'm going to a study session at seven. Sewuphungile?

Dad: ungandenzela nawe kaloku, imnandi xa yenziwe ngomnye umntu.

He didn't give away if he saw anything at all, but I know dad. He probably did, and he's gonna make me sweat.

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_06

One week later, oko mna ndalala ekhaya while my “boyfriend” or “shag buddy” was in town and while other kids were “cross nighting”, studying together in groups according to subjects...

As I walked out of the school premises, just after writing the morning paper I saw Ginger's car (well, his hired car) and I wanted to pretend like I didn't see him, you know? Walk up the street like I did the last time? But my feet found themselves walking up to it. He didn't come out but unlocked the car as I neared it, so I automatically walked around it to get to the passenger door. I opened it and peeped inside,

Me: hi? What are you doing here?

Ginger: hi, surprise.

I chuckled.

Ginger: Get in.

Me: since when do you pick me up from school?

Ginger: am I not allowed to?

Me: why didn't you at least tell me uyeza?

Ginger: I didn't think that would be necessary. Wait, are you hiding something?

Me: zange ndithi kuwe ndine boyfriend kanene?

He chuckled,

Ginger: I don't care what you said, come on in. Let's go.

Me: Hewethu can you imagine what those rascals are saying about me, just for these few seconds I've

been talking to you right now?

Ginger: and here I thought someone doesn't care what other people say about her?

Okay he got me. I smiled and got in, buckled up and he drove to town.

Ginger: I'm going to Durban for about a week or two.

That came as a shock.

And so random.

When we last spoke he said he's here for three weeks and he could make it four. Now he's "minus'ing" one if not two of those four weeks by going to Durban? Leaving me behind?

Me: mmkay.

Ginger: that will give you enough time to focus on

your last exam.

Me: uzobuya?

Ginger: yes of course.

I nod.

He looked at me, then back at the road.

Wait, did I really ask that? Why would I ask him that?

Ginger: what's on your mind?

I shrugged

Ginger: come on.

I sighed...

Me: it's nothing, really

Ginger: baby...

I took a minute, silent.

Me: I still fail to understand what you want from me. I'm young, you're old and successful among other things. Being with me is risky, this moment right now is a risk. Why would you risk it all to be here, right now?

He looked ahead and drove in silence, we weren't going to his hotel, we were headed towards the beach.

Ginger: question is why would you risk it all to be with me?

I wasn't intending on answering him, I didn't want to give it away that I actually have fallen for him. It was no longer about sex now. I had it bad, and I didn't know how to compose myself.

Ginger: I'm not as successful as I'd want to be, but

I'm getting there and there's no one else I'd want to get there with, besides you.

Me: why?

Ginger: because you are not after my money, yes you appreciate them but you don't get moved by gifts, you can be all excited and chilled at the same time. You... You challenge my brains Nelle, I used to hate that because I thought you were undermining my intelligence, until I actually started seeing you for the smart ass that you are.

I laughed at "smart ass", he could have said "smart woman" or "smart pants" but he chose ass.

Ginger: Seriously. You have your way of being two steps ahead of me, every time.

Me: except for now.

Ginger: yes except for now, which is good.

I smiled.

He touched my thigh as he drove, found a parking space and turned the ignition off with the car overlooking the sea. We opened the windows...

Ginger: You make me want to do better, whenever I look at you, I know you're gonna kick ass and I want to be there to witness it all.

Me: baby what do you want?

He laughed.

Ginger: so I can't compliment you if andifuni nto? Is that what you're saying?

Me: no don't get me wrong, I am enjoying these compliments but come on. Spit it out.

Ginger: unfortunately, andifuni nto ke. I'm just simply complimenting you.

I examined him with narrow eyes and he laughed even more. His laughter did things to the inner parts of my belly. It made me warm.

Ginger: you're eighteen, for you to think like that, you obviously have not been loved right.

Me: and you would know how to love right?

Ginger: I know how to love you, and that's the only thing that matters to me. Loving you right.

I blushed.

And mumbled "Why am I being showed with compliments all over the show"? He heard this and laughed all over again, he took out food satya making small nonsensical conversations then we were done he drove out of the beach...

Me: when are you leaving?

Ginger: tomorrow night.

Me: andibhali ngoms o, can we spend a little time before you leave?

Ginger: of course, what time should I pick you up ek'seni?

Me: I'll text you.

Ginger: okay...

I wanted a plan to sleep over, but I wasn't going to tell him that. He dropped me off at home and we just pecked on the lips, it was actually fun, spending time with him without having any sort of sexual intercourse. This was new to me...

I walked in at home and cooked dinner, I wasn't even sure if the folks would be back tonight but just in case they do come back, I wanted them to come back to a warm house...without precious little Onele qha. When I was done, I went to freshen up, and wore lacy underwear and a denim dress that reached just below my knees with black sneakers,

and a biker jacket. As I walked down from my room, dad's car drove in.

I quickly went to sit down, scattering books all over the coffee table and "concentrated". This "outing" would have been easy if it was just mom, she knows sis Mandy, bendizozimela ngaye but now there's dad too. I was panicking.

"Nkqo nkqo"

I focused on my books, they whispered amongst themselves as they walked in...

Dad: ooh mntanam, usabhala na?

Me: ewe tata...ndigqiba next week.

He threw me a shopping bag, I smiled mouthing a thank you. Mom joined me on the couch, heeee this was to be more difficult than I thought.

Mom: how was today's paper?

Me: Difficult, but we wrote.

Mom: kaloku ungulo ungakhange ufune uyo
cross'nighter.

I laughed at her, and then a light bulb went on!

Yes! This was my opportunity and I wasn't gonna let
it slip away tu.

Me: well, ndiyaya namhlanje, I can't afford a repeat
of what happened today.

Dad: But you're not writing tomorrow.

Me: yes, there won't be a cross night Sunday night
so they're doing it tonight and tomorrow the whole
day.

Dad: so when are you coming back home?

Me: in the afternoon, unless I know what they're

studying then I'll come back earlier.

Dad: when you know something kaloku you share with those who don't, andithi that's why nawe usiya kwabanye because you want them to share what they already know, with you?

Me: ewe tata.

Dad: So we should expect you in the afternoon.

Mom: mmh, uphekile?

Me: yes ma'am

Dad: uqale undenzele itea ke before you leave.

Me: and I thought your beautiful wife would make tea for you.

Dad: nooooo! Yhu hay no thank you!

They both laughed.

I collected all my books, took two for the "cross night" along with a fleece,ne charger. Put everything in a bag and went waited until kwabetha u six then I hiked a taxi. Yep, I just slipped out of the

folks watch for a forbidden D!

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_07

I think I loved the surprise on his face than me lying to my parents for him.

Ginger: baby, what are you doing here?

Me: I came to check who's been keeping your bed warm all this time.

He chuckled and let me in. I walked in and threw my bag on the couch, taking a bottle of water that was on the counter. He joined me on the couch, still surprised

Ginger: baby?

Me: mh?

Ginger: I thought we're spending the DAY together

ngoms o.

Me: so?

Ginger: what are you doing here, this time? And, what's in the bag?

Me: do you really have to ask this?

Ginger: baby no offense neh, I just don't want you getting into trouble on my account.

Me: only now you think of that?

Ginger: it was different in PE, you were with your sisters. Now you're home, with your parents.

I smiled at him drinking my water, he made me feel like I was intruding but I didn't care about that right now. I'm here so he must just make peace with it. He took my bag...

Me: books and a fleece, ndithe ndiyofunda.

He put it back laughing as he pulled me towards him. He kissed the side of my head, amused.

Me: you look like you're going somewhere?

Ginger: yeah uhm I was, but I will cancel. Can't leave you alone here.

Me: where were you going?

Ginger: I was going out for drinks.

Me: I didn't know you had friends here.

Ginger: associates, not friends.

Me: ooh okay.

Ginger: order something, so we can have supper in here. Or you wanna go out?

Me: go out? Ndis ekufundeni baby?

He burst out laughing once again, I ordered food for us, texted my parents that ndihambe safe, then went to pee, he was already changing the sheets on

the bed. Oh man.

Me: ubulala nabani apha Ginger?

He laughed,

Ginger: ubungekuthi baby, just for once?

Me: awumdala for ba ndithi baby, phendula umbuzo.
Ubulala nabani apha?

Ginger: wouldn't you like to know.

I threw him with the nearest pillow, he caught it and came charging for me I tried running away but there wasn't enough room so he caught me and cornered me between the bathroom door and the window. Now was my turn to laugh, he kept on biting my skin softly, kissing some places and suckling on some and for some reason, we ended up having a "quickie" right there. We actually only stopped when the food was delivered, I went to the door and paid then served us separately. We sat on that couch quietly... Until he spoke up.

"that was intense"

I just laughed

Ginger: Are you sure you're only eighteen baby?

I laughed even more, there was nothing special about what we just did. It was a quickie and that's it.

Ginger: hay no, ndiyakuvuma.

Me: as if uyaqala uyiva yonke lento uyivileyo namhlanje.

Ginger: ingxaki yakho wena baby you will never understand...

I didn't respond.

He was done eating before me, and he moved closer, touching my thighs which were now exposed.

Ginger: I want more of that.

I kissed him on the lips and continued eating, when I was done I rinsed my mouth and we went to bed. His jaw dropped when he saw the lingerie I had on, I'm voluptuous with meat on my bones so when I stole a look at him gawking at me, I got excited. His eyes made me excited.

Me: Vala umlomo.

Ginger: oh hell no....

I giggled as I tied my hair, he was already behind me, stripping off my lingerie while kissing me from behind. He touched me between the legs and I threw my head back, giving him more space to kiss around my neck as his fingers slid in. I was already wet so...

After a couple of moans, he turned me around so we could kiss, he picked me up from the floor and slowly lay me down on the bed where he worshipped my body. From head to toe.

Then his phone rang, he didn't stop. It died down and rang again, so I stopped him, it was annoying.

Me: please answer your phone or switch it off.

He took it, switched it off without even checking who was calling him. Haibo lobhuti!

We made love.

Oh we made love for the entire night. I'd fall asleep in his arms and whenever we woke up we would just continue where we left off until morning. When I woke up he wasn't there, I went to the bathroom, did my business and came back to bed. I wanted to order breakfast but I didn't know ba akayangothenga kutya na so I waited, he came back with a Spar shopping bag with yogurts, chocolates... Snacks basically.

Ginger: you're awake. Good morning, baby.

Me: Morning.

Ginger: have you ordered breakfast yet?

Me: nope.

Ginger: please do, I'll just take a quick shower.

Me: sho.

I did as I was asked to do, got up and joined him in the shower and we took more than the intended time in there but we finally came out on time for the breakfast then we ate. He gave me a brown paper bag, I opened it and found two pills.

Me: and this?

Ginger: morning after.

Me: oh flip! Thank you.

He smiled as I gulped the pills down with water.

Me: I didn't think we'd need it though.

Ginger: uyahlabis a?

Me: yes.

Ginger: it's always good to be extra careful... We can't afford you falling pregnant right now.

Me: definitely... So, what are your plans for today?

Ginger: I have countless appointments with your body the whole day, what are your plans?

I was giggling like a smitten teenager, well I'm eighteen, I'm still a teen. Correct?

Me: well, whoever you go sir, I follow.

Ginger: thats more like it.

He came forward and kissed me, we kissed as he pulled his body up so his weight may rest on mine. His hands were grabbing and pinching on my thighs, my waist, my ass. Maybe we're just addicted to each other, it has always been like this when we're

in one room together. After about two rounds I left him in bed and opened the windows, took the shopping bag and went to watch TV in the other side wearing only his vest.

My phone rang... Cassandra, I ignored her. It rang again,

Me: baby momma?

Sandra: makazi, how are you? How's school?

Me: I'm almost done with my exams so I'm excited.

She laughed

Me: how's the little man?

Sandra: he's growing, still handsome.

Me: just like his dad huh

Sandra: oh haiké.

Me: how is he? Niyathetha mos ngoku?

Sandra: he's fine Onele, he's good.

That wasn't convincing so I just let it slide.

Sandra: uphi? I called endlini wathi umama awukho.

Me: uthe ndiyephi yena?

Sandra: Onele uphi?

I sighed

Me: ndise ndodeni Cassandra.

She laughed, oh... I thought she'd be on that deputy parent 101.

Sandra: I thought as much.

Me: hay suka I needed some air, I needed to breathe man yhu.

Sandra: don't forget to take the pill ke girl, you know the drill.

Me: Ude wandiphathela ngokwakhe unyana womntu.

Sandra: oh shem u Mabhuti wabantu.

Oh flip.

Kukho nalowa kanene...

Well I wasn't going to explain anything to Cass, how do you explain this? Ginger is not one to be explained to my family. We spoke some more and then we hung up. The thought of Ginger sent tingling effects all over my body, my nipples immediately got erect and I just laughed at myself.

Me: I need help, no, this can't be normal"

I went to check on him, he was still sleeping

peacefully so I closed the door and returned back to the TV.

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_08

He finally woke up and joined me, we kissed and shared a passionate fifteen minutes then we lay on the couch, naked, the TV watching us.

Me: are you ready to talk?

He looked at me confused.

Me: you said you wanted to tell me everything.

Ginger: oh that... Yes.

Me: now is the time.

He sighed and looked straight into my eyes, then pecked me on the lips.

Ginger: I think I'm in love with you, it's not really a shocker I guess but it wasn't part of the plan.

Me: What plan?

Ginger: you were right, Steve and I were back to make your family's life difficult. He had this whole plan worked out, we stalked everyone of you guys, especially you ladies. Besides your routine yenu, worse eka Cindy no Siki and we knew when and what times Cass was alone.

I sat up.

I was starting to boil inside, he sat up as well.

Ginger: the plan was to get you distracted, get you attracted to Luciano so that the more you spend time with him, the more vulnerable and unguarded Cass is because we knew how much you two spent time together. You guys are like twins, so the plan was to get you busy, and her alone and vulnerable since things weren't really working out with her

boyfriend.

Me: yhima, uthetha ngo Luciano Morris? Luciano is your friend?

Ginger: he works for Sthe as well, we're not friends but we work together.

Me: wow.

Ginger: so when I heard of this plan, I decided to act first and approach you before him ku messenger and for some reason you got attracted to me and you didn't really pay much attention to him. I didn't tell them what I did, they didn't even know that there's something going on between us until that day you saw Sthe and I having lunch in PE.

Me: so you admit to lying to me.

Ginger: yes, with reason.

I chuckled.

Ginger: I told Sthe because he was mad at Luciano

for not pulling the weight, Luciano was relaxed ngayo yonke lento. Maybe he just wasn't attracted to you or you gave him the cold shoulder, I don't know. So I told Steve that we're actually dating, maybe that's why you didn't entertain Luciano and he was mad that I didn't tell him beforehand.

I swallowed, feeling played.

Ginger: I told him I don't report my personal life to him, and because he didn't communicate yonke le way ka Luciano kum I had the upper hand. He asked how long we've been dating and I told him it's been two years wothuka. He was actually mad at me for fucking you, uthi ndimdala mandikhangele iintanga zam ebengaphazamanga when he sent Luciano to you because at least he's in his early twenties but I told him akhange ndithunywe kuwe so he can just bugger off.

I just looked at him, no emotion whatsoever.

Ginger: plan A didn't work ke ngalo ndlela and now we had to come up with plan B. Which you ruined by asking me questions that night.

Me: oh I did?

Ginger: I had a chip on, he heard everything and trembled when you said you spotted us in Cape Town Airport and so we went back to the drawing board but that also didn't do us any favors because your brothers had already caught up with Sthe and threatened him.

Me: they should have killed him, nawe on top of that.

He smiled.

Ginger: well they did cut of his leg last week, he's an amputee now, still in hospital though.

Me: they should have gouged out his eyes mani, fuck!

He didn't say a word, I think he could tell I was angry.

Me: yazi Uyandicaphukis a.

Ginger: I can tell.

Me: ngaske ndikuhlabe and watch you ungcungcutheka ziintlungu.

He didn't answer me, then he got up and went to the bedroom, came back with a pocket knife and gave me. I took it, he sat down and looked at me,

Ginger: ndihlabe and watch me die in pain.

My throat went dry.

Ginger: do it baby, I know you will feel better when you're done.

Me: I can't...

I threw it across the room, my eyes tearing.

Me: I can't. Oh fuck I hate you!

I got up and walked around the room...

Me: yintoni ingxaki ka Sthembele no Cassandra?

Ginger: he's obsessed with her, he thinks had he married her and not Asanda... He'd be richer because Cassandra is very wise. Just like you.

Me: Sthembele is mentally disturbed Ginger. That guy is sick!

Ginger: I know.

Me: but you still do business with him?

Ginger: he's got a respected reputation in the underworld. I have to work with him until I can stand on my own.

I looked at him, he got up and walked towards me

Ginger: I love you, I don't know why I felt the need to lie to him about us dating for two years but I don't regret that. I really do love you.

Me: I hate you.

Ginger: I understand.

Me: you do? Really? Then leave me the fuck alone.

He kissed my forehead and walked away, he got dressed and I watched him leave me in his room. I slid down the wall and cried, when I had cried enough I went to bed. After about three hours I woke up and he wasn't there, in the room with me, so I called him.

Ginger: baby?

Me: ubuya nini?

Ginger: I'm here...

He opened the bedroom door, I hung up and looked at him. He looked quite sad, but amadoda soze uwagqibe nge feelings zawo. He put his phone down and got in bed, pulling me close for a hug and cried on his chest. I don't even know why I was crying...

Ginger: I'm sorry.

Me: no you're not.

Ginger: believe me baby, I am sorry.

I didn't respond.

Ginger: he knows where I stand with everything that regards your family and I think he's still shocked that your brothers actually cut off his leg, I hope he gets the message.

Me: I feel stupid.

Ginger: you're not stupid, I am.

I sniffed.

Ginger: I'm stupid for even agreeing to his plan knowing fully well I'm putting your life at risk, that was stupid of me and I'm sorry. It will never happen again.

I cleaned up my face, he took my hands and kissed them.

Ginger: I love you Onele Mzayi and trust me when I say I will never let anything happen to you.

Me: I want him to pay.

He looked at me.

Me: you say you love me, right?

Ginger: right.

Me: then I want you to prove to me that you really love me, make him pay. Or better yet, help me to make Sthembele pay for every little pain he's caused us, he's caused both my sister's. I don't care what you do, I don't care how you do but I want to see you make him pay. If you don't help me do this, if you don't do this for me... Don't think I won't do it on my own, I will and I will make you pay as well.

He nod.

Me: I'm so tired of men thinking they can walk all over us, I'm so fucken tired and you know what... I'm not gonna beg you, I'm not gonna remind you. If I see that you're not taking my request seriously then I'll do it on my own.

Ginger: okay, but first. Finish your exams.

Me: are you game or not?

Ginger: I'm on your side baby, I'm on your side.

Me: okay.

We hugged, he released a breath he must have been holding since he walked in here.

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_09

He pulled back and kissed me on the lips,

Ginger: masiyotya.

I got out of bed, followed him to the other side and waited for him as he warmed the food then we dug in. I stopped halfway...

Me: you said you have to work with him until you can stand on your own?

Ginger: yes.

Me: what are you working on?

Ginger: I can't tell you that.

Me: are fucken kidding me?

He sighed...

Ginger: illegal stuff. I'm working on illegal stuff
Onele.

Me: surely they have names or terms to be called by.

Ginger: drugs and guns for now.

Me: for now?

Ginger: yes, I'll see if I can get a share in the gold
mining business in the long run. But for now what
pays my bills it the drugs and guns.

Me: what do you do with those?

Ginger: I import and sell.

I nod...

And continued to eat.

Ginger: What are you thinking?

Me: nothing.

Ginger: baby...

I sighed and wiped my mouth.

Me: you need to train me, gun handling.

His eyes almost popped out.

Ginger: what? Why?

Me: because, I wanna know how to handle a gun,
how to shoot.

Ginger: Nelle...

Me: if you don't train me you do know that I can go
to a shooting ranger for that, right?

He nod...

Me: good.

Ginger: guns are dangerous.

Me: I know that.

Ginger: can I teach you self defence instead?

Me: I won't need to defend myself anywhere.

Ginger: what?

Me: I won't be no victim of attacks baby, I'll be the attacker. Ayizondinceda nganto i self-defence. I need to know how to handle the gun, simple.

He didn't answer me, when we were done eating I collected the trash and cleaned up, I had leads than four hours to spend with him. I joined him on the couch, he was thinking. I lay my body, back, on his and his legs secured the rest of my body...

Ginger: I live a very dangerous life, I don't want you part if it.

Me: then break up with me.

Ginger: that's not what I meant.

Me: mmh.

He sighed, his fingers going over my hairy skin sending shivers down my spine. He kissed the crown of my head, I kissed his chest. My phone rang, private number.

Me: hello?

Asanda: Onele, unjani?

Me: sisi, why are you calling me ngo private number?

Asanda: I thought you wouldn't answer my call...

Okay she was right... Maybe I wasn't going to.

Asanda: how are you?

Me: I'm okay sisi, unjani wena?

Asanda: I'm good... I miss you guys. Wena no Sandra.

Me: Eish...

Asanda: I don't know how to speak to her, uyandivalela ngaphandle and I've tried countless times... Ude wathi utata mandimyeke azinyibilikele ngexesha lakhe.

Me: I think that's a good idea, on the bright side though, she's still okay with your kids.

Asanda: ewe ke.

Me: u sure u right sisi?

Asanda: ndi sure baby, I just wanted to hear your voice. Ugqiba nini ubhala?

Me: very soon, what's up?

Asanda: we're going for holiday in Atlanta, thought you might wanna come and houses it.

Me: haha okay, I'll talk to the folks and hear from them. U Aphiwe naye uyahamba?

Asanda: yhu lowo, uya ku Sandra kaloku.

Me: obviously.

We both laughed, and after a couple more minutes, we hung up. Shame u sisi... Things never went back to normal after that shooting, even though no one verbally took sides, we all took Cassandra's side. It was a unanimous decision that wasn't even discussed.

Ginger: baby?

I didn't respond.

Ginger: Uyayifuna imali yokuya kwi therapy?

Me: what?

Ginger: that's a healthier way of dealing with your anger, not guns.

I laughed at him, lifting up my head to kiss him on

the lips.

Me: if ufuna ukundipha imali then do so, into endingazoyenza kukuya kwi therapy. Or maybe, just deposit enough so that I can buy myself a shotgun.

He kissed my lips...

Ginger: I don't want you handling guns.

I kissed him back..

Me: I wasn't asking for your permission.

He chuckled.

Ginger: Onele I am not joking.

Me: mistake yakho kukucingba ndiyadlala. I'm eighteen ginger, I can get any license I want, I'm of legal age.

Ginger: you can go learn martial arts, you can learn

boxing and everything else not guns.

Me: I want exactly that, guns. Guns honey.

I smiled as I kissed him again, he sucked my bottom lip simultaneously as he grabbed my behind. Before I knew it, we were heaving for breath, humping, sweating and moaning in unison. I could feel this session was different, he wasn't worshipping my body, he wasn't making love to me. I looked into his eyes and I saw rage, he really wasn't making love to me but he was channeling his anger. Funny enough, I was enjoying this side of him, as much as it was foreign to me, I was enjoying it, I was excited just by feeding off the anger in his eyes. He grabbed one of my boobs and squeezed so tight I screamed and laughed at the same time as I felt another wave of orgasm jolting through my entire body. He had me pinned on that couch as wave after wave swept through me, and then when I was calming down, he had his own and it was such an amazing experience. He sunk his teeth on my shoulder as he moaned out loud, releasing hot

juices between my legs. After a moment his body came back to normal and he was out of breath. We lay there, body to body... Not saying a word. I was happy, I was satisfied. I could go home any minute from now on, he definitely served me. I kissed his forehead, playing with his ears...

Me: you need to man up baby, if I'm really gonna be part of your life, you need to man up.

He lifted his head confused,

Me: the only way you can punish me nge sex is if you deprive me of it, not by giving it to me with anger. I'm a different kind of breed.

He laughed, sucking my nipples...

Ginger: you make me look like a pussy, you know

that.

Me: haha, you're actually right. You do look like one.

He sucked my nipple hard I cried out in pain, hitting him on the shoulder.

Ginger: you're fucking too old for your age. Fuck!

I opened my legs wider, he was still between them, his whole body on mine.

Me: are you complaining?

He looked at me sheepishly, kissing my chin.

Ginger: not one bit...

Me: thought as much...

We kissed again, then we went to shower and we took an ice cream drive for an hour then he took me home. I called mom on my way home, just to make sure abekho because I didn't feel like walking....

Mom: Nontombi?

Me: ukhona utata endlini?

Mom: hay simnkile thina, imali yokongeza igrocery ise roomini yakho under the teddy bear.

Me: Haibo, nindishiya ndedwa nge weekend bethuna?

Mom: besizokusishiya nabani inguwe iphelo?

I sulked.

Me: cela unike utata iphone.

Mom: he's driving.

Me: mama niya phi kanti?

Mom: siyi couple kaloku Nontombi, mna no tatakho
we are a couple so siya kwi couples weekend away.

Okay I laughed, no I was upset though. I laughed so
hard especially when she hung up on me.

Me: wow.

Ginger: abekho?

Me: nope, they went on a couple's weekend away.

He laughed, amused.

Ginger: wow, that's nice. Bring the spark back.

Me: eeuw man baby.

He laughed at me.

[06/26, 15:12] : #Onele_10

#Cassandra

We went to bed, for some reason, as much we both missed each other, we both didn't seem to be hungry for sex. We just cuddled and fell asleep in each other's arms. I woke up before him and went to make breakfast,

He joined me just as I was finishing to plate up.

"Morning" he said, kissing my cheek in passing. I just smiled as I watched him opening all windows, and came back to help me. Well that's what he said, but he didn't help me one bit, he disturbed me. He stood behind me and kissed my neck, nibbling on my earlobes. I tried to get away from him but I couldn't, he had me cornered and he knew it. After a while I gave up wriggling myself off him, I just gave in. He smothered me with kisses, picked me up and put me on the kitchen counter looking deep in my eyes...

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda kodwa Cass andra.

Me: but uyazazi uyathandwa nawe ndim.

Nkosinathi: I know that...

Me: really?

Nkosinathi: mh?

Me: mh?

He laughed and kissed me, we made out on that counter and when our pressure died down, we took the food to the lounge and ate there, he wasn't eating, he was looking at me...

Me: haibo baby!

Nkosinathi: I really missed you.

I blushed, he removed food from the corner of my lips.

Nkosinathi: your sister in-law sent a text, she's coming here for lunch.

Me: I hope you told her we won't be here for lunch.

Nkosinathi: I didn't respond.

Me: well please do.

Nkosinathi: if she's serious she will call me, if not, then uzofika ndingekho and I'll just tell her I didn't get the message.

I looked at him and laughed.

Nkosinathi: and I changed the locks, and gate remote after mom and Liyema left so...

Me: You didn't!

Nkosinathi: it's my house, I bought it with my hard earned money. I can basically do whatever I wanna do with it.

Okay I didn't respond.

He came forward and kissed my cheek, I smiled and kissed him on the lips, he bit my bottom lip but I had to push him away since I was still chewing.

Me: I'm eating!

Nkosinathi: I don't care, I can eat that from you!

I burst out laughing, we ate finish then his phone rang as we were about to take the dishes to the kitchen. He looked at me and put on loud speaker...

Nkosinathi: hello?

Liyema: Hi bhuti, unjani?

Nkosinathi: I'm good makoti, unjani wena?

Liyema: Nidyaphila nam, ukweliphi icala?

He looked at me and I shrugged,

Nkosinathi: Ndis e Kapa, what's up?

Liyema: ndis endleleni eza eKapa nam, I have an appointment with the gynaecologist on Monday so bendizocela ufikela kwakho?

Me: kugqityiwe nje u renovate'wa endlini, why ungafikeli khona?

Liyema: I need a quiet place, they are busy preparing for uvula indlu and kugcwele phaya.

He looked at me in silence.

Liyema: okanye u busy kwakho?

Nkosinathi: yeah I am.

Liyema: oh...

Nkosinathi: why don't you ask your husband to book you into a hotel? Closer to your doctor?

She kept quiet...

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry Liyema man, enyinto nam ndiyafika and I really need my space right now.

Liyema: hay wethu akhongxaki, I understand.

Nkosinathi: enkosi sisi.

Liyema: Alright, sharp ke.

He hung up and looked at me.

I kissed him on the lips.

Me: I'm proud of you.

Nkosinathi: I feel like she was sent to test waters.

Me: whatever the case may be, I am proud of you qha.

He kissed me again and we went to wash the plates, went to bath and went to view our houses. Well, my house. He loved all of them, which was not what I

wanted from him because I chose the three because I loved all three. I needed him to at least love two, so I could pick one of those two. He took me out to lunch right after we viewed the house, we ordered and waited sipping on drinks. My phone vibrated, a message from his sister.

Me: I thought I blocked her.

Nkosinathi: Who?

Me: Asenathi, she just texted me.

Nkosinathi: Uthini?

I read the text: “Hi Cassandra, I know u right. I bought some things for umntana, ndingazisa kokwenu in two weeks’ time or should I just bring them to you? I’m in Cape Town. ”

I looked at Nkosinathi, he shrugged.

Nkosinathi: she bought things for umntana? Is she okay?

Me: haha! I should be asking you.

Nkosinathi: Are you gonna answer her?

Me: nope, she'll call me if she's serious.

He laughed and we continued eating, when we were done we headed to the beach and stayed there until his sister called him, guess it was time for their lunch date.

Nkosinathi: hello?

Asenathi: hey, uphi? I'm at your crib.

Nkosinathi: You're at my crib? Phi? Ndis e Kapa mna.

Asenathi: I know you're in Cape Town, ndikwakho nam aph'e Kapa.

Nkosinathi: Oooh okay, I'm out.

Asenathi: You're out? Where? I texted you earlier that I'll be coming over for lunch.

Nkosinathi: I haven't checked my texts in a while,

I'm sorry mntase. You should have called though.

Asenathi: mnkq, so uphi and when are you coming back?

Nkosinathi: I'm out for the rest of the day, might be home after dinner time. What's up?

Asenathi: I thought I'd spend the day with you.

Then they both went silent...

Asenathi: You have been avoiding all of us ever since you sold us your shares, I know you believe you did the right thing but truth is, it's affecting the entire family Nathi.

Nkosinathi: I haven't been avoiding you guys, I've just been busy.

Asenathi: come on!

Nkosinathi: I just landed apha izolo, I have things to do obviously...when I'm done ndizoya endlini. I hear umama uzovula indlu next week.

Asenathi: she didn't tell you?

Nkosinathi: no...but, it's okay.

She sighed,

Nkosinathi: raincheck?

Asenathi: yeah, raincheck.

Nkosinathi: Sharp ntwana.

She didn't respond, he just hung up.

Me: I know I said I'm proud of you but I really don't like this.

Nkosinathi: It's not as bad as she makes it to be.

Me: Your mother didn't tell you uvula indlu, it's bad.

Nkosinathi: baby...

I felt really bad, he was doing all of this because of Milli and I. Defying his family, just for us and I felt bad.

[06/26, 15:13] : #Onele_11

#Cassandra

We finalized into yendlu ka Milli and then he went back to his businesses, leaving me to continue with work. Asenathi never called, but she got the grip of what was happening or she thought I was just being a snob. Either way.

My brother's wife gave birth, triplets as predicted and they had to stay for a while in the EC so when Nathi called to ask if we could go to Durban for the next weekend I obviously agreed. He had a business meeting on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning so that meant I'd be stuck in the hotel room until after his meetings were over then we'd spend that time enjoying the Durban sun together.

We landed and he first took me to u shaka marine for about an hour, because I had been raving about it, then we went to our hotel room where he freshened up and left for his meeting. I grabbed my phone and called my mom, I missed my son.

Mom: Sandra, molo Ntombi?

Me: makhulu ka Milli, unjani?

Mom: ndiphilile mntanam, unjani wena?

Me: I'm okay, ndikhumbula u Million qha.

She laughed, melting my hair.

Mom: u Million use Bhayi, ndizomthatha Sunday.

Me: Haibo, kanti uphi wena?

Mom: ndisazikhuphile.

Me: uzikhuphile? Uphi utata kengoku?

Mom: usaphumile, I think uyothenga ijuice.

Me: oh, so nihambe nobabini?

Mom: Hewethu sithathile thina, yintoni le inothusayo no Onele xasizikhuphile?

Okay I laughed

Me: Okay ke, I'll call u sisi and maybe do a video call ndincokole nomntanam while you and your husband nisidla ubutsha benu.

She laughed and hung up on me, but I called??!

I laughed and dialed my sister, Siki.

Siki: Aw, baby, aren't you supposed to be at work?

Me: I knocked off early today sisi, how are you?

Siki: You knocked off early? Are you okay?

Me: I'm okay sisi, we're not that busy anyway.

Siki: Oh okay, we're good, no Milli is a gentleman.

Me: Can I video call you guys? I miss him so much.

Siki: Why don't you come down this weekend?

Me: I want to rest a bit, we have a hectic week next week.

Siki: ooh okay, he's sleeping. I'll call you when he's up.

Me: Okay sis, enkosi.

Siki: so, uphi utatakhe?

Me: I think he's in Durban on a business meeting or something.

Siki: When last did you see him?

Me: Before he went to Durban.

Siki: Are ya'll okay? It's been a while since he called for Milli, I'm getting worried.

Me: He did come to check on Milli when Milli was with Mom, but we're okay wethu sisi.

She didn't answer me, I knew there's something she wanted to ask me qha I wasn't going to lead her tu.

Siki: I uhm, not sure if he has told you already but I noticed that his mother's house is on sale.

Me: I expected it to be, she's apparently going to be living kulena ilapha eKapa. Iyavulwa ngokusesikweni next week.

Siki: oh really?

Me: Yeah, Asenathi wanted to bring Milli a couple of things. Ndive ngaye.

Siki: Asenathi waphi? Milli kabana?

Me: exactly sisi!

Yho haike u sisi uthukisela, I just laughed. When I didn't respond to her I was avoiding being emotional and maybe irrational, I understood very well how sis Siki felt.

Siki: I meant to talk to you yazi...about Nkosinathi.

Me: oh-kay.

Siki: Where do you guys really stand?

Me: I don't understand your question sisi.

Siki: We both know how much he still loves you, despite everything that has happened in the past.

Me: Mh.

Siki: And I know you, I've seen you around him...

I didn't answer...

Siki: If he were to come back, would you give him a second chance?

Me: I haven't thought that far yazi, I think I'm enjoying umsebenzi, the independency and everything that comes with it. And naye uyamondla umntanakhe ngokufanelekileyo so akho need yoba ndileqeke emva kwakhe.

Siki: That's not what I'm looking for.

Me: What are you looking for ke sisi?

Siki: Cassandra?

I sighed...

Siki: You know exactly what I'm asking, look, I'm not saying throw yourself at him even if he doesn't want you, all I'm saying is that if there is a chance...

cingela wena nomntanakho, asingeni ndawo thina in as much as oo Cindy hate his guts.

I sighed again, only this time with a bit of excitement.

Siki: you don't have to answer me right now, just think about it.

Me: enkosi sisi, this means a lot.

Siki: okay ke, bye!

I smiled as she hung up.

I sat there wishing I had told her that we were actually together already but I had promised Nkosinathi that I will not involve my family, just as he wasn't involving his kwi relationship yet.

Nkosinathi returned while I was napping, and he didn't wake me up. I only realized he's back when I woke up for the loo visit. I went to the toilet and came back, joined him in bed again.

Me: Why didn't you wake me up?

Nkosinathi: Ubuleli kamnandi, and I figured udiniwe so mandikuyeke uphumble.

Me: thanks.

He kissed my lips, I blushed.

Nkosinathi: Ubutye ntoni?

Me: Andikatyi, ndilinde wena ubuye.

Nkosinathi: Haibo baby, kutheni uzilambisa?

Me: Bendingalambanga nje tatakhe.

Nkosinathi: What did you do while I was gone ke?

Like, awutyanga ne complementary cookies ezi.

Me: I called mom, and sis Siki then ndalala.

I said yawning, I didn't understand the fuss ngokutya. It's just food, haibo.

He looked at me and then took the hotel menu, put it between us as he pulled the telephone closer. We browsed, and finally decided to order, with a bottle of wine ofcourse. He would have wanted whiskey or beer but he had another meeting the following day so he opted for my wine.

Nkosinathi: Is everything okay at home?

Me: Yeah, I wanted to check on Milli but mom is on vacation with her husband so I called the nanny for

the weekend u sisi ke.

Nkosinathi: Did you get to see him?

Me: nah, he was sleeping. Yho andis amkhumbuli.

He looked at me smiling, our food came through and he took it in.

We ate together, showered together and chilled in bed talking about our future plans.

Nkosinathi: we will go to Siki on Sunday.

I stopped eating and looked at him, he was serious, and because I had food in my mouth I couldn't scream so I just threw my hands around his neck. He kissed my cheek laughing,

Nkosinathi: you're a totally different person yazi lately, it's like ubuyela kula Cassandra ndandiqala udibana naye at the beach.

Me: Nyhani?

Nkosinathi: nyhani baby, and I will forever be

grateful that you gave us a second chance.

Me: haike baby, it was a mutual feeling mos.

Nkosinathi: I know that, but I have to say thank you...andiyazi ngendinjani phi if you hadn't agreed.

Okay I kept quiet, he was making me emotional. He took a sip from his glass and came to kiss me, I let him take charge of my entire body, I wanted him to take control of the both of us, I wanted every ounce of him and he could read my language without me having to say it.

“I love you”, he mumbled and I'm sure I responded to that, even if it was internally.

[06/26, 15:13] : #Onele_12

We drove and stopped in front of my house, I took a deep breath and opened the door...

"Wait"

He said, and I stopped abruptly.

Me: what's up?

Ginger: if your folks are not here for the weekend, why not spend the weekend with me?

Me: you're going to Durban.

Ginger: so what's stopping you from going with me?

I looked at him, he was serious.

Wow, okay.

Ginger: I'll bring you back Sunday morning so you can study if you're writing Monday.

Me: u sure?

Ginger: you don't trust me?

Me: I do... It's just that... It's so sudden.

Ginger: well do you need an hour or?

Me: nah, I'll skip. You can go, I'll see you when you come back.

Ginger: u sure?

Me: yes I'm sure.

Ginger: okay ke, bye bye.

I kissed him in the lips and got out of his car, went into the yard and locked the gate then he left. I flopped on the couch thinking about his offer, who knows me in Durban anyway?

I ran up to my room and packed a weekend bag, and then waited for him to call me again. I felt like he had to call me again and ask if I was sure na, I know he did before, but he's supposed to ask again.

I didn't even know which side of the country my

parents were but I didn't really, I was going to be in a hotel room the entire weekend anyway so I wouldn't bump onto any of them if they were also in Durban for some reason.

Ginger called and I smiled to myself as I answered his call...

Me: Baby?

Ginger: Have you decided yet?

Me: I'm done packing, if that's what you're asking.

Ginger: alright, I'll be there in thirty.

Me: sure.

After we hung up I checked if all windows were closed, all doors were locked and gave the dogs enough food and water then I locked up and took a walk to the bus stop. I immediately regretted that, Mabhuti was there with his baby momma waiting

for a taxi.

"Molweni"

They mumbled their response so I just plugged in my headsets and texted my boyfriend that he'll find me at the bus stop. I was chatting with Cassandra on WhatsApp so I didn't really pay much attention to these two, and then my ride appeared and I heard Mabhuti going crazy over the car, well over its budget. It stopped in front of us and I left them, got in the car and we drove off. I could only imagine how he felt after I left, but I didn't really care. We left the car at the airport and boarded, I slept throughout, I guess I was tired he woke me up when we landed and we drove to his hotel room. After he put our bags in the cupboard he sat next to a sleepy Onele and kissed my cheek, causing me to smile.

Ginger: you can order anything you want, I'll freshen up and be out for a couple of hours.

Me: okay.

He got up and went to the shower, I wished I could join him but he would be late wherever he was going to. I lay down and closed my eyes, the sun was beautiful, a ray came through the nearby window and hit on my calf. I wasn't hungry so there was no need to order anything just yet. When he was done, he really left so I went to freshen up as well and then ordered snacks and wine from the hotel restaurant. My big sister called,

Me: hello sisi?

Asanda: unjani nontombi?

Me: ndi right sisi unjani wena?

Asanda: ndi right nam, uphi?

Me: ndis endlini sisi.

Asanda: u sure? I just saw someone like you in Durban.

My heart stopped.

She started describing what I was wearing and I felt like crying, we've been spotted and usisi uyandazi. She knew she saw me, but I wasn't about to admit to that right now Haibo, who am I?

Asanda: u sure it's not you?

Me: hay sisi inoba kufana kwabantu, mna ndiyaphuma endlini ngoku ndiyofunda koo Lisekho siyagqibezela ubhala next week.

Asanda: ooh okay ke.

Me: ufuna ntoni wena e Durban?

Asanda: ndize kwi property auction, ndizojika kwa namhlanje kodwa.

Me: ooh okay. Good luck then.

Asanda: thank you baby.

We hung up.

Oh I panicked, who else saw us? And what if us i didn't believe me qha she just let it slide for now?

After about three hours, Ginger came back and I was napping. I heard him whistling, in tune to some music that was playing in the other side of the room. I sat up and stretched, then went to look for him. He was in an exceptionally good mood, there was alcohol in front of him, scotch and a box of cigars. Okay, expensive shit. I attempted to sit next to him, he pulled me to sit on his lap and I sat there sulking.

"The nap brought back baby Onele"?

"Don't start with me"

He laughed, kissing my arm, chest and chin.

"Why are you in such a good mood?"

"Business meeting went well, so we celebrate.

Right?"

"I guess... But I'm hungry"

"There's food there"

He pointed with his head, I got up from him and went to get the food: wings, pizza, Kota... He bought food, everything called food. I just laughed as I stood there not knowing what to take. I just grabbed two kota's and warmed them then I went to sit down next to him, he pulled back up to sit on him so we ate in that awkward position. He seemed fine with it though. He finished quicker, then watched me devour mine in silent, I was really enjoying every piece of it.

When I was done, he poured me wine and I downed two glasses, then later concentrated on the third one. Taking my time.

After some time I just put the glass down and we

kissed, my clothes became a trash-pile behind the couch as he stripped me naked, smothering me with kisses and making sure that he doesn't leave a spot un-kissed.

"oh Baby"

That wasn't intentional, but I found myself calling him seductively as he worshipped my body. He got up from the sofa and carried me to bed where he knelt down on the edge of the bed, pulled me closer and opened my legs wide as he buried his face between them.

Then he kissed his way back to my lips and kept it there until I felt his thickness between my thighs. I held my breath as he slid in, the ground was fertile enough, watered enough I mean, so it was an easy entrance for him and in the next minute... He started pounding.

I clutched onto him for dear life as his pace fastened and his breathing thickened. He buried his head in my neck and moaned my name between gritted teeth, his body tensed up for a few seconds and then I felt his warmth inside. I released himself in me, as usual and then he started kissing me from that neck, up to my lips before flipping us over so that I could take control and ride

Ofcourse, I never say no to a challenge, so I took my position and grinded until we both came. Out of breath, I tried to get off him, and he just pulled towards his so I lay on him as we both calmed down and our breathing went back to normal.

Ginger: I love you.

Me: Keep showing me that.

He chuckled and kissed my forehead, not forgetting to smack and grab my behind at the same time.

[06/26, 15:13] : #Onele_13

I woke up with every ounce of my body throbbing for him, and I started kissing his lips while he was still sleeping, down his neck and onto his chest. He slightly opened his eyes and then closed them again, I just continued with what I was doing until he fully woke up and tried to lay right, just enough to give me more room and then he motivated me to keep going.

After a couple of minutes, he flipped us so that he could take charge. He was a very controlling man, I could tell by this. Everytime we made love, he wanted to be in control... To be in charge, to lead. And I had absolutely no problem with that. That was his role anyway, to be the leader.

After about two rounds we cuddled in silence in that sticky situation until he spoke up...

Ginger: Uzandenza ibhari wena.

Me: mh, why?

Ginger: ndiyinto ehleli iyozyozo mvanje.

Me: focus baby, focus.

He laughed, I just smiled at him. We kissed, very passionately and then I kissed his chin closing my eyes.

Ginger: sulala kaloku.

Me: just a few more minutes please.

Ginger: we're having supper at the restaurant ke uyazi.

Me: is that necessary?

Ginger: yes, you need some fresh air.

Oh God!

What if my sister spots us again? That was my only fear, but I didn't wanna tell him and scare him off so I just kept quiet. He played with my hair, then my ears, then my cheeks, with the other hand running through the length of my body... Nah he wasn't being cute, he just wanted me to wake up.

Ginger: Baby?

I mentally cursed, then I opened my eyes and looked at him without saying a word.

Ginger: I saw your brother in-law today.

Me: which one?

Ginger: Dakumba.

Me: Really? Ebehamba nabani?

Ginger: yedwa, we were from different meetings but in the same building.

Me: so he also saw you?

Ginger: well I hope not, I tried my utmost best to avoid him.

Me: why would you do that? You do know that it's highly possible that he saw you qha wakwenza muncu?

Ginger: Yes, I know that. But I'm hoping he didn't.

I looked at him...

Ginger: I'm not everyone's favorite person kaloku baby, we both know that.

Me: with good reason, uyeke mna lo umuncu.

He kissed my cheek, almost sucking my skin and I squeaked.

Ginger: awukho muncu, you just love danger. You've got a different kind of adrenalin.

Me: bubumuncu nobo.

Ginger: well I love you, regardless of what people may think of this relationship I really do love you.

I smiled to myself, he sounded very sincere whenever he said that and for any reason (call me stupid if you may), but this was one thing I really was sure of: HE LOVED ME.

Ginger: So, should we freshen up and go have supper?

Me: uhmmm

Ginger: you are not backing out on me ke baby, you agreed.

Me: eshe, okay. I'll start.

Ginger: we can share.

Me: no, sit your old ass down, I'll start.

I literally ran to the bathroom and locked the door before he could grab me, he followed and tried the knob. He knocked and knocked, calling my name, I just showered and he just laughed and eventually went back to bed. I showered quickly, making prayers in between that no one sees us and recognizes me. By no one I mean Asanda of course, I just prayed that she had left already, and Ta Nko. Oh bawo that one would be the death of me, he would run straight to Sandra and tell her everything.

I walked out and got dressed without making conversation with him, he went to shower, came out while I was brushing my crusty hair.

Ginger: Babe, you need to do your hair.

Me: ndizothi ndiyithathaphi imali ekhaya?

Ginger: Ku Cassandra obviously.

Me: I'll have to bribe her k'qala.

Ginger: Utheni u Mabhuti ebengakubheji?

I stopped whatever I was doing, how did he know Mabhuti? I don't recall telling him his name at all.

Ginger: What?

Me: Are you really stalking me?

Ginger: Huh?

Me: I never told you his name.

Ginger: It's called doing research.

Me: I don't like it, it's creepy.

He didn't answer...

Me: and no, ebengandibheji ngamali yokwenza intloko, ngumntane's kolo mos.

Ginger: So benibhejana ngee Toppers ne Lays.

He said that with a chuckle.

Me: and everything else in between.

He came to kiss me and I walked out, he laughed and I ignored him.

Once he was done we walked out, his hand on my back as we entered the elevator. I understood the stares we were getting from the people as we were led to our table. He's my brothers' age for heaven's sake, people are going to stare, for whatever assumptions they had in mind but they were still going to stare.

We placed our orders and waited sipping on drinks, and making small conversation. He could tell I was uncomfortable...

Ginger: babe?

Me: Mh?

Ginger: You want us to rather sit outside?

Me: no, why?

Ginger: We can have supper by the poolside and the weather is warm enough.

Me: okay...why not.

He got up and went to the kitchen, asked our waiter to bring our food outside then he came back and held my hand as we walked out to the poolside.

Me: Thank you.

Ginger: I guess you gonna need some thick skin.

Me: yeah uhm, in due time, I think.

Ginger: How about now? You don't know these people, they don't know you so get them out of your head. Right now.

Okay I laughed at that.

He was right, I just needed to get them out of my head, they didn't matter.

Me: I love you.

He looked up and smiled saying "That's the first time you've said that, since we started dating" I laughed at him, he was smitten, I was smitten and I actually loved the way he protected me, I liked the way he felt like he should be my guardian angel.

Me: I really do love you, as dangerous as your life may be, I feel safe around you.

Ginger: That's what I want, for you to feel safe around me, regardless of what life I'm living.

Me: I see that.

Ginger: So we're dropping the gun issue?

Me: yes.

Ginger: Thank you. I really don't want you in that.

Our food came and we indulged, after that we went back to our room. As we headed for the elevator I felt eyes on my back, and then my phone rang, well vibrated. I ignored it, whoever was looking at me was obviously calling me right now to prove that ubona mna. I ignored until we reached our floor, reached our room and then, only then did I take out my phone from my pocket.

[06/26, 15:13] : #Onele_14

With our door locked and my heart racing, I sat down trying my best to appear calm but I was failing. My phone rang again and my heart sank,

Me: hello mama?

Mom: Hewethu, kunini ndikufounela.

Me: iphone yam iku silent kaloku mama siyafunda, Uxolo s thandwa.

Mom: ooh okay, bendikukroba nje ba us ahleli kakuhle mntanam

Me: ndis ahleli kakuhle mama, akhonto.

Mom: u Mas 'thathu uthi ebelapho phezolo wakhwaza wancama, Kwabe kumnyama as if akhomntu.

Oh crap † ♀ I had to think on my toes kengoku.

Me: ndimvile wethu mama qha I didn't have the energy, and wena mhlobakhe ubungekho.

She laughed.

Mom: ooh okay, xa ubuyile ekufundeni ke please take the big three legged pot to her uzoyis ebenzis a ngoms o late.

Me: ndizayis a ngoms o late mama.

Mom: kanti uzobuya what time namhlanje?

Me: mama uyamqonda phofu u mam'Mas thathu ba

uzobe endehlisa endenyusa ndidiniwe mna? Ha.a
sana, ndizayisa ngoms o after church.

Church yaphi?

Church yantoni ndise Durban?

Mom: okay ke sisi, don't forget to close all windows.

Me: alright ke, enjoy your vac.

Mom: we are, thank you.

Then she hung up, still laughing.

I threw my weight backwards, landing with a thud
on the covers.

Ginger: what's up?

Me: mh?

Ginger: you look anxious. You didn't enjoy dinner?

Me: I did... I just spoke to mom, her friend told her ingathi andikho sendlini. She was there last night.

He nod, not asking anything further. He lay on his back next to me

Ginger: Have you checked your applications yet? Responses?

Me: didn't I tell you? Ndithathiwe e NMU, CPUT nase Wits. I just have to make a choice kengoku as to which varsity I choose.

Ginger: if you take CPUT uzo renta?

Me: ubhuti will never allow me that, especially with Cass that side and she's got a car. Bazofuna ndihlale nabo.

Ginger: same as Wits and NMU. You have family there too.

I nod...

Me: But, I could convince them with Wits, u sisi lives quite far from varsity and I can't take taxis oko. So I might just crack the code there.

He nod.

Me: don't look so gloomy now, I'm sure something will work out just fine.

Ginger: I'm sure too... J ust that, I don't enjoy lo hide-and-seeK simenzayo. This thing... That I can't even hold your hand in public, I hate that.

Me: well maybe we should just come out ke and tell my family.

Ginger: bandicubhe bandibulale sixoxe leyo ke?

Me: bakubulale ndiphinde ndikuthathephi kemnake?

He looked at me, smiling. Came forth and kissed my lips then wiped something off my cheek.

Ginger: asoze ndife baby.

Me: you sound so sure.

Ginger: if they kill me, they'll have to kill Ta Sthera as well, which they won't. He's their nephews father, they obviously don't want his blood on their hands qha into abazomenza yona is to torture him and make his life difficult until he gives in.

Me: and I suppose ya'll have a counterplan for that?

He didn't answer me... Yep, they did. He just wasn't gonna tell me. I smiled as it dawned on me that he could really be using me, or even if he wasn't using me, he still didn't want me to know too much or get familiar with his lifestyle.

Ginger: whatchu smiling at?

Me: you.

He laughed, he had beautiful teeth but I couldn't tell him that, he'd think I'm weird. I felt weird, realizing that I was falling inlove with him, and really starting to see more beautiful pieces of him as we got closer emotionally.

Me: what time are we leaving tomorrow?

Ginger: you can't wait to get out of my sight so soon?

Me: you don't really want an answer for that.

He looked at me as though he was searching for an answer in my eyes.

Ginger: we're checking out before 6am.

Me: meaning we should get in bed right now, kus a msinya.

Ginger: yeah... But before that, I have to do a lil something real quick. Ndizobuya soon kodwa.

Me: how long will you be gone?

Ginger: an hour max.

Me: mh.

I got up and changed into pj's, he got up and changed into some dark brownish, army kind-of clothes. They looked dangerous, if ever clothes could look dangerous in any given circumstance. I watched him until he was done, he grabbed a bag in his closet and came to kiss me. We kissed for a minute and then he walked out, I closed my eyes and did an internal prayer. I was suddenly scared, I don't know scared of what but I was scared. I decided to call Cass, it's been a while.

Cass: makazi ka Milli? Unjani mntase?

Me: argh I'm not sure. But you sound excited, what's up?

Cass: I'm happy, what's up with you?

I kept quiet... What was up with me, nyhani?

Cass: Onele?

Me: Mntase... I think ndiyagowa wethu.

Cass: reason?

I sighed...

Cass: The man not treating you well? Or, you went back to Mabhuti?

Me: I didn't, yhu I'd never kaloku.

She laughed

Me: mntase can I tell you something? Please ke, it remains between us?

Cass: okay, sure.

I took a deep breath...

Cass: Yey inkulu lento.

Me: my new boyfriend is quite older than me.

Cass: Nkosinathi is also older than me.

Me: Are ya'll back together?

Cass: no, I'm just making an example. Or maybe I should have said utata ka Milli was also older than me?

I chuckled.

That seemed like a slip of tongue.

Me: yes, was would be the perfect tense. But anyway, I think eyenu into was just ten years, right?

Cass: kanti how old is your boyfriend?

Me: please don't be dramatic ke...

She laughed

Me: yintanga ka Ta Steve.

Cass: soze Onele!

Me: I just asked you to not be dramatic, just now.

Cass: Onele! U Ta Steve Uyamazi unangaphi? At least Lionel ke, but U Steve bra?

I swallowed and just waited for her, she kept quiet. Thinking. Maybe.

Me: I love him and he treats me good.

Cass: are you safe?

Me: I'm on the needle.

Cass: so you don't use condoms?

Me: He doesn't like them.

Cass: did ya'll ever go for tests? STI, HIV, and every other sexually transmitted infections?

I kept quiet... We haven't.

Why didn't I even think of that.

Cass: you haven't. I'm not sure how long you've have intercourse with him, but please do me a favor and go get tested. Please.

Me: okay mntase, thank you for not judging me.

Cass: I'm in no position to judge anyone, I have my own mess to deal with baby.

I breathed.

Me: So when are we going to Milli, I'm done with my exams?

Cass: I'll be closing emsebenzini on the 10th of December, then I'll come home completely.

Me: Milli is in PE.

Cass: I know that, I'll fetch him then we'll come home.

Me: mmh, okay. Before I go...

Cass: yeah?

Me: can you stunt for me?

Cass: for what?

Me: I think ndizophiwa imali apha to do my hair, he was complaining about it earlier. I just need you to tell mom xa ebuza ba ndiyiphiwe nguwe.

Cass: okay, no problem.

Me: oh wow, you don't want a bribe?

She laughed, I joined her.

Cass: no I don't, for now.

Me: mnkq! Okay enkosi ke mntase.

Cass: you're welcome. Goodnight baby.

Me: goodnight sthandwa sam.

We hung up.

[06/26, 15:13] : #Onele_15

When I woke up, later on in the night he wasn't there, I was tempted to call him and ask where he was but when I went onto WhatsApp Cassandra was online so I called her and she answered as immediately.

Sandra: I wonder kutheni ungalelanga?

Me: Ndiyoyika.

Sandra: woyika ntoni?

Me: iingcuka.

Sandra: Ziphi?

Me: Naaziya!

And we both burst out laughing.

Me: I'm bored, and a lil bit hungry but I don't wanna go to the kitchen.

Sandra: from our conversation earlier I thought you were at vacation?

Me: I am, he's not around.

Sandra: It's past midnight Onele.

Me: I know.

Sandra: then how come he's not around?

Me: he's probably working or something.

Sandra: what kind of work does this boyfriend of yours do that keeps him past midnight?

I sighed, I hated this secrecy thing, yes I knew that even if they accepted the relationship, (which they wouldn't) , the fact that Ginger was some sort of a gangster or thug or whatever he was, that would be the last straw.

Sandra: Onele, are you sure you're safe wherever you are?

Me: I'm safe mntase, don't worry about me.

Sandra: okay, then what does he do?

Me: I can't tell you that.

Sandra: you can't tell me that? Whoah, that's a first.

I sighed again...I cursed under my breath as I realized that I shouldn't have called her in the first place.

Me: Mntase, we uhm, him and I, we have decided to keep the relationship to ourselves for now. Its best this way.

Sandra: it's best this way? Why? Best for who?

Me: Because Sandra... We want it this way, both of us.

Sandra: So you're keeping secrets from now?

Me: It's not like you've been totally honest with me nawe ngo Taka Milli, come on.

Sandra: What?

Me: you had a slip of the tongue earlier, I know ya'll back together and you haven't really told me. So you're also keeping secrets.

Sandra: oh wow!

Me: ndiyaxoka ke?

Sandra: Even if we were back together, why would you compare the two? You know Nkosinathi, you're familiar with him, the whole family knows him.

Me: But still...

Sandra: and I don't understand you because you've been pushing me to him, you've been motivating the whole idea of us getting back together.

Me: but you never reverted back to me to inform me of the final decision, not that I mind but...

Sandra: Okay Onele tell me this: ho knows le boyfriend yakho? Who has seen him? How do we know you're safe with him? How do we know you're not in any danger?

Me: I'm safe with him, he'd never endanger my life.

Sandra: Onele remember that saga eyenziwa ngoo

Ta Sthera? We don't want a repetition of that.
Hopefully this secrecy of yours won't lead us to
something like that.

Me: Why do you have to be so negative though?

She sighed...

Sandra: you know what, never mind, good night.

Me: mntase...

Sandra: no it's fine wethu Onele, you're eighteen,
awungumntana. I won't lie, this makes me
uncomfortable but you know what you're doing so I
won't get myself worked up over you ndixekeke
zezam izinto.

Me: Suthetha njalo kaloku mntase, I still need you in
my corner...

Sandra: I am in your corner Onele but you have to
trust me, you have to tell me everything. Well maybe
not everything, but I need to know the important bits
so that when this whole thing backfires, at least I will

know how to protect you.

Me: I know...and I will tell you in due time. Please give me some time.

She didn't answer me,

Me: Ndiyakucela torho, I promise I will tell you everything when I'm ready to. When we're ready to.

Sandra: okay.

Me: I love you.

Sandra: and I love you...now please, good night.

Yho!

I laughed as I said good night and she hung up.

Just as we hung up, Ginger walked in looking tired. His shirt ripped on the shoulder, and he had a bandage on, around his shoulder.

Ginger: Hey, you're still up?

Me: hey.

I got out of bed because I was now really hungry.

He kissed the side of my head as I walked past him to find food, he went to shower. I found snacks, warmed one slice of pizza that was already in the microwave and then started nibbling while waiting for the coffee water to boil. When I was done eating that pizza I grabbed my coffee with cookies and went to wait in bed. I didn't know what to make off Ginger's shoulder bandage I decided I won't ask questions, he'll tell me if he wants to. He came to bed as I switched the light off my sidelamp.

Ginger: baby?

I ignored him, he got into his pj's and joined me in bed. I had my back towards him while I faced the wall. He hugged me and I just tried my utmost best to fall asleep, but there was a lot in my mind I couldn't really fall asleep as immediate as I would have liked.

Ginger: Baby?

Me: hm?

Ginger: Uqumbele ntoni?

Me: andiqumbanga.

Ginger: qha utheni?

I didn't answer him

Ginger: Ulambile baby?

Me: dude please.

Ginger: okay what have I done ke? Coz uqumbile.

Me: andiqumbanga bo, I just wanna sleep, is that too much to ask for?

Ginger: sizolala njani uqumbile?

Me: Can we please sleep? Please?

Ginger: Okay let's sleep kaloku, but wena uqumbile nje.

I huffed as he tried to kiss my cheek and after some time. I really fell asleep.

When I woke up in the morning I checked my messages and the first message I received was from Lionel:

“I’m not sure what you’re doing, I don’t think I want to know what it is that you’re doing but trust me it won’t end well. Ndithule ndikubukele, ungacimba uyasibhanxa sonke kodwa ke mna andimuncwanga, when this whole shit you’re doing blows up in your face don’t come back crying to me.”

I read that two times and my heart started beating fast.

Then there was a second one...

“You better be home by lunch time”

Oh fuck!

I jumped out of bed and went to bath, he was obviously at home. Maybe the folks told him to go and check up on me in the absence wafika ndingekho...

Me: I hope he didn't track me down. Oh shit I'm dead!

Ginger was still fast asleep as I started getting dressed, my palms were sweating. Akukude e Durban Bawo!

[06/26, 15:14] : #Onele_16

#Cassandra

I honestly felt like I was very fortunate to have Nkosinathi, a man who worshipped the ground I walked on yet I couldn't help but feel like there was just something bad that was going to happen. I lay there in silence trying to make sense to everything I was feeling, and I couldn't really tell him because I didn't know how to put it into words. I'm no prophet, I'm no psychic but I was surely feeling something. He had been gone the whole day, business meetings all over and I was okay with that. That's why we came here, for his meetings. He was out of the shower, dressed in shorts and a vest.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

I looked at him

Nkosinathi: Are you okay?

Me: yeah... Just... Anxious, I think.

Nkosinathi: of what?

Me: I don't know. But I feel an anxiety attack creeping in, maybe I'm just tired.

Nkosinathi: did you bring your meds?

Me: oh yes... Khame ndisele wona maybe ndizoba right.

I had forgotten my anti-depressants, don't ask me how they'll help with anxiety but I drank them and he opened his arms to welcome me into a warm embrace as we lay together.

Me: it's your birthday very soon, what are you planning to do?

Nkosinathi: Andiyazi yazi baby.

Me: Oh... What do you normally do?

Nkosinathi: spend it with the family.

Me: you can still do that.

Nkosinathi: I'd like to, qha umama uzabe endifuna u Milli isidala and I'm tired. They know what needs to happen and I'm not going to do it for them.

Mabaphakame bona bayocela uxolo kokwenu njengoba nam ndaziphakamela.

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: She called me last night, after my meeting.

Me: your mom?

Nkosinathi: yep, undixelela ngomzi awuvulayo.

Me: finally. You're going, right?

Nkosinathi: Told her I'm busy but I'll send something.

I sat up and looked at him, he sat up too.

Me: Ndcela uye torho.

Nkosinathi: why? If they wanted me there they would have told me earlier, like the rest of the people.

Me: She told you, eventually. Ndcela uye.

He didn't answer me.

Me: I love you, and I love how you're putting me and your son first in everything you do, every decision you take.

Nkosinathi: I sense a "but".

Me: but, your mother is still your mother. She already has to live with the fact that she cannot see her grandson, you can't add to that by pulling back as her son. At least xa ndingamnikiyo u Milli wena yiya kuye and talk to her, call her, take her out...

Ezanto ubukade uzenza before yonke lento.

He didn't answer me...

Me: I know she loves you, I know you love her too. Ndiyakucela mntuwam, forgive her and most importantly, don't punish her for your dad's doings.

Nkosinathi: she's the one who offered you money for abortion, not my dad.

Me: I know that, but what if she was cornered into doing so? Ukhona wena umama omaziyo onokwenza lonto? Ngomzukulwana wakhe?

He sighed.

Nkosinathi: Okay ndiyakuva.

Me: call her, mxelele you'll be there umbuze ushota ngantoni, ngoku uyaziyo ba abashoti nganto but ask, it will mean a lot to her.

He grabbed his phone and dialed her, his other hand pulled me closer to him. I moved close and lay my head on his chest listening to their conversation.

Mam'Dakumba: Nathi, hello bhuti?

Nkosinathi: Khehlakazi, unjani?

She laughed at that, I felt that.

Mam'Dakumba: ndiyaphila mntanam, ndidiniwe qha. Unjani wena?

Nkosinathi: hay ndi right Magogo, how far are the preps?

Mam'Dakumba: we're almost done with everything, kushota kugqitywe the two backrooms at the back then we're good to go.

Nkosinathi: oo okay, haike kuhle. Ndizofika ke Monday, bendifuna uqonda ba ushota ngantoni?

Mam'Dakumba: uza kuvulo lwendlu?

Nkosinathi: Ewe nozala.

Mam'Dakumba: Yho bendisithi awuzi mntanam.
Andisavuyi... Hay asishoti nganto ndoda, yonkinto
uyenzile utatakho no mkhuluwa wakho.

Nkosinathi: oh haike, masibonane Monday.

Mam'Dakumba: kodwa ke ungandiphathela into
emnandi wethu.

He laughed and promised to do so.

Mam'Dakumba: okay ke mntanam... Hewethu,
ugqibele nini uyobona umntana?

He cleared his throat.

Nkosinathi: bendisandombona mama, uyakhula
noko.

Mam'Dakumba: Yho, andis ambaweli ukumbona.
Ndcela wethu xa usiza ucele umamakhe akwenzele
ivideo noba ndimbone kuyo.

Nkosinathi: Yho.

Mam'Dakumba: awuzotsho kaloku ba ifunwa ndim,
ndiyakucela wethu ndoda.

He kept quiet for a second... I felt her pain yazi, this
was sad. In as much as I hated his family hut my
heart went out for his mother mvanje.

Nkosinathi: okay nozala ndizokuzamela.

Mam' Dakumba: enkosi mntanam, enkosi kakhulu.

They said their goodbyes and then he hung up.

Nkosinathi: she's happy.

Me: you made her happy.

Nkosinathi: see why I didn't wanna talk to her?

Me: Milli is still her grandson baby, we can't run away from that. Qha ke mntakabawo uyasazi isono sakhe.

He put his phone back down and lifted my chin for a kiss. We kissed, and got disturbed by his phone

Nkosinathi: Magogo?

Mam'Dakumba: Ndifuna nje ukuthi enkos i mntanam ngoku founa.

Nkosinathi: akhongxaki mamzo.

Mam'Dakumba: okay ke ndoda.

And that was it.

Nkosinathi: you're going to be a great wife one day.

Me: and you'll be a great husband I believe, but first,

Netflix.

Nkosinathi: you wanna watch TV ndikhona?

Me: I'll watch with you.

Nkosinathi: I don't wanna watch anything.

Me: then watch me ke.

He laughed, I pushed him over and he almost fell.

He went to put on the TV and came back to bed.

Me: you need to hit the gym again.

Nkosinathi: huh?

Me: your muscles are a bit pulp bhuti.

He looked at his biceps and laughed,

Nkosinathi: okay sisi. I will revisit the gym once I am stable in Cape Town.

Me: haibo, uzohlala full time eKapa ngoku?

Nkosinathi: Why do you sound surprised?

Me: Because this is the first time I'm hearing of this.

Nkosinathi: I haven't decided yet, I'm just considering.

Me: Why kaloku?

Nkosinathi: I want to be close to you guys, should you decide to live with Ukhona anytime in the future.

Me: Okay...

Nkosinathi: You're not happy.

Me: I just don't want you to think sithenge indlu yohlalis ana.

Nkosinathi: ndinendlu yam sisi.

Me: haha! Okay.

I chose a series for us to watch, he brought in snacks, and then we cuddled warmly watching. He wasn't really watching, but because I wanted to

watch, he obliged.

[06/26, 15:14] : #Onele_17

I woke him up, he opened his eyes and just looked at me.

I avoided looking at his bandaged shoulder because that would probe me to ask questions.

Me: we need to get going.

Ginger: have you eaten?

Me: Have you seen the time?

Ginger: so uzohamba ulambile?

Me: I'll eat at home bro, please, vuka.

He closed his eyes, I huffed and started packing my bags, if ubhuti uthe by lunch time then he meant by lunch time. Not dinner time. Ginger woke up, showered and came looking for me, I was busy

combing the heavens out of my hair in distress.

Ginger: what's going on?

Me: It's past the time you said we would be going home at.

Ginger: it's just 30 minutes past.

Me: so?

He didn't answer me, I stopped and looked at him, he turned back to go and get dressed.

When he was done we left the room, drove to the airport and boarded. I was panicky, the entire flight and he just let me be. I actually would have loved for him to ask what was going on with my mood or something, you know? For him to show some interest and that he cares, but he didn't. He just busied himself until we landed. I went for my bag, he went for his and we walked for a few minutes before he spoke up,

Ginger: Okay what's really going on?

Me: Where?

Ginger: With you? Oko ubu grumpy.

Me: I just wanna go home.

Ginger: Can you slow down a bit?

I slowed down and breathed, it was still dark outside and I was hungry, and cold but all of that was subdued by the fact that I have my brother waiting for me at home and I didn't even know what else was awaiting me there, what if the rents were back? And I had lied to them ndathi I'm home. He caught up with me, grabbed my hand and we walked towards some waiting car, we got in and the driver took us to his hotel room. I stayed behind as he got out with his bags,

Ginger: Onele?

Me: I'm going home.

Ginger: If ufike iparents zakho zikhona uzothi uvelaphi this time? Is it even safe to be driving

around the hood ngelixesha?

I didn't answer him.

Ginger: Suit yourself, you know my room number.

He walked away, the driver fixed his rearview mirror and looked at me, after a few minutes I sighed and got out of the car to follow Ginger who had already disappeared into the hotel. I got to his room as he put his luggage in the wardrobe, I put my bag in the lounging area and went to the bathroom. When I emerged from that, he was already in bed, covers over his head. I removed my shoes and joined him in silence, my face directly facing his chest and his head above my head.

Ginger: Baby?

Me: Mh?

Ginger: utheni?

Me: I think my brother saw us in Durban.

Ginger: Which one?

Me: Lionel.

Ginger: and?

Me: He said he wants me home by lunchtime.

Ginger: kengoku yintoni equmbisayo kodwa ubuhleli uzoba home by lunchtime anyway?

I didn't answer him.

Ginger: Onele Mzayi?

Me: Bongani?

Ginger: you need to learn to communicate with me properly, I love you, I really do but awuzondigezela ngo 3 in the morning instead of telling me what's really going on. Learn to talk to me.

I sulked.

Ginger: Okay?

Me: hm.

Ginger: rest a bit, I'll call you a cab around 10am, after utyile.

Me: hm.

I closed my eyes and tears came out at the corners, why was he being cold? I was legit scared of my brother, why couldn't he understand that? Mxm.

Even in me being upset, I still found warmth in his scent. He made it worse when he pulled me close and enclosed me under his strong arm, I melted. Why did he do that? How did he do that to me? He kissed my forehead and said "I love you" but I didn't respond.

LUNCHTIME

I have been at home for the past three hours and my brother was nowhere to be found, I was tempted to call him but then I decided not to. Instead of seeing his car drive in, I saw the parents' car and I smiled to myself.

I went out to help them with their luggage, mom was more refreshed than dad, maybe it's because she wasn't driving. He looked famished.

Mom: Awumhle, kutheni umhle kangaka xasingekho?

Me: freedom mamakhe, freedom!

We both laughed as we followed each other inside.

Dad went straight to his room, I made tea for mom and listened to her telling me about their weekend then after a few minutes I took the three-legged pot over to her friend's house. On my way back I bumped onto Mabhuti, and he walked me home

Mabhuti: Ndis akuthanda yazi Onele, I know ndenza impazamo ngala way but ndis akuthanda.

Me: Uyazinceda mntasekhaya.

Mabhuti: I know you moved on...

Me: which makes me wonder ufuna ntoni kum kengoku.

Mabhuti: Ndifuna wena.

Me: Ndidlule apho mna ngoku, like, ndigqithile mfethu.

Mabhuti: Mdala kuwe la bra, uzolimala Onele.

Me: and that concerns you how?

Mabhuti: because I know you went to him ngenxa yam, and I want to apologize for that. I am sorry.

Okay I laughed.

Me: uthini na wena?

Mabhuti: had I given you attention, the way you

deserve it I'm quite sure you wouldn't have fallen for him. And we both know ku dangerous njani to date older men, phuma pha Onele while you still can.

Me: Andizokhuts hwa nguwe Mabhuti endodeni endingakhange ndifakwe nguwe kuyo. Wandinika I attention awaandinika, all of that is in the past.

Mabhuti: ufuna ndithini ke Onele?

Me: Ndifuna undiyeke. And what you can do, ambokits a, umntana uzofuna amabis i nama nap'keni very soon and you can't possibly expect your mother to feed you and your child at the same time.

I left him and walked faster, andiyondawo yogezela mna.

[06/26, 15:14] : #Onele_18

When I got home, there were two extra cars.

My heart started beating so fast, I slowed down and

tried calming my nerves down. Before I knew it, Steve's kids ran out of the house, playing and laughing. I knew that moment that they were home, both my brothers were home with their wives. I walked into the yard, trying my best to seem calm and exited as the kids ran over towards me for hugs and kisses then they dragged me inside.

Me: Molweni!

I said excitedly as I walked over umama who was carrying one of the triplets. I kissed sisi on the cheek and took one child and played with him.

Me: baphi oo bhuuti?

Sisi: Base utata esibhedlele.

Me: haibo, utata? Utheni?

Mom: He's not feeling well.

Me: and wena ulapha? Njani mama?

Mom: relax wethu Onele, I'm more needed here than

at the hospital.

Ha.a something wasn't making sense here. I put the child down and went to my room, I locked the door and called dad.

Dad: Nontombi?

Me: haike uphi?

Dad: ndiye kwa Gqirha man andiziva right.

Me: unantoni tata? Ubu right mos ngok-ngoku.

Dad: I think yi pressure...don't worry about it, I'm with your brothers.

Me: Nikomphi u Gqirha ndize nam?

Dad: Oh mntanam, akho need yalonto. Ndi right nyhani.

Me: Okay tata ndiyakuva, but ni komphi uGqirha?

He laughed and told me, I wore a jacket and walked

out.

Me: ndiyabuya.

Sisi: hay uyaphi ufika?

Mom: ulandela uyise, myeke!

I laughed and really left them, we're all alike. From the oldest sibling, right through to me. I knew that it's possible my brothers forced dad to go to the doctor, he's not a sickly person so when something is off about him, we all jump. I called Cass as I got into a taxi and she didn't answer, I tried three more times and gave up, called her again as I walked into the hospital and her boyfriend answered...

“Cass's phone hello?”

I cleared my throat.

I was right about her not telling us that she's back with him, I felt betrayed yet I was excited that she

finally gave him a second chance.

Me: Ta Nko, u right?

Taka Milli: Ndi right mfethu, unjani wena?

Me: I'm okay, uphi losisi?

Taka Milli: Usatshints ha umntana, I'll ask her to call you back.

Me: haibo, u Milli ukuni? Ukuye?

Taka Milli: Ha.a we came to see him, apha e Bhayi.

Me: Oooh Okay...so nide na grand?

Taka Milli: haha I wish, you know your sister. I had to bribe her to accompany me nangoku.

Me: But usamcenga mos nawe? Like, I don't wanna have high hopes apha gqiba uthi gqi nomnye umlungu.

He laughed.

Taka Milli: Ndisacenga Onele, qha akukho lula ukucenga an independent woman who cannot be bought nge gifts.

Me: Oh bawo! You picked the wrong one shem, I feel for you.

Taka Milli: Andingomntu uncamayo ke kodwa, in due time everything will fall into place.

Me: You have patience ke wena bra, did you guys fly in together?

Taka Milli: yeah, I wanted to come on Friday wathi udiniwe and you know I can't really come alone ndifike kukho u Cindy. At least if I knew kukho u Siki ngendizizele ndedwa.

I laughed at him, I know sis Cindy!

Me: I know what you mean, please ask her to call me back.

Taka Milli: Will do that.

We hung up and I texted dad until I got to where he was with his two sons. I greeted them and went to sit with dad, he had a patch on his forearm and I nudged him on the ribs wahleka. We spoke as if abekho abanye until the doctor came in so I had to get off the bed and make space for the doctor to do his work.

Steve: Awusemhle mfondini, caba kumnandi kwa grade 12?

Me: kumnandi uyazi ba andiphindi ndinxibe uniform kanti bhuti, otherwise akhonto imnandi tu kwa grade 12.

We laughed about it.

Steve: Where were you this past weekend?

Me: andiva bhuti?

Steve: ubuphi kule weekend idlulileyo?

I now had to decide whether to lie or be honest. I cleared my throat and answered him with a smile and almost a laugh.

Me: bendizikhuphile bhuti.

Steve: Ubuzikhuphile? Wayaphi?

Me: haike bhuti khaw'yeke!

He laughed shaking his head.

Steve: Heh Mfondini, unendoda ngoku?

Me: haibo bhuti! During the people?

He laughed so hard, while his brother just kept a serious face. He was making me hella nervous. I actually wanted him to say something, anything.

And just as ta Steve was about to say something, my phone rang and Lionel lifted his eyes and looked at me.

Me: Sandra?

Sandra: hey babe, you called?

Me: yeah...wanted to tell you that your dad is in hospital.

Sandra: I know, uti his blood pressure is high.

Me: oh, he told you?

Sandra: bhut' Lionel told me so I called utata and we spoke, he doesn't sound too serious.

Me: Naah he's not, I was just shocked wethu.

She laughed.

Me: nijika nini?

Sandra: kwanamhlanje mntase, I have work

tomorrow.

Me: Mmmh, semandi.

Sandra: Haha! Kumnandi nyhani ku mts hanakho, oko ethe nca kutatakhe ingathi akandazi mna.

I laughed at her jealous tone.

Me: yeah whatever, bye bye futhi.

Sandra: Sharp.

We hung up.

They called her and didn't call me? Wow these people.

The doctor was done and dad was getting dressed.

Me: you're done?

Dad: Yes ma'am, I told you I'm fine.

I just smiled at him.

Lionel: uze ngantoni?

Me: nge taxi bhuti.

Lionel: Mmmh...mas ambeni.

Sana, the man was grumpy nje.

I walked with dad, to avoid having a chance yothetha nobhuti andibuze about the weekend. I already knew they were aware of my whereabouts, but I couldn't stand being asked about that in front of dad.

[06/26, 15:14] : #Onele_19

We got home and I was asked to cook, which was a great thing at least I didn't have to sit across ubhuti and his serious face. My boyfriend called while I was busy there, I lowered the stoves and went to sit outside.

Me: hello?

Ginger: Hey, everything okay?

Me: yeah...we just returned from the hospital.

Ginger: Hospital?

Me: dad had high blood scare, luckily oobhuti bakhona so they took him to the doctor who referred him to the hospital but uright.

Ginger: I'm sorry about your dad.

Me: okay.

Ginger: So your brother hasn't said anything?

Me: nope, hasn't had a chance to. But he surely knows something.

Ginger: Keep me updated.

Me: okay...

We both went silent.

Ginger: u sure uright?

Me: Are you gonna tell me what happened to your shoulder?

Ginger: It's nothing to worry about.

Me: So you're not going to tell me? Okay.

Ginger: Baby...

Me: It's fine wethu, ndikuyekile.

Ginger: Suqumba kaloku, I thought we agreed that andizokubalisela anything about my work shenanigans.

Me: You left me u right, returned and you have hurt your shoulder and you expect me not to ask? I get it, I won't ask even in the future.

He sighed

And I suddenly felt someone's presence, perfume ka Bhuti.

Me: I have to go, iimbiza ziyatsha.

Ginger: Please call me back when you can, I don't wanna call you kanti ndiyakuphazamis a.

Me: sharp.

I hung up.

Lionel: So how long have you two been at it?

My body froze.

He knew, all along he knew what I had been hiding and wazixelela ba he wants to ask me face to face. I tried my best to look all composed and not moved by this question but I did feel like I was failing.

Dismally.

Me: Andiva bhuti?

Lionel: How long have you two been at it?

Me: us two? Uthetha ngantoni bhuti?

He chuckled, with a hint of irritation, I squirmed in my seat.

Lionel: Niyiqale nini lento niyenzayo no Bongani Onele?

That moment when he mentioned Ginger's real name I felt a lump going up my throat but I had to wear my "big girl pants" so I swallowed it anyway.

Lionel: hm?

Me: Not so long ago bhuti...

Lionel: why?

Me: why?

Lionel: Yes, why? Ufuna ntoni kwindoda endala kangaka Onele?

I counted my words...there was no other way than to be honest with him. I wasn't even sure I knew what he wanted to know but I knew I had to answer his questions with honesty.

Me: I don't know how to put it bhuti, maybe because he gives me attention. Andiyazi.

Lionel: So if I get you properly uthi you don't get enough attention here at home? Is that what you're saying?

Me: It's not the same bhuti...

Lionel: then explain it to me.

I sighed..this was hopeless yazi.

I didn't even see why we were having this conversation coz we both knew what he really wanted to say.

Lionel: Mh, so I guess you've told Cassandra?

Me: ha.a bhuti.

Lionel: Siki?

I shook my head

Lionel: Cindy?

I shook my head again, he chuckled.

Lionel: Were you at least planning on telling anyone amongst your siblings?

Me: nope.

Lionel: Wow.

Me: I knew you guys would react like this...

Lionel: With reason.

Me: Which reason? The fact that he's older or his involvement kulanto ka Cass?

Lionel: How about both? Do you know how old that guy is? Do you know what he does for a living? DO you really wanna get yourself into that? At the age of 18?

“Onele iimbiza”

I jumped at hearing my mom’s voice.

Sigqibile mos.

As I plated up, Steve came in the kitchen and sat there in silence. I only realized after a few minutes that he had my phone in hand and I tried grabbing it wabaleka nayo going outside. I left the pots and ran after him, obviously he’s fitter than I could ever be so when I got tired I just sat down at the center of our yard and wailed loudly until mom came out.

Mom: Iyawa yintoni Onele? Yey nina, nimenzeni umntana?

Lionel: Bayadlala nozala.

Me: mama ubhuti uxuthe iphone yam!

Mom: Stephen Mzayi!!!!

He laughed and brought it back, threw it at me and I

caught it, wiped my tears with the back of my hand and walked back into the house. I checked where he was, WhatsApp. Tshini mnkq.

I put it inside my bra, and continued plating up for the entire family. We sat around kwatyiwa, I felt really tense around my brothers. I guess I didn't know whether they've told the rents yet or they were planning to tell them now, while we were all here.

Luckily for me, Cass called and my phone was now next to dad so when he gave it to me I excused myself,

Steve: Uyaphi?

Dad: bayohleba no Cassandra!

I laughed and walked away, I bet they thought it's the man.

[06/26, 15:14] : #Onele_20

#Cassandra

After we left Milli we went shopping for "his guys", I had already figured from the sizes that we were going to go past the home. His other family, those guys we once went shopping for, yes. We went shopping for them again, clothing, blankets and food. Mostly ready food and cool drinks with lots and lots of fruit, and on our way there I decided to ask..

Me: So now that you and your family are having some differences, how often do you guys come through for these people?

Nkosinathi: I still do my part, come twice in a year and leave them with money if I can and when I can't I just send it when I have enough to spare. But mom and dad are still committed and ikho sure ke ngo Ase.

Me: I like this....

Nkosinathi: I hope we can bring Ukhona when he's old enough.

Me: I hope we can bring him maybe when he's five, so that he grows into this and grasp the environment kwangoku emncinci.

Nkosinathi: we can most certainly arrange that, enkosi baby.

I smiled.

This was the part of him that I loved the most, the giving selflessly part. As we drove in I noticed that the place had been extended and it was even fuller than the last time I came here, there were kids playing in the backyard and some men in the big garden just opposite the kids playground.

Xolani (the guy who cornered Nkosinathi into introducing me to them when we first came together) was outside with three other guys,

Me: ingathi zincinci ezizinto sizenazo yazi baby.

Nkosinathi: Ndibona lonto nam, but it's okay I'll leave them with money bazongezele.

Xolani smiled and came to the car as we got out, he offered his hand for a shake and I opened my arms for a hug. Nkosinathi told me how careful they were with strangers, they didn't want ukuphoxwa hence they would either smile or offer a handshake but he emphasized that bayathanda ubonakaliswa uthando so me offering a hug was simply showing him that I'm actually one of them. If they could hug Nkosinathi as their brother then they could hug me as well, especially since he was married anyway so there shouldn't be discrimination whatsoever. He called the other guys and they helped us carry the food inside then Nkosinathi did the usual and checked maintenance then he went to the kitchen and checked the cupboards, wabanika imali enough for izinto that were on shortage then we walked out

to the car... Of the kids ran to us and tapped on his thigh so we stopped and he bent down next to her so they almost leveled.

Sisipho: bhuti, next time usiza apha sicela usithengele ugqaphu ne ball ye netball please.

Nkosinathi: you play netball?

She blushed

Sisipho: I play at school bhuti but uthe u aunt Sarah I must also teach the others xasidlala apha.

Nkosinathi: okay ke, I will send them no makhulu when she's coming next month coz ndizoza kudala mna.

Sisipho: enkos i bhuti.

They hugged, she opened her arms for a hug from me as well and I hugged her then she whispered "Yho umhle sisi" I laughed and kissed her cheek. She ran away shortly after that, we walked to the car and drove out in silence. I was still smiling at

what Sisipho had said and I could see Nkosinathi eyeing me...

Nkosinathi: and that?

Me: uthi ndimhle.

Nkosinathi: u Sisipho?

I nod

Nkosinathi: ingenzeka that's what she wanted to say yazi, qha wazulis a ngala gqaphu.

That's exactly what I thought too yazi. From there, we went straight to the airport and waited for our flight home. As soon as we boarded, my phone beeped...a message from Steve:

"I'm not sure if you know, but your little sister is dating Ginger... It's been a while now"

I thought I read the entire text wrong so I read again, almost three times and then it all made sense. The secrecy, the age issue she mentioned when we spoke... Come to think of it, she was never secretive to me about any of her relationships but with this new one? She pulled all the stops. But Ginger of all people? After everything he'd put me through no Ta Sthera? Okay fine... But nooo man. Ginger was our brothers' friend before he became Khiri's skivvy so obviously yintanga yoo bhuti so....

"Oh crap u Onele!"

That's all I managed to say, Nkosinathi was abela and I just shook my head. I texted my brother back... And deleted it, texted again for the second time and still deleted the text and decided to rather wait until we land so I could call him andicacisele ba uthini kanye kanye. I closed my eyes and tried to relax, but hey nooo man. How could she? How could she date

that man kanti unjani u Onele? Why would she do that?

Nkosinathi: Baby?

I looked at him, I knew from the look on his face that my own face had an expression so I tried to relax again before he asked "u right?" and I nod.

Nkosinathi: Baby kwenzeka ntoni?

Me: Akhonto, I'm okay man.

Nkosinathi: Thixunathi?

I almost laughed, he never calls me that. That was Mpumelelo's name, not Nkosinathi.

Me: Ndi right chap, I'm just tired and thinking.

Nkosinathi: yintoni le uyicingayo kaloku ikucaphukisayo?

Me: I'll tell you once we land, but ayonto icaba wethu so chill.

I joked and he smiled, kissing the side of my head. We landed and went to collect our luggage, as we made way to the car I called my brother...

Steve: Mama ka Milli?

Me: Bhuti, andiyiva mna la text yakho.

He laughed, I was almost agitated ke yazi.

Me: Dude!

Steve: Yey'phi le ndawo ingavakaliyo?

Me: Yonke bhuti.

Steve: U Onele Cassandra umetsha no Bongani, u Ginger ke ukutsho. Yey'phi kengoku wena le ndawo ungayivayo?

Me: yile uyithethayo kanye... Bhuti how old is Ginger kanti?

He burst out laughing, why was this funny kanti?

Steve: Yintanga ka Lionel u Ginger Sandra.

Me: Yhu!

Steve: and Onele knows that.

Me: How sure are you of yonke nje lento uthetha ngayo bhuti? Like, everything. Do you have proof?

Steve: they were in Durban together nje this past weekend, what proo-

Me: What? Onele was in Durban this weekend?

Steve: erh... Yes.

Me: With this guy?

Steve: Yes.

Me: Wow! Yho haike wow!

Steve: Lionel tried talking to her about this, she

seems like she's made up her mind and uthetha ngoba she's loves him and all that bullshit.

Me: but bhuti... How does she even begin dating labhuti u Onele? Okay siyiyeke iage ke, that man made my life a living hell... Like... Yho.

Then he went silent....

Me: I'm not saying she should also adopt my enemies but bhuti no man, she knows how that period of my life messed me up but she still...

I felt a lump in my throat, and I blinked away the tears that were threatening to come out. Nkosinathi eyed me...

Steve: I'm sorry, I don't think she was going to tell any of us though.

Me: xa engaxelelanga nam then obviously she

wasn't going to tell us at all.

Steve: please wait for her, don't tell her I told you anything.

Me: I actually don't wanna talk to her at all right now, I so wish she doesn't call me until I've processed this whole thing.

He didn't answer me, but after a minute we said our goodbyes and hung up. I closed my eyes and a tear rolled down my cheek...

Nkosinathi: baby kwenzeka ntoni?

Me: u Onele uno Ginger...

Nkosinathi: That Ginger?

Me: Yep, that Ginger. And they were also in Durban this past weekend.

Nkosinathi: I saw him... A few times, at the hotel or something I'm not really sure.

Me: well apparently bebeye bobabini ke... I just

can't... Yho hay u Onele. Yho heeee!

I knew ubhuti wouldn't lie to me ngento enjena, but I still could t believe it. Why would Onele do that? It didn't make sense, yes I knew maybe Asanda would, but u Onele? No man.

[06/26, 15:14] : # Onele_21

#Cassandra

I couldn't sleep, I kept tossing and turning the whole night until I had the worst nightmare where Onele was shooting me right where Asanda shot me that day. I jolted up straight with a loud cry and Nkosinathi also jumped up and switched the lights on.

Nkosinathi: Yintoni?

I looked around and only then did my mind register

that I was dreaming, it wasn't real. Everything wasn't real it was just a dream. I breathed, then got out of the bed, took my short walk to the bathroom and washed my face drinking some of that water. I came back and he wasn't in bed. I followed him down because I knew he could only be in the kitchen making me tea..

Me: There's no need for that, I'm okay.

He looked up with the cup in his hand, I was at the top of the stairs just looking down at him.

Me: really, I'm fine.

Nkosinathi: okay. Go back to bed, I'm coming.

Me: Sure.

I went to bed and waited for him, he eventually came back, with chocolates and coffee. Well, it

wasn't tea. I took my cup and he laughed, I just smiled at him and we sat in silence in that dimly lit room.

Nkosinathi: Uphuphe ntoni?

Me: Argh, it doesn't really matter.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra.

I sighed...

Me: It was about u Onele, she shot me on the same place Asanda shot me at ngokuyana...I guess its paranoia wethu and shock.

Nkosinathi: Maybe you should talk to her about this...

Me: No.

Nkosinathi: Baby...

Me: Ha.a torho

Nkosinathi: So you're going to avoid her until when?

Me: Until...I don't know. But what I know is that I will not talk to her anytime soon, okanye ke for this whole week.

Nkosinathi: Really?

Me: I just need to get my head around this...

He sipped his coffee and didn't answer me, I knew ucingba ndiphambene but I didn't care. I just wasn't ready to talk to Onele, whether ubhuti was right or wrong I just wasn't ready.

Nkosinathi: drink up, you're working in a few hours.

Me: argh, please remind me why am I working again?

Nkosinathi: Because ungu "Miss Independent" kaloku.

Me: Kanene!

He laughed as I rolled my eyes at him, drank up my coffee and ate two pieces of chocolate then I cuddled up on him. When he was done, he put his cup down and we cuddled properly.

Nkosinathi: You know, you can't really punish her for falling in love, despite who she had fallen in love with and you most certainly cannot be mad at her for not telling you about her relationship. We are also back together and we haven't told any of our family members because we know how they would react, or at least we think we know. You basically have no ground, as it is.

Me: baby u Onele u in love njani nomntu who helped in making life miserable?

Nkosinathi: Do you control who to fall inlove with?

Me: masilale!

Nkosinathi: So you won't answer me?

Me: You don't want to see where I'm coming from with this.

Nkosinathi: I know where you're coming from, I was there remember?

Me: Okay, masilale ke.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I know.

Nkosinathi: And you don't love me?

Me: Does it matter?

Nkosinathi: Nah it doesn't, I love you anyway.

I smiled, I don't know whether it came with age or the breakup we had but he was a wiser man. I was really impressed with his decisions, with his approach to life and everything in between but mostly to how he was handling me. Hahaha! I'm a handful, but he knew how to handle the "handfulness" as of late. Well maybe he was able to, even before, but he had no reason to...until Milli happened. We actually had no reason, until Milian decided he's gonna be the reason to pull us back together.

Woke up in the morning and the bath was run already, I prepared for work and when I was done, I woke him up. Caba he ran me a bath and went back to bed,

Nkosinathi: Mh?

Me: I'm done.

Nkosinathi: utyile?

Me: I don't eat in the mornings.

He took a minute and then got up, grabbed a gown and slippers then followed me out. A grabbed an apple and bottled water then he drove me to work. Dressed in a gown and slippers.

Nkosinathi: uphuma bani?

Me: five,

Nkosinathi: sure.

We hugged, he kissed my cheek then I left.

He waited until I actually got inside the building then he started the car and drove away. I worked two hours and I got sick...well not really but, I just wanted to go home so I pretended to be sick. My manager permitted me to go home, saying that if I didn't feel better the following day I must just stay at home. Utshe kubani? Kum? I knew I won't feel better the whole week mos mna. I returned to my desk and called Nkosinathi, because we left my car endlini when we left on Friday.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Nd'cela uzondithatha.

Nkosinathi: Utheni?

Me: ndiyagula...

Nkosinathi: Yho, okay.

Me: thanks.

We hung up, I started packing up my stuff, drank my water and waited for him. Twenty minutes later he called that he's outside so I grabbed my bag and left. As soon as I sat down next to him he looked at me, and started his car but he didn't say anything for the first five minutes of the drive, maybe he hoped I would explain?

Nkosinathi: Ugula yintoni?

Me: Ndiyagodola, is the AC on?

He heated his car up, eyeing me in silence...well before he asked the same question again.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra? Ugula yintoni?

Me: I don't know...

Nkosinathi: But you're sick?

Me: Mh.mh

He shook his head and drove to the doctor, I only kept quiet because I needed the doctor's note for the entire week. Lol. We walked hand-in-hand and went to wait at the reception because we didn't book... When it was our turn I sat on the bed and allowed the doctor to do his work, after he was done he asked me how I was feeling I told him I felt exhausted...

Doc: okay, I'll give you a day to rest, then you should be fine.

Me: I actually need a week to rest.

Nkosinathi and the doctor: Haibo!

I smiled, I wanted to laugh.

Doc: Ms Mzayi, are you sure? I mean, you could be coming off with flue but other than that, you're perfectly fine.

Me:I'm sure Doc...

Nkosinathi: Hay doc akho veki ngandawo apha give her according to what you think is right. Ebethe ufuna uphangela lomntu, makaphangele ke.

Me: five days wena doc, just five then I'll be fine.

The doctor laughed, and made the sick note for me. Five days as requested.

My boyfriend paid and we walked out again, hand-in-hand again. We went to buy food then he drove me to his place, made sure I've eaten and I'm in bed and then looked at me, I just laughed.

Nkosinathi: Usile kodwa.

Me: Andifunuphangela anymore, so what do we do?

Nkosinathi: Uzophangela, uphelelephi u Miss Independent?

Me: But ndiyagula mos emsebenzini

Nkosinathi: Ugula yintoni emsebenzini Cassandra?

Me: Andiyazi nam baby shem, but ndiyagula mna net ndingene e ofisini.

He laughed and picked up his phone and keys on some “lala ke sisi, ndi busy mna” and he walked away. I didn’t bother asking uyaphi, I wanted to sleep nam ndingaphazanyiswa.

[06/26, 15:14] : # Onele_22

#Cassandra

After four hours of a well-deserved sleep and rest, I woke up still alone in his house, so I called him. His phone rang four times and then it hit voicemail. So I texted him to come back, I was sicker than when he left me. He called after thirty to forty minutes,

almost after an hour.

Me: M'low?

Nkosinathi: What's up?

Me: What's up?

Nkosinathi: Sisi, I told you I'm busy, you're supposed to be at work...yes, what's up?

I mumbled, he laughed.

Me: Uhleka ntoni? Khona uyicbolaphi lento yokuthi sisi xa undibiza?

Nkosinathi: Okay uxolo ke sthandwa sam, you're up from your drugged sleep. Are you hungry?

Me: Yes.

Nkosinathi: There's food in the microwave, have you checked?

Me: No.

Nkosinathi: Okay then, go and check, and there's co-

Me: Uphi baby?

Nkosinathi: Ndis e Bhayi baby.

Me: WHAT!?!

He burst out laughing, what was so funny???

Me: You left me in your house and went to Port Elizabeth? Really?

Nkosinathi: You're sick, remember?

Me: But that's no excuse...

Nkosinathi: So ngendikufunqule sihambe sobabini?

Me: You could have told me you'll be going out of town, I would have gone home haibo.

Nkosinathi: But ndizobuya mos.

Me: But Nkosinathi!

Nkosinathi: So ufuna ugoduka? Is that why you called?

Me: NO!

Nkosinathi: Okay, why did you call ke baby?

I kept quiet... I was really in my feels yazi.

Me: I missed you, not that it matters now.

Nkosinathi: I miss you too...for what its worth.

Me: It's not worth anything, you can't get into your car and come to me mos. In fact mandigoduke futhi.

Nkosinathi: whoah whoah, ugodukelani kengoku? I just said ndizobuya baby come on.

Me: Bye bye.

I hug up, he called again.

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: Uhamba nyhani?

Me: Ewe tshi.

Nkosinathi: Uhambela ntoni?

Me: Because you left me at your house and went to another province without telling me. Who does that?

Nkosinathi: Ndihambe nantoni baby? You have the entire house and food and everything else you could ever need, at your disposal.

Me: Ndifuna wena mna andifuni house or food or everything else, ndifuna wena mfondini. Why don't you get that?

He didn't answer me...

Me: wenzani khona eBhayi?

Nkosinathi: Sithunywe ngu Nozala to fetch some stuff for oluvulo lwendlu.

Me: Mmh...

Nkosinathi: Nd'cela unghambi...

Me: I've already called the cab, do what you have to do. We'll talk when you're done.

Nkosinathi: I'll fetch you obuya kwam.

Me: If ufike ebusuku rather don't come fetch me, call or text just so I can know you're back.

Nkosinathi: Ndithi I'll come fetch you obuya kwam, andiyazi ke ba ii terms and conditions zingenaphi.

Okay I laughed, why was he suddenly irritated? Tshi, the nerve!

Me: Okay, can I go now?

Nkosinathi: sure.

He hung up, I smiled and switched my phone off.

After a minute I went to food enough for both of us, so because I was cooking, I had to spend some time in the lounge but the heater was on. It was drizzly outside, when I was done cooking I plated up for the both of us then left his plate in the microwave and went to the bedroom with my own. Before eating, I returned back to the kitchen and scouted for snacks, found a couple and returned back to the room.

When I was done eating my food I covered the plate with another plate and cuddled his pillow while eating his snacks and watching cartoons but halfway through that I decided to switch my phone on again, just in case u sisi calls regarding my son. I fell asleep again kuyo yonke lento ke and when I woke up, he was in the shower. I thought I was dreaming, but when I listened carefully, I realized that he really was back. I looked at my phone to see if he called or anything, and he didn't. Inoba ebeyazi ba andihambi I'm just throwing a tantrum.

He walked out of the shower and looked at me, I blushed because I expected him to scold me or something along those lines, instead, he just came to kiss me. I kissed him back, then after a few seconds he kissed my forehead and went to get dressed in pjs.

Me: Ubuye nini?

Nkosinathi: About an hour ago, but akudalanga ndingenile aphenhlini.

Me: Things are working out?

Nkosinathi: Yeah, ba covered.

Me: I'm sure your mother is happy.

Nkosinathi: Very much, bonke man bonwabile, it's a different atmosphere.

Me: That's nice.

He didn't answer that...

Me: Your food is in the microwave.

Nkosinathi: you cooked?

Me: I was hungry, and you did say there's food
endlini yakho.

He laughed and went to warm his food, came back
and got in bed watya endincokolela about his day
and I had to be attentive and look interested. I lay
on my back listening to him and just out of nowhere,
Onele called...I looked at my phone and put it down.

Nkosinathi: And that?

Me: Onele.

Nkosinathi: Kengoku?

Me: Bendithe I don't wanna talk to her yet.

Nkosinathi: Does she know that?

Me: no, obviously.

Nkosinathi: So uzocinga ntoni when you don't

answer your phone?

Me: She's gonna think I'm sleeping, zi past nine anyway.

He shook his head, drank his coffee then we cuddled.

Sindy sent me a text, I opened it but it wasn't a text but a video of Milli. We watched it together, and as we were watching, Onele sent her own text: "I tried calling you a minute ago" I texted back: "I'll call you ngomso". Did she listen? No. She called again...

Now because Nkosinathi was gawking at me I had to answer iit...

Me: Hey?

Onele: Hey, sewulele?

Me: yep, was just woken up ngu Milli no makazi

wakhe.

Onele: Oooh okay, thought you're avoiding me or something.

Me: And why would I avoid you kengoku?

Onele: I don't know...but it's okay, ndiyakuve ulele so I'll wait for your call ke ngoms o.

Me: kanti ubuzothini?

onele: I miss you, wanted us to catch up.

Me: oh okay...

And that was it.

We both hung up and I didn't even look at Nkosinathi because I knew what he was going to say.

[06/26, 15:15] : #Onele_23

#Cassandra

I switched my phone off and cuddled up onto him, lento bendifuna uyenza emini and he chose to go to another province without informing me. He switched off the lights and breathed, he must have been tired umntanabantu shame kuphinde kubekho mna omduba ingqondo ehlelinje.

Nkosinathi: So what was really going on with you emini?

Me: What do you mean?

Nkosinathi: You said you're going home...

Me: So?

Nkosinathi: So?

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: The question is what was going on? Ubutheni?

Me: I told you, I missed you.

Nkosinathi: I get that, but...

Me: but it doesn't make sense?

Nkosinathi: Actually, no, it doesn't.

Me: I thought you're around okay, I thought you'd be able to jump into your car uze kum. That's pretty much all I wanted, you to come to me but you chose to go to another province wandishiya apha kwakho ndedwa ndigula.

Nkosinathi: Oh I see.. So how are you feeling now? Since ubugula ke?

Me: Ungandishiya imini yonke ndigula and only ask me ndinjani ngoo 9/10 ebusuku? Yho ha.a baby masilale torho.

He laughed,

Nkosinathi: Baby...

Me: Goodnight my love...

Nkosinathi: Baby...

Me: Yho ha.a ke...

Nkosinathi: Baby...

I sighed, why? Why was he doing this? This time nogal?

Me: Tata ka Miliyoni!

He burst into a roaring laughter, I joined in, I don't know where that came from but yey ha.a mani ha.a yho hayi. Tyhini.

Nkosinathi: You didn't! You did not!!!

Me: Hey hay nawe uyandibiza man ebusuku, Tyhini! Oko oko baby baby? Yho hay mfondini masalale ngoku.

He continued laughing before asking, "Don't you

think we should make another baby?"

Me: Yhima ke baby, xa usithi "we" uxela wena nabani?

Nkosinathi: Kanti u Ukhona ndimenze nabani?

Me: So ubala nam?!

Nkosinathi: Bendizobala nabani omnye?

Ndizobenza nawe mos abantwana bam bonke, I thought at least that part was made very clear.

Me: Yho haike bhuti ngekhe, ufuna ndiphinde ndisindwe sisisu ngoku for nine months?

Ayikonwabisi caba le yokuba ndisi spring chicken eKapa oosisi nomama bengabadlezana kula Eastern Cape?

Nkosinathi: usi spring chicken sam mos...

Me: We are not having another baby. Forget it.

Nkosinathi: Ndithini ke coz uyanditefela ngoku, kanti ba ebekhona omnye u Ukhona or maybe if ebekhona esimlindeleyo ke I'd understand.

Me: So what you're really saying to me right now is that ndiyakudika?

Nkosinathi: You're putting words in my mouth kengoku baby, I didn't say that. You know I love you, the whole you.

Me: Ude uthi the whole me? Hehe!

Nkosinathi: okay, okay. Ndiyakuthanda ke sthandwa sam.

Me: Mnkq!

He kissed my forehead...

Nkosinathi: But, adding another one wouldn't hurt. Right?

Me: And how do we begin to explain how I got pregnant? We are not dating kaloku bhuti, remember? Wena unomlungu wakho, mna ndi single.

Nkosinathi: Mna ndinomlungu wam? Baby!!!

Again, he laughed, why was he laughing at the truth?
Uno Tammy kaloku yena mna ndi single mos. Kanti?

Nkosinathi: We'll tell them these things happen, surely they've been young once noko abanokothuka that much. And besides, if Sindy or Steve disowns you guys nizohlala kulandlu yenu intsha.

Me: If they were to disown me trust me they'd keep my son, that I can bet on.

Nkosinathi: Less baggage for us then, simple.

Me: Yhu unesibindi!

Nkosinathi: It will be a good excuse for you to stop working though...

Me: Who said anything about me stopping uphangela?

Nkosinathi: I thought that's what you said, that whenever you get into the office you get sick?

Me: And you said ndizophangela ndigula ndinjalo

because I chose to be Miss Independent. Andithi?

Nkosinathi: So you've decided you'll continue working? Is that what you're saying?

I laughed at him, my laughter sounded so pure and refreshing in that darkness.

Me: Since I'm seeing that you're busy kule veki, can you please organize for me to go and spend some time with my son. Please?

I swiftly changed the subject, I wasn't going to get myself pregnant out of wedlock again nor was I going to quit my job to be receive handouts from him, that wasn't going to happen. At all. In fact it would take greater intervention for me to fall pregnant again, to get myself pregnant again. I walked that journey alone and to be honest, I was still traumatized by it and I feared he would disappear all over again when I needed him the

most. I couldn't do that to myself, us being together was fun alright but heck no, we both weren't ready to add another child into the picture. Phofu I wasn't ready, at all.

Nkosinathi: So now you want to leave me here uye eBhayi, kodwa nguwe othe mandifounele umama and enquire about uvulo lwendlu?

Me: Kaloku baby...

Nkosinathi: Awuyi ndawo baby.

He wasn't being forceful about his response, nor was he arrogant. He just simply told me "no" and for some weird reason I couldn't go beyond that. I think I wanted to oppose that, but my lips froze.

Nkosinathi: You're spending your week here, with me. Noba ndikhona, noba andikho but you'll be here for this whole week. Ungaphinda ke ugule next week ndizokuzamela indlela uyohlala nomntanakho.

Me: But you'll be busy kokwenu nje tatakhe, what will I do here ndedwa almost every day?

Nkosinathi: I'll take a day or two to spend with you, and I'll sleep here every night.

Me: And if you're asked to accommodate additional family members?

Nkosinathi: We'll book ourselves a room at the hotel kaloku.

Me: See why I should go home? Xandingekho apha there won't be a need for you to do all of that, there won't be a need for you to be spending unnecessarily.

Nkosinathi: Lala baby, awuyindawo qha.

Me: Okay...

He kissed my forehead and relaxed, ehehe, he dismissed me nam ndathi "Okay", Haibo! I literally felt his body relax.

Me: Nkosinathi?

Nkosinathi: Thixunathi?

Me: This conversation is not over.

Nkosinathi: I love you too.

Hehehe!

[06/26, 15:15] : #Onele_24

#Cassandra

I was the first one to wake up the following day, I went to make us breakfast and then he came down while I was still busy making the food. He was talking on the phone, he sounded very serious but when he saw me his face lit up. I chuckled.

He came to kiss my lips, sucking my bottom lip and then grabbed my waist. I tried to close the lid and

embraced him, did he not strip me? Using one hand, and his lips, and at some point his knee? Just when I thought he's just fooling around, he abruptly hung up, throwing the phone on the counter and grabbing me with both hands, carrying me to the couch in the other room. His phone rang again but we were on the other side of the house he had no choice but to ignore it...

Me: I thought.... We're having breakfast in bed today.

Nkosinathi: We can have it on this couch, it's okay.

I laughed as what he just said registered, we made out on the couch, and made love on the couch. He's forever precise about what he does so today was no different, he worship my body and played around some bumps and areas that he knew made me feel insecure, kissing my stretch marks in between.

When we were done, he smacked my behind and went to answer his phone, whoever was calling him was very persistent. I sat there, gathering my breath

with a little laugh wondering, "Did we really just have sex on the couch?" I laughed as I gathered my clothes and wore what I could wear returning back to the kitchen, I was too hungry. He was still on the phone, I kissed his bare back for a couple of seconds, plating fairy kisses all over it and then I left him, as I plated up, he ended his call and then there was a hooter outside. I looked at him...

Nkosinathi: Uh oh...

Me: Hay hay hay suthi uh-oh. Who's that?

Nkosinathi: It must be your favorite sister inlaw, I think.

Me: Really baby? Really?

The hooter went off again, two times but he didn't move. I looked at him, his phone rang, he looked at the screen and laughed.

Nkosinathi: Yep, it's her.

Me: Ngcongconi yakwabani! Ekseni kangaka mani?
Yhu ha.a u dadwenu.

He smiled at me, then he answered his phone on
loudspeaker so I could also hear the conversation ...

Nkosinathi: Ase?

Asenathi: Haibo khawuvule igate, kunini ndipipiza.

Nkosinathi: Andikho sendlini mna, what's up?

Asenathi: So early? Uphi?

Me: I'm with my girlfriend sisi, what's up? How can I
help you?

Asenathi: Please don't tell me you're with that
Tammy thing! Arrrgh Nkosinathi shame.

He laughed, I smiled.

Wondering if there'll ever be a girl that she actually
likes for his brother except for Sive.

Nkosinathi: Ufuna ntoni Asenathi before le phone ixuthwe because uyasiphazamis a nomntu wam.

Asenathi: I wanted to have breakfast with you...

Nkosinathi: Oh man, next time chap.

Asenathi: So that means I can't steal you away from her? I'll come fetch you even...

Nkosinathi: I've had breakfast already, served bare on the couch with some sticky whitish sauce. I'm actually waiting for round two.

Asenathi: sies man, yeerrr!

Okay I also laughed at her, but silently.

Nkosinathi: I'll see you tonight.

Asenathi: Can't we do lunch ke? Like, ku crowded kulendlu I need some air Yho ha.a.

Nkosinathi: Take Liyema to the mall or something...

Asenathi: Is that a no?

He looked at me, I looked away. I wanted him all to myself, she wanted to have her brother for lunch and he couldn't give her an honest answer because he didn't know how I'd feel about him going out with her endishiye again "ndigula" mna apha endlini.

Nkosinathi: Let me give this woman a bit of attention, then I'll run to Khayelits ha for an hour or two, I'll call you if I make time.

Asenathi: Okay ke...

Me: If not, see you tonight.

Asenathi: Fine, please tell me you're not coming with her.

Nkosinathi: Haibo! Anibafuni abantu kokwenu xaninotywala???

She burst out laughing,

Asenathi: Uyaphambana kengoku, I just don't want you to bring umlungu ozakube ethe nca kuwe sibe nathi nabantwana bethu sikufuna.

Nkosinathi: mmmh, I'm not coming with her, relax. Breathe.

Asenathi: Hay shame noske kuthwe ubuyelene nalanoqatiko ungu Cassandra kunalo mlungu ndingamaziyo wamcholaphi undidikayo. Like... Yhooooo hay nawe man, leyoba sikhumsha sitolika ngoku everywhere we go??? Yhu hay!

He looked at me smiling, I was n't smiling. Ngubani uNoqatiko? Kutheni bendiqhela nje xabedibene? Then he laughed.

Nkosinathi: Ndizomxelela u Cassandra ba uthi ngu Noqatiko.

Asenathi: Hay hay hay Nathi don't do that, she hates me already. Akho need for you to add onto that...

Uzamenza angabisazithatha nezizinto ndandizithengele umntana.

Nkosinathi: Akakazithathi kanti?

Asenathi: Ha.a, and ndiyoyika nokuzisa ngokwam kwa bhuti wakhe, akaqheleki mntase labhuti Yho, and then I don't wanna anger u Cassandra, she has sharp comebacks.

He laughed...

I wanted to laugh too..

Nkosinathi: Okay I'll take them, ndimnike xandimbonile.

Asenathi: Okay thanks... Is she still angry at us? The fam I mean.

Nkosinathi: I don't know...

Asenathi: Oh, I thought niyathetha... Since ya'll are coparenting.

Nkosinathi: We don't talk much, umntana akahlali

kuye so I communicate with her sisters xandifuna ubona.

Asenathi: And her?

Nkosinathi: As I said, we dont talk much.

(With that, he grabbed my arm and pulled me closer to him, I sat on his lap squatting and we kissed while listening to her sister. There wasn't much talking nyhani between us at that very moment,)

Asenathi: Yho...but you do pay maintenance?

Nkosinathi: Yes.

Asenathi: That's good, responsibility.

Nkosinathi: Hay bye bye mfondini, kutheni wamandelwa? Uyayiqonda ba uzandilahlis a phofu?

Asenathi: Yhu heeee!

He hung up and focused all his attention on me. I

laughed at how that call ended, but I was enjoying the attention. Then I stopped kissing him and hugged him, he hugged me back, seemingly confused. I pecked his lips and sighed....

Nkosinathi: Is that a sigh?

Me: You may go and have breakfast or lunch with her.

Nkosinathi: Wena uzothini?

Me: You'll drop me home, then on your way back uzodlula ngam.

Nkosinathi: Baby I thought we spoke about this....

Me: We have spoken about it, but zikhona izinto endizidingayo pha endlini anyway.

Nkosinathi: I'm not leaving you here and I'm not dropping you off anywhere...

Me: Kanti aren't you going to Khayelits ha or something?

Nkosinathi: Ndiyanawe, I just have to drop off

something you can stay in the car or ungene nam...

Me: ufuna ukuya nam e Khayelits ha?? Are you being real?

Nkosinathi: Okay ke let me rather ask these guys to come here...

He turned to walk away

Me: Please go have lunch with her... Please.

Nkosinathi: mh.

He was already dialing a number and walking to the door. I wasn't really comfortable with this new him, but at the same time I was happy. Really happy, especially seeing that he wasn't forcing himself to do these things, they came solely and freely from his own heart.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Oh, he was back.

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: We're good, andisayi ke e Khayelitsha.

Me: And so you're going for lunch with your sister?

He rolled his eyes and dug in ekutyeni kwakhe. I chuckled and joined him with my own plate.

[06/26, 15:15] : #Onele_25

#Cassandra

When we were done eating I left him to clean up, I went to get soaked in the bath. Thinking....

And then, Steve called...

Me: Hi, bhuti?

Steve: Yintoni u hi? Good morning Thixunathi unjani?

I smiled...

Me: Uxolo kaloku Stefano yintoni ntombi? I'm okay, uvuka njani wena?

He was still laughing from when I called him Stefano, I waited for him to calm down.

Steve: Ndizakukhaba yazi?

Me: Xolo kaloku.

Steve: Uphi? I need something endlini, Zuko will come pick it up from you andiphathele tonight.

Me: What time will he pick it up? Yintoni yona?

Steve: First question was, uphi?

Me: Andikho sendlini kaloku bhuti that's why ndibuza ixesha.

Steve: Uphi? That's the question Cassandra, uphi?

I sighed...

Steve: hehe! Yhe ntombindini, don't tell me uphinde wavuma enye indoda kwelo Kapa?!

Me: Ndis e mall ke sana... Not that it would have been a sin, the other part of what you said.

Steve: hehehe!

I laughed.

Steve: Cassandra!!!

Me: Bhuti???

Steve: Heh mntanandini unendoda?

Yho I burst out laughing,

Steve: Yho ndizokuxela ku tatakho uzobona.

Me: Awuna proof yalento uyithethayo so relax.

Steve: Hayini she told me to relax.

We both laughed.

Me: Bhuti,

Steve: I know you love me and stuff, but kaloku Haibo bethuna, surely mos everyone knows that umntu yena ndizobanaye.

Steve: Cassandra amadoda aseKapa are either amatshipha aku Centane or ii Gangstas. Ngowaphi kewena lomntu umvumileyo because we already have u Onele osiphathele igints a as a brother inlaw, we don't need another one from you. Please"

I laughed and paused as what he had just said sank in.

Me: So ba serious nalento bayenza yo nyhani bhuti?

Like, you weren't joking?

Steve: She still hasn't told you?

Me: No... I'm supposed to call her back today. She called last night but I was already sleeping.

Steve: Mmh, I think it's best ulinde pha kuye man... And don't give her a hard time.

Me: Don't give her a what?? Bhuti, does Onele understand yonke lanto that I went through ngenxa yala Ginger and your stupid brother inlaw u Sthera?

Steve: She might not understand kaloku baby girl, that's why ndisithi don't give her a hard time. Remember, she wasn't there...

Me: ha.a bhuti yho ha.a... Does she even understand how it affected me ke? My studies? My psychological state? The children abats helwa zizinto zabo on that fire? The landlords son owats helwa lilifa lakhe? Does she understand all of that? Like... The trauma bethuna, the trauma of it all, does she at least get that part ye trauma?

He didn't answer me and I felt like I was about to cry, I had a lump in my throat just by replaying what I was saying to him in my mind. I felt betrayed.

Steve: Sandra?

Me: Bhuti?

Steve: Ndiyafuna mna simyeke u Onele azibonele u Ginger ba ngumntu onjani because she thinks she knows him, I don't know what he told her but she is so confident ngayo yonke lento she sees nothing wrong with it.

Me: Then she must see nothing wrong with me cutting ties with her bhuti, I can never.

Steve: Come on Cass...

Me: I have to go... Give your friend my number to call me when he's coming. I love you, bye.

I hung up before he could say anything else. I didn't want to hear anything else, I closed my eyes and cried. Nkosinathi knocked and pushed open the

bathroom door, I quickly covered my face with foam so he wouldn't see me crying.

Nkosinathi: Oko ubuvasa?

Me: It's probably been a minute yazi.

He chuckled....

I got out of the bath and drained the water while he was still standing there, watching me. He probably suspected something, but I didn't care and I didn't want to talk about it.

“Onele called, uthi akakufumani on your cell”

I chuckled, uxokelani u Onele?

When did she call? Even if she called while I was talking to ubhuti I would have known.

Nkosinathi: Undivile?

Me: Ewe Ta Nko.

He laughed, she calls him that.

Nkosinathi: Are you going to call her back?

Me: Nah, anyway she didn't call me. Maybe she just wants something to clutch on wethu when her secret comes out.

Nkosinathi: I don't get you...

Me: baby, she knows or rather she suspects that we're together so she has this belief that nam I am keeping it a secret just like she is keeping her relationship a secret. She called while we went to visit Milli and I told her I'm with you for obvious reasons...so, she could have called you now instead of calling me just to check if we're together na.

He nod...

Me: Undenzela iworry ke because azifani ezizinto acinga ukuzifanisa, if my theory is correct phofu.

Nkosinathi: Please call her...

Me: Ha.a torho, not ngoku.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra.

Me: Bhutindini, if you want to speak to Onele call her mna andifuni.

Nkosinathi: But what if you're wrong?

Me: I could be wrong ewe, but dude, can I not be forced into this? I am angry okay? I will say things and later regret them so ndcela undiyeke okwangoku ndibe right. I will eventually talk her, kodwa not ngoku ndisacaphukayo.

Nkosinathi: Okay.

I went to go get dressed, we went to drop off whatever he had to drop off e Khayelits ha then we

went out to grab a bite. He looked worried, but yho
ha.a I didn't care.

[06/26, 15:15] : #Onele_26

#Cassandra

Boyfie and I were busy vibing, when lil sister
decided to ring me up. I sighed, I really wasn't
feeling like talking to her but I couldn't really keep
on avoiding her.

Me: Hey?

Onele: Hey, you sound busy... U sharp?

Me: I'm busy yes, but I'm okay. Wena?

Onele: Good good, how busy are you? I want us to
talk...

Me: We're talking right now...

Onele: it's kind of serious, so I'd need you to either
be sitting down or at least be at home or something.

I rolled my eyes at that, Nkosinathi saw it and laughed. I pinched his arms and he shut up.

Me: You can talk, it sounds really serious.

She breathed.

Onele: Uhm... I want to Uhm, tell you something. And I guess I know this conversation might not end well but I'm tired of hiding stuff from you...

Me: Uyandoyikisa kengoku, you're hiding stuff specifically from me or from us as a family?

Onele: You, phofu nonke... I think.. Well it doesn't really matter now.

Me: Oh-Kay...

Onele: My Uhm, new boyfriend... He is older than me as I said before.

Me: Yes.

Onele: And Uhm, you know him...

Me: I do?

Onele: Yes. It's Bongani, he used to be friends with oo bhuti before he joined u Sbari, utata ka Aphiwe to be exact.

I didn't respond to her...

I didn't know what to say. I think I was more mad at her now than I was when Steve told me about this, the fact that she new every little detail about Ginger and still chose to sleep with him messed me up the most. I closed my eyes, I felt rage boiling from the pits of my belly and I didn't trust anything that would escape my mouth so instead of even looking at Nkosinathi, I just shut my lips together and waited for my burning ears to cool down. But as expected, she went on... Oblivious to what was happening on the other side of the phone.

Onele: I know he's old, he's some sort of a gangsta

or something, but mntase I love him. He makes me feel like the only woman he has ever laid eyes on, he makes time for me, he makes more than an effort, he treats me really good and I have no doubt that he loves me too.

I wanted to actually throw my phone onto the wall that was across where I sat, with my gritted teeth, I tried to breath through a small gap between my pursed lips. My nose, my nostrils were failing me...

Onele: I know you two have some beef, and I will understand if you have some sort of resentment towards him.

Me: I don't have beef with u Ginger Onele, I hate him. That's it, and there's no going around that, he knows it very well.

Onele: But mntase I'm not saying...

Me: You either have no idea what I went through because of that man of you're just ignorant. I'm not

really sure right now what hurts me the most, you sharing a bed with a man who almost ended my life or you praising him and expecting me to understand why you're sleeping with him.

She didn't respond...

Me: But you're eighteen now, right? You can sleep with whoever you want to sleep with, including that snake you call a boyfriend.

Onele: Mntase, I know he hurt you badly. But he was working for our brother inlaw, it's not like he wanted to hurt you njee out of the blue.

Me: Are you listening to yourself?

Onele: I'm sorry I'm not saying what you want to hear Sandra, but I really do love him.

Me: Good, enjoy your relationship with him then. Just know that mna ndingu Thixo-unathi Cassandra Mzayi, right now, ndiyakukhupha ebomini bam.

Onele: All because of a man? Seriously Cassandra?

Me: No Onele, all because you chose a man over your sister!!!! You did this, you knew very well what he put me through and you still chose him over me dammit!

Onele: He did all of that to YOU, not me! Why must I then suffer?

Me: Ooh injalo ngoku?

Onele: Sandra you know how much I've been in your corner, I've always chosen you. I've always backed you up, I've always been your cheerleader... But this once, just this one time when I need you in my own corner you make the whole situation about you? Yho!

Me: If this isn't about me then why are you telling me this? Ndingenaphi kwi relationship yakho oyifihlayo Onele?

She didn't answer me...

Me: I made this easy for you ndathi go ahead, be

with him, asoze ndime phambi kwakho mna just know that I'm no longer your sister.

Onele: So you're disowning me? Without even giving him a chance.

Me: You did that the day you shared a bed with u Ginger Onele, I'm merely officiating what you initiated here.

Onele: Sandra...

Me: I did say I'm busy when we started this conversation, right?

Onele: Yes, but before you go. Ingaske uyazi ba intliziyo ayixelelwa where to find love, I didn't ask to fall for him, I didn't ask for any of this to happen. I know you're hurting right now and I am willing to give you some time to sleep on this because I understand why you're upset.

Me: Bye.

I hung up before she could even respond, I didn't have it in me to listen to anything else she was

going to say. I put my phone off and closed my eyes, hot air was coming out of my ears and my chest felt like it had small needles all over it. I wanted to cry so bad but we were in a public space I didn't want to attract any attention.

Me: Please take me home.

Nkosinathi: Huh?

Me: Please take me home.

Nkosinathi: you shouldnt be alone right now babe, let's jus-

Me: Please take me home. Please.

He nod and we walked to his car, he drove to my brother's place. I got out of the car and walked into the yard without saying a word to him. Once I was inside, he started his car and drove away. I locked myself in and cried out that rage I had felt boiling deep down my belly. I screamed and threw things around until I felt better, and when I did, I cleaned

my brother's house and took a tub of ice cream ndanaba pha phantsi right next to the fridge.

After a couple of spoons, I felt better and replaced the tub back to his drawer ndayolala in my room. I was woken up ngulamntu ebezothatha into ethunywe ngubhuti, then after he left I checked my phone, I had a lot of messages but I only returned ezikabhuti and gave him a report back. Then I called Tata ka Milli...

Nkosinathi: Baby

Me: Hey

Nkosinathi: Ndizokuthatha?

Me: Nah, I'm good. I was just returning your calls, bendilele when you called.

Nkosinathi: Ooh I figured, but yintoni u nah I'm good kengoku?

Me: Ndifuna utya ndilale torho, can we not do this right now?

Nkosinathi: Okay fine, can I bring you food at least?

Me: I'll find something man, or I'll order in. Hamba iyakokwenu, I'm sure they need extra hands, but I'm fine here.

Nkosinathi: Okay ndiyeza.

Then he hung up.

I was left looking at my screen, my mind replaying what he had just said "Okay ndiyeza", did he really say that? Okay ndiyeza? Uyeza uyaphi bethuna umntana ka Dakumba? Did he even hear what I said? Uyaphi? I called him back again, I really didn't feel like being smothered at all...

Nkosinathi: Thixunathi?

Me: Uyeza uyaphi?

Nkosinathi: Khawuvule igate.

Like what the actual hell??? Where was he when I

called him? I gave up, went to open up for him and waited in the lounge. He walked in with food for two, sigh.

[06/26, 15:15] : #Onele_27

#Cassandra

I plated out for the two of us in silence, he was sitting in the lounge watching Supersport, I served him and ate up in silence.

Nkosinathi: Uthini u Onele?

Me: She's telling me about her relationship with Ginger.

Nkosinathi: And you dis owned her, why?

Me: Because, I hate that man. She knows that obviously, but she doesn't care.

Nkosinathi: But she loves that man, and she was honest enough to tell you.

Me: After how long belala kunye?

Nkosinathi: Does it matter after how long? At least she swallowed her pride and told you.

Me: Baby la Ginger-

Nkosinathi: I was there, I know everything that he put you through but, u Onele akenzanganto apha.

Me: Akenzanganto? So sleeping with him doesn't count?

Nkosinathi: Would you have rather he slept with you ke?

I looked at him, shocked.

Me: What?

Nkosinathi: You and I both know that you cannot tell intliziyo whom to love.

Me: Yhima whoah, whose side are you on here?

Nkosinathi: I'm on your side, but you can't really go around telling people who to love and who to not love. Mdala u Onele and she also deserves

someone who ozamthanda like I love you.

That was my “shut up” moment.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: We’re done here, eat up.

Nkosinathi: You’re gonna shut me out because I hold a different view to yours ngalento?

I didn’t answer him, I did tell him we’re done so I didn’t know what he was expecting from me. I wasn’t about to get into the same argument with him, the one I had earlier on with Onele was enough. My phone rang, Siki.

Me: Sisi...

Siki: What’s going on between you and Onele?

Me: huh?

Siki: I just spoke to Onele, she's crying but andimva ba uthini. I just heard your name somewhere between her sobs.

Me: It's nothing to worry yourself about sisi, we'll be fine.

Siki: So something is going on?

Me: Yes, but I will not discuss it with you. We still have to talk, so...

Siki: You and who?

Me: Mna naye kaloku.

She sighed,

Siki: Ayonto ingamandla ke? Xa kucaba ayithethwa lento yenzekayo?

Me: Ha.a sisi, we can handle it.

Siki: Then ukhalela ntoni umntana Sandra?

Me: Andimazi sisi, ngoku mna bendithetha naye

ebengakhali. But I'll call her when I'm done here...

Siki: Please do that, ubuyele kum.

Me: okay sisi.

She hung up,

I threw the phone across the couch and closed my eyes. Did she really have to involve oosisi? Lionel and Steve were enough, but u Siki? Come on!

Nkosinathi: Thatha iimpahla sihambe.

Me: What?

Nkosinathi: You're returning to work next week, take a couple of clothes for work.

Me: Haibo, kutheni ndingacelwa?

Nkosinathi: We are not doing this ke baby, thatha impahla sihambe it's getting late.

Me: Nkosinathi?

Nkosinathi: Thixunathi?

Me: Ndisekhaya apha, have you forgotten that?

Nkosinathi: Trust me I am very much aware.

Me: Then goduka ke, and leave me alone.

Nkosinathi: I'm not leaving you alone, I might bring you back Sunday but I'm not leaving you alone tonight.

I didn't answer him, I just collected the plates, washed them and put the leftovers in the fridge. His phone rang and I could pick up from his tone and choice of words that he was busy with one of his family members, I soooooo wished he would just leave me alone nyhani. Just as I finished up the kitchen, my own phone rang so I went to fetch it and returned to the kitchen so we could both have a bit of privacy. I didn't want to hear iindaba zakokwabo anyway,

Me: Onele Mzayi?

Onele: Sandra... Can we talk?

Me: Awugqibanga ngoku uthetha?

Onele: Dude, why can't you just be happy for me?

Me: Why ca- you know what? I can't do this with you.

Onele: Sandra mna ever ndaku support'a, kuyo yonke into oyenzayo I have always supported you. Wena ngoku wohlulwa kukundi support'a when I tried so hard to protect you from this.

Me: You tried so hard to protect me? Seriously
Onele?

Onele: Ewe mfondini...

Me: So now it is about me?

She sighed...

Me: Yintoni eyona ngxaki yakho Onele?

Onele: I know ubuyelene no tata ka Milli but andikugrumbi ngalonto because I fully understand it's none of my business, I know you hate Ginger and I'm not saying mthande but can you be my

sister for a minute? Please.

Me: I didn't say hlukana nendoda yakho mna, I just told you I hate him and I'm not going to like him because you're sleeping with him Onele. Andiyazi ke ba u Nkosinathi ungenaphi kule conversation, but do you boo. Do you sweetie.

Onele: Okay...

Me: So you went ahead and told u sisi about this?

Onele: I just needed someone to talk to, I didn't tell her much, please don't tell her anything.

Me: She obviously called, ndcela ubuyele kuye ke.

Onele: Utheni wena kuye?

Me: Why does it matter?

Onele: It matters because andikwazi ufike ndithethe one thing kant wena sewumxelele something else, come on.

Me: I didn't tell her anything.

Onele: Enkosi.

I didn't respond.

Onele: I guess, good night?

Me: Good night Onele.

Onele: Ayt.

She hung up.

Nkosinathi was probably done on his own call, but I didn't move an inch after the one I had with my sister. My body felt frozen, or something. I just sat there, looking into space. I wanted to call mom and tell her about yonke nje lento but something in Onele's voice held me back. It felt like I could hear a cry in her voice, but it wasn't a cry of help...

"You ready to go?"

I looked up, he was really ready to go. I just wanted to sleep ekhaya mna, why couldn't he just

understand that part? To top it all off, I didn't have the energy to fight with him as well.

Me: I'll go pack.

He nod...

I went to pack, work clothes, extra PJ's and gowns then we left. He went to Steers and bought me milkshake, which I really appreciated, then he drove to his mother's house. I looked at him, quizzically so...

Nkosinathi: I won't be long, lock yourself inside.

And he left, haibo.

[06/26, 15:16] : #Onele_28

#Cassandra

I sat in that car cursing Nkosinathi ngaphakathi.

Why would he take me ekhaya azondigcabisakokwabo phandle? What kind of selfishness was that? Tchi.

After a couple of minutes, I lowered the seat and closed my eyes. It was no use being angry at him, he was probably busy taking shots inside so why not rest a bit? See why I needed the whole week to rest? My distinctive mind must have known that kuzokwenzeka sonke esisiphithiphithi. I then heard three voices nearing the car, one of which was his, then his door opened, followed by the back passenger doors and I froze.

Nkosinathi: Ndcela unyuse iseat baby.

I slowly did as he asked, but my mind was still stuck kule part yokuba did he really bring out someone, rather, people to the car I was in without informing me? What had happened to us being discreet about this whole relationship? Once the three guys got in, he started his car and drove off. They were chatting

cheerfully ke, and I picked up that they were cousins, I was just glad that he didn't seem to be in a mood to introduce me to them, vice versa. I didn't feel like mingling anyway...

Nkosinathi: You good?

I nod, my eyes closed and my head leaning towards the door.

Nkosinathi: You sure?

I nod again.

He wanted me to talk, I didn't want to talk. I wanted to be left alone, ekhaya, because I didn't want to talk.

We got to his house, he took out my bags and then one of the three guys went to the driver's seat and revved out with the car. Once they were out, he locked the gate, I was already waiting for him by the door. He tried to kiss me as he opened the door and I backed up, wahleka. That irritated the heavens out

of me, uthi uyamphoxa umntu kanti uyamonwabis a?
Yhu! I walked in and I went straight to the bedroom,
I undressed, he walked in with my bags ndakhupha
ii pj's, ndanxiba and left him there ndayozenzela itea.
My phone rang, Siki... I ignored her. It rang again, I
ignored her and then I heard someone else's phone
ringing in the lounge. I walked over and saw
Nkosinathi's phone on the coffee table, I obviously
couldn't answer it so instead of taking it to him or
calling him down, I called my sister back using my
own phone because: umntana!

Siki: Hey, ulele already na?

Me: Ha.a sisi I was in the shower, what's up?

Siki: Ooh okay, besendifounela no Tata ka Milli
ndizokubuza pha kuye.

Me: Haha! Yhu, why didn't you call u bhuti ke at
least?

Siki: Because I know he's still at home nomkakhe.

Me: Mmh, did you at least get hold of him? U Tata

ka Million?

Siki: Nope, he didn't answer...

Me: Inoba u busy, last time I spoke to him ebesithi kukho umcimbi kokwabo.

Siki: Ooh okay, listen, u Cindy is coming to Cape Town tomorrow mna ngoms o omnye ndisa u Milli kumama coz I'm going back to work soon.

Me: Oh-kay

Siki: So, in case ikhona into ebenibawela uyinikela for your son, ring Cindy up.

Me: Ooh okay sisi, I'll tell uNko, mna andinamali right now.

Siki: Alright ke baby, nide na right no Onele?

Me: Sizoba right sisi, don't worry yourself about it.

Siki: You still don't want to tell me what's going on?

Me: She's going to tell you ngokwakhe, mlinde sisi.

Siki: Mnkq, okay. Can I ask you something a bit more personal?

Me: Shoot.

Siki: Nibuyelene no Tata ka Milli?

Me: Ha.a sisi...

Siki: u sure? I mean, beni cosy too much man ngoku benilapha, kuphele nala hostility yayikade ibakhona xanikwi space esinye.

Okay now I contemplated on whether or not I should tell her, but I decided not to. We said we wouldn't let them in, I wasn't about to break that.

Me: We share a son, so ultimately we have to get along, so we are working on that getting along part. Yena shame, he wants to be a hands-on dad so much, but he understands that the timing is a bit off and nam andizokwazi ukumnika umntana abekuye because umntana ayingowam ngowasekhaya and ke, because of what his parents did.

Siki: I hope you do realize that his parents did you wrong, not him.

Me: I do sisi...

Siki: We both know that he still loves you, whenever you're ready, please give him another chance.

I didn't respond, I felt that deep.

For some reason her words cut deep and I wasn't surprised because she had always seen good in people, she was the only sibling who actually liked Nkosinathi. She had never made him feel like an outsider, I remember that time at the hospital when Cindy blew up on him...

Siki: Love forgives mistakes, love is patient. Be patient with yourself yes, but also with him. Ndiyakwazi mna ba uyamthanda, we've spoken about this before. Andifuni ke uphoswe luthando ngenxa yokucingela ukuba sizothini, yes at some point we were all mad at him but he has shown us another to him, well he's shown me. On top of that asingeni ndawo thina, sonwabile emizini yethu, namadoda wethu.

I teared up...

Siki: You also deserve to be happy, and ke uxolo ukuba unenye i-ou but the only man I know will love you with all your flaws ngu Tata Ka Milli. I saw it in his eyes...

Me: Okay sisi,

Siki: Don't miss your chance at love, happiness because ucingela abanye abantu. We only live once, and once we die, we are forgotten. Unfortunately, we don't get to come back and correct or love anything again. It's done, over.

Me: Noted.

Siki: Listen to me preaching, hay suka good night.

Me: Haha! You should have been a Mam'Mfundisi...

She laughed,

Me: Thank you for the peptalk sis, really do appreciate it.

Siki: You're welcome. Love you,

Me: Love you.

We hung up.

Okay, I cried a bit. I was overwhelmed, the confirmation that I was doing the right thing even if we were hiding it for the time being. But the fact that she confirmed hit hard.

Nkosinathi: Who died? Why are you crying?

When did he get there? Wasn't he bathing or something? I got up and went to hug him, Siki was right. He was the one for me.

Nkosinathi: Baby don't tell me you had another fall out no Onele!?!

Me: I love you.

He didn't respond, I squeezed him tight, he squeezed tighter and released a chunk of breath.

Me: I really love you.

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda nam s thandwa sam.

Me: I don't doubt that...

Nkosinathi: Are you okay?

I nod, not moving out of his embrace. He brushed my back, and didn't say anything until I took a step back and kissed him on the lips, grabbed my phone and walked back up the stairs ndayolala. He followed and just looked at me confused as I lay in bed, curled up waiting for him to come and warm the bed.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: No one died, I didn't fight with no one. Chill.

Nkosinathi: Then why are you acting so strange?

Me: Telling you that I love you is strange?

Nkosinathi: Crying over the phone, talking to whosoever you were talking to and then telling me that you love me, all in a minute? Baby that is strange.

I smiled, and laughed.

Nkosinathi: Ndi serious mani baby what's going on?

Me: I was talking to Siki, she was basically vouching for you. That she sees it in your eyes, that you love me. So I whenever I'm ready to date again, I should first consider giving you a second chance because you're the only man that she thinks can love me right.

He smiled, then blushed and then relaxed. He

breathed out, and then laughed.

Nkosinathi: Kudala waba yi fan yam ke la Siki yazi baby.

Me: Haha haike ngoku.

Nkosinathi: Did you tell her we're dating?

Me: She asked, I said no. Then she proceeded to tell me yonke ke lento.

Nkosinathi: Awu, Sbari!

I laughed at how stupid he looked with all that smile on his face, he seemed genuinely pleased that at least someone from my side actually liked him. Liked the idea of us.

[06/26, 15:16] : #Onele_29

#Cassandra

The following morning I woke up to a lengthy text

from Onele, I didn't even read it, it looked like an essay and I wasn't up for that. Nkosinathi wasn't in bed, so I just called u Sisi, I missed my son.

Siki: Mama ka Bhabha?

Me: Molweni, uphi u Bhabha?

Siki: Uyavasa, uya kumakhulu kaloku namhlanje.

Me: Yhoo kanene, I woke up missing him.

Siki: We will call you when we're done, or when we get home. Just remind me.

Me: Okay I'll do that, bye now.

Siki: bye baby.

We hung up, Onele obviously saw that I blue ticked her so she decided to call me...Lord!

Me: Little Sis?

Onele: Good Morning, unjani?

Me: Ndiright wena unjani? Why do you sound so down?

Onele: Why did you blue tick me?

Me: Yhu, uqumbule lonto?

Onele: Come on, it's rude!

Me: Oh uxolo, I clicked on the message and didn't even read it because ndibone ilength yayo, andikaxukuxi noxukuxa for you to bombard me with essays ndivuka.

Onele: Oh wow, so you decided to ignore me?

ME: I didn't ignore you, I had other important messages to attend to, like attending to my son, before ndihlalele le yakho inde phantsi. Was there anything important in it?

She sighed,

Me: Oh-kay, there wasn't, I will wake up kengoku, ndiyoxukuxa, make myself cereal and then you're

your message and respond to it. Are you okay with that?

Onele: Yeah, sure.

Me: Great, ubene mini emnandi.

Onele: Are you not going to work?

Me: No.

Onele: Kutheni?

Me: I'm off sick.

Onele: You're off sick or you're sick?

Me: Both.

Onele: Unantoni? Why didn't you tell us?

Bendithetha nobhuti and he didn't mention anything about you being sick.

Me: Because, I can handle it. I'm not dying, anikho lapha nonke it's not like there was any difference ebenizoyenza if I had told ya'll.

Onele: Cassandra uqale nini wena to not tell you family when you're going through something? Anything?

I sighed, I thought the call was about a message that I didn't respond to, not an interrogation.

Onele: Did you at least tell dad ke?

Me: It's really not necessary, as I said, I can handle it.

Onele: So that's a no? Wow, uyile kwa gqirha?

Me: Ndingaba off emsebenzini that means I have a doctor's note Onele can you stop fussing, haibo!

Onele: I just don't get why you didn't tell us, like, not even u Ta Steve ke.

Me: Yho haike, andiyazi ufuna ndithini because I've been telling you I can handle it.

Onele: Okay, fine.

Me: bye.

She hung up.

I really didn't open her message, I had to look for Nkosinathi k'qala so I got up and went to the kitchen he wasn't there. I called his phone and it rang in the lounge, I followed the sound of it and saw it on the couch. He must have forgotten it, so I called it his sister...

Asenathi: Hello? Cassandra?

Me: Hi, unjani?

Asenathi: Yintoni ingathi uyavuka?

Me: What's the time kanti?

Asenathi: I thought you were employed kaloku sisi,
I sighed,

Me: I can't get hold of your brother, do you perhaps know where he is?

Asenathi: He's here at home, akukho ngxaki?

Me: No, I'll call him later on.

Asenathi: U sure? U right umntana?

Me: U right umntana, I'll call him later on wethu it's fine.

Asenathi: Ndiyakwazi wena ungathi akukhongxaki kuba uthetha nam, please hold ndimkhangele.

Me: okay.

I waited, she found him and the phone exchanged hands without her even explaining who was on the phone, yes I was waiting for that part.

Nkosinathi: Hello?

Me: Umntu xa ehamba uyatsho, or even leave a note.

I heard him walking, he could have been walking away from her, or whoever he was with when she brought the phone. The perks of having a secret relationship.

Nkosinathi: Baby, uxolo man. Lonto ndilahle ne phone.

Me: Phone yakho ilapha endlini, on the couch.

Nkosinathi: Oh really? Thanks, ulele kakuhle?

Me: I just wanted to know u safe wethu, bye bye.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: Sure.

Nkosinathi: You don't love me back?

Me: I'm actually hungry, bye bye. Please don't drink and drive, you can always call a cab, or ulale kokwenu ukuba uyazibona usele kakhulu.

Nkosinathi: Or, I can always call you to come and fetch me.

Me: I'll switch my phone off after 8pm sibone uzofounela bani.

Nkosinathi: Awukatyi ne breakfast kodwa sewucinga ngocima iphone ebusuku, mnkq mnkq!

I laughed at him and hung up.

I made myself food, then went to sit on the stoep outside basking on the sun.

Decided to open Onele's essay and it read:

Mntase, you know I love you, I really do and ndiyayazi nawe you love me. I am not sure what ubhuti told you but ke as I have also told you, yes I am dating u Ginger and we are dating with intention. I know he is old but I love him and he loves me, I see it in how he treats me. At first I thought ekuhambeni kwexesha he would change, maybe he was after you again you know, lonto yakhe no Tata ka Aphiwe...but he has proven to me that he really does love me. I am not asking you to like him, or forgive him for what he put you through, all I'm asking is that ubengu sister wam and support me the same way I have always supported you. I know I might be asking for a lot ngokucela lonto seeing that his name still sends triggers, so I will give you time, you can take as long as you want, to digest

this. I haven't told our parents and I will not tell them, nawe ndicela ihlale apha phakathi kwethu lento, ubhuti knows, well both of them do so I think I'm safe kwelocala. If things were to turn sour in the future, I know they would come to my rescue even though they also do not like the idea of this whole relationship. I am sorry for the things I said when we last spoke about this, I hate keeping secrets from you, I hate the tension between us, it's actually depressing. I know I was inconsiderate ngendlela endikuphendule ngayo ngalamini but with all of that being said, I want you to know that I love you very much, and I love him.

Seriously, we were still having that conversation? She made it clear mos that day where we stood, why now we were going back to the same thing? Her relationship wasn't about me, what her boyfriend did to me wasn't about her. So why were we doing this? I replied back to that text: Okay.

I really had nothing to say to her about her relationship, if oobhuti knew about it then I was cool. At least they would know what to do should she find herself in trouble, Ginger was their friend after all, they would know apho abots hwa khona.

She called back, I laughed. I knew she would call me.

Me: Little Sis?

Onele: Bra, that's all you're going to say? Okay qha?

Me: You didn't leave room for argument kaloku, you were telling me so okay, ndikuvile. There's nothing else to say really, you said everything you wanted to say ngalamini.

Onele: So you won't forgive him? Or accept him as part of my life?

Me: What happened to taking my time?

Onele: Okay, sorry.

Me: It's cool...Listen, I spoke to Siki wathi u Milli uyeza apho namhlanje.

Yes, I changed the subject on purpose!

[06/26, 15:16] : #Onele_30

After ubhuti went through my phone I knew he would tell Cass about my secret so I gathered up courage to do so myself because he didn't know the logistics to it, I did.

Sandra: Hey?

I knew that she already knew, I was right, ubhuti had already told her what was going on. She was irritated but trying so hard not to give away.

Me: Hey, you sound busy... U sharp?

Sandra: I'm busy yes, but I'm okay. Wena?

Me: Good good, how busy are you? I want us to talk...

Sandra: We're talking right now...

Me: it's kind of serious, so I'd need you to either be sitting down or at least be at home or something.

Sandra: You can talk, it sounds really serious.

I breathed, I was suddenly sweating and for a split second I wanted to hang up and just let her believe whatever ubhuti told her. But my pride wouldn't allow me to, so I swallowed hard and broke my version of the news to her.

Me: Uhm... I want to Uhm, tell you something. And I guess I know this conversation might not end well but I'm tired of hiding stuff from you...

Sandra: Uyandoyikisa kengoku, you're hiding stuff specifically from me or from us as a family?

Me: You, phofu nonke... I think... Well it doesn't really matter now.

Sandra: Oh-Kay...

Me: My Uhm, new boyfriend... He is older than me as I said before.

Sandra: Yes.

Me: And Uhm, you know him...

Sandra: I do?

But why was she forcing it?

You know when you're having a conversation with someone and you can feel that they're either yawning or rolling their eyes at you? That was what I felt when she asked that, she could have easily taken me out of my misery avele athi "I know you're dating Ginger" then sixoxe leyo ke, but because it was Cassandra, I had to spell the whole thing out to her.

Me: Yes. It's Bongani, he used to be friends with oo bhuti before he joined u Sbari, utata ka Aphiwe to be exact.

She didn't respond.

I didn't know what was going on in her mind, I couldn't tell.

Me: I know he's old, he's some sort of a gangsta or something, but mntase I love him. He makes me feel like the only woman he has ever laid eyes on, he makes time for me, he makes more than an effort, he treats me really good and I have no doubt that he loves me too. Mntase do I know you two have some beef, and I will understand if you have some sort of resentment towards him.

Sandra: I don't have beef with u Ginger Onele, I hate him. That's it, and there's no going around that, he knows it very well. You either have no idea what I went through because of that man or you're just ignorant. I'm not really sure right now what hurts me the most, you sharing a bed with a man who almost ended my life or you praising him and expecting me to understand why you're sleeping with him.

I wanted to tell her that whatever he did to her was actually none of my business, I wasn't there, he wasn't part of my life then, yes he did what he did and he owned up to it but who doesn't deserve second chances in life?

Sandra: But you're eighteen now, right? You can sleep with whoever you want to sleep with, including that snake you call a boyfriend.

She lost it there!

Right there she lost it, I was merely doing her a favor by telling her about my relationship, my relationship was actually none of her business. I didn't want her to hear ngaphandle or see pictures, obviously I wasn't going to break up with him ngenxa yakhe but to actually insinuate that I'm sleeping with a "snake" seriously? She was the two-faced one here, secretly sleeping with the man who left her when she needed him most. Yes I loved Tata ka Milli, and I would root for him any day

because he had always been genuine but I never asked her about him even though I could tell they were together.

She blasted out on me, she was still angry I could tell, but to blast out on me ayeke i culprit engu tata ka Aphiwe nosisi who shot her? That was some bullshit right there. She said quite a lot of hurtful stuff, wandiqwela when she disowned me as her sister, like, really now?

Me: All because of a man? Seriously Cassandra?

Sandra: No Onele, all because you chose a man over your sister!!!! You did this, you knew very well what he put me through and you still chose him over me dammit!

Me: He did all of that to YOU, not me! Why must I then suffer?

Sandra: Ooh injalo ngoku?

Me: Sandra you know how much I've been in your

corner, I've always chosen you. I've always backed you up, I've always been your cheerleader... But this once, just this one time when I need you in my own corner you make the whole situation about you?
Yho!

Sandra: If this isn't about me then why are you telling me this? Ndingenaphi kwi relationship yakho oyifihlayo Onele?

She was right, why did I bother myself?

It was none of her business but ndamnyanzela kuyo knowing fully well that she wasn't going to take it well, nor support me because u Ginger was "indlavini" emehlweni wakhe. Why did I even think she would support my relationship with him in the first place?

After we hung up, I called Ginger, I was upset...

Ginger: Baby?

Me: Are you still around?

Ginger: Yeah, what's up?

Me: Nd'cela uzondithatha.

Ginger: And your folks?

Me: I don't care, please just come fetch me.

Ginger: Oh-kay...

I hung up, grabbed a jacket and walked out of my room.

Mama: Uyaphi na Ntombi?

Me: Ndisathatha iwalk.

Steve: Did you see the time? Yi walk eyaphi leyo?

Me: Far away from you.

He laughed, I really walked out and texted Ginger on my way to the bus stop. I didn't care, I just wanted to be away from all of them for a few minutes.

Ndibaphekele mos, batya bahlutha, what else did they want from me?

[06/26, 15:16] : #Onele_31

He took an entire hour to get to me, what was he doing all the time?

I didn't even greet him, I got in his car and we drove off in silence. He went to Nando's drive-thru, bought food, went to Tops and bought alcohol then we went to where he was staying. I initially wanted to turn my phone off, but the thought of having mom panic over nothing stopped me,

I removed my shoes and jacket then jumped onto his bed with a loud sigh. He came in with the food and booze, satya without saying a word. At first it was weird, that he wasn't asking questions, then I just appreciated that he didn't. When we were done eating we just lay there, on our backs, he was smoking, I was thinking.

Me: I spoke to Cassandra.

Ginger: I figured.

Me: She basically disowned me.

Ginger: I don't blame her.

Me: What?

I literally jumped up, why was he taking her side?

Ginger: I said, I don't blame her.

Me: You're supposed to be on my side, what the hell?

Ginger: I am on your side babe, trust me I am.

Me: But you just said you didn't blame her for disowning me, how's that being on my side?

He breathed, put out his cigarette and turned to face me, I was still sitting on my heels.

Ginger: A lot happened, most of which maybe you were not told but I was there, I know and understand the trauma she's in.

Me: I don't believe this.

Ginger: Baby, I'm not making excuses for her, all I'm saying is that I don't blame her. That doesn't mean you shouldn't, if you want, blame her.

I shook my head, grabbed a Savanna and downed half of it in a couple of seconds.

Ginger: I told you before that I love you and I'm not going anywhere unless well, you want me to. Not that I'll just take that, but you know...

Me: You just sat there, and took Cassandra's side. Really? My own boyfriend just sat there, listened to me venting and then took my sister's side? W-

He smashed his lips onto mine, I was mad at him but the minute I felt his lips, tasted the staunchy taste of cigarette, my entire strength died down. Faded. Flew out the window. I just froze, feeling defeated for the first few seconds of that moment, and then when I realized that he wasn't gonna stop, I kissed him back. Once I was calm, he stopped, and looked at me.

Ginger: Ungenaphi u Cassandra kwi relationship yethu?

Me: Akangeni ndawo.

Ginger: Then why are you sweating?

Me: She's my damned sister, I always support her, why can't she do the same?

Ginger: Did she ever beg you to?

I didn't respond.

Ginger: Did she ever force you to?

I rolled my eyes at him.

Ginger: Then myeke, you did your part, when the time is right izophinda ibe right irelationship yenu. Don't force her into anything, into ezovele yenzeke kukuba nizoxabana oko.

Me: She's just selfish.

Ginger: Andizoyiphendula ke lonto, but myeke elahlobo alilo. It's not like you need anything from her, and unabo mos oo Siki no Cindy as extra sisters awukho dependent kuye yedwa, right?

Me: Right.

Ginger: Great, now we move on...am I getting some tonight or you're going back home?

Me: I'm going back home, right after I give you some.

He kissed me again, and just as we were getting naked, mom called.

Talk about bad timing!

Me: Mama?

Mama: Uphi na Onele kuhlwile, awuboni wenaba kusebusuku?

Me: Ndiyabona mama, ndiyeza.

Mama: Uyeza uphi?

Me: Ndilapha mama.

Mama: Ulapha phi Onele man? Yey sundiphambanisa wena.

I rolled my eyes, and Ginger just laughed and walked out to the bathroom.

Mama: Onele, kuphi apha?

Me: Andiyazi lendawo, but ndiyeza.

Mama: Hehehe! Hay zange ndayiva.

Me: Ndiyeza mama kaloku.

She hung up.

I burst out laughing, Ginger came back and looked at me then he started laughing again.

Ginger: Ndilapha mama? Really?

Me: Shut up!

He was having the time of his life, and in that moment, I got, grabbed my clothes and got dressed. He only noticed when I was putting the shoes on, he came around the bed and grabbed one shoe,

Me: Asoze ke!

Ginger: Haibo, uyahamba nyhani?

Me: Dude, please.

Ginger: J ust one ke?

Me: No,

Ginger: half?

Me: Half? What's that? You know what, don't answer that. Nd'cela isihlangu sam please.

Ginger: Baby come on, please.

I ignored him,

Ginger: Please?

He came to hold me, I wriggled myself free from his embrace.

Me: Ndiyeke ndigoduke bra.

Ginger: Bra wakho ngu Stephenson!

Now I laughed at him, he finally gave me the shoe, bathing me in kisses as he tied the laces. He grabbed a packet of chips that was on the table as

we walked out. I wasn't necessarily tipsy, but I was warm enough. We got to my street and he stopped the car, he actually parked phambi komnye umzi ndamjonga,

Ginger: Let's rather walk.

Me: You'll leave your car here?

Ginger: Yes, it's not far from your house.
Ndizoyibona as we go.

Me: yho, unesibindi.

We got out, and he walked me home.

I understood why, bendithe ndiyeza and ndiyaziwa ba andina friends zine moto so bendizothi ndivelaphi emotweni entle? We just fist bumped as we reached my gate then he slowly walked back to his car, making sure that I was already inside the house before he vanished into the darkness of the night.

Kuphinde kubekho abantu abathi akandithandi?

Mxm!

[06/26, 15:16] : #Onele_32

I walked in, locked the door and walked straight to my room. Mom was patiently waiting for me in the lounge, with Lionel of course, glad it wasn't Steve, but then I pretended as though I hadn't seen them.

Mama: Heh Onele Mzayi!

Me: Ma?

Mama: Uthi uvelaphi elixesha?

Me: Ndivelo thatha iwalk mama.

I had stopped on my tracks immediately after she called out my name.

Mama: Uvelo thatha iwalk? Elixesha?

I didn't respond,

Mama: Heh Onele, uqala amakhwenkwe ngoku?

Lionel: Uyawaqala?

Mama: Thula wena!

I wanted to laugh, uzithanda gqithi izinto.

Ebengenaphi? Mom looked at me waiting for an answer...

Me: Hayi mama.

Mama: Qha wehlelwa yintoni?

I sighed, but iwalk namakhwenkwe zidibanaphi?

Mama: Ngaske uyazi ukuba we don't need another child aphenlini, u Cassandra wayofunda eBhayi wabuya no Thixukhona, awukaqalisi kewena

nopakisha ukuya kula Pretoria yebhongo yet unyawo lwakho selubatshaza.

Me: Okay mama.

Mama: I don't understand why you would decide to just take a walk ebusuku when you know how dangerous this place can be, ingaske uyofunda eKapa bheterere so that Sandra can keep an eye on you. Ndiske andakuthemba.

Me: So this had to be about Cassandra?

Mama: Uthini?

Me: Yonkinto apha kulendlu revolves around Cassandra, like seriously?

Lionel: Watch your tone wena Sbhaxandini.

Me: Andisoze ndibesiso mna isibhanxa bhuti but nawe uyayazi inyani.

Mama: Utye utywala Onele? Kutheni uzothetha isigezo kwam ngobusuku?

Me: Toxic traits ziqala kanje ke mama, we're merely having a conversation and I'm voicing out how I feel now ndibizwa isibhanxa ekhaya and on top of that

uyandithuka uthi nditye utywala? Okay fine,
andizophinda ke ndithethe inyani.

Mama: Did you just say I'm toxic Ondle?

Me: Yho ha.a, good nightini bethuna.

I walked to my room, got in and locked it. I knew one of them would follow me and I wasn't in the mood for any peptalk, I just wanted to sleep.

I heard someone opening the door, well, turning the knob and just smiled at their frustration, then they knocked and I ignored them. My phone rang, Lionel... I rejected his call gqiba ndalala.

When I woke up in the morning Ginger had left the country, left me a message saying that he'd be back in three if not two weeks but I knew how to get hold of him. I dreaded getting up and facing the family, but I was hungry so I woke up and went to the kitchen in my pj's, dad was having breakfast in the

lounge so I greeted him and went to make myself cereal then I joined him. After a few minutes of silence, he was watching the news Channel, the lowered the volume and looked at me. I just focused on the milk in front of me.

Dad: What happened last night?

I didn't answer him,

Dad: Onele?

Me: Tata?

Dad: What happened last night?

Me: Phi Tata?

Dad: Between you and your mother?

Me: She was upset that I went for a walk after serving dinner.

Dad: that's it?

Me: That's all I can recall Tata.

He nod, and then mom walked in, as if she had been waiting for me to give an answer. She didn't even greet, she just sat across her husband and looked at me on disgust,

Mama: Ulele njani?

Me: Kakuhle mama.

Mama: Behla ubuthongo after disrespecting me like that?

I didn't respond to that, I wasn't going to.

Me: I understand you have an opinion, but ingaske ubenendlela yothetha. Not only apha endlini, usezohlala nabantu abangakwaziyo and you'll misrepresent us ngalendlela oyiyo.

I just continued eating,

Me: All of your sisters were once teenagers, and all of them did their mistakes but none of them ever spoke to me the way you spoke to me last night.

I guess that's where I was supposed to apologize?

Mama: You know how hard we work for all of you, your brothers included, I don't understand why it's so difficult for you to learn from your sister's mistakes.

Me: Are you still comparing me to Cassandra?
Again?

Mama: I am not comparing you, I am just giving you an example that you will understand.

I didn't respond ke,

Mama: You were never a troublesome teenager,

iyandothus a le attitude unayo mvanje at your almost adolescent stage and I don't understand ba ivelaphi.

Dad: Why do you feel like your mom is comparing you to your sister?

Me: Everyone does, it's not only mom.

Dad: Okay...

Me: I understand that we ought to learn from others people's mistakes but bethuna can I just be allowed to make my own? Live my own life? Without being expected to be like the perfect Cassandra!

They didn't respond, dad was kind of shocked.

Me: I am not her, I will never be her. I refuse futhi to be treated like I'm not normal just because I'm not like the perfect Cassandra that every body loves.

Mama: The perfect Cassandra? Zinto ozithaphi ezi uzithethayo Onele?

Me: Every time ndi shout'wa apha it's Cassandra this, Cassandra that. Seriously? Akho Asanda ke, or Cindy, or even better.... Siki! Now that's a perfect example eninondi shout'a and compare me to, sis Siki at least she's the only person kulendlu who never had a child esafunda. She waited until she was financially stable, ningandixeleli ngo Cassandra mna.

I felt like I was really sweating, but I just couldn't shut up.

Me: The same Cassandra that I'm being compared to fell pregnant for a man almost as old as oo bhuti, he left her to face the humiliation alone, he comes back and he's suddenly the perfect father? Tata ka Milli sent this, Tata ka Milli sent that! Where the hell was he when he was really needed, ebephi? Kuphinde kuthwe Cassandra this, Cassandra that? So in fact what yall trying to tell me is that I must at least get to my third year in Varsity, find an older

boyfriend who is financially stable and then fall pregnant for him so that I can have a car as a gift? Is that what you're saying mama, because that's practically how Cassandra's life played out.

I must have been blabbing too much because didn't see her getting up from her seat, but I felt her hot slap across my face and I had a mini blackout.

I woke up to a glass of cold water splashed onto my face, I just wiped the water off and took my bowl to the kitchen, came to back to fetch my phone and dad asked me to sit down.

Dad: I'm sure your mother did not mean yonke lento ngalendlela oyithathe ngayo, I understand where you're coming from and I apologize for everyone who has ever compare you to anyone. Not just to Cassandra but to any of your sisters.

Me: Enkosi Tata.

Dad: Now do me this one favor?

Me: Okay?

Dad: Do not fall pregnant, that's all I'm asking from you. Ungamithi.

I nod, he wasn't mad at me, he was just concerned.

Dad: If you do me that one favor, I'll buy you that car on your graduation, just like I would have bought it for all your sisters had they waited a little bit longer.

Me: Okay Tata. Enkosi for understanding.

Dad: It's okay,

I excused myself and went to my room ndafika ubhuti epha, laying on my bed on his back.

Me: Uxolo bhuti,

He got up, I got under the covers and just waited for

him to say whatever he had come to say.

Lionel: Uyayazi mos ba u Ginger is not worth it?

Me: When last did you speak to Asanda?

Lionel: Andiyazi, why?

Me: I feel like we failed her, even if we didn't vocalize it but we all took Cassandra's side and forgot that no sisi needed us as her siblings kulanto yenzekayo ngala mini.

Lionel: Well, since you're dating her ex husband's right handman, do the right thing and reach out to her.

Me: I will, because I will also need someone in my corner some day. Since the rest of the family is so invested on Sandra.

Lionel: I guess she didn't approve of your relationship?

Me: I didn't expect her to, but I hate the fact that she made it about her.

Lionel: Then why did you tell her in the first place? You made it all about her the minute you slept with Ginger and then decided you're gonna tell her. You involved her, I'm quite sure ebengazoyeka ukuba yindodakho uGinger ukuba ubungamxelelanga u Sandra.

Me: I.. Mxm, doesn't matter wethu. Ndidikiwe qha kube nindi comparisha naye, ndapas a kakuhle kufakwa yena, ndapheka kufakwa yena, andaya ecaweni kufakwa the same person, ndanekwekwe kufakwa kwalo Cassandra?

He just laughed at me, that's why I was glad he wasn't Steve... Steve is very strict. He would have beaten the heavens out of my body kwaphezolo.

[06/26, 15:17] : #Onele_33

Lionel: Ngaske uyazi ba family is all you'll ever have, bazofika oo Ginger with all their sweet words and whatever else it is that they offer, but bazophinda bahambe ushiyeke with your family. It is never wise

ke, to choose a man over your family, ask Asanda when you reconcile with her she will tell you how difficult it can be. Noba unganemali engakanani when you choose an outsider over your family you will never experience love like that of your family, and you will never be entirely at peace. Ewe ungazixokisa uthi you don't care, and whatnot, but deep down, you know the truth and it stings deeper when no one is watching.

I heard every little word he said, I just didn't have an answer for him. He didn't sound like uyandishwabulela but there was a glint of concern and care in what he was saying.

Lionel: I'm always a phone call away, either way.

Me: Enkosi bhuti.

Then he walked out, closing my door. I got up and went to lock it just in case one of the parents

decided to come in for a peptalk... I sat there for a minute and went over what he had just said, then I decided to call sis Asanda...

Asanda: Hello, Nelle?

Me: Sisi, unjani?

Asanda: I'm happy you called, niyanqaba nonke sana. Unjani wena?

Me: I'm okay sisi... Bendizobuza ba niyabuya?

Asanda: Uhm...

Me: Or niya ko sisi eBhayi?

Asanda: Uyamazi u Aphiwe ngendawo eno Sandra, last time I checked he was going to her. Thina sizohlala apha kulonyaka man.

Me: Great, ndicela ukuzwa kwakho ke?

Then there was a moment of silence...

Me: Sisi?

Asanda: Yeah uhm, u sure?

Me: Haibo sisi, ndim mos ocelayo.

Asanda: Oh yeah, no akho problem ungeza anytime.

Me: Okay ke, I'll call you xandisiza so that uyondikhawulela.

Asanda: Alright nontombi,

Me: Bye bye ke.

Asanda: Bye.

I hung up, she seemed shocked that I would want to visit them and it was understandable because last time I was there I was with Sandra, zange siphinde siye after la incident.

I lay on my back thinking, then Ginger called....

Me: Baby?

Ginger: Baby, unjani?

Me: I'm okay, you?

Ginger: You sure you're okay?

Me: I'm fine, really.

Ginger: You don't sound convincing.

I sighed,

Ginger: It's okay if you don't want to talk about it, I was just checking up on you.

Me: I'm okay, nyhani. Thank you for this...

Ginger: Okay, listen, I'm buying a house in Pretoria and I thought you'd want to go and view it with me obuya kwam in two weeks time.

Me: Sure, no problem.

Ginger: Ayizokufaka engxakini nabazali lonto?

Me: Nah, Milli will keep them preoccupied wethu and ndiya kusisi soon so...

Ginger: Siki or Asanda?

Me: Asanda,

Ginger: Oh, really?

Me: Yep, but I still have to ask for imali kutata or andise ngokwakhe.

Ginger: I'll send you money,

Me: No, please don't. You can send me money xasendiphaya but this one has to come out from them, ngabo abazali apha.

He laughed,

Ginger: Okay sisi, noted. How's Cass?

Me: I don't know, don't care and really don't want to talk about her.

Ginger: Yes ma'am,

Me: How are you? You sound excited.

Ginger: I am, things are looking good and yes I'm buying a house in South Africa, meaning I don't

have to do lo back and forth anymore as long as I steer away from your family then I should be good.

Me: Haha! Arch enemy.

We both laughed, the conversation continued until I actually begged him to hang up, I wanted to take a walk and breathe. So I got up, took a shower and went out, found mom and her two friends drinking cool drinks, I just greeted and walked out. Normally, she would call after me and ask ndiyaphi, but she didn't. I walked around the hood, and saw some girls I met kwi inter-schools and decided to just chill with them for a while. A car, black with tinted windows stopped right where we sat, and we looked at each other... The guy lowered his window and signaled for me to go to him, I rolled my eyes and continued with the conversation we were having. Wohlika from his car and came to us,

Ntsika: Ladies,

Girls: Hey

Ntsika: Nd'cela nindiboleke losisi man,
ndizombuyisa in a minute.

The girls looked at me, I looked at him quizzically.

Ntsika: One minute, please.

I got up and followed him, only because he said please. But one thing I wasn't going to do was to get in his car, ndingamazi. I stood at a short distance from him, but a bit further from the girls.

Me: How can I help you?

Ntsika: My name is Ntsika, ndihlala e Durban but ekhaya kulapha ngasentla.

Me: Okay?

Ntsika: I saw you in Durban a while ago and I wanted to come to you but you were with some other guy, I'm not sure if it was one of your brothers

na.

Me: One of my brothers? Uyandazi?

Ntsika: I've seen you around xandibuyile in the past years, so that's why I was able to recognize you.

Me: Okay, so ndingakunceda ngantoni?

Ntsika: How about your name first? And then your number?

Me: Yho bruh, your minute is over.

Ntsika: Come on, please.

Me: You could have just told me what you want, uyeke izitori ezi undixelela zona.

Ntsika: Ndifuna wena ke.

Me: Ufuna mna? Yintoni eyakho ekum?

Ntsika: I like you, and I'd like to get to know you better. Please?

Me: The man you saw me with in Durban is my boyfriend, not any of my brothers.

I winked at his shock and returned to the girls, one of them, Sisanda was taken by the guy. She couldn't stop drooling, she watched him until his car disappeared and then she looked at me.

Me: Yintoni?

Sisanda: Who's he? Where's he from?

Me: Andimazi.

Sisanda: What do you mean awumazi? Kanti what did he tell you?

Me: That his name is Ntsika and uhlala ngasentla, that's it.

Sisanda: Uyakufuna chomi?

Me: I think that much is obvious.

She screamed, we all looked at her and laughed.

Sisanda: He's cute haibo, hopefully umnikile ke i

number yakho.

Me: Nope.

They all looked at me like I was crazy...

Me: I have a boyfriend bethuna, and I'm not looking for another one.

Sisanda: Yho haike ndizamthatha mna, uthe uhlalaphi ngasentla?

One of the girls, recognized as Mbali spoke up, still laughing at Sisanda.

Mbali: He's my brother.

We all froze, and she laughed even more.

Me: Uyaxoka Mbali!

Mbali: I'm serious, he works in Durban and he

comes home twice in a year, when he's on leave
ngo June and now, xabevalile emsebenzini.

Sisanda: Mbali mntase, mnike inumber yam u
brother wakho. Ndiyakucela!

Mbali: I'd rather not, xa efuna wena uzoza kuwe sisi.
Okwangoku, ufuna u Onele!

Sisanda: Umvile mos u Onele uthi akamfuni and u
nomntu wakhe yena.

Mbali: That has never stopped Ntsika before, I don't
see how it's gonna stop him now.

Me: Haike haike, utheni uNtsika wakokwenu
akamva u hayi?

She laughed,

Mbali: He just has a mind of his own, and now that
he's seen me with you, he's gonna be nagging me
ofika kwam endlini.

Me: Good thing you don't have my number.

Mbali: Getting your number will not be a problem for him, xa e serious, he's just entertaining you ngoyicela.

We all looked at her, she wasn't joking.

Asiphe, one of the girls looked at Mbali and asked, "Mbali ligints a ubhuti wakho?" I wanted to laugh, but there was something in Mbali's face that drew me in. She quickly smiled and responded, "Akhangen dits ho, qha ndithi xa eyifuna nyhani inumber ka Onele he's gonna have it. Noba akayifumenanga ku Onele,"

Sisanda: Uzayifumana phi kaloku?

Mbali: haike I don't know.

Me: Hey Mbali, umxelele torho if he really loves himself and his life nje as a whole, makandiyeke mna. Show him ii pictures zika Sisanda and tell him she's in love with him.

Sisanda: Yhuuuuu chomi, ndimfuna apha kum u Ntsika! Yho Mbali mhle u bhuti wakho rha!

We laughed at her, she was really taken. And, he was really cute, honestly speaking.

[06/26, 15:17] : #Onele_34

After some time they walked me home, then bagoduka coz bonke bebehla ngasentla. I found dad ehamba, yho ndam'misa.

Me: Awufuni ukhats hwa?

Dad: Ndizobuya late kakhulu.

Me: U right kaloku, I'm bored here, please?

Dad: Go take a jacket ke sihambe.

I sprinted ungena endlini, went straight to my room, grabbed a jacket and ran back out before mom

could say anything. We drove away, I wanted to ask for permission to visit u sisi more than anything...

Me: Tata?

He eyed me,

Me: Ndcela uya ku sisi...

Dad: Omphi?

Me: uAsanda.

Dad: Okay, nini?

Me: Anytime you have money, andenzinto ngoku I'm practically done with school, results zizophuma ngo January so akhonto ndiyihleleleyo apha to be honest.

Dad: Okay, I'll have a word with your mom and then I'll take you if uyavuma.

Me: Okay enkosi.

Dad: Nawe ke uqale ucele ku Asanda, maybe she has plans or uza ngapha.

Me: I spoke with her already, they're not coming this year and she's okay with me visiting them.

Dad: Oh okay, no Sandra uhamba nawe?

Me: Andiqondi Tata, but I'm sure she misses her son so kumele aze ngapha.

Dad: Ooh, okay, I'll have a word with your mother later tonight ke.

Me: Thank you.

That was it, he went to about four places and I got out with him kwey'1 qha Kuba it was people I knew from church and they had abantwana abalingana nam so while he was busy with whatever he was doing with the elders, I mingled with the kids and we had lunch phaya. By the time we went back home, it was really dark and bhuti called me...

Me: Bhuti?

Lionel: Uphi?

Me: I'm with dad.

Lionel: Ooh okay, sharp.

Me: Sure.

Dad laughed, I just rolled my eyes.

We got home and mom hadn't cooked dinner, she argued that Ndim intombi I should have cooked dinner instead of running around emva kotata ngathi kukho into elumayo endlini. Haike, I also didn't cook, I wasn't going to ke futhi, past nine in the evening? Dad made himself coffee with rusks wahamba wayolala, I went to my own room and locked it. Haha, I had grown into the habit of locking the door because I didn't want uninvited persons to just barge in.

I called my boyfriend before ndilale...

Ginger: Mrs Me.

Me: Andis akukhumbuli.

Ginger: I know, the feeling is mutual. How was your day?

Me: It was good, utata uvumile ba ndiye kusisi but he also has to confirm with mom. Which could take a wrong turn, but we wait and see.

Ginger: Mh, okay. That's good news.

Me: Yeah, how was your day?

Ginger: Konke kuhamba kahle baby, honestly.

Me: That's great. Good night ke.

Ginger: So early?

Me: It's past nine bhuti, past nine.

He laughed,

Ginger: Okay lala ke nontombi, I'll call you in the morning.

Me: Did you just call me nontombi?

He laughed and hung up, I smiled and put the phone away. And then a message beeped just as I switched off the bedside lamp,

"I really do like you, and I get that you have a boyfriend, but that doesn't really mean anything. He's not your husband,"

I read the message again and I knew ngula Ntsika! I called him,

Ntsika: Sthandwa sentliziyo yam.

Me: Stha-what?

He laughed, adding to my annoyance.

Me: Uyithaphi inumber yam?

Ntsika: That's not really important...

Me: Ntsika! Where the hell did you get my number?

Ntsika: I can imagine your cheeks bloods hot red ngumsindo right now, a beautiful natural blush I say...

Me: Hayini!

Ntsika: You're beautiful, like really beautiful mfethu and I know that we belong together. Your place is right here, next to me.

Me: Mamela apha ke ndoda, sukundiqhela ke uyeva? I don't care where you got my number, or how you got it, but please, sundiqhela kakubi mna. Do yourself a favor and delete it futhi.

He laughed, oh my word! I felt my stomach turn,

Me: Iyahlekisa?

Ntsika: Actually, yes. Because I'm gonna remind you one day and uzoyihleka nawe.

Me: Ntsika!?

Ntsika: I'd feel better ba ungathi baby, okanye ke uthi Ntsikayomzi wam.

Me: Uts haya ntoni?

Ntsika: I am not a smoker, but I do drink cognac occasionally.

Me: Sunxilela kum ke.

Ntsika: Uba unoyazi andinxiliswanga nabutywala this time around, ndinxiliswe nguwe. Yho umhle mntana womnye umama,

I don't know why I calmed down when he said that, but I suddenly felt at peace. Calm. Weird.

Me: Okay fine I get that ndimhle, enkosi, now please leave me alone.

Ntsika: Leave you alone? Hay Onele sudlala ngam apha, I'm not going to leave you alone tu.

Me: Andikufuni mos mna, yintoni kengoku ingxaki yakho?

Ntsika: Ndiyakufuna mos mna, yintoni kengoku ingxaki apho?

Me: Awuphilanga wena.

Ntsika: Ndiguliswa nguwe, khazondinyanga.

Hay ndamhleka,

Ntsika: Ooh damn, the sound of your voice just melted ice in my heart.

Me: Tyhini Thixo, hay lithunyelo!

I hung up.

Put the phone away and stared into the dark room, and then I just laughed. He was insane, he was sick.. Weird.

[06/26, 15:17] : #Onele35

#Cassandra

I stayed in someone's sons' house alone, that entire day because he was attending that house-opening ceremony at his mom's new place. I dreaded the thought of going back to work on Monday but I had to. Argh!

In the afternoon I started preparing for dinner, I didn't even bother asking if he was going to come back, because I knew there was a ninety percent chance that he wasn't going to. Kukokwabo phaya and with almost every cousin around, they were bound to have fun. I wanted him to have fun, he needed that after everything he had gone through alone, well with me, but alone because he didn't want to involve his family in it. When I was done cooking, I watched a movie. Asanda called and for some reason I wasn't irritated, it was actually a refreshing surprise.

Me: Hello sisi?

Asanda: Hey, unjani?

Me: Ndi right, unjani wena?

Asanda: Ndi right nam...

Then there was silence, awkward.

Me: Bekungekhonto sisi?

She sighed first, then she answered.

Asanda: Actually no, qha bendiku jonga. Uyanqaba.

Me: Oh okay, niyabuya ngo December?

Asanda: Ha.a babe,

Me: Haibo, nabantwana awuzobazisa?

She hesitated,

Asanda: uyamazi u Aphiwe ngendawo enawe, ebethe uzokufounela and ask to spend the festive with you in Cape Town.

Me: Ndiyagoduka mna, kaloku siyavala emsebenzini and I miss my son. But he can come if he doesn't mind uhlala noomakhulu bakhe ifestive yonke.

She laughed,

Asanda: Ndizokhe ndimxelele...

Me: Wena kutheni ungagoduki?

Asanda: I guess...after yonke la drama yo S'thembele izinto zaatshints ha Sandra, kuthi sonke, even if ke abanye bayazama to not show but I can feel that things changed.

Okay now was my turn to keep quiet,

Asanda: I think ke futhi I'm the problem because I was so much in denial which made me a bit more defensive than being rational, I am sorry.

I froze.

I wasn't expecting that.

Asanda: Nd'cela uxolo mntaka tata for what I put you through, I knew very well that S'thembele had fancied you for quite some time, I just never thought he would actually act on it. I am sorry.

I broke down, yes, she had apologized before, but it was never sincere. This was the very first time she apologized and I felt the sincerity of it.

Asanda: I am saying all of this for you to forgive me ngoku, but I haven't been sleeping much, guilt has been ripping my heart off my chest for the past six months and I just didn't know what I would say to you. I wanted to call you, kudala ndisithi I will call you, but avele aphele emqaleni. Akukho lula to admit that I was wrong, ndimdala, I was supposed to protect you but instead I hurt you more than physically. Nd'cela uxolo mntase, please find it in your heart to forgive me.

She was also crying, I had never thought we would have a moment like this.

We basically cried until we were both content, then we had this silence lingering between us. It wasn't awkward, maybe peaceful.

Me: You have no idea how long I have waited to hear you actually say that. I know you have apologized before, but it never felt authentic until now.

Asanda: I apologized for the sake of apologizing.

Me: Exactly how it felt, you just threw that apology at me and expected me to accept it.

Asanda: Yeah, I'm sorry.

Me: It's okay sisi, thank you.

She breathed, I finally breathed.

Me: Really, thank you for this. It means a lot to me.

Asanda: I'm just glad we are okay, okay maybe not immediately but I'm sure we will be. Soon.

Me: We are okay sisi.

She sniffed,

Me: Now please, if you have nothing to do, go home with the kids.

Asanda: I already promised Nelle that I won't be going home, she wanted to come this side.

Me: Oh?

Asanda: Yeah, it's actually weird you know, having her come all the way here alone. Y'all used to do that together.

Me: I didn't even know, well, you could just send the kids uhlale ke no Onele it's fine. Naye inoba udingwe kukuhlala endlini and she might be studying that side mos next year?

Asanda: Andiyazi wethu, ndizova ngaye ofika

kwakhe.

Me: alright ke.

Just like that, we made what? Peace!

Come to think of it, Onele didn't mention that she was visiting usisi for the holidays, I didn't mind ke phofu. Mna bendizogoduka and spend time with my son, and if Nkosinathi wanted to ndivele ndithathe umntanam siyohlalisana ifestive season yonke.

Talking about umhlaliswano, the man of the house used his sister's phone to call me...

Me: Hello?

Nkosinathi: I miss you.

Me: Yho, so uzothini kengoku?

Nkosinathi: haibo baby, ndiyakukhumbula.

Me: ndiyakuva kaloku, but uzothini ngalonto?

He laughed,

Me: I miss you too, undishiye ndedwa endlini yakho.

Nkosinathi: Ufuna ukuba apha?

Me: nah, I'll pass.

Nkosinathi: U sure? Akhomntu uzakubuzisa anything yazi baby, sebenxile bonke abantu ndihleli nabo.

Me: I am very sure kwekwe, enjoy yourself.

Nkosinathi: Okay ke, andityanga apha. Are you going to cook?

Me: Are you going to ask me nicely to cook? I'm on sick leave kaloku bhuti, or have you forgotten?

He burst out laughing, I laughed too.

Nkosinathi: Kanene usisigulana, uxolo ke mntuwam, ndicela upheke ke.

Me: I'm done.

Nkosinathi: Oh really? Upheke ntoni?

Me: Ukutya, duh!

He laughed again, someone said something in the background but I couldn't hear what, instead I heard him laughing even more.

Nkosinathi: One of the guys who came with us bezojika nemoto uthi ucela umphakele naye, he wants to taste if you're worthy of being umakoti walapha.

Me: Mxelele ba ndizoba ngu makoti we takeaways.

He repeated that and I heard voices laughing nearer to the phone.

Nkosinathi: Siyeza.

Me: Niyaphi?

Nkosinathi: Sizotyia.

Me: Ndiyalala mna.

Nkosinathi: I have my own remote and key, lala sizotyia and leave you in peace.

I chuckled and hung up.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele36

#Cassandra

I waited up for them, because the cousin seemed like a cool person and I wanted to have a laugh and see if he'd be comfortable enough around me like he was over the phone. They only came after two hours, and they were drunk. Dead drunk. I had switched off the light, because I told him I'd be sleeping, but the TV was still on. They went straight to the kitchen, three of them, and started a conversation while Nkosinathi dished up for all of them. I laughed at some of their conversations because they were speaking so casually about their

girlfriends, and they didn't know/see that I was in the other room.

After some time, bes atya, Nkosinathi came to the lounge. I quickly closed my eyes, to pretend to be asleep. He kissed my forehead and switched off the TV, I opened my eyes and he got the shock of his life, I laughed and sat up.

Nkosinathi: Ubus abukele?

Me: Yep, but it's fine, mandiyolala ku late anyway.

Nkosinathi: You mean to tell me ubuhleli all this time? Why are you watching TV in the dark?

Me: Because it makes me feel like I'm in a cinema.

He laughed and called his cousins to the lounge, they started acting shy, we both laughed at them and then we chilled together. One of the cousins went to fetch a bottle of Cognac from the car baqala phantsi ukunxila, I made peace with them sleeping

over, there was no way they were going to drive back to his mom's house that drunk.

Me: Okay boys, have a good night.

Cousin1: You're going to bed already?

Me: Yep, it's way past my bedtime.

Cousin1: Oh ubhabha, upheka kamnandi ke sisi, enkosi.

I just laughed at him and left them in peace, I had an answer for him but I was really sleepy I didn't want to drag the night more than it had already dragged. I got to our room and got in bed, switched off my phone because I had a feeling Nkosinathi wouldn't let me sleep in peace.

Following morning, woke up and cleaned the room first, then I went to the lounge, they were fast asleep on the couches, all three of them. I opened the curtains and went to the laundry room, he had a pile,

and I had a couple that needed to be washed. I sorted everything and left the machines running, I was in a good mood, so I prepared breakfast for all of us. The second cousin woke up while I was cooking,

“Sisteri”

I looked up and smiled,

Me: Good Morning.

Zukisa: Yho, sekus emini kangaka? Indaw’ni bathroom?

Me: Fourth door on your left, down the passage.

He nod and disappeared in there.

After about 30 minutes he came back, in his jeans only and he went outside wabuya enxibe iverst. I figured they carried clothes in the car? Wow, okay.

He made himself some raw egg mixture, drank it and went to rinse off his mouth outside then

wabuya sancokola.

Me: you never told me your name.

Zukisa: My name is Zukisa.

Me: Nice to meet you, ungekho drunk.

He laughed,

Zukisa: Do you need help?

Me: Nah, I'm almost done. But ndizonis hiya, inoba uzabavusa ngokwakho aba.

Zukisa: uzoyaphi?

Me: Church.

He nod, when I was done I plated up for all of us, then satya thina sincokola, I left him and went to hang impahla, loaded another load and went to prepare for church. When I was done, I grabbed my bag and walked out, Nkosinathi was up, eating.

Nkosinathi: Uyaphi?

Me: Good morning,

He rolled his eyes at me and waited for his answer.

Me: I'm going to church.

Nkosinathi: You're going to church ngantoni when you don't have your car here?

Me: I've called a cab.

Well I was going to call a cab, because last time I checked, he was sleeping.

Me: Utheni? Awulelanga kakuhle wavuka unengcwangu?

Nkosinathi: I'm taking you to church baby, I'm almost done here.

Zukisa laughed, I just stood there and waited for him. He grabbed water and followed me out, we had a silent drive, he was probably hung over, I was just meditating.

Nkosinathi: What time should I pick you up?

Me: I'll call you, but I could actually really catch a cab babe.

Nkosinathi: Thixunathi Mzayi uphuma bani ecaweni?
Haibo!

Okay I laughed, why was he so grumpy?

Me: Around 12.

Nkosinathi: Sure, I'll fetch you.

Me: Okay, fine.

He gawked at me, I just laughed at him, kissed his

lips and got out of his car.

Church was “nice” as usual, then I called him to come and fetch. I actually prayed that he would come alone, I wanted us to have lunch-out. He came through, alone, I got in the car engxola umculo and he drove in the slowest pace ever. He was obviously trying to get a reaction from me, and I wasn't going to give him tu.

Nkosinathi: How was church?

Me: Bekumnandi.

Nkosinathi: Mmmh,

Me: Can we go out for lunch?

Nkosinathi: Funeka ndiyoncedisa endlini baxhelile, can we rather do dinner?

Me: Of course,

He nodded.

He went to drop me off at his place, as soon as he

dis appeared, I called a cab and went out for lunch
mna. I wasn't going to cook or eat bread ndingafuni.
While enjoying my lunch, I saw his sister walking up
to me with two other ladies, which I assumed were
some of her cousins.

Asenathi: Cassandra, awusemhle Ntombi. Mholo?

Me: Molweni,

Asenathi: You're having lunch alone?

Me: yep.

Asenathi: Mh, uyakhula umntana? Oh by the way
these are my cousins, guys, this is Nathi's baby
momma.

They smiled and extended their hands for a
handshake, we shook hands and I was in a good
mood. Seriously, I was.

Me: Uyakhula, by the day.

Asenathi: That's nice, ezanto wathi u Nathi uzazithatha ke azithumele ngokwakhe.

Me: no problem, thank you.

She hesitated,

Asenathi: Are you sure the child is okay? When you called I assumed...

Me: The child is fine, I just needed something from your brother and we got it sorted out. Thank you.

Asenathi: Oh okay ke, it was nice seeing you.

Me: Nihambe kakuhle.

They walked away, I wasn't going to say it was nice seeing her as well, why would I lie? It was never nice seeing Asenathi at all and I doubt it ever will be!

[06/26, 15:18] : # Onele_37

#Cassandra

Akuphelanga ne hour le, yatsho iPhone yam. I ignored it, but the caer was persistent so I took the phone out of the bag and before I could answer it, I just laughed.

Like, why would she?

Me: Tata ka Miliyoni?

Nkosinathi: Mamakhe, uzayifuna inyama le ixheliweyo?

Me: Izokojiwa?

Nkosinathi: I can bring it raw sizojele endlini.

Me: sure, no probs.

Nkosinathi: sharp.

Then we hung up, okay, guess she didn't tell him that she bumped onto me then. But then he called again,

Me: Baby?

Nkosinathi: Uphi? Why am I hearing people in the background?

Me: You're hearing people where?

He kept quiet, I guessed he was listening. Lol.

Nkosinathi: You went out? Wedwa?

Me: huh?

Nkosinathi: I can hear that awukho sendlini baby, ayo TV le ivakalayo kwi background yakho.

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: Haibo baby, I thought we agreed that we would go out for dinner.

Me: We will go out for dinner, obuya kwakho kaloku,

akukhonto imoshakeleyo.

Nkosinathi: Why did you feel the need to deceive me then?

Me: I didn't deceive you kodwa.

Nkosinathi: You let me drop you off endlini, and then you still went ahead with your lunch plans behind my back, after I said we couldn't go kuba ndisabambekile endlini and you don't think that's deceit?

Me: Yho, yazi I didn't think you'd make such a big deal out of this.

Nkosinathi: It actually is a big deal, you could have just told me awuzokwazi ulinda for dinner then ndibone mandithini.

Me: Babe, I just said we will still go out for dinner. Bendilambile and I figured you forgot to buy isonka since esiya benisitye kusasa.

Nkosinathi: Kutheni ungats'hongo kengoku?

Me: I don't want to be an added burden tatakhe torho, xa ukokwenu ingaske nengqondo yakho

ibekokwenu kungacaba ulapha es'thubeni nam oko kodwa kubusy kokwenu.

Nkosinathi: Yho.

Me: Uxolo.

He didn't respond, but really, I didn't think he would make such a big deal out of it.

Me: I'm really sorry.

Nkosinathi: It's okay.

Me: No it's not, because uqumbile ngoku.

Nkosinathi: I just don't like what you did, I get that is onka siphelile ke and I really forgot to buy it before ndiyokuthatha ecaweni, but you could have just told me ulambile sidlule ngokutya e town so that we could enjoy dinner later on, together.

Me: But we will still go out together, oko bendis its ho nje baby.

Nkosinathi: Akufani, sewuzihambele mos.

Me: So asisazophuma kengoku late?

Nkosinathi: We can just braai the meat endizoza nayo, it's fine.

I kept quiet.

First of all he drank the whole day izolo and woke up in a crappy mood namhlanje, then he was grumpy all the way to drop me off at church, secondly, he didn't want us to have lunch together, now he's upset that I went to have a solo lunch? To even cancel dinner kengoku? Hay that was petty, but because it seemed as though I was inconsiderate, I decided to apologize and keep quiet.

Nkosinathi: See you later?

Me: Sure.

He hung up, I had my lunch mna. Yho I enjoyed my lunch, when I was done, I bought myself icecream and went back home. We didn't text each other the

whole day after that conversation, he was offline phofu the whole day so I didn't bother him. Instead, Steve called!

Lord!

Me: Bhuti?

Steve: Hewethu, uphi?

Me: Ndisendlini, why?

Steve: Usendlini kabani because uwukho kwam?

I should have known he was back home.

Steve: Kutheni wathula kengoku?

I just laughed at him.

Me: Ndisendlini ye friend yam bhuti, ufike nini?

Steve: Ooh, kuyalalwa kulendlu ye friend?

Me: Ufike nini?

Steve: Last night.

Me: Mmmh, ewe ndize for the weekend.

Steve: Ngubani le friend?

Me: Awuyazi bhuti.

Steve: Hence I am asking, ndifuna ukuyazi kaloku because oko wafikayo apha awuzange uthethe nga friend ekucaba ungade uyolala kwayo iweekend yonke.

Hay I laughed at him, tyhini, why the investigation kwintombi endala?

Me: Awuzomazi bhuti.

Steve: hehe! Uzobuya nini ke sisi?

Me: Tuesday, after work.

Steve: Haibo Cassandra! Uzophangela ngantoni? Because your car is here.

Me: II chomi zam zinee moto bhuti, relax!

He burst out laughing, I think he knew where I was but ebedlala nje ukuzifisa.

Steve: Okay sontombi, bye bye, ungazilibali torho ukuba unomntwana ongekagqibi nonyaka. .

Me: Andizelanga mna, bye bye.

I hung up and laughed.

Around 7 pm Nkosinathi wasn't back yet, so I started preparing for the following day, which was "back to work" Monday. I ironed my clothes, packed ezinye ezi bendizivasile into my bags and then bathed for bedtime. I was busy thinking that I was really not going to call him, but my phone rang, while I was in the bath so I tiptoed out of the bath and went to fetch it from the bedroom. Then I walked back into the bathroom...

Me: Baby?

Nkosinathi: Ndis endleleni ezayo, uzokwazi ulungisa so we can go out?

Me: Go out?

Nkosinathi: Yes, for dinner.

Me: I thought you said we're not going out anymore njena?

Nkosinathi: Well, Zukisa and his girlfriend suggested some sort of a double-date kinda vibe,

I didn't answer him.

In fact I was bored by his sudden enthusiasm over this date because mna ngoku bendiyifuna yena ebekhalala.

Nkosinathi: That's if you're up for it phofu.

Me: I'm in bed already.

Nkosinathi: Are you serious?

Me: Nilibonile ixesha? Kuyaphangelwa ngoms o.

Nkosinathi: Okay, but ndiyeza ke.

Me: okay.

Argh!

I quickly got out of the bathtub, cleaned it and dried my body in a swish. When I was done, I got in bed just like that, because I knew he was rushing back to freshen up and convince me so it would have been wasteful for me to wear pj's kodwa ndizophinda ndiqhize in the next five minutes. I heard him driving in, but then at that very moment I saw my brother Lionel online, so I called him. I wanted to update him on the Asanda issue...

Lionel: Ulala nini?

Me: Eshe, unjani?

Lionel: Ndi right ntwana yam, unjani wena?

Me: I'm great.

Lionel: You sound great.

Me: I had a conversation with Asanda today.

Lionel: Really?

Just then, Nkosinathi walked in, he just looked at me and then went to run himself a shower, wabuya wazokhululela apha kulendawo ndikuyo.

Me: Yeah, we had a heart to heart.

Lionel: Finally, it was long overdue.

Me: Yeah, feels like some weight has been lifted off my shoulders, like, I think for the first time, we were both genuine.

Lionel: You can imagine how SHE feels, dude, undonwabis a ndizaw'lala man.

I laughed at him,

Me: I hear your sister is going that side for the holidays.

Lionel: Argh, u right wethu. In fact akayi naku Asanda u Onele pha uyaku Ginger qha ufumene ityholo elingu Asanda.

Me: Ginger lives in Pretoria?

He sighed, why did I feel like he knew more than what he was letting us believe ngalo Ginger wakhona?

Me: Bhuti?

Lionel: Uzohlala khona I believe. Usekwi process yokuthenga indlu as far as I know.

Me: And how do you know about this?

Lionel: I'm selling him the house.

Me: You're selling your house? Wait, you have a house in Pretoria?

Lionel: OH Bawo! This stays between us, okay?

Nkosinathi was in the shower by now... Whistling.

Me: What stays between us bhuti?

Lionel: I have properties Cassandra, ever heard of property investment?

Me: Ooh, okay. So you're selling him a house, does he know it's yours?

Lionel: He doesn't know, and he doesn't need to know.

Me: Haha! Sneaky.

Lionel: I know,

It seemed like he left something off that sentence and immediately, I felt like he knew that I had also bought a house. What if we also bought that house from him, without knowing we were buying it from him? Oh snap?!

Me: Good night wethu, bendifuna ukuqhayisela qha ba mna no sisi si grand.

Lionel: Inoba nizotsho nilale obehlayo xanidibene. Ibimbi lanto yenu, xasithethela nje phantsi.

I laughed and then we hung up.

I charged my phone and turned off my light, benditshilo mos emntwini ba I'm already in bed. He came out of the shower, still whistling and walked over to his closet wathambisa, got into his jeans and sneakers then he came to uncover my face.

Me: Sup?

Nkosinathi: Dinner?

Me: I'll pass.

Nkosinathi: Why?

Me: I'm tired, and I want to have an early night, ndiyavuka ngoms o.

Nkosinathi: Asizohlala more than two hours phaya,

siyotyā qha.

Me: What happened to the braai kanti?

He didn't answer me, nor did he move. I mumbled and got out of bed, he watched my naked ass walk over to my already packed bag.

Nkosinathi: You even packed already?

Me: Ewe, ubhuti ukhona so I have to go home.

Nkosinathi: Mmh.

I wore jeans, sneakers, a cropped top then I looked over at him. He shrugged,

Me: Ndcela undiboleke icap?

Nkosinathi: Fourth drawer.

I took out a white cap, among many other white

caps. Put it on, and Vaseline on my lips. If they thought I'd be in heels and a weave ngobus uku then they had another surprise coming their way. I grabbed my wallet and followed behind him, to the kitchen and out of the house. We didn't speak for the first five minutes of the drive, well, until he finally spoke to me.

Nkosinathi: Uqumbile?

I shook my head, nguye mos umntu ebequmbile earlier on.

Nkosinathi: Qha utheni?

Me: I'm just quiet.

Nkosinathi: You wanted us to go out, but now you're just quiet?

Me: Dude, please.

Nkosinathi: what?

Me: You're bullying me to being part of a double

date that I don't want to be part of and you expect me to be excited about it?

Nkosinathi: Haibo baby I didn't bully you.

I didn't respond to him, he looked at me and then back at the road.

Nkosinathi: Zukisa is fond of you, I guess it just felt good to have someone from my family who actually liked you. I'm sorry if I came across as forcefull kuwe.

Me: It's fine, sesilapha.

He didn't respond, we got to the parking lot. He switched off the ignition and locked the doors, I chuckled, expecting a lecture.

Nkosinathi: I'm sorry.

Me: It's okay kaloku, ndits hilo mos.

Nkosinathi: Is that your idea of responding to an

apology?

I laughed, I didn't know what to say... Okay, you're forgiven? Sounded too formal. He kissed me, I kissed him back. We kissed for a while in that semi dark parking lot and then he moved back and kissed my lips softly,

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda mfondini, ndikuthanda worse when you're loved by some people that I also love.

Me: I know that.

Nkosinathi: So we're having dinner with my cousin and his girl? Right?

Me: Yes baby, we're having dinner.

He smiled and unlocked the door, we walked out of that car like siblings or rather twins dressed in the same clothes, just that the other was more feminine than the other.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele_38

#Cassandra

We walked Hand-in-hand because umntu was just showing off, like, there really was no need. I saw Zukisa at a distance and I was kind of surprised to see one of the girls I saw earlier with Asenathi, sitting with him. Didn't she say they were her cousins? Or were Nkosinathi's cousins dating each other?

We hugged them, and sat down with our menu's. Nkosinathi ordered drinks for both of us, then they did the introductions, the girl was Ziyanda, and she wasn't a cousin, the other girl bebehamba nayo emini was. Qha ke...

Our food came, and it was really a vibe. The date I mean to say. It was really nice seeing a different side of Nkosinathi's family, mna the first time I met

Asenathi wayeshoutisa and she disrespected me engandazi ndikwa bhuti wakhe e Bhayi, I never liked her from that day and I really doubted I'd ever like her. I understood that they were siblings, and that they loved each other but I wasn't going to be part of that.

Zukisa: Oko ndandive kusithiwa ninomntana ke Cass, andikade ndimboniswe lomntana wenu.

Me: Unazo nje ii pictures utatakhe, ask him to show you.

Zukisa: Hay ndifuna ukumphatha mna, pictures zezo Ziyanda noo Asenathi.

Ziyanda: Yho Ase was raving about that emini after we bumped into you.

I looked at her, I know I gave her an ugly look but it wasn't intended, and she didn't care. She just continued to talk...

Ziyanda: Uyamncoma ba mhle umntanakho sana, just that akana relationship naye as u dabs and blah blah blah.

The she took a sip from her glass, Nkosinathi was eyeing me, but I didn't want to make it obvious to him that I could see he was panicking.

Ziyanda: U Ase ke sana is never wrong, like, she cane never be wrong. Oko edwaba, pointing fingers and whatnot, mna ndimjongele ukuba limenemene qha.

Zukisa: Uyaziphambanisa u Asenathi xa ethanda.

Ziyanda: Ndavela ndamjonga njee mna baby, because she didn't know that I knew the whole story.

Me: The whole story?

Ziyanda: Ewe, that they tried to make you abort buy offering you money. I know that story, I think abantu bakulo Ta Nathi bebonke wena Cass, like the entire Dakumba clan thinks ezizinto zabo asiziboni. Kanti

si well informed, qha sithule ke wethu, because e sicenge okukuthandana noo Zukisa!

Me: Haibo!

Yho ha. a ndamhleka, she wasn't drunk, she was just talkative. She didn't care how they took it, she was bluntly saying it as she felt it.

Ziyanda: Yho wena Cass, awuyazi into yaphaya.

Me: How long have you two been dating?

Ziyanda: Dating? Eshe!

Zukisa: We're married.

Nkosinathi: Qha ayaziwa lonto endlini.

I looked at all three of them and froze, what, married?

Okay wait, secretly married?

Zukisa: To answer your question we dated for two

years on and off, broke up for a few months, got back together and then dated for two years straight and decided we wanted to be each other's nuisance forever so we got married.

Ziyanda: We've been married for three years now.

Me: Yho guys, what was the reason for the on and off, and the break ups?

Ziyanda looked at Zukisa, Zukisa and Nkosinathi's voiced echoed throughout the room with laughter. I figured he was the problem.

Zukisa: My family didn't want her.

Me: Sounds familiar.

Ziyanda: Ha.a baby, yibeke kakuhle.

Nkosinathi: Yho niyafana man, uyazibona baby apha ku Ziya?

I rolled my eyes at him, he was right. We were of the

same character.

Zukisa: Okay, fine. My family wanted me to marry my ex.

Me: Why am I not surprised?

Nathi and Zukisa laughed, again.

Zukisa: So they interfered with our relationship yonke la two years ka on and off, she got tired of it and she left.

Nkosinathi: She didn't leave, she vanished. Disappeared.

Ziyanda: Thanks to you, he found me.

Zukisa: Heeee! Ziyanda vanished, akaziwa kokwabo, akaziwa zi friends zakhe kanti umntu uyohlala e Pretoria angazi kwamntu kuyo phofu. But Nathi found her, we got back together and fell pregnant that same year, I went to pay for the damages ndasose ndinyuka nengalo same time and her father was pleased.

Ziyanda: My dad always vouched for you, even after we broke up, he was like "Ziyanda wenze ntoni? Ulunge gqitha la Zukisa ndiyayazi akasoze akuhlukumezi, oyena ungenangqondo nguwe. Wenzeni?"

Sounded familiar. Yet again.

Me: Who paid lobola for you if your family didn't want y'all together and still doesn't know that nits hatile?

Zukisa: My uncles from my mother's side helped me, and abavani ncam ne taima so it was easy.

Me: How many kids do you have?

Ziyanda: Three, solekelisa ngamawele.

Me: So babiza ifani yas emzini?

Ziyanda: Yep, and Ase once questioned me about that, ndamxelela ba it was an agreement between u Zukisa nam and kwavunywa nas ekhaya.

Zukisa: I think she was suspicious because she also asked me about it ndamxelela ba ndibahlawulile abantwana bam bonke then ndayocela ipermission kulo Ziyanda ukuba basebenzise my surname kwavunywa and that was it.

Mnk, to think that Nkosinathi and I had bought a house for our son without either of our families knowing, at least her family knew and they were okay with everything. My family seemed okay with the idea of us being together again, but I wasn't really sure if I wanted to let people in yet. I was enjoying the sneakiness of being in a secret relationship with my baby daddy.

When we we done, which was more than two hours later, we all retreated to our cars and went our separate ways.

Nkosinathi: Are you seriously going back home

ngoms o?

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: You're going home? Your packed bags.

Me: Uh, yes. Ubhuti called me before you got there ufake last night.

Nkosinathi: Uzobuya nini kengoku?

Me: I just spent an entire week with you.

Nkosinathi: But I want to spend my entire life with you.

I didn't respond,

Nkosinathi: Do you get that? That I want to spend my entire life with you?

Me: You know what to do.

Nkosinathi: Your dad likes me ngoku sisi, ndingaya nakusasa kuye mna sundithuma.

I laughed, he was right.

And I knew Siki and Onele would vouch for him, maybe Lionel too... I didn't know about Steve and Asanda, but I knew Cindy wouldn't. That was out of the question.

Nkosinathi: You see that kuyaphileka without involving too much family ezintweni zakho?

Me: What works for them might not work for us, remember that.

Nkosinathi: I know that, but I'm just trying to show you that it's possible.

Me: Okay.

He eyed me, I chuckled.

Honestly, their relationship was beautiful, but what worked for them wasn't a guarantee that it would also work for us. Eyona ngxaki was literally the Dakumba family and mna bendingabafuni anywhere near my child, utshata kwethu would sort

of give them an entitlement or idea to think bazoba ne access kuye which they were not. He didn't exist kubo, I wished bangamkhupha kwalapha ezintliziyweni zabo. Worse la Asenathi who traumatized me ngo Sinathi during my pregnancy.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele_39

#Cassandra

On Monday I went to work, ndabuyela kwakhe.

Tuesday, I went to work ndaphumela ekhaya ndafika ubhuti ekhona. He was actually outside so he did see the car that dropped me off, but you know when you know that abantu bayayazi anyway? I didn't really care.

Me: Molo bhuti,

Steve: Molo sisi,

I chuckled and went inside, he was cutting his grass.

I changed, and went to start with supper. Usisi wasn't back yet, the babies were still young and she was probably still on maternity leave.

My phone rang ndis aqala ukumis a imbiza yokuqala,

Me: Hey?

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakukhumbula kengoku.

Me: Yho, so uzothini?

He laughed, I stole a look outside, ubhuti was busy with his grass. Not minding me at all.

Nkosinathi: Ndaws'ke ndizokulanda mna.

Me: I wonder uzofika uthini kubhuti?

Nkosinathi: I'll talk to him, man to man.

Me: Inoba sendingumkakho.

Nkosinathi: Awufuni ndikuts hate kaloku wena.

Me: Wena ufuna ukundits hata nyhani or udunyelwa nje yile idea yo Ziyanda of umts hato?

Nkosinathi: What?

I didn't answer him, I knew he had always wanted us to be a family. We had always dreamed of that but, the idea of getting married and keeping it a secret? I would have opted for it maybe a year ago, but now that I knew better, I felt like we didn't have to.

Nkosinathi: Ndiyeza.

Me: Haibo, uyaphi?

Nkosinathi: Ndiza kokwenu, uyandiqhela mos ngoku.

Yho andamhleka.

He hung up, I called him back, he didn't answer me. I ran outside to ubhuti, he stopped what he was doing and looked at me confused because I was still laughing.

Steve: And then, wena?

Ndahleka ndawa right in front of him, he just laughed at me, still confused.

Me: Okay...okay, someone is coming over to see you. Caba.

Steve: See me? Who's someone?

Me: Tata ka Milli.

Steve: Mmmh, ufuna ntoni?

Me: Andimazi, ndimphoxile qha efounini wathi uzoza kuwe.

Steve: heh, okay.

I went back to the house, and focused on my pots. Did Nkosinathi not pitch ekhaya with a case of Viceroy brandy? In actual fact, I did not see him efika, I just heard intsini outside, ndakroba because last time I checked ubhuti ebayedwa, I initially thoughts uhleka no mheza, kanti no. Uhleka no

Nkosinathi. Heheee!

Ndema kula festeri, and watched them acting like old friends, I felt betrayed by ubhuti, but most importantly, I was shocked sisibindi sika Nkosinathi. After a while ndahamba and went to sit in my room, they walked in, I was done cooking.

Steve: Sandra?

Me: Bhuti?

Steve: Khaw'vele!

I rolled my eyes and went to the lounge, ndema emnyango without saying a word.

Steve: If ubugqibile upheka ndcela usiphakele, we have a couple of things to discuss.

Me: You and him?

Steve: Ewe.

Me: Nizi friends uqala nini?

Steve: Haibo Cass andra! Nkos inathi lindwendwe lam, eyoba sazi friends nini awungeni ndawo kuyo, siphakele sisi ubuyele eroomini yakho.

Me: Hayini!

Nkos inathi wanted to laugh, but on the other side, he wanted to keep this straight face. I went to dish up for all three of us, served them, and then went back to my room. I texted him to send me Ziyanda's number and he did. I didn't have friends, so maybe...

I called her, and she answered immediately.

Ziya: Ziyand speaking?

Me: Hi, it's Cass andra, I got your number from Nk-

Ziya: Cass! Unjani?

Okay, she was excited.

Me: I'm good, unjani wena?

Ziya: I'm great, so, when are we going out again?

Mna nawe qha this time around?

Me: That's exactly why I was calling you.

Ziya: Nyhani? Haike masenze into ebonakalayo

Ntombi, awuphangelisi on weekends mos?

Me: Nope, we can do Friday after work. Labhuti uyathanda ukundibanga on weekends xa ekhona.

We both laughed at that, and just like that, I had found myself umntu that I also actually equally liked from the Dakumba family, even if she wasn't blood, but she was already part of the family and she knew them more than me. Bonus? Her bogus friendship with Asenathi.

After that phone call I ate my food, and got in bed, with the plate right next to the bed. I didn't want to go to the kitchen, bazocing'ba ndifuna iindaba zabo,

or even worse, ubhuti ebezocinga ndizidlulis a phaisidala kuba kukho lobhuti ndincuma naye.

I heard footsteps, so ndazilalisa, and then there was a knock.

“Ngena”

ubhuti just peeped in,

Steve: Uyabizwa ngu Nkosinathi.

Me: Mxelele sendilele, we’ll talk ngoms o.

Steve: Uhm, awubaweli uzomxelela ngokwakho ke??

What?

I sat up and looked at him, he shrugged and walked away. I couldn’t believe that ubhuti just said that, I got out of bed and followed him, he wasn’t even in the lounge when I got there.

Me: Awundidike, uncuma nabani?

Nkosinathi: Kchange ndithi kuwe ndizosuka ndizokuthatha?

Me: Soze avume lonto ubhuti.

Nkosinathi: Pack a weekend bag sisi, or better yet, thathe le ubuya nayo sihambe.

Me: What?

Nkosinathi: Should I wait in the car?

He had this smirk on his face, grabbed his car keys and walked out. I stood there, confused. My brother came to the lounge and looked at me, with a huge smile on his face.

Steve: You look like you saw a ghost

Me: Uhm...

Steve: I thought you guys were leaving, or ubungafuni uhamba?

Me: Yhima bhuti, you thought we were leaving?
Benithetha ngantoni no Nkosinathi?

Steve: He told me nibuyelene if that's what you're asking.

Me: He told you that?

Steve: Yes, and he asked for my permission to have you spend some time with him this week.

Me: And you agreed?

Steve: Yes, ndiyahamba again ngomso, uzohlala nabani apha? Uyintombi? Anything could happen to you, at least I will know that you are safe.

I looked at him, and then I looked at the door.

I couldn't believe my ears, he chuckled and walked to his room.

I went to my room, because I wanted to leave with my man, but I was still confused. I grabbed my phone, and bag because I had not unpacked yet. I just added a few more work clothes and walked out before my brother changed his mind.

“Ndimkile bhuti”

Steve: Alright, I'll call you ngoms o.

Me: Okay.

I quickly ran out, closed the door and jumped into the car. Nkosinathi laughed at me as he drove out.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele_40

#Cassandra

We drove to his place in high spirits, I still couldn't believe that I left my brother's house with a man, in front of my brother. That was a first!

Nkosinathi: McD or Nandos?

Me: We just had supper.

Nkosinathi: Ungandivusi ebusuku usithi ulambile ke.

I laughed, we drove straight home and he carried my bag, I went straight to bed. I was still in my pj's anyway, he changed and joined me.

Me: What did you really say to my brother?

Nkosinathi: I told him ndiyakuthanda, and I apologized for how we began our relationship, mna naye ke, during your pregnancy and stuff.

Me: And the brandy case?

Nkosinathi: That was my apology.

Me: Seriously?

Nkosinathi: Baby kaloku I had to bring him something, same way I'm going to bring your father something xandiyokucela.

Me: You could have just bought one bottle, an entire case?

Nkosinathi: Your brother didn't trust me, he didn't like me for obvious reasons. In as much as I was apologizing to him, I also wanted to show him that I'm capable of taking care of you and our son.

Okay...

Nkosinathi: Sathetha ke njengamadoda, we're good.

Me: Mmh Mr Smooth talker!

He hit me with a pillow, I laughed at him as I buried my head under the covers. He uncovered me, I just looked at him, beaming.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I love you.

He kissed me, I kissed him back. There was some freedom, a fresh breeze somewhere this time around. We lay in bed cuddled, I fell asleep just thinking about how everything was suddenly aligning. But what bothered me was Onele, Ginger and then bhuti with his property thingie, a lot was suddenly on my mind that evening and I didn't want

to share with him, we were finally happy, I didn't want to bring negative thoughts into that.

When I later woke up, around 3 am he was busy doing something on his phone, or texting someone, I wasn't sure. I went to pee, came back and lay on my back. He eyed me, I just looked at the ceiling, my side lamp was on.

Nkosinathi: Babe?

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: You're okay?

Me: Yeah.

He put his phone away and looked at me,

Nkosinathi: Ndiyabawela umthathe umntana abekuwe next year.

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: Ndibawela uthathe umntana ebazalini bakho ahlale kuwe next year.

Me: Uzobakhona full time wena?

Nkosinathi: I will try to.

Me: That's not an answer, I work 8 hours full in a day, five days a week and sometimes 6 so I can't really fetch Milli ndizazi ba I'm not going to cope.

Nkosinathi: I'd like to think that's why there are kindergartens.

I rolled my eyes at him.

Nkosinathi: I'm missing out baby, in fact we are both missing out on him. I understand why things are like they are right now but si grand mos ngoku? Surely we can try and work around having him on our daily lives as it should have been kwakuqala.

Me: I'll think about it.

Nkosinathi: Uthen? Ucingaphi?

I shook my head, he stared at me.

I turned and faced the other way, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that there was something off about Onele, taking from what ubhuti had said, to think that she had arranged to visit Sis Asanda and I didn't know about that, what if she thought she could have an alliance kulento yakhe ayenzayo? Ewe usisi would have been a great ally but usisi knew she was wrong, she knew what she did was wrong hence she came to apologize. Onele was under the belief that she didn't owe anyone anything, which was okay, because at the end of the day, she wasn't there. She doesn't know what I went through and I wasn't sure whether I could trust Ginger with her heart. Which could be argued that it was none of my business, but, she's my sister, little sister for that matter and Ginger was way above her average. On so many levels.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Masilale baby.

Nkosinathi: Siyalala kaloku but are you okay?

Me: I'm fine.

He kissed my shoulder and we cuddled, salala.

I woke up in the morning and prepared for work, he was fast asleep. When I was done I woke him up, he went to shower and then took me to work. On the way there I decided to ask him about his plan, surely he wasn't in Cape Town to just drive me to and fro, surely?

Me: So awuphangeli?

Nkosinathi: I'm on leave.

Me: Until when?

Nkosinathi: Until I feel like I've spent enough time with you.

Me: Meaning awuphangeli?

Nkosinathi: If that's how you want to see it.

Yeah, his plan was to drive me to and fro.

Seriously.

Nkosinathi: I'm going to J o'burg today, if it happens that I'm not back by the time you knock out, please take a cab.

Me: Can you not go fetch my car endlini undizis ele emsebenzini before you leave?

Nkosinathi: But you won't need it after today, ndizobe ndikhona until you go back home obuya ko bhuti wakho.

Me: Hehe! And when will that be?

Nkosinathi: I didn't ask.

Me: Kutheni uxoka?

Nkosinathi: Haike baby, kuse k'sas for yonke lento.

He was lying, I felt like he gave ubhuti something, an opportunity that he couldn't refuse. That's why he was leaving, that's why no Nkosinathi was suddenly leaving for J o'burg. It made sense, but I decided to not ask anything. He parked ems e benzini wam and looked at me,

Nkosinathi: Awuyenzanga ilunch endlini do you have enough money on you?

Me: Yes.

Nkosinathi: U sure?

Me: Yeah, but ndcela undithengele idata xa une chance.

Nkosinathi: Okay, gimme a kiss ke.

I kissed him, he smiled and kissed me back.

Me: Be safe.

Nkosinathi: Always. I'll call you nge lunch time

yakho.

Me: Okay. Bye.

I left, he drove out and went about his business.

He didn't call me nge lunch time, and I didn't really mind because I was busy anyway. I had a lot to catch up on emsebenzini because I had been "off sick" for an entire week.

I called a cab and went home, well to baby's house, it was slowly becoming my home too. Ubhuti didn't call me as well, hehe! I called Boyfie, I was worried, it was getting dark.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Babe, usabuya?

Nkosinathi: Ewe but I might be a bit late.

Me: Ku a bit late as we speak, are you sure usabuya?

Nkosinathi: Ewe baby ndilapha eKapa, but I have to finish a little something before ndize endlini.

Ndiyabuya nyhani.

Me: A little something doesn't have a name?

He laughed,

Me: Mmh, okay, ndiyalala kemnake.

Nkosinathi: Haibo, awuzondilinda?

Me: Ngoku sewuthe uzoba late mfondini?

Nkosinathi: Ndizokuvusa ke uyazi.

Me: Don't be unfair, I have work kasa.

Nkosinathi: I obviously don't know why you're still going to that place, but it's okay.

Me: Will you give up?

Nkosinathi: Will you cook tonight, please?

Me: Only because you asked nicely.

He laughed as we hung up, I cooked dinner, and had an hour long video chat with my son. Even if iindaba zethu bezingavakali but I could see he was happy seeing my face. I caught up with mom for a bit, dad hijacked the phone, we had a good laugh and then we hung up.

I decided to wait for him, I didn't want to eat alone anyway. Half past eight I got a call from an unknown number, I hesitated, but ended up answering because the person wasn't giving up.

Me: Hello?

Mam'Dakumba: Unjani sisi?

Me: Ndiyaphila unjani wena?

Mam'Dakumba: Ndiyaphila nam, uthetha no mama ka Nkosinathi ndiyifumene ku Asenathi inumber yakho.

I felt my spine freezing, I looked at the number

again.

Mam'Dakumba: I know that this might be an unpleasant surprise for you, but please don't hang up mntanam.

Me: How can I help you Mam'Dakumba?

Mam'Dakumba: I'd like us to meet, I hear uhlala apha eKapa ngoku. Whenever you have time, please.

Me: What are we going to meet for? What are we going to discuss that we can't talk about right now?

Mam'Dakumba: I'd like to sit down and talk sisi.

I sighed, I didn't want to.

Me: I won't have time anytime this week

Mam'Dakumba, hence I'm asking what can't be discussed over the phone?

Mam'Dakumba: It's okay, noba ku next week. Whenever you have time.

Me: Okay, I'll tell you.

Mam'Dakumba: Okay sisi enkosi.

I didn't answer her, she hung up.

I called Nkosinathi,

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: How far are you?

Nkosinathi: Ndilapha e gate'ini.

Me: Sure.

I hung up and got out of the bed, went to warm our food and waited for him. He walked in with a bunch of roses, and a gift bag, showered me with kisses and then went to freshen up. I put his food on a table and started eating in silence. He came in, wearing shorts only and took his plate from the other side and came to sit next to me.

Nkosinathi: Utheni?

Me: I just spoke to your mother, she wants us to meet.

Nkosinathi: Mh, for nto?

Me: I don't know... She wouldn't say.

Nkosinathi: Are you going to meet her?

Me: I don't want to, what did she say to you?

Nkosinathi: I didn't even know she called you, so I don't know why she'd want to meet you.

I didn't believe him, but he sounded sincere.

Me: Mmh.

Nkosinathi: So how was your day?

Yes, that was him changing the subject. Swiftly.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele_41

#Cassandra

When we were done eating and catching up on each others day, he washed the dishes and I wiped. His cousin called, so he left me in the kitchen and went to answer his phone e lounge. A few minutes later, he was laughing, making his way back to the kitchen with the phone now on loud speaker.

Nkosinathi: Thetha uyakuva.

I stopped and looked at him,

Zukisa: Heh Cassandra?

Me: Yho awandibiza kabuhlungu mfondini.

Zukisa: Andinaxes ha lakho, yeh man, umenze ntoni u Ziyanda?

I looked at Nkosinathi, shocked and confused, but he was hysterical.

Me: Njani ngoku?

Zukisa: Oko endingxolela ngegama lakho losisi kulendlu, nitheni ngoku nenza ii plans that exclude us already?

I burst out laughing, I thought it was something bad, you know, I didn't think of what he was saying.

Zukisa: Ooh iyahlekisa?

Me: Oh yhini, uxolo kaloku.

Zukisa: Cassandra?

Me: Mamele kaloku, I just want to get to know her better that's all. It's not like a date-date, we're going out for drinks qha.

Zukisa: Ooh okay, so mna uyandazi lento ungandimemanga?

I just laughed at him,

Zukisa: Ndiyeza ke kwezo drinks zenu, you will get to know me too.

And then he hung up, Nkosinathi laughed as he looked at his screen and I just stood there smiling. It was cute, and very foreign to me. The whole family thing, the whole vibe was foreign especially from a stranger because I'm mostly like that with my family. Well, I used to be like that before the shoe Ta Stera thing...

Nkosinathi: And why wasn't I told about this?

Me: Bekungekho need.

Nkosinathi: Haike, sihamba nani.

Me: Niyaphi guys?

Nkosinathi: We want to get to know you two nathi.

Me: Baby come on, I just want to have a little girl's night with Ziyanda, not nomyeni wakhe and definitely not with you.

Nkosinathi: Sitheni thina?

Me: You are men!

Nkosinathi: We are YOUR men, tshi.

Me: Kengoku? We don't ya'll everywhere we go bethuna.

Nkosinathi: Kwaba bantu babiwa kangaka kule South Africa you two just want to go out and have drinks nedwa? Ni right?

Me: Yhu hay niyazithanda izinto.

He laughed and left me there, I packed and turned off the lights, texted my brother as I followed Nkosinathi to the bedroom because I was kind of still waiting for his call as he had promised, he didn't respond so I just let him be.

Ziyanda called,

Me: hey?

Ziyanda: Andisadikwe!

Me: Kudikwe mna sana!

Ziyanda: Uyamazi ukuba he's already looking at

places we can go to? I'm sitting here ngathi ndim omenywe nguye ngoku.

Me: Inoba wenza lonto nalo ulapha ecam'kwam ethe cwaka nje.

Nkosinathi laughed.

Ziyanda: What do we do now?

Me: I will call you ngoms o when I'm at work, someone's eavesdropping right now.

Ziyanda: Okay, good night babe.

Me: Night sis.

I lay down, facing the other way and ignored Nkosinathi...

Nkosinathi: Baby?

I ignored him...

He put his phone away and came to hug me from

behind and I smiled, I wanted to laugh but I also wanted to really ignore him. Wandibiza wade wancama, phofu ndilele esandibiza.

Woke up the following day and he wasn't in bed, I didn't bother looking for him even though, I just prepared for work. When I was done, I went downstairs to make myself lunch, only because he raised the issue of lunch the last time he drove me to work. When I got to the kitchen, I found him there, cooking, well, making breakfast and my lunch.

Me: Morning.

Nkosinathi: Good Morning.

I rolled my eyes at the emphasis on "Good" as he came to kiss me, and held my breath kissing all over my face.

Me: Okay you can stop now.

Nkosinathi: Ulele undiqumbele?

Me: Andiqumbanga mna, I am hungry though.

Nkosinathi: Then come sit, ndikuphakele.

Mnqk mnqk, maybe funeka ndilale ndiqumbile qho ndizophekelwa ibreakfast every morning. While he was dishing up, his sister called, kwi phone yam. I didn't want to act dramatic, so I answered.

Me: Hello?

Asenathi: Hi, unjani?

Me: Ndi right unjani wena?

Asenathi: Ndi right nam... uxolo wethu ngokuhlupha uvuka, I was wondering if I can come see you at your work place namhlanje?

I stole a look at Nkosinathi, and then looked away.

Me: What for?

Asenathi: I would like to have a word with you. Please.

Me: Yintoni le ifuna ude uye emsebenzini wam ungenoyithetha right now? Siyathetha mos nangoku?

Asenathi: I don't really have to go to your work ke, we can meet anywhere else, as long as it's going to be a face-to-face kind of thing.

What was really going on kulo Nkosinathi?

Like, really, what were they planning ngam?

Asenathi: Anywhere apho u comfortable khona, please.

Me: First it was your mother, now nguwe? Guys, nifuna ntoni kum?

Asenathi: Umama ufuna uxolisa, iyamtya into yongabikho kwi life yomzukulwana wakhe, eyam ke we will talk about it when we meet in person.

Me: mfondini, umamakho akanamzukulwana uzelwe ndim, niva xakuthwani kanti?

Asenathi: Cassandra, siyayazi usenomsindo and

maybe you really do hate us but umntana wakho ngoka Nkosinathi and he is my mothers' son and that makes her umakhulu walamntana uzelwe nguwe.

Me: You really called me so early in the morning to patronize me, right?

Asenathi: Ingxaki yakho awuyifuni ke inyani, because there's nothing patronizing here, I'm just stating facts ozaziyo nawe.

Me: Hay rha voetssek man! Voetssek, nx!

I hung up and put the phone down, Nkosinathi had served me breakfast but he was now just looking at me. I got up, and went to take my bag and went to take my lunch that was already waiting for me on the kitchen counter.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Please take me to work.

Nkosinathi: Your food?

Me: Lost my appetite.

Nkosinathi: Cass...

I didn't respond to him, I just walked out and went to wait for him in his car. He followed, still in pj's and an apron. Waqhuba imoto yakhe oko sithe cwaka, until we got to my work. He locked the doors and looked at me, I looked outside my window, avoiding eye contact, sulking.

Nkosinathi: What is going on?

Me: I don't wanna talk, please.

Nkosinathi: You don't wanna talk? So when you eventually wanna talk uzofuna ndikumamele, right?

I rolled my eyes, still not looking at him.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: Nkosinathi.

Nkosinathi: I woke up early today and prepared food for you, then one phone call changed your entire mood and my efforts went down the drain. What was that all about?

Me: If only your family could just bugger off! Seriously.

Nkosinathi: So every time you have a fallout with someone, you will storm off?

Me: We are not talking about “someone” here, but your mother and sister.

Nkosinathi: Kengoku mna ndingenaphi? Ndibathumile?

I didn't answer him.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: Hm?

Nkosinathi: Ndibathumile nah, to bother you?

Me: Andiyazi.

Nkosinathi: Awuyazi? Uyaziva? Are you listening to yourself?

Me: You spent your weekend kokwenu, emcimbini, I don't know what conversations y'all had but all of a sudden I'm being bombarded with ii phone calls zika mamakho no dad'wenu wanting us to meet. For ntoni? Why now? Yintoni eyabo ekum? Why can't they just leave me nomntanam alone?

Nkosinathi: Sundi shout'a kaloku, personally, I understand your frustration but uyikhuphela emtwini orongo. Umbuzo wam which you haven't answered yet is: Ndibathumile na?

I didn't answer him ndits hilo mos ba andiyazi, and the most frustrating part was that I felt like I was about to cry, and I didn't want that. I wanted to cry yes, but not in front of him.

Me: Nd'cela uvule imoto yakho ndiphume.

Nkosinathi: We are not done talking.

Me: Okay.

Nkosinathi: If you do not want to talk to umama no Asenathi block them, this is very easy. If you want to see a shrink, say so, ndikubhatalele because we cannot go on like this. You are angry, you need help to deal with that anger and I can only help you if you allow me to. I am here with you because I love you, I want to do this life thing with you but please work with me. Realistically, my family will know that sibuyelene and at some point they will see umntana in person noba asimsanga kubo we could bump onto them e town or baze apha bafike elapha. That is the reality of the situation, bazombona umntana at some point but will we get to that point us elugcwabevu unjena?"

I felt the betrayal of tears streaming down my cheeks,

Nkosinathi: I am sorry if I am being harsh right now but sibadala and we have to face izinto with

ingqondo yobudala, andithi yiya kubo noba awufuni but it won't hurt hearing what they have to say.

Umdala, you will be my wife, xakukho izinto ezenziwayo ekhaya you will have to work with these two women. Can you at least try ke, uyosabela bathini and then sibuye sijongane naleyo into?

I didn't respond.

He was making me feel like I was stupid for being angry at his family, he basically wanted me to make peace with them because I was going to be his wife.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

I cleaned my face in silence, he was taking their side.

Me: You know I'm sitting here wondering ba why did I think you would always be on my side when you're actually a Dakumba?

Nkosinathi: I am on your side.

Me: But you're sitting here advocating for your

family? Right.

Nkosinathi: You have selective hearing kengoku, I am not advocating for anyone ndifuna nenze uxolo qha because at the end of the day nonke nizobas ebomini bam.

Me: Have a nice day baby, please unlock imoto.

He sighed and unlocked his car.

Yes, he would have never disowned his entire family, his father maybe, but umamakhe? Nah. He wanted umamakhe, udad'wabo, nam to make peace. And he said he had nothing to do with the phone calls?

Ndim isibhanxa mos.

[06/26, 15:18] : #Onele_42

#Cassandra

I didn't do much work emsebenzini because my mind was all over the place, lunchtime, Nkosinathi brought me lunch. He knew I had taken the lunch he

made me kiss him but he still brought me lunch...

Lydia: Cass, there's a guy at the front looking for you.

Lydia was one of the three receptionists that we had, being a private person that I was, not even one of my colleagues knew I had a boyfriend.

Me: What does he look like?

She described him, I sighed and closed my lunchbox, put it back in the canteen fridge and then followed her. He was standing right there, with a Chicken Licken bag and a bouquet of flowers.

Me: Hey.

He opened his arms for a hug, and I fell into it. Took the flowers and led him to my office. He pulled a

chair, so I could sit next to him instead of behind my desk. I obliged yazi, because I didn't want us to argue or fight over something so small and useless.

Nkosinathi: How was your day?

Me: Unprogressive.

Nkosinathi: How is your day now?

That was a trap, a trap I wasn't going to fall into.

Me: You always make my day babe.

He smiled,

Me: But, you wasted money here, did you forget that you made me lunch today?

Nkosinathi: I didn't forget, I just wanted to see you.

Me: Mmh.

I opened his Chicken Licken and started eating. He

joined me and for a few minutes we ate in silence. Then he stopped and looked at me, I didn't stop, because I kind of didn't want to revert back to the morning's conversation.

Nkosinathi: I feel like we should talk about this morning's conversation.

Me: Mh.

Nkosinathi: I will always have your back Thixunathi, I am always on your side. If it were up to me ngekudala ndakuts hata siziqalele ubomi bethu sobabini without aba bantu who are bothering you but on the other hand you don't want that. You want family, you are family oriented and I also love you for that.

I didn't answer him...

Nkosinathi: I suggested to you that we should do lento yenziwe ngoo Zukisa, awuyifuni. I am not sure

if you realize that the same family route that you want us to take will not only involve your family qha but my own family too. My family consists of these two women who piss you off ngophefumla nje, my family consists of the same people who've given you and your family the idea that my son should be called Million. My family consists of the same people tha-

Me: I get it.

Nkosinathi: Okay, so ufuna sithini kengoku?

I sighed and stopped eating,

Me: I will go see your mom, and hear her out.

Nkosinathi: You really want to do that?

Me: No I don't want to, but I want to shut her off my life for good having heard why she even thought I'd entertain the idea of abortion.

Nkosinathi: Okay.

I looked down,

Nkosinathi: Therapy?

Me: I've been to therapy already, there's no need for that.

Nkosinathi: Baby, you're angry, you're killing yourself with anger and trust me I don't blame you. I'm on your side, hence I want to help you heal because you were there for me when I had that heart problem. You helped me right through the operation, I want to help you go back to yourself. To the same girl I met at the beach, to the same girl that I promised to have more babies with, to build a life with. I want that Cassandra back.

Was I not crying by the end of that speech? Why was he doing that to me? I felt his arms around me and then I cried more, until I felt a relief. I cleaned myself up and suddenly felt shy, he kissed my lips

and held the kiss. I breathed,

Nkosinathi: I love you Cassandra.

Me: Won't you get tired of me?

Nkosinathi: Why would I? Why would you even think of that?

I shrugged,

Nkosinathi: Hay man baby, andiyi ndawo. Let's just get these little things done so that siqale ifamily yethu on a clean slate.

I nodded,

My lunch was over, so I walked him out to his car. He held my waist as he kissed me, we kissed for a while in that parking lot, I felt better. Seeing him, crying and hearing his affirmations made me feel better.

Nkosinathi: I'm ready to be a father again.

Me: I'm not ready for the pregnancy trauma.

Nkosinathi: I'll be here this time around, every step of the way.

Me: You'll be a father again, when you've sent iinkomo ekhaya bhuti.

He laughed and kissed me even more, then he left. I walked back to my office and called his mother, Asenathi would have to wait. I wanted to hear her mother first.

I sat right across her and waited, she looked tired, frail and worn out. Like she hadn't been sleeping well. A waitress came to take our order, I just ordered hot chocolate and she ordered herself tea.

Just before we could talk, her son rang me up.

Me: Hi?

Nkosinathi: What time am I picking you up kanene?

Me: I'll catch a cab.

Nkosinathi: You know I don't want you to use public transportation Thixunathi.

Me: Kaloku we just got here, I can't really say yhiza ngo seven when I don't even know why I'm called here.

Nkosinathi: Okay fine, I'll wait apha kwi parking.

Me: You're still here?

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakwazi wena ungavele umshiye apho umama in the first five minutes of that conversation. So ndifuna ukuba ready... For anything.

I wanted to laugh, I hated that he felt like he knew me very well. I cleared my throat, smiling like a stupid teen in love.

Me: Okay fine, enkosi.

Nkosinathi: Love you.

Me: Bye.

He laughed and hung up, I wasn't going to be disrespectful and respond to that. I looked at his mother,

Me: I'm sorry about that.

Mam'Dakumba: It's okay sisi.

Our beverages came through,

Mam'Dakumba: I don't want to waste your time at all, so I'll get right into it.

Me: Thank you.

Mam'Dakumba: I wanted to apologize to you for what I did when you were pregnant, I am glad that

you never listened to me I am glad that you never took that money and you chose your son over money.

What was I supposed to say?

Mam'Dakumba: I know I have hurt you, and I apologize for that. I know I cannot turn back the time, but all I want is for you forgive me, I'm not here to advocate for my family. Ndizele mna ndedwa, for my own part and to make peace with you because I am missing out on my grandson's life. I want to be a present grandmother, but I also acknowledge that I made this bed.

I put my cup down and cleared my throat,

Me: How does it feel to hear yourself saying your grandson to someone you wanted to be shoved down the drain?

She swallowed and put her tea down.

Me: How does it feel to hear yourself saying your grandson to someone you wanted to pay an entire million, for his existence to be erased?

Mam'Dakumba: Kubuhlungu mntanam, I won't lie, kubuhlungu.

Me: Inoba kunjani kum?

She cried, I saw tears in her eyes and my heart broke.

Mam'Dakumba: Ndcela uxolo mntanam.

Me: Andikwazi mna ukuxolela mama because I thought as a woman, you would take my side when I was cornered but instead you advocated for such evil to befall me. You allowed the men in your house to not only disrespect me but to disrespect my family, if I wanted to pin your son down ngomntana don't you think I'd have followed him kulandawo

wayekuyo when I found out that I was pregnant?
Even after ebuyile, nanikhe nandibona ndileqeka
emva kwakhe or nguye umntu owaba ngumsila
wam?

She didn't respond...

Me: What kills me the most is that you're only
apologizing because you're missing out, not
because you're sorry. Eyona nto uyifunayo
kukubona umntana wam qha.

Mam'Dakumba: That's not true, I'm apologizing
because I know what I did was wrong.

Me: If I had aborted, would we be sitting here?

She didn't respond...

Me: We both know wouldn't be here, that I know for
sure but I would be intlekisa eniyithuka ngesilambi

esemka ne million yenu as if asinamali ekhaya.

Mam'Dakumba: I'm sorry sisi, please forgive me.

Okay, what can I do, to show you that I am sorry?

That I'm being sincere?

Me: Take your husband, and your son lo wayekhona when you were offering me lamali nihambe niyocela uxolo ekhaya.

She froze....

Me: u Million ngumntana ka Tatam no mamam, you making peace with me doesn't guarantee you that you will have access to him but you taking a step and the initiative to go to my family uyocela uxolo might enlighten the situation a bit. I don't know if my father would welcome you or your family into his house, but, ke you will never know until you try.

She nodded.

Mam'Dakumba: I will talk to my husband namhlanje,

ndibuyele kuwe.

Me: Okay.

Mam'Dakumba: Will you be able to give us your dad's contact details so that we can call him and schedule an appointment before we go all the way to the Eastern Cape?

Me: u Nkosinathi unazo mama, ungazicela napha kuye.

Mam'Dakumba: Okay ke sisi, enkos i wethu ngokuvuma udibana nam. I know how hard it must have been for you.

I didn't have much to say to that, but when we were done, I left her there apparently she was meeting someone else. I found his son really waiting for me kulandawo bendimshiye kuyo when he dropped me off, he was sleeping.

[06/26, 15:19] : #Onele_43

#Cassandra

Nkosinathi: How did it go?

Me: I threw her with my coffee!

Then I put my bag in the back passenger seat, he didn't move, he just looked at me waiting for something, and in as much as I wanted to be serious about what I had just said, I couldn't. I laughed,

Me: Ndiyadlala, sithethile.

Nkosinathi: What do you mean nithethile? Nithethentoni namisana phi?

Me: We spoke baby, about everything.

Nkosinathi: In such a short time?

Me: Ewe, she's going to ask your dad and your brother bahambe naye bayoxolisa ekhaya.

Nkosinathi: Dad is in Moscow.

Me: Andingeni ndawo mna, she said she will talk to him tonight.

He nodded and started the car,

Nkosinathi: I'm proud of you.

Me: Sungxama, kusekho u Asenathi.

Nkosinathi: Haha! Oksalayo I'm proud of you...

Just then, my phone rang, an unknown number.

Me: Hello?

Dr Sirhonyi: Ms Mzayi, unjani?

He was the only person who ever called me like that, and for some reason, I was excited to hear from him.

Me: Mpumelelo?

He laughed,

Dr Sirhonyi: Yep, it's me. Unjani mfondini?

Me: Dude! I'm okay, I'm surviving, unjani wena?
Where have you been?

I saw Nkosinathi's weird look, but ignored him. It had been a while since I heard from Mpumelelo and even if our friendship was a rocky one taking into consideration that he probably was the reason Nkosinathi and I broke up in the first place, but he was there for me throughout the pregnancy ups and downs and even after I gave birth, when Nkosinathi wasn't.

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm alright, I'm good. When can we meet up? Coffee or lunch?

Me: How about tomorrow, lunch time?

Dr Sirhonyi: Alright, should I pick you up?

Me: Yes please, haibo Mpumi!

He laughed as we said our goodbyes and hung up.

I was obviously still smiling, and I could see Nkosinathi's weird looks from the outer corner of my eye but I decided I won't explain anything unless he asks. Which he didn't, well not immediately. We got home, and followed each other inside. I wanted to cook for him, just to return the morning's favour and so I quickly went to the bedroom, changed and then returned to the kitchen. He was busy in the lounge,

I started cooking, his phone rang, I just heard muffled sounds as he walked out to the patio. Then I decided to call his sister while he was out and schedule a meeting with her, as per her request.

Asenathi: Cass andra?

Me: When do you want us to meet?

Asenathi: Akukho no Mholo lo kengoku?

Me: Mholo Asenathi, when do you want us to meet?

Asenathi: How's tomorrow?

Me: Can we make it the following day? I already have my day planned out tomorrow.

Asenathi: Okay fine by me, where are we meeting?

Me: I don't know, choose a location ngokwakho.

Asenathi: Uzoba grand nge transport?

Me: yes.

Asenathi: Okay ke, I will send you the location.

Me: Sure, bye.

Asenathi: Bye.

I hung up and focused on what I was doing, when I was done, I plated up and served him. He was back from his phone call, but busy on his Laptop.

Immediately after I put the food down he closed his stuff and packed up, focused on the food in front of him and of course, me.

Nkosinathi: Smells nice.

Me: tastes nice too.

He chuckled and agreed with a nod.

Then after a while, he asked me out ngo Mpumelelo.

Nkosinathi: So your friend is back?

Me: My friend?

Nkosinathi: U Mpumelelo Sirhonyi.

Me: Oh, apparently so.

He eyed, me.

There was something weird in his eyes...

Me: What?

Nkosinathi: Where has he been all this time?

Me: I don't know, I guess I will find out tomorrow.

Nkosinathi: You're really having lunch with him?

Me: Why shouldn't I?

He shook his head...

I stopped eating and looked at him.

Me: Am I missing something?

Nkosinathi: Am I missing something?

Me: What?

Nkosinathi: The way you lit up after that phone call Cassandra iyandikrokrisa, is there something I should know about this guy?

Me: Yhima, the way I lit up? Iyakukrokrisa? Hewethu, uqale nini ukukhweleta? Let alone ukukhweletela u Mpumelelo who happens to be your nephew's father.

Nkosinathi: I don't like him.

Me: Okay, but mna ndingenaphi?

He just rolled his eyes, what was happening kanti?

Me: Baby?

Nkosinathi: Mh?

Me: What's going on?

Nkosinathi: I just don't like him, and I don't feel comfortable with you meeting him ngoms o.

Me: You don't feel comfortable?

Nkosinathi: Ewe.

I didn't respond, no, I wasn't going to argue with him ngento endingayaziyo. If he had something to say about u Mpumelelo then he had the option to come out with it kwanguku because I wasn't going to cancel the plans I had made ekhona for into endingayaziyo. I ate up, went to put my bowl in the kitchen and then went to take a shower. When I came out, he was already getting in bed, the phone

call must have really changed his mood. I got in next to him, and moved in very close, so my leg could go over his. He opened his eyes and just looked at me as I kissed him.

Me: Uqumbele ntoni?

Nkosinathi: I am tired, had a long day.

Me: Really?

Nkosinathi: Yes really, good night baby.

Then he closed his eyes again, I turned off the light and moved in even more closer to him. His arm went over my body, he cuddled me, and I kissed his breastplate, a very light, feathery kiss.

Me: I love you.

Nkosinathi: Love you too.

And with that, he kissed the crown of my head.

I woke up around 2 am and he was awake, just looking at me. As soon as I opened my eyes, he kissed my lips and smiled, I felt weird, but smiled and went to the bathroom, came back and joined him in bed. It was a bit chilly, so I cuddled up against his warmth and he just chuckled.

Nkosinathi: Now I see why you don't want my child to come live with you, uyakuthanda ukuthi nca.

Me: Kuyabanda chap.

He made sure that even my back was covered, I lifted my eyes and met his.

His lips slowly came for mine and I welcomed them, we kissed, we made out, made love.

He had a skill in attending to my needs, his close attention to detail and his patience with me was just remarkable. He wasn't the kind to stop when he was satisfied, but he made sure that I was satisfied as well.

Nkosinathi: Ndiyakuthanda Thixunathi.

Me: Ndiyayazi nam lonto.

He sealed that with a kiss, I buried my head right in his chest and breathed. That was all I could ever need, him.

[06/26, 15:19] : #Onele_44

I woke up in the morning and went to make breakfast, I actually made enough food for three people, myself and my parents. Only to go and knock in their room and find out that I was the only person in that entire house. They were not home, I didn't even hear them leave but it didn't matter.

More food for myself then.

I realized there was no bread, so I grabbed money from my wallet and went to the spaza shop. I saw a car stopping near the shop as I was approaching it, I didn't even pay attention to it because I was hungry and I just wanted bread, ndoguduke ndiyoty. I waited in line, two guys were in front of me, one of them or both of them smelt very good. They bought and turned to leave, one of them was Ntsika, he just smiled broadly and stepped aside waiting, while the other one went to the passenger side of the car. Ndathenga isonka sam and turned to walk away, he walked right next to me.

Ntsika: Umntu ubamhle noba uyavuka pha kwa Tat'u Mzayi.

I ignored him.

We walked in silence, he kept on talking to himself and I ignored him until I couldn't ignore him anymore.

Ntsika: Unjani mntu wam?

Me: ndingumntu wakho uqala nini kanene?

Ntsika: Awundifuni mos wena.

Me: And you don't get a hint?

Ntsika: Akho hint' ndizoyi get'a mna Onele, unjani?

I sighed, what a bad way to start my day!

Me: Ndiright torho Ntsika, nd'cela undiyeke kengoku, ndikuphendule mos.

Ntsika: Can I buy you lunch before ndikuyeyeke?

Me: No.

Ntsika: Why not?

Me: I haven't had breakfast yet wena ufuna undithengela ilunch? Really?

Ntsika: I can't really offer to buy you breakfast kodwa uphetha isonka sotya for breakfast now can

I?

Me: How about you just leave me alone?

Ntsika: Gimme a kiss ndikuyeke.

Me: Uphambene?

Ntsika: So awundifuni nyhani?

Me: I've been saying that, dude, utshaya ntoni?

Ntsika: Nditheni, ndikhangeleka ndiqhunyiwe?

Me: Too much.

Ntsika: Uyayibona ke i-effect that you have on me?

Me: Yiyho!

Ntsika: Okay fine ndikuyekile, but I like you.

Me: Great, now bye!

He had already walked me to my gate, so I just walked and closed it. He stood there, smiling from ear to ear, I got inside my house and watched him behind the curtains as he walked away, still smiling. What was wrong with him though?

I made breakfast and went to eat in the lounge, then u sis' Asanda called.

Me: Sisi?

Asanda: Hey baby, unjani?

Me: I'm okay sisi unjani wena?

Asanda: Ndi right nam, heh sana ingathi kuzobakho some change of plans.

Me: Haibo, njani ngoku sisi? Please don't tell me uyabuya, please.

She laughed, I almost had a panic attack! Why would she do that?

Asanda: Ndiyabuya baby, in fact sonke siyabuya immediately begqiba abantwana ubhala.

Me: Haibo sisi I thought uzozisa nje abantwana bodwa, what changed?

Asanda: A lot of things changed, but I miss home and I think I just need to be home khendibe surrounded by love. Maybe ndinga right.

Me: Oh, so awukho right?

Asanda: I haven't been alright in a while, but I'm getting there. I'm sorry thought if I messed up your plans, you seemed a bit excited to come this side.

Me: I'm still going to come, I think ndizoza kule weekend siya kuyo depending on the rents agreement. But ndiseza even if andizohlala for long ke.

Asanda: Ooh okay, haike it's cool.

Me: Sharp ke sisi.

I wasn't going to allow usisi to ruin my plans mna, all of a sudden uyagoduka? Why? Tyhini!

I knew I was going to Pretoria, and then xa ehamba ndilahleke negama lam ndiye ku Ginger qha, very simple.

I started packing my traveling case, and then Steve

called.

Me: Bhuti?

Steve: Unjani?

Me: Ndi right bhuti unjani wena?

Steve: Ndi right, uthi utatakho ufuna ukuya e Pretoria?

Me: Ewe bhuti.

Steve: Khaw'lungise ke ndidlule ngawe.

Me: Wait, right now?

Steve: Kanti benigqibe entweni?

Me: Okay bhuti never mind, uzofika ndi ready.

Steve: Sharp.

He hung up.

He sounded like he was driving, and here I thought I was going to fly to PTA, but I didn't care much as long as I was leaving.

Right after that call, I called my boyfriend.

His phone rang once and cut, I tried again, haibo same results.

I left him a message on WhatsApp and it got one tick.

[06/26, 15:19] : #Onele_45

#Cassandra

I woke up and again, he was not in bed.

I realized that was something I should get used to, so I just prepared for work, when I was done I went to the kitchen and he wasn't there. It looked like he had made my lunch already, and breakfast, but he wasn't there.

I peeped outside, the door was open, and I didn't see him but then I heard his voice from the lounge side and walked over there. He was in the patio, in a

very heated argument. I listened,

Nkosinathi: Kengoku wena ungenaphi? ...Ndoda, if you know what's good for you stay the hell away from my wife! ... Was she supposed to report to you? ...Hella, fstek!

I walked away from there, sat down and had my breakfast. Who was his wife? Well if he was referring to me then the other person on the end of the line must have been Mpumelelo. It only made sense that way...he went on and on, until I even finished my food. I grabbed my bag, and lunch then I went to him, he was still on that phone. I tapped his shoulder, he turned and cut the call...

Nkosinathi: Baby, sewunxibile?

Me: Morning, u right?

Nkosinathi: I'm good, why?

I shrugged, he smiled, putting his phone in his pocket and then pulled me by the waist, kissing my cheeks.

Nkosinathi: Awusanuki kamnandi namhlanje.

Me: Namhlanje?

He chuckled, I didn't laugh. Why did he emphasize on "namhlanje" as if andiqhelanga kunuka kamnandi?

Me: Can I please drive myself namhlanje?

Nkosinathi: No, masambe, yintoni e special namhlanje wafuna ukuziqhubela?

I chuckled, I wasn't going to drive myself kodwa bendithe ku Mpumelelo makazondithatha. It wouldn't make sense. We walked out, following each other and then we drove to work. His mind was not there with us, it was elsewhere and I decided to leave him like that, and not bother him.

Whatever or whoever worked him up must have been a real problem, threat of some kind. He dropped me off, kissed me and left without even waiting for me to walk into the building, like he normally would. I shook my head ndangena ems ebenzini.

Lunch time, Mpumelelo called and asked for directions to my workplace, I sent them to him and he really came to fetch me. I was really happy to see him, he looked good and happy. He looked better than the last time I spoke to him...

Dr Sirhonyi: You look happy.

Me: I'm happy to see you.

Dr Sirhonyi: No, you look happy, you're in a happier place than the last time I saw you.

Me: Maybe things changed you know, maybe I'm trying to be at peace.

Dr Sirhonyi: Whatever it is, it looks good on you.

Me: Thank you,

We placed our order.

Me: So, where have you been?

Dr Sirhonyi: I've been busy building a relationship with my son.

Me: Aaaw man, how is he?

Haike he went on and on, I could see from the beam on his face that he was really happy. Umntu abe happy ade atyebe? Yho oo Mpumelelo! Did my boyfriend not call me while we were eating? I mized him, until our lunch was over, Mpumelelo drove me back to work. At the parking lot, he turned off the ignition and smiled, looking at me. I blushed,

Dr Sirhonyi: I'm surprised your boyfriend has n't checked up on you.

Me: My boyfriend?

Dr Sirhonyi: Yes, I know ya'll are back together.

Me: And how do you know?

Dr Sirhonyi: The question should be, why are you two sneaking around? It's what you both want, right?

Me: Yeah.

Dr Sirhonyi: Then why are you sneaking around?

Me: I just don't want his family anywhere near my child.

Dr Sirhonyi: But you want him?

Me: I love him.

Dr Sirhonyi: Are you prepared to be part of that family?

Me: What do you mean?

Dr Sirhonyi: Cass, you can't tell me you're planning to marry into a family you haven't researched.

Me: Research? Why?

He laughed, and shook his head.

Why was he even talking about marriage? How much of my life did he know?

Me: What are you saying?

Dr Sirhonyi: I am saying what I've always said to you, do your homework. Make sure that you are prepared to marry into the Dakumba clan, make sure.

Me: Okay fine, what's going on? What do you know that I should know?

Dr Sirhonyi: I know that your boyfriend is claiming you as his wife, which is kinds cute because ke niyafanelana.

I rolled my eyes at his sarcasm, he laughed.

Dr Sirhonyi: Look, just do your research before you commit to a lifetime thing such as marriage. I have always told you ayikho right la family but even then, I knew you still loved your baby daddy as you still

do nangoku and ke I will not sit here and lie ndithi ndikuncamile, andikuncamanga but because I respect you, I have decided to let go.

I breathed,

Dr Sirhonyi: Kodwa ke with all of that being said, I do care about you hence I wanted us to meet in person. If you're sure you want to spend the rest of your life with Nkosinathi then sit him down and ask him to tell you the truth about his family. Not because he has to, but because most times when you marry into a family, you become one of them and what's theirs, become yours so kubangcono okungena entweni oyaziyo kunokothuka sewungaphakathi.

Me: Uyandoyikisa yazi ngezi riddles zakho.

He laughed,

Dr Sirhonyi: Uxolo, I don't mean to scare you more than making you aware. Qha.

I nodded, he opened his arms and we hugged.

I watched him drive out and then I walked into my office feeling more confused than happy, that was the draining part about the lunch, it was confusing. He said a lot of things, but withheld a lot of information.

[06/26, 15:19] : #Onele_46

#Cassandra

I returned to my desk and called Nkosinathi,

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Hey, I missed your call. Unjani?

Nkosinathi: I'm happy you called, unjani wena?

Me: I'm okay babe, ubuzothini?

Nkosinathi: I was just checking up on you sthandwa sam, nothing much.

Me: Oh man, enkosi tatakhe.

Nkosinathi: How was your lunch?

Me: It was okay, ndisandobuya.

Nkosinathi: Just okay?

Me: Ewe baby, just okay.

Nkosinathi: Mmh, uthi ebephi all this time?

Me: Uthi he was busy bonding with his son, I didn't ask where ken am because andingeni ndawo.

Nkosinathi: And he's back for good?

Me: Why are we discussing u Mpumelelo kanene baby?

He fake-coughed!

Nkosinathi: I'm just curious as to why he's back ngoku sendilungise izinto nawe. What are his

motives eintlek?

Me: Huh?

Nkosinathi: Cassandra we broke up ngenxa yalomjita in the first place, now that sesilungise izinto phakathi kwethu, siyavana and we are happy he comes back out of the blue. Ufuna ntoni?

Okay, he wasn't just shouting at me but he sounded aggravated.

Me: Oh-kay...so, uhm, can I return back to my work and then we can continue with this conversation later on? Xandibuyile?

Nkosinathi: I'll be home late tonight.

Me: Uyaphi?

Nkosinathi: I'm in Johannesburg right now, ndine meeting ngo 4 so...

Me: Oh, ndizogoduka ngantoni kengoku mna?

Nkosinathi: I'll send you money to call a cab.

He said that so casually and I felt a bit irritated.

Me: Okay.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: I love you.

Then I hung up, I was irritated.

He couldn't have told me earlier that he wasn't around, that he wasn't going to be able to fetch me? That was the whole point of me requesting that we fetch my car, because I knew he also had a life of his own but he said he'd always be around. But, I had a lot on my mind I didn't want to end up saying anything I would later regret. So I continued noms ebenzi wam until home time, he sent me imali for a cab, I just hiked from a colleague ndayokhwela itaxi mna e rankini. Sitting in that taxi I replayed everything Mpumelelo said, but I knew very well that I wouldn't be able to ask Nkosinathi anything.

He would be mad, why would I meet Mpumelelo and still discuss indaba zakokwabo?

“Cassandra?”

I looked up, I didn't know the person.

Me: Hi,

Thula: Unjani sisi?

Me: I'm good thank you, do we know each other?

Thula: No we don't, but I know you. Do you know Mpumelelo?

Me: Mpumelelo?

Thula: Yes, Mpumelelo Sirhonyi.

Me: urh, yes. Why?

Thula: Do me this one favour please, tell him to drop it.

Me: Drop what?

Thula: What he's doing, tell him Nokuthula or just
Thula said he must drop it.

I looked at her, confused.

She looked like him, a bit, but she looked older.

Thula: I'm his sister...

Me: Oh, you're his sister? Mpumelelo has a sis-?

Thula: I've been trying to get through to him for the
past two years and akamameli, please, tell him if he
still wants to live and see his son grow old he must
just drop it. It's not worth it.

Me: Okay, lemme give you his number so you can
call him umxelele ngokwakho.

I looked down, dug for my phone in my bag, the
minute I looked up, she was no longer there. I
looked around, no sight of her. I felt my spine
freezing, I literally felt uneasy and immediately

regretted taking a taxi home instead of a cab as I was told to. Yaske yangathi iyacotha kwa le moto because I wanted to call Mpumelelo ndimxelele.

I finally got home, immediately after locking the gate, I called him.

Dr Sirhonyi: Mama ka Bhabha?

Me: Do you know of a Nokuthula? Or Thula?

Dr Sirhonyi: The only Thula I know was my sister.

Me: Was?

Dr Sirhonyi: Yes, she passed away a long time ago.

Me: WHAT?

I literally dropped my bags, I felt paralyzed for a second.

Dr Sirhonyi: Why are you asking me about my sister?

Me: Because, she came to me at the taxi rank and said I must tell you to drop it.

Dr Sirhonyi: Huh?

Me: Your sister, Thula, she said that she's been trying to get through to you for the past two years and wena awum'mameli. She said I must tell you that if you still want to live and see your son grow old then you must just drop it. It's not worth it.

He went silent on me...

I was still outside, my bags right next to me.

Me: Can you explain that?

Dr Sirhonyi: What was she wearing? The woman you spoke to.

Me: A white vest...and, red beaded earrings. Like ezi zinxitywa ngamagqirha or something...

He sighed.

Me: Explain.

Dr Sirhonyi: Not now, thank you for the message. I'll call you.

Then he hung up.

I looked at my screen, picked up my bags and walked into the house. The more I replayed my entire day, the more nothing made sense. First of all, Mpumelelo rocked out of nowhere, and we had lunch. Fine. Then his sister rocks out of nowhere, gives me a message for him only to find out that she's actually a ghost. If she died a long time ago, then she's a ghost, right?

The minute that sunk in, I called Nkosinathi, almost crying. I spoke to a ghost, I spoke to an entire GHOST!

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: Nd'cela ubuye.

Nkosinathi: Haibo baby, I told you I have a meetin-

Me: Please come home torho, please.

Nkosinathi: Okay calm down baby, what's wrong?

I started hyperventilating and crying at the same time, i had never seen let alone spoken to a ghost but all of a sudden I had an entire conversation with one in a public place? And she vanished?

Me: I don't know...

Nkosinathi: But you're crying, and you want me to come home? Like, right now?

I took a deep breath.

Closed my eyes and realized that I was actually being irrational. Maybe, maybe the lady I spoke to wasn't really dead. And even if she was, uzofika athini u Nkosinathi?

Me: Uhm,

I cleared my throat.

Me: It's fine, you can come back xa ugqibile.

Nkosinathi: Kanti baby what's going on?

Me: I'll tell you obuya kwakho.

Nkosinathi: Us endlini ngoku?

Me: ewe.

Nkosinathi: Awulimelanga or something?

Uyandoyikisa mamakhe.

Me: No ndi right, I'll uhm, I'll wait up for you.

Nkosinathi: Okay, ungapheka. Order something.

Me: Kay, love you.

Nkosinathi: I love you too.

We hung up.

I looked around the house, feeling a bit paranoid.

[06/26, 15:20] : #Onele_47

#Cassandra

I sat in bed, and started doing my research, first researching my very own boyfriend. He was obviously older than me and even more established, but I never really saw the need to do this until now. It wasn't really a need, but I was curious...

For the first hour, there was nothing interesting, nothing that I didn't know already, nothing shocking or surprising. I put the laptop away, went to his closet and started going through his documents that were in the safe. It was left ajar, for some reason, or he left in a hurry and didn't notice that he didn't close it. I wasn't sure.

Even then, there was nothing fishy, just his business documents and ID's qha, so I gave up. I gave up convinced that Mpumelelo was either crazy or he was conniving. My phone rang xandibuyela ebhedini,

Me: Baby?

Nkosinathi: Ukuthengile ukutya?

Me: I'm not hungry.

Nkosinathi: Mna ndizobuya nditye ntoni?

Me: Uzodlula ngokutya tatakhe before uze endlini, haibo.

Nkosinathi: Ikwenze ntoni le ou yakho kule lunch yenu, waske wamuncu?

I gulped, swallowed my response right then.

Nkosinathi: Cassandra?

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: Nenzene ntoni no Mpumelelo?

Me: If you have nothing to ask or say to me other than what you're saying right now may we please cut the call?

Nkosinathi: Ndcela u orde ukutya, ndizobuya late kakhulu mna and I'm tired andizokwazi uhambe ndidlula.

Me: kay.

Nkosinathi: I love you.

Me: u right.

Nkosinathi: You don't love me?

Me: Khandiyeke torho.

Nkosinathi: Hayini u baby, ubu right ke ksasa when I left you at work, so obviously this has everything to do with landoda yakho.

I hung up.

Yes he was joking, but I was agitated, yho!

I ordered food for him, went downstairs and took a bottle of wine and a glass then I walked back up the stairs and into bed. I saw a flippen ghost! An entire ghost, with sangoma attributes? Yhu!

I drank two glasses ndacimela, kanti ndiye ndalala.

I was woken up by his scent, and faint voice, he was on the phone with someone but he was angry. I looked at him as the morning's event came back to my mind, he was also angry on that phone call in the patio. It felt weird, but I was trying to make sense into everything that was happening but yey ha.a man.

I went to the loo, came back and he was still on the phone, his back towards me. I switched off my lamp ndalala...

In the wee hours of the morning, I woke up to him staring at me.

Me: Yintoni?

He kissed my lips, smiling.

I moved closer, covering my head with the blanket.

Nkosinathi: You didn't even greet me phezolo wena.

Me: You were busy shouting at someone.

Nkosinathi: Walala kengoku ungakhange uthethe nam?

I didn't answer him, it was flippen 3 am. Why would I want to have a conversation at 3 am when there were a lot other things I could be doing other than talking.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: What's the time baby?

Nkosinathi: 3:15 am.

Me: Nd'cela ulala ke.

Nkosinathi: But I miss you, ndikugqibele k'sasa kaloku sthandwa sam.

I ignored him, I wasn't sleepy anymore but yho, ukuthetha ngo 3 ekuseni? Hay!

Nkosinathi: So, your friend, ithini into yakhe? On a serious note?

Me: I love you yazi Nko shame, I really do but into endingazoyenza kukuncokola ngo Mpumelelo nawe ngo 3 ekuseni. Hayi baby andizi tu.

Nkosinathi: Did you just call me Nko? Yho

He laughed, I just smiled, I had always called him by his full name. Lento ye short names had not sunk in kum, ngu Nkosinathi or tatakhe or u baby qha.

Obviously nam ndizive sendithe "Nko". He pulled me closer and uncovered my face, I looked at him smiling, wahleka and kissed my lips, I sucked his bottom lip in as I kissed him back. He grabbed my behind, pulling my leg over his and we continued kissing. His phone rang just as he was removing my PJ top, and he cursed under his breath. I cursed mentally though, and judging by the persistence of

the caller and his sudden pause, I could tell he wanted to answer it so I grabbed it from behind him, looked at the screen and pressed “answer” on speaker phone and we both listened.

Nkosinathi: Asenathi?

Asenathi: Bra, uphi?

Nkosinathi: Kanti what time is it?

Asenathi: Kuyats ha endlini mfondini uphi?

Nkosinathi: Kuphi endlini?

Asenathi: aphenlini man, indlu kamama le ibivulwa.

He jumped off the bed,

Nkosinathi: Uphi umama?

Asenathi: Silapha phandle sobabini, waiting for fire fighters.

Nkosinathi: Okay ndiyeza.

Asenathi: Please.

He hung up and started getting dressed, I watched him, and just as he threw on his t-shirt, he looked at me and stopped.

Nkosinathi: Masambe.

Me: Ndiyaphi mna?

Nkosinathi: I cannot leave you here, what if whoever burnt indlu kamama comes here? Ube ulapha wedwa?

Me: You think it's a person?

Nkosinathi: Yila ndoda yakho.

Then he grabbed a jacket and walked out, I stayed in bed.

Whenever he referred to Mpumelelo as indoda yam I felt a bit of irritation and I knew he was doing that intentionally.

I stayed in that bed, took out my phone and checked who was online in my siblings WhatsApp group, ndabona ubhuti was online so I called him.

Steve: Cass?

Me: Oko wawumkile?

He laughed, he didn't sound like he was sleeping, too much energy.

Steve: Nawe oko wawuhleli endodeni.

Me: Ndandithunywe nguwe phofu nakuyo.

Steve: Hay suxoka.

Me: Esho, I wonder uthi kumama undishiye nabani. And you've never checked up on me oko wemkayo.

Steve: Mfondini, you still need me to check up on you uhleli nendoda? Yho hay sunditefela mna sisi,

umkam uhleli ngaaapha e Bhayi.

I laughed at him and hung up.

Nkosinathi had walked back into the room while I was laughing, he had this weird look on his face. I put my phone next to me and looked at him.

Me: I thought umkile.

Nkosinathi: Ndilinde wena, kutheni ungeka nxibi?

Me: Ndiyaphi mna?

Nkosinathi: Ubuthetha nabani?

Me: Kwi phone yam?

Nkosinathi: So you were talking to him?

I chuckled, he was trying me, ekuseni.

Nkosinathi: Umxelele ke ukuba andimoyiki, xa efuna mna makeze kum ayeke ukundijikeleza otherwise

ndakumnika lento ayifunayo quick and fast.

I stared at him...

Nkosinathi: Phakama sihambe, okanye ufuna ush'yeka u bond'a naye in my absence. Nibe nifounelana so early in the morning ningekaxukuxi. Khathi le phone ndibone futhi, sapha.

I threw him with the phone and it landed on his chest, I got up from the bed in silence and got dressed in track suits, two piece ne sneaker. He paged through my phone, ndamshiya eme pha ndayomlinda ezantsi. He opened the door, and we left, driving in silence.

[06/26, 15:20] : #Onele_48

#Cassandra

We drove in silence, from where we were, we could

see the smoke.

He didn't give me my phone, he just put it next to his on the dashboard and drove to his mom's place. Safika pha saphuma sobabini, I stood against the car and just watched, the fire fighters were there already so there was nothing for me to do beside ukuma ke ndibukele. There were other people standing and watching, neighbors.

“Yhu, ndamgqibela nini uvutha kulendawo”

One of the ladies said, as they walked past me, from the house.

“Hay kaloku uyabazi abantu abanemali ngothakathana, uzova wena ingekapheli leveki bazobe sebeyazi ba uthunyelwe ngubani la vutha”

Okay, gathering from that, it wasn't Mpumelelo who physically burnt the house down, ngu vutha.

Now, who would want to send uvutha kulo

Nkosinathi? Mpumelelo.

I saw Asenathi walking towards her brother's car with a couple of bags, she halted when she recognized me, a couple of feet away from me.

Asenathi: Haibo, ufuna ntoni apha wena?

I ignored her, she walked closer and put the bags down near the boot.

Asenathi: Hi?

Me: Hi.

Asenathi: Nihamba nobabini?

Me: Ewe.

Asenathi: Oh, nibuyelene or ucele nje umkhaphe?

I just looked at her,

Asenathi: Phofu it's none of my business. Please help me with the boot ndifake ezi bags.

I opened the boot for her, even helped her with the bags and then ndaphinda ndema kulandawo bendime kuyo. I wanted to go and ask if they needed a hand, but knowing them, I opted to wait ndicelwe and she did.

Asenathi: If you don't mind, ndcela uzondiphathisa. U Nathi usakhupha iimpahla e back and umama is kinda traumatized akakwazukwenzanto.

Me: Sure.

I followed her, and we brought more bags to the car, even in the seats at the back now my question was "sizohamba njani sonke with all the bags?" but I wasn't going to ask her, in fact I wasn't going to ask no questions because bendingayazi noba baya kwa Nkosinathi or baya kwindlu katatakhe kwapha eKapa na. When we were done, I stayed behind, emotweni e front and lay back. I had work in a few hours, andilelanga, ndise stratweni.

Nkosinathi: Cass?

I opened my eyes, the door was open...

Me: Mh?

Nkosinathi: Can I quickly go drop off umama nezi bags endlini, I'll come back for you no Ase.

Ndaphuma and just walked away from him and his car, I felt him following me as I walked to a stone across the road and sat on it.

Nkosinathi: Baby...

Me: Yintoni ngoku?

Nkosinathi: Ambolinda pha ebantwini kaloku, ku stout apha worse ume wedwa.

Me: Ndi right apha bra, can you see the smoke?

Wathula and just looked at me.

Me: Nankuya umamakho ephuma, vula imoto.

Nkosinathi: Uqumbile?

Me: Ndcela iphone yam?

Nkosinathi: Uqumbile na?

Me: Ndizoqumbela ntoni na Nkosinathi ekuseni kangaka? Ndcela iphone yam torho.

Nkosinathi: Andizokunika phone Cassandra.

Me: Then leave me alone ke.

He left me alone, wahamba wayokhwela imoto yakhe and left with his mother. People started leaving, going back to their houses, understandably so because the day was breaking. Asenathi came to sit with me, we sat in silence for about fifteen minutes before she spoke up.

Asenathi: You're good for him, I have seen how happy he's been the past couple of months and

when umama said she thinks nibuyelene I didn't believe her.

I didn't know what to say, in fact I didn't want to talk.

Asenathi: Uhm, Mpumelelo is in town.

Me: I know.

Asenathi: Ya'll still talk?

Me: Yeah.

Asenathi: Why?

Me: Zange sixabane.

Asenathi: But he's the reason you broke up with my brother.

Me: He's the reason your brother broke up with me, yes, but asizange sixabane.

Asenathi: So what are the chances of ya'll dating again?

Me: We never dated, we just kissed...for the sake of

kissing ke futhi, there's nothing there.

Asenathi: That's not what he told me.

Me: Ey ke Asenathi, I don't know what he told you, I don't even want to know. Mpumelelo is your baby daddy, your first love and probably the love of your life, xanincokola bethuna leave me out of your conversations because andingeni ndawo futhi andisoze ndibes angena ngoku. I have my own life, I am busy building my own family with your brother so ingaske nani nenze njalo andiyazi ke wen abazakwenza njani because you're married to another man. But ingaske man umntu ajongane neengxaki zakhe in peace because we both know that mna nawe will never see eye to eye and that's okay ayilwisi, ayixabanisi.

She didn't respond, we sat in silence until her brother came back to fetch us.

I sat e back, she joined me, I thought she would go sit with him, he fixed his mirror and looked at us, I closed my eyes and waited for him to speak, he

didn't. He started his car and drove off, safika kwakhe ndazenzela itea and took my cup upstairs, I had an hour left before ixesha lam lovuka so I just got in bed, drank my tea in peace, ndacimela ndazama ukulala just la hour.

An hour and a half later, he woke me up.

Ndayovasa, prepared for work and followed him downstairs.

Me: Molweni ma.

Mam'Dakumba: Molo mntanam.

She was up, having porridge already.

I went to the kitchen, made my own lunch and grabbed an apple.

Me: Ta Nko?

Nkosinathi: Coming.

He walked in, with his cup of coffee in hand.

Me: Are you driving me or I must take a cab?

Nkosinathi: I will drive you, nd'cela silinde umama agqibe I have to take her to the hospital.

Me: Ndizoba late.

Nkosinathi: Sizogala siphangelise wena, awuzoba late.

Me: And my phone?

Nkosinathi: Ise charge.

Me: Nd'cela undiphathele.

Nkosinathi: Uzayithini iphone emsebenzini?

Me: Nkosinathi, ndicela undiphathele iphone yam, ngoku.

He stared at me, I stared at him back.

He walked to the lounge, came back with it and put it on the table before walking back to his mother ndabalinda pha e Kitchen. I went through my messages, and phone calls, then I realized that he had actually blocked Mpumelelo's calls. Mnkq!

[06/26, 15:20] : #Onele_49

#Cassandra

I had a very busy day at work, I didn't even have time to eat lunch, in between attending to other people and actually doing my work, I had to do a colleagues work because she was off sick. I managed to steal five minutes ndakhe ndayophumla phandle, I needed a short break. I sat down, removed my shoes and breathed.

"He didn't do it"

I looked around, there she was, again.

Me: What?

Thula: Ayinguye lo utshileyo pha.

Me: Kutshile wena?

Thula: I wish, but in case you were wondering, it's not him.

Me: Okay, but why do you keep appearing kum? He told me you passed away.

Thula: You're the only person right now onentloko ethambileyo who can get through to him.

Me: u Asenathi?

Thula: She's a walking zombie, bamgqiba kudala.

Me: What do you mean bamgqiba?

She played with the grass and laughed,

Thula: Asenathi and I were close, at some point in life because we are kind of similar. But because

she's a big mouth, utatakhe stole her gift of seeing. So uyafana nje nesithunzela kulandawo akuyo, akazi noba kubethwa abaphi. The only time the real Asenathi comes out is when someone touches umamakhe.

That made sense...a bit.

Thula: Mpumelelo is angry, but I don't want him to fight for himself. Sikhona nomama siyamlwela as it is, qha kuye ingathi siyacotha. Kanti into xa uyenza kufuneka uyenzisis e.

Me: Am I in danger?

Thula: Why would you be?

Me: I'm associated with them, the Dakumba clan.

Thula: You're an outsider, so you're not in danger. Just do your best to keep your son away from their houses for now because he has their blood running in his veins.

Me: Their houses?

Thula: Yes. Incinci lanto yenzeke kulandlu intsha, watch this space, I will show them that igazi lam ayilogazi lokudlala abantwana.

And yet again, she vanished, I quickly went back inside and buried myself emsebenzini. To think I was even comfortable asking questions to a ghost was absurd. I forgot home time. The receptionist had to come and fetch me, obviously followed by Nkosinathi because he probably thought ndivalele u Mpumelelo kula office. I ignored him as I removed my coat and gloves, to think I wasn't even hungry. I was just tired, I just wanted a peaceful place to breathe and my bed.

Nkosinathi: Nd'cela uzame ukhaw'lezisa ndiyaleqa.

I ignored him, when I was done, I packed up and walked out. He followed, so I could lock my door. We followed each other to his car, his sister was there, in the front seat. She got out of the seat and

went to sit at the back, I joined her pha e back. I didn't ask her to move, I wasn't going to ke futhi.

Nkosinathi: So nanamhlanje nizondihlalis a ndedwa apha?

Asenathi: Khaw'qhube Nathi.

Nkosinathi: One of you must come sit with me.

Asenathi: Asifuni mos, that part is clear.

He looked at me, I was focused on my phone.

Nkosinathi: Baby?

Me: No.

Nkosinathi: Mnkq!

He started his car, and drove out of my work place. Ziyanda called me ndise moody ndinjalo and my entire mood just changed.

Me: hey?

I answered and saw Nkosinathi eyeing me through the rearview mirror.

Ziya: Hey sweetie, are we still on for tomorrow?

Me: Of course babe, what time will be fine for you?

Ziya: Around 4:30 pm, is that fine with you?

Me: It's perfect, I might just have to fetch my car endlini though. But I'll see.

Ziya: Akahambi u Nathi?

Me: Andimazi mntase.

Ziya: Okay ke, ndizova ngawe ngoms o.

Me: Sharp, good night.

Ziya: Night babe.

We hung up, I focused back on my phone.

We got to his place, ndohlika kuqala, walked in and greeted his mom who was watching news e lounge

then I walked straight to the bedroom. I undressed, wore PJ's and got in bed, charging the phone. Just as he walked in, my sister called...video called.

Me: Molweni...

I could see she was with the kids, even Aphiwe was smiling from ear to ear.

Asanda: Hey sweetie, unjani?

Me: Andidinwe sisi, yho!

Asanda: Long day?

Me: Longest ever! But, I'm happy ya'll called, ninjani?

Asanda: We're good, someone is actually excited.

Me: Yho ndiyambona akanqekeke mntaka bawo... yhimani ndikhangele ii earphones.

Aphiwe laughed, I laughed too.

Nkosinathi walked out just as I got out of bed, looking for my earphones in my handbag. I found

them, went back to bed.

Me: Thetha ke Aphiwe.

Aphiwe: Haikaloku makazi, ndize nini?

Me: Uyaphi?

Aphiwe: Ndiza kuwe mfondini.

Me: ndiya emntaneni wam mna ovala kwam.

Aphiwe: Hayi makazi, umntana wakho uzakuza nam kuwe.

Me: Haibo, ugqibe nabani lonto?

Aphiwe: Nomntu ohlala nomntana.

I laughed, his mother laughed too.

It was actually refreshing to have them on my screen, everyone smiling. It was clear that everyone was happy, I was happy and sad at the realization that our beef could have affected the kids severely without us acknowledging it. After about an hour,

we hung up. I called mom, phone call, not a video.

Mom: Sandra, awunqabe Ntombi?

Me: Ku busy mfazi, unjani?

Mom: Oh mntanam, you sound tired.

Me: You have no idea.

Mom: Si right thina, uyakhula no bhutana apha.
Akamoshi Cass andra umntanakho!

I laughed at her dramatic tone,

Mom: Akhonto angayits aliyo mntakabawo, yintoni
ingathi ndizikhulisela iphara nje?

Me: Asoze ke mama! Soze umntanam uthi li phara!

She burst out laughing, I smiled, she was my happy
place kodwa nyhani.

Mom: Ubuya nini Ntombi?

Me: Andiyazi yazi mama, but I think ndingazama utsiba noba yi weekend, I miss you guys.

Mom: Sithi oo guys kanene!

Now I laughed, Nkosinathi walked back in and sat down.

Mom: U Aphiwe ke ufuna ukuzodlula ngo bhutana apha xa esiza kuwe.

Me: Mnkq u Aphiwe uthi nivumelene ke sana caba mna andingeni ndawo kule agreement yenu, ndizoza wethu mama ndizobathatha. Inoba ucing'ba e Kapa kuse Bhayi.

Mom: Akamde Cassandra!

Me: Uzobamde onase njengba efuna ukuza no Milli apha.

She laughed, we spoke for a few more minutes then

we hung up.

I put the phone back into the charger
ndagqumathela.

Nkosinathi: Cass?

Me: Hm?

Nkosinathi: Kutyiwa ntoni?

Me: Andiyazi.

Nkosinathi: Nd'cela upheke ke.

I uncovered my head ndamjonga,

Me: Huh?

Nkosinathi: Please come and make dinner.

Me: Andizoyenza lonto mna, kanti u Asenathi
ebesenzani imini le yonke?

Nkosinathi: Andimazi nam oko bendimke nomama
esiya kwa Gqirha.

Me: Thenga ukutya tatakhe nitye, nilale.

Nkosinathi: So ndityise umazala wakho ii takeaways ukhona?

Me: Dude please ne, not today.

Nkosinathi: ndiyabuza kaloku ba ndityise umazala wakho ii takeaways ukhona na?

Me: Undilobole ngamalini na Nkosinathi lento kucaba ngoku ndinomazala ongazityiyo ii takeaways? In fact don't answer that, ewe mtyise ii takeaways umthengele i-allergex in case aphume irash or something. Yhu!

I covered myself again, after some time he walked out and closed the door.

Haibo! Umntu andivuse ngentseni ba mandiyobukela umlilo kokwabo not considering the fact that I was going to work 8 to 10 hours mna and then expect me to make dinner? Bebekhona bonke, they could have cooked? Hayike!

[06/26, 15:20] : #Onele_50

#Cassandra

Right after he left, I got out of his bed and started packing. Tshini, ndaqheleka yindoda emzini wayo? Sies! I packed yonke into ethi mna, everything.

Nkosinathi: Uyaphi?

Me: Ndiyagoduka.

I answered ndingakhange ndibheke or even see ba uphinde wangena nini? He closed the door, I heard that part, then sat down watching me until I was done packing.

Nkosinathi: You're going home? Just because of a little misunderstanding?

Me: Misunderstanding? Dude, you're literally treating me like i-girl yakwakho. I understand that you're hurt, and maybe isakucaphukisa into edibene

nam no Mpumelelo but babe, sesilapha mos ngoku?
I mean...yho ha.a sana.

Nkosinathi: Heh Cassandra, is this what you're going to do every time singavisisani? Uzopakisha ugoduke?

Me: Yep, hence I have a house and a home in Cape Town.

Nkosinathi: Yet we're still planning a life together, umts hato and all of that.

Me: Akukho kwanto endinqandayo mos ba ndingakus hiyi kwakho xa undiqhela noba sesits hatile. Good thing sizotshata sihlale apha kwakho, then wondidika njenga ngoku ndizopakisha ndikus hiye nendlu yakho, very simple.

Nkosinathi: That's so immature.

Me: I know...

I looked for his slippers, mine were already in my bag. Wore his slippers, and his hoodie gqiba ndamjonga.

Me: Are you going to take me home okanye ndibize icab?

Nkosinathi: I'm not taking you anywhere ngobusuku.

Me: So ndibize icab?

Nkosinathi: Ubungeno lala ke uhambe ngomsa?

Me: Ngomsa uzandigodusa or nangomsa I will have to call a cab?

Nkosinathi: Ndizokugodusa.

Me: Great, now buy food for your family, nitye nilale. I am dead tired, all I want is to sleep.

Nkosinathi: Awuzotywa wena?

Me: I'm not hungry.

Nkosinathi: But you didn't even eat your lunch.

Me: I'm not hungry, I wasn't hungry.

He nodded.

I removed the hoodie and shoes, got in bed again

ndalala.

Thanked God that he really didn't wake me up ofika kokutya, ndalala mna ndayovuka kusasa and the very first thing I did was ukuthutha ii bags zam ndazifaka emotweni yakhe, ndabuya and prepared for work. I had a date-night with his cousin's wife, Ziyanda, and last time I checked it was going to be a double-date but I wasn't going to remind him. Bazifakile mos no Zukisa bengangeni ndawo kwakuqala.

When I was done, I woke him up.

Nkosinathi: Mh?

Me: Ndigqibile.

Nkosinathi: Yho.

Then he closed his eyes, ndamlinda.

He finally woke up, went to the bathroom, came back and sat next to me.

Nkosinathi: How did you sleep?

Me: Kakuhle, nd'cela unxibe so we can go.

Nkosinathi: Uyonqena uziqhubela? I am supposed to go back to the doctor with mom namhlanje, she has an 8 am appointment.

Ndamjonga...

Me: And you couldn't tell me that izolo?

Nkosinathi: You were asleep by the time ndifika apha eroomini and you said you were tired so I didn't want to wake you up.

Me: So if I take the car nizohamba ngantoni nina?

Nkosinathi: Imoto ka Asenathi ilapha.

Me: Great, car keys?

Nkosinathi: Kitchen counter.

I got up, he pulled my hand so I halted.

Me: What's up?

He stood up, and draped his arms around my waist before kissing me multiple times. I just laughed at him, Nkosinathi was always like that, that was him apologizing or making me aware that he knows he was wrong.

Me: Uzandenza late mfethu.

Nkosinathi: Umfowenu ufana nam?

Me: Ewe, kancinci, but he's more handsome.

He smiled, kissing me again.

Nkosinathi: I don't want you to go.

Me: I know, but I have to, your family needs your attention more than I do right now.

Nkosinathi: Baby...

Me: It's not like I'm going to the Eastern Cape, I'm

gonna be just around the corner. You can come to me anytime you want.

Nkosinathi: Okay, so you're not leaving because you're upset with me?

Me: No, I'm leaving because I have to. Akukho need yale tension ikhoyo right now, you're obviously upset, your mom's house just mysteriously got burnt, and...

Nkosinathi: And Mpumelelo just mysteriously resurfaced.

Me: Yes, but I don't think that should bother you one bit.

Nkosinathi: U sure?

Me: I'm sure, I thought you knew already that I only have eyes for you. You only.

He cupped my face, and we kissed, he was the man I had fallen in love with again.

On my way home, from work I saw Nkosinathi's father walking with about six men. I looked back, yep, it was him. They looked shady though, like really shady. But, I minded my own business, ndafika kwa bhuti and showered, called Ziyanda to tell her that I was coming alone and that I would be driving so there wouldn't be a need for them to pick me up.

Nkosinathi called while I was struggling to get into my ripped skinny jeans, I lay on my back as I answered his call.

Me: Babe?

Nkosinathi: Hey, kutheni unxaphile?

Me: ndiyanxiba, I think le jean incinci.

Nkosinathi: Haha! Uyaphi ndisiza kuwe mna?

Me: I have a date with Ziyanda, remember?

Nkosinathi: Oh crap, that's today?

Me: Yep, and you don't have to tag along.
Sendimxelele ba awuzi so no Zukisa akezi.

He sighed, I smiled.

Nkosinathi: Okay, what time are you guys meeting?

Me: Ogqiba kwam unxiba ndiyaphuma, dude, why aren't you at home kanti?

Nkosinathi: I wanted to take you out for dinner k'qala then ndigoduke.

Me: Aaaw baby, that's so sweet. Well, we can do dinner ngoms o.

Nkosinathi: Okay, enjoy.

Me: Thank you, love you.

Nkosinathi: I love you too.

I laughed at the "I love you too" he hated the "love

you” kodwa yena uyats ho kum ndingabina ngxaki. I decided to take my own car, and not his, because I feared for my life even though bendingazothetha lonto kuye. Yonke nje lanto ibithethwe sesasithunzela was still audible in my head, I didn’t want to be found in his car ngobusuku nditshe nemoto. Could never be me!