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DIFFERENT PATHS by Olwethu Nyathi

CHAPTER #01

The sun is all out today, one would think we are already in hell. No matter how much you try to blow air to your face with your hands, the heat just won't go away. Mhlampe sesishela nezono Zethu! (Maybe we are burning for our sins now!).

The flip flops I am wearing are making it hard for me to walk properly, I notice a tree with a large shade and I hurry to it. I unstrap my baby from my back and sit down with him. I breathe out loudly, allowing my body to adjust to the rest. I am tired and hungry; I have been walking for hours. But I am almost there, just a few more minutes.

After getting enough rest, I decide to continue with the journey. After what feels like twenty minutes I finally arrived. I sigh and hold on tight to the towel holding Owami. I go through

to the main house I assume, I knock and a woman comes to the door. She welcomes me with a smile.

“You must be Nokuthula”.

I nod.

“I am the landlord, but you can call me Betty. We spoke over the phone about you wanting a room.”, she further said.

Nokuthula:Yes, is it available?

Betty:Yes, follow me.

She led me to a one roomed shack, the inside was neat and tidy. There wasn't any much furniture, except a sofa, fridge, bed and a cupboard.

Betty:This is the room, as you can see there is some furniture available. But, you can also add your own if you wish. The rent is R880 p/m, no late payments. I don't tolerate it. We don't have much rules here, except making noise, other tenants work nightshifts and they are sleeping during the day, so if you make noise, please keep it contained within this room.

Nokuthula:I understand ma.

Betty: Well I will leave you to it. You don't have to worry about paying rent now, you can pay next week.

She said and left.

I sighed and closed the door. Never had I thought I would live in a shack. I put Owami on the bed, he was still sleeping. Poor thing! I need to prepare his bottle before he wakes up and starts crying. I don't have much luggage; except this suitcase I have been dragging all the way here. I open it and start taking out important things, mostly Owami's things.

Good thing there is a kettle here, so I go outside and look for a tap. I pour water and go back inside, I turn it on and continue tidying up.

I place the canned food on the cupboard and the small rice that was in a plastic bag. I will cook that for today.

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SIZIPHIWE

My P. A comes rushing to my office with a stack of papers. I laugh and help her.

Siziphiwe:Please don't tell me I have to sign all that.

"You have to Madam. Also, Mr Francis called. Tomorrow you have a meeting with him. Remember that deal we poached to him months ago?"

Siziphiwe:Oh yes, do you think he has made a decision?

"We can only hope so. If he doesn't want to partner with you, then it's his loss. It's not like you need him and stuff, I mean you have been labelled the wealthiest female business owner of the year so nje we don't really need him.", she says boosting my confidence.

Mpilo is more than my P. A, she has become like a sister.

Siziphiwe:My friend shut up.

I said laughing and grabbing a pen.

Mpilo:So what are the plans for today?

Siziphiwe:Dinner with my parents, they are finally back from their vacation.

Mpilo:I am sure you missed them.

Siziphiwe:So much, but they needed this vacation.

Mpilo:Yeah

I wish to have their kind of love someday.

Siziphiwe:How when you turn down every man that makes a move on you?

Mpilo:I want the love from novels. Where a man will just give me R40K unprovoked and book the whole restaurant to myself.

Siziphiwe:Weee klibhi. You will wait until Jesus comes back.

We laugh.

Mpilo:Eish okay I hear you, but I don't think I have met the right one yet.

Siziphiwe:Don't worry, when you do meet the right one, you will just know it.

Mpilo:And you would know that doctor love, how is the honeymoon phase?

God! Men will kill us. It's illegal to love someone like this. Luhlelo is my fiancé, he proposed 10 months ago, it was a very romantic set up. I couldn't bring myself to say no. And besides, I love the guy and I really do see a future with him. We are going to get married once all the traditional customs have been done. The lobolo has been done so that's out of the way.

Me and Luhlelo met years ago, and we instantly hit it off. He makes me happy, like I'm the only girl in the world.

Maybe I should go with him to my parents, it's been a while since we all got together.

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NOKUTHULA

I am done with cooking and have already eaten, and washed the dishes. Owami slept immediately after I fed him. With everything going on, I'm really glad he isn't a trouble child that cries every time, I don't think I would have managed. I have enough problems, and my life has no direction at the moment. Angizazi nje ukuthi ngimiphi(I don't know where I stand). Tomorrow I have to go job hunting, there's no time to cry. I have a child that needs to be fed.

My phone rings and I look at the caller. The woman who gave birth to me, I exhale loudly before answering her.

Nokuthula:Hello.

Mom:Nokuthula mtanami ngicela ubuye ekhaya(My child please come back home).

She sounds like she is crying.

Nokuthula:I can't mom, I can't keep on depending on you and your husband. I am a mother now and I have to make it on my own.

Mom:Your father didn't mean all those things he said, please come back home.

Nokuthula:He meant it, he has been very transparent about how he feels about me ever since I got pregnant. Not that I blame him, I did disappoint the two of you. You guys were right, I knew what I was doing when I opened my legs for a man. I'm sorry I disappointed you, but I can't abandon my child either. I will make it on my own.

I hung up and wiped the tears that had fallen. I will do this. I will show my parents that I can take of a baby and myself. They will be sorry they ever doubted me.

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@Nokuthula's parents.

Nokuthula's mother(Faith) looks at her phone and blinks her tears. She feels like she failed her daughter, the words they both (her and her husband) said to Nokuthula are so slowly coming back to her. She regrets it, sure she fell pregnant while doing her final year in University but at least she was 23 years old. Others fall pregnant at 15, at least she listened to them during her teenage years.

She was supposed to be a mother to her and not abandon her like she did..

The husband (Kwakhe) clicks his tongue and continues with his newspaper.

Faith:I am worried about her, we don't know where she is.

Kwakhe:If Nokuthula wants to be a woman then let her be. I spent thousands of rands towards her education only for her to turn into a slut just when she was doing her final year.

Faith:She is still our daughter. We need to bring her home.

Kwakhe:She doesn't even know who the father of the baby is, you see your teachings!?

Faith:You will not dare blame this on me!

Kwakhe:You were the one who was supposed to look after her and teach her about how to maintain herself.

Faith:She is just a child, and she made a mistake.

Kwakhe:Well her mistake cost her everything. In fact she did us all a favour by moving out, before she could influence her sister with her bad behaviour.

Faith sighs and goes to the kitchen for water. She is very worried, and it hurts that Nokuthula doesn't want anything to do with her.

She sends her a text message.

'MY daughter at least tell me where you are, so I can know you're safe'-Faith.

She gets no reply and she almost toss her phone on the wall.

"Mommy, why does daddy hate Sis Thula?", she hears a tiny voice asking behind her.

It was her younger daughter, Yamkela.

She picks her up.

Faith:He doesn't hate her baby, he is just angry at her for now.

Yamkela:Will he forgive her? Sis Thula told me that he is angry because she has a baby.

Faith:Don't worry about anything my pancake, Sis will return home okay?

She nods her tiny head. Faith catches the sadness in her eyes and her heart drops.

“Please come home Nokuthula”, she thinks to herself.

To be continued.....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #02

NOKUTHULA

I woke up early this morning, I have to find a creche for Owami so I can do my business during the day. I have bathed him and myself.

I pack his things on his bag and head out.

I find Mam'Betty outside, watering her garden. I greet her with a smile and she replies.

Betty:Where are you going so early in the morning?

Nokuthula:I am looking for a crèche for Owami. I have to go job hunting today.

Betty:There is a creche right by the corner, on your left. They will let you leave him.

Nokuthula:Okay thank you. See you later.

I walk out of the yard and follow the directions she told me. I see a big board written, "Siyabambisana Day Care". This must be it. I open the gate and walk inside.

I greeted the lady I came across with.

Nokuthula:Hi my name is Nokuthula, I would like to put my son here.

"Is he registered or it's your first time coming here?", she asks me.

Nokuthula:No it's my first time, I recently moved here.

"But he looks too young to be left at a day care. How many months?"

Nokuthula:He is five months, I promise you he doesn't cry.

"Okay....follow me"

I follow her to an office and she gives me multiple papers that I have to sign. She then tells me that I need to have fetched Owami not later than 15h00pm. I think I will be back by that time.

I leave my baby and run back to the house, to get my important documents.

I walk to the bus stop and take a bus to town.

After what felt like a long time, the bus finally stopped and we all hopped out. I had no idea where I was going, but I will knock at any door right now.

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SIZIPHIWE

Dinner with my parents last night was fantastic. I really missed them. Me and Luhlelo slept over since it was late to drive, and mom is really strict when it comes to driving at night.

Right now we are in the kitchen making breakfast, she actually woke me up.

Mom:So how are things between the two of you?

I knew she wanted to gossip. I can't help but smile.

Mom:She's already blushing, Cha ukuphethe kahle awubuzwa(He's treating you well, no need to ask).

Siziphiwe:He is ma, none of my ex boyfriends ever made me feel like this.

Mom:Oh I'm really glad you are happy Phiwe. Honestly you've made me proud as a mother, you've achieved quite a lot for someone your age.

Siziphiwe:Nothing but being focused to what you want. We lived in poverty and it wasn't nice. Having only one chicken feet a month is not something I want to go through again.

Mom: Things were tough back then, I'm sorry me and your father couldn't give you the life you deserved.

Siziphiwe: It's not your fault. What matters is that that phase of life is over. Silala ngo bhekeni sivuke ngawo. Let's continue before these men wake up.

We hurry with breakfast and set the table. The men finally join us. Luhlelo winks at me and I ignore him while blushing.

Dad: Are you not going to work today sweetheart?

Siziphiwe: I am, but I'm going to come in late.

We had a nice breakfast and I helped my mom wash the dishes when we were done. Now it was time to go. Luhlelo accompanied me to the car and kissed my lips.

Luhlelo: Have a good day.

Siziphiwe:You too, you are going back home?

Luhlelo:No, I have to pass by the office first.

Siziphiwe:Okay, I love you.

Luhlelo:I love you.

He got on the driver's seat and drove me to work, my company to be specific.

Luhlelo:I will have people bring your car okay?

Siziphiwe:Okay. Bye.

Luhlelo:Bye sweetheart.

He drove away and I fixed my ring and headed inside. People were already working, I would like to think that I have a very good relationship with my employees

I am not that monster boss. I try to be as friendly as possible to them, but I don't play when it comes to work! I mean business when it comes to that.

I walk to my office and pass Mpilo at her working station. I wave at her since she was on the phone.

I open the door and get in. My eyes meet the picture on the wall and I instantly get filled with sadness. The girl I lost.

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NOKUTHULA

When I check the time it is close to 13h00pm. I haven't found anything yet, most places I've went to told me that they are not hiring or I should leave my CV, but I saw one of them throwing it on the bin. Today was a complete waste. Owami's nappies

are almost running out, with milk it's a bit better because he can have breastmilk.

I am going back now, will try some other day. I'm tired and the sun isn't doing any justice to my skin.

I buy a small can of cola with the little money I have, just to quench my thirst. Walking to the taxi rank feels like forever with my level of tiredness.

A man approaches me. In this heat!

"Sawubona Nkosazane", amadoda anescefe! (Men are tiring).

I look at him up and down and don't reply, I continue with walking.

"I wasn't going to ask you out, I just wanted to tell you that you have a red stain on your Jean", he said cocky.

I quickly put my hand on my back and indeed I felt something wet. Oh God no! Please don't tell me I'm having my periods!

Why today!? These are the consequences of having a forever changing cycle.

I am so embarrassed right now. Some lady hurries and stand behind me. I quickly put the jacket over my Jean.

Nokuthula:Thank you.

I say to the lady.

"It's a pleasure, these things happen. Don't be embarrassed".

I searched for that man but he was nowhere to be seen. I sighed and carried on to the rank and took a taxi home.

I passed by the creche and picked up Owami, they said he didn't give them any problems. Tomorrow I have to come with payment.

We went back to our room. I changed his nappy and bathe him.

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LUTHANDO

She is sloshed at a bar she doesn't even remember what was the name. The bartender drags her outside and she is laughing non stop.

"I swear to God! You are not allowed back here again!", he swears.

Luthando burps and a car stops before them. The bartender tells the driver where he should drop her off.

She gets in the car as drunk as she is and falls asleep immediately when the car starts moving. The driver chuckles, if it was another person he would be taking advantage of her right now, but he also has Sisters and he wouldn't want to hear that some pervert did as he pleased with them.

He stops at the address the bartender told him and help her get out.

Driver:You are home. Wake up.

Luthando:Mhhh, just a few more minutes mom....

She mumbles in her sleep.

The driver picks her up and walks toward the house. He knocks and wait for the answer.

A teenage girl opens the door..

Driver:Is this your sister?

"Yes".

Driver:Okay, she's asleep. Can I take her inside?

He gets inside the house and the girl leads her to the couch.

The driver looked around and the room was a bit of a mess.

He put Luthando down and looked at the girl.

Driver:Where is your mother?

"We don't have a mother"

Thinking that he's overstepped his boundaries, he decides to stop it with the questions. He takes out R50 from his pockets and give it to her.

"Thank you", he smiles and walks out.

Thandiwe looks at the R50 and beams with joy, she doesn't waste any time and hurries to the shop to buy bread.

She hurries back to the house and gives her siblings two slices each. They all eat and down the bread down with water.

Hours later, Luthando wakes up from her nap and her mouth tastes bitter.

She goes to the kitchen and frowns when she sees the bread.

Luthando:Thandiwe!!!!

She shouts at the top of her voice, Thandiwe comes to her..

Luthando:Siphumaphi lesinkwa? (Where is this bread coming from?)

Thandiwe:Ubhuti okade eklethile usiphe u R50(The person who brought you here gave us R50).

Luthando slaps her with a loud clap that made her(Thandiwe) dizzy.

Luthando:Nonyoko waqala kanje! (Your mother started like this too!) And now she's six feet under, all because she couldn't close her legs. You want to be like her!?

Thandiwe:Cha! (No).

She shakes her head crying.

Luthando: You want the whole world to know that we are poor!? Get out of here!!

She runs out in speed.

Luthando opens the fridge and she's met by only a jug of cold water.

She takes out the bread and folds four slices at once, she opens her mouth wide and push them all in. She chews and drinks water on the side.

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To be continued.....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #03

THANDIWE

It's early in the morning and she is helping her sisters prepare for school, she is also late. It would be better if Luthando could at least help them out, but she's dead asleep.

She finishes dressing them and gives them their bags.

She searches for the bread she bought yesterday and there was an empty plastic by the table. She sighed and blinked her tears.

Angrily, she took the plastic and marched to where Luthando was sleeping. She shook her roughly and hit her with the plastic.. Luthando woke up in confusion and she was half asleep.

Thandiwe:Why did you finish the bread? We only ate 2 slices which makes it 6 slices, and you saw it fit to finish it all! What will we eat!?

Luthando:Mhhh I'm still sleeping...

She said and went back to sleep.

Thandiwe:You are so selfish! Nxxx.

She went back to her siblings and told them that they should leave. But she did not forget to put plates in their bags, so they can have food from the feeding scheme at school.

Thandiwe:Asambeni(Let's go).

They followed her and she dropped them off at the primary school and went to her school.

She was almost late as the bell rang just when she entered the gates.

She hurried to class, luckily the teacher was not in yet.

She sat on her desk, next to her friend, Mpumi.

Mpumi:You were almost late.

Thandiwe:I know, I had to drop off my siblings at school first, I'm scared to let them walk alone...

Mpumi:True hey, the things that have been happening lately are scary. Kids get kidnapped every minute.

Thandiwe:That's my worst fear...

Mpumi:Why didn't Luthando take them to school?

Thandiwe:Uyamazi nje(You know her).

Mpumi:Your sister has issues.

Thandiwe:Deep issues friend.

They saw the Maths teacher through the window and the whole class went quiet, they took out their books.

"Good Morning class".

They stood up and greeted her. She gave them permission to sit back down.

"Yesterday's homework please"

Thandiwe opened her exercise book happily, she didn't sleep last night doing her homework.

"Okay, anyone who volunteers to do corrections for number 1",
The teacher said.

Thandiwe raised up her hands quickly like something was poking her butt.

"Okay Thandiwe, you may give it a try"

She stood up and went to the board and did the sum proudly, she was so sure that her answer was right.

When she was done, she turned back to the teacher but Mrs Mnguni didn't look satisfied. She looked back at her classmates and most of them were laughing at her.

Mrs Mnguni:Keep quiet, there is nothing funny. You are all here to learn. We don't laugh at someone if they did a mistake. I don't ever want to see this behavior again okay!?

"Yes Ma'am", they said in unison.

Mrs Mnguni:Thandie you may sit down.

Disappointed, she went to her seat and wondered how she got that wrong. She was so sure her answer was right.

Mrs Mnguni called Mpumi to redo the sum and she got it right. More students did the rest of the corrections, and Thandiwe had gotten zero, none of her answers were right.

How was she getting this school thing wrong? Just when she thinks she's got it, then boom she doesn't have it!

She peeps at Mpumi's work and all her answers were correct. Lucky her!

She is the top student after all, always getting distinctions and trophies.

She is from a rich family and she is smart..

"Impilo inzima! (Life is hard)", she thinks to herself.

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NOKUTHULA

She is back again at town and trying to find a job, but it's been hopeless. She is starting to lose hope that she will find something. She had a plan when she left home, find a room to rent, get a job and raise her son alone. Now she is forced to ask for handouts, something she hates with all her heart. She doesn't want to come across as desperate to other people.

She enters another boutique, and sighs.

Even if they could give her a job of being a cleaner, she doesn't mind.

She goes to the lady on sight and greet her.

Nokuthula:Hi, I am here to drop off my CV for any vacant spaces.

"I'm sorry my darling, but we are not hiring.", The lady said to her.

Nokuthula:Okay, I understand. Thank you for your time.

She turned back with a tail in between her legs.

"Hey I think I know you from somewhere"

She turned back and looked at her. Here it goes!

"Aren't you Ndaba's daughter?"

Nokuthula:The famous millionaire, who donated to over 50 orphanages

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the same Ndaba who funded the SIYAKHANA BURSARY SCHEME?

"Yes. Aren't you?"

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Nokuthula:No I'm not.

She said and walked out before she could ask her any more questions.

She decided to sit at the benches and calculate her next moves.

She looked at the different people passing by, others selling something, others walking high, others carrying many cupboards.

Her eyes focused on the woman who was standing on the scorching sun, with a hat over her head. She was selling fruits and vegetables, and sweating, but she was not giving up. She was inspired, most people look down on selling on the streets like this, because they think you are selling expired products.

Perhaps she should try something different indeed, job hunting is difficult and really it seems pointless, especially with no qualifications. She doesn't think she will finish school, she doesn't have the funds and she has a baby now. She has to put him first, above everything.

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SIZIPHIWE

Today she decided to have a day off just to relax and buy a few things. Luhlalo has already left and went to his work, so she's alone. Their house is seriously too big for only the two of them. If they had children it would be much better, the little rascals would be running around the house and misplacing everything..

She smiles at that thought, Luhlelo has been asking them to have children but she thought it was not yet the time. She wanted them to get married first and then have children, but the wedding is still far, maybe being pregnant wouldn't hurt. She would love to be a mother, she's at the appropriate age for that now.

She will make an arrangement with her doctor to get off contraceptives. Surely Luhlelo will be happy to hear that.

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THANDIWE

It is after school and she is walking with Mpumi to her house.

Mpumi:My brother is coming to visit over the weekend, I'm so excited. I missed him.

Thandiwe:You are always talking about him.

Mpumi:I missed him, ever since he got engaged he barely comes home.

Thandiwe:I'm sure he misses you too, he will bring you presents.

Mpumi:Obviously.

They laughed.

They arrived at her house and went straight to her room, after greeting Mpumi's mother first.

They threw their bags on the floor and sat on the bed.

Mpumi:So let's do Maths today.

Thandiwe:Okay, speak slowly, you know I'm a slow learner.

Mpumi:You are not a slow learner. You are just stressed, from taking care of your siblings and having to deal with your sister, it's a lot.

Thandiwe:I wish mama was still alive, things were so much easier. Ever since she died, Luthando has been something I don't even recognize. I have never been the smartest in school but now it's worse. I try to study but it's hard, sometimes she just switches off the lights while I'm busy and say I'm wasting electricity. I have to come back to school, bathe my siblings, clean the house cook and dish for them, while she has been at home the whole day and she did nothing. She dropped out of school for God knows what reason, but she can't even look for a job. The food we eat, most of it is hustled by me. She does nothing! Nothing. All she does is, remind us that our mother was not a good person and that is why she died. But my mother was a nice person, I know her.

Mpumi snuggles her and helps her wipe her tears.

Mpumi:I'm sorry, it will get better I promise.

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #04

At Mpumi's House.

She snuggles her closer and wipes her tears.

Mpumi:I'm sorry, it will get better I promise.

Thandiwe:Time will tell, I am tired Mpumi I don't want to lie.
Everyday we are fighting to see tomorrow. I don't even know
what we are going to eat today.

Mpumi:I will be back.

She goes out to the kitchen and takes a black carrier bag, she
opens the cupboards and loads any type of food she can see,
while checking for her mother to not see her..

She opens the fridge and also load some stuff.

"What are you doing?", she is scared off by her mother's voice.

Mpumi:Uhhh....

She snatches the bag away from her and peep inside.

"Where is all this food going Mpumi?"

Mpumi:I was just taking some for Mathandi.

Her mother looks at her sternly for a few seconds.

"Then pack it nicely, not like this. She's not a street thug"

She takes out the food and put it back appropriately. Mpumi ran off again to her room, leaving her mother with tears. She knows that life very well.

"I wish I could adopt you", she says to herself.

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NOKUTHULA

She stands up when she hears a knock on the door, she wonders who could it be because she has no friends. She just came back.

To her surprise, it was her mother in flesh.

She let her in, Faith entered and looked around the room. It was tiny but clean, she was proud of that.

Nokuthula: Mom what are you doing here? And how did you find me?

Faith: You're my daughter. I couldn't sleep not knowing where you were.

Nokuthula: Oh wow, so you investigated me? Not surprised though, y'all put a tracker inside my body when I was five years old.

Faith: It was to protect you.

Nokuthula: I'm sure. So what are you really doing here?

Faith: Nokuthula we need to talk.

She sat on the bed and picked up Owami. She played with him for a few seconds and put him back down.

Faith: I am not going to ask you to come back home because you made it clear that you will never return. I just want us to talk, as mother and daughter.

Nokuthula: *Sighs* Okay fine.

Faith:First I just want to apologize for the way I treated you, from the day you told us you were pregnant. I shouldn't have done that, sure I was disappointed and angry at you, but no one is perfect in this world. Truth is, me and your father expected more from you, we only wanted the best for you. So when you were doing your final year and you told us that you were pregnant, our emotions were evoked.

And you didn't even want to tell us who the father of your baby is.

Nokuthula:It won't make any difference. Look mom, I'm over that really. I know I disappointed you and all of that, and I regret it. But there's nothing we can do now, Owami is here and he is not going anywhere. I will not put my son up for adoption while I'm alive, just to keep dad's image clean. I will hustle for him, if it means I must be poor with him then so be it. As for coming back home, I don't think I can do it. Dad will always have something to say, his words pierce through the heart, I can't deal with that again.

Faith:I understand my daughter, but don't you want go back to school at least? I will look after my grandson while you finish your studies.

Nokuthula:No mom, I want to do this on my own.

Faith:Okay then I can find you a job.

Nokuthula:I don't want handouts

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I don't want anything from you.

Faith sighed sadly.

Faith:Okay, whenever you need me, I'll always be your shoulder to cry on. I'm your mother and I love you.

She stood up and went to the door, she took out a few notes from her wallet and gave them to her.

Nokuthula looked at the money and shook her head, she gave it back to her.

Nokuthula:Keep your money.

Faith took her money back.

Faith:I don't know what point you are trying to prove Nokuthula, but in all of this, please don't harm my grandson. I don't mind looking after him, I can take him and then you can stay here...

Nokuthula:I don't need your charity!!

She slammed the door on her face and silently cried. She heard her mother walking away and let out a burst of tears.

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SIZIPHIWE

She is back from running her errands and is back home, to her surprise she finds Luhlelo already back. They share a brief kiss.

Siziphiwe: You didn't tell me that you were going to be back early today.

Luhlelo: Just wanted to spend more time with you before I go home for the weekend.

Siziphiwe: Oh konje, when are you going to be back?

Luhlelo: Probably Monday or Tuesday. I miss my family...

Siziphiwe: Greet them for me, I would be going with you but I have a lot of work.

Luhlelo: It's fine babe, I understand.

Siziphiwe:So you won't believe who I saw today.

Luhlelo:Who did you see?

Siziphiwe:Nokuthula, she was walking around town but I didn't greet her.

Luhlelo:Why?

Siziphiwe:I'm scared, things aren't that good between us. It's been long since we talked, and I think she doesn't like me anymore. Nokuthula has this pride in her that makes you want to detach yourself from her. I know I am a bit older than her, but I really loved our friendship and we cared for each other. But ever since my career started booming, that's when she started showing signs of jealousy. Even through that, I didn't say anything because I thought I was seeing things. The final nail was when she got pregnant and she told me that I think I am better than her because I am a business woman with no child, my life is going well. And nalapho I was just advising her as a friend kanti she will bite my head off. Maybe it was the hormones I don't know. She told me that she will show me that

she can be something else, even after having a child. I was never in a competition with her, I thought we were friends. Her words hurt me, we never spoke after that. She blocked my numbers. I will be back.

She went to the bathroom and took her phone with, she called Nokuthula with another number.

"Hello", she heard her on the other side of the line..

Phiwe cleared her throat.

Siziphiwe:Nokuthula hi.

Nokuthula:Who am I talking to?

Siziphiwe:It's me, Siziphiwe.

Nokuthula:Oh... How can I help you?

Siziphiwe:I was wondering if we could just meet up and talk.

Nokuthula:About?

Siziphiwe:About everything that happened.

Nokuthula:I'm a very busy person, is that why you called me?
Because you think I'm not busy with anything?

Siziphiwe:No it's not about that, I'm sorry if I disturbed you.

Nokuthula:Mhhh.

Siziphiwe:So do you say yes?

Nokuthula:Nice offer, but I have to decline. I can't, I have errands to run tomorrow, probably for the whole day.

Siziphiwe:Oh, if you are free then please call me.

Nokuthula:Sharp.

She said and hung up.

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To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #05

Unedited

LUTHANDO

It's Friday, and that only means one thing to her, going out to party till the sun comes up.

She is back from borrowing a dress from one of the neighbors, she definitely needs to dress up today. Maybe she'll be lucky and vibe with a rich old man. She is dressing up and Thandiwe is busy with her school work..

She laughs and continues dressing...

Luthando:When are you receiving reports for the last term?

Thandiwe:They said they will give them to us next week Monday..

Luthando:Okay, do you think you passed?

Thandiwe:I don't know, we will see.

She really didn't know..

Luthando:Okay, come and lock. I am going out.

Thandiwe:When will you be back?

Luthando:Maybe tomorrow I don't know.

Thandiwe:So we will sleep alone again? What if something happens to us? Sis Thando we are scared, the last time you went out, someone tried to break inside, we had to shout your name before they ran away.

Luthando:No one will come in here Thandiwe. I am late and I need to go.

Thandiwe:What about food?

Luthando:Ngikuthathephi Mina sisi wami ongxoxole? (Where will I get food my sister tell me?)

A car hooted outside.

Luthando:That's my ride, I have to go. Lock the door.

She went out already dancing and singing as she waltzed to the car.

Her friends inside the car also made noise and blasted the music, angering the neighbors.

Luthando:Aaangeke ngvumeeeee aww yinj' umseleku

She sang and danced, now everyone passing by was watching and shaking their heads. Finally she finished and she got inside the car.

Luthando:Zimporozaphi today?

Sne:Some new club by the burbs.

Luthando:Hope I will get to score a rich man.

Londi:Don't worry, it's gonna be lot of them.

They drove around until they reached their destination.

The girls got out of the car and headed inside, the place was already vibing.

They went to the bar and ordered drinks. Luthando ordered an expensive drink.

Sne:We Thando oe how are you going to pay for such an expensive drink?

She asked and they laughed with Londi.

Luthando:Hawu oe!

She said embarrassed.

Londi:Abangenamali abaphuze amanzi ngeke(Those who don't have money must drink water).

Luthando put down the drink that was on the tip of her lips. She'd never thought that her friends would embarrass her like this, worse there are men near them and they surely heard them humiliating her like that.

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NOKUTHULA

She managed to buy data bundles just to research about how you go about with the process of selling on the street, first she needs to get a permit that will allow her to sell her things. Then she need stocks, she is thinking of selling food, maybe fat cakes, fried chips, fish and all those things. But she doesn't have funds. She sighs as she is met by the zeros on her bank balance. The only cash she has is for rent and a little of Owami's food and clothes. Other than that she has nothing, and she is too proud to ask for anything to anyone.

Owami wakes up from her nap crying and she picks him up,

Owami reminds him so much of his father, and he's got his facial features.

Nokuthula: Too bad daddy's not here with us.

She says to Owami.

Nokuthula:I know he was excited about you, he would have loved you. You look exactly like him.

She feels a tear rolling down and wipes it off with her thumb.

Nokuthula:But it's me and you against the world now baby. We will make it I promise you. I will open my businesses and make enough money to move us to a new place. This is just temporary. We don't need anyone's help, we can do this alone. Just the two of us.

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Back at the club.

Luthando was now sitting with some man on the VIP section. She was sitting on his lap.

Mxolisi:So what do you say after this we go to my house?

Luthando:Mhhh let me see, do you have a wife?

Mxolisi:I don't. You don't have to worry about that.

Luthando:Okay then, I will go with you, on one condition.

Mxolisi:Let's hear it.

Luthando:You will give me R5000 when we are done.

Mxolisi:*Smirking* Is that all you are worth?

Luthando:I am not selling my body. You are looking for a good time, I am too. So you have to pay for my time.

Mxolisi laughs.

Mxolisi:Whatever you say madam. Can we go now?

Luthando:Yes we can. Let me just tell my friends that I'm leaving so they won't wait for me.

She goes to where Sne and Londi were sitting.

Luthando:Guys I am leaving.

Londi:Oh you can wait for us, we are about to leave anyways.

Luthando:No

I am leaving with someone.

Sne:Lucky you who got a man, thina it has been a dry night. No one even looked at our direction.

Luthando:Sorry girls.

She walked away, Londi and Sne watched as she walked out with Mxolisi.

Sne:Luthando is lucky shame.

Londi:Let's go home friend, this is pointless.

Sne:Okay let's go to the bathroom first.

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SIZIPHIWE

She is home alone and binging some movies, Luhlelo left in the evening for his parents'.

He has sent her a goodnight text and reminded her that he loves her.

She feels so lucky to have gotten a man like Luhlelo. He is so calm and loving-everything she needs in a man. He has never caught him cheating or anything like that, so she's convinced he isn't doing that, and she trusts her man. She knows he wouldn't do something that would jeopardize their relationship.

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THANDIWE

She is sleeping, but with only her eyes. She is scared to death, being alone is really scary. Especially with the way that someone tried to break in the other day. She is spooning her siblings closely as they are sleeping.

The clock on the wall indicates that it's now 1000pm, so she relaxes a bit and try to get some actual sleep.

Deep in her sleep, she feels something touching her on her lower body. She ignores it and continues sleeping. But it continues, by now she was alarmed but she stayed still. She listened and got aware that someone is actually trying to pull down her panties. She almost let out a voice but she kept quiet and held her sisters closer. That person pulled down completely

her panties and she slowly opened her eyes. She peeped and noticed that it was the neighbor, the one they trusted the most, no wonder it's him. He knows that Luthando is not here.

Thandiwe shakes the kettle that was right above her head and the neighbor stop what he was doing and looks around. He stands up and walks around the house trying to figure out where that noise came from.

When he was out of sight, Thandiwe got out of bed and threw a spoon on the direction he was going. The neighbor further continued with his search.

She woke up her sisters so quickly and put one on her back, the other holding with her hand. She led them to the window and pushed them out. She was the only one remaining inside when the neighbor came back and noticed her trying to get out.

She climbed up the window but he held her down. By now she was crying and scared for her life, she managed to kick him on his crotch area, she heard that's painful to the male gender. He fell down holding his area and groaned in pain.

Without wasting any time, out she went of the window. She put back her sister on her back and held the other one with her hand.

"We run and we don't look back okay", she said to them.

They started running, she needed to get them out of there.

The neighbor came out of the house and noticed them running, he kept quiet and ran after them in silence.

Thandiwe's tears were falling uncontrollably and her sister was heavy on her back, so it made running a bit hard. But she couldn't stop. She noticed Mpumi's House and ran even faster, she turned back and noticed that the neighbor was still following them at a fair distance.

She arrived at Mpumi's gate, and knocked loudly on it. She knocked like a mad man, with the neighbor just a few seconds away from them.

"Please help.... Mpumi!!! Help me!!", she shouted while banging the gate.

The gate opened and Mpumi's older brother was the one who got out first, Thandiwe didn't waste any time and ran to hide behind him. The neighbor ran off so quickly.

Mpumi's brother went outside to look for him, he was carrying a stick, he thought it was a thug knocking.

He didn't find him so he went back inside the yard and closed the gate. Thandiwe was shaking and crying, with her sister's in her arms.

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #06

THANDIWE

They have been let inside, she is still shocked and traumatized by what happened. Mpumi's mother(Mato) brought her warm sugar water, to help her calm down but it was not helping. She is sure that she saw her life flashing before her eyes. If she didn't run with her sisters, she doesn't know what could have happened. She can't believe that out of all people, it was her neighbor who did something like this. It's true when they say you should not trust everyone, for not everyone has a pure heart.

Mato:Where is your sister Thandie when all this happened?

Thandiwe:*In hiccups* She left in the afternoon, I don't know where she went to.

Mato:Okay it's fine, you and your sisters can sleep here tonight.
Luhlelo please go to their house and lock it.

Luhlelo:Okay ma.

Mato:Thank you son. And be on the lookout for that pervert,
we need to talk to the police about this and open a case.

Luhlelo went out to Thandiwe's home.

Mato:Mpumi please take her to your room and be with her.

Mpumi:Yebo. Let's go Mathandi.

She held her hand and they disappeared into her room. She locked the door and looked at how vulnerable and terrified her friend looked. She wished she could do something to help her, now she hates Luthando more than ever. Thandiwe is always telling her that there is someone who always tries to break in when she's gone. How could she leave girl children alone!?

Mpumi:Do you want to take a bath?

Thandiwe:No...

She shakes her head.

Mpumi:Okay let's sleep.

Thandiwe:My sisters...

Mpumi:Mom will take care of them don't worry..

Thandiwe:Okay.

They got into bed together and Mpumi held her tight, like she was going to slip away from her. She kissed the back of her neck and released a loud breath.

Mpumi:Your heart is racing.

Thandiwe:I'm scared, I thought he was going to kill us.

Mpumi:You're safe now don't worry. You did good by running away.

She pulled her closer again, and pressed her body against hers.

Thandiwe was still shaking and gnashing her teeth.

Mpumi:We are not going to be able to sleep with you shaking like this Mathandi.

Thandiwe:I'm sorry, I just can't stop thinking about it..

Mpumi:It's okay, I'll help you forget.

She turned her around and looked at her under the dark.

She(Mpumi) brought her lips closer to hers and Thandiwe freezes. What was Mpumi doing?

Mpumi:Relax....

She shoved her tongue inside her and kissed her. Thandiwe remained still, not sure what to do or how to kiss back.

Eventually she figured it out and kissed her back. It went on for a while and Mpumi removed the covers from them. She lowered herself on the bed and knelt in front of Thandiwe.

Thandiwe:What are you doing??

Mpumi:Shhh.....

She parted her legs with her elbows and brought her face to her area. She removed the skirt and underwear she(Thandiwe) was wearing and brought her face even closer.

Thandiwe closed her legs but Mpumi opened them again took out her tongue to her pussy.

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LUTHANDO

She is having the time of her life with Mxolisi, the floor is filled with used condoms. She doesn't think she can have another go at it, the man is destroying her with his dick.

Mxolisi: Shall we go again mam?

Luthando: Oh please no. My girl can't handle it anymore.

He laughs at her and chooses to cuddle with her instead.

Mxolisi: So what is your problem?

Luthando: My problem?

Mxolisi:Yeah, a beautiful girl like you, hanging out in clubs like that and asking for 5K nyana. What is your deal?

Luthando:Nothing, I just love me some nice time.

Mxolisi:Really?

Luthando:Yes...

Mxolisi:I don't think so.

Luthando:What do you think then Mr?

Mxolisi:I think you have issues, deep issues. You try to mask the emotions by pumping your body with alcohol and sex so you don't have to think about whatever happened.

Luthando freed herself from him.

Luthando:I don't know what you are talking about, and I don't appreciate you prying in my business like this.

She said agitated.

Mxolisi:That's the first sign of having issues, getting defensive and ready to attack whenever someone tries to talk to you.

Luthando:I'm not getting defensive. I'm just saying that there is nothing wrong with me.

Mxolisi:I know someone whose wife cheated on him, they had been married for seven years and she was pregnant when she cheated. He found out but didn't confront her, he kept it all to himself. Everyday, he pretended like everything was normal meanwhile he knew that he was carrying so much hate and anger for his wife in his heart. He started following his wife to everywhere she went, he became a stalker. He became paranoid and wanted to know everything and everyone she talks to. He didn't trust her anymore. He didn't even believe that the child was hers. One day

when the child was born, he secretly did a DNA test and he found out that the child isn't his. He became even more angry, and that's when he decided that no it was enough, he's going to confront his wife. To his surprise, when he found out where he was, she was with her side dude. He stormed to his place, with his gun, he was a police officer. He arrived and came kicking doors. He found them sitting on the couches, like a perfect family. He didn't ask any questions and started shooting at them. By the time his senses came back, everyone was already dead, including the child.

Luthando:Why are you telling me all this?

Mxolisi:Because he was just like you, he didn't want to talk to anybody with his problems, he kept the anger to himself, and he ended up killing people. Nawe you don't want to admit to your issues, who knows your family might be hurt by you.

Luthando:I would never hurt my family.

Mxolisi:If you say so.

Luthando:I am leaving now. Thank you for the wonderful night.

Mxolisi:Oh, I thought you will leave in the morning.

Luthando:No, I am leaving now.

Mxolisi:Okay, I will take you home.

She got out of bed and wore her clothes.

They went his car and he drove her home and dropped her off.

Mxolisi:Can I have your numbers?

Luthando:Sure... It's 06-

Mxolisi:Thank you, I'll call you.

She nodded and went inside. The door was locked so she opened with her key. She got inside and the kids were nowhere in sight.

"Thandiwe!!", she called out for her but no response.

She sighed and proceeded to the bed to sleep. She kept turning and tossing, as Mxolisi's words kept ringing in her head.

NOKUTHULA

Owami has been crying all night, terribly. She doesn't know what to do anymore. She puts him back on the bed and remove all his clothes, maybe he was feeling hot.

She almost screams when she sees his whole body red.

"Where is this bad rash coming from?", she asked almost whispering.

She picked him up again and went around the room with him, to stop him from crying. But he didn't stop, he cried more..

She sighed defeated and sat down with him.

Back at Mpumi's home..

Thandiwe is beside herself with pleasure and she just wants to scream out loud but she can't. She pushes Mpumi's head even further down and hisses biting her lips.

Mpumi is having no messy on her untouched pussy as she pushes her tongue even further down, causing Thandiwe to lift up her body. She hold her legs down and continues...

Just as they were busy, the door opened..

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To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #07. Unedited

Mpumi snaps out of it and stands away from the door, she peeps her head out to whomever was trying to open. It was her brother.

Luhlelo:I have been knocking.

Mpumi:Uhhh.... sorry Thandiwe was still wearing her clothes.

Luhlelo:Ohh okay, tell her I'm from her house and I locked it.

Mpumi:Okay thank you bhutiza.

Luhlelo:Take care of her Mpumi.

Mpumi:I will, she's my friend.

Luhlelo:Okay you girls sleep tight.

He walks away and she closes the door, and goes to the bed with Thandiwe who had her eyes half closed.

Mpumi:Mathandi.

Thandiwe:Mhhh..

Mpumi:Do you need anything? Milk? Tea?

Thandiwe:No, I'm good. I just want to sleep. Please hold me.

She gets on the bed with her and holds her.

Thandiwe:Are you okay?

Mpumi:Who? Me? Yes why?

Thandiwe:You are breathing very heavily.

Mpumi:I'm okay....

She tried to sleep but it was so hard now, especially after the fantasy she just had. What was wrong with her?? Her friend is distraught and she's busy having a dirty mind!

She clears her throat and closes her eyes.

In the morning.....

Thandiwe was the first to wake up, she is used to waking up early.

Mpumi:Why are you up so early?

Thandiwe:It's another day, and I need to go back home.

Mpumi:You must be joking, after what happened yesterday!

Thandiwe:I don't want to crowd your family. I'm sure Luthando is back by now.

Mpumi:Thandi wait, it's still 6 in the morning. Wait for my mother. She can help you.

Thandiwe:I don't want to be a burden.

She really didn't want to disturb their perfect lives. They have already done too much for her. She ignores Mpumi and heads out of the room to find Mato.

She finds her sisters eating breakfast on the table.

She is not used to that.

Mato:Oh Thandiwe you are awake.

Thandiwe:Yes, I couldn't sleep.

Mato:No worries dear, sit down and have some breakfast.

Thandiwe:Uhhh ma, thank you for taking us in yesterday. We appreciate it. But we have a leave now.

Mato:You have to leave? What if that thug comes back?

Thandiwe:Sis Luthando will be there. Thank you for everything once again.

She grabbed her sisters.

Thandiwe:Goodbye.

She walked out with them. Mato sighed and cleaned up the room.

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NOKUTHULA

She has been standing on the long queues to get inside the offices for the permit.

The other people she was standing with, most of them left due to being tired.

"I wonder if we will get helped", someone says behind her.

She turns to her

Nokuthula:I doubt, I don't even think they are working. They haven't let anyone in.

"I really need this permit so I can start selling"

Nokuthula:Can't you just sell without it?

"And have the police destroy your things? I don't think so"

Nokuthula:They can do that?

"They do it".

Nokuthula:Hay I don't think anything is going to work out for me. I have been trying to find a job for months but nothing. I moved out from home trying to live my life because I was tired of having my dad breath down my neck. That time I have a five month old baby boy, selling on the streets was my last hope and I don't think it's going to work out now.

"Don't lose hope. Maybe they'll call us inside. Let's be patient. This life thing is not easy. It needs you to hold on. We are all going through different things, no one has it easy."

Nokuthula:I haven't even introduced myself. I'm Nokuthula.

"I'm Nosipho".

"The office is closed, and permits will not be issued out until the 6th of November 2024", the lady who works inside shouted.

Everyone at the que sighed disappointed.

Nokuthula:Well...we woke up for nothing....

Nosipho:Let's just leave. They are doing this on purpose, they are saving the permits for their friends.

They walked out of the building and exchanged numbers before going their separate ways.

She took a taxi back home and fetched Owami from creche first. But the care giver asked to speak with her.

Nokuthula:What's wrong? Is my baby okay?

"Relax. I am concerned about him"

Nokuthula:What do you mean?

"He has this red rash all over his body, and he cried the whole day today. If he's not crying, he's just staring into space without even blinking, I even thought something happened."

Nokuthula panicked instantly and opened up Owami's jersey and he was indeed red from the rash. Yesterday it was just small but now its all over his body. How did it happen!?

" I think something is wrong with your son. You should take him to the doctor or the clinic. It's still early."

Nokuthula:I will, thank you mem. I don't know what is wrong with him. I noticed it yesterday that he has a rash but I didn't take it serious because I thought it was the nappies.

" I'm sure he will be fine once the doctors find out what's wrong with him"

Nokuthula:Okay

Advertisement

let me hurry to the clinic. I don't have money to see a doctor.

She walked out of the crèche and took a different direction, going to the clinic. Upon arrival, it was packed with long queues.

"Oh not again!", she muttered.

Luckily, children were a top priority in this clinic so she was let in.

The nurses didn't even do anything much, they just gave her some cream to apply to his body and said it was eczema.

She may not be a health care worker, but shouldn't they run some tests or something?

"Sisi uyawubona ulayini ungakanani? (Do you see how long the line is?)", The nurse rudely asked her.

Nokuthula:I understand the line is long, but my son doesn't need cream. I need to know what is causing this rash, can't you see that he's even breathing difficulty?

" Aren't you Ndaba's daughter? What are you doing in a public clinic? Shouldn't your father be taking you to an expensive doctor?"

Nokuthula:I can see that you won't be helping me, so I will leave.

She took the cream and left.

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At Mpumi's House.

It is midday and she is thinking of going to Thandiwe's house to check up on her.

Luhlelo:Where are you going?

Mpumi:To Thandiwe. I need to check up on her.

Luhlelo:Okay I will accompany you.

Mpumi:I will be fine don't worry. How is Sis Siziphiwe?

Luhlelo:She is fine, don't try to change the topic..

Mpumi:*Laughing* I'm not changing the topic. I was just asking about your fiance. Side note, I still don't like her..

Luhlelo:You not liking her has nothing to do with me, I don't care because I don't understand why you don't like her.

Mpumi:*Shrugging* I just don't feel her.

Luhlelo:So tell me who does Thandiwe stay with?

Mpumi:Their older sister, but she's barely home and she doesn't take care of them like an older sibling should.

Luhlelo nodded and put his hands on his pockets.

Luhlelo:How old is she?

Mpumi:Why are you asking?

She asked looking at him suspiciously.

Luhlelo:Just answer me.

Mpumi:She's my age.

Luhlelo:I see.

Mpumi:Oh hell no! Please don't tell me you want her!

Luhlelo:Oh come on, she's young and besides I'm about to get married.

Mpumi:It better stay that way. Thandiwe is no field to play in.

Luhlelo:Why are you getting so defensive?

Mpumi:I'm not. I just don't want to see people taking advantage of her.

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NOKUTHULA

Owami is worrying me a lot, I'm deeply worried and panicking right now. I don't even have no one to turn to for help.

He has been crying non stop, I don't even know what to do.

I answer my ringing phone without even checking who it is.

Nokuthula:Hello.

"Is that my grandson crying?"

Nokuthula:Ma I can't talk. Owami is crying.

Faith:What's wrong with him?

Nokuthula:I don't know, he started having this rash and he just blanks out. He has been crying non stop, I don't know what to do.

Faith:Nokuthula I don't know much about traditions and customs, but where is Owami's father?

Nokuthula:Ma please stop asking about him.

Faith: Maybe the child needs his father, I don't know Nokuthula. Owami is not a child who just cries.

Nokuthula: His father is not here ma.

I blinked a few tears.

Faith: Where is he?

Nokuthula: He's just not here.

Faith: Nokuthula you can talk to me, I'm your mother. Look now, you are also crying now. Where is his father?

Nokuthula: His father is dead ma, he died the day I gave birth. He didn't even see his son. He was involved in a car accident when he was coming to us at the hospital. We didn't even attend the funeral because his family wouldn't let us. So that's it, Owami doesn't have a father. He's gone. Noah was so excited about my pregnancy; you could hear his joy over the phone when I told him that I'm at the hospital. But he didn't make it to us.

To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #08

NOKUTHULA

Faith:What do you mean his father is dead? Why didn't you tell us Nokuthula?

Nokuthula:We weren't on good terms. You and dad were always upset with me, it was hard to share anything with you.

Faith:Okay I'm coming there, just hold on. We will take him to the doctor for now and fix other things tomorrow because it's late.

Nokuthula:No it's fine I got it.

Faith:You don't have anything, stop being stubborn. This isn't about you. It's about Owami.

Nokuthula:Owami is my son and I know how to take care of him.

Faith:Nokuthula Ndaba!! I am on my way there. Now sit down and wait for me. I have been begging you for far too long.

Faith hung up and Nokuthula opened the window a bit. Owami was still crying but not that loud. A while later, she heard a car sound outside and knew it was her mother. She took Owami's bag and went outside after locking the door...

Faith opened the car door for her and she got in the backseat.

Faith:Let me see him.

She gave him Owami and Faith almost barfed at the horror she was seeing.

Faith:Kodwa Nokuthula why did you wait for this long? Take him.

Faith started the car and drove to the nearest private hospital that opens 24 hours.

They were attended to quickly.

"It looks like it was just a bad allergy reaction. Did you give him something?", The doctor asked her.

Nokuthula:No, but he was at creche these days. This is new. He has never had an allergy reaction.

"Okay, we will give him some medicine and cream."

Nokuthula:That's it? Aren't you going to run some tests or draw some blood?

"If his condition persists, then you can come back. Now take this prescription to the pharmacy desk and get these"

Nokuthula:Okay, thank you.

She went back to her mother.

Faith:What did the doctor say?

Nokuthula:He said it's an allergy reaction. He gave me some prescriptions. So I'll just go to the pharmacy and get them.

Faith:Okay.... We are going to fix this don't worry. Owami will be fine. He's a strong child.

Nokuthula:I hope so, because I can't stomach the thought of anything happening to him.

Faith:Nothing will happen. We will find his father's family and do things accordingly.

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THANDIWE

She is back home and they found Luthando sleeping like a dead person. She's only waking up now, and she prays she's not about to cause drama because she's not in the mood for it.

Luthando yawns and check the cupboards for food.

Thandiwe:There is no food.

She remembers the 5K she got from Mxolisi, but that is money for booze. She can't spend it all on groceries and besides, Thandiwe always has a plan. She will find them something to eat.

Luthando:Where were you yesterday?

Thandiwe:We slept at Mpumi's house.

Luthando:Why?

Thandiwe:Bhut Sfiso broke into the house last night and he tried to hurt us, so we had to run.

Luthando:He tried to hurt you??

Thandiwe:Yes, I felt someone lifting down my panty. It was him.

Luthando felt a little bit guilty. If she were here, none of that would have happened. Thandiwe had been trying to tell her that someone always tries to break in when she is not here.

Luthando:Oh, he didn't hurt you. Are you sure?

Thandiwe:yes we ran before he could do anything.

Luthando:Are you uh.... Okay?

Thandiwe:Yeah I'm fine. I was a bit shaken yesterday but I'm fine now.

Luthando:I'm sorry for not being here, I'll never go out at night again.

Thandiwe:Do you promise?

Luthando:I promise. Are the three of you hungry?

Thandiwe:Very. We left without eating at Mpumi's house. I don't like being a burden to someone.

Luthando:Okay, I'm going to head out to the shop real quick and buy us takeaways. I will lock you inside.

Thandiwe nodded but she was a bit scared.

Luthando took the money and locked the door when she was outside.

Thandiwe: This is the first in a long time I see Luthando so humble and apologetic.

She claps her hand and stands near the door for any suspicious movement.

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LUTHANDO

She has made her order but her mind is far away. Has she really been a bad sister all this time?

"Lutha your order is ready", they tell her.

She pays for the food and goes back home. She stands by the neighbors' house, getting conflicted by all sorts of emotions.

Who knows what that pig could have done to her sisters if they didn't run away? He would have assaulted them sexually, and that's not something she wishes upon anyone. It's not nice, it leaves a scar on you forever.

She unlocks the door and hands over the food to Thandiwe.

Luthando:I'm coming back just now.

She went to Sfiso's home and knocked violently on the door.
Good thing she is wearing pants

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so she will manhandle him properly.

Sfiso's mother opens the door shouting at whomever is breaking down her door.

Luthando pushes her aside and let herself in, searching all rooms. Looking for Sfiso.

"Luthando what is wrong with you!?"

Luthando:Uphi u Sfiso? (Where is Sfiso)

"He's not here. He came here in the morning in a rush and we haven't seen him ever since"

Luthando:When you see him, Tell him I will teach him a lesson.
Ngizombulala ngalezi ezami izandla, angimsabi phela Mina.
Ngelusa Mina!!

"My child what's going on? He also came here crying that he almost did something bad and that some people are looking for him. What's going on?"

Luthando:He broke in at home while my sisters were sleeping.
Who knows what he did to them?

"No way! Sfiso wouldn't do something like that. That's not like him at all"

Luthando:I was telling you, not asking. You have always been his spokesperson. Your son is a well known rapist but you're always on his side.

"Don't come to my house and speak nonsense like you're the best sister. You are the one who left your sisters all alone at night. It was not the first time and it was definitely not the last. Nawe uyisdwedwe nje sentombazane"

She chuckles and feel letting down a rain of a slap, but this is an adult. So she just walked out and went back to the house.

Luthando:Tomorrow morning we are going to open a case against that pig nxxx!!

Thandiwe:It's school tomorrow.

Luthando:When you come back, I will go and do grocery shopping tomorrow so you will find me here.

Thandiwe licked her fingers and almost asked what's with the sudden change of heart, but she decided to just live in the moment. She knows Luthando, very soon she will be back to her old ways. This was probably a front or she's trying to ease her conscience for not being here that night.

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SIZIPHIWE

She has been trying to call Luhlalo but to no avail. His phone has been off the whole day. She's not sure what's happening. He's not a person to just ignore her without any explanation.

She tries him one more time, and he answers her this time.

Luhlalo:Hello.

Siziphiwe:Seriously that's it? Just a plain "Hello"!?

Luhlalo:What's wrong now?

Siziphiwe:I have been calling you all day and you were not answering my calls, you didn't even call me back.

Luhlelo:Sorry, I was busy today.

Siziphiwe:Busy doing what?

Luhlelo:Stuff. What's with the third degree questions?

She took her phone away from her ear and blinked repeatedly. What is wrong with this man today!? This was the first time hearing him speak to her like this.

She put it back on her ear.

Siziphiwe:What is wrong with you today?

Luhlelo:Phiwe it's been a long day, did you need something?

Siziphiwe:Is it a crime to call my man now?

Luhlelo:No.

Siziphiwe:I can see that you don't want to speak to me today so goodnight.

Luhlelo:Sure.

He hung up, leaving Siziphiwe in disbelief. She chewed her inner mouth and felt the room getting hotter. Were they experiencing problems now? What could have went wrong? She has done every trick in the book to ensure that Luhlelo doesn't get tired of her.

Maybe she needs to get pregnant quickly. She doesn't like his new attitude and something needs to be done soon before it gets worse.

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THE FOLLOWING DAY

THANDIWE

As always, she is accompanying her siblings to school first. She drops them off and takes a different direction. She is very happy today. Luthando gave them lunch money, R20 each! She doesn't remember the last time getting lunch money.

She was on her way when a Familiar car stopped near her. She calmed down and kept on walking. The driver lowered the window and she relaxed when she saw it was Mpumi's brother, Luhlelo.

Luhlelo: Get in. I'll give you a lift.

Reluctantly, she got in with the hopes that she will find Mpumi inside but she wasn't there.

Luhlelo:You good?

Thandiwe:I'm fine. Where is Mpumi?

Luhlelo:She already left.

Thandiwe:Oh, I thought she was in here.

Luhlelo:No it's just the two of us.

The drive was a bht quiet. He kept on stealing glances at her, which made her uncomfortable and she wished they were at school already.

Luhlelo:So how is school?

Thandiwe:It's fine.

He stopped near the school and she got out just as he opened the door. She sprinted to class.

Mpumi:*Laughing* Why are you running?

Thandiwe:Your brother gave me a lift and it was a bit awkward. I'm scared of him. He has that intimidating face.

Mpumi breathed nervously.

Mpumi:He's just like that, don't mind him.

Thandiwe:Okay... Oh here's the teacher. The bell rang already?

Mpumi:Yep.

The teacher came and they greeted him. He had a big brown envelope with him, surely those were their report cards.

Thandiwe's mood instantly dropped. She knows she failed.

Indeed it was their report cards, the teacher distributed them to everyone. But she was scared to open hers. She asked Mpumi to open it for her. Mpumi stared at the card for a while and looked at her with a sad expression.

Thandiwe:I failed, didn't I?

Mpumi slowly nodded.

She(Thandiwe) took the report from her and shoved it inside her bag. Her mood was ruined for the day.

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To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #09

THANDIWE

Getting back home with the report in her hand, she found Luthando unpacking a load of grocery. Where did she get the money?

She gives her the report and sighs.

Thandiwe:I failed again.

Luthando takes the report from her and looks at it. There was a line of level 1s for all her subjects. She even got a 16% for Maths.

Luthando:I'm sorry, you will do better next time.

Thandiwe:What next time? We are writing finals soon and obviously I will fail because I have failed all the previous terms.

This means I will never go to Varsity, my name won't show on the paper. I will be a laughing stock. Why is school so hard for me? I try so hard Sis Luthando, I even attend extra classes and have Mpumi tutor me but it's still the same. I just don't understand....

Luthando:Life is not black and white, there are people who dropped out at the tenth grade but they didn't allow that to stop them. They did something for themselves and became successful. So maybe nawe school isn't for you.

Thandiwe:So what do you think I should do?

Luthando:I don't know.

Thandiwe looks at her and takes her report.

Thandiwe:It's nice of you to show this caring side. I missed it.

Luthando>About that... I'm sorry, I will do better as a sister I promise.

Thandiwe:I hope so, I hope you aren't doing all this because you feel guilty about what happened.

Luthando:I do feel guilty, but that's not the reason why I'm being nice. Someone actually spoke some sense into me the other night. He made me realize a lot of things. I am angry, but not at you. I directed my anger to the wrong people, the person who caused all this is gone, leaving me to deal with the trauma.

Thandiwe:What did mom do?

Luthando:It doesn't matter, I don't want to talk about it yet.

Thandiwe:Okay...

She runs to her and gives her a tight hug. Luthando just melts in her arms, it's been long without this affection and care. It feels strange, yet good.

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NOKUTHULA

Mom took, no she actually dragged me back home last night. I haven't seen my father and I hope it remains that way. That man can talk for days about how disappointed he is in me. He should chill out, I made a mistake and I owned up to it. Owami was a bit calm yesterday but he was crying a bit.

The door of my room opens and I see Yamkela running to me. Oh how I missed her! She jumps into the bed with me and hugs me.

Yamkela:Sisi I missed you.

Nokuthula:I missed you too pancake.

Yamkela:Ahhh Wami....

She takes Owami and plays with her, I watch in admiration. Mom follows and tells me that Bab'Ndaba is seeking for my presence at the lounge. Kwasuka lokho! I went to the bathroom to wash my face and brush my teeth.

Nokuthula:Yammy don't drop him or try to pick him up. Play with him on the bed okay.

Yamkela:Yebo.

I walked out to the lounge.

Nokuthula:Sanibona(Greetings)

Kwakhe:Yebo Nokuthula.

Faith:How did Owami sleep?

Nokuthula:Good, he didn't cry.

Faith:That's better..

My eyes were looking everywhere except my father, I can't look at him in the eye.

Kwakhe:So what brought you back to my house?

Faith:I'm the one who brought her back. This is still her home.

Kwakhe:The very same home she cursed and said she will never return?

Nokuthula:I needed to leave this place. We both know dad that you were always angry with me.

Kwakhe:Oh so now I'm not supposed to be angry with you?
Who is the parent here? Me or you? Was I supposed to smile when you fell pregnant?

Nokuthula:Cha baba, but you could have at least given me a chance to explain myself.

Kwakhe:Uzochaza ini because wamitha Nokuthula!? What was there to explain!? On top of that, you have the gut to tell your mother that you hate me, all because I was angry with you.

Nokuthula:I didn't say I hate you.

Kwakhe:What did you say then?

Nokuthula:You wanted me to give up my child for adoption, because you were scared your business associates would laugh at you. You made everything about you, without even caring about how I felt that time. I too had dreams, I didn't plan to be pregnant on my final year. So yes, maybe I didn't like you very much.

Faith:Okay that's enough! Both of you!

She shouted while standing up.

Faith:I have been listening to the two of you going on and on! It is enough now. We are not here because of you Kwakhe, this is about Owami, not you. Same as you Nokuthula, stop being stubborn and accept help. You can't live life on your own, you definitely need a helping hand. Again, this is about Owami not the two of you. Now we are going to calm down and talk like adults!!!..

Nokuthula:I'm sorry...

I cleared my throat. When mom shouts like this, you know she's fed up.

Kwakhe:What's wrong with Owami?

I swear I'm sensing concern from his voice.

Faith:Owami has a bad rash all over his body, and he cries a lot, something he never does. We took him to the doctor and they said it was an allergy. Then I asked Nokuthula who Owami's

father was because I figured maybe he just needs his father and he will be fine. Nokuthula told me that his father is dead, he died the day she gave birth. She said she wasn't allowed to his funeral, by his family. Most people take these things lightly because majority of black people have abandoned their traditions and succumbed to the White's living style.

Kwakhe:Why didn't you tell us all of this?

Nokuthula:I was scared, and heartbroken. It all happened too fast, I still think it's a prank because I haven't moved on. I loved him.

Faith:So... We should find the boy's family and talk to them, let them know that they have a grandson and find a way forward to all of this. Owami's life is at stake here.

Kwakhe:How will we find them? Nokuthula do you know the place?

Nokuthula:I do.

I guess there's no running away from this. The truth was bound to come out eventually..

Kwakhe:Then we will go there tomorrow morning. I uh.....
I'm....

Nokuthula:You don't have to say it dad.

I know he wants to say he's sorry, but one thing about my dad. He can't say sorry to save his life. He'd rather show you that he is sorry.

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LUTHANDO

She decided to visit Sbongile(her mother)'s grave, after so long. She was last here when they buried her, and she came when everyone was gone.

She is kneeling in front of her grave.

Luthando: Coming here, I thought I would finally be able to get closure for what you did to me, but I still hate you. It hurts that you died so quickly. You ruined my life ma. I'm like this because of you. I abused my siblings and took out my anger on them instead of you. You just left us, without any explanation. You just left. Leaving me alone to raise three girls. How do you think I will feed them? I'm not working, I'm not studying. I'm just nothing in this world. I hate you so much. You took the one thing away from me that I treasured. You left me with scars, and you didn't even care. You were very selfish to take your life! Leaving your children all alone. You couldn't deal with your guilt so you just decided to kill yourself. You should have killed me. You should have just killed me. There's nothing I'm living for

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I'm a failure. I can't even feed your children. I hope you are in hell, and I hope you are not resting in peace. You deserve to be grilled by Satan's fork. Even on the grave, you still make my life miserable. But.... I can't keep on living like this. I can't carry this anger anymore so I release you. I forgive you, for everything. I'm going to find help and be the best version of myself. I will be better than this.

She wiped her tears and stood up. She felt a huge relief, like a weight was removed from her shoulders. She went back to Mxolisi who was waiting for him.

Mxolisi:You okay?

Luthando:Yeah,I'm okay.

Mxolisi:Do you want to talk about it?

Luthando:Not yet.

Mxolisi:Remember we said we are letting go of the past.

Luthando:Let's get inside the car at least.

He opened the door for her and they got in.

Luthando:I've never really told anyone because I don't like opening up to people. But you are different, you make me feel safe.

Mxolisi:I'm glad to be your safe space.

Luthando:So the thing is, Sbongile isn't really my mother. She was my stepmother, but she treated me like her own, no one could tell she didn't give birth to me. I was told that my biological mother died when she gave birth to me. Dad then remarried her(Sbongile) when I was 7 years old. She got her own children, so when I was 16, things started to change at home. Dad would come back home late and they would always argue loudly. It made me sad seeing my parents fighting because I was used to them being nice and loving. Then I overheard dad telling mom that he regrets choosing her because she's evil, mom replied by saying that she did good by killing his first wife, my mother.

So, days went on and they kept on fighting, I didn't ask them about what I heard. Dad then asked to speak with me some day and he told me that I should be careful of Sbongile, she is just pretending, she doesn't like me. Dad told me that she wanted

him to give me away to family relatives when they got married. But dad didn't allow that.

Months later, dad got sick, heart problems. He spent months in the hospital until his body couldn't take it, he died and left us. I was 17 then, we buried him and tried to move on. S bongile still didn't show any signs that she hates me because she still treated me equally to how she treated her daughters. So last year, before she died, she confessed to me. She told me that my mother was actually her sister, and she admitted to killing her. She said it was an accident and she didn't mean to, that it all happened too fast. She told me that she married my father because she felt guilty and wanted to at least give me a good life after killing my mother. She....she also admitted that she did something to my father, dad wasn't supposed to die, she also killed him. Because he was threatening to report her to the police for her crimes, of which killing my mother wasn't her first crime. My whole world was turned upside down at that revelation. Part of me wasn't understanding what she was saying and a part of me thought she was joking. She said she feels guilty and she doesn't sleep at night because of the nightmares, apparently my parents were haunting her. I hated her so much Mxo, I loved that woman.

What surprised me, was when she told me that Thandiwe, my sister, she got her from an outside affair. She cheated with some wealthy business man, Wakhe or Kwakhe something like that. And you know how rich people roll, give you the money to abort because he can't lose his "wife". Thandiwe doesn't know that, I've never told her.

But, you were right. Being angry all your life is not going to help. So after today, I want to move on. I want to forgive her and forgive myself. I want to be a role model to my sisters.

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SIZIPHIWE

The red flags are starting to show. Luhlelo is stressing me out. I don't know what has gotten into him. He can't do this to me, not when I love him like this, just when we are about to get married. He has been the perfect boyfriend and fiance all this time. What has changed? Did I do something wrong maybe?? Mpilo is here and trying to cheer me up but it's not working. I just don't understand.

Mpilo:He's still not answering.

Siziphiwe:Does he not want me anymore?

Mpilo:This is why I'm scared of relationships, a person starts acting crazy and treating you like shit. If you don't want a person anymore, tell them, don't act like a shitty human being and string them along. What he's doing is childish.

Siziphiwe:I love him. Mpilo I have dedicated my life to this man. I don't want to lose him. Please try him again.

She calls him again and it rings for a long time. He answered just when she was about to drop it.

I snatched the phone away from her.

Luhlelo:Babe?

Siziphiwe:Hlelo please come back home.

Luhlelo:I'm coming back tomorrow sthandwa sami, is there a problem?

Siziphiwe:No I just need you to come back home.

Luhlelo:Okay let me pack my stuff because I can hear that you are not okay.

Siziphiwe:Do you still love me?

Luhlelo:Of course I do, I love you so much.

Siziphiwe:Then why were you acting cold towards me these days?

Luhlelo:I'm sorry, I was just stressed out about something but you don't have to worry about it now. I'm coming back now. I love you.

Siziphiwe:I love you too. I will be waiting.

I hung up and a little smile formed on my face.

Mpilo:Just like that??

Siziphiwe:What do you mean?

Mpilo:You're just going to forgive him and pick up where you left off.

Siziphiwe:Yes, he's my fiance Mpilo and we all make mistakes.

Mpilo:You are not even giving him a hard time nyana.

Siziphiwe:Iyohamba Indoda ngibhizi O hard to get.

Mpilo:Ay Cha waze wazinikela endodeni sisi(You have dedicated your life to a man).

To be continued

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #10

NOKUTHULA

It is the following day, and they are driving to Noah's home. She hopes his mother doesn't throw a tantrum and throw them out. Now that she thinks about it, Owami needs to be introduced to his family and ancestors. Even if his sudden sickness has got nothing to do with longing for his father, it is something that needs to happen.

Nokuthula: We are here.

Kwakhe: Finally, we have been driving for hours.

Nokuthula: Thank you for being here dad. It means a lot.

It really made me happy to see him being here, despite our problems.

We got out of the car and went near the gate.

Faith:Well what do we do?

Kwakhe:The gate is opened, so let's just get in.

We nodded and went inside the yard. Honestly, I'm scared of Noah's mother. She is dramatic.

We knocked on the door and God forbid it was her who opened for us! Her eyes met mine and she looked like she would explode any minute from now.

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Narrated

Luhlelo is back home and it feels great to have him back.

Siziphiwe:I missed you.

Luhlelo:I missed you too.

Siziphiwe:How is everyone doing at home?

Luhlelo:They are fine and alive.

Siziphiwe:What about Mpumi? Still doing well in school?

Luhlelo:You know her, she never fails to disappoint.

Siziphiwe:It's no doubt she's going to varsity next year. She is smart.

Luhlelo:Yeah I'm sure she will.

Siziphiwe:So babe....

Luhlelo:Yes...

Siziphiwe:Can we revisit the wedding topic?

Luhlelo:Why?

He immediately let her go since he was cuddling with her.

Siziphiwe:I mean we have been engaged for far too long now.
It's time to official get married. What are we waiting for?

Luhlelo:I just need more time.

Siziphiwe:More time for what exactly??

Luhlelo:Marriage is a big deal babe. I don't want us to go in
without having a clear head.

Siziphiwe:Wow... Just wow!!!

Luhlelo:You have to understand.

Siziphiwe:I don't have to understand any shit Luhlelo. I had everything planned out. We get married, have kids and live happily.

Luhlelo:What's your obsession with living a perfect life? We are not living a movie.

He was getting annoyed and irritated by now. Siziphiwe is such a perfectionist, she wants everything to go according to plan. Even with proposing to her it was..... He is getting fed up day by day with her tactics.

Siziphiwe:Everything has to work out Luhlelo, I grew up in broken living conditions. I don't want that for me or my children. Everything has to go according to plan. Me and you are getting married Hlelo. Next month!

She folded her arms.

Luhlelo:I don't want to get married.

He blurted it out. He sighed and rubbed his hands together. Truthfully, he is not lying. He does not want to get married yet. He feels like it's too soon. And with recent developments, he thinks his heart may be somewhere else. But Siziphiwe, this woman has been with him since day one. She's never left his side, even when his business was at the blink of getting shut down because of finances, she help him built it back to shape, using her own money. Everything he has, mostly is because of her. He's the man he is because of her.

Siziphiwe:You don't want to get married??

She asked feeling hurt, why would Luhlelo do this to her? Why now? Couldn't he see sooner that he doesn't want to get married? What will people say? Every family member is waiting for a date of the wedding. What will she say to them?

Luhlelo:That came out wrong I swear.

Siziphiwe: So you want to get married?

Luhlelo: I... I don't know...

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At Noah's home.

They have been let inside and they are sitting by the dining area. Nokuthula has been looking down the entire time. Kwakhe has explained the situation at hand about what brought them here.

Noah's mother ask to hold Owami.

She takes him and scrutinize him, digging holes in his body with her eyes. She removes his clothes and search for a birthmark on his back. She starts smiling a little when she recognizes it.

"He is a Mtololo", she finally says.

Nokuthula sighs relieved, she doesn't know why though because she knows that Owami is Noah's.

"Mr and Mrs Ndaba, I'm very sorry that we have to meet under such circumstances. But I do know Nokuthula, she used to come here a lot. She knows I wasn't approving of her relationship with Noah, reason being Noah was a married man. Nokuthula dated him knowing very well that he is married, but I can't say much about that because Noah also knew that he was married. Both of them broke that woman, who stayed faithful to a man that cheated on her and had the nerve to bring his side chick home. I don't know how the youth of today does things, but I do not want to believe that there's a woman out there who would willingly hurt another woman by dating her man, knowing fully well that he's married.

Your daughter got cocky and thought she was the main when Noah wanted to marry her, he came to me and told me that he wants to marry her. Kanti his wife will find out and by that time Nokuthula was apparently pregnant.

I remember very well, it was the 23rd of June last year when Noah came to me excited

he didn't say much, he just said he is going to tell me when he comes back.

But... He didn't come back. I was shocked so much that I almost had a heart attack, when I received a call to come and identify my son at the morgue. What was my son doing in the morgue? I called my sister and she accompanied me, when we arrived there it was indeed Noah! My Noah! They said he had a car accident and he died at the hospital. We found out that he was going to Nokuthula, at another hospital. I blamed her for my son's death, I didn't want to even see her at his funeral. I chased her out when she showed her face here, I was angry with her. Part of me thought she had something to do with my son's accident but I got rid of those thoughts.

We buried Noah and made peace that he was gone, his wife was a mess. I don't know how or when, but police came here and took her, saying that she's arrested for murdering Noah. She was the one who hit him with a car, she found chats of Nokuthula and Noah on his phone and followed him.

I'm not saying what she did was right, but the things we do when we are angry sometimes leave so much mess! She was angry and felt betrayed by the two of them. If they didn't cheat, Noah would still be here.

There are plenty of men out there and still people willingly choose to go for married men and women! I don't know if people can't see or they are just ignorant, but everyday there are incidents reported that someone was killed by his /her partner, all because of cheating.

The whole world has changed, so much that people prefer to test their relationships with cheating. In our days, you wouldn't dare look at a married man, that's how much we respected them.

A whole entire family would be broken and burnt to ashes because someone wasn't satisfied with their partner. It's better to just leave a person if you aren't happy with them anymore than making a fool out of them.

So yeah, Noah's wife is in jail, Noah is dead, and Nokuthula is still here, living. Like nothing ever happened."

She sure said a mouthful. Nokuthula gulped her saliva and licked her lips that instantly turned dry. Noah's mother was far from forgiving her, she can feel it, and she doesn't blame her. She wasn't aware of the consequences of her affair with Noah, honestly at first she was just doing it for fun. But she ended up catching feelings for the guy, plus he was smoking hot so it was hard to not fall for him.

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Narrated

Mpumi and Thandiwe are taking a walk.

Thandiwe: So we went to the police station and they were not of much help.

Mpumi: What did they say?

Thandiwe:That they will investigate further.

Mpumi:Ahhh they probably won't.

Thandiwe:But Sfiso's family moved out in the morning. They left. Sfiso got a restraining order so he can't bother us anymore.

Mpumi:Tjoh I'm glad this is over now we can walk freely.

Thandiwe:Ohhhh here's your girlfriend...

She said with a silly voice looking at the girl coming towards them.

Mpumi:Oh come on, stop it.

Thandiwe:Unjani Zuzie?

She greeted the girl.

Zuzie:Hi Thandi, I'm fine, how are you?

Thandiwe:I'm also good.

Zuzie:Nice to see you guys.

She walked away.

Thandiwe:Not you freezing!!

Mpumi:Mxm I didn't freeze. Man it's just Zuzie Eish!!

Thandiwe:No need to say it, your face says it all. You should just be brave and ask her out.

Mpumi:Ehhh I'm scared of being rejected.

Thandiwe: Oh come on, Zuzie has the hots for you. You should have seen her face when I told her that you are part of the LGBTQ family. Her face lit up.

Mpumi: Really?

Thandiwe: Yeah, that's your girl dude. Just get her already.

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To be continued...

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #11

#NARRATED

Siziphiwe is on a phone call with her mother.

Siziphiwe:Me and Luhlelo have finally decided to get married on the 25th next month.

Her mother ululated on the other line, sounding happy...

“Finally, I thought you weren’t getting married anymore”

Siziphiwe:Well we are, I have to start preparing for the big day. My dress is almost done, the tailor told me that by the end of the month it will be delivered to me.

“I hope he did it the way you wanted it”

Siziphiwe:He’s good at his job.

“Ohhh Phiwe my daughter I am so proud. So have you gathered the bride maids?”

Siziphiwe:I think it will be Mpilo and some of my cousins, I don’t think Nokuthula will even come to my wedding.

“Okay, I will let the rest of the family know that they should get ready. We will also start preparing. If you need any help, just shout”

Siziphiwe:I will, bye mom.

She hung up and sent a text to Nokuthula.

“I am getting married next month. Can you be my maid of honour? I need you”- Siziphiwe.

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NOKUTHULA

We left Noah’s home; we will return at the day of the ceremony. They burned some incense to Owami today. We are now back at home and my phone beeps with a text message.

It’s Siziphiwe, asking me to be her maid of honour. So she’s going ahead and marrying Luhlelo? Wow, I never thought they would last this long.

It wouldn’t hurt to attend a wedding, I’ve been under a lot of stress lately so it will be good to unwind. I replied to her and let her know that I accept the offer.

She called me immediately.

Nokuthula:Hello.

Siziphiwe:Are you serious? Will you really be there?

I laughed at her recurring questions.

Nokuthula:Yes, I will be there.

Siziphiwe:Thank you so much, I thought you wouldn't agree because of what's happening between us.

Nokuthula:Yeah, we need to talk about that.

Siziphiwe:How about tomorrow?

Nokuthula:I am available tomorrow.

Siziphiwe:Thank you once again for this, I missed you.

Nokuthula:I..... Me too....

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LUTHANDO

She is on the phone call with Mxolisi, he is a funny guy and it's always nice to talk to him. He always leaves a smile on her face. She jumps whenever he calls her.

Mxolisi:So will I see you tomorrow?

Luthando:Maybe you will, maybe you won't.

Mxolisi:I'm taking that as a yes.

Luthando:Okay, you will see me. But it will have to be during midday when my sisters are at school. I want them to find me home.

Mxolisi:Don't worry, we won't be gone for too long.

They talked for a while and said their goodbyes.

Luthando:Thandiwe don't you need me to hire a tutor for you?

Thandiwe:Haaa sisi, those are for rich people. Where will we get the money to pay that tutor?

Luthando:Don't worry yourself about that.

Thandiwe:I don't think that will help, Mina nje I'm just dumb. Stupid in fact. You would be wasting your money paying for that tutor because he/she won't be able to help me.

Luthando caught the sadness in her voice as she said that.

Luthando:Don't give up yet. You can still make it.

Thandiwe shrugged her shoulders and continued eating her food. She really didn't see a need for a tutor.

Luthando:It's better to try than to just give up. I will look for someone.

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LUHLELO

He is locking himself on the study. Thinking. About a lot of things. Siziphiwe is obsessed about this marriage thing and he just doesn't see the big deal. Siziphiwe can be crazy sometimes, the obsession with living happily ever after is registered on her brain and it's worrying him.

He used to love her so much, but now he doesn't know what has changed. He was so sure Siziphiwe was all he needed. But that changed when he saw Thandiwe. Funny he remembers her when she was still young, but now she has grown into this gorgeous young lady. He also can't just go to her and tell her that he has feelings for her, she is young, very young. People would call him a pervert. They would label him with all sorts of name. She's even still in high school, meanwhile he finished school years ago. She probably hasn't even been with a boy; he would be taking advantage of her. She looks so clueless and innocent. She doesn't know the dangers of this cruel world.

“Why did I have to fall for a kid?”

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he asked himself frustrated.

He stood up and walked out of the study, he went to their bedroom and found Siziphiwe on the bed. Planning, planning for their “wedding”. Great, another stress.

Siziphiwe:Oh good you are here, so I’m thinking that our colour theme should be white and pink. What do you think?

Luhlelo:Everything is fine by me.

Siziphiwe:You have to get your groomsmen ready, have you told them?

Luhlelo:No.

Siziphiwe:What is wrong with you? We are getting married next week.

Luhlelo:Well I was aware of that hours ago.

Siziphiwe:Just call them and tell your family. We don’t have time. Everything has to be ready by the 25th next month.

Luhlelo:You have already picked a date?

Siziphiwe:Yes, is there something wrong?

Luhlelo:Nop... look I’m about to head out for a bit. I will be back.

Siziphiwe:Where are you going Hlelo? It’s late.

Luhlelo:I will be back.

He grabbed his jacket and his phone and car keys and walked out. He drove to his boys' usual hang out and he found them there.

“Ahhh the man about to be married. Sit down boy”, his friend Nkazi said.

Luhlelo:And how do you know I'm about to get married?

Nkazi:The Mrs sent us messages.

Luhlelo:What??

Nkazi:Yep, we thought you would tell us first..

Luhlelo sighed and ordered a beer. He needed it.

Sphe:Why do you look so stressed sbari? You should be happy..

Luhlelo:Eyyy broz I don't wanna get married.

They stopped and looked at him.

Sphe:Ehhh kusukela nini manje? (Since when?)

Luhlelo:Since forever.

Nkazi:But you proposed to her, and confessed your love to her!

Luhlelo:Who bought the ring?

Nkazi:*Confused* Wasn't it you?

Luhlelo:*Chuckled* I never bought no damn ring, heck I didn't even want to propose. She bought the ring and gave it to me, said that we have been dating for a long time and we need to get married.

Sphe:Why couldn't you just say no!?

Luhlelo:I owe that woman, she helped me rebuild my business.

Nkazi:You never take money from a woman, you could have asked us or your family.

Luhlelo:I was confused and my business was shutting down. Now she is obsessed with getting married and I'm just not there.

Sphe:Do you love her?

Luhlelo:I... I do..

Sphe:Then marry her.

Nkazi:Hay Sphe he says he doesn't want to get married nje.

Sphe:Where will you get another woman like Phiwe? Someone who respects you like her? She has more money than you but she never boasts about that. Just marry her, you love her right? So you will adjust to the marriage.

Nkazi:What bad advice!!! You want him to be miserable and bitter like you!! You also married someone when you shouldn't

have and you divorced within a year. Wena Luhlelo, if you don't want to get married to her, then call the wedding off. Sure she helped you with money, but you didn't ask her, and she did out of love. That doesn't mean you should forever be indebted to her.

Sphe:What advice can you get from a single person? He is leading you astray. Phiwe is gorgeous and I can't believe you are second guessing marrying her.

Nkazi looked at Sphe sternly, more like warning him with his eyes. Sphe kept quiet.

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NOKUTHULA

The following day, Siziphiwe said I should come to her workplace. The place looks so great, for sure they make loads of money here.

Can't believe Phiwe is so successful at her young age, she was even named the wealthiest female business owner of the year because of her achievements. She grew up from the gutters but you wouldn't say, her house is a mansion!

The lady behind the desk lead me to her office and I knock.

I open the door when I hear a come in.

She was sitting on her big chair like the CEO she is. My eyes wandered around and I noticed a picture framed on the wall. Surprisingly, it was me on the picture. She has a picture of me on her office?

I cleared my throat and sat down.

Siziphiwe:I will be with you in a sec. I just need to send this off.

I felt so small, she screamed success. Even the clothes she's wearing, my God! Ukube Umuntu akamithanga nje ngabe ngikude nempilo(If I didn't fall pregnant, I would be far with life) . Look at what my mates are doing!

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To be continued...

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #12

At Siziphiwe's office.

Siziphiwe:I'm so glad you came. Do you need anything to drink?

Nokuthula:Water will be fine.

She stood up and got her water.

Nokuthula:I never thought you would have my picture in your office..

Siziphiwe:I put it up a few months ago. I missed you so I decided to stare at your face whenever I enter the office.

Nokuthula:Thank you. That was really sweet of you.

Siziphiwe:So how is Owami?

Nokuthula:I had taken him to Noah's home yesterday, he's growing.

Siziphiwe:I'm sorry about Noah.

Nokuthula:It's okay, he's not coming back and I have to make peace with it. Hey his mother dished out everything to my parents to my parents yesterday.

Siziphiwe:And what did they say?

Nokuthula:They haven't said anything yet. Im scared. I know dating Noah was wrong because he had a wife, but sharing a man is common these days.

Siziphiwe:I would castrate any hoe that comes even close to Luhlelo.

Nokuthula kept quiet.

Siziphiwe:Anyway, I hope after today we can go back to that friendship. I have missed you.

Nokuthula:I am sorry, for everything I said and did. My pregnancy changed me, it turned me into a person I don't know and I became bitter. I almost disowned my parents. I moved out and lived in a one roomed shack because I wanted to prove a point that I can make it on my own. Even when my mother offered to help me I said no. Thinking of it now, I was just crazy. I wouldn't have made it on my own. I'm still young and I want to go back to school, mom said she will take care of Owami for me.

Siziphiwe:*Smiling* It makes me happy to hear you speaking like this. You are back to that Nokuthula I know.

THANDIWE

School is very boring for me now. I can't wait to finally finish and be done with all of this.

It's after school and I'm waiting for Mpumi, she's talking to Zuzie. At least she didn't freeze today, I hope they become a couple. They look so cute together.

That car stops next to me again. It's Mpumi's brother. He must be here to fetch her. He opens the door and tells me to get in.

Thandiwe: Mpumi is not here yet.

Luhlelo: I came to fetch you, not her. Get in.

I was sceptical about this. I'm scared of him, he has this intimidating look on his face.

Luhlelo: I don't bite, get in.

I looked around and decided to get in. He started the car.

Luhlelo: So how are you?

Thandiwe: I am fine, how are you?

Luhlelo: I'm also fine. School still okay?

Thandiwe: Yeah. Did you come all the way here to give me a lift?

Luhlelo: Yes, is it wrong?

Thandiwe: I don't know.

Luhlelo: That neighbor of yours, they moved out right?

Thandiwe: They did, who told you?

Luhlelo:No one.

His eyes were focused on the road.

Luhlelo:Do you have a phone?

Thandiwe:I don't.

Luhlelo:So if I need to see you

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how do I get in touch with you?

Thandiwe:Why would you need to see me?

He was acting suspicious and he seems very nervous. I may be dumb but I'm not that stupid.

He stopped on the gate home. I hope Luthando isn't home.

What will she say when she sees me coming out of a man's car?

He opened his dashboard and took out a phone. He gave it to me. I was so confused.

Thandiwe:What should I do with it?

Luhlelo:It's yours, it used to be mine but I'm giving it to you.

Thandiwe:I can't take it. My sister will shout at me.

Luhlelo:You will hide it. I will call you when she's not home.

Thandiwe:I don't know. I'm not a rebellious child. I respect my sister and I don't want her to think I'm starting to disrespect her.

He held my hand and I exhaled.

Luhlelo:Please take it. You will hide it from her. You will tell me when I can call you, we will just chat over text. Do you have your room in there?

Thandiwe:No.

Luhlelo:Okay, but you will find a plan to hide it from her right?

Thandiwe:Okay... I will try.... Can I go now?

Luhlelo:Yeah...

I opened the door and he held my hand. I looked back at him but he didn't say anything, he was just staring at me.

Luhlelo:You're beautiful.

Thandiwe:Thank you.

I hopped out of the car and went inside. Luthando wasn't here. Thank God. She actually left a note.

'I will be back before 19h00pm. I have already cooked and fetched the kids from school, they are playing at Mam'Zwane's house.

Luthando'.

That was actually very responsible of her. I like the new her. She's more kind and caring. I hope it stays like this forever.

I took off my uniform and washed my shirt.

I looked at this phone and powered it on.

There was already a message waiting for me. It's from Luhlelo, his number is saved here.

I replied to him.

'Hi, no she wasn't in the house.'-Thandiwe.

This is my first time owning a phone. Now I see why Mpumi is always on her phone. It's addictive.

He sent another message.

'You are really beautiful'-Luhlelo

'Thank you again'-Thandiwe

'Do you think I can see you any time soon? '-Luhlelo.

'See me? For what?'-Thandiwe

'Just to spend time with you. You seem like a good person.'-Luhlelo.

'I'm not sure. You are pretty much older than me, and people would just assume we are dating when they see us together'-Thandiwe.

'Would that be so bad though?'-Luhlelo.

'Very bad, aren't you getting married soon?'-Thandiwe

'I am, but my heart is with someone else'-Luhlelo.

'Tough.'-Thandiwe.

He sent another message after that but I ignored him and checked out other things on this phone.

#Narrated

She is running like a headless chicken getting everything that need to be done. Her date with Nokuthula is over.

Mpilo:Okay I just spoke to the lady who makes cakes, and she says she can't make a cake now and get it done by the 25th next month.

Siziphiwe:What?? How long does it take to make a cake!?

Mpilo:And we have problems with the venue. They are overbooked.

Siziphiwe:Oh come on!

Mpilo:Phiwe maybe you should just calm down for a bit. Luhlelo is not going anywhere. You guys have plenty of time to get married. Just relax and sort out everything in your pace.

Siziphiwe:No no you don't understand Mpilo, I have to get married next month. I have to get married to Luhlelo. I can't let him slip away from me.

Mpilo went to her and wrapped her arms around her.

Siziphiwe:I don't want my children to grow up poor like me, I don't want to be like my parents who made so many mistakes. I have to do this.

Mpilo:You don't have to rectify mistakes of the past. Just allow things to happen the way they should. Your parents did their mistakes growing up, but that doesn't mean it will happen to you too.

Siziphiwe:Mpilo my father left my mother pregnant and married another woman. He didn't marry my mother, and we got nothing from his money. He died and his wife claimed his money and we got nothing! My step-father was of no help because he as also poor. I have to get married Mpilo, I want a perfect wedding. Luhlelo is mine and he will marry me.

To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #13

NOKUTHULA

Her father asked to speak with her. She is nervous, her dad is unpredictable. After what they heard that day, he can just chase her out of the house.

Kwakhe:Sit.

She sat down.

Nokuthula:You asked for me.

Kwakhe:Yes, but I'm not going to bite you. Stop looking so scared.

Nokuthula:Sorry... it's just I'm used to you shouting..

Kwakhe:I won't shout I promise.

She nodded.

Kwakhe:AbakaMtolo said we can come next week Sunday for the ceremony. It will be a small thing, nothing big.

Nokuthula:Yebo baba.

Kwakhe:That woman said a lot of things that day but I want to hear your side of the story. Was she telling the truth?

Nokuthula:She was. I did date Noah knowing that he is married.

Kwakhe:Did you regret it or you didn't care about the wife?

Nokuthula:Honestly at first baba, I didn't care. I enjoyed the man, I started to feel guilty when I got pregnant. Then Noah said he wants to marry me, that's when I thought that he loves me more since he wants to marry me..

Kwakhe:I hear you, well I won't judge you because I am no saint either. I have learnt an important lesson, that we should allow our children to make mistakes and teach them to learn from them. I shouldn't have treated you like an outsider when you told us that you were pregnant. I was worried more about my image as a public figure and discarded your feelings as my child. I'm sorry.

Nokuthula:It's okay dad, I have forgiven you. I also wasn't supposed to fall pregnant. There are contraceptive methods but I didn't take any. I'm also to blame for everything that has happened.

Kwakhe:So what about school? Do you want to go back?

Nokuthula:More than anything baba, I want to finish my degree and graduate.

Kwakhe:I'm happy to hear you speaking like this. I will continue paying for your studies.

Nokuthula:Thank you.

Kwakhe: You don't have to worry about Owami. He is our grandson and we will look after him for you, maybe we will hire a nanny if it gets too much. But I just want you to focus on school, no distractions this time..

Nokuthula: No distractions I promise.

Kwakhe: I will get in touch with the financial office to your institution and sort out your outstanding fees, I don't know maybe you will go back next semester or next year.

Nokuthula: Probably, next year.

Kwakhe: Okay.

Nokuthula: Dad are you okay?

Kwakhe: Yeah I'm fine, why are you asking?

Nokuthula: You seem very stressed and the paper you are reading the paper is upside down.

Kwakhe: Oh I didn't notice.

Nokuthula: You can talk to me dad.

He sighed heavily.

Kwakhe: It's just something Noah's mother said, her words cut deep. About how cheating can destroy an entire family.

Nokuthula: But you don't have to be stressed out by that dad, you have never cheated on mom right?

She asked laughing. Her laugh slowly died down when he saw the serious look on his face.

Nokuthula:Please tell me you didn't.

Kwakhe:It was years ago, Yamkela was not born yet. It was stupid, I don't know what got into me.

Nokuthula:Does mom know?

Kwakhe:She doesn't, and please don't tell her. She would never forgive me.

Nokuthula:But how could you have done that to her baba?

She was disappointed and shocked in her father. He is always preaching honesty and loyalty, while he knows that he once cheated? Who knows how many times they did it?

Kwakhe:I am sorry, I didn't mean to.

Nokuthula:Said every cheater ever. So who was the woman?

Kwakhe:It was a woman named Sbongile Khambula.

Nokuthula:When was the last time you saw her?

Kwakhe:Those years ago, I told her to never contact me again. She.... She came to me and told me that she was pregnant... out of fear, I gave her money to do abortion because I was scared to lose my wife.

Nokuthula:Did she do it?

Kwakhe:I thought she did, but 9 months later she called me and told me that she gave birth to a girl

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and she was naming her “Thandiwe”. She asked me to come and see her but I didn’t. I insulted her and told her to look for the real father of her baby. After that, I never bothered myself with her.

Nokuthula:So you have never seen your daughter and you have no interest in her?

Kwakhe:Faith would have left me.

Nokuthula:So you saved your marriage at the expense of your daughter!?

Kwakhe It was too complicated Nokuthula. You wouldn’t understand.

Nokuthula:I think you have to find Thandiwe. I am mad that you did my mother like that, but there’s a child out there who doesn’t know her father and is probably living God knows what life! While you are living in luxury like this. I’m disappointed in you baba I don’t want to lie. I never thought you would be capable of abandoning your own blood like this. No wonder you wanted me to give my son up for adoption. Because you know you have done something like this before.

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LUTHANDO

She is back from her date with Mxolisi, if that's what she can call it. He took her to a nice restaurant and they had such a good chat.

Thandiwe:Why are you all smiles?

She asked folding her arms. Luthando has been smiling nonstop since she came back.

Luthando:Uhh nothing..

Thandiwe:Come on, I've never seen you smiling this wide. Even now you are blushing nonstop.

Luthando:Eish okay, so you see this guy that is always fetching me here?

She nodded, waiting eagerly to hear the news.

Luthando:Well the way he came into my life is something I will have to hide from you, but he actually is the one who helped me realize that the life I was living was not right. He helped me deal with my anger and encouraged me to not bottle things up

because I'll be bitter and dangerous. Well... we are dating now...

She screamed and Thandiwe joined her.

Thandiwe: Oh you must love him, your cheeks are even red from all the smiling. I am happy for you sisi wami, you deserve this. He better treat you like a princess.

Luthando: Don't worry he will. I'm just scared that I will mess this up. He seems like a guy who has his life in order, meanwhile I just have no direction.

Thandiwe: Well you have to dust yourself up, the first step would be to go back to school. You were on your final year remember; you can still finish your studies.

Luthando: You really think so?

Thandiwe: I know so, unlike me, you are actually smart. So you can do this.

Luthando: But I don't have funding ma, what will I study with?

Thandiwe: Try bursaries, if it means you must enter every business looking for funding then do so!

Luthando: Not you giving me advice, you have grown sis!

Thandiwe: Old enough to have a boyfriend?

Luthando:Now that is just crazy talk. Any boy who says he loves you will be wasting your time. You are still young to date.

Thandiwe:Yeah I'm still young.

Luthando:Khona okushelayo yini? (Is there someone asking you out?)

Thandiwe:Cha(No).

She answered quickly.

Thandiwe:I need to go to the toilet.

She hurried there and closed the door. She took out the phone underneath her breasts and opened WhatsApp. She makes sure to always put it on silence.

Luhlelo was online.

So she sent him a hi. But he didn't reply.

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Meanwhile, at Siziphiwe and Luhlelo's house.

Luhlelo's phone beeps and Siziphiwe takes it to give it to her, but she notices that his number sent him a message.

Siziphiwe:Why is your number sending you a message??

He snatched the phone from her and knew it was Thandiwe.

Luhlelo:I gave my old phone to a friend and forgot to take out the Sim card, so he must be using it.

Siziphiwe looked at him lying to her. Anyone could tell he's lying. No one can give a phone away, together with a Sim card. Unless...

Siziphiwe:Well let's call him.

Luhlelo:Call who?

Siziphiwe:The person using your phone.

Luhlelo:Are you crazy? Why would we do that?

Siziphiwe:I just want to make sure that you are telling the truth.

Luhlelo:Don't start acting psycho on me Phiwe.

He clicked his tongue and walked out with his phone. He went to his study and locked from the inside.

He replied to Thandiwe's text.

'Hey sweetheart. You good?'-Luhlelo.

'I'm fine. Why haven't you texted me today?'-Thandiwe.

'Was out with Phiwe, sorry bun'-Luhlelo.

'Okay. Thank you again for the phone. We will talk tomorrow. My sister is calling for me'- Thandiwe.

'Okay, goodnight'-Luhlelo.

He heard a loud bang on the door, followed by her voice.

"Hlelo please open for me, I'm sorry for acting like that. Please open for me so we can talk sthandwa sami", she cried on the door.

Luhlelo sighed and went to Google, typed a question.

"How to tell if your fiancé is psychotic and is trying to kill you?"

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #14

SIZIPHIWE

Luhlelo slept at the guest bedroom yesterday, he didn't even talk to me last night. Okay maybe I overreacted when I said we should call his number, but it was just weird seeing his number texting him. Something seemed off.

I woke up early today to make him breakfast and apologize for what happened. He should be up by now.

I wiped my wet hands with the dishcloth and went to the bedroom to check for him.

I heard water running from the bathroom, he must be taking a shower. The bed wasn't made yet so I decided to do it for him. His phone dropped on the floor and I picked it up. I switched it on, and it was locked. There were no notifications on the screen.

I'm tempted to search through his phone but it requires his fingerprint to open...

I put it aside and continued making the bed. He stepped out of the shower with only a towel around him. If he had abs I would be obsessing over them, but Luhlolo hates the gym so much that he's out of shape. He needs to get rid of that belly pot stomach. It doesn't look sexy and I need him fit for the wedding.

Siziphiwe:Good morning.

Luhlolo:Hi.

Siziphiwe:I made you breakfast.

Luhlolo:Thanks, but I'll grab something on my way to work.

He was cold and it made me feel humiliated. Imagine going all out preparing a nice breakfast for my man and he rejects it.

Siziphiwe:Can we talk about yesterday?

Luhlelo:What about yesterday?

Siziphiwe:I'm sorry for the way I overreacted. I shouldn't have doubted you. I know you would never hurt me.

He ignored me and went on with his business. I went near him and tried to touch him but he pushed me off of him, but not too hard.

Siziphiwe:Baby....

Luhlelo:I need to go to work Siziphiwe. Give me space.

Siziphiwe:Okay.....

I left the room with my tears already falling down. I am losing Luhlelo and I can feel it.

I went to our main bedroom and called my mother.

"Hello"

Siziphiwe:Ma he's losing interest in me.

"Who is losing interest baby?"

Siziphiwe:Luhlelo, he's been giving me the cold shoulder. I think he is cheating on me.

"No ways, my son in law would never do something like that. He loves you very much to hurt you like that."

Siziphiwe:How would you know?

"I just know, I've seen the two of you together. That man loves you Phiwe. Don't lose him over something stupid. Men hate a nagging woman, if you become a nuisance to him that's when he will go out and cheat."

Siziphiwe:Were you also a nuisance to dad?

She kept quiet and I heard her breathing heavily.

" This is not about me"

Siziphiwe:So what should I do about Luhlelo?

"Hang in there my baby. You are almost married. So worry not, when the two of you are married, nothing will separate the two of you."

Siziphiwe:You really think so?

"I know so, don't make the mistake I made of getting pregnant for a man who didn't even marry me. He will drop you like a hot potato."

Siziphiwe:I know, you've told me that my entire life.

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NOKUTHULA

Being back home is something she can say she needed. Moving out was kind of dramatic, and the point she was trying to prove was just stupid. But she's happy now that she has made peace with her parents, and that she's going back to school the following year. She knows her mother will take good care of Owami. Speaking of Owami, his rash is slowly fading away. She doesn't know whether it's the cream she got from the doctor or going to his father's home.

The only thing bothering her right now is the fact that she has a sister, whom she doesn't know. Poor kid! She can't imagine what kind of life she could be living. She hopes her father takes this matter serious and find his daughter.

Faith:Thula please go with Yamkela to the shops. I need a few things from Checkers.

She stands up and accepts the card in Faith's hands.

Faith:Don't overspend, I know you.

Nokuthula:*Laughing* I won't.

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THANDIWE

After school...

Today was PE day, something I hate. I hate gym my God!

Mpumi:I have to accompany Zuzie, see you tomorrow.

Thandiwe:Are the two of you dating now?

Mpumi:Not yet, but it's promising.

Thandiwe:*Smiling* I wish you all the best. You're a good person, she'll be a fool to let you go.

Mpumi:Thank you, byee.

I waved and she walked away. I started walking home, thankfully Sis Luthando now fetches the kid from school so I don't have to travel to another school.

My bag was hung around my both shoulders, I like carrying it like that, like I'm a toddler.

I stop walking when he parks next to me. Again! Maybe I should get used to this.

He opens the door and I hop in.

Thandiwe:Hi.

Luhlelo:Unjani (How are you?)

Thandiwe:I am fine, how are you?

Luhlelo:I'm good.

Thandiwe:So is this an everyday thing now?

Luhlelo:What do you mean?

Thandiwe:You fetching me from school?

Luhlelo:If you don't mind. I just want you to be safe.

Thandiwe:His family has moved out

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I'm not in danger anymore.

Luhlelo:Well just to be sure.

Thandiwe:Okay.

I sighed and looked outside the window. He kept driving.

Luhlelo:Can we pass by the mall first? I need to get a few things.

Thandiwe:Just drop me home first and then go about your way.

Luhlelo:We won't be long, I promise.

Well, it wouldn't hurt to go out. Although we are not going out. Just saying that, just in case someone thinks I want to go out with him.

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Narrated

@Siziphiwe's workplace.

Mpilo brought her some iced tea, she heard it helps with nerves.

Mpilo:So what is the go ahead with the venue?

Siziphiwe:I don't know, I'll ask around from my business associates.

Mpilo nodded and continued paging through the internet for someone who bakes cakes.

She was confused and worried about her friend. She just couldn't understand why Siziphiwe, a woman with all the money in the world, would be so desperate and weak for a man!

Money gets you everything. Respect, loyalty and happiness!

But to her(Siziphiwe) , she's just so clinging to the idea of marrying Luhlelo, dark or blue.

Mpilo:Mom said hi and asked when you are coming to visit her.

Siziphiwe:I'll visit her soon, oh its been long. How is she doing?

Mpilo:She's okay, just old age catching up to her.

Siziphiwe:*Laughing* And ke, does she still sit by the veranda every morning?

Mpilo:You bet she does.

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Narrated

Outside #CheckersHyper

Luhlelo is holding Thandiwe's hand and they are walking inside the store.

She is a bit scared, scared of what will people think of them?
He's old and she's literally in a school uniform.

Luhlelo:Relax. Everyone is minding their business.

He noticed how nervous she was.

Luhlelo:We will be in and out.

They walked inside the store and he grabbed a trolley..

They walked around, putting some stuff, mostly it was junk food. She wondered why a man like him would eat junk food.

"Shit!", Luhlelo cursed under his breath when he noticed Nokuthula. Coming directly towards them. Thandiwe panicked looking at how worried he was.

Luhlelo:Just keep quiet.

He whispered to her.

Nokuthula came to them, she had a suspicious look on her face.

Nokuthula:Luhlelo, fancy seeing you here.

Luhlelo:It's a grocery store, what do you expect?

Nokuthula:Who is she?

She asked looking at Thandiwe with the evil eye.

Luhlelo:My sister's friend, I'm buying food for them.

Nokuthula:And where is your sister?

Luhlelo:What's with the third degree questions? Me and you are nowhere related.

Nokuthula:Wena, Ufunani la!? (You, what are you doing here!?)

She asked Thandiwe with so much attitude.

Thandiwe looked down and kept quiet.

Luhlelo:Well it was nice seeing you Nokuthula, we have to go now. Let's go Thandiwe.

They walked away to pay and left her just standing there.

Inside the car.

Thandiwe:Who was she?

Luhlelo:Phiwe's friend, you don't have to worry about her.

Thandiwe:What if she tells your wife that she saw you with me?
I don't want to be labeled a homewrecker. Me and you are not even dating, you're way too old. Please take me home. Knowing you will just bring me problems and I hate arguing with people. I'll bring you back your phone. I want you to s_

He caught her by surprise and kissed her cheek. Making her to freeze and stop talking.

He held her hands and looked at her directly in her eyes.

Luhlelo:I'm not letting you go. Ever.

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KWAKHE

Nokuthula's words stuck with him. She was right, he has to find his daughter. It has been many years since he kept contact with Sbongile, but he is a connected man. Finding her would be like eating cornflakes for dinner.

He sends a message to someone to find Sbongile for him. He has to make things right, hopefully his daughter will understand why he did what he did and they could build a father daughter relationship.

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To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #15

LUTHANDO

Thandiwe is still not back from school and I am starting to get really worried. It's unlike her to not be home this late. If she has extra classes, she always tells me in the morning or pass the message on other students for them to tell me. Where could she be?

I went to stand outside and still nothing!

This child!

My phone rang and it was Mxolisi.

I answered.

Luthando:Hey babe..

Mxolisi:Hey, is she home yet?

Luthando:No, I'm getting really worried. What if something happened to her? Sfiso could have come back again.

Mxolisi:Okay I'm coming there and we are going to look for her.

Luthando:Okay, please hurry.

I hung up and waited anxiously. I relaxed a bit when I saw her approaching, carrying a checkers bag. I sent Mxo a text to not come because Thandiwe is home.

The moment she was near to me I almost threw a slap at her but I stopped myself. I made a promise that I would be a better sister than I was before.

I exhaled while closing my eyes. I opened them again.

Luthando:Where have you been? It's close to 6pm now.

Thandiwe:Sisi I am sorry... I... I.....

She was really stuttering and nervous. Her hands were shaking.

Luthando: Get inside now!

I followed after her and closed the door behind me. I took a peak at the bag she was carrying and there were goodies inside.

Luthando: Where did you get this? Because I know very well I never gave you any money.

Thandiwe: I... I got it from Mpumi....

Luthando: Really???

Thandiwe: Yes.....

Luthando: So if I call Mpumi now she will confirm that she bought this for you?

Thandiwe: Yes... She... She will...

Mhhh, I took my phone and dialed Mpumi's number. Whole time I was watching this miss here.

Mpumi: *Over the phone* Hello.

Luthando: Mpumi hi, this is Luthando. Are you home?

Mpumi: Yes I'm home.

Luthando: Okay, Thandiwe came home late today. Was she with you? Or did you buy something for her?

Mpumi: Ohhh yes.... I did, I just wanted to spoil her. Hope I didn't get her into some kind of trouble.

Luthando:No it's okay. Bye sisi.

I hung up and suspiciously looked at my sister. Something seems off. Friends cover for each other, that's well known. Something is beating the water here.

Luthando:Go and take off your uniform, food is almost ready.

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NOKUTHULA

After what transpired at the mall, she went back home without even getting the rest of what her mother said she should get.

She was still upset about seeing Luhlelo with a school girl, he shouldn't dare cheat on her friend with a kid.

But the name he called the kid with, sounded very familiar. But maybe it's a coincidence.

Faith:You didn't get the tomato paste.

Nokuthula:I forgot.

Faith:No worries, I will buy it tomorrow. Let's unpack these.

They unpacked the groceries.

Nokuthula:Hey mom, can I ask you something?

Faith:Sure baby.

Nokuthula:If you saw your friend's boyfriend with another girl, and you confront them, he then tells you that it's a friend of his sister's. Would you believe him or tell your friend?

Faith:Firstly, you weren't even supposed to confront him. He's not your boyfriend, you are just his woman's friend. And about telling your friend, it's up to you, but just think about it. What if it was really just an innocent thing? and she was really his

sister's friend and you rush to tell your friend, making her to be suspicious of her boyfriend and not trust him, when it could have been avoided and it was nothing!?

Nokuthula:Right.. So I won't tell Phiwe. And besides that was a kid

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he wouldn't do it with a kid.

Faith:Baby sometimes it's important to just stay out of people's business because you will be left alone in the crossfire should they fix things. You will be their "we've been through a lot" when they are pillow talking.

Nokuthula:Hay, relationships are complicated.

Faith:*Laughing* Relationships are not complicated. It's people who make them to be that way. Respect and trust is what keeps a relationship going. Me and your father have been married for more than 20 years but not even once have I caught him cheating or disrespecting me.

Nokuthula swallowed hard and packed the potatoes.

Faith:I am just happy that God gave me a man that every woman prayed for.

Nokuthula:Yeah you're lucky.

She said with a fake smile.

"If only you knew your husband's lies.", she thought to herself.

Faith:I am going to teach you how to cook spinach today.

Nokuthula:*Sulking*Mom.....

Faith:What!? You're almost 25 and you don't know how to cook a mere spinach!

Nokuthula's phone rang and it was Siziphiwe.

She went to another room and answered.

Nokuthula:Hey girl.

Siziphiwe:Heyyy. Listen, I need to make an announcement and I won't repeat myself . So ears sharp okay.

Nokuthula:*Confused* Uhhh.... Okay.....

Siziphiwe:Luhlelo told me that you saw him today walking with his sister and her friends. I don't like how you just attacked him without reason. Luhlelo is my man not yours, I would kindly appreciate it if you could keep your insults to yourself.

Nokuthula blinked repeatedly, she was surprised to hear her speaking like this. She thought she was doing what any friend would do in a situation like that.

Siziphiwe:I know your habit of married men, don't even think of getting Luhlelo under your pants.

Luhlelo:Wow..

Siziphiwe:I hope I made myself clear. Goodbye.

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SIZIPHIWE

She hung up and looked at him.

Siziphiwe:I'm sorry, she won't do that again.

Luhlelo:I hope so. Your friend is really forward.

Siziphiwe:I'm sorry, she thought she was just protecting me.

Luhlelo:I'm going to my study. Don't disturb me.

Siziphiwe:Can I ask?

Luhlelo:Sure....

Siziphiwe:Are you happy? I mean with me, are you still happy?

He smiled a little.

Luhlelo:I love you... I am happy..

Siziphiwe:*Smiling* I love you too....

He walked away and she sat down with a smile on her face. She knew he still loved her, why would she even ask him that? They were made for each other.

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KWAKHE

He goes outside to answer the call.

Kwakhe:Please tell me you found something.

"Not exactly Sir"

Kwakhe:What does that mean?

"There's no recent record of the woman you asked me to find. It shows she has been dead for months."

Kwakhe:She's dead?

"Yes. But I was able to find her house adress where she used to reside. Four people are living there, her daughters. I will send it to you now"

Kwakhe:Okay thank you, I will send your money.

He hung up and received the address . It was a bitter pill to swallow that Sbongile was dead, they haven't even fixed things.

He sighed and wondered what was the next step from here. Does he go to this house and just drop a bomb that he's looking for his daughter or does he wait!? What could he be waiting for though? It's been years since he hasn't seen his daughter, now he's finally got the chance. How could he just not grab the opportunity? He needs to make things right.

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THANDIWE

She has taken off her uniform and went to the bathroom and locked herself inside.

She took her phone and found a missed call. It has been vibrating under her breasts but she couldn't answer.

She called him back..

Luhlelo:Hello.

Thandiwe:Hi.

Luhlelo:Are you with your sister?

Thandiwe:No, I'm hiding in the bathroom.

Luhlelo:Okay, I hope you didn't get in trouble after coming back late.

Thandiwe:Mpumi covered for me don't worry. Thank you for buying me those goodies.

Luhlelo:Anything for you sweetheart... So will I see you tomorrow?

Thandiwe:I don't know, I'm already in trouble twice today for seeing you.

Luhlelo:Or you can skip school and we will spend the day together, I'll bring you back early.

Thandiwe:Skipping school? I have never done that before.

Luhlelo:I know it's bad, but just one day. A lot of people will be on our business now if I fetch you everyday from school.

Thandiwe:I don't know Lu. I told you before that I'm not a rebellious teenager. Skipping school for a guy is not what I want to do. My sister would kill me.

Luhlelo:No one will find out. We will go outside the city where no one knows us. Please...

She kept quiet and thought about it.

Luhlelo:I won't do anything you don't like. We will just chill...

Thandiwe:I'm sorry, I can't do that. Goodbye....

She hung up and switched off the phone. She put it back under her breasts.

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Narrated

The following day, Thandiwe was all prepared for school but her mind was elsewhere.

Luthando:I'm accompanying o Sli to school, you should go too.

Thandiwe:Okay, goodbye.

Luthando left with her sisters.

Thandiwe took the phone from where she had hidden it and called Luhlelo.

Luhlelo:Good morning babe.

Thandiwe:Hey is the offer still available?

Luhlelo:It is.

Thandiwe:Okay please fetch me. My sister is out but she will be back soon.

Luhlelo:Okay I'm coming. I'll park a few houses away from yours.

Thandiwe:Okay...

She waited for 13 minutes and he sent a text that he was here.
That was fast!

She went out to him.

Thandiwe: You must have been flying on the road.

Luhlelo: I'll be honest, I was already here in case you changed your mind.

She smiled and threw her bag on the backseat.

Thandiwe: So where are we going?

Luhlelo: You will see. You'll love it.

He started driving while stealing glances at her. He sure would have scored if he got her. She's everything he needs.

To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #16

Narrated.

@The Hotel.

He bought her new clothes so she could change the uniform she was wearing.

Thandiwe: Thank you, I love the dress.

Luhlelo: I'm going to get us some food, I'll be back.

Thandiwe: Okay..

He walked out and she checked the time. It was still 9am, very early.

Luhlelo's phone rang, startling her.

She looked at the screen and the number was saved as, "Phiwe".

She lowered the volume and slid it under the pillow.

She stood up and looked around the hotel room. This was fancy and beautiful, she had never been inside a place like this.

Even the floor was incredibly clean that it felt amazing to have her feet touch on it.

She touched her body and her heart was racing. She wasn't sure what would happen today, but one thing she knows for sure, he wouldn't just bring them to a hotel just to "chill".

The door opened and he entered with their food.

Luhlelo:I'm back.

Thandiwe:Your phone was ringing, it was Phiwe..

Luhlelo:I'll call her back.

The way he just said it alarmed her. It is her fiancée!

They sat down and dug in.

Luhlelo: So tell me about you.

She sighed.

Thandiwe: Well I'm Thandiwe, but you know that. I'm just a human on Earth.

Luhlelo: *Laughing* I meant tell me more about you, I want to know you better.

Thandiwe: *Smiling* There is nothing interesting about me seriously. I'm just a girl. I prefer letting a person know me through my actions because I don't want to oversell myself.

Luhlelo:Okay, that is impressive actually.

Thandiwe:So will you tell me about you?

Luhlelo:I prefer you see for yourself too. Can I do something?

He asked getting closer to her. Way too close.

There was a tiny gap between their faces, and his eyes were directly looking at her lips. They looked sweet and juicy!

Thandiwe:Wha...what do you want to do?

She asked feeling hot, his hand was in her left thigh, brushing it up and down. It was hard to remain cool.

Luhlelo:This....

He closed his eyes and closed the gap between them. He reached for her lips and kissed her lower lip. She was shocked

and remained frozen, this was the first encounter with a guy, kissing, ON THE LIPS!!

He sucked on her lower lip more and she kissed him back. The kiss went on for a while and it got heated. His hands were all over her and he took off the dress she was wearing, leaving her exposed. She had fresh thighs

in fact her entire body was fresh that it drove him insane. She's just too innocent and clueless and he likes it, it turns him on.

She had no bra on, benefits of having small tits. His hand traveled all the way up her thigh to her underwear.

She touched his hand when it reached that area.

Thandiwe:No one has ever touched me before.

She whispered to him.

Luhlelo:I know, I won't do anything relax. I respect you so much.

Thandiwe:Do you love me?

Luhlelo:Why are you whispering?

Thandiwe:I don't know.

Luhlelo:I love you, the day you came to my house scared and running was the day I fell in love with you. You are gorgeous Thandiwe and I want to be with you.

Thandiwe:What about Phiwe?

Luhlelo:Let's not worry about her for now...

He continued kissing her and lifted down her panty, leaving her entirely naked. He felt himself growing and he took off his clothes.

Her eyes grew bigger seeing his dick.

Thandiwe:Uhh... I'm....

Luhlelo:Shhhh.... We are not going to do anything, I promise you. Do you trust me?

Thandiwe:I trust you.

Luhlelo:Good...

He knelt before her and she was lying down.

He slapped her entrance with his dick and grunted softly. He wasn't sure whether he would be able to control himself when it comes to her.

He rubbed himself up and down without penetrating.

Thandiwe's eyes were half closed as she was grabbing the sheets and crying in pleasure.

Rubbing himself on her felt too good and he wanted to enter her right away, the fact that she is a virgin drove him insane. He would actually be the first to tear her tight untouched pussy, seeing the look in her eyes as he enters her world be majestic.

He lifts her leg over his shoulder and push his dick deeper inside her, causing her to scream out loudly. The pain was nothing like she have ever felt before.

He took it out and touched her boobs.

Luhlelo:I'm sorry, I should have prepared you...

Thandiwe:No no no.... Please take it out...

Luhlelo:I did....

Thandiwe:Please get off of me. I don't want to do this. I'm still a virgin.

He got off her and laid in bed next to her. He pulled her to lay on his chest.

Luhlelo:I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. We will stop now. I won't do it again okay?

She nodded.

He kissed his forehead and closed his eyes. He almost ruined things, he didn't mean to scare her. He allowed his erection to control him.

Thandiwe:Please take me home.

He heard how shaky her voice was.

Luhlelo:It's 10am, where will you say you were to your sister? I'm sorry sthandwa sami, I won't do it again. Please don't be upset with me.

Thandiwe:*Crying* I want to go home.

He held her tighter and allowed her to cry in his arms.

Luhlelo:First time is always painful, but we didn't do anything. You're not ready and I will respect that. Thandiwe I love you and I mean it. I know I am older than you but that doesn't take away my feelings for you. I'm also scared, because I haven't felt like this in a long time. Fuck Thandiwe I can't believe I'm being drove mad by a teenage girl! Please allow this to happen. I won't hurt you I promise....

Thandiwe:I've never been in a relationship before, because my life has been dramatic. I've had to deal with issues that a girl like me shouldn't even be bothered by. Now you show up and try to mess up my life. I get that you say you love me, but the way you are doing things is actually a turn off. There is a woman whom you sleep next to everyday and lie to her that you love her. You are getting married soon and here you are confessing your undying love to me. I'm not trying to destroy a family here, Mpumi would be angry at me if she could find out about us. Please do this the right way.

Luhlelo:What do you want me to do mama?

Thandiwe: Break things off with her and be with me or leave me alone and be with her. It's your choice. I'll understand if you choose her. But if you choose me, I won't share you. I may be young but I don't want to share a man. So decide ke bhuti.

He smirked at her challenging him. It was a huge fuckin turn on.

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To be continued...

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #17

NOKUTHULA

Her mother was right that she should not tell Phiwe about what she saw. It's not her business. She has enough problems on her own.

She sneaks to her father's study and locks the door, so that Faith won't hear them.

Nokuthula:Dad did you find her?

Kwakhe looked at her and hesitated before he could answer.

Kwakhe:No... No I didn't find her.

Nokuthula:What a bummer, I was looking forward to having another sister. But you won't give up right?

Kwakhe:I won't give up, I'll try harder.

Nokuthula:About mom, will you tell her?

Kwakhe:I want to, but I'm scared. This could end our marriage.

Nokuthula:It's better to just tell her, sooner or later she will find out. So just tell her.

Kwakhe:Nokuthula you don't understand, me and your mother have been married for years and not even once has she caught me cheating. What will she say now when she finds out that I have a teenage daughter?

She shrugs her shoulders.

Nokuthula: Keeping this a secret will not end well. That's all I will say.

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LUTHANDO

Ever since Mxolisi came into her life, he changed her for the better. She used to be a wild girl who lived like there was no tomorrow. But now she has woken up, she has sisters she needs to feed and take care of. It was wrong in the first place to abuse them based on their mother's faults. They didn't do anything wrong.

What bothers her the most is the issue of Thandiwe having an unknown father. She doesn't know how to tackle that.

Thandiwe doesn't even know. She is scared to tell her, but she is old now maybe she will understand.

She breathed out loudly. Problems never seem to end!

She browsed through her phone and stopped at Londi's WhatsApp Status update. They were partying with Sne, she smiled a little remembering that life. Life was so simple. She knew that she could go to a club without even a penny but she will leave drunk. Men will do anything just to get between your thighs and she knew how to use that to her advantage.

She replies to the status.

'Where are you guys?' - Luthando.

She sends it and Londi starts typing when she has read it.

'Our usual club, it's so fun babes' - Londi.

'Have fun' - Luthando.

'Don't you want to join us?' - Londi

'No, I have to wait for my sisters. It's early for you guys to be partying' - Luthando.

'Fun has no limit. Just come over, have a few drinks and return back home. Your sisters won't even know that you were gone' - Londi.

'Mxo won't be happy about this. I promised him that no more clubs' - Luthando

'Oh well there goes another woman!' - Londi.

'Okay I'm coming. Just a few drinks' - Luthando.

She put her phone down and excitedly went to change her clothes.

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THANDIWE

It is almost 2pm and that means she needs to go back home, it was fun to hang out and chill with Luhlelo. Their day has been amazing, it was a wild day. There was no penetration (after he pushed it in and she stopped her) but boy he sure rocked her world!

She isn't sure what is happening between them. Does she love him or it's the teenage in her being excited about a boy!?

She wishes she could talk to her friend about this, but she will omit Luhlelo's name.

He hugs her and plants a kiss on her neck.

Luhlelo: Thank you for spending the day with me. I know it's wrong to make you skip school, but I needed to see you without any distractions.

Thandiwe: It's okay, I enjoyed spending time with you too.

Luhlelo: So do you agree to be my girlfriend now?

Thandiwe: I told you to fix your issues first.

Luhlelo:You want me to choose.

Thandiwe:Yes, you can't be with two women at the same time.

Luhlelo:Just give me time. Phiwe is...

He sighed and she could tell how stressed he was by just saying her name.

Luhlelo:She is not okay, she may just do something crazy if I break up with her.

Thandiwe:Kyobe kungaqali ngaye ukwaliwa! (She wouldn't be the first woman to be dumped!)

Luhlelo:You don't understand.. She.. Helped me with most things and I...

Thandiwe:Choose her then and leave me. I am serious.

Luhlelo:Please give me time mama. I will fix this okay....

She leaned on his chest with her back and closed her eyes.

Thandiwe:So in the meantime we do what? I be a sidechick?

Luhlelo:You're not a sidechick. You're my woman. We will be together, I promise you....

Thandiwe:I trust you

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please don't break my heart Lu.

Luhlelo:I would never.

Thandiwe:Let's go home now....

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Narrated

At the club.....

The club wasn't packed like Londi said it was. In fact it was empty. What did she expect? It's a Tuesday midday! People are working and don't have time for partying.

Luthando:I think I will go now.

She has had a couple of glasses and they are making her a bit dizzy.

Londi:Oh come on, the party is only getting started.

Luthando:No.... My sisters are back from school. I don't want them to think I'm back to my old ways.

She said and sat down, she was sweating and she felt very tired.

Sne: You have gotten so soft shame, your sisters used to be so scared of you but look at you now!

She shook her head disgusted...

Luthando: *Weakly* I... Want to go home... Please call Mxolisi.....

Londi and Sne looked at each other and nodded. They took her bag and her phone. They switched off and put it back.

Luthando quickly passed out on the couch.

Londi: Well what do we do now??

Sne: I don't know, we didn't think this far.

Londi:Well we drugged her, now what!?

Sne:I have an idea. I will be back.....

She disappeared and went to some guy that looked shady by the bar.

She came back with him.

The guy nodded smirking while looking at the sleeping Luthando.

"Don't worry. She will be what you want by tomorrow morning", he said to them and carried Luthando out.

Londi:What is he going to do with her? He's not going to kill her, is he?

Sne:No he's not.

Londi:Let's get out of here.

They walked out of the club.

Sne:"Be a better sister and go back to school" my foot!!!

She clicked her tongue.

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SIZIPHIWE

If anything, she is scared. The way things are happening are scaring her. She is losing her fiance. After she fought so hard to have a happily ever after, she can't just lose now. Luhlelo has to marry her. She just can't... Her mother will be so disappointed in her should things not work out. She is her last hope....

Luhlelo has been gone all morning, he's probably at work. She decided to work home for today. Being a CEO has its benefits.

She hears his car driving in and she sighs and wait for him.

He enters after a few seconds, all smiles and dancing around while whistling.

Siziphiwe:What is wrong with you??

Luhlelo:Nothing, life is just great...

He spanked her butt.

Siziphiwe:Mhhhh, did something happen today? Did you score a deal or something?

Luhlelo:Not yet, but it's promising....

Siziphiwe:Seeing as how happy you are, can I ask you for a favor?

Luhlelo:I'm listening...

Siziphiwe:I got a personal trainer and he promised that he would get rid of that belly in a short time.

Luhlelo:Ahhh you have started ke! Leave it.

Siziphiwe:Sorry..

Luhlelo:We are not cooking today. Let's eat out.

Siziphiwe:You're taking me out on a date?? You haven't taken me to one for a long time.

Luhlelo:Well today I am. Get ready.

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THANDIWE

Sis Luthando wasn't home when she got back.

Anyway, she has taken off my uniform and washed it. No one will ever know she was absent, except for the teachers of course.

Since she's alone, she can relax with my phone. She goes to WhatsApp and check his last seen. He was online just now.

She sent him a hi and looked at his status updates.

He just posted random stuff.

He answered her and asked if she arrived safely. She answered yes.

He posted another update, her heart shattered when she saw that he posted a picture of him and his fiance. They looked happy, like they deserved to be together.

She replied to his status

'Nice picture.' - Thandiwe.

He blueticked her and she scoffed in disbelief.

"Wow!", she said to herself.

She sent him another message.

'I hope you have made a decision. Me or her!' - Thandiwe.

He blueticked her again and it drove her nuts. She is jealous and she's not even going to pretend. Just now she was laying on that man's chest and now he's all over Phiwe. For sure she's going to open it all for him later.

Maybe she shouldn't have denied them to have sex, maybe he wouldn't be acting lovely dovey with her.

She logged off WhatsApp with her heart beat rising up higher than normal.

To be continued...

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #18

LUTHANDO

The following day, she is woken up by Thandiwe roughly shaking her, more like fighting.

Luthando:What is it? I'm up.

Thandiwe:You promised you wouldn't go back to your old ways again!

She sat upright and rubbed her eyes. She doesn't remember much about what happened yesterday, she only remembers going out with Londi, everything after that is a blur.

She looked at Thandiwe and she was crying. What for?

Luthando:Why are you crying? What happened?

Thandiwe:Don't act like you don't remember, you are back to the old you again!

Luthando:Mathandi what are you talking about? When did I get home?

Thandiwe:Your friends brought you back, you were drunk as hell and couldn't stand on your feet..

Luthando:Drunk....

She asked herself. She doesn't remember drinking anything heavy that would make her drunk. She closes her eyes trying to get memories of what happened yesterday but she only got vivid memories that didn't make sense.

Thandiwe:I'm going to school..

She left.

She stood up from the couch, she had a burning thirst for water. She drank some and sat on the chair, trying to make sense of what happened.

Like Zeus was throwing lightning bolts at her, she stood up in a speed going to the bedroom.

She took off her Jean and checked herself, checking for any signs of forced penetration.

She didn't feel anything so she relaxed a bit. She looked for her phone and shockingly it was switched off. She never switches off her phone.

She turned it on and found multiple of missed calls and text messages from Mxolisi.

She called him back and he answered.

Mxolisi:Yeah.

That was cold.

Luthando:Hey babe.

Mxolisi:Where were you yesterday?

Luthando:I can explain my love.

Mxolisi:Okay, explain. I want you to explain to me why I called you like an idiot, worried about you, wondering where you were. Only to find a video from you snuffing drugs and grinding on top of another man.

She was tongue tied. Drugs? She has never done drugs before in her life.

Luthando:Drugs??

Mxolisi:Ungangenzi islima Luthando(Don't make me a fool Luthando) , you know exactly what I mean. Did you sleep with him?

Luthando:Babe I swear I didn't sleep with anyone. I don't even remember what happened yesterday. I don't remember anything. I would never cheat on you. You changed my life, why would I want to ruin what we have?

She begged him crying, she really had no clue what video he was talking about. She has never done drugs and she doesn't remember grinding on top of someone.

Luthando:Babe you have to believe me, something happened to me yesterday. I don't know what.

Mxolisi:Did anyone drag you to that club?

Luthando:No.

Mxolisi:Then how did you get there?

Luthando:I... I went on my own. But I only had a few drinks. I was going to come out after that.

Mxolisi:Just stop lying to me Luthando and be honest.

Luthando:I'm not lying..

Mxolisi:You know what, this is all my fault actually. What was I thinking?? Did I really think I could change you? You are a bad girl Thando, and you will never change. Please don't call me again, delete my number and I will delete yours too. It's over between us.

He hung up and she felt like the whole world was crumbling on top of her.

Tears filled her eyes and she tried calling him back again and again, and again. But it wasn't going through. He must have blocked her.

Luthando:Oh God what have I done?

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THANDIWE

Her mind is far away, she is thinking of the way Luhlelo acted yesterday over the phone. Could he not be interested in her anymore?

Mpumi:What are you thinking about?

She has been talking alone for a while.

Thandiwe:Mhhh nothing..

Mpumi:Come on you can talk to me. You look very stressed. Is it about school?

Thandiwe:No it's not about that.

Mpumi:Then what is going on?

Thandiwe:It's about a boy.

Mpumi:A boy?

She asked her. Thandiwe isn't one to talk about boys.

Thandiwe:Yeah. I was with him yesterday.

Mpumi:You skipped school for a boy!?

She asked with a hand over her mouth.

Mpumi:I thought you didn't like boys.

Thandiwe:I never said I don't like boys, I just said I don't want to date as yet.

Mpumi:I thought you were part of us.

She said with a low voice. She really thought Thandiwe would be interested in her some day.

Thandiwe:I'm not a lesbian Mpumi.

Mpumi:Okay.. So tell me about him. What's his name?

Thandiwe:His name is uhm... He is Ntando. We actually just met and I like him. A lot actually. But there are two issues one, he's older than me, like way older. Two, he's about to be married.

Mpumi:Hay Thandiwe please don't tell me that you are dating a married man?

Thandiwe:It's wrong I know, but I like this guy. At first I wasn't sure, but now I'm convinced. I love him. He's my first love and I want to be with him.

Mpumi:What about his wife? Are you aware that you are potentially destroying another woman's marriage?

Thandiwe:It's not my fault her husband wants me.

Mpumi:Haybo!

She was shocked to the core. This man was corrupting her friend. Thandiwe is a sweet innocent girl who wouldn't want to deliberately bring harm to anyone.

Thandiwe:Anyway, yesterday he took me to this nice hotel and brought me food. We almost did the deed.

Mpumi:What!?

Thandiwe:He did insert it, but I told him to stop because it was painful. We didn't do anything after that.

Mpumi:Thandiwe I don't know what to say about this. This guy is your first boyfriend, and he already knows more stuff than you do. What if he just wants to smash and leave you?

Thandiwe:He won't do that. He loves me.

Mpumi:Even so, but you need to be careful. You are not in any kind of contraception. What if you fall pregnant? What if you are pregnant already?

Thandiwe:We didn't have sex.

Mpumi:There is precum. Pregnancy doesn't even need penetration.

Thandiwe:Mpumi don't joke like this. I can't get pregnant. What will I do with a baby? Ngathi ngizifeyilela naseskoleni,

ngizoyenzani Ingane? (I'm failing at school, what will I do with a baby?)

Mpumi:Calm down, I could be wrong. I wasn't there. Did he cum?

Thandiwe:Cum?? What is that?

Mpumi:What did the two of you do yesterday?

Thandiwe:He rubbed it against my thighs and then some white fluid came out. He released it on my breasts.

Mpumi:I'm not sure how many days until a person gets pregnant. But for now, when you get home, drink a lot of water and vinegar. Coke, sprite, everything.

Thandiwe:Won't that kill me?

Mpumi:I don't know MaThandi. I've never slept with a boy.

Thandiwe:Luthando will kill me.

Mpumi shook her head disappointed. This was so unlike Thandiwe. First love always makes you do crazy things.

Thandiwe:I'm going to the bathroom. I'll be back.

She hurried to the toilets and locked herself inside. She took out her phone and called Luhlelo.

Luhlelo:Hello.

Thandiwe:Hi, can you talk?

She heard some shuffling.

Luhlelo:Now I can talk. What's up?

Thandiwe: Is there a possibility that I could be pregnant from yesterday?

Luhlelo: No, I didn't release on you.

Thandiwe: Are you sure?

Luhlelo: Yeah, what is this about?

Thandiwe: I don't want to get pregnant Lu. I'm still young.

Luhlelo: I won't impregnate you.

She sighed.

Thandiwe: Okay... I don't like what you did yesterday. You ignored me like I don't even exist. Please hide me when you are going to post her.

Luhlelo:But babe you know me and Phiwe are together, of course I will post her.

Thandiwe:So you're choosing her?

Luhlelo:I didn't say that.

Thandiwe:Then what are you saying?

Luhlelo:I'm just saying Phiwe could lose it if I break up with her.

Thandiwe:Oh so I won't lose it if I see the two of you together?

Luhlelo:Please understand my position.

Thandiwe:I'm not understanding anything Lu. You promised me yesterday that you would fix this. You said you love me. I'm coming there after school and I will tell her that you slept with me yesterday.

Luhlelo:What!? Are you crazy?? You can't do that.

Thandiwe:Then choose me. Or I'm coming there and telling her everything and showing her our conversations. I still have your dick pictures here that you sent me.

Luhlelo:Eish okay babe, please don't do that. I'll fetch you after school and we will talk about this okay..

Thandiwe:Okay. I love you.

Luhlelo:I love you too.

Thandiwe:I have to go.

She didn't hang up and she heard him talking.

"All the women in my life are crazy".

She clicked her tongue and hung up.

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NOKUTHULA

Today was the day of the ceremony. Owami has been successfully introduced to his ancestors. I hope things will be better after this. I asked to see Noah's grave, and they gave me permission to go there.

There were fresh flowers on his grave.

I knelt in front of him and put my flowers.

Oh how I miss him! He was a good man, and I know he would have been a good father! He was so excited about Owami. God took him away from us, but I know he's in a better place now. He is resting in peace.

I kissed a stone and placed it next to the flowers.

To be continued

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #19

LUTHANDO

Crying won't help her at this moment, she needs to stand up and fix this. First stop is to go to the clinic and do a full body diagnosis. She isn't sure of what happened yesterday but she intends to find out. Londi and Sne will tell her what happened, it can't be that they don't know.

The nurse brings her results and she is shivering.

"For the HIV test, just know that if these results come out positive, it is not the end of the world, you can take your medication and continue being the Luthando everyone knows"

Luthando:Just tell me.

"You tested Negative. You also tested negative for pregnancy. There wasn't any sign of forced penetration, your blood results are yet to be back from the lab. We will let you know when they are available"

Luthando: Thank you nurse.

She exhaled relieved. She said her goodbye and went out. She needs to see Mxolisi and explain everything to him, maybe he will believe her.

She calls a cab to take her to his house, upon arrival she is shaking from fear. What if he chases her out?

She already knows the code so she lets herself inside.

She knocks on the main door and she hears him shouting that he's coming.

The door opens and he stops to look at her. She doesn't like the look on his face. It's like he's disgusted by her.

Luthando:Hi.

Mxolisi:What are you doing here?

Luthando:Can we talk?

Mxolisi:I thought I told you that I don't want to see you again.

Luthando:I know, but I need to explain to you then you can dump me.

Mxolisi:Okay come in.

He led her to the lounge.

She sat next to him.

Luthando:I know you are angry with me and you feel like I cheated on you, but I didn't. I'll be honest, yesterday I did go

willingly to the club but I only had a few drinks. I remember that I wanted to go home after that, I remember feeling dizzy, I must have passed out or something because I don't remember what happened next. I don't remember taking drugs, nor flirting with a man. Everything is confusing Mxo, I went to the clinic today and I tested negative but my blood results are not back yet.

Mxolisi looked at her for the longest time.

Mxolisi:Just how old do you think I am?

Luthando:What do you mean?

Mxolisi:Do you expect me to believe this crap you just told me? Do I look four years old to you!?

Luthando:It's the truth babe. You have to believe me.

Mxolisi:Drugs I get it, but another man!? Who knows what the two of you did yesterday!? I have been through so much in life

because of a woman cheating on me, I won't allow you to turn me into that monster again..

Luthando looked at him as she remembered something..

Luthando:That story you told me, it was you wasn't it?

Mxolisi:Leave my house Luthando, I don't want to do something I will regret. Leave while you still can.

She stood up and left with a tail between her legs.

When she was outside she sent him a message, reminding him that she loves him and she will prove her innocence.

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THANDIWE

She is outside, waiting for Luhlelo but he is a no show. School was out thirty minutes ago and Mpumi long left. Could it be that he stood her up?

She sees his car approaching and she smiles a little. She waits for him to reach her and he opens the door for her. She gets in and greets him. He starts driving.

Thandiwe:I thought you weren't coming anymore.

Luhlelo:I got held up at the office, I'm sorry.

Thandiwe:It's okay, I haven't been waiting for that long.

He parked somewhere and sighed.

Luhlelo:We need to talk.

Thandiwe:I don't like your tone, it's like you are going to tell me something that will disappoint me.

Luhlelo:No I just want us to talk.

Thandiwe:Okay?

Luhlelo:I love you you know that right?

Thandiwe:Yes.

Luhlelo:You are still young I get that, but I don't like the way you spoke to me earlier on. That's not how you speak to someone, no matter how angry you are. Our relationship is only starting but you are already throwing threats and insults. You knew very well that I am engaged and involved with someone, Phiwe isn't going to magically disappear because you are now in the picture. I also love her like I love you. I'm not going to choose between the two of you.

Thandiwe:Wow! So you are saying I should be okay with being a sidechick?

Luhlelo:If that doesn't make you happy then you can leave me.

She blinked repeatedly not believing what she was hearing. Just yesterday he was dying of love for her but now it's another story!

Luhlelo: You're not even 20 years old, Phiwe is old and matured. She knows almost everything about the world. You know nothing, you are yet to go out there and meet new people

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gain new experiences. Who's to say you won't leave me for a boy your age?

Thandiwe: I won't do that.

Luhlelo: You don't know that, life is unpredictable.

She folded her arms and looked outside the window.

Luhlelo: So what do you say? Do we continue or we leave it?

She ignored him and continued looking outside.

He lifted up her skirt and brushed her thighs.

Luhlelo:Mhhh Thandiwe?

Thandiwe:I.. I...

She stopped as he felt his finger digging deep inside her. She gasped and turned to look at him..

Luhlelo:What do you say? Do you want to be with me?

Thandiwe:I.. I do..

He quickened his pace and fingerfucked her more..

Thandiwe:I love you... Please don't leave me.

Luhlelo:I'm right here baby..

He removed his finger and made her lick it..

Luhlelo:Let me take you home.

Thandiwe:I don't want to go home.

Luhlelo:Well then what do you want to do?

Thandiwe:I want to do it.

Luhlelo:Do what?

Thandiwe:Sex. I want to have sex with you.

Luhlelo:Are you sure?

Thandiwe:Yes. Today.

Luhlelo:Uhh okay, the car will be uncomfortable for you. Let's go book somewhere.

Thandiwe:Okay.

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KWAKHE

He has finally gathered the courage to see his daughter. He is parked outside the adress his guy gave him, but he is scared of getting inside. He doesn't know what he will find, he is nervous.

His life is about to get messy as hell, Faith still doesn't know a thing. He is more scared of telling her than meeting his daughter.

He rubs his hands together and gets out of the car. He gets inside the yard and moves to the door where he starts

knocking. He hears footsteps dragging and the door opens. A young woman, about Nokuthula's age opens for him.

"Can I help you?", she asks without greeting.

Kwakhe:I am Kwakhe Ndaba, I am here for a private matter.
Can I get inside so we can talk??

Luthando looks at him trying to remember why the name sounds familiar, then she remembers that it's Thandiwe's father.

Luthando:Look I don't know who you are, but you are at the wrong house. Please leave.

Kwakhe:I just need two minutes. I won't bother you again.

Luthando:Please leave before I call the whole neighborhood.
You got the wrong house.

She pushes him out but he holds her hand tightly.

Luthando:You are hurting me.

Kwakhe:You can just let me inside or we can talk here instead of acting like a drama queen. You know why I'm here, don't you?

Luthando:I don't know who you are nor what you want...

She breaks free from him and slams the door in his face..

Kwakhe:Oh I will be back.

He clicks his tongue and walks away.

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NARRATED

Luhlelo:Are you sure about this?

He asks her.

Thandiwe:I'm sure.

She replies under him, she is totally ready for this. Or she thinks she is.

Thandiwe:Can we use a condom?

Luhlelo:I don't have one with me.

Thandiwe:I don't want to get pregnant.

Luhlelo:Do you trust me?

Thandiwe:Yes.

Luhlelo:Then relax.

Thandiwe:Okay...

He starts kissing her all over her body.

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SIZIPHIWE

She hears a knock and hurry to open for whomever it is that is knocking. She finds Luhlelo's friend, Sphe.

Siziphiwe:Hi, Luhlelo isn't here.

Sphe:I know.

Siziphiwe:Then why are you here?

Sphe:I'm here for you.

Siziphiwe:Me?

She asked confused.

Sphe:Yeah, I need to tell you something.

Siziphiwe:What is that?

Sphe:Can I come in?

Siziphiwe:Sure....

She let him inside.

Sphe looked around the house and smiled to himself. He can just imagine himself walking around half naked, making eggs for his woman.

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THANDIWE

At the hotel.

She is sniffing silently as she wears her uniform. That was the painful experience, she doesn't want to do it again.

He tries touching her but she slaps her hand.

Thandiwe:I want to go home.

Luhlelo:But you are crying mama.

Thandiwe:I want to go home.

Luhlelo:You are the one who said you wanted this, so stop crying my love. The worst is over, the more we do it, the more the pain will subside.

Thandiwe:No, I don't want to do it again. Just take me home.

Luhlelo:Eish okay Thandiwe but you are worrying me. Now it's like I forced myself on you, when you are the one who gave me permission.

Thandiwe:I know what I said, but I said it because I wanted to keep you. You were busy telling me about Phiwe so I said the one thing that I was so sure would get you to stay with me.

Luhlelo:You.... I wouldn't have left you. That would have been your choice. Now I feel bad, I shouldn't have agreed to us to have sex. You are still young and your hole is small, that's why it hurt like that.

Thandiwe:Just take me home Lu, I don't want to hear anything else.

She wipes the falling tears and stands up.

She walks out and he follows her. They sign out and go to the parking lot. They get inside the car and he drives her home. The whole journey was silent, she didn't say anything to him.

Luhlelo:When will I see you again?

Thandiwe:I don't know.

She opens the door and get out.

She sighs and wipes the tears, she washes her face on the tap outside so that Luthando won't see she was crying.

She gets inside and found Luthando by the couch crying, and hugging a pillow..

She looks down and goes to the bedroom.

DIFFERENT PATHS. Unedited.

CHAPTER #20

SIZIPHIWE

She is eager to know what Sphe has to say, it seems serious.

Siziphiwe:You said you want to tell me something.

Sphe:Yes. Where is Luhlelo?

Siziphiwe:I don't know, he's not back from work yet.

Sphe:I know where he is..

Siziphiwe:Uhh okay....

Sphe:He has been lying to you.

Siziphiwe:Lying about what?

Sphe:He is cheating. And you know what's the funny part? He's cheating on you with a teenager. A school kid!

Siziphiwe:You're lying, Hlelo wouldn't do that.

Sphe:But he is sweetheart, let me show you.

He took out his phone and showed him pictures of Luhlelo and Thandiwe together, them going in and out of the hotel, and holding hands.

She gave the phone back to him, she was panting from fear. Luhlelo wouldn't dare embarrass her like this, not with a teenager!

Sphe:Still don't believe me?

Siziphiwe:Why would he do this to me? After everything I have done for him.

Sphe:He is ungrateful and selfish babe. He doesn't appreciate you, I don't even think you should go ahead and marry him. Maybe he's just with you because of the money. He once told us that you gave him R50K.

Siziphiwe:Why would he do this? Why would he do this to me??

Everything didn't make sense. Luhlelo seems so in love with her, why would he cheat now? She needs to find this girl and take care of her.

Sphe shifts towards her and cups her chin. She looks at him confused. He brings his face forward and tries to kiss her but she slaps him angrily.

Siziphiwe:What the hell do you think you are doing!?

Sphe:Sorry, I thought you wanted this.

Siziphiwe:Don't dare patronize me! I'm not an idiot. Nothing is ever going to happen between us Sphe, get that through your thick skull!!!

Sphe:But we had a moment !

Siziphiwe:That was a long time ago and it was a mistake. We both swore that we would never talk about it again. If Luhlelo could find out, he could kill the both of us.

Sphe:*Chuckles* He can't even throw a punch.

Siziphiwe:Please leave!!

Sphe:What are you going to do about him?

Siziphiwe:I'll handle it. What's the girl's name?

Sphe:Thandiwe. I can send you everything there is to know about her.

Siziphiwe:Do that, but for now I need you out of my house!!

She pushed him out and locked the door.

She wiped the sweat from her face and sat down, her knees were getting weak. She wasn't sure what to think of this revelation. What if Luhlelo is with the girl right now!?

She takes her phone and call him and it sends her straight to voice mail.

"Damn you Luhlelo!", she cuss.

She calls her mother.

"Hey baby", hearing her mother's voice just makes her tear up.

“Phiwe what’s wrong? Did something happen? Are you okay?”, she asks worried.

Siziphiwe:It’s Luhlelo again ma. He is cheating.

“What!?”

Siziphiwe:I saw pictures of him with a girl entering a hotel. A school girl. She looks young.

“How can he do that to you?”

Siziphiwe:I don’t know. I have done everything you taught me about how to keep a man but it seems I didn’t do enough. I don’t know where I went wrong with him. I was so sure he would never do this. I give him everything, I feed him sexually and financially. What could be the problem? Am I doing something wrong??

“Baby listen, stop crying. You’re a big girl now. You will not allow a teenager to ruin your marriage right before it even

begins. You need to fix this. When Luhlelo comes home, don't confront him"

Siziphiwe:Why??

"You will go to this girl and tell her to stay away from your man. Threaten her if you have to, she's a teenager! Or give her money

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those skanks love money."

Siziphiwe:I don't know. What about my dignity? What will people say when they find out that I was threatening some teenage girl to stay away from my fiancé?

"See that's your problem my daughter, you worry too much about what will people say. Will people give you Luhlelo when he has left you for that teenage girl?"

Siziphiwe:No.

“Then do as I say. You hear me?”

Siziphiwe:Yes I hear you mom. Thanks again for your advice.

“Anytime my baby. Goodbye now”

She hangs up and wipes her tears. Her mother was right, she shouldn't allow some girl to snatch Luhlalo away from her. Luhlalo is just confused or tempted, there's no way he could be in love with a young girl.

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Outside Siziphiwe's house.

Sphe sends every information he has about Thandiwe to Siziphiwe.

He hears a loud knock to his car window and he rolls it down.
To his surprise, it is Nkazi.

He sighs annoyed and look forward, not at him.

Sphe:What!?

Nkazi:I don't know what game you think you are playing here
but I am warning you Sphe, stop whatever it is that you are
doing.

Sphe:I am not doing anything. I'm just helping her.

Nkazi:Stop lying, you're doing this for yourself. I've seen the
way you look at her. It's disgusting to have feels for your bro's
woman.

Sphe:So you are condoning Luhlelo cheating on her with a
school girl? Why doesn't he leave her if he does not want her
any more?

Nkazi:I'm not, but it's none of my business and it isn't yours either. Luhlelo is a full-grown man, he knows what he's doing. I don't know what the fuck he's also thinking sleeping with a minor.

Sphe:Luhlelo is your friend, not mine. I won't let him play with Phiwe's heart.

Nkazi:Fuck you Sphe!

Sphe:Back at you!

He starts his car and drive away, leaving Nkazi just standing there like an idiot.

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THANDIWE

She's sleeping, but sleep hasn't reached her yet. There are a lot of things going on in her mind. She regrets sleeping with

Luhlelo, she shouldn't have rushed to that stage yet. What will she say to Luthando? She thinks that she's still a virgin.

Luthando also seems to be going through the most, she has been crying all afternoon and she didn't cook..

She takes her phone under her pillow and finds no message from Luhlelo. She sighs and put it back.

She is shaking under the covers, not from cold, no, from being nervous. She thinks she jumped the gun today. What was she thinking?? How could she just give her virginity to someone he has been dating for less than a month??

These questions are running through her mind, and she can't find the answers.

Her phone vibrates under her and she knows it's him.

She answers.

Thandiwe:Hello.

Luhlelo:Hi, are you okay?

Thandiwe:Yes.

Luhlelo:I'm sorry about today , I shouldn't have had sex with you, even though it was your idea. I will bring you some pills tomorrow.

Thandiwe:What pills?

Luhlelo:Morning after pills, so you don't get pregnant.

Thandiwe:Thank you.

Luhlelo:I love you, I know things are not that great between us.

Thandiwe:I want to break up with you.

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #21

NARRATED

Luhlelo:*Over the phone* You want to break up with me?

Thandiwe:Yes, you've got what you wanted. So you can leave now.

Luhlelo:What are you talking about?

Thandiwe:Mpumi told me that guys only want sex and then they leave you when they've got it.

Luhlelo:What does Mpumi know? Did you tell her about us?

Thandiwe:I didn't.

Luhlelo:Okay baby listen, your emotions are running high right now. You're not thinking straight. I can't lose you.

Thandiwe:*Sighs*You were a mistake Lu. Goodbye, don't bother about the pills. I'll get them on my own.

She hangs up and gets out of bed.

She goes to the other room and Luthando was still crying, now she was busy biting the pillow.

She got close to her and touched her forehead.

Thandiwe:What's wrong Sis Thando?

She didn't say anything but continued crying.

Thandiwe: Did I do something wrong?

She shook her head no.

Thandiwe: Is it about bhuti Mxolisi?

She nodded and cried even louder.

Thandiwe: What happened? Do you need me to call him?

Luthando: Yes... tell him I'm crying.. Use the other sim card.

She(Luthando) gave her her phone.

Thandiwe went to her contacts and called Mxolisi.

Mxolisi: Hello.

Thandiwe: Hello this is Thandiwe, Luthando's sister.

Mxolisi: Oh how are you sisi?

Thandiwe: I'm fine. But sis Thando isn't.

Mxolisi: What's wrong with her?

Thandiwe: She is crying, has been since I got back from school.
She says she wants you.

Mxolisi: *Sighs* Okay I'm coming there. I'll call when I'm outside.

Thandiwe: Thank you. Bye.

She hung up and gave the phone back.

Thandiwe:He said he's coming, now go and wash your face. You look ugly with all these tears.

Luthando:*Sniffing* Thank you mtase.

An hour later.

She is seated inside his car.

Luthando:Before you say anything, may I speak first?

Mxolisi:Fine.

Luthando:Mxo when we first met I thought I was just looking for a guy to score for the night. But that wasn't the case. You opened my eyes and made me realize that the life I was living was not right. Believe it or not, but you changed my life. I am a better person today because of you. I'm grateful to have you in my life. I know what you saw in that video makes it hard for you to even look at me. But please believe me, I swear to you I was telling you the truth. The blood results will be back tomorrow and we will find out if I wasn't intoxicated with anything. I would never willingly do drugs, I may have been a drinker but I came nowhere near to drugs.

I think my friends have a hand somehow, but I am not sure.

Mxolisi:I hear you Luthando, I'm sorry for also pushing you away without hearing the whole story. But when I saw that video, I just got angry and assumed you were cheating on me.

So I... I don't want to say that I believe you. But your facial expression tell it all, they say the truth lies in a person's eyes. And right now I don't see you lying. So we will investigate further about this. Let's wait for the results tomorrow. It's a good thing that you did the tests, you could have been violated yesterday. If your friends really have a hand in this nc nc....nc.....

She hugged him all emotional.

Luthando:Thank you for believing me.

Mxolisi:It's okay, I had some time to think about it when you left and I'll admit, I overreacted.

Luthando:I love you.

Mxolisi:I love you.

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THE FOLLOWING DAY.

THANDIWE

School was taking too long today I don't know. Examination period is nearing. Another stress!

"Thandiwe can I speak with you?", that is my class teacher, Mr Mtshali.

I go to him and greet him. He tells me to follow him

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away from the other students.

Mtshali:Thandiwe I asked to speak with you because of your academic performance.

I looked down, I already know what this is about. We've had this talk twice this year.

Thandiwe:Yes Sir I'm aware that my grades are bad, but I am really trying. I took your advice and stayed behind for extra classes but it didn't help. I'm still failing.

Mtshali:I know, I've seen how dedicated you are this term. I've been a teacher for 10 years now, I have come across different students. I don't mean this in a bad way or anything, but I think you should consider going to a college.

Thandiwe:College?

Mtshali:Yeah, what do you like to do?

Thandiwe:*Shrugs shoulders* I don't know. If you are referring to a talent, I haven't discovered it yet.

Mtshali:Okay but please reconsider going to a college, they mostly do practical work not theory. I think you will be best suited there.

Thandiwe:Sir are you speaking for now or next year?

Mtshali:I mean next year. Have you applied yet?

Thandiwe:No I didn't.

Mtshali:Okay if you are interested in going to a college, I can help you with applications. Don't think you would be downgrading by going to a college, I know most of your peers will be going to universities next year and you will feel pressured.

Thandiwe:I will think about it sir. Thank you.

Mtshali:Final exams are coming up soon, they are bringing in a tutor from another high school.

Thandiwe:I will be there.

Mtshali:Okay you can go back to class now.

I nodded and went back to class.

Mpumi:What did Sir want?

Thandiwe:He was advising me to go to a college next year.

Mpumi:I think that's a good idea.

Thandiwe:Yeah, so which university are you going to?

She squealed in excitement.

Mpumi:I got another offer from Wits yesterday, so I'm considering going there. But UCT is my first choice and they haven't gotten back at me.

Thandiwe:I'm sure they will reply soon.

The bell rang, saving me from this conversation.

Mpumi:I have to go with Zuzie again. See you tomorrow.

Thandiwe:Okay, bye.

We walked to the gate and I walked the opposite direction from her.

As I was walking, I noticed that a car has been following me from school. I stop and look back, it also stops.

This better not be Luhlelo because I don't want to see his stupid face!

It comes and stands next to me. The window rolls down and I was not prepared for whom I saw. It is her. Why is she following me!?

Phiwe:From the look on your face, you already know why I'm here. Get in.

She demands, I look around and there wasn't anyone to shout for help to.

Phiwe:Don't think about causing a scene. I said get inside in! Or I will drag you in.

I was scared next to death. I was not ready for her. She showed me a shiny metal and shook her head.

Phiwe:Get in.

I got in, and almost wet my undies.

Thandiwe:I'm sorry.

I pleaded.

Phiwe:Futsek!! You were not saying sorry when you were sleeping with other people's men. Awusemncane sies!! (You're so young!)

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To be continued.....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #22

THANDIWE

She was driving very fast; I don't know where we're going. Maybe she's going to kill me and hide my body where no one will ever find me. I'm too young to die.

Thandiwe: Please stop the car.

Tears are falling uncontrollably from my face.

She looks at me and back at the road.

Phiwe: We are almost there don't worry.

Thandiwe: Sisi I am sorry, please take me back. I will stay away from Luhlalo I promise.

Siziphiwe:*Laughing* You're just like all of them. Always lying and thinking I'm this stupid rich girl who can't think for herself.

Thandiwe:I do not think that sisi. I'm sorry, please forgive me.

She looked really angry and she was sweating.

She stopped the car at some abandoned house. Oh God she's definitely going to kill me!

Phiwe:Out!

She dragged me out and led me inside. There was a chair and she tied me on it.

Thandiwe:Please let me go.

Siziphiwe:I told you to shut up....

She takes her phone and places it on her ears.

Siziphiwe:Yeah where are you guys?

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Siziphiwe:Okay I'm here, I'm waiting for you.

She hangs up and looks at me, like I'm some disgusting barf.

Siziphiwe:Did you sleep with him?

I sniffed my tears and looked down.

Siziphiwe:So you slept with him!?

Thandiwe:It was only once, I broke up with him I promise you.

Siziphiwe:How old are you? Do you know how old he is? What did he say his age was?

Thandiwe:He said he was 25.

She laughed like I just said something stupid.

Siziphiwe:*Laughing* He said he was 25? Well then I must be 23. Sweetheart he is 32 years old. He lied to you.

She moved to me and bent her legs near to me.

Siziphiwe:Was it nice?

She asked caressing my cheek with her fingers. They are actually so soft.

Thandiwe:What was nice?

Siziphiwe:Him fucking you, was it nice?

Thandiwe:I don't know, most of the time I was crying. It was painful.

Siziphiwe:I see. I don't do well with competition mathandi, and you are standing in my way. I don't know what he saw in you because I'm not seeing it.

Thandiwe:I will stay away from him please.. Please let me go.

I had no tears left by now. I'm scared of this woman. Her eyes reflect a lot of anger and hate towards me. I wish I had never met Luhlelo, he ruined my life. Where is he even now? Probably relaxing at his house while I'm about to be murdered by his wife.

Two ripped guys enter the room looking all scary. She smiles when she sees them.

Siziphiwe:Glad you are here gentlemen. Here's the meat.

She looked at me smirking. Oh no!

I tried to get out of this rope but she knotted it tightly.

Thandiwe:Sis Phiwe please don't do this.

Siziphiwe:At least you're respectful. Don't worry, they are going to do to you what Luhlelo did. It'll be over soon. I want to break you until the little confidence you have disappears, I want to damage you so bad that you don't even look at the direction of a man in future.

Thandiwe:No no no please don't let them. It was painful. I don't want to do it again.

Siziphiwe:Oh but you will love it.

She laughed and blew me a kiss.

Thandiwe:Luhlelo was right, you're crazy.

Siziphiwe:That's what they all say sweetheart, that's what they all say.

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LUTHANDO

We were at the lab to get my results and Mxolisi is fuming. They found sleeping pills and some other drug in my blood, I don't know, fancy word, I've forgotten.

But it actually proves that someone drugged me, I was under the influence doing what Mxolisi saw in the video.

If my friends really have a hand in this, then I am disappointed in them. I thought we were all friends. Why would they do something like this to me? Just when I was getting my life in order.

Mxolisi:Call your friends and tell them to come here.

We were back at his house.

Luthando:What are you going to do?

Mxolisi:I said call them!

Luthando:Babe I think we should talk about this first.

Mxolisi:What is there to talk about? They sold you to some guy who pumped you with drugs, who knows what else could have happened there!? What if he forced himself on you?

Luthando:They didn't find any sign of that, and I feel fine.

Mxolisi:Do you know how many people get human trafficked daily!? How could they do this? What is friendship to them?

Luthando:Londi and Sne have always been like this, I just didn't pay attention to it because I was the person I was. They never motivated me to do better. They have thriving careers and are financially stable, whenever I spoke of wanting to leave alcohol, they would convince me not to. So I'm not surprised that they did this, they weren't too happy when I told them that I wanted to change.

Mxolisi:So you are fine with what they did?

Luthando:I'm not fine with it. But I don't have the strength to fight them. I know they did this to bring me down and break the two of us up. To them, I'll always be this girl who drinks from Monday to Sunday. I don't even want to confront them, they are not worth it my love. Let's focus on us.

Mxolisi:How are you so calm?

I held his hand and kissed him.

Luthando:I know what will calm you down

I moved my hand to his crotch.

Mxolisi:That's more like it.

He lifted me up and placed me on top of the counter.

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SIZIPHIWE

I left the place and went home. They will call me when the job is done.

I arrived and took a shower. I want to cook a romantic dinner for my man tonight. We have been through a lot and we need to have some time of our own, without any distractions.

After finishing bathing, I wore a simple dress and headed to the kitchen.

I was humming while taking out the things I'm going to use.

Luhlelo entered just as I was chopping the onion.

He gave me a peck on the cheek.

Luhlelo:Hey.

Siziphiwe:Hi

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why do you look so stressed?

Luhlelo:It's nothing. I have just been trying to call this friend of mine but he isn't answering.

Siziphiwe:Oh I'm sure he's probably busy. Go and freshen up, I'm cooking tonight.

Luhlelo:Okay.

He walked away.

I turned on the stove.

I opened the fridge and took out the meat I had specially sold to me today. He will love it.

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THANDIWE

No matter how much I screamed and begged them to stop, they didn't. They kept having turns on me, there isn't a hole they didn't insert their penises in. I am weak and tired, they drained all strength in me. I just want to go home.

They are not done.

I feel my body moving and they place me on the floor. He parts my legs while the other sits on my face.

He does as he pleases and goes in and out of my sacred temple. The one sitting on my face is pulling my cheeks roughly and rubbing his thing on my breasts.

I try to push him away with my hand but they slap it away.

I just lay there and wait for them to stop. Crying didn't stop them, screaming didn't stop them. Even when I looked at them in pity, they didn't stop. They didn't stop. No matter what I did. No matter how much I begged them. They didn't. They didn't stop. They have ruined me. They damaged me.

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NOKUTHULA

Dad looks so miserable.

Nokuthula:Hey dad, you will try again. The sister was probably scared and you caught her off guard.

Kwakhe:You think so?

Nokuthula:Yeah, you should go back again. Don't give up on your daughter, she needs you.

Kwakhe:I won't give up on her.

Nokuthula:What about mom?

Kwakhe:I will tell her, I just haven't found the right time yet.

Nokuthula:You need to tell her, before she finds out on her own.

Kwakhe:I will.

Nokuthula:Anyway, Noah's mother told me that I can bring Owami whenever I want.

Kwakhe:That's good. Do you think she has forgiven you??

Nokuthula:Not yet, but it's promising.

My phone rings and it's Nosipho, that girl I met when I was attempting to live life on my own.

I go outside and answer her.

Nokuthula:Hello.

Nosipho:Hey girl, I have been waiting for your call but nothing.

Nokuthula:Sorry, things have been crazy.

Nosipho:I can imagine. I wanted to tell you that tomorrow I'm waking up for that permit thing again in case you want to go.

Nokuthula:Oh about that, I'm sorry but I'm back home now and I'm going back to school next year so I don't need a permit anymore.

Nosipho:Oh okay.

Nokuthula:But we can still be friends.

Nosipho:I would love that.

Nokuthula:I would love that too.

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LUHLELO

I am stressed and worried about Thandiwe, she hasn't answered my calls. I want to give her the morning after pills. As much as I love her, but we are not ready to have a baby yet. Phiwe would freak out.

Speaking of her, it was nice of her to cook today. She hardly cooks, mostly it's the house help that cooks.

Luhlelo: This looks amazing, thank you.

Siziphiwe: It's a pleasure. Enjoy.

She raised her champagne glass.

I took a spoon and started digging.

Halfway through the meal, I stopped because my body was reacting other wise.

I coughed endlessly and felt like something huge was stuck on my throat, making it hard for me to breathe.

She was just sitting there, unbothered.

Luhlelo:What is this food?

Siziphiwe:Chicken curry.

Luhlelo:Then why am I....

I wheezed struggling to breath.

Siziphiwe:Oh I may have added small chops of beef inside it.

Luhlelo:You know I'm... allergic...

Siziphiwe:Oh you are? I didn't know. My bad.

I fell down, and touched the table. I struggled with my phone trying to call for help. I always knew she was psycho but I never thought she would go to such lengths.

She snatches the phone away from me and kicks me down.

Siziphiwe:You're not calling anyone.

Her voice was fading away, I could see her lips moving but not what she was saying.

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THANDIWE

They opened the door and pushed me out. I picked myself up from the ground and entered home. It is difficult to walk, my whole body is in pain. My uniform is all dirty and red, I bled on the way home.

I open the door and sis Luthando was the first person I saw. She stood up and came to me.

Luthando:Oh God Thandiwe what happened to you?

I didn't say anything but hugged her tightly.

Luthando:What happened baby? Talk to me.

Thandiwe:Please just hold me.

I said with a tiny voice.

She wrapped her arms around me and I felt vulnerable. I found myself crying again. I could still feel them inside me. I can still see them taking turns and treating me like a prostitute.

I HATE THEM SO MUCH.

To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #23

LUTHANDO

I'm not sure what happened, but Thandiwe is in a bad shape. She hasn't stopped crying and she is bleeding. I'm even crying myself because a lot of things are going on in my head.

I called Mxolisi and asked him to take us to the hospital.

"Where is she?", that's him.

Luthando: This side.

I shout back. He comes running in and he is shocked too when he sees Thandiwe.

Luthando: Please help me take her to the hospital.

Mxolisi:What happened?

Luthando:I don't know, she just came home crying. I think she was violated.

Mxolisi:Okay let's take her to the car.

Luthando:I need to change her first.

Mxolisi:No, don't change her. You know how fucked up the justice system is.

Luthando:Okay.

He carried her to the car and I went next door to leave these two so they don't stay alone.

I got in the backseat and she was on my lap. He started driving.

I was holding her hand the entire trip. She is in pain and hurting, her eyes say a lot. She hasn't stopped crying. Whatever they did to her, I don't think she's ready to tell me.

Mxolisi:We are here.

Whoa that was fast.

He gets out and carry her inside. I follow behind him.

Mxolisi:We need help here!

Nurses rush to him with a stretcher.

Nurse:What happened?

Luthando:We are not sure, but she's been crying and bleeding since she came back from school. Please help her.

Nurse:Okay, I will get the doctor. Wait here.

They pushed her away.

I remained frozen on the same spot. I am confused and scared, I don't think I am ready to hear what happened. I have never seen Thandiwe like this. She is so empty and void.

I feel Mxolisi's hands hugging me.

Luthando:I need to call her father and let him know what happened.

Mxolisi:Are you sure that's a good idea??

Luthando:Yes, he deserves to know. I chased him out the other day when he came at home.

Mxolisi:Okay, do you have his number?

Luthando:No, but he's a famous man. It won't be too hard to find his number.

Mxolisi:Okay I will find it.

He took out his phone and searched him.

Mxolisi:Here, I'm calling him.

Luthando:Can you talk to him? I don't have the strength.

Mxolisi:Okay.

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SIZIPHIWE

I kiss his lips and smile.

Siziphiwe:Hey sweetheart.

He looks at me.

Luhlelo:You poisoned me...

Siziphiwe:Ohh sweetheart I didn't poison you. You just had an allergy reaction, but the doctor fixed you. You're okay.

Luhlelo:Why would you do that Phiwe? I almost died.

Siziphiwe:But you didn't. Do you want water?

Luhlelo:I don't want your water.

I laughed and took his phone. I removed the fingerprint lock when he was passed out.

Luhlelo:Give me my phone.

Siziphiwe:Mhhh let's see. Your number, whom you said you gave to your friend, was just telling you that he loves you. And you sent dick pictures. Nice.

Luhlelo:Phiwe I...

Siziphiwe:Ohh what is this? Thandiwe is her name. She's pretty.

Luhlelo:It's not what you think.

Siziphiwe:What do I think? That my fiance is cheating on me with a teenage girl? Oh no. How old is she?

Luhlelo:Phiwe please...

Siziphiwe:I'm asking. How old is she?

Luhlelo:She's 18.

Siziphiwe:Mhhh. Does she know you are 32?

Luhlelo:No, she thinks I'm 25.

Siziphiwe:Okay.

I stood up with his phone.

Luhlelo:What are you going to do?

Siziphiwe:What I've always done, eliminate any threat standing in my way.

Luhlelo:Please don't hurt her. She's just a kid, she didn't know what she was doing dating me. I'm sorry, please hurt me not her. Please don't hurt her. She's fragile.

Siziphiwe:You love her?

I asked with a tear falling from my eye.

Luhlelo:I don't. I was just fooling around. Please punish me, not her.

Siziphiwe:You must think that I'm a fool. I can see that you love her. That other day you came home dancing. You were with her weren't you? You fucked an 18 year old. Tell me, was she tight? Were you her virgin breaker?

Luhlelo:Let's talk about this.

Siziphiwe:But we are talking my love. Was she tight?

Luhlelo:I can't answer that.

Siziphiwe:We are getting married. In the next two weeks to come. My dress is ready. So prepare to be a husband.

Luhlelo:No, I don't want to marry you Phiwe. You think I would marry a lunatic like you?

I laughed while clapping my hands.

Siziphiwe:Don't call me a lunatic Luhlelo. We are getting married!

I pushed the door so hard on my way out.

I called Bucks, to ask him how things went.

Bucks:Nkosazane.

Siziphiwe:Is it done?

Bucks:Yes, we dropped her off at her house.

Siziphiwe:You didn't kill her!?

Bucks:Killing wasn't part of our agreement.

Siziphiwe:Do you know that she will sing like a canary to the police?

Bucks:She won't. She's too weak and traumatized. Even if she does, we are going down with you.

Siziphiwe:Oh forget it. I've been through this before boys. I know how to get myself out of a crazy situation. Find her and silence her, you can't kill her now because it will be clear that it's you.

I hung up and clicked my tongue. They should just kill her yazi. She's useless now. I bet they ripped her apart. How I wish I could have been there to see all that. Next time, she will think twice before sleeping with a married man.

Nxxx!!! She's even so young, what was she doing with Luhlolo!?

I washed my hands and called my mother.

Siziphiwe:Mother.

"Yes baby?"

Siziphiwe:Everything is okay now. Me and Luhlolo spoke and we fixed things. He apologized and promised to never do it again.

"I'm glad you two are alright. I was sad yesterday thinking you were breaking up with him"

Siziphiwe:I would never.

"That's my girl. All men cheat baby, you just have to accept that"

Siziphiwe: Get your outfits ready. It's a wedding season..

She started ululating, burning my ears.

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LUTHANDO

We were still at the hospital and the doctors were busy with her. They have been there for a long time. I'm panicking more by the minute that passes.

Kwakhe arrived in no time with her daughter, Nokuthula. They are holding hands sitting by the bench. I wonder what he is thinking.

Luthando: They should be out by now. What is wrong with my sister??

Mxolisi: Let's wait. They know what they are doing.

Minutes later, we saw two police officers walking towards us. They greeted and entered the room where Thandiwe is.

My intestines twisted as what I suspected happened just got confirmed.

She's so young, who could have done that?

Narrated

Inside the ward.

The doctor(Mshengu) looks at Thandiwe sadly and back at the officers.

Mshengu:I called you as soon as I was done with her. Her family hasn't seen her yet.

Detective:Thank you doctor. So what do we have here?

Mshengu:Sexual violation. I have never seen something like this before in my 5 years of practice.

Detective:Who bought her here?

Mshengu:Her family. She won't talk, she's still traumatized. Her clothes are there, by the transparent plastic. I have done the rape kit, everything you need.

Detective:Thank you, we will get into it soon.

He looks at Thandiwe.

Detective:My dear can we ask you a few questions?

Thandiwe is staring at the wall, silently crying.

Detective:Do you know who did this to you?

Mshengu:She's not talking, I advise against putting pressure on her.

Detective:Okay we will work with what we have for now.

Mshengu:Please call her family for me. They are outside.

Detective:Okay.

He went out and called Thandiwe's family.

Mxolisi waited outside.

Luthando rushed to her (Thandiwe) side and touched her hands.

Kwakhe swallowed hard, seeing his daughter for the first time. In this condition.

Nokuthula frowned, she was the girl she saw with Luhlelo.

Kwakhe:What happened??

Mshengu:She was raped.

Luthando:Whaaa....?

She asked in shock.

Kwakhe:Who did it?

Mshengu:I don't know, but I have already informed the police.
Can I speak with you outside? There is something else you need
to know.

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To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #24

LUTHANDO

The doctor called us outside.

Mshengu:Sorry I didn't want to speak in front of her, she's at a vulnerable stage right now and she might sink into more trauma.

We nodded.

Luthando:Is she going to be okay?

He sighed and shook his head.

Mshengu:It's really bad. We had to give her an emergency contraceptive pill to prevent any pregnancy that might result

from this assault. She was badly injured on her private part, we had to stitch it back to place because it was teared. From the looks of it, it seems there was multiple penetration from more than one person. She has multiple infections, which can be treated though. I think she's still traumatized for now because she hasn't said a word. Be careful and go easy on her, don't put pressure on her to talk. The police are doing everything they can to find the perpetrators. There is therapy and counseling available, I advise you look into that soon before you lose her to depression. Rape is no small issue, it doesn't only damages you but it scars you for life. We are still monitoring her for now for any changes or problems.

Kwakhe:Thank you Doc.

I don't know what to think, I don't know how to feel. My little sister, who could be evil to have done this to her?? It's so inhumane. She will never heal from this. I can imagine how scared she was when they did this. She was probably crying, and begging them to stop.

Kwakhe:I'm sorry I haven't been part of her life for all these years, but I am here now. The people who did this will pay.

He said that and walked out, he looked really angry. His daughter followed him.

I went back inside the ward and stood near her.

She was silently crying; I just wish she could talk to me.

I sat on the chair and enjoyed the silence.

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KWAKHE

Nokuthula follows me while shouting after me..

Kwakhe:What Nokuthula!?

Nokuthula:Dad where are you going!?

Kwakhe:I'm going home.

I lied.

Nokuthula:So you are just going to leave her like this!?

Kwakhe:I have to find who did this!

Nokuthula:And what about being there for your daughter? Did you see how she is? She needs all the emotional support she could get right now. You can look for those people after spending time with her..

Kwakhe:She doesn't even know me.

Nokuthula:And now is not the good time to tell her who you are. It will confuse her.

Kwakhe:Maybe if I was present in her life, none of this would have happened. I would have protected her!

Nokuthula:It's not your fault dad, it isn't her fault too. It's those bloody rapists who deserve all the blame and insults there is.

Kwakhe:How do you do this to a child!? She is young for this.

Nokuthula:I also don't understand rapists. That time a person is crying and begging you to stop, you mean to tell me they don't hear the victim's pleads? The world has gone mad, God should just take his Earth because humans are slowly destroying it..

Kwakhe:Let's go back inside. I'll follow you.

She left and I followed her while sending a message.

'I want you to track her movements for the past week. Where she's been, who she laughed with and who she's been with. Something happened to her and I need to know who did it. I need all this by tomorrow!'-Kwakhe.

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LUHLELO

She has brought back my phone and I was able to call Nkazi and ask to meet with him. I need to talk to someone or I will go crazy. Thandiwe's phone isn't going through, I don't know why she's ignoring me.

Nkazi:Man.

We Bro hug and sit down.

Luhlelo:Dude, I'm so glad you came..

Nkazi:What is it? You sounded so stressed over the phone.

Luhlelo:I need to vent bro, or I will run mad.

Nkazi:I'm all ears..

Luhlelo:Phiwe put beef in my food yesterday knowing very well that I'm allergic. Bra I passed out and woke up with my phone in her hands. She knows about Thandiwe, she saw our chats and saw her pictures.

Nkazi:Damn!

Luhlelo:I know, and Phiwe is a nut job. I'm scared of what she will do to her. Thandiwe is still young and innocent; I shouldn't have tagged her along in my messy life. She told me multiple times to make a decision about who I want to be with, but me being me I ignored the situation because I am weak.

Nkazi:Do you remember that I warned you about this Luhlelo? I told you that nothing could ever go right dating a school girl. She's a kid, what did you expect to happen? Were you really going to leave Phiwe for her!? She's a minor for God's sake, do you know that you could be jailed for statutory rape? How did you even get an erection for a child!? Ingane ekhlaza cwe esanuka ubisi!

Luhlelo:You're judging me.

Nkazi:Ngikutshela ezikabhoqo(I'm telling you the truth). You see how fucked up your life is!?

Luhlelo:I see.

He clicked his tongue and looked at me.

Nkazi:I am angry, angry because I also have sisters and I don't want any men taking advantage of the. You also have a sister, would you be happy finding out they are dating men in their 30s?

Luhlelo:No.

Nkazi:You fucked up dude I won't lie. Break up with that girl, it won't end well. You know your wife is crazy. Nakhona nje Wavele wayosukela uhlanya ulubona, Ayyy Luhlelo niyaphoxa man yeer! (You willingly went for a mad woman, you're a disappointment Luhlelo!)

Luhlelo:I thought she would change, this behavior is recent.

Nkazi:Caused by you. Anyway, I need to tell you something about Sphe.

Luhlelo:What about him?

Nkazi:He was at your house the other day, and he told Phiwe that you are cheating on her.

Luhlelo:He did what!?

Nkazi:He is a snake, don't trust him.

The nerve of that guy

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how did he even find out because I never told him?

Luhlelo:Thanks for telling me man.

Nkazi: Fix your issues baba. And keep a close eye on Phiwe, I just don't trust her.

Luhlelo: I will, but I still need to see Thandiwe.

Nkazi: Again? Even after all of this, you want to see her again!?

Luhlelo: I know, but I'm worried about her man. She hasn't returned my calls and her last seen is from yesterday.

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A few days later.....

#Narrated

@The police station.

Bucks and Bricks have been in holding cells for two days, the detective is questioning Bucks again.

Detective: We have already charged you and your friend with rape, so you are wasting my time by not talking.

Bucks: What do you want me to say detective?

Detective: I want to know who you were working with, this looked like it was very planned. The victim was almost attacked last night at the hospital by an unknown person.

Bucks: Ayyy Mina I have said everything I know.

Detective: Do you know how many years you will get for raping a minor? The judge will want to make an example with you. There is a possibility that you could get life without any chance of parole.

Bucks started to get scared. Life in prison?

Detective: So are you ready to talk?

Bucks: Siziphiwe Jali, she's the one who hired us to rape that girl. Yesterday it was her who visited her at the hospital, she was trying to finish her off so she won't talk.

He blurted out everything. The detective smiled and took him back to his cell.

He went to his colleague.

Detective: We have another arrest to make, Siziphiwe Jali. She's the one who was behind all this. I will get the arrest warrant ready.

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#NARRATED

Luhlelo slowly opens the door to Thandiwe's ward room. He made sure that no one saw him.

He finds her sleeping and kisses her forehead.

Luhlelo: I'm sorry for all of this. I am the cause of this, I wish I would have known that things would turn out like this, I wouldn't have bothered you and disturbed your peace. I'm sorry Thandiwe, I'm really sorry. You don't know how much I regret my actions right now.

I hear that you are not talking, please talk. Your family loves you and they need you.

He hears someone talking and he quickly gets out and leaves.

Thandiwe's doctor and a nurse enter the ward room for the daily check ups.

Mshengu: I don't think we should discharge her yet...

Nurse:Medically is she okay?

Mshengu:A bit, she still has a loose bladder hence the diaper.

Nurse:Mhhhh bayimosha ingane(They ruined the child).

Mshengu:I don't see her healing from this. You can see the pain in her eyes, it's too painful.

Nurse:I hope the people who did this are arrested by now. They don't deserve to roam around freely.

Mshengu:I trust the police to bring justice. I think we are going to need an AXR(Abdomen x-ray) just to monitor how things are going.

Nurse:Okay I will call the radiology, it will be a BSU right?

Mshengu:Yeah, let's do mobile.

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#NARRATED

The detective and his colleague arrive at Siziphiwe's house and ring the intercom. She opens for them; she is not that surprised to find police officers at her door. More likely, she was expecting them.

Siziphiwe:Officers how can I help you?

“Ma’am we are going to need you to come down to the station with us to answer a few questions”

Siziphiwe:Am I arrested?

“You either come willingly or we will arrest you. We have the warrant, we just want to do this peacefully”

Siziphiwe:Okay I will follow behind you.

“You need to get in the van with us”

Siziphiwe:Okay, I’m calling my lawyer.

“You can do that at the station. You have all the right to do so”

She closed the door and followed them. They opened the back of the van and pointed that she should get in.

Luckily for her, they lived in a quiet neighborhood, so no one is peeping their heads wondering why she’s getting arrested.

The detective get in the front and drive away.

Just two houses away, Ntaba who was watching the whole thing, sends a message to Kwakhe that Siziphiwe just got arrested. He calls him immediately.

Ntaba:Mhlonishwa(Boss).

Kwakhe:Is the idiot home?

Ntaba:No, he hasn't returned.

He sees Luhlelo's car driving past him.

Ntaba:Oh he is here now.

Kwakhe:Make sure he doesn't leave. I'm on my way.

Ntaba:Sure thing mhlonishwa.

He hangs up and gets out of the car. He walks to the house the gate was opened so he walks right in.

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LUTHANDO

I came home to change and go back to the hospital. Mom's aunt came to help out, I'm a bit surprised because mom's family cut us off when she died. But I'm really glad she's here, we need an adult during this time.

"Thando are you leaving already??", she asks me.

Luthando: Yeah I'm on my way.

"Okay, pass my greetings to her. Here, I Cooked some nice food for her. I don't know whether they'll allow it or not"

Luthando: I will ask, thank you.

I took the food and walked out to the rank. I caught a taxi to the hospital, they already know me so getting in was no hussle.

As always when I get here, it's either she's sleeping or just staring at the wall. Right now she's awake.

I sit down and hold her hand.

Luthando:Hi.

Thandiwe:Hi.

She holds my hand back.

I smile with tears in my eyes, I missed her voice.

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To be continued..

DIFFERENT PATHS.

CHAPTER #25

Unedited

#Narrated

At the police station.

She has called her lawyer and is currently being questioned.

Detective:I'm going to ask again, where were you on the 13th?

Siziphiwe:I was at working from home, I went out to go to the grocery store. That's all.

Detective:Do you have an alibi for all of this?

Siziphiwe:Yes, my fiance found me home that day.

Detective:Your story doesn't check out. Your fiancé told us that he only saw you around 18h00pm when he came back from work. Your buddies also sold you out, and confessed that you were the one who hired them. I'm going to have to keep you here until you see the judge.

Lawyer:On what charges are you keeping my client here for?

Detective:Oh I don't know, paying people to harm a minor, that is a serious offense. The cell is waiting for you.

He stood up.

Lawyer:Can I have privacy with my client?

Detective:Sure, the officer will be outside waiting to escort you.

He walked out.

Siziphiwe relaxed on the chair and leaned back.

Lawyer:I'm going to need you to be honest with me. Did you really do it?

Siziphiwe:I didn't, I don't know what they are talking about.

Lawyer:Hey Phiwe, I'm your lawyer. I need facts in order to represent you.

She snapped her fingers.

Siziphiwe:Okay okay I did it.

Lawyer:You did it?

Siziphiwe:Yes.

Lawyer:I don't think your bail is going to be approved. But I will try my best.

Siziphiwe:I don't care, but I am not going to jail Snakho. Try everything.

Snakho:I will do my best, if this goes to trial we are going to need to get our story straight. I need you to tell me everything. Don't leave none out.

Siziphiwe:Okay.

She put her hands on the table and told her everything.

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#Narrated

At Luhlelo and Siziphiwe's house.

Ntaba has him tied up in the living room and waiting for Mr Ndaba.

Luhlelo:Why are you doing this??

Ntaba:Shut up!

Luhlelo:Please I will give you everything you need. My fiancé is rich, she will give you any amount you want.

Ntaba:I don't want your money, my boss pays me handsomely. So just keep your mouth shut and let's wait for him.

They kept quiet and waited. A while later, Kwakhe sent a message that he was outside. Ntaba went to open for him.

Kwakhe:Where is he?

Ntaba:This side.

He led the way.

Kwakhe stopped for a second looking at him(Luhlelo). He is the one who started all of this.

Kwakhe:So you are Luhlelo!

Luhlelo swallowed on the chair. Of course, he knows this man, besides being successful and rich, he heard that he doesn't let anything slide, which means if you wrong him you pay! But what has he done to step on his toes!?

Luhlelo:Sjr please, whatever I have done. I'm sure we can talk about it and resolve it like gentlemen.

Kwakhe moved towards him and threw him a punch. Luhlelo staggered back on the couch.

He punched him again, punched him endlessly. Releasing all his anger on him. He only stopped when Ntaba held him back.

Ntaba:You said you don't want him dead, remember?

Kwakhe breathed heavily and wiped his hands that were full of blood.

Luhlelo:I'm sorry.

Ntaba hit him with the back of his hand.

Ntaba:Shut up.

Kwakhe:You ruined my daughter's life! I don't know what the fuck you were thinking pursuing her!

Luhlelo:I don't know who your daughter is.

Kwakhe:I'm talking about Thandiwe.

Luhlelo:*Confused * She is your daughter??

Kwakhe:Yeah and you messed with the wrong one pal this time!

Luhlelo:I... I... I'm sorry....

Kwakhe:Did you bring the lighter?

Ntaba:Yeah..

Luhlelo:Lighter... what are you talking about???

He was in a lot of pain and hearing them talk about lighters terrified him.

Ntaba took the petrol and poured it all over Luhlelo.

Luhlelo:*Screaming* No no no, please don't do this.... Please don't do this...

He lighted up the lighter and smirked looking at him.

Kwakhe:Do it.

He threw the lighter at Luhlalo and he started screaming seeing his body burning. He rolled all over the room trying to put it out but nothing.

Kwakhe and Ntaba just stood there looking at him. Ntaba looked at his watch and nodded.

It has been minutes since he started burning.

His screams were still loud and annoying to them.

Ntaba took a bucket of water and poured it on him.

Kwakhe called the fire department and the ambulance using his other phone.

They walked out and left Luhlalo there, passed out and burnt.

Kwakhe:Did you take the rag I wiped my hands with?

Ntaba:Yeah here it is.

Kwakhe:So I need you to do something else for me.

Ntaba:Anything you need sir.

Kwakhe:I want you to take care of those two idiots in jail.

Ntaba:Mhhh I see what you want to do.

Kwakhe:*Smirking* That's why you are my most trusted guy.
Let's go.

They heard the ambulance coming and drove away from the scene.

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THANDIWE

Everyday she is always here, she first sits down and hold my hand. Then she greets me. It always warms my broken heart to hear her voice. Even now she is here.

Luthando:Then she said “Le kwa msunu” when he asked him why she’s living the life she’s living.

She said laughing, she was narrating a story to me, Indoda by Thembelihle Nkosi. Gosh! Reine is a character.

Luthando:I will give you my phone so you can continue reading.

I nodded smiling.

She stopped and there was that look of pity again. I hate it when she does this.

Luthando:Do you want to talk about it?

These tears came back again.

Thandiwe:I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to think about it. I want to forget about it.

Luthando:I know I know. It's okay sisi, you don't have to talk about it.

Thandiwe:They ruined me. I have never felt pain like that before. No matter how much I begged them to stop, but they didn't.

She wrapped her arms around me and cried with me.

Thandiwe:I hate men so much.

Luthando:Shhhh, don't cry. I'm sorry for making you talk about this. We are going to be alright.

Someone cleared their throat and we looked up. It was the same man that has been coming all week. I don't know who he is. But he seems to care about me, I think.

Luthando:I will give you some space.

She tried to move away from me but I kept a firm grip on her arm.

Thandiwe:*Whispering* Please stay.

Luthando:Okay, I will just sit here.

She sat on the chair.

He moved towards me and I looked at Sis Luthando. She whispered that it's okay.

Kwakhe:How are you feeling today?

Thandiwe:Better than yesterday.

Kwakhe:I am sorry for what happened to you. No one deserves it. The people who did this to you are arrested. Justice will be served.

I nodded playing with the sheet.

Thandiwe:Who are you?

Kwakhe:I'm your... just call me Bab'Ndaba. I will explain everything when you recover. I don't want to add more stress to your life.

Someone knocked on the door and it was my doctor.

Mshengu:Nana the police are here and they are wondering if you will talk to them.

Thandiwe:It's okay, I will talk to them.

A few seconds later, the police entered and greeted us in the room.

Detective:Thank you for agreeing to speak with us. Remember

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we are not putting any pressure on you, if you feel like it's too much you can stop answering the questions, okay?

Thandiwe:Okay.

Detective:Please narrate to us what happened.

I told them what happened, starting from when I dated Luhlelo and slept with him, to his fiancé kidnapping me and having her goons hurt me.

I didn't realize that I was crying, I noticed the cover getting wet. Luthando stood up and came to calm me down.

Luthando:I think that's enough now detective.

Detective:Thank you for your time. And Thandiwe I promise you, all three of them will pay dearly for their crimes. I will ensure that you get justice, I swear on my life.

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NARRATED

AT ANOTHER HOSPITAL.

Paramedics run inside the hospital with Luhlelo in a stretcher.

Doc:What do we have here?

Paremedic:We got a call that someone was on fire, and we found him like this inside his house. He is still breathing but he doesn't look too good..

Doc:Okay we'll take it from here, thank you.

The following day

#NARRATED

Siziphiwe's mother came to visit her when she heard that she was arrested.

Angie:This must be a mistake. I know you are innocent my girl.

Siziphiwe:Mama I am not worried that much, I know I didn't do anything.

Angie:Exactly. I also received a call from my in laws that Luhlelo is admitted at the hospital fighting for his life.

Siziphiwe:Luhlelo? In a hospital?

She asked.

Angie:I don't know, apparently he was on fire and he was rushed to the hospital.

Siziphiwe:Is he okay though?

Angie:I don't know, but I will go and see him after this.

Siziphiwe:Please do mama.

Angie:Be strong my dear. This is obviously the work of the devil. He is trying to shake your relationship, but your union is blinded by God and he can't break that.

Siziphiwe:He won't.

Angie:So what about bail?

Siziphiwe:My lawyer has put in a request, but she's not positive they'll allow it.

Angie:I will pray about it.

Siziphiwe:How is dad?

Angie:He's okay. He asked me to pass his greetings.

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In the detective's office.

He is talking with his colleague, trying to make sense of what they just heard.

Detective:My gut is telling me that she has a hand in this.

"You really think she would do this?"

Detective:Just think about it, they sell her out and all of a sudden they are dead overnight. She's responsible for this.

"Well then, she's stupid if she did this. She's just adding on to her charges"

Detective:I hope she rots in jail nxx!!

His colleague looked at him and cleared his throat. He knows just how much he hates rapists.

THANDIWE

Mpumi came to see me today, for the first time.

Mpumi:I'm sorry for not coming sooner, I was just embarrassed that my sister in law would do something like this. I was also disappointed in my brother that he would ask you out when he knows that I l.... Never mind, I hope you can forgive me.

Thandiwe:It's okay Mpumi. All that matter is that you are here now.

Mpumi:God I don't even know what to say Mathandi! I am so so sorry this happened...

She sniffed hugging me.

Mpumi:I should have been there with you. If I wasn't too focused on Zuzie, I would have seen her taking you from school. I'm so sorry my love.

Thandiwe:Hey this is not your fault, you didn't know something like this would happen.

Mpumi:Even so, if I was there maybe it wouldn't have happened. Bhuti is also in the hospital, he was on fire. Life is currently moving at a pace I don't know.

I sighed and pat her back. I couldn't care less about Luhlelo, even if he died I wouldn't shed a tear.

#NARRATED

At Nokuthula's.

She opens the door and is met by a dream of a man. She forgets to greet and just stare at him in admiration.

Ntaba chuckles and snaps his fingers in front of her face.

Nokuthula:Oh sorry.

She laughs embarrassed.

Ntaba:I'm here for Mhlonishwa, is he home?

Nokuthula:Mhlonishwa?

Ntaba:Oh sorry, I mean your father. Is he home?

Nokuthula:No he's not home.

Ntaba:Okay, I'll be on my way then. Tell him I was looking for him.

He turned back and walked away, she ran after him.

He turned back to her with confusion all over his face.

Ntaba:Yes?

Nokuthula:Can I have your number?

Ntaba:What?

This was the first time this was happening. A girl asking for his number, it's always him who does that.

Nokuthula:Yeah, you didn't ask for it so..

Ntaba:Ngiyadideka, uyangshela? (I am confused, are you asking me out?)

She smiled and took out her phone.

Nokuthula:Your number.

He laughed a little, this was a first. Somehow he was impressed. He gave her his number.

Nokuthula:I will call you.

To be continued....

DIFFERENT PATHS

CHAPTER #29

Finale.

A YEAR LATER....

#Narrated

@CHOOSELIFE RECOVERY CENTRE.

Thandiwe is standing outside the rehab centre, waiting for someone to pick her up.

She notices her father's car driving by and she smiles a little.

She waits for him and he opens the door for her. She gets in and greets him. Kwakhe nods while smiling proudly.

Kwakhe:Are you ready to go home?

Thandiwe:I'm ready.

She has been in rehab for 6 months. She got addicted so badly, she didn't stop at smoking weed. She smoked some other dangerous drugs, that landed her in the hospital. No matter how much her family spoke to her and tried to get her help, she wasn't hearing any of it. She just wanted to get rid of the pain and the memory of what was done to her. Her heart was bleeding so much, that she found comfort in drugs. She lost hope and care for her life, she turned into a hobo. She has lost

count of how many times she escaped from home to go to the streets and smoke in peace. In all that, Luthando and Kwakhe never lost hope or gave up on her, they were always there, taking all her screams and cries. One day, they “kidnapped” her and forcefully admitted her to the rehab centre.

Arriving at the centre the first day, she wanted to get out of there. But there was tight security. She eventually gave up and came to terms with getting help.

It wasn't easy, because she would crave for a joint so bad that she would scratch her body until it turns red. She had a hard time adjusting to her new environment. At some point, she hated Kwakhe and Luthando for bringing her here..

The people helping at the centre were really kind and patient. There was even group therapy sessions that were organized. She won't lie, that therapy really played a part in her getting over her addiction. She just regrets not going anytime sooner.

Kwakhe arrives at home and parks.

Thandiwe: Thank you once again, for everything.

Kwakhe: I'm your father, I'll do anything for you.

Yeah, that's still something that she still can't believe. She can't believe that she is the daughter of the richest man in South Africa.

Kwakhe:I will fetch you tomorrow to come home and meet the rest of the family.

Thandiwe:Will they like me?

Kwakhe:They love you. You don't have to worry about anything. See you tomorrow okay.

Thandiwe:Okay, bye.

She took her things and got out of the car, she took a deep breath before getting inside the yard and knocking on the door.

Luthando opened for her and when she was their eyes met, she instantly gave her a warm hug.

Luthando:I'm so happy to see you.

Thandiwe:I'm happy to see you too.

Luthando:Come inside.

They got in.

Luthando:I cooked your favorite, are you hungry?

Thandiwe:I'm starving.

She dished up for her.

Luthando:So how are you really?

Thandiwe:I am fine Sis I won't lie. I feel so much better and at peace. I have forgiven those who wronged me. I'm ready to

move on. That chapter of Luhlelo and Siziphiwe, I have closed it for good.

Luthando:I'm happy to hear you say that, you will get a boyfriend your age someday.

Thandiwe:*Laughing* I'm not even looking for a boyfriend. I just want to fix my life sisi. I wasn't able to write my final exams, I know I would have failed but still. I think I'm going to take my teachers advice and go to college.

Luthando:Really?

Thandiwe:Yeah, I know I'm not good in school. I would be wasting my time if I go back. When I was in rehab, I discovered that I can do electricity. When there was a faulty bulb, they would call me to fix it. Or when there was a problem with the plugs, they would call me. So, I want to go to college and learn that, maybe it will be better because it will be something I'm good at. So tell me, what happened to Phiwe?

Luthando:Ahhh, that one was let out.

Thandiwe:What!?

Luthando:Yep, you weren't there during the trial and they couldn't move forward with the case. So they let her go. She is roaming free and back with that pervert of hers. They got married last month.

Thandiwe:Wow.

Luthando:Do you want to reopen the case? I'm sure we are allowed to do that.

Thandiwe:Nah, I'm not there anymore. When I said I have moved on, I meant it.

Luthando:She actually came here looking for you.

Thandiwe:What did she want?

Luthando:To apologize, she even knelt down before me. She looked really sorry, but you can never know.

Thandiwe:I forgave her, but I don't want to see her. I'm good with them.

LUHLELO

The burns in my body are still very much visible, I don't even look at myself in the mirror anymore. I look like a monster.

Ndaba really did this to me. But who am I to fight that man!? He is connected everywhere. I would be just wasting my time arresting him. He'd get out in a few hours.

I heard that Thandiwe was in rehab, apparently she was doing drugs. I never thought she would do drugs. She must have been going through a lot.

Me and Siziphiwe got married last month, but between you and me I don't think Phiwe loves me anymore. Not that I blame her, my current physical appearance is not good.

I bet she's with Sphe, she is openly cheating and I have no strength to fight. I'm scared to leave her because no sane woman would ever want to be in a relationship with me looking like this! I'd rather settle for her.

The door opens and it's her, carrying her bag and full of hickeys on her neck.

Phiwe:Hello husband.

Luhlelo:Hi. Where have you been?

Phiwe:Out.

Luhlelo:And those love bites?

Phiwe:Must have been the mosquitoes last night.

Luhlelo:And they specifically chose your neck? Not even your arm?

Phiwe:I don't know Hlelo, I'm not a mosquito. Now can you excuse me, I need to take a shower.

She walked away, leaving me here. This marriage will drain me!

The following day

THANDIWE

To his word, he came to fetch me to go to his house. Or should I call it home?

We arrived and there were people outside, looks like it was a gathering of some sort.

Thandiwe:Are you having a party?

Kwakhe:Yes, for you.

Thandiwe:Me?

Kwakhe:Yah. Let's go.

He pulled my hand inside and there were so many people, which I'm assuming is the rest of the family he was talking about.

"Is this her Ndaba?", one woman asked while looking at me.

Kwakhe:Yes, everyone this is Thandiwe, my second born daughter.

They ululated and came to hug me. Okay, I wasn't expecting this kind of welcome. I thought they wouldn't like me.

"Well I'm Faith, Mrs Ndaba. But you can call me mom", said some beautiful woman. She's the wife, I looked down shy. We must not forget that I am a result of an affair.

Faith:Hey I know what you're thinking, I'm not there dear. I love you like my daughters.

I relaxed a bit.

Thandiwe: Thank you for welcoming me into your home.

Kwakhe: We have to introduce you to the ancestors, so that you can take your Surname and be a full time “Ndaba”..

I nodded and we went to a hut. You would think we would find huts in rural areas, but I guess dad is a traditional man like that. We arrived in the hut and there were two men in there, dad said they are my uncles (his brothers). They lighted Impepho and brought the goat, they did their things and introduced me to oNdaba, they also apologized for not finding me sooner mad bring me back home. They asked them to protect me from any harm and love me as their own.

Kwakhe: It is done.

Dad put a bangle around my wrist. This is not even a bangle, it is called “Isiphandla”. I don’t know what it’s for but I love it.

Kwakhe: Usuwu Ndaba ophelele.

We got out of the hut and went back to the main house.

“I heard someone is having a party”, I know that voice. I turned back and it was Mpumi.

I hugged her for a while.

Thandiwe: Ohhh I missed you mngani wami.

Mpumi:I missed you too, but now you are breaking my bones.

I laughed and pulled away from the hug.

Mpumi:Look at you. You're so gorgeous.

Thandiwe:Thank you, you look amazing too. What are you up to?

Mpumi:Well I am studying in Wits, I came back because Luthando told me you are back. I'm so glad you got help, I almost lost you.

Thandiwe:I'm sorry for putting you through that.

Mpumi:It's okay, as long as you are okay now. I warned Luhlelo to stay the hell away from you, if not I will kill him myself.

Thandiwe:You told him I was back?

Mpumi:I wasn't telling him, I was threatening him.

I laughed and Sis Nokuthula came to us.

Nokuthula:Hey can you cover for me, NTABA is outside and I need to go to him.

Thandiwe:You haven't told them about him?

Nokuthula:I did, but you know your father. He'll think we are disrespecting him by bringing Ntaba here.

Thandiwe:Okay, I will cover for you.

She walked out tiptoeing.

Mpumi:I'm going to get us some snacks and I will update you about everything that happened while you were gone.

I nodded and went outside, just to take in the air. This is a fresh start, a different path. I hope I make wise decisions in future, ones that won't destroy my life. I learnt the hard way, boys are just there to complicate your life. Through everything that happened, I thank God that I came out alive.

"Mathandi I have been looking for you", that was Mpumi.

I pulled her towards me and kissed her. She pulled away and looked at me in shock.

Mpumi:Whoa what are you doing?

Thandiwe:I don't want to play games anymore.

Mpumi:What games?

Thandiwe:Are you going to kiss me? Or you're going to ask me questions?

Mpumi:I want..... to kiss you.

We kissed again....

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THE END

THERE WILL BE NO SEASON TWO, PLEASE DON'T ASK FOR IT.
THIS IS THE END. THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE FROM THE
START TILL END.

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