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CHAPTER ONE

“Miss Mthembu, please join us in Mrs Davis' office.” Mrs Davis personal assistant says walking past my office. I find that quite strange considering Mrs Davis only summons us to her office when she wants to talk about our progress or very important weddings to plan. Well, all weddings are special and important but those of public figures and multi millionaires are our first priority and only those who have proven themselves worthy of such responsibility and are dedicated to their work can plan such weddings.

Everyone else, including me are still working on proving to our superiors that we are the best at what we do. After knocking twice on the door, Mrs Davis shouts for me to enter. She has to be one of the most kind hearted people I have ever met. Other than being our boss and the owner of this successful company, she's the best adviser and mother figure you can ever ask for.

Yes, she's like a mother to me. In this world that we live in, interracial relationships such as ours are rare and so we make the most out of ours. Not just me, but all of my colleagues.

“Miss Mthembu, please take a seat.” She says flashing a polite smile. Before her is a lovely couple sharing the two seater couch. Next to them is Kamo, Mrs Davis' personal assistant seated on the single couch. I nod and settle next to Mrs Davis. “Miss Nkosi, Mr Cebekhulu, I'd like you to meet Lumina Mthembu - your wedding planner.” She introduces. I mask my confusion with a smile politely as I extend my hand to shake both theirs. Mrs Davis must have forgotten to brief me regarding this new project. “Nice to meet you.”

“I look forward to working with you,” I say with a smile. “Good, Mr Cebekhulu is a business mogul. The very best in his field of work,” she explains with a grin. I just smile and glare at the couple. “And, what does Miss Nkosi do?” I ask looking at her. “I'm a beautician, salon and spa owner.” I nod at her response. She does look like a beautician, with a decent amount of makeup and very stylish choice of clothing. Her designer bag and shoes tells me she spends my monthly salary within a day.

“Right, Miss Mthembu will take you two to her office so you can start working.” Mrs Davis says. I nod then get up and kindly ask them to follow me to my office space. This will surely be a huge and troublesome wedding altogether- that's what we deal with all the time. These uncultured show offs and spoilt brats

do anything for media attention. They just want to see themselves splashing money all the time.

I allow them to sit down. My office is not as sophisticated as Mrs Davis' but it should be enough. If I make it to the big league, my office will be upgraded among other things, not just my job title. "Please brief me on what you're looking for in your wedding?" I say opening my notebook application on my laptop. "Uhm... We just want a simple wedding." Mr Cebekhulu states. Simple, that's new. Having all the money in the world, surely I would take this opportunity and splash it like nobody's business. "Okay. What is your colour scheme, the theme, how many guests will you have, the number of your bridal party?"

I look up and await their response. They both look at each other then back to me. "About three hundred guests..." the man responds. A simple wedding with three hundred guests? "Our theme is white and gold, I'll have three bridesmaids as well as a maid of honor and he'll also have three groomsmen and a best man." I ask them all the necessities and note them down on my notepad then ask for their contact details before we end the meeting. Miss Nkosi gets up from her seat and walks out without saying anything.

The fiance watches as she walks out then turns back to me. "My apologies for my fiancée's behavior." I nod. "Its fine Mr Cebekhulu." He chuckles. "You can call me Mafu
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” my eyes pop open. “Wait, you are Mafu Cebekhulu?” I ask. Mafu Cebekhulu is not just a business mogul, no. He is currently busy with a project in the western cape, building a museum of technology, one similar to the one in the United Arab Emirates. He is partners with MegaCorp, a software company owned by Buhlebami Mnyanda. He is a big deal and I will be planning his wedding.

He throws his head back and let's out a rather deep laugh. I note his long lashes and how they kiss his rather defined jaw. His voice is something between deep and husky, rich. “Yes, I guess I am,” he says while recovering from his laughter. I must have made quite the ridiculous expression for him to laugh so much. Shame engulfs me and I shyly look away from him. “I'm sorry, I'm just so excited to be planning your wedding. You are a big deal incase you don't know.” He leans closer and settles his elbows on my desk. “You said your name is... Lumina?” he asks and I nod.

We fall into an awkwardly uncomfortable silence. My eyes lock with his and I instantly regret looking up from my laptop. His eyes are a beautiful shade of brown but they hold so much intensity, as if he is trying to look into my soul. I try to look away but my eyes keep on finding their way back to his. Why is he still looking into my eyes? “How old are you, Lumina?” he suddenly asks, in the midst of all the silence. “Twenty eight.” I counter, avoiding his intense gaze still. He nods at my response, not making a move to look away from me.

“How long have you been working here?” he asks yet again. “For five years.” My nerves suddenly shoot up at the thought that he thinks I am not good enough to plan his wedding. Maybe he just wants to check if I know what I'm doing. “Mr Cebekhulu if you're worried about me planning your wedding, please do not worry. I may not have the experience you require but I do have a creative mind with extraordinary ideas.” I say trying to convince myself more than him. I can plan this wedding right? A simple yet classy wedding, I can do that. “I hope so,” he clears his throat and gets up from the chair. “I will see you tomorrow.” Just as I'm about to get up, he turns and makes his way out of my office. I don't know if I should rejoice that the intense staring contest is finally over or wallow in my sorrows as it finally sinks in that I will be planning Mafu Cebekhulu's wedding. This is such a huge responsibility and if I pull this off, I might get the promotion I have been chasing ever since I set foot here. Sighing out loud, I realize that I am in very deep trouble. I am not sure how I will be able to work with this couple and given the four months time frame, it might be hard but I will try my very best to pull it off.

“And, how did it go?” Kamo asks barging into my office. “I don't know, they're both weird characters.” I begin, thinking of the past few minutes I spent with Mr Cebekhulu doing nothing but staring into each other's souls. “And they have quite the long wish list but we're going to look for the wedding venue tomorrow.” No, scratch that, I will be looking for the venue all night and I'll be showing my discovery to them and they have to choose the one they like. “As long as you don't mess this up.

Give them what they want and you'll earn yourself a new office as well as a new title in this company," she says then walks out. I bang my head on the desk twice and heave out a sigh. The struggle of proving yourself is real and it eats me up every time I have to plan a wedding. Worst part is that I don't have a shoulder to cry on or to offload onto. I swear if I'm not diagnosed with depression before the end of this year, I'm stronger than I thought I ever was.

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I'm nervous. Is it normal to be this nervous? I swear I'm going to faint. I'm still in my apartment yet my knees are trembling. I pour myself a glass of wine and gulp it in one go. It will help me, so why not? I pour another one, then another one and last but not least, another one. I doubt I can rock heels with such disappointing knees that buckle up whenever I'm nervous. This is my ticket to being one of the best wedding planners, I swear if anything goes wrong I won't hesitate to jump in a lake.

I slide on a pair of sandals and grab my research book and head out. I spent the whole night calling up owners of some beautiful wedding destinations so I hope - so help me god - they love at least one. When I finally do make it to work after all the traffic I've been stuck in, I set up my presentation board before heading out to make myself a fruit salad from the kitchen. I didn't even have anything to eat because of all the stress. I can barely put my food down when I'm nervous so I didn't even try. Basically, I last ate yesterday, lunchtime.

I love my job but I most certainly did not sign up for this. Next year, I'm going back to school to study something else or I'll just find myself a minister of finance and stay at home while they blow up my phone with notifications for being beautiful. "Mthembu, your clients are here," Kamo announces through the intercom here in the kitchen. I quickly rinse my bowl and wipe my hands before rushing back to my office. I bet they're still in the reception. I use that opportunity to make sure

everything is in order. Just then, my laptop notifies me of a new email. I hope its the email I've been waiting for.

I cross my fingers before opening the email. As soon as my eyes land on 'is available on...' I let out a squeal. That's exactly what I needed to improve my mood. This is the best, most beautiful venue in the province, there's no way they won't like it. At least I won't be pitching lies to my clients. The soon-to-be-weds walk in just as I'm editing my presentation board and I'm glad to not be as nervous as I was earlier on. I'm not sure if its the wine or the news of the availability of this venue. Eitherway, I'm glad.

They look rather tense, not that its any of my business. "Mr Cebekhulu, Miss Nkosi..." we shake hands before they make themselves comfortable on the uncomfortable chairs. Yes, they're uncomfortable. It feels as if there's a log under your butt, an old wet log. "I'd like to present to you five of the best wedding destinations in the province," I say sliding copies of the presentation booklets to them for a closer look. "Two of them are booked for your wedding day but open for the next day," I explain to them. "Which one do you like?" Mafu asks, his question directed at me. I blink repeatedly, looking at his soon to be wife to check for her approval. I instantly regret it when I realize that she is close to bursting with anger and quickly look away.

"Mr Cebekhulu, I think you guys should discuss this together." I watch as the man furrows his brows, his intense eyes finding mine. My breath hitches as I am reminded of what happened

yesterday. "Uhm... The Spring garden." He smiles at my response and closes his booklet. "Then its settled." Miss Nkosi turns to him with a shocked expression. "What's settled? Why are you asking her? Will you be getting married to her?" she shoots at him. He holds the bridge of his nose for a few seconds before speaking. "The whole point of having a wedding planner is so she could make the choices. I'm too busy for all of this," He says softly.

Looks like these two had a long night...

"You're too busy to plan your own wedding? Don't drive me crazy Mafu!" Miss Nkosi shouts. Mafu raises his head and stares into her eyes. He looks angry, I think my office is about to turn into a crime scene. "Don't raise your voice at me ever again, and my decision is final since I'm paying for this damn wedding of yours!" he bellows before getting up and storming out of my office. I bite the insides of my cheeks and wait for the designated bride-to-be to say something but it seems like she won't. "Is the wedding still on?" I ask, curious about the real reason they were biting their heads off in my office. She let's out a soft laugh then clicks her tongue.

"You know, Mafu really knows how to upset me at times," she murmurs, more to herself than me. She keeps quiet for a few minutes then heaves out a sign. I have no idea what's going on here but I need some clarity. "Should I call him? We have to go view the venue," I ask and she just nods and drifts off to her thoughts. I open my notepad and search for his contact details.

His phone rings unanswered but he answers on the second attempt. "Mr Cebekhulu, its Lumina. I'd like to know if you will you be joining us or we should leave without you?" I hear some shuffling in the background before his deep voice is heard. "I'm just getting some air, you'll find me in the parking lot," he hangs up. I stare at the phone in disbelief before collecting myself.

"He said we'll find him at the parking lot," I tell her. She nods and walks out. I grab my stuff and follow her suit. I don't know how this is going to work but they better resolve this so this wedding can happen. They can divorce a week after that, I couldn't care less. However this wedding will happen, come hell or high waters. We find him in the parking lot, already in his car. "I'll lead the way." I inform them before rushing to my car.

We finally arrive at our destination after driving for less than half an hour. "This is the Spring Garden, owned by Eva Peterson," I introduce as we enter. "Its beautiful..." Miss Nkosi says as she follows me in. I stand aside and watch as she admires the vibrant coloured flowers as well as the greenery. I turn to Mr Cebekhulu and find him staring at me. "Your forehead, what happened to it?" he asks, a frown on his face. I touch the bandaid and look back at him. "Oh this, its nothing..." do you tell your clients that you bang your head against your desk whenever you're stressed? I think not.

"Do you like the venue?" I ask him, somehow very interested in his opinion and not just because it is his wedding, but because I

have always looked up to him. He steps closer to me, towering over me with his tall and broad figure. He extends his arm, touching the bandaid on my forehead. A very weird man he is. I look up as he retreats and as expected, he is already looking at me. "You should get this checked," with that said, he walks away. I furrow my brows in confusion. He might just be weirder than I thought, he did not even answer my question.

Shaking my thoughts off, I look around to find Miss Nkosi and go to her when I spot where she is. "I hope you like what you see, this is the best our province has to offer." She smiles at me, something I believe is rare coming from her. "Yes, I can already see where we'll have our matrimonial ceremony and our reception. We'll take photos this side cause its more beautiful, plus the fountain makes it even more special," she says. Well, she's a visionary.

"Hey, do people make wishes here?" she asks and I nod. "Can I make one?" she asks and I nod. I follow her to the fountain as she searches for a coin in her fat purse- it was not my intention to peak. She throws the coin inside the fountain and closes her eyes. I would join her but I do not believe in wishes. I was taught to work for everything I wanted hard. I don't think a coin is going to get me everything I want while I sit on my couch and stuff my face.

"I wished for my marriage to last and for my fiance and I to be happy together," she suddenly says, a sad smile on her face. How sweet. Miss Nkosi perches up on the fountain and her

smile disappears. "I love him so much, I don't know what I'd do with myself if I'd lose him," she cries. I sit right next to her and caress her arm. "I'm sure things are not that bad. You two just need to talk and find a common ground. You are about to get married, that's a huge step and you know what the foundation of your marriage should be?" I ask. "Communication?" I nod at her response. "Just have a cordial conversation with him, no shouting and no screaming," she nods. "And if you can, spice it up with a dinner date or something cute," she wipes her tears and nods.

"Thank you," she says. "Where is he anyway?" she asks and I shrug. "I left him outside, I thought he was right behind me." She nods. "Well then, this is beautiful. I'd love to have my wedding here." I flash a grin, at least I can tick the wedding venue off the list, now I have the rest to deal with.

“I was thinking of a iconic midnight blue and white tuxedo. We can use midnight blue silk on the lapels and match them with the pants by adding stripes to the sides then the rest of the suit can be either white or also keep the pants midnight blue. The shirt will obviously be white and we'll use French cufflinks if not a turtle neck T-shirt in order to avoid the bowtie vs necktie debate,” I suggest. Mafu looks at his wife then back to me. I bet he's not convinced, good thing Musa - my designer - and I had already drafted our thoughts and he had them sketched out.

I slide him the pages of three suit design sketches to see. They consist of his suit, his best man's suit as well as his groomsmen's suits. He looks at them and slides them to his wife to be to see. “I actually like them...” Miss Nkosi says. I can't help but to smile. I was nervous, thinking all my hard work and sleepless nights will go to waste. Mr Cebekhulu wanted a tailor made suit, a tuxedo made especially for him and I honestly understand that but everything he wanted made my job a lot harder but with Musa's help, I finally got it right. “I love them, well done,” Mafu says with a smile and I can't help but to squeal. “My apologies, let's move on to the gowns,” I say rampaging through my files.

Miss Nkosi wants a tight fit mermaid dress with gold detailing. She doesn't want a veil but the sleeves of her dress will be long enough to reach the ground as well as flare at the ends. Her bridesmaids on the other hand will wear simple white cocktail

dresses and her maid of honor, a long body con dress with a slit. Now as easy as it seems, brides are hard to impress and I hope - so help me god - she likes everything. I don't know what I would've done without Musa. "I love it, this is perfect! This is exactly how I envisioned it and more." A smile graces her face. A happy bride, a happy wedding planner. "If this dress comes out as good as it looks on paper, I don't even know how I'll repay you," she looks at the sketches one more time and giggles. "Baby, what do you think?" she asks showing her fiance.

I found they are in a better mood today ,which is good for everyone. I guess they talked it out or did whatever the hell couples do to make up. "Its dramatic, just like you," Mr Cebekhulu says and she giggles louder. "I'm not dramatic!" Mafu chuckles then leans in closer to her. "I can't wait to see it on you," he whispers loud enough for me to hear. Miss Nkosi shyly looks away from him. As cute as this is, its weird and uncomfortable. Someone knocks on the door before letting themselves in. My colleague and best friend, Zama walks in with a box of chocolates, a bouquet of flowers and a Victoria's Secret paper bag.

"I'm sorry to disturb your meeting but these came in for you," she says placing everything on my velvet couch. "No, it must be a mistake." I protest but she scoffs and shakes her head. "Its definitely not a mistake," she winks at me then walks out. I wonder who sent me that. "Your boyfriend?" Miss Nkosi asks and I shake my head. I don't have a boyfriend nor any potential

lover. I don't even have a secret admirer, that's how bad things are. "We should get back to work," I suggest. "I actually need to go to the ladies room, in the meantime you could open your gifts," she says getting up from her seat and makes her way out.

"Do you mind?" Mafu shakes his head in response to my question and fishes for his phone in his pocket. I get up from my seat and rush to my delivery. I first grab the bouquet of flowers and take in the scent. To be honest they don't smell as good as actors paint them to smell. I take out the card from the middle. "They are as beautiful as you are, I hope you love them, Siyamthanda." I look at the card in disbelief and let out a brief chuckle. How dare he, after everything he put me through? Where did he get the audacity to creep his way back into my life with a bouquet of cheap roses and my favourite chocolates?

I throw the flowers on the couch and reach for the paper bag. There's something lacy inside. I reach for it and throw it back in as soon as I see what it is. There's a card attached to the paper bag. "This would look good on you," it reads. I neatly place everything back and return to my seat. I lean back and let everything sink in. I swear I'm going to kill him. "You should be happy, not a lot of men get their ladies lingerie," Mafu says dragging me out of my thoughts. He saw that? Maybe the paper bag sold me out. I bet everyone knows that Victoria's Secret is a ladies' house.

“He's not my boyfriend,” I respond flatly. “A friend with benefits, perhaps?” I shake my head. Is it appropriate to ask such questions while looking straight into someone's eyes? He does that quite a lot and without shame. “You're a virgin?” he asks and I almost choke on my saliva. Is he trying to converse with me, is that why he's asking me these questions? Then he's bad at it, straight up. “N-no, I'm not a virgin,” he's still looking at me. “So you engage in sexual activities then?” what kind of questions are these? Miss Nkosi needs to get her fiancé checked, he might be deranged for all we know. I look away. “Yes, I... I do,” he nods.

I get up and get myself a glass of water from the water dispenser, my throat feels incredibly dry. This also allows me to get away from Mafu before he asks me even more insanely personal questions that no one should ever even ask. I think I'm getting a fever. I turn around and find him standing behind me. I jump in shock. “You don't look too well,” he says softly. Yes, maybe if you step back a little I'll be fine. “I'm just- you scared me.” He steps forward and stops in front of me. Gosh, he smells so good. I don't know why he does this thing of looking into my eyes but I have a love-hate relationship with it.

“You need water?” I ask but he doesn't respond. “You... You're fascinating,” he says. I open my mouth to say something but nothing comes out. I don't know what to say, I'm not even sure if that was a compliment or what. He extends his arms and holds on to the counter. I look at his arms and notice his veins popping. Honestly, I wonder how intense they get when he

grabs on the sheets. “Your fetish?” he asks. Is he asking about what turns me on? Where there hell does this man come from? “I mean veins. I notice you've been staring at them for some time so I figured they must be your fetish,” he says and I nod. I look away then shake my head, what's wrong with me?

“Uhm no, they terrify me.” he chuckles, he does that a lot. I hear heels clicking against the newly installed tiles. “Miss Nkosi is on her way back.” Mafu uncages me and pours himself a glass of water of which he gulps down in one go while staring at me. I watch as his Adam's apple bobs up and down and my throat instantly dries further. The door slides open and Miss Nkosi makes her way in. “I'm sorry I took a while,” she apologizes. “No problem, actually I think we're done for the day. Yeah, Musa will come to your house to take your measurements and you'll choose your material and fabrics then we'll move on to the decor and... And menu,” she nods then takes her handbag. “My love, let's go.” Mafu glares at me before following his fiancée out.

I'm not going to work today. It's not my day off but I won't be able to face the couple after what happened yesterday. I fascinate him? What's fascinating about me, his wedding planner? I think that he likes me, but that's a little overboard. I mean the man is getting married to the love of his life in a couple of weeks and to be honest, I'm no match to his fiancée. She is beautiful and she knows it. She walks as if she were a model, gracefully and with confidence. She's probably the brand ambassador of confidence. And Mafu is a big deal, he would never stoop so low as to take interest in me. Miss Nkosi probably has insurance on her face worth millions- yes, she is that beautiful.

Right now, I just need to stop over thinking and make the most of this supposed day off. I scoop myself some ice cream and march to the living room. I surf for an interesting movie on Show max of which I don't find. I then settle for my favorite adult swim cartoons, Rick n Morty. They have got to be the best cartoons ever. I'm too old for cartoons? There's no such thing as that. A knock on the door interrupts my peace and quiet. The person knocks louder this time, forcing me to get my huge behind up and attend to the door.

I open it and attempt to close it as soon as I can but he pushes the door. "Lulu, please open for me," he beseeches. "Go away!" I shout still trying to close the door. "Please hear me out, just this once. After this I'll never bother you again, I promise," he

says. I let him in and walk to the lounge with him following behind. He sits next to me. "How are you doing?" he asks and I don't respond. I didn't let him in to talk about my feelings. He just needs to say what he came here to say then get lost. "Lulu, I know I hurt you and it wasn't my intension to do so. I was just tempted and did some crazy shit to you but I've always loved you and I never stopped loving you," he says.

"You cheat on someone you love countless times and blame them for your infidelity?" I ask. "Lu, listen to me..." I clench my fists on my sides in order to control my anger. "No Siyamthanda! You won't come to my space, invade my privacy then tell me what to do. I've listened to you for three years and I'm done. The five years I've lived without you were the best years of my life." He looks disappointed by my response. If he thought I would jump at his command then he thought wrong. "You don't mean that..." he says softly. "No I mean it, Siyamthanda. You slept with my closest friends, my cousins and everyone I knew then you come back here and think "I love you" is going to cut it? No! In fact, get out," I ask him nonchalantly.

"Lumina..." I get up from the couch and jog to the spare bedroom to get the gifts he bought me. "Take this and get out. Don't ever come back here and don't ever call me. Stop buying me things and get the fuck out of my life." He takes them but stays rooted on the same spot. "Get out Siyamthanda, get out!" he smirks and throws the gifts on the couch. He steps closer and pulls me closer to him. "I love you and no fool is going to

take you away from me,” he says looking behind me. I try to turn but he holds my face. “Keep the gifts, I bought them for you. You'll come back to me one day,” he tries to kiss me but I move my head. He laughs and makes his way out, bumping into Mafu who is also rooted to the door.

“Mr Cebekhulu?” I ask wiping my tears. I'm in nothing but a baggy T-shirt and my client is at my door step? “How did you find my apartment?” I ask looking around to make sure everything is in order. “Are you going to let me in?” he asks and I nod. I've never seen him out of a suit before and he looks so good. Black is his colour. “So should I come in?” he asks. “Oh yes, I'm sorry,” he enters and I close the door behind him. I follow him to the lounge and take my ice cream bowl to the kitchen and my so called gifts to the guest bedroom. “Would you like anything to drink?” I ask. He looks at me from head to toe before looking into my eyes. “A glass of water with ice,” he says.

I rush to the kitchen to get him water with ice then hand it to him while I rush to change into something appropriate. “You don't have to make yourself uncomfortable in my presence,” he says

watching my retreating figure. I stop to look at him and shrug. “I know I didn't tell you that I won't be coming to work but you didn't have to come to my apartment,” I tell him. “Mrs Davis said you called in sick. You look healthy to me so why didn't you go to work? Is it about yesterday?” he asks and I hesitantly shake my head. “I would like to change first,” he only nods in

response. I then rush to my room to change into something more appropriate. I slip on my joggers then head out.

I pass by my office space which is the spare bedroom, and grab my workbook and my laptop. I see Mafu has made himself comfortable in my apartment. "Before we go any further, how did you find my apartment?" I ask. "I have my ways," he responds. "Which are?" he remains quiet. "Mr Cebekhulu, your ways are an invasion of my privacy so tell me or leave." He looks at me as if I have suddenly grown two heads. Knowing him, with our few encounters, he probably won't answer me. He heaves out loud. "That colleague of yours who wears skimpy clothes gave me your address." I should've known Zama would do something like this. She never uses her brain but what's between her thighs, just like Siyamthanda.

I'm not even going to ask any more questions, I don't want surprises. "Last night I searched some cake designs for you as well as started working on your food and drinks menu." I say opening my laptop. I saved everything as slides so it will be much easier to present. "I'll email everything to you so you can discuss it with your wife." I add on. "Fiancee," he corrects me. "Soon to be wife, yes," I protest. "But she's still my fiancee," he agitates. Why are we even arguing about this. "I also found three celebrity DJs who are free on your wedding day and..." he chimes in. "Was that your ex boyfriend?" he asks. "Yes and I don't think he has anything to do with what we're talking about," I say.

“Did he buy you those gifts?” he asks yet again. “Mr Cebekhulu, may we please not talk about my private life?” I ask. He raises his brow. “Was he your first?” he asks. I sigh in fury. “Mr Cebekhulu, may we please respect each other's privacy? I don't ask about your personal life and I don't think you should ask about mine.” Why is he looking at me like I'm crazy? “We're not in your workplace, are we?” he asks and I nod. “So that means I'm not your client here. I didn't come here to talk about work, in fact I came to talk about what happened yesterday,” he says. “Oh.” I feel like a fool right now. He should've said all that when he got here.

“What about yesterday?” I ask. He sits up straight. “My behavior is totally unacceptable and I know that. I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable yesterday, it wasn't my intension,” I was most certainly not expecting that. “But I meant it when I said you fascinate me. I would like to get to know you, maybe we can be friends?” he asks. I'm blinking rapidly right now, waiting for him to tell me that he's joking. “Aren't you too old to be my friend?” I ask and he laughs. “I'm not old, Lumina,” he says. “Then how old are you?” I ask. “Old enough to be your friend... Come here,” he says signaling me to join him on the couch. I hesitantly get up and sit next to him. He wraps his arm around me and I snuggle closer.

“I know I'm a confusing person and you might find me weird, I get that a lot. Everything about me is hard to understand but I'm not a bad person. If we become friends then you'll get to know me more and...” His words slur off and my eyes trail off to

his lips. They're moving, which means he's talking but I can't hear him. He glares at me for a second before smiling. I don't know why he's smiling but it's a beautiful sight. "So, friends?" he asks and I nod. I watch as his smile turns into a grin and my insides melt. Why did I agree to this again? His cellphone vibrates from his pocket and he fishes it out. His grin fades as soon as he turns his screen on. He sighs then shoves it back into his pocket. "What's wrong?" I ask.

"I was planning on taking Noma on a Spa treatment but she just canceled on me," he says. "Now I have to cancel everything. Thing about Nomalanga Nkosi is that I can't do anything for her cause she's always with her friends. She never has..." I chime in. "You don't have to cancel- I haven't had a massage in years."

Mafu watched as his new friend was being touched all over her body. He specifically asked for masseuses for personal reasons. He knew he wouldn't stand the sight of another man massaging his fiancée but now that the situation has taken a complete turn, he would not have been able to watch another man touching Lumina all over the place, giving her pleasure that he'll never be able to give her and making her moan like she currently was. He couldn't even feel the small fingers of the masseuse who was massaging him because he had completely zoned out. Watching Lumina enjoy the massage made him feel better on its own.

Her moans were as sweet as honey and her face was gorgeous. The pleasure was too much for her, she was on the verge of crying. Funny how an innocent massage turned into a sexual fantasy. It was sexual for Mafu, as he pictured himself making love to her. His hands roaming all over her perfectly sculptured body while he pleased her, taking her into a frenzy of excitement. He pictured the look on her face as the face she'd make when he made her orgasm. She was beautiful, attractive, charismatic. That's what made he thought when she first walked into Mrs Davis' office and met them for the first time. That's what he always thinks when he always sees her. She was a goddess in his eyes, the goddess of beauty.

Not only was she beautiful but she had brains. She was her own person and she fascinated him. He liked how she carried

herself, how she always tried to keep things professional between the two of them. On the other hand, he failed. Even Nomalanga saw how he looked at her and that resulted in them fighting. He promised to behave himself yet he went behind her back and befriended their wedding planner whom he was also sexually attracted to. He hated having to see her break down because of a man, a useless man at that. He was not even a man but an excuse of a man. How do you hurt someone like that then think a bouquet of cheap roses and a lingerie is going to cut it? If anything, the lingerie was a bad call.

He imagined his lips on hers while she dug her long nails on his back. But his thoughts were short lived when he heard someone whispering into his ear. "Wakey Wakey," it was none other than his newly made friend. "I'm not asleep," Mafu said to her. She chuckled softly that he barely heard her and started massaging him, finishing off the work of the masseuses who were all ready to leave. "The massage was that great?" she asked but he had already zoned out yet again. He needed to finish his sexual fantasy off, especially now that she was touching him. It felt real. Her tiny fingers dancing on his back felt like she had wrapped her arms around him and encouraging him to pleasure her.

"Mafu, get up!" she whispered in his ear yet again. He groaned and got up. "The masseuses want to leave," she said using her non existent strength to pull him up. He was heavy, must be because of all those muscles. He got up and threw himself on the couch. She sat next to him laughing, he looked quite

exhausted instead of looking as rejuvenated as Lumina was. "Are you tired?" she asked and he shook his head like the big baby that he was. He only wished her towel would fall off so his fantasy could be real. "Hungry? Should I make us something to eat?" Lumina asked and he nodded. She dashed to the kitchen, her behind wiggling as she walked. He wasn't hungry for food but for something else rather, something to help him blow off some steam and hopefully make him forget about Lumina Mthembu and focus on his fiancée and his wedding.

He dragged himself to his bedroom to put on at least a pair of joggers while she moved around the kitchen like she owned it. He silently sunk onto a high chair and watched as she slithered around his kitchen while dancing to the tune she was humming. Turning around, she was shocked to find Mafu had returned, silently so. "Oh, you're here? Maybe you should get some rest, you really look tired," she suggested. He did it, that thing he likes to do where he looks into her eyes and ignores everything she says. The only difference was that this time, she held his gaze. She hasn't realized he was shirtless and in a pair of gray joggers which detailed every inch of his lower body.

"What are you making?" he asked. She looked away and attended to her pots. "You like meat, right?" she asked. Yes, he loved meat, lots of it. He liked it thick and juicy, tight and mouth watering. He liked all the meat in front of him. "I'll be back, just want to get dressed," she said walking past him. He involuntarily grabbed her arm and pulled her back. He got up from the chair and pulled her closer to him. "Mafu

what are you..." he captured her lips with his, sucking on and making love to both of them. Her arms found their way around his neck and in a swift, he lifted her up and placed her on top of the island. He broke the kiss and attended to her neck of which he kissed and sucked like his life depended on it. She wrapped her arms around him and locked him in with her legs. She couldn't hold it in anymore and started moaning out loud.

He untied the towel around her bosom and held her swollen breasts and started playing with them. "Mafu!" she screamed as he pinched her hard nipples. She helped him lower his pants and grabbed his groin and started massaging it, stroking it. Her hands felt like magic, but all he wanted was to bury himself between her thighs. It felt exactly like he thought it would and he knew just then that he wouldn't last. Her face was exactly as he thought it would look. "Oh baby," she cried. She held on tightly to him as he slowly thrust in and out, coating his groin with her wetness. Her warm breath fanned his face as she struggled to breathe.

He squeezed her butt as he started to furiously thrust inside of her. He wanted himself balls deep inside of her. He wanted her to stretch for him and him only. He wanted to ravage and destroy her so that when he was done, she wouldn't be able to walk. Her screams were messing him up as they kept ringing in his head. He felt the warmth of his juices slipping out of his manhood, spreading inside of her and that's when she screamed out his name, "Mafu!"

“Mafu!”

“Mafu!” she called out as she shook her. He looked at her and realized she was wearing her dress which meant he was only imagining, nothing happened between them. “Are you okay?” she asked, she was now worried about him. He spends too much time on his thoughts. He looked at his hard manhood and noticed the wet stain. He chuckled in disbelief and shook his head, “You really know how to mess me up,” he said getting off the chair. “Let me go freshen up.” He left her thinking of what he meant when he said she really knows how to mess him up. Was it her fault he was in that state?

Mafu returned a few minutes later in a new pair of pants, he was no longer in joggers but in sweats. “You changed your pants?” she asked with a raised brow and thankfully he had also put on a T-shirt. “Yes, what's for dinner?” he asked as he made his way to the pots. “Mmhh, it smells really good,” he said. She slapped his hand, “It'll be ready in a few minutes now leave my pots alone,” she warned. “Your pots?” he asked chuckling. He surprisingly liked the idea of having Lumina cook for him. The kitchen suited her and he wouldn't mind coming back home from work to this, maybe even cook together with her at times- if she let him. “You know what I mean. Would you like anything to drink in the mean time?” she asked making her way to the refrigerator.

“Are you sure its your first time here? You seem to know where everything is,” he teased. “Yes its my first time here and you

have a beautiful house,” she said taking out two bottles of water. She slid one to him and sat next to him. “Thanks for the massage, I needed that with everything happening in my life,” she murmured but he heard her. “Whats happening in your life?” he asked. He was intrigued, wanting to know everything about her. “Nothing of your interest, just this and that,” she said trying to avoid the topic but Mafu was a curious man. His stare said it all.

“Okay fine, I mean everything is overwhelming. Work, ex boyfriend and an untrustworthy best friend who gives my address to everyone and anyone,” Mafu chuckled. “I'm sorry for that. She honestly didn't want to but I paid her,” she gasped. “You are sly, mister. However, I do not believe that you are sorry.” Mafu smirked at her words, leaning forward as he uttered his next words. “That's because I'm not.” His voice came out huskier than he intended but he meant what he said. The intensity in his eyes caused Lumina to become all hot and bothered. With no further words, she gulped down her water in hopes to calm herself down.

“You know, you should smile more often,” I suggest and he breaks into a surprisingly cute laugh. “You have a beautiful smile, Mntungwa,” he instantly stops and clears his throat. I guess its true that Zulu men don't like to be complimented. “Let me go turn the air-conditioner on,” he says already walking away. I hope I didn't spoil his mood cause I'm not so good with comforting people and my stubborn ass sometimes refuses to apologize even when I'm in the wrong. I wipe the rest of the plates and pack them away in the cupboards. Mafu has a really huge yet beautiful and comfortable house. Its a modern contemporary house with a beautiful landscape. This is the kind of house I dreamt of owning one of these days.

I most certainly enjoyed dinner with him but I think this is my cue to go back to my matchbox of an apartment. I need to soak myself in a warm bath and then get a good night sleep. I head to the lounge to get my phone. I need to get a cab because I'm most certainly not going to ask Mafu to take me back to my matchbox. I sit down on the couch and put on my sandals, did I really have to wear sandals with so many straps? My feet are killing me!

“Leaving already?” Mafu questions, making his way down the staircase. “Yeah, its getting late and I have to...” words instantly run out and my ability to speak flies out of the window. He's just standing there with him arms folded and staring at me as usual. “Is that slobber driveling from your mouth?” I touch the

side of my lips to feel if there's any saliva coming out of my mouth and he chuckles. He is just teasing me. "Stop staring at me, I know I look hot." I look away and finish up tying my shoe straps, completely ignoring the he's rushing to my cheeks. Did he fall and lose his tshirt on his way to turn the air-conditioner on? "You haven't answered my question." I get up from the couch and clear my throat. "Yeah uhm... I've already requested an uber so you don't have to worry,"

"Cancel it," he says. "Women get abducted and killed, the stats get higher with each passing day. I'll take you to your apartment," I can't believe he just pulled that card on me. "Mafu." I try to argue but he is not having any of it. "Cancel it, I'll accompany you, Lumina." he says sternly. No I refuse. I refuse to be told what to do. I'm a grown woman and I can take care of myself. "Goodnight, Mafu," I grab my bag from the couch and make my way out, Mafu decides that he is going to follow me out. "Lumina!" he calls out after me but I walk as fast as I can to the gate. I don't understand why it has to be this far from the house, what is all this space for? What's the distance for.

Just when I think I have gotten away from him, he grips my arm in a tight hold and pulls me back. "Lumina please, let me take you home. I just want to make sure that you get home safe." His voice is suddenly soft, his face pleading with me to agree. I sigh and nod hesitantly. He frees my arm from his strong grip and steps closer. His hand finding my waist while the other holds my face. For a minute, I think he is going to kiss me but he

only caresses my cheek. He mutters something under his breath, something I didn't hear. When he pulls away, I almost take his hand back. I suddenly feel cold where he had touched me, the lack of touch leaving me bothered.

This is someone's husband, I need to get my act together. I clear my throat and fish for my phone in my bag. After canceling my uber request, I follow Mafu back to the house. The drive to my apartment is silent, not uncomfortable though. We are both stuck in thought, me thinking of how he makes me feel. Thinking about everything, meeting the man I have always looked up to to him telling me I fascinate him. If anyone ever told me that I would ever meet Mafu Cebekhulu, plan his wedding, become supposed friends with him and even cook for him, in his house, I would have never believed them. In fact, I would have laughed hard in their face.

Mafu finally pulls up at the parking lot of the apartment building. I turn to look at him and he does the same, our eyes meeting for a brief moment. "Uhm, thanks for taking me home." My voice comes out softer than I intended. There is something about being in small spaces with him, so close to him, that makes me feel hot. I hate how I even have such thoughts about him. He is my client, for goodness sake, a very important one at that. He is a very important man, whom is also about to get married. I cannot ever cross this line I would never.

When Mafu doesn't say anything, I take that opportunity to try and slip away. Mafu holds my wrist, pulling me closer to him. His hands cup my cheeks, bringing my face closer to his. My heart starts thumping hard and fast, trying to anticipate his next move. However, when his soft lips press against mine, everything seemingly comes to a standstill. My lips move in sync with his, savoring and memorizing his passionate kiss. He wraps his one arm around my shoulder, pulling me incredibly closer to him. My body is now flush against his, the thin fabrics of our clothing the only barrier between us. "Mafu..." I try to pull away but Mafu is not having it. He only deepens the kiss, his hand moving to my butt.

At the realization of what we are doing, I use all my strength to pull away from him. Both of us are breathing heavily from how hare we were kissing. I think its safe to say that I can feel a pool between my legs. "We- we should not have done that, Mafu." He does not look faded, not even a look of regret in his eyes. "Oh my goodness, we shouldn't have kissed." Mafu only tries to reach out to me but I pull his hands away from me. He is not sorry for kissing me, and I'm not too, but it doesn't change the fact that its wrong. Grabbing my bag, I exit the car without saying anything else from him. I scramble to find the keys to my apartment, my hands shaking from the intense feelings that are coursing through my veins.

As soon as I enter my apartment, I receive a text from Mafu. "Kissing you was not a mistake," the text reads. Excitement takes over as my mind drifts back to that mind blowing kiss. I

squeeze my thighs together in order to relieve the intense feeling. Realizing that that won't do, I rush to my bedroom, opening my closet and digging deep for the one thing I never thought I'd have to use again, my magic wand. Stripping of every article of clothing, I lay down on the bed and turn the wand on. As it starts to vibrate, I press it against my clit. The violent palpitations bring me wave after wave of pleasure. I cannot stop the loud moans that escape my mouth as I rock my hips against the wand.

I imagine it were Mafu bringing me this pleasure and that's all it takes for me to reach my climax. My legs are shaking aggressively as my orgasm ripples through me. It only dies down after a few minutes, leaving me incredibly spent. I suddenly feel exhausted, my eyes shutting at their own accord and sleep swallowing me whole.

The following day, I wake up feeling indifferent. Regret from kidding a married man wallows me in and the thought of fantasizing about him in that manner makes me want to drown myself in this tub. A series of knocks on the door forces me out of the tub. I grab a towel and wrap it around my bosom then rush to attend to the door. I hate uninvited visitors, people should at least respect you and ask for permission to come. Even so, does this person know what time it is? I open the door and as soon as I see who it is, I try to close the door but he puts his foot forward. "My love please..." I open the door.

He has another bouquet of roses in his hand, except these are white roses. "Wow, you look..." I fold my arms and shake my head, imbecile. "Its too early to see your sorry ass, what do you

want Siyamthanda?" I ask. He looks at the roses before he hands them to me. "I know you said you no longer want to see me but I just can't stay away from you. Can we at least be friends?" he suggests. I roll my eyes and hand the roses back to him. The men in my life and wanting me to become their friend. Before I could respond, I see Mafu stepping out of the elevator. Am I the only one who thinks six o'clock is too early? What time do these people wake up and what does he want here so early? "Siyamthanda, leave!" I order him.

He looks where I was looking and scoffs, "This cheeseboy of yours is the one who's driving you crazy neh?" he asks. Before I could respond, Mafu pushes him out of the way and makes his way in. He stops in front of me and wraps his arm around my waist. He pecks my forehead then steps back. "Mafu, what are you doing here?" I ask. He takes out a piece of paper from his pocket. "Your doctor's note, you forgot it at my house last night," he says. I frown then take it. "Thanks." I don't know what's going on but it's not good. "Anyway I had a great time last night. Actually, we should do it again," he flashes what seems like a genuine smile. Is he referring to the kiss?

"Uhm Mafu..." he tips my head up and presses his lips against mine in a very toe curling kiss. Except this time he pulls away before I can even grasp what's going on. It's as if he's teasing me. I watch from the corner of my eye as Siyamthanda throws the roses down and walks off mumbling to himself. Well this is one way to start a morning. Mafu needs to explain himself, that was uncalled for. Maybe this friendship thing won't work after all.

A file is thrown on my desk before Kamo makes herself comfortable on my it. "So, how far are you with the wedding planning?" she asks. I inwardly roll my eyes and glare at her. She thinks she's more important than any of us because she's a personal assistant. She does nothing all day other than to stare at her computer and walk around the premises with Mrs Davis' diary at hand. "Very far," I say flatly then look back at my laptop. I'm not in the mood for all her trash, especially after the morning I had. "That tells me nothing at all," she agitates. I shut my laptop and look at her right in the eyes.

"I've had just about enough of your nonsense. How far I am with MY projects has nothing to do with you. You are just Mrs Davis' personal assistant, nothing more and nothing less. Now if you're done interrogating me about MY job, close the door on your way out and go do YOURS." I hear her clap her hands once before she walks out. I'm on edge this morning, snapping and barking at everyone who comes my way but one thing about me, I won't apologize. Mr Cebekhulu and Miss Nkosi are coming in later on in the day. I'm nervous. Miss Nkosi can't come before Mafu and I have a chat.

What happened last night and this morning disturbed me, it wasn't supposed to happen and if Mafu doesn't have a good explanation for that then we most probably shouldn't have any connection besides me planning his wedding. Time passes and before I know it, Zama barges in my office and throws her

handbag on my desk. "We need to talk," she says making herself comfortable on my desk. We sure do need to talk, "Is it about you giving my address to Mr Cebekhulu for a few bucks? Sure," she looks away, guilt written on her face. "I'm sorry about that, he said its important but I made him cough up a few hundreds cause I kinda needed it," she says.

She always needs a few bucks, everything is an opportunity for her to make money... "What if he was a deranged serial killer? What if he was a psychopath who wanted to kill me or something?" she laughs. "Go ahead and laugh, after all, my safety is not of importance to you," she stops laughing and looks at me with total confusion. "Would you relax? I know what I did was wrong but why are you snapping at everyone today?" she asks and I sigh. "I just had a horrible morning, that's all." I say massaging my scalp. Stress is going to kill me one of these days. "Well, I wanted us to go..." someone knocks on the door before letting themselves in.

Why is he here? Isn't it lunch time? "Mr Cebekhulu?" Zama says getting up from my desk. She fixes her mini skirt as well as her wig. Mafu glares at her with a bored expression before directing his attention to me. He places a doggy bag on my desk then looks at Zama, "Leave us." Zama glances at me before she walks out. I get up from my seat. "What are you doing here? Our meeting is in an hour's time," he rolls his sleeves up and opens the paper bag. "I hope you like Italiano," he says taking food out from the bag. Of course he knows I love Italian food. "You didn't answer my question." He glares at me for a second

then continues with his task. Right, he never answers any of my questions.

“I heard you're not a fan of soda, I bought water and juice,” he makes himself comfortable and starts eating. “Sit down and eat, I know you're hungry,” he orders. “I'm not hungry.” I fold my arms and look out the window, pretending to be uninterested. However, the aroma has my stomach grumbling, totally working against me. I huff then sit down and start eating. I don't know why he's here but he better - so help me god - answer my questions. “How much do you know about me?” I ask. He shrugs nonchalantly. “A lot,” he counters. “What is a lot?” he shrugs once more.

“You're a twenty eight years old wedding planner, you like Italian food and you are a very good cook” he says. “Everyone knows that Mafu, quit playing.” I scold. He stops eating and looks into my eyes. “I know things about you that no one knows, I can see right through you. I know more than you can ever imagine.” That makes me slightly uncomfortable. I clear my throat and look away. He's still looking at me for some reason. “I know what I did in the morning shook you but I had to,” he says. “What do you mean you had to? You made it seem like we have something going on and that we got intimate.”

“I had to, okay? He can't make your life a living hell, make you cry and stress you out then come back when you're in a good place to destroy you again. He needs to know that you're off

limits and you don't need him," why the aggression? "That's not your decision to make, Mafu." he puts his utensils down. "As your friend, I have to care for you and to protect you. I don't want to see you cry ever again, especially not because of that low life..." He's seen me cry? "It hasn't even been a week of our friendship and you think you have some moronic claim over me?" he raises his brows.

"I don't think so, I do." He bangs his fists on the desk. This man shocks me with each passing day. With every single day, I learn something new about him. So far, he's a deranged man who thinks he can get whatever it is that he wants, now that I'm at it, "What is that supposed to mean?" he grabs his food and continues to eat. He's not going to answer me, is he? "And last night, why did you kiss me?" He scoffs, for once not looking at me and focusing on his food. "Because I wanted to. And I do not regret it. If anything, I want to do it again."

After a rather awkward lunch, Mafu leaves to fetch his fiancée at the parking lot. He's been gone for close to ten minutes now and for some reason, I'm worried. I get up from my seat and start pacing up and down. What if Nomalanga bugged the house and there's cameras all over? She'll know I was at her home, cooked with her pots in her kitchen and basically took over her house. Why do I have such an overly active mind? I swear I can think of an answer to any question within a couple of seconds. The door slides open and I instantly tense up. The look on her face says a lot about my speculations. Oh god, she's

going to wipe the floor with my hair but she doesn't look like she can.

She's slender and not really tall so if it gets to it then I could beat her. I look at Mafu and he doesn't look at me. That kind of hurt, I guess I'm used to having him looking at me all the time. "Miss Nkosi." She shakes my hand then sits down followed by her fiance. "The menu, I'm not happy with it. I specifically asked for Vegan food and you had to go ahead and add other dishes." Straight to the point, I see. "Well I could've done that but as your wedding planner its my duty to make sure everything is in place and everyone is happy," she shakes her head. "No, its your duty to make sure that I am happy!" She bangs on the table with her small fist. "I understand that but you have to understand that not everyone is Vegan I mean your fiance is also not Vegan so we have to accommodate everyone.

"You'll be getting married into a Zulu family and I think we all know how most Zulu families love their meat." She glares at Mafu then back at me. "This is my wedding and you are just a wedding planner. I want all of those dishes out of the menu and more vegan dishes added." She orders. "Noted," I grab my notebook and start noting down everything she says. I know how this is gonna backfire but as she said, I am just a wedding planner and she's right. We move on to discuss the beverages, cocktails are the first priority. With hr desserts, she wants egg less and milkless cheesecakes and I know how that is going to strain my night.

"Babe, can we go out for dinner? I know this great Vegan..." Mafu cuts her mid sentence. "My business partner and I will be going out for dinner tonight," he tells her then clears his throat and looks at me. I look at him for a while then realize that I'm the business partner he's talking about. "But baby I miss you, can't you reschedule? I also want to show you this new numb..." he chimes in yet again. "Its important my love, we can do that some other time." he tells her. I can tell she's disappointed. "When will you be back?" she asks and he shrugs. "Uhm I don't know but don't wait up," he pecks her cheek then gets up and walks out. He halts by the door and winks at me.

"I don't even know how I agreed to this or why I'm doing it." She throws a pair of jeans my way. I really don't understand what's taking her so long. "Just give me the nude body suit, Zama." She walks out holding a different outfit paired with heels. "I thought I was wearing jeans and a cute top." Zama shakes her head and sits on my bed. "I've changed my mind." I roll my eyes at her statement, of course she changed her mind. I put the outfit on either way and she styles my faux locs and beats my face. "Vegan food at a Zulu wedding?" she asks and all I do is nod. "And she's Zulu herself, I don't understand." There honestly has to be an underlying situation regarding her decision.

"And you straight up told her that Mafu is not Vegan?" She asks and I nod. "She's trying to turn him Vegan by eating out in vegan restaurants and whatnot. You should see how much Mafu loves his meat." The room goes silent. I look at the mirror and find her staring at me, "Do you like Mafu?" She asks and I can't help but to laugh at how absurd that sounds. "What do you mean? He's my client." She cocks her one brow up. "And supposed friend whom you are going on a date with." I grab my handbag and take out my vibrating cellphone. He's already here? "And he, are you sure he doesn't want you? Bringing you lunch, going out on dates, getting all worked up about your ex? Free massages, cooking for him and god knows what else you did," I give her a death stare before pushing her out of my room.

She gulps her unfinished glass of wine and grabs her bag then we walk out together. "Friend, whatever happens, have fun and behave yourself. Some men are rapists and murderers out there." Rich coming from her. When I warned her about giving out my information to Mafu, she thought I was being dramatic. She pecks my lips and sashays out to her car. "You kiss your friends yet you argue with me when I kiss you," Mafu says making his way to me. "You just broke my heart," he adds on, placing his hand on his chest to feign heartbreak. "Quit being a baby," he chuckles. "Cheek? Please." I roll my eyes and peck his cheek. "There we go, let's get going then." He holds out his elbow for me and I hook my arm with his then walk to his car. It smells just like him.

There's something about his cologne, makes me want to inhale it all the darn time. "So, you'd rather go out with your "business partner" than to spend time with your fiancée?" I ask and he shrugs. "Its nothing personal." He expresses and I furrow my brows. What does he mean its nothing personal? Infact, I'm lucky he answered that question even though it was not really much of a response. I should stop talking about his fiancée. "Anyway, where are we going?" I ask and he shrugs. "I heard you like surprises..."

Within a few minutes, we are silently eating under the dark sky covered in gleaming stars with a light breeze blowing. Mafu had a cute and comfortable picnic set up for us in the middle of a field. I honestly thought we would go to a high end restaurant

where regular people like me will have to reserve a table months before, I guess I was wrong. "Staring is rude, Lumina." I purse my lips and look away. What is he talking about, he does it all the time. "Then I guess you're rude," I mumble and earn a chuckle from him. "You look so adorable when you do that."

A streak of light crosses the sky before disappearing and another one follows. "This is beautiful." I smile, admiring the dark sky. He looks up as well and we watch as more bright streaks cross the night sky, shooting stars. "Not as beautiful as you are," he says in a whisper. I can feel him looking at me and for some strange reason, I like it. I want him to look at me and to compliment me. "Let me pour more wine, do you want some?" I ask but he doesn't respond. I get up and trip on the blanket then fall on top of him. I sheepishly laugh it off as I try to get up but fail as I fall back on top of him. "I'm sorry, I think I-" he looks into my eyes and I look into his. The wine must be playing tricks on my mind making me clumsy as well. "You're so beautiful, Lumina," Mafu compliments. He looks so serious and sounds sincere.

I shy away then try to get up but he holds me tight. "Mafu, what are you doing?" His eyes become hooded, filled with nothing but lust. "I'm scared that this will go too far and I don't want to hurt you in anyway," he whispers as he caresses my lips with his thumbs. "You really know how to mess me up," this is the second time he's said this and I still don't understand how I could possibly mess him up. "Please. Please allow me to do this," he says leaning closer. "Mafu..." This is not a good idea,

coming here was not a good idea. Being alone with him is never a good idea.

“Please let me in because I'm failing to control myself. I can never lose control with you, I don't want to hurt you so please let me in so I can end this,” he requests, sounding so sincere. “Mafu what's wrong?” He shuts his eyes. “You Lumina, you are what's wrong. Ever since you came into my life, I've been messed up.” I can't help but to feel guilty. I don't know what I did or how I messed him up but I can see he's torn. He's down and I don't know how all of this happened, how his beautiful smile suddenly turned into a frown. “Mafu, I'm sorry if I did something wro- ” His lips are pressed against mine, locking and intertwining. My arms are around his neck while his hands are roaming around my body. I use all my might to pull away from him. “Mafu stop. We shouldn't be doing this.” He looks at me with pleading eyes.

“Lumina please.” He presses his forehead against mine. “I don't want to cause any rift between you and your wife.” I confess to him. Why does it sound like I'm up for this? These people are about to get married and here I am, kissing the groom to be. As their wedding planner I'm supposed to make sure things are going well and not falling apart. “Go home to your fiancée, Mafu, we can't do this. Maybe we shouldn't be... Friends and we shouldn't see each other so often, that way you'll forget about me.” He shakes his big head. “No,” he deadpans. “Mafu, let go of me.” He shakes his head and tightens his hold around me.

“I feel something very strong towards you, and I know you can feel it as well. I know I can never have you all to myself, but I want to know how it would be like if I were to. I would like to experience how being with you would be like, please don't deny me that opportunity, Lumina.” I feel myself melting at his words, goosebumps arising on my skin as his words sink in. He wants to be with me?

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“What do you mean you no longer want to plan the wedding?” Mrs Davis asks getting up from her seat. “I mean just that. I don't think I'm fit to plan such a wedding, that couple has way too many problems and I don't want to be a part of it,” I clarify. “But you were doing a great job, you managed to plan everything under three weeks and it came out perfect.” she says trying to change my mind but I shake my head. “I know Zama would like to continue where I left off,” she throws herself on her seat and sighs out loud. “You youngsters are going to kill me one of these days. What am I supposed to tell Mr Cebekhulu when he returns from Singapore?”

“Just tell him that I'm not fit for the job or something, he'll understand,”

Hearing that Lumina was no longer planning his wedding was not what Mafu wanted to hear as soon as he got off his plane. It has been a dreading week after all that has happened between them and Lumina not to answering his calls made things worse. He was exhausted, jet lagged and was craving a warm home cooked meal with a lot of meat. He was most certainly not looking forward to vegan takeouts. Mrs Davis had explained that Zama would take over and continue where Lumina left off. She had also explained that she took her annual leave of which is her first ever leave since she started working as a wedding planner.

Mafu had set up an urgent meeting with Zama at the nearest restaurant from the airport. He had arranged for her to be fetched because he wanted to get to the bottom of this as soon as possible. A few minutes passed and Zama rushed in like she was being chased after. Mafu sat back and watched as she made herself comfortable on the seat opposite his. "Mr Cebekhulu." He nodded curtly and sat up straight, leaning forward. "This is about your friend, Lumina." Zama scoffed. "I know what happened, she told me everything." Mafu furrowed his brows, slightly uncomfortable with people knowing his business. "What is everything?" he asked, concerned.

They were friends and she was obviously going to confide in her but he didn't trust Zama. She looked like the gossip type. "She told me about the date and the kisses. Its the reason she

dropped her project and took the leave.” Zama explained. “Look Mr Cebekhulu, Lumina has been deceived a lot and cheated on and she really detests infidelity. I hate seeing her like that and so I humbly beseech that you to give her some time and focus on your upcoming wedding.” This was most certainly not what he wanted to hear. He didn't call her here to listen to her babbling about infidelity and whatnot. She was not one to talk about infidelity whereas she slept with older and married men for a few Mandela notes...

The drive to Lumina's apartment felt long. He couldn't wait to finally see her again, that one week felt like a year, a year of hell. When he finally arrived at the apartment building, he parked his car and ran for his life to her apartment. Lucky for him, he caught her right before she left. Her suitcases were lined up by the door and she was walking around her home, ensuring that everything was in place. “Where are you going?” He asked as he let himself in. Startled, Lumina turned to him and took a step back. “Mr Cebekhulu, what are you doing here?” She asked and glanced around for the last time, memorizing the positions of her possessions.

“I asked you a question,” he said, his voice loud enough to be heard by neighbors. “You don't answer any of my questions, so...” Lumina walked off and Mafu followed her to her bedroom. She grabbed her handbag, cellphone and charger before heading out and he still followed her. “Lumina don't walk away from me when I'm talking to you,” he said grabbing her arm. She sure was stubborn as hell and the expression on

her face is what pissed Mafu off, this was indeed going to be a long night. "Why do you care what I'm doing?" she yelled. "Because I care about you. Look, I just want us to talk and stop acting like children by running away from our problems." She yanked her arm out of his grab and started massaging it. It was a hard grip after all.

"Well there's nothing to talk about," she walked off and grabbed one suitcase and headed for the door. "There's a lot to talk about, the date, the kisses, the wedding." Lumina stopped and turned to him. "There's nothing to talk about, Mafu. The date didn't happen, we didn't kiss and I never planned your wedding, capeesh?" She cocked her one eyebrow up, awaiting him to agree with her but deep down she knew he would never back down. "That's what you tell yourself to make you feel better? How selfish can you be?" He asked and she laughed out loud in disbelief. "Selfish? You're the selfish one here, leaving your wife all alone at night to go out with your "business partners" then wanting to sleep with them? Don't shit on me, Mafu!" She shouted.

Mafu took her hand and snatched the car keys from her. He was beyond angry for he never had someone speak to him in that manner, besides Nomalanga. "You will go back inside, with your bags and we'll talk." He ordered sternly. Neighbours were now peaking through doors to see the couple making noise outside. "Mafu give me back my keys." He clucked and snatched her phone from her then made his way back to her apartment. He made himself comfortable on the couch while

he waited for her. A few minutes passed and that's when she decided to return. She threw everything down and made her way to the lounge. "Fine, talk."

"Sit down." She sighed at Mafu's dominant behavior and sat down next to him. He placed everything on the coffee table then took her hands into his. "I'm sorry for everything I've done to you. I'm not sorry for the kiss but I am sorry for putting you in a compromising situation. I am selfish for wanting you but I can't help it, I can't help the attraction I feel towards you. Had I known all of this was going to happen, I wouldn't have accepted you as our wedding planner." Well she was most certainly not expecting an apology but one of them had to be the bigger guy and it most certainly wasn't going to be Lumina. "What did you mean when you said I really know how to mess you up?" She asked, seriously. Mafu chuckled then look into her eyes. "You fascinate me, Lumina. In every way possible.

"I have never wanted a woman as much as I want you since Noma. I can't even get intimate with her cause I might just fantasize about you." Lumina looked away. She didn't know what to say or how to feel. "Is it my body? My face?" Mafu shook his head. "Okay well that included but its more than that. Its you in general, your smile, your laughter, your logic. The way you speak, the way you walk, your free spirit, your stubbornness and feistiness. You fascinate me." Mafu ventured. "But sexually?" he shrugged. "Might be." She freed her hands from him and massaged her scalp. She can't, she just can't.

“What do you want from me, Mafu?” she asked calmly. “I want you,”

“You want my body, Mafu.” She argued. “No, I want you.”

"For sex, you want to use me to bring your twisted fantasies to life!" She shouted. She got up from the couch and started pacing around. "The friendship, it was a ploy to get closer to me so you could have sex with me, right?" she asked and he hesitantly nodded.

She let out a brief chuckle followed by a cry as she sunk back to the couch. "How could I be so naïve?" she asked herself. She felt used, usable. "I would become your mistress, the wedding planner who sleeps with her clients." he pulled her closer to him. "First it was Siya now its you." she wiped her tears. "Don't look at it like that, love." she looked at her wrist watch and got up. "Please leave, I need to get to the airport," she said, her arms folded.

Mafu stood up and pulled her to him. He pressed his lips to her forehead before he turned his back on her and made his way to the door. "When will you be back?" he asked. "I don't know but this place is not good for me, I might not."

"Then may I take you to the airport, I might not see you again after all."

Her breath hitched when she felt his luscious lips on her skin. "Mafu," she whispered. He his lips with hers, pulling her into a deep kiss. He made love to her lips, passionately and gently. She tasted of the wine she drowned her sorrows in and it all went straight to her clitoris. It was most probably how she ended up agreeing to this agreement. She loathed infidelity and she never imagined herself getting intimate with a married man. Mafu convinced her to stay the night and she'd leave the following day. She agreed but an hour after Mafu had left, she had downed half a bottle of red wine or maybe it was almost empty.

Mafu was a very good looking man, it was impossible to not have erotic thoughts about him. As much as Lumina hated to admit it, he wanted a piece of him as much as he wanted hers. "We don't have to if you don't want to." Mafu was hesitant but she shook her head and helped him take his T-shirt off. She ran her fingers on his uncovered torso. "Are we really doing this?" She asked, still admiring him. She was hoping she'd be able to get over him by the end of the night but she doubted that would happen. If anything, she knew she'd end up wanting more and more of him. "There's really no going back now, is there?" she shook her head and bit her lower lip.

He spun her around and nuzzled her shoulders. He pulled the zipper down then the dress off. She was not wearing any panties. Who the hell wears underwear when they're home?

She was a sight, more than a sight in fact. She looked even more beautiful when naked. He couldn't wait to grab a hold of her breasts and enter her sheath. Lumina was starting to get uncomfortable, his stare was intense. It was as if he was skinning her. He cursed under his breath and hurriedly took off his pants. He held his painfully hard cock, stroking it and massaging it. He was preparing it to enter its new home. He grabbed a hold of her legs and held them up. "Are you sure?" he asked, already rubbing himself on her entrance.

She nodded and in a swift, he slid in. He let out a soft moan as he made himself comfortable in his temporary home. He pulled out and shoved it back inside. He had always wanted to see her ass swallow his cock, even in his erotic dreams and fantasies. And now that it was happening, there was no turning back. "Mafu!" she cried. She hadn't gotten intimate in the longest time. As painful as it was, it felt good to finally dig up some water from the desert. Her moans, her screams and how she shouts his name. He didn't even know what to do with himself at that moment.

There was this thing that she did that just made Mafu want to cry. They have tried out every position they could possibly have but she was currently riding the hell out of him. Her hands were pressed on his chest while she bounced up and down his shaft. "Mafu, I think I..." she threw her head back and clenched around him as she reached her climax, a soft cry escaping past her lips. Mafu tensed up and instantly lost it and came inside of her. Lumina broke into a frenzy of pleasure and collapsed on

top of him. Mafu pecked her forehead then held her close to him, caressing her back in order to calm her down.

In the midst of the silence, Lumina finally spoke up. “Do- do you regret what just happened?” She was nervous. Somehow, she wanted to know how Mafu felt about her after what they did because she was sure her feelings for him multiplied. Even though she knew it was wrong, she could never regret the best times of her life. “No. Instead I'm not sure if I'll ever be able to let go of you. Its as if I now want you more, I need you.” Lumina looked up at Mafu, admiring his features. He was perfect, something she hardly thought of when it came to a man. She never thought she'd ever meet a man who had everything she has ever wanted in one.

Suddenly, all they both wanted was to lay in this bed and be together until the world ended. But given the circumstances, they can do nothing about their situation but try to live with it. Mafu can never pull out of this wedding to be with Lumina, people could be hurt by their decision. Lumina would surely lose her job and Nomalanga would be heartbroken. But now, they are both unhappy that they can never be heartbroken. Mafu would be stuck in a marriage while his heart belongs to another woman. Lumina would get the job of her dreams while she always returns home to that empty apartment while the man she loves is too far for her to reach.

Love? Her heart beat fast at the thought of ever being in love with Mafu. She was not sure what she felt for him but she knew she didn't want him out of her life. "Do you?" A smile graces her lips as she shakes her head. "Never." She counters. Mafu reflects her expression and pulls her closer for a toe curling kiss, awakening the lustful desire within her. He felt himself hardening inside her as she sat up and started rocking her hips, slowly. They both had a question at the tip of their tongues which they both had no answer to but they were afraid of the other's response. And so ignoring it seemed to be a good idea at the time. They will focus at the task at hand, bringing each other immense pleasure.

Lumina moaned as Mafu wrapped his hand around her neck. She shut her eyes and threw her head back as she slowly moved up and down Mafu's length. Mafu could only moan softly as he felt her inside cling onto his girth, squeezing the life out of him. And before he lost all his senses, he flipped them round and started thrusting mercilessly inside of her. His thrusts were long and deep, grazing her every inch as they moved at an incredible speed. She could barely think nor utter anything as she felt him reach places she never thought could be reached. Her fingers grazed his back, her nails sure to leave questionable scars for Nomalanga to see. But she couldn't care any less, she needed to hold onto him at that moment.

Mafu wrapped his arms around her, holding her flush against him as he continued to hurl inside her. He feels his climax nearing and all he wants to do is to stall it. He never wants the

moment to end but the woman beneath him has him on a tight hold. She showers out commands and all he can do is grant them, giving her exactly what she wants and more. When she continues punches around him, he knows she is close as well. But he holds back so she comes first and he comes right after. His thrusts sloppy and getting weaker as he releases rope after rope of come inside of her. Pulling out of her, he lies next to her, trying to catch his breath.

“So, what now?” Lumina finally asks, refusing to look at the man who has spun her world round. “I don't know but I don't want this to end.” Mafu counters. “Are you still leaving?” He ask and she nods. “I have to, I miss my family and I know I'll have a clear head.” She explained. “Are you still coming back?” She shrugged. “I haven't thought that far. If things don't go well that side then I'll come back,” she promised.

“You’re amazing, you know that?” I ask her and she nods. I chuckle then peck her forehead. “Please come back to me,” her forehead creases and she scrunches her nose. “To you?” she asks and I nod. “I won’t forget about you so easily, Lumina. Especially after last night and this morning. I know it was meant to be a once off thing but I don’t think...” she steps closer and holds my hand. “Don’t hold back on your life and your fiancée because of me. We can never be anything more than what we are, friends,” she says.

“I’ll never be able to get past this Lumina, so promise me that you’ll come back to me.” She bites her lower lip then nods, “I promise.” I peck her lips multiple times until she giggles and steps back. “Let me go before I miss my flight, again.” I nod. I don’t want her to go but I don’t really have a say in this matter. “Please don’t shut me out, we can still talk after this, right?” she bites her lower lip then nods. “Goodbye Mafu.” I pull her in for one last hug, holding on to her as if my life depends on it. When I free her, she stands on her toes and pecks my cheek. I watch as she runs off with her handbag. She needs to stop this thing of not wearing panties, it might just land her in trouble.

I head back to my car and drive straight home. Mom said she wanted to see me about something important. I don’t know what could be so important that I had to go so early in the morning. Good thing I took a shower with Lumina. I haven’t spoken to my parents in more than five months and when they

finally call me is because they want to talk about something important? The parents we have... I love them nonetheless. When I finally arrive, the gate is opened for me and I drive to the porch. It hasn't changed. I don't know why but I was hoping there could be some change in the landscape but MaMnguni will always be MaMnguni. She loves her roses, her petunias, her lilies and all these multi-coloured flowers.

Before I could even knock, the door flies open and tiny arms are already wrapped around me. I lift her up and spin her around. I haven't seen this one in two months. I last saw her when she came back from India. "Small." She pouts and folds her arms across her chest, she hates it when I call her that. "You will never change." She rolls her eyes and walks off. "Mama, brother just arrived!" She shouts from the staircase. I honestly still don't understand why this house has such a grand staircase, these people are old and this is too much exercise. I make my way to the living room and make myself comfortable on my favorite couch, the couch I always sat on when I still lived here. Nomvula follows in with a tray of six glasses.

She rushes out and hurries back in with a jug of water, juice and a bottle of whiskey. She then sits next to me and lies on my laps. "You've abandoned us yet again," she says. My throat instantly dries up and I'm at a loss for words. I can't tell her that the last time I came here, my parents and I had a huge disagreement. It was so bad, I'm surprised I was even called here. If anything I won't be shocked if they don't attend my wedding. "I've just been snowed under work, small. You know

about my project in the Western Cape?" I ask and she nods. "I heard about it from your last interview. I heard its similar to the one in Dubai?" I nod.

Mom walks in followed by dad. I don't even know how I feel about being in their presence right now. "Mvula, please leave us

" Cebekhulu says softly. She pouts then looks at me. "Your brother won't do anything to you Nomvula, get going," MaMnguni says. Small gets up and rushes out. I won't do anything to her? I wonder what she has done, I hope she didn't flunk at school. I clear my throat and focus my attention back on the couple. "Cebekhulu, MaMnguni," mom smiles and dad tries. This old man only smiles at his wife. "How are you, son?" Cebekhulu asks. "I'm doing well, how are you? How have you been?" I ask. Mom looks at dad then back at me.

"Son, I don't mean to open a can of worms but its about Nomvula." Mom says. Now this sounds intense. "Your sister is pregnant, Cebekhulu," she adds on. This has got to be some kind of a joke. I was with her right now and her body seemed normal. "No she's not," I protest. "Yes she is, eleven weeks," I don't even know what to say. She's only nineteen years old. She goes to University for a couple of months and comes back with a baby? "Nomvula!" I shout out her name. "Nomvula find your way back here, now!" I bellow. She walks in with a red nose and hangs her head low. She's grabbing the hem of her T-shirt and sniffing. "What is it that I'm hearing? We send you to school to

come back with degrees and you decide to come back with a live one?" I ask and she shakes her head.

"I didn't mean to, I swear it was a mistake." she cries. Time to spit out the famous line. "What? You tripped and fell on a penis?" I ask and she shakes her head. "Why are you even sexually active Nomvula? What do you know about sex?" I ask in fury. If she thinks she knows too much about sex then how is it that she's pregnant? Doesn't she know that that's how babies are made? "You spoiled her too much, look at her! Why was I even called here?" I ask looking at her parents. "Don't be so hard on her, Cebekhulu. I also had you when I was just a teenager." MaMnguni says. "So you're promoting that? You want her to follow in your steps?" I ask. Its not like I asked her to bring me on Earth, especially when she was also nineteen. "Bhuti, I can terminate the ba- " she stops talking as soon as I look at her.

We don't do that here! "Go and pack your bags. Just get ready to be a mother, you're a creator right and now you want to be a terminator?" she shakes her head. "Pack all your clothes, everything that belongs to you, you'll find me in the car." I pour myself a glass of whiskey then down it in one go. "Cebekhulu, please calm down," I ignore her and get up from the couch and storm out. I pray to god, I just pray to god that she knows the father of the baby because I will terminate her if she doesn't. And if she does, I'll terminate him. I take my phone and text Lumina to call me when she sets foot in KwaZulu-Natal. I could use someone to talk to right now.

Nomvula finally steps out of the house with her parents helping her with the bags. I open the trunk and step out to help them. I don't even know why I'm taking her with me but I am. "Take care of yourself and listen to your brother," mom says to her. She nods and hugs her, then dad. She gets in and I drive out as soon as possible. "Who is the father?" I ask. She bites her nails then looks down. "Siyamthanda Ndlovu."

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Dear Friends please download these books direct from <https://novelsguru.com/> bookmark this site for latest African books, and also supporting me Thanks.

Nomalanga Nkosi was proving to be more of an irritating person than anything. All she ever did was to babble about her friends and how successful her business is. Nomvula had only spent one night in her brother's house but she was already exhausted and agitated by her future sister in-law. They only had three more months to go before the wedding and if anything, she wished Noma would trip on the staircase and die.

“What are you guys drinking?” she walked in on the couple having what looked like disgusting dishwater for breakfast. “Spinach smoothies. Yours is in the refrigerator,” Noma said then finished off her drink. “There's no way I'm having that,” Nomvula murmured and made her way to the refrigerator. If anything, she was craving a farm breakfast. She was not certain that she'd eat eggs but she sure was craving for a lot of bacon and sausages with perfectly toasted warm bread with melted butter. The refrigerator looked horrific and terrifying. “Why is it so green?” she asked searching for the needed ingredients but all she could see was leaves and veggies.

She closed the refrigerator and headed to the pantry. She was confused, “You guys have no milk, no cheese, no yoghurt, no eggs, no meat, may I ask what do you eat?” she asked clearly upset. Noma looked at her fiance and sighed. She was in no mood whatsoever to explain herself. Becoming vegan was the only way to go or the high way. In order to keep her body as perfect as it was, she had to eat healthy food. She knew she

exaggerated by going vegan but she was enjoying it and was never going back. The thought of having love handles, excess skin and being huge on its own creeped her out.

She never saw herself going back to that life, the life of being a joke, struggling to breathe and having a low self-esteem. She was content with her life now and that's all that mattered. "You'll find me in the car." She grabbed her handbag and rushed out. Nomvula knew just how to get under that light skin of hers. She talked a lot and had answers to everything. She was going to be more irritating now that she was pregnant and Nomalanga didn't want to be a part of that but she loved Mafu to the moon and back. What she wasn't willing to compromise was her healthy lifestyle.

"How the hell do you serve vegan food at a Zulu wedding?" Zama, her new wedding planner asked, as angry as she could ever be. "You want your in-laws to hate you forever? Don't you know that Zulu men love their meat and pap, not these greens and couscous of yours," she added on, looking right into her eyes. One thing about Zama, she wasn't good at masking her emotions nor keeping to herself. She said things as they were and more. "Mafu, talk to her!" Nomanga shouted, on the verge of jumping off her seat and beating the crap out of the wedding planner.

Mafu was going to sit this one out. He definitely didn't want his family to eat leaves on their big day but honestly

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this was Nomalanga's day. His day was going to be the following day, where he'd embrace his culture and follow his traditions. He and Lumina had secretly decided to serve African cuisine on that day and they would rejoice and be happy while they order a salad for Noma and because of that genius lady, he couldn't care any less. "I swear if Lumina doesn't change her mind, I'll handle everything myself!" Noma shouted. Zama was just frustrating and judgmental to her. It wasn't even her wedding for crying out loud.

Zama reached for her laptop and set up a zoom meeting with Lumina who was still enjoying her surroundings. She didn't seem to regret her decision to leave because she was finally at peace and relieved. Nothing mattered more than solitude to her and the beautiful greenery and falling water was doing a great job. "Miss Mthembu, I refuse to be treated in this manner by your colleague. If you don't return at once, I'm pulling out if this." Nomalanga threatened. Well wasn't she just a drama queen? "I can assure you everything will work out," Lumina said to her. She looked as calm as ever making Noma seem insane and mentally unstable. Surely she was exaggerating but it was her wedding, she had every right to stress about it.

"Nothing will work out with her wanting Zulu people to eat soil and grass. Look at your fiance, look how big he is, he needs meat!" Zama literally shouted at the top of her voice. She was loud enough to shake the building but that did not seem to touch on Lumina. She was looking at Mafu who was also looking at her through the screen before him.

She looked beautiful. Seeing her without makeup was refreshing and seeing her this happy was even more refreshing. She seemed to be sitting on top of a huge rock while surrounded by more rocks and greenery. The sound of water falling grabbed his attention and he instantly knew she was sitting near a waterfall.

She had taken her faux locs off and tied her hair in a cute high bun and clad in a loose summer dress showing off her cleavage. Once Noma and Zama were tired of bickering, Lumina decided to break out of her trance and focus on why her peace was disturbed. The whole point of her leaving was to get away from work and stress but it seemed to follow her around. While she wasn't willing to lose money, she agreed to resuming her job. "Zama, we have already went through the menu. The couple agreed and its definitely not your place to argue with them and go against their decisions," Lumina said nonchalantly.

"Will you be able to come back?" Noma asked and Lumina shook her head. "But I will be in contact with you. Everything will be fine and I'll be back there after my leave ends, which is in three weeks, so we can finalize things." A relieved Noma almost squealed in excitement. She hated the idea of having Lumina as her wedding planner because of how Mafu looked at her at their first meeting but she appreciated and respected her. She most certainly wouldn't know what to do with herself if she had dropped them. She smugged at Zama who was very livid. If only she could, she'd burst that bubble of hers but she

would never betray her best friend and only friend by revealing her deepest secret.

But what she couldn't help was to look at Mafu like a criminal. She just wanted to slap his face hard for using her friend like that, except she agreed even though she knew the terms. What she needed right now, was a loud ping notifying her of a huge amount of money transferred to her account and Nomalanga excusing herself to answer a very important call gave her an opportunity to use her friend's secret to benefit herself. "Do you love your fiancée?" she asked Mafu who didn't see the need to answer her question. "I wonder what she'll say when she finds out you're sleeping with your wedding planner." she added on, grabbing his attention.

"I know you're a well off man, Mr Cebekhulu. Ten thousand rands won't hurt your bank account," Mafu scoffed and shook his head. "Tell her then. I wonder what Lumina would say if she found out her trusted best friend is trying to sabotage her career. She would simply get another job elsewhere with my help and you... You would lose the only person who cares for you in this god damn world." With that said, he pushed himself up and walked out. Lumina needs to pick her friends widely. This Zama girl would have her shipped to Russia just for a quick buck.

A week later and I'm back from home. I thought I would return in three weeks but I was struggling with work that side. Miss Nkosi wanted me to do everything with them. She wanted us to go cake & food tasting together, she wanted me to be present at their fitting and everything else after that. She threatened to pull out and me being me and loving my job and salary, I had to cut my leave short and head back to Johannesburg. I'm not ready to face Mafu, heck I don't want to face the both of them. How do I look at her dead in the eyes and plan her wedding happily knowing very well that I screwed her husband and enjoyed it to the gods and back?

“Lumina,” Mrs Davis gets up from her seat and walks my way. She wraps her arms around me and squeezes me. “Mrs Davis,” I manage to break free from the hug and look at her, analyzing her. “I'm glad you're here. We can't afford to lose this deal,” she says sounding pained and desperate. “Don't worry Mrs Davis, I'll plan this wedding and lock everything in.” She flashes a genuine smile then goes back to her seat. “They're here already,” I nod then head to my office. There, Miss Nkosi and Mr Cebekhulu have already made themselves comfortable and have bottles of water in front of them. I don't know how this is going to work but it will - it has to.

“Miss Nkosi, Mr Cebekhulu,” I greet as I make my way to my desk. Nomalanga flashes a smile and gets up from her seat. To my surprise, she engulfs me in a hug and squeezes me. “Oh you

smell good,” she compliments. My eyes shift to Mafu and his expression is just pure coldness and anger. “Thanks...” I utter blankly. Now, back to work. “We have less than three months to go until your wedding. I've managed to find a company to do your decor and they'll start a week before your day. Your fitting is scheduled for next week Monday and your final fitting three days before your big day. I'll fetch your dress and suit personally but your bridal party will have to fetch their attires themselves.” she smiles then nudges Mafu, clearly excited about something.

“Your cake and food tasting will take place a week before your wedding at your house if that's okay with you?” I ask. She nods then looks at Mafu. He's been staring at me all this while but he nods curtly. “You're joining us, right?” she asks and I nod. “Five pm, sharp. Your shoes will be delivered with your attire and your make up artist will see you next week Friday.” Mafu is seemingly not interested in what I am saying, I can tell his mind is not here. “I will also need your official guest list so I can design and send out the invitations. Mr Cebekhulu said he will personally take care of the cars and transportation, are we clear over there?” I ask and he just nods.

Clearly something is wrong here and I don't think I want to be a part of. “Well, I hope we're done for the day, there's somewhere I have to be in an hour,” Nomalanga says getting up from her seat. “I'll email you the decor ideas we came up with and I'll need a USB cable containing your soundtrack.” She nods then look at Mafu. She lifts his face and pecks his lips. “I'll see if

later, okay?" She doesn't wait for his response before she captures his lips with hers. I feel a pang of jealousy when I see him responding to the kiss, kissing her like how he kissed me. I'm making a fool of myself, aren't I? I clear my throat then get up from my seat to get myself a glass of water or wine perhaps? I can't and don't drink at work but rules are meant to be broken, right?

Nomalanga giggles then walks out, judging by her heels clicking on my office floor. I gulp down the glass of water then pour another one. I'll most probably drink when I get home. I should just remind myself of why I'm doing this. I'll get myself a promotion and finally buy myself a classy and functional car and a house. "Mafu, get away from me," I say when I feel him near me, his scent taking me by storm. "Jealous?" he asks and I grit my teeth. Jealous? I don't even know how to spell that word. "You are my client Mr Cebekhulu and I really appreciate my job." I hear him chuckle.

"Oh now you appreciate your job? Did you think about that when you were riding me and screaming out my clan names?" I huff then turn to him. "I was tipsy and for someone who is about to get married, you're pretty messed up." Mafu grabs my arm and pulls me closer. "Don't talk to me in that manner." I try to yank my arm from his hold but he tightens it. "While you're at it, get a new friend." He frees my arm from his hold then fixes his tie and makes his way to the door. He opens it then glares daggers at me while Siyamthanda walks in. "Is this the

reason you talk to me as you wish?" Mafu asks closing the door. Clearly he's not going anywhere anymore.

So the two men I've screwed are in the same room and they both look angry as fucked. "Your wife just left, why are you still here?" Siyamthanda shoots at Mafu. "Are you talking to me, boy?" Mafu asks earning a snort from Siyamthanda.

"Siyamthanda Ndlovu, what are you doing here? At my work place to the least? Didn't I tell you to stay away from me?" I ask. "Siyamthanda who?" Mafu asks and I roll my eyes, why is this one still here. "You are the bitch that impregnated my little sister?" Mafu asks and my eyes pop open. "Hey man, I didn't impreg- " A punch lands on Siyamthanda's jaw before he could finish talking. He falls to the floor and Mafu holds him up and starts punching him repeatedly.

"Mafu stop it!" My screams fall on deaf ears. I don't know what's happening here and I didn't even know Mafu has a little sister. "Please stop it Mafu, its not going to solve anything!" I scream and that's the only time he actually stops. He wipes his bleeding nose with the back of his hand as Siyamthanda managed to punch him once or twice. I make my way to him and hold his hands, shoulders then face. "Are you okay?" I ask and he nods. Siyamthanda is groaning on the floor as he tries to get up. "What's happening, what's wrong? Please talk to me Mafu..." He holds my hands then slightly pushes me aside and heads to the water dispenser. I turn to Siyamthanda and try to help him up. I can't believe no one heard anything but that's good, I don't want any scenes on my first day back to work.

“Siyamthanda, what are you doing here and why did he just beat you like this?” I ask and he ignores me as well.

I grab tissues from my desk and hand them to him while he heads to sit down on velvet couch. “Somebody please tell me something,” I order. “That bitch of yours impregnated my little sister. She's just nineteen years old, what's wrong with you?” Mafu shouts at the top of his voice. “Cebekhulu are you sure it's him? I mean there are a lot of Siyamthanda Ndlovu's in this province,” I try to neutralize the situation but unintentionally add fuel to the fire. “Are you seriously defending him right now?” Mafu asks and I shake my head. “This man cheated on you until you couldn't take it, why wouldn't he impregnate a nineteen year old?” I bite the insides of my cheeks then look at Siyamthanda. “Did you do it?” I ask. He looks at me then down before he hesitantly nods. I can't help the bitter chuckle that escapes my mouth hole. “This is the last time I'm telling you this, Siyamthanda. Stay away from me before I get a restraining order against you.” It doesn't take him a while to get the message as he finally pushes himself up and walks to the door.

“And if you dare open a case against Mafu, I'll kill you in your sleep.” He nods then heads out. I look at Mafu in disbelief and shake my head. He beats people up like that, like they're not human? They should be glad no one came here. “Sit down,” I order Mafu as I grab my first aid kit. I sit next to him and start cleaning him up. He just has a nose bleed. “Don't ever disrespect my work place like that and as much as I'm your designated friend, you're my client.”

Nomvula hasn't stepped out of the house the whole day, let alone her bed room. I know this because I'm working from home and not once did she show her face. She must be torn, sad, mad. Last night, I shouted at her and told her that I beat her stupid boyfriend up. I was so mad, I ended up telling her that the same Siyamthanda she opened her skinny legs for is busy chasing after my wedding planner. Nomalanga said I should apologize to her but I won't. I will never apologize for being a big brother and protecting her. I also won't apologize for scolding her- she has to be disciplined somehow and honestly, its up to her to decide on how she takes it.

I groan in frustration when I hear Lumina's voicemail. I don't know why she's not taking my calls but I do know that she's doing it on purpose. The women in my life really know how to drive me crazy. "MaMthembu, we need to talk. Stop ignoring me and get back to me!" I end the call then bury myself in my work. I'm fatigued, I just want to run away from everything and come back after a year, and the woman I want to run away with is not taking my calls. I stop everything when my cellphone rings and I can't help but to smile. "Cebekhulu..." Her voice is soft, as if she had just woken up. I love it when she calls me that, it does things to me. "MaMthembu," she sniggers. "I'm sorry for not taking your calls, I was sleeping." She explains. I check the time and its way too late for her to be sleeping. "That's unprofessional of you, Mthembu," I tease.

“Tell me about it. I called in sick just so I could get enough rest, I'm so tired Mafu. In fact after this call I'm going back to sleep.” she then yawns, causing me to yawn as well. “May I see you, please?” I beseech. “Mafu...” I chime in. “I'll come with snacks and whatnot. I just want to see you.” She remains quiet for a few seconds then sighs. “Fine.” She then ends the call. Just as I'm about to dash out, Nomvula walks down the staircase still in her pyjamas. Her eyes are swollen, in fact her whole face is swollen and her light skin has reddened. “Your food is in the microwave,” I tell her and she just nods. “Brother I don't want to keep this baby.” She looks far worse than I anticipated and her voice is so low. “I know you want me to keep the baby but I don't want it. I don't want anything to do with Siyamthanda. Please help me,” she begs.

“We'll talk when I get back. Just stop worrying me okay? I'm your brother and I love you, I also want the best for you. Now I need you to eat, clean yourself up and get some rest. I'll wake you up when I get back.” I pull her into my embrace and caress her back while listening to her sobs. Once she finally calms down, I peck her forehead and hold her tighter. “Should I get you anything?” I ask and she nods. “Ice cream,” she says softly. I predicted that somehow, I also know that the list doesn't stop there. “Is that all?” I ask. She looks at me then shakes her head. “Please get me wings and nuggets... Oh and chicken strips. We'll get everything else tomorrow when we go grocery shopping,” she says and I raise my brow. “There's more than enough food at the pantry, why are we going shopping?” I ask and she frees myself from my hold.

“You mean all those things? I miss eggs, bacon, sausages and meat. I miss pancakes glazed with honey, I miss-” I chime in.

“Okay fine

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we'll go grocery shopping tomorrow,” she squeals then rushes to the microwave and takes out her breakfast. She scrunches her nose and drags herself back to her bed room. Looks like she'll be just fine, as long as I'm gentle and understanding with her.

I promised Lumina some snacks so as soon as I left my house, I headed to the mall to buy some snacks for her as well as for Nomvula. I'm not used to all these things, Nomalanga usually does them but I guess I'll have to learn. Lumina opens the door for me then walks away. I close the door and place everything on the island then follow her. She's curled up on the couch and she's clad in lounge wear. Her hair is untied but combed and pinned back, she looks so adorable. “Why are you smiling at me, you creep?” She asks sounding tired. “You look so cute...” She throws a pillow at me then pulls her fleece closer. I settle next to her and she instantly scoots closer but stops herself. “We won't do anything, okay? Come here.” She smiles then rests her head on my laps.

I run my fingers through her soft hair, raking the thick strands of hair. “You promised me snacks, that's the only reason I allowed you to come,” she says and I can't help but to laugh at her. “They are on top of the island.” She gets off the couch and

rushes to the kitchen then comes back with the plastic bag and throws herself next to me. "Should we watch a movie?" She asks and I shrug. Is she going to eat all of that? Maybe its that time of the month. "Here, you can choose," she says handing me the remote controller then focuses her attention on the snacks. "You hungry? I can warm up some lamb chops for you," she says indulging on her snacks.

"I haven't had lamb in forever," she dips her potato chip into the ice cream tub and throws the mixture inside her mouth. "Great!" she jumps off the couch then heads to the kitchen. Once I find a movie, I join her in the kitchen. She's sitting on top of the island while awaiting the food to warm up. It already smells good in here. I have no doubt that she's a good cook, she once cooked for me and I enjoyed every bit of the meal. I'm glad she did when she did because Nomalanga was going to kill me if she found meat in her refrigerator. "Wash your hands so long," she says then jumps off the island. She's going to sprain her ankle one of these days.

I wash my hands while she dishes up sides then watch as she moves around the kitchen. Why is she making the plate look pretty? I'm going to destroy it either way. Once she's done, we move back to the lounge then we both indulge in our "food" while watching the movie. "You don't look so good," she says suddenly then pauses the movie. I know she won't back down just like how I want to ignore her. "I'm fine." A few seconds pass she's looking at me, I guess she's waiting for me to speak my mind. "Lumina I'm fine."

“Okay then, why are you here?” she asks. “Because I just wanted to see you,” she squints her eyes then nods and resumes the movie. I don't think I'll finish this meal anymore. “I'm just worried about Nomvula. She told me she wanted to terminate her pregnancy and isn't it too late?” I tell her. “How far is she?” She asks and I shrug. “Fourteen weeks? I'm not sure.” she nods. “I'll do some research and tell you. I mean I wish I could help but I know nothing about pregnancy,” she says. “I suggest you talk to a specialist and check for any risks and side effects,” she adds on then continues indulging in her snacks.

“You don't want her to terminate, do you?” she asks after a while of silence and I shake my head. “I mean I could raise the baby, I don't know. Nomalanga doesn't want to have children so I don't mind raising Small's baby as my own.” She smiles then holds my hand. “You're a great brother you know, who knew you were so compassion?” She asks playing with my fingers. “I think you should talk to her, cordially. Don't force her into anything and don't be hard on her,” she says and I nod then look into her eyes for a while. Once she notices, her smile fades and she flushes. I pull her closer then wrap my arms around her. “Mafu, everything will fall into place, okay?” she says and I nod. “Lumina?”

“Cebekhulu...”

“I- Thank you.”

I feel quite intimidated parking my match box next to a beast. Its as if Mafu is trying to embarrass me on purpose, what will people think when they look at the two cars and compare them? They'll say I'm the bravest person alive to park my caterpillar next to this beast. He's having a chat with someone almost as tall as I am with his cellphone at hand. They both break into laughter which ceases when he sees me stepping out of the box. The girl, whom I assume is Mafu's little sister, looks at his direction and her smile also disappears. This was a pretty bad idea. I'm her baby daddy's ex girlfriend whom he keeps going back to, she must hate me to death. Well, hopefully Mafu shut his mouth and said nothing to her. This is going to be a long day.

“Hey, look at you!” Mafu says pulling me into his embrace, his long arms wrapped around me for a much needed hug. “I thought you had bailed on us,” he adds on. I shake my head in response, I would never. “I was just running late, Mrs Davis wanted to assign me to another project after yours but I honestly want to get out of here after planning your wedding,” I explain and he furrows his brows. “What is that supposed to mean?” he asks and I shrug. “I don't know, maybe I'll go back to the bhundus,” he huffs then scratches the back of his head before turning to the lady next to him. “This is Nomvula and Small, this is Lumina,” he introduces, changing the topic. “Nice to finally meet you, biggie here has been talking about you since we hopped inside the car,” she says with what looks like a

genuine smile. I most certainly did not expect that and I also didn't expect this big headed man to talk so much about me.

“Hope he only said good things about me,” I say and she giggles, “You are like an angel in his eyes!” Mafu wraps his arm around her neck then walks off and I follow, I guess he's embarrassed if not suddenly shy. “Let go of me! I won't tell her anything else, I swear.” Nomvula teases and Mafu frees her. They sure do have a good relationship and they shouldn't let someone like Siyamthanda to ruin it for them. “Hey, I checked out your work on the internet and I would really appreciate it if you planned our baby shower,” she says holding my hand. We all stop and I glare at Mafu then back at her. “Our?” I ask and she nods with a smile. “Yes, I know biggie told you everything so I'll go ahead and tell you that I agreed to keeping the baby and he'll raise it,” she announces. I don't know why I'm grinning but I am, I'm happy for Mafu and for Nomvula as well.

I mean surely she knows what she's doing and with Nomalanga not wanting to have babies, this is good for Mafu. I don't know why or how but I'm hugging Mafu and he's hugging me back. “I'm so glad I listened to you,” he whispers then breaks the embrace before his lips pressing against my forehead, resulting in my cheeks heating up. “Thank you,” he adds on and I just smile. “I was just being a- ” Nomvula's voice surfaces. “Okay so I brought a smaller cart for you, I hope that's fine,” she says pushing two carts. “Thank you.” I take one cart from her hold and she smiles then pushes the other one

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rushing in front of us.

I look at Mafu then at Nomvula, “She's so free spirited... I'm worried about her for some reason,” I say softly to Mafu. He places his hand on my back and remains silent, I guess he's not going to say anything regarding my concerns. “Lunch after this?” he asks and I just nod.

About two hours later, we find ourselves settled in a restaurant, having lunch. “How did the food tasting go?” I ask and Nomvula drops her fork and knife on her plate. “I don't know how this wedding is going to work out but hopefully it goes well. The roasted veggie pasta, quesadillas, frankies and tacos were good but everything else was straight up horrible,” she groans. “The cake?” I ask and she shakes her head. “I didn't even want to taste it, egg less cake? Count me out... No eggs, no milk?” She continues. “And she kept giving feedback on everything she tasted. She and Nomalanga almost manhandled each other,” Mafu adds on and they share a laugh. She talks quite a lot and I'm honestly having fun. I haven't had such company in a while and Zama has been ignoring me. I don't even know whether we're still friends or not.

“Are you okay?” she asks and I nod. “Yes I'm fine... Actually I have to get back to work,” I say already getting up. I grab my purse and take out money to pay for my meal then grab my car keys and rush out. I unlock my car but I feel a tight grip on my arm as I'm about to slide in. “Lumina, what's wrong?” he asks and I shake my head. “Nothing is wrong, I just don't want to be

late for work.” I tell him. “Then you won't mind joining us in a picnic,” he says and I look away. The last time we went to a picnic he begged me for sex because he was sexually attracted to me. I don't want to spend more time with him than necessary and I most certainly don't want to cause a rift in his marriage.

“Mafu I'm your wedding planner, we shouldn't be spending so much time together.” He frees my arm from his grip then holds my waist. “Well, we're friends and we should be spending as much time as possible, especially before I get married,” I sigh then nod. “I'll think about it and get back to you.” I promise. “Can't you think about it now?” he asks and I furrow my brows, why is he rushing me? “No, I can't think about it now. I want to be sure and I don't want to regret it in the long run.” He looks taken aback by my choice of words but he quickly masks it. “I won't ask you to have sex with me and I won't make you uncomfortable. Lumina I enjoy your company and I don't want to- to lose you because of stupid mistakes.” I look away from him. I honestly thought I would be over him and he, over me, as I went away. He was part reason why I left.

“You know, you may think you know someone but in all honesty you don't.” He begins. “Some people are sheep in wolf clothing. You may be surprised to learn that only a small percentage of the people you know actually love and care about you.” I don't know what he's talking about or how we got here. “Mafu...”

“They are going to hurt you and stab your back countless times and while you're nursing your wounds, they'll stab you in the front as well.” he continues. Now I'm getting worried. I unwrap his arms from my waist and hold them. “Mafu, what's wrong? Are you okay?” I ask and he nods. “I'm just looking out for you. Lumina I care about you, more than you can ever imagine. You're more than just a wedding planner to me and I would hate to see you get hurt.”

“Mafu, I hate riddles! Who's going to hurt me and what are you talking about?” I ask, on the verge of bursting with fury. “You'll be late for work, we'll discuss this on our picnic date,” he says then walks off, leaving me stranded right next to the car. There's nothing I hate more than being in the dark, its frustrating and stressing. He most certainly did that on purpose, so he could trick me into going to the picnic. I swear that's the only reason I'm going there and I'm praying this is not some kind of a joke because he's going to be hard to kill as huge as he is.

I just got here but it feels like he's been staring at me for hours. "Cebekhulu..." he quickly looks away then continues eating his fruits. "So, why am I here?" I ask, earning his attention again. "Zama... You should be careful of that girl, in fact stay away from her," he orders and I suddenly feel frustrated. Now he wants to pick friends for me? "You tell her everything that goes on in your life and she uses that to her advantage. She threatened to tell Nomalanga regarding our little arrangement if I don't buy her silence," he explains and I instantly feel my world come to a halt. Zama would never do that to me, we literally have each other's backs in this city. I'm the only person who cares about her and I thought she cared about me too. Why would she do that to me, we've been friends since forever.

"Did you pay her?" I ask and he shakes his head. "I made her realize that she'll lose her friendship with you if she continues doing this." I just sniff and wipe my tears, my head hung low in disappointment. "I trusted her with my life and she goes and does this to me? That's why she's ignoring me?" I ask and he hesitantly nods. I'm definitely going to confront her about this, I need to know what's going on in that little brain of hers. "I think its best we keep our distance. The less time we spend together, the better." I inform him and he shakes his head. "No! We talked about this, Lumina." He argues. "That was before but after what you just told me, we have to stay away from each other." Does he not see that this will be good for the both of us?

“No! I'm not going to do that. I genuinely care about you and you keep pushing me away, for what?” He agitates. “Mafu this is going to cost you your marriage and me, my job and reputation. I'm going to be known as the wedding planner who sleeps with her clients!” I reason. “Maybe it has already costed me my marriage!” Mafu bellows, leaving me shocked and speechless. “Maybe while you're busy planning the wedding, I'm getting cold feet.” He adds and I shake my head. “Maybe as the wedding day nears, I'm losing interest. Maybe it won't happen.” This cannot be happening. “No Mafu, I can't have all my hard work go to waste and Mrs Davis is counting on me. We need the money!”

“And I need you! I need you Lumina,” he says. I ignore him and start shoving food inside my mouth, I'm most certainly not going to leave without eating, I love free food but I have to leave. There's this new bakery that opened and I heard they bake the best cheesecakes. I want to rush there before they sell out cause everyone loves them. “Lumina,” he calls out softly. He's looking at me with pleading eyes. That's the look he gave me on our first picnic. That's the look that haunted me and I ended up agreeing to getting intimate with him. “I have to go, there's this new place that opened and they sell good cheesecakes. Everyone loves them so if I don't get it now then I won't ever get it.” I say then gulp down my juice and get up.

He holds my hand then pulls me back down. “Mafu, I really have to go,” he chuckles then caresses my cheek. “I bought two

cheesecakes specifically for you so you don't have to worry," he says and I furrow my brows. "Why would you do that?" I ask in disbelief. "I thought you'd want some considering everyone loves them, even those who do not have a sweet tooth," he says softly and I shake my head, I'm not talking about that. "Mafu you know what I mean," I tell him. He sighs then closes his eyes, "You might not understand but you mean so much to me. I dream about you, I think about you I see you everywhere," I shake my head and try to free my hand from his hold.

"Mafu, let go of me." he doesn't, in fact he tightens his hold. "Lumina, listen to me," he says and I shake my head. I'm not about to break someone's marriage so no. I should've stayed away from him when I could. "Mafu, I need to go. Please let go of me," I beseech but he ignores me like always. I furiously wipe my tears with the back of my hand. "Lumina I- " I stop him right before he could say it, that phrase that has everyone losing their minds. "Don't say it! Don't even think of saying that to me. From now on going forward, I'm your wedding planner and that only." He rests his head on my shoulder, rubbing his nose on the crook of my neck before leaving a trail of kisses.

"You want to leave me?" he asks in a whisper and I bite my lip. "You want to leave me, love? You want to leave me all alone, sbani sami?" I shake my head. "You have Nomalanga, your fiancée. You guys are getting married in a couple of weeks."

“One last time, MaMthembu. Just one last time,” he nibbles my earlobe. He doesn't have to tell me anything for me to understand what he means. Before I could think of my next move, his cold shivering lips are on mine. He stops then caresses both my lips with his thumb.

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I step under the shower head and turn the water on. I don't know why or how but I can't say no to him, I need him too but I can't break his marriage like that. I'm not saying this is right and it never will be but right now, I need him so I could get over him. He needs me as well, we need each other. The door slides closed and he wraps his arms around my waist, pecking my shoulder and sucking on my neck. I bend my head a little to make it easier for him. I wrap my arms around his neck and he swiftly lifts me up and pushes me against the wall. Without a warning, he plunges inside of me and I let out a loud scream.

He captures my lips and starts sucking on them while he furiously thrusts inside of me, leaving me screaming for my dear life while I struggle to grasp onto him. His pace increases and before I know it, I'm a spasming mess of pure pleasure. He presses his forehead against mine and pecks my lips. “Can I spend the night?” he asks and I shake my head. “Mafu...” I am ready to protest but he doesn't allow me. “No baby, we'll just sleep and I'll leave early in the morning,” I bite my lip then nod hesitantly. Wait, what did he call me?

He doesn't put me down but turns the water off and grabs a towel as he walks out of the shower. My wet and naked back comes in contact with the cold sheets of my bed as he gently lays me down. He pecks my lips over and over again before getting off me then starts wiping me dry. Once done, he wipes himself then puts on my robe, which is a bit small on him but he actually looks adorable in it that I can't help but to laugh. He smiles then disappears to the bathroom and returns with a body lotion of which he applies on me all on his own. He hands me my nightdress while he walks out of the room for a few minutes.

He comes back with a bowl of cake and a cup of tea then joins me on the bed. He hands me the tea then offers to feed me the delicious cake. I've never tasted such a moist cake before. Once done, he pulls me to him and caresses my arm. "Promise me you'll stay away from that friend of yours and that you'll take care of yourself," he says breaking the ice that formed as soon as we left the shower. I nod then look at him. "I promise," he smiles a little then pecks my forehead. This is for the best, for all of us, for everyone. "Thanks for the cake."

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“One month before your wedding, how do you feel?” Lumina asks with a smile on her face. She doesn't look so good. Her eyes are swollen, like she had been crying all week, heck her entire face is swollen. No amount of makeup will be able to hide that and her voice is much softer. All in all, she looks weak and that smile of hers isn't going to hide anything. “Excited and terrified at the same time. I hope that's normal.” Nomalanga grabs my hand and starts playing with my fingers.

Lumina sees that and quickly looks away. “Yes it is normal. A lot of brides feel that way before their big day. Anyway, I've sent out the invitations and like I said last time, your glass tent will be set up in three weeks time and your decor, three days before your wedding.” She says rampaging through the papers scattered all over her desk.

Looks like her head is all over the place. “I've seen the pictures and I love every single thing about it. Now, I can't wait to fit my dress.” Nomalanga says with a grin on her face and Lumina just nods and picks up a few papers then starts paging through them. She suddenly stops and gags. She covers her mouth and shuts her eyes closed. “Are you okay?” Nomalanga asks and she nods before she gags again. She gets up from her chair then rushes out of the office. Noma looks at me with her eyebrow cocked up. “Do you think...?” she asks then bites her lip. “What?” I ask and she shrugs. “I don't know, maybe she's expecting. I mean she looks so much different from the last time I saw her,” she says and I furrow my brows.

“You know what, I'll go check on her,” she says then gets up without awaiting my response. “Maybe she's ill Nomalanga, just give her some space.” She pouts then returns to her seat. A few more minutes pass before she walks in, her nose red and her eyes teary. “Are you okay?” Nomalanga asks as soon as she sits down and she just nods. “I'm sorry, I haven't been feeling well for the past few days.” Lumina explains. Noma squeezes my hand and giggles. “How far are you with the pregnancy?” She asks and Lumina furrows her brows. “I'm not pregnant and Miss Nkosi may we please focus on your wedding!” She suddenly snaps. Noma smiles at me and nudges my arm.

“Oh, I forgot my phone in the car!” Nomalanga gets up and rushes out the office, leaving me with Lumina. She gets up and pours herself a glass of water then comes back and sits down. “Why didn't you tell me?” I ask but she stares at me then at her PC. “Lumina, you know how much I want a family, please don't deny me this opportunity.” I plead with her. “Mr Cebekhulu, I'm not pregnant.” I sigh out loud then throw my head back. “Lets go to the doctor then, I need to be sure,” I suggest and she shakes her head. “Mafu, I'm not pregnant.”

“We made love more than twice and we've never even once used protection, it must've happened after our first night together,” I tell her and she sighs. “That's why you were eating so much, weird food at that.” She gulps the glass of water and remains quiet. I just want to know what's going on in that head of hers. “Baby please, I'll even go on my knees if it will make you feel better.” I say already pushing my chair back. I get up

and make my way to her. “Please maMvelase.” I take her hands into mine then help her up the chair. I haven't seen her in weeks and it feels like a years if not a decades.

I'm not about to give up on her so easily. If I knew I was going to be in a situation as such then I would've done something about it. I don't know how but one of them has to stay inside my heart. One of them has to be in my life. I peck her knuckles then get on one knee. “Mafu, get up before your fiancee gets back.” She says sounding nervous. I don't care if she comes back or not. I don't care if she finds me like this or not. I don't care if she finds out or not. Infact, that would make things easier for the both of us. I wrap my arms around her waist then rest my head on her belly. “We both know that you're pregnant with my child, MaMthembu. We both know you're carrying my baby and I won't rest until you agree.”

I look at her and find her staring at me tears threatening to come out of her swollen eyes. She blinks and they roll down her flushed cheeks. I get up from my knees and hold her reddened face. I wipe her tears with my thumbs and place a peck on her forehead. “I'm sorry sthandwa sami, I'm really sorry.” I didn't know she was going to be so emotional. In fact, I thought she was going to lash out on me as well as spit fire at me. I hate seeing her cry, I hate that I'm the one who made her cry. “There's no need to go to the doctor. I took some tests and I am pregnant.” She says softly. I hug her tightly and start thanking my ancestors. “Cebekhulu, Linda, Nsele, Mafu, Nkunga, Nsele kaLindamkhonto, Nongalo,

Mtungwa, Sothinyase, Linda kaMafu,” she giggles then covers her mouth, feeling nauseous.

“I'm sorry, I'm just excited. Looks like we have a lot to talk about.” She looks down then nods. “I'll come to your apartment so we can talk things through.” She nods once more then frees herself from my arms and sits back down. The door slides open and Nomalanga walks in with a grin on her face which ceases as she scans the room. We're probably going to argue about this. I grab the face tissues and hand them to Lumina and start caressing her back. “Do you still feel like barf?” I ask and she nods and takes them. “But I'll be fine, thank you.” I walk back to sit down and Noma follows. “My apologies, this is so unprofessional.” She says forcing a smile before focusing back on her laptop. “Miss Nkosi, I won't be able to join you today but please do contact me if you need anything.”

Even talking seems to be a challenge, must be because of all the crying. She must've blamed herself for all of this, degrading herself and thinking of ways to resolve this.

Maybe she wasn't going to tell me about the pregnancy. She had planned to leave the city after the wedding, there's a possibility that I wasn't going to see her ever again as well as our baby.

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“What was that?” Nomalanga asks and I let out a sigh, there we go again. I was waiting for this moment the entire drive. “What

was what?" I ask. She folds her arms and stands in front of me. "I've seen how you look at her Mafu and we spoke about this. Now that she's ill or whatever, you want to be her knight in shining armor?" I scratch my head. "We've been through this Nomalanga. She's not feeling well and I was just helping her. Was I supposed to leave her to suffer?" I ask. "Yes, you were supposed to do just that Mafu! She's none of your concern, she's nothing to you!"

"And who's going to plan your wedding if something happens to her?"

"I don't know, there are a lot of experienced wedding planners out there who actually know what they're doing! If this goes on any longer, I swear to God Mafu, she won't live to see the next breaking dawn!" She threatens then walks off, leaving me rooted on the same spot. What is that supposed to mean? "Nomalanga Nkosi, if anything happens to that woman, you'll have me to deal with!" I unlock the car and slide inside then drive off.

As soon as I open the door, huge arms are wrapped around me and my head is against a buffed up chest. His luscious lips press against my forehead and gives it a long kiss. "Mafu, what are you doing here?" I ask but he just pulls me back to his arms. I thought he would come tomorrow so we could talk, not tonight. "I'm sorry baby but I had to see you," he lifts my chin up and caresses my cheek. Clearly there's something wrong, he looks distraught. "Mafu, what's wrong?" I ask but he presses his forehead against mine. "I can see it in your eyes Mafu, the last time I saw you like this was the last time I saw you." He sighs. "Let's get inside, I just want to see you and be with you," he says freeing me and I just nod because I know he won't answer me.

We step inside and I close the door. He looks at me before rushing to lock it. His eyes then wander around before he stares at me. I grab a hold of my robe and hold it tighter, covering myself with it. "You don't have to do that, I want to see you," he says taking my hands. "I'm not showing, Mafu." I mutter. "I still want to see you." I sigh out loud when I realize he won't back down then free the robe from my hold. He looks at me from head to toe to thigh, breasts then finally my face. "You're amazing, do you know that?" He asks stepping closer and I look down when I feel my cheeks flush. He's closer than necessary, I place my hands on his chest to try and stop him but he grabs my wrists and holds me closer. "Look at me, MaMthembu," he

orders, his tone causing me to break into shivers. That seems to amuse him.

I look into his eyes then his lips. One minute he was distraught, the next he's smiling so beautifully but soon after he'll be sweet talking me. Why? Because I'm his mistress and I can't say no to him so I'll obviously open my slender legs for him. "I'm sorry for coming unannounced, I just had to- I had to see you," he murmurs against my lips, purposely brushing his lips against mine. That doesn't seem to help my lady down there who's losing her mind. "Its okay, you're here already. But what did your fia- " he starts sucking on my lower lip, then the top lip and gently pulls the lower lip with his lips.

"I'm worried about you, are you okay? You were puking all morning." He asks the moment he pulls away from the kiss. He's not going to answer me, I get it. I bite my lower lip then nod. "Its normal during pregnancy, its called morning sickness." I tell him. "So this happens every morning?" he asks and I shrug. I guess we'll see along the way. "Then who'll take care of you? I don't like this at all," he says helping me sit down. "I'm not ill Cebekhulu I'll be fine on my own." He looks around then gets up from my couch. "Did you eat? Do you need anything?" he asks. "I just want to sleep." He nods then rushes off down the passage.

Before I forget, I had fetched their rings of which I have to give to him before I lose them. I don't have that kind of money, heck the money to purchase those rings could buy me a great luxury

car and a town house if not villa or a fancy penthouse apartment. I get up from the couch and take them out from my drawer then head to where Mafu disappeared to, my bedroom. He's stuffing the bed with pillows. "I don't need so many pillows you know." He smiles in return. "But our baby needs them in order to be comfortable." Clearly he's excited about being a father. I don't know but I should've done something to prevent this. I don't want to break their marriage apart, I don't even know if our baby will be kept a secret or not. All I know is that I definitely won't deny Mafu our baby but he'll have to do right by him/her.

We sure do have a lot to talk about. "Are you okay?" He asks and I nod. His eyes wander off to my hand. "The rings?" He asks and I nod once again. He grins and rushes to me. He takes the package from my hand, takes my hand then leads me to the bed and helps me sit down. "Mafu I'm not even showing yet you're already treating me like I'm heavily pregnant." He ignores me and opens the neat packaging, revealing the expensive rings. He takes out Nomalanga's ring first then admires it. "Its so beautiful," I say. He takes my left hand and slides it on my finger before I could even fathom what is happening. "It fits perfectly," he says softly, pecking my knuckles.

What's going on? I yank my hand from his and try to take the ring off but he stops me. "Relax, its just practice okay?" he says then hands me his ring. "Put it on my finger..." I hesitantly take his hand and slide the ring on his finger. His lips are on mine

again but the kiss is sensual and slower. He does these things on purpose. He knows I won't reject him. This was the reason I wanted us to stay away from each other. I was going to tell him about the pregnancy but not now, not so soon, maybe when I'm in the second trimester but definitely not before the wedding, this wasn't a part of my plans.

Now he's going to use this pregnancy as an excuse to come here whenever he wants to, curse his big head. He breaks the kiss then smiles. I like him and I know he likes me too but this wasn't supposed to go this far, it wasn't even supposed to happen at all. Tears instantly prickle my eyes and I quickly look away and slowly take the ring off. "Here, keep them safe." Mafu tries to speak but stops himself and takes the ring. He takes his off and puts them back in their packaging and places them on the night stand. "I was talking to Nomvula, she invited me to her first appointment." I say to Mafu who looks shocked to say the very least. "I'm sorry but I couldn't say no to her, she begged me so much." I add on and earn a smile from him, again.

The ancestors must be with me tonight, this man is smiling quite a lot. He has such a beautiful smile, its a pity his smiles don't last longer than a couple of seconds and he only smiles on very rare occasions. "MaMthembu I- Let's sleep." He says suddenly then shuts his eyes. "You're staying over?" I ask and he nods. See what I was talking about? There's really no reason for him to sleep over. He leaves the room as I make myself comfortable and comes back a few minutes later. I heard him

talking so he must've been talking to his wife over the phone and didn't want me to hear him. He turns the lights off, takes his clothes off then gets under my covers and snuggles closer. "Are you asleep?" he asks and I shake my head then turn to him. "Wake me up if you need anything," he says and I just nod and shut my eyes.

A few minutes later, he slips his hand beneath my nightdress and squeezes my thigh. "We won't hurt the baby when we... Do the deed, right?" He asks and I can't help but to giggle. "No, we won't," I can feel him grinning, I know he is. "Alright, ngicela uthi kancane," he says already holding my thigh up.

His skin against hers, his lips locked with hers and their fingers intertwining. He had never felt this way with any of the women he's been with. He had never gone crazy and lost his senses because of a woman. He freed his one hand from hers and grabbed a hold of her thick thigh, caressing it as well as he gently pounded into her. She held his face and looked into his eyes as per his command, "I love you," there he said it, the three forbidden words slipped out of his slips and fell into her ears. "I love you, Lumina. I love you so much, it hurts." He whispered, his teeth gritted and his grip on her thigh tightening. He did love her, more than anything and he wanted to be with her.

"Mafu!" Lumina screamed out his name before writhing beneath him, in pure pleasure. He groaned out loud as he released his fourth load of the night and pulled her in for a kiss before laying next to her, his arms tightly wrapped around her. She was not saying anything. She was silent and that hurt him. Why did she not want to believe him? "Baby," he whispered as he kissed her back but she still did not respond. "I know you don't believe me but I truly love you," he said but she shook her head. "No." He was taken aback by her response, which meant she was in fact ignoring him. "I love you, Lumina!" He told her in a stern tone but she still insisted on not believing him. "Why don't you want to believe me? I love you Lumina and honestly I don't want to get married anymore." She continued to shake her head.

“No Mafu, no! You don't love me and we just had meaningless sex. I was not supposed to fall pregnant from this arrangement and that wedding is happening, whether you like it or not,” she said, her voice cracking and breaking from the ache she felt in her heart. “I love you and we just made love. You falling pregnant was a sign Lumina and you can't force me to get married. Futhi, look at me when I'm talking to you,” he ordered. “Lumina,” she sniffed and wiped her tears before turning to face Mafu. “Why are you crying?” He asked wiping the rest of her tears. “I don't like it when you cry, MaMthembu.” He kissed her forehead then her lips.

One thing that was now on her mind was planning the wedding so she could finally leave the place. She and Mafu would come to an agreement regarding the baby but it would only be that. How she found herself in such a sticky situation, she also didn't know. Mafu on the other hand was a man of action, he always got what he wanted and with his heart bleeding for Lumina, he would surely make her his, one way or the other. He was happy when with her, he fussed over her when he was not near her and she occupied his mind all day, everyday. Of course, it was meant to be a sexual arrangement, no strings attached but now all the strings were attached, all of them. “I want you to cancel the wedding, I'll pay for everything though,” Mafu informed Lumina who almost choked on her saliva. “Are you crazy? I'm not going to do that,” she argued. “Yes you are, Lumina.”

“No, I'm not!” he sighed and laid back. “I'm not going to lose my job and reputation because of you Mafu. Why do we have to argue about the same thing over and over again?” she asked in fury. “Why are you so invested in planning this wedding and making sure it happens?”

“Because its my job Mafu!” He scoffed, “Like I believe you. Tell me you don't love me and I promise you, I'll leave you.” He dared her. He knew she would never be able to do it. She looked down and bit her lower lip. “I don't love you,” he let out a cold chuckle. “That is nothing but utter nonsense! Look me in the eyes and tell me that bullshit.” His words carried bitterness and fury. He was determined to prove that they belonged together. “Tell me you don't want me in your life and you don't feel what I feel when I'm with you. Tell me you don't enjoy spending time with me and getting intimate with me, Lumina. Tell me!”

“Don't shout at me!” she shouted back at him. “Don't shout at me, Mafu. It doesn't matter how I feel about you, what matters here is you and- ”

“Stop telling me that shit and let's sleep. Or do you want Cebekhulu to put you to sleep?” He asked and she shook her head. He held her closely and kissed her. “Do you enjoy saying those things and breaking my heart? I swear you feed off from my pain,” he whispered to her. “No I don't, I just- ”

“Please accept my love for you, MaMthembu. I love you so much and I won't stop loving you. I don't care what you say and what you do but I want to be with you.” She looked at him, awaiting him to tell her its a prank or that he's joking but none of that was happening. He was as serious as a heart attack, his eyes pleading with her. He wanted in on her life, he wanted to be a part of her life.

Morning came faster than they thought and that's when reality kicked in for the two. Mafu was worried about the love of his life, the one who didn't trust when he told her he loved her to heaven and back. He was worried about her safety as well. He knew Nomalanga was not bluffing when she made that ultimatum. She had always been brash and unpredictable, which was the reason he fell in love with her to begin with. Her savage smile and no nonsense expressions always awakened something inside him he couldn't explain. She would always want to fight with people who pissed her off, she had that fire inside her, she was ablaze. But that all went down the drain when he laid his eyes on his wedding planner.

Lumina was seemingly the complete oopposite of Nomalanga. She was calm and composed. Her kind heart and humble self is what made Mafu fall for her even harder. The first time he had ever heard of her was from Nomalanga listing the best wedding planners for their wedding and the first time he saw her was on a magazine cover after she had planned a successful and beautiful wedding of a business mogul. Drifting off to the memory, he smiled to himself and let out a chuckle. She was

clad in a white cocktail dress, showing off her beautiful thighs and flawless legs. Her skin was gleaming in exposure to sunlight and her smile was heart warming. He knew right then and there that she was the one and wanted to meet her. It didn't take a lot of convincing to get Nomalanga to agree to meeting her and an appointment was made.

The look he gave her and the look she returned, how he could not stare at anything else but her? But that was what angered Nomalanga. It drove her crazy to the point where she wanted Lumina out because she knew he would not back down and she was right. The Mafu she knew and loved always got what he wanted. He would fight till the ends of the earth to get what his heart desired, part reason why he was as successful as he was. Now, their wedding planner shares a bed with her fiance and is pregnant for her fiance. She had already replaced her in his heart and he cannot live without her.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Lumina asked, shying away from his piercing stare. “You’re beautiful,” he said absent mindedly, he only managed to utter the compliment in a whisper. “That dress looks like it was made for you,” he added on. His misbehaving shaft was already bulging, threatening to burst his zipper and spring free from his pants so it could fuck her brains out. She flushed, her cheeks burning intensely and he could only chuckle at his adorable Lumina. “I love you,” he said getting up from the bed. He made his way to her and wrapped his arms around her waist then kissed her neck. “I love you so much,” he added. Lumina bit her lower lip, thinking of a

response but she needed not to do that for the heart wants what it wants and hers yearned for Mafu.

“I love you... Too,” she uttered. Mafu opened his eyes, batting his long eyelashes before looking at her through the mirror.

“What did you just say?” he asked, still in shock. He thought his mind was playing tricks on him into hearing what he had always wanted to hear, he needed assurance. “I love you, Cebekhulu.” he smiled, flashing a megawatt smile and before she knew it, she was in the air while Mafu was shouting out his clan names as well as thanking his ancestors.

I have always enjoyed my job, all the sleepless nights and attempts to make my clients happy, being in control of their smiles and making sure their big day is one to never forget - best moments of my life. But that is all in the past now. Sitting in this chair is sickening, trying to get this wedding together is nauseating. Everything about this job is a pain in the neck, I am a pain in the neck. Ever since I started planning this wedding, I have felt nothing but repulsion for this job. It has certainly brought me the best and worst memories ever. The best, meeting and being with Mafu while the worst was everything else.

“How did the fitting go?” I ask and earn a smile from Nomalanga. “Amazing! You should've seen the final product, that dress is just magnificent. I can't wait to finally be Mrs Cebekhulu,” the sparkles in her eyes say it all. I feel like crying, but I can't break down in front of them. “Don't worry, you will be sooner than you think. Seven days and a couple of hours to go.” My smile is not as bright as hers, definitely not as big as hers and the only sparkle in my eyes is that of tears glistening and screaming to roll out.

“Mr Cebekhulu, is everything okay on your side?” I ask and he just nods, pity written all over his face. He can't even look me in the eyes as if he's at fault. He wanted to stop the wedding but I didn't allow that. Even after I confessed my love to him, I can't allow him to do this to himself. He'd be losing the love of his

life, his ride or die, his high school sweetheart. "I must say you have good taste! He won't tell you but he loves that suit." I smile and look at her. "Then I guess the only thing standing in your way is the date of your big day." She nods then squints her eyes. "And hopefully, that's the only thing standing in our way because if not..." Mafu looks at her and she stops talking. What was that about?

My cellphone pings from my bag. I thought I put it on silent mode, this is unprofessional. "You may attend to your cellphone," Nomalanga says. I nod then check it, a text from Nomvula telling me she's outside. What is she doing here, I thought we were going to meet at the hospital. And she's way too early, might I add. There's a soft knock on the door before it slides open and she walks in followed by Zama. "She said she was looking for you," Zama says and I just smile. "Thank you, Zama." she nods then walks out and closes the door. "Nomvula, what are you doing here?" Nomalanga asks, puzzled by her presence.

"Lumina is going to accompany us for my appointment," she says sitting on her brother's lap. Nomalanga looks at Mafu then at me then back at Mafu. "Lumina was also heading there for her appointment so I figured it would be better to just go together," Mafu says and I furrow my brows, what appointment? I most certainly do not have an appointment today with a gynecologist. "What, Lumina you're pregnant?" Nomvula asks and I force out a smile. I look at Mafu then down. "I think it'd be best if we leave now, we don't want to be late

now, do we? We all get up and I reach for my bag and cellphone and follow everyone out. I notice Zama staring at me by the coffee bar before quickly walking away. I don't know what she's up to now, I thought I told her to stay away from me.

“How far are you with the pregnancy?” Nomvula asks taking my hand into hers. “Eleven weeks, I think.” she squeals then wraps her arms around my arm. “I have no doubt you're going to be a great mother.” She says and I only manage to sigh. Am I going to be a great mother, am I? What life will my baby live? Will Mafu assist wherever he can without risking his marriage? Why did I complicate my life like this? I watch as Mafu pecks Nomalanga's cheek before helping her inside her car. I know he's doing that not to hurt me, but it hurts either way. “Are you okay?” Nomvula asks and I nod. “Yeah
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I'm fine.”

“We should get going.” Mafu says taking my hand into his and I just nod. He leads me to the passenger seat, opens the door for me and helps me in. Maybe I should break things off with him, this is not the way things are supposed to be. He finally gets in the car, brings the engine to life then drives out of the parking lot. He smells different, this is not his regular cologne. He smirks then glares at me. “What?” he asks and I shake my head then check what Nomvula is doing at the back. She's busy with her phone and has her headphones plugged in. “You smell... Different,” he chuckles. “You said you my cologne makes you

nauseous so I changed it, is this one better?" he asks and I nod with a smile.

He takes my hand into his, our fingers intertwine then he pecks it. "Are you okay?" he asks and I nod then look forward. I'm not okay but he doesn't have to know. "Mafu we should stop doing this. I feel terrible having to finalize your wedding while- " He cuts in. "We'll talk about this some other time," he says and I just remain quiet. I try to take my hand back but he tightens his hold. I check Nomvula once again and find her staring at us with her headphones off. Oh god, please tell me she heard nothing. I look at Mafu then throw my head back, could this day get any worse.

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"All done," Nomvula says with a grin. I look at her scans and smile. This is what my baby will grow into and more? "You're up next," the gynecologist says looking at me. I look at Mafu and he just nods. "Go," Nomvula says taking the scans from me. I get up from my seat and make my way to the bed. "Please raise your T-shirt," she says and I raise it before lying down. "Okay, this will be slightly uncomfortable and cold," she says. "I was told you are about eleven weeks, is it?" she asks and I nod. She squirts some gel onto my belly and I shut my eyes as she spreads it, it really is cold. A fast beating sound fills the room, forcing me to open my eyes and look at Mafu. "What's that?" he asks and earns a giggle from the gynecologist. "That's your little sweet pea's heart beat," she clarifies.

"Is that the baby?" I ask, spotting a prawn shaped thingy on the screen next to me. She nods with a smile, "Your sweet pea is

growing really fast. The head is still supersized, but the body is growing quickly. The fingers and toes are separating out. There are tiny fingernails and miniature ears. You probably won't see much besides the head." she says. I giggle and shut my eyes. I'm pregnant? Mafu grabs my one arm and pecks it before breaking into laughter. "I'm going to be a dad," he whispers in disbelief and I can't help but to allow the tears I've been holding back for so long to stream out. "Congratulations, Miss Mthembu and you too, Mr Cebekhulu." She says handing a wipe to Mafu who instantly takes it and wipes the gel off my belly. He helps me sit up straight then wipes my tears. "All will be well, okay?" he whispers and I nod. "I love you," he says then pecks my forehead. "I love you too."

It is later on in the day and we are from our appointment. I am on a call with Mafu while driving back home. "I know you're not happy with this arrangement and believe me, I would give anything to be with you," he counters. I can't, I would never be able to look at myself in the mirror if this wedding doesn't happen. "Mafu..."

"You know what, I'm calling off the wedding," I shake my head then heave out a sigh, there's nothing I can do to stop him, is there?

I step on the brake in attempt to slow down the car to no success whatsoever. I instantly feel my chest enclosing as tears prickle my eyes. This car is suddenly too suffocating for me and my vision is blurring. "Mafu, the brakes are not working!" I cry. I hear some shuffling before letting out a scream as my vision gets blinded by a bright light followed by repeated hooting.

Her screams, her cries - they are forever ringing in my head. I don't know what I would do if I were to lose her and our baby. Everything was fine today, everything went well. We were both happy and emotional then this happens? Why would god allow something like this to happen? Who would do something like this to her? "Lumina Mthembu!" I jump up from my seat as soon as I hear her name. The doctor smiles at me, "She's awake." He says and I let out a sigh of relief before following him back inside her ward. I can't help but to smile when I lay my eyes on her. She's sitting up straight and caressing her small belly, she looks like she's in her own world. "Miss Mthembu," the doctor calls out to her but she doesn't respond.

My smile falters and I look at him, awaiting some sort of clarity. "She had a concussion. The blow to her head was quite severe which caused her to suffer a temporary loss of physical and mental abilities. She's still traumatized and confused." The doctor explains which causes my worries to increase. "She won't have amnesia, will she?" I ask and he shakes his head. I don't know what I'd do if she were to ever forget me. "She won't but I'd like to keep her for a night or two, just to run some more tests as well as keep her under strict care and observation. Did she know by any chance that she's pregnant?" he asks and I nod.

"Yes she did, she had her first appointment earlier on in the day. Is everything okay?" I ask and he smiles at me. "Her and

the foetus are fine. She just needs some rest and no stress whatsoever.” He says his goodbye then excuses himself. She has a bandage wrapped around her forehead and her wrist, a band aid on her arm and another one on her ankle. I make my way to her then perch up on the bed. She looks at me before blinking her tears out. “Hey baby,” she just looks at me for a few more seconds then looks back at her belly. “I love you so much, you know that? I don't know what I would've done if anything were to happen to you.” She laughs before suddenly sobbing softly.

“I love you too Mafu, but I'm not ready to die in the name of love. I still want to accomplish my goals before dying, I want to show my parents that all their hard work paid off and I want to mother this baby and leave something behind for it.” I take her hand into mine but she yanks it out of my hold. “We should break things off, Mafu and stay away from each other as far as possible. Do you realize that I could've died tonight? Something could've happened to my baby because of our stupidity Mafu.” I furrow my brows at her statement. “Because of our stupidity? What is that supposed to mean?” I ask and she lets out a bitter chuckle. “Oh cut the crap Mafu. I don't get why you ran and told your wife everything, even worse you told her that I'm pregnant. That's why she tried to kill me, isn't it?” she asks. “Lumina, what are you...”

“Stop it Mafu! Don't even dare try to protect her. Clearly she followed me from work so she could witness me dying in a tragic car collision. She watched me scream for help. She smiled

at me and told me to rest in eternal peace, along with the "bastard" I'm carrying. She left me crying and bleeding, my car leaking petrol. I almost burnt inside that car Mafu," she furiously wipes her tears then lies down on the bed, her back turned against me. "Shut the door on your way out and please don't come back here." she says.

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"Yeew!" Nomalanga exclaims as she kicks her boots off and throws herself on the couch. "Now, I could use a glass of champagne because I won as usual." she says then chuckles. She sits up straight and claps twice, turning the lights on. Startled, she let's out a loud scream as she lays her eyes on me.

"Mafu

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why are you sitting in the dark? You want to give me a heart attack?" she asks, her voice cracking up. I look at my glass of whiskey before gulping it all down my throat.

"You sound tired, would you like a massage?" I ask and she smiles. "I could use one, thanks." I smile back at her then get up from my couch to hers. I hold her shoulders then start massaging her, working my fingers on her skin.

She closes her eyes and let's out a moan. "Ha, that feels so good." I chuckle then shake my head. "It does? You know I hate this rebellious side of you right? Going as far as wanting to kill Lumina?" She immediately gets up from the couch and glares at me with her eyes wide open. "You disgust me, do you hear

me?" I ask as I step closer but she steps back. "I hate women like you Nomalanga, I detest them. Had you had a problem, why didn't you come to me? Why did you not mess with the brakes of my car and try to kill me because I'm the problem here?" I ask. She tries to speak but words fail to leave her mouth. "Why did you do that to Lumina, Nomalanga?" She lets out a soft sob then covers her mouth.

"No Mafu, please listen to me. I wasn't planning on killing her, I just wanted to scare her so she'd leave you alone. None of this would've happened if you didn't spend so much time with her and look at her the way you always do. Did you sleep with her?" In there she goes, playing the victim card. "See that's your problem, you like making yourself the victim then blaming others. When will you ever take responsibility for your own actions Nomalanga, when?" She gulps. "In fact I did sleep with Lumina and I enjoyed it so much. She was the only person in my mind for weeks after that, the only person I wanted to be with. I felt complete with her, I felt alive and free. I enjoyed it to the point where I kept on going back for- " I feel a sting on my cheek before I could even finish talking.

Nomalanga slaps me once again and I manage to hold her hand before she could slap me for the third time. "Let go of me!" She shouts and I just shake my head. "You're lucky I don't believe in hitting women because if I did, I don't even want to say it. You are going to stay away from Lumina, in fact you'll stay away from me as well. If you try to do something to her again, asazi Nomalanga, I don't know what I'll do but it won't be good."

A sound of shattering glass filled the room, followed by a light sob. "Mvula?" She holds on to the wall then her baby bump and shakes her head. "Where's Lumina? She always answers my call but tonight she didn't. Where is she?" She asks softly. I let go of Nomalanga's wrist from and focus my attention on Nomvula. "Lumina is fine and safe, she's just tired and going through a lot." I tell her but she shuts her eyes and let's out a moan. "What did you do to Lumina and why?" She opens her eyes and looks Nomalanga dead in the eyes. Noma stutters then looks at me. "Somebody say something or I'll step on this glass!" Nomvula threatens, her voice rising.

"Lumina is fine Nomvula, I can take you to see her if you want," I suggest and she nods repeatedly while wiping her tears. "Yes? Should we go now?" She nods and smiles a little. "Okay, let's go. Nomalanga clean this mess up and we'll talk when I get back." she nods.

Mafu had been sitting on that chair by the window while Nomvula and I were chatting up a storm. I could see he was trying so hard not to fall asleep but he ended up sleeping but not before sending Nomvula home - not his house. He didn't trust Nomalanga enough to leave her with his little sister after their argument. Nomvula told me everything she witnessed and while I'm glad Mafu fought for me, things might actually just get worse. I grab a blanket from my cabinet and slowly make my way to him. My ankle still hurts from the accident seeing as to I sprained it too hard but I'll live.

Mafu looks so adorable sleeping like that, I can't help but to blush. I know he didn't tell his wife anything, I just needed someone to blame and I needed an excuse to push him away. He wanted to cancel the wedding before I got into an accident and I pray and hope he has changed his mind. Maybe I shouldn't have told him about what Nomalanga did. I'm startled when I feel a grip on my wrist followed by him pulling me on top of him. He wraps his arms around my waist and rests his big head on my shoulder. "Why are you not asleep?" He asks in a whisper. He sounds torn and heartbroken.

"I thought you might be cold and in need of a warm blanket," I whisper back. He raises his head from my neck and looks at me. "Thank you," I nod and try to get up but he holds me tighter. "Please don't move..." he smiles politely, his eyes filled with worry. I nod and sit comfortably on his lap. We cover ourselves

with the blanket and sit in comfortable silence, his warm breath fanning my face. "I'll never stop loving you Lumina, no matter what happens or how much you push me away. I'll always be there for you and our baby," he says in the midst of the silence that had engulfed us. I raise my head from his chest and look at him. "I don't want to endanger my- our child Mafu. I know you love me and I love you too but we cannot complicate our lives like this," he heaves out a sigh.

"You are not listening to me, are you?" He asks and I can't help but to laugh at his tone. He sounds defeated but stubborn as he is, I know he's not willing to give up. "You and Nomalanga have been through far worse challenges, you've been together since high school, through thick and thin and right when you're about to get married, I happened. Not only will this ruin my career and chances of making it in this industry but it will ruin me and no one will want to hire me because they'll think I'm going to sleep with their clients' husbands and trap them with babies..."

"Lumina..."

"No Mafu, please just- Please do this for our baby and I. Please allow me to be the type of mother who won't bother you in the middle of the night asking for baby diapers. Please give me the opportunity to prove to everyone that I am a good wedding planner who just made a mistake. And no, I don't regret meeting you and I do not regret the time I spent with you, the amazing moments we shared but I am begging you Mafu, can this end here?" I ask, tears pricking my eyes before streaming

out. He does not say anything but pulls me back to his chest and caresses my back. His heart is beating slower than usual. He's heartbroken, sad to say the least. "I'm sorry but I can't let this go on any further. I am not ready to sacrifice so much of myself in the name of love, I'm sorry Mafu..." he hushes me and pecks my forehead. "Get some rest, okay baby?" he just says holding me tighter and I nod and shut my eyes.

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I stuff all my toiletries inside my bag and zip it up before looking around, checking if I hadn't left anything behind. I am finally getting discharged and Mafu offered to drive me home. He stayed with me and came to visit whenever he could. I bet the doctor was tired of seeing his face more than mine because he was often rude or disapproving of how things were done here and criticized almost everything. "Are you done?" he asks peeking from the door. I glare around the room one more time then nod. He makes his way in, grabs all the bags and gestures for us to go by tilting his head towards the door.

I catch some nurses glaring at him as we walk past them. "She's one lucky woman," some say. Am I? Am I lucky to be in an entanglement with him? I would be lucky to have him all to myself, yes but now I do not consider myself lucky. We finally reach the parking lot. He helps me inside the car first and fastens my seat belt before heading to put my bags inside the trunk and coming back. He looks tired, like he hasn't been

getting enough sleep for the past couple of days. "You look drained

" I finally tell him as he drives out the hospital grounds.

"Yeah, I've been busy with the marriage arrangements, looking after you as well as arranging to pay damages to your family. It's been a long week." He says and I nod. I didn't know he was planning to pay damages. "If it were up to me, I'd be paying dowry instead of damages... Unfortunately it's not," he says, his face showing disapproval and his eyes reflecting anger. "That means your family knows about the baby?" I ask and he nods. "And they want to see you. A meeting will be held to resolve this situation we are in before the wedding. The damages have to be paid before the wedding," he says, his words sending shivers down my spine.

"I have to tell my family that I almost wrecked your marriage?" I ask and he shakes his head. "Well, my family and I will go to your home to apologize but before that, the meeting has to be held. You don't have to be present but my parents would like to meet you separately," he announces. I gulp and look out the window. He let's out a chuckle followed by a cluck. "I love you, so much Lumina. It's just too bad that you don't see that." he says, anger and irritation clearly visible in his tone.

"Mafu I thought I told you why I'm doing this," he shakes his head. "Whatever... And I don't want to see any man near my child Lumina or I swear!" he clucks after.

Mafu is so unbelievable! I'm just going to ignore him until we reach our destination. Right now, I just need to think of a way to tell my family that I was impregnated by a married man, my client and I almost destroyed their marriage- without dying from my own mother's hands. After the sickening drive filled with uncomfortable silence and my occupied mind, we finally make it to the complex. He helps me out of car and follows me to my apartment with my luggage. He makes his way in and places the bags on my bedroom floor. "Thank you, for everything." He nods and makes his way out. I heave out a sigh and perch up on the corner of my bed. What have I done?

Mafu walks back in after a few minutes and throws my slippers on the floor. "You left these inside the car," he says. I get up from the bed and thank him once again. He does not respond, instead he looks at me from head to toe and gulps. "Why are you doing this Lumina, are you happy with your decision?" I look down and bite my lower lip. "Answer me!" he says banging on the door. "No okay! But it's for the best." I said hoping he would understand where I'm coming from. "Best for whom? For you?" he asks stepping closer. "It's best for everyone Mafu. Believe me, sooner or later you'll realize that and probably thank me." He shakes his head in disbelief as he stops in front of me.

He takes my hands into his and pecks the both of them. "I love you Lumina and unfortunately I can't agree to this arrangement of yours. I want to be a part of your life, as your partner, as your lover." He says softly, his voice breaking and his eyes

watering. He frees my hands and holds my face. “Please think things through...” he whispers before brushing his lips against mine. I try to push him back to no avail as he uses that opportunity to lock his lips with mine, kissing me like he has never before. With one hand on my back, he unzips the zipper of my dress and manages to pull it down without breaking the kiss. He helps me lie down on the bed and nuzzles my neck, then my belly down to the lady of the moment, the one who got me into this mess to begin with.

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Mafu had been sleeping at my apartment for close to a week now. He spent most of his time here if he was not at work. He says he does not trust me to follow the doctor's instructions nor does he trust Nomalanga to stick to her word. He thinks I am in great danger and he does not want to wait for anything to happen to me to act. He would rather prevent it from happening, as he said. I have continued with my lief, but from home seeing as to Mafu has a trick up his sleeve and seemingly, a way forward regarding the wedding.

Today, however, we are supposed to go to his parents' house. He had already informed me that his parents want to meet me and he wants to formally introduce me to them as his girlfriend, who is also carrying his child. I am nervous, so much so that I have been vomiting all night. Mafu obviously thought it was something serious, which is why we stopped by the doctor's office on the way to his house. "I am sad to announce that due to high levels of stress and anxiety, her morning sickness has worsened. It was supposed to have actually lessened or even stopped as she is at the end of her first trimester. As a result, your blood pressure is high, which may be a risk to the foetus. I would like to admit her, just to monitor her blood pressure." I turn to look at Mafu. He looks as if his high blood pressure is going to shoot up the roof.

"Don't worry, Me Cebekhulu, your wife and baby will be perfectly fine as long as she avoids stress, stays healthy and

doesn't do any hard labor. We have to consider her head injury as well," the doctor says, noting Mafu's unspoken concerns. However, Mafu and I are shocked by how he regarded me as his wife. Mafu must be thrilled, hearing that because he has been pestering me about it all week. But it seemingly awakens the nerves I had buried and I start feeling nauseous once again. Mafu's grin turns into a frown as he notices me trying to suppress my strain to vomit. "Doctor, I thought you said she'll be fine?" Mafu's voice sounds more panicked than worried.

The doctor brings a bucket to my face in which I pour out my guts into, vomiting hard. Mafu hands me a glass of water to rinse my mouth before laying me back down on the bed. "Doctor, you have to do something. I can't lose her." At first, I found Mafu's worry very adorable and possibly funny, but hearing him speak this way makes me worry even more. Does he think something bad is going to happen to me? I smile weakly at him as he caresses my forehead. "I'm not going anywhere Mafu. Please stop worrying so much." He looks hesitant but takes my word for it. I guess I won't be able to meet his parents today then.

It is later on in the evening when I hear people talking. They are trying their best to whisper but I can clearly hear everything they are saying, or this ward is very small. The voices die down as soon as I open my eyes, and find four pairs of eyes already looking at me. My eyes instinctively lock with Mafu's then Nomvula who is standing next to him with a bulging baby bump. My eyes then move to the elder woman who looks a lot

like Nomvula then the man next to her, who is the older version of Mafu. That means these are Mafu's parents. My heart starts beating fast at the thought of finally meeting them, at a time like this no less.

“Love, are you okay?” Mafu's voice pulls me out of the state of panic I was in. He helps me sit up on the bed and holds a glass of water for me to drink as my hands are shaking. I thank him after taking small sips of the water and turn to the older woman who is now standing next to me, an uneasy look on her face. But all that disappears when she smiles faintly at me. “You look even more lovely in person” she says softly, causing me to blush. I am not sure if she has seen me before but I'm guessing Mafu has showed her my picture. “I'm Mafu's mother, this is his father,” she says looking at the man standing next to her. “These two have told us so many good things about you.” The older man's voice carries so much authority, he is basically ordering me to listen to him.

“We didn't mean to bombard you here at the hospital but we just couldn't wait to see you. When Mafu told us you were not feeling well and had to be hospitalized, we got so worried that we had to come visit you.” Mrs Cebekhulu said. “Thanks for coming.” She smiles politely, looking at Mafu with nothing but pure joy in his eyes. “You three, would you please excuse us. MaMthembu and I need to have a talk, woman to woman,” she orders. Mafu gives me a comforting smile before leaving, following his father and little sister out. Leaving me in the room alone with the woman who birthed the man I love, I have no

idea how to feel. I don't think I'm capable of feeling nervous any longer.

“My son has told me so much about you and I can tell he loves you more than anything. I have never seen him like this before, even with Nomalanga. I need to know that you love him as much as he loves you,” she states, her soft expression replaced by a stern one. “I love Mafu, ma, more than I can imagine. Took me a while to admit that to myself but I do.” Her face brightens up at my words. “I know you do, I can see it in your eyes. The way you two look at each other, the look on his face when he talks to you, I haven't seen a love like this in forever.” I soften up at her words, suddenly feeling calm and the anxiety long gone. “The underlying matter here is that Mafu is a married man and he has now not only fallen in love with someone else but impregnated her too. Nomalanga will not take this lying down.” I know that. She has already attempted to kill me and she did not know anything.

Mafu and I have to figure out a way to tell her everything. Or he could do it alone and come back and tell me how it went. I feel like it would look like we are adding salt to her wound if we tell her together. A part of me can only hope we can keep the pregnancy to ourselves but she probably even knows already. If she thought Mafu and I had something going on and she knows of my pregnancy, it won't take her much to realize that I'm carrying Mafu's baby. “Mafu told us that she almost killed you.” Mafu has confided in me that she does not think Nomalanga was just trying to scare me away. Knowing her for as long as he

does, he is more than sure that she wanted to end my life. “She's probably not going to stop there. You and Mafu need to do something about this matter before it gets out of hand.” The way she speaks, it's as if she herself fears Nomalanga.

Although she is right about doing taking care of this matter, I don't think Nomalanga is going to easily accept that she has lost Mafu. After having a cordial conversation with Mrs Cebekhulu, she has proven to be a kind and humble being. She has not judged me, ever since she set foot in this ward and is seemingly accepting of my relationship with Mafu. If anything, she is more than happy to be getting another grandchild. Mafu walks back in, ending my conversation with his mother. He claims I need to rest and so should his mother. I haven't spent much time with Nomvula but I will as soon as Mafu and I find a solution to this matter.

Mafu squeezes himself in the small bed with me, making me lay on top of him so we both fit. He seems much more peaceful than earlier on. “My parents like you,” he suddenly says in the midst of the comfortable silence. “I like them too.” I really do. Mafu's mother treated me like I am her friend whereas his father seemed not to have a problem with me. I haven't really spoken to him but I know they have accepted me. “Good, because I have a solution to this. But it will require all three families to meet.”

Disappointment, that's all I can see in Mam Mthembu's eyes as I have just explained to her that I committed the greatest sin in her eyes. I have just explained to her that I fornicated with my client, let alone a married man and got impregnated by him. I destroyed his marriage and his wife almost killed both her unborn grandchild along with her daughter. Mam Mthembu is not one to give silent treatments when angry. My mother is the type to shout when angry and apologize after calming down. Her silence says a lot and I do not know how to deal with it. Its nothing I have ever experienced before. I expected her to bite my head off, even kick me out of her house but she is just sitting there, looking into space.

I guess I have never seen this side of her. I've never really disappointed her and when I did, I guess I destroyed the remaining hope she had of me succeeding in life. "Mama..." She heaves out a heavy sigh then gets up from the one seater couch and scratches her ashened hair. "I will inform your uncles that they are needed this side. They should be arriving tomorrow morning if not tonight." With those words, she retires to her bedroom. Tears prickle my eyes and in attempt to send them back from where they stemmed from, they decide to betray me and roll out and they did not stop, not even once. My cellphone vibrates and I instantly break into shivers. "Baby..." Mafu must not dare do that to me, he must not dare call me that like he did not put his wedding on hold for me.

He is supposed to be getting married in a week and here we are, trying to right our wrongs. "Mafu..." That comes out as a whisper and in attempt to call his name louder, I instead break into a loud sob. "You should've seen the look on her face, I've never seen my mother like that, ever! I hurt her so bad, Mafu, nothing can ever fix this." He remains quiet for a couple of seconds then sighs. "My apologies for putting you in a situation like this, I should have handled things better. I should've started off with ending my relationship with Nomalanga before pursuing something serious with you. I should have done something as soon as I realized I was deeply in love with you." But he didn't. He did not do any of those things and I am at fault because I kept on pushing him away and pulling him back.

I confused him and told him I did not want to pursue anything with him knowing very well that I was lying. I kept on forcing him to continue with the wedding and not destroy his relationship with Nomalanga. I am to blame in this situation. "I am sorry Mafu, I'm really sorry." I wish he was here with me. I wish he could hold me tight, caress my back and tell me everything is going to be alright. I love him, there's no denying that, especially when the damage has already been done. "I am sorry as well, Lumina. Call me before you sleep. I will arrange a shuttle to fetch you and your family from the airport tomorrow." I just nod as if he could see me.

"I love you, MaMvelase and I won't stop loving you. I will fix all of this, I will make things right. There's no time for regrets now because there's no going back but I need you to assure me that

this is the compromise you are willing to make because baby I would lay my life down for you. I need you to- ” I chuckle and nod yet again. “It's risky, yes but I am willing to compromise just a portion of my life for you Mafu. People may see this as an abomination but I love you, and I cannot force you to stay in a loveless marriage.”

“That's all I needed to hear. Let me go prepare for tomorrow, we'll talk later.” I hang up and press the cellphone against my chest.

My other hand rests on my not so flat belly and I start caressing it. “I am so scared right now, I might shit myself but I love your father. We went about it the wrong way but was there ever a right way?” With my hot headed self and his stubborn self, was there ever another way? Yes, there was but was it going to ever work out as anticipated? What if someone would've lost their life? What if things would've taken a far worse turn? No use beating myself up about it now.

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I never really realized how terrifying the Mthembu men were until now, now that they were surrounding me and glaring daggers at me. They were all asking cumbersome questions which required answers I did not have. “Your father must be turning in his grave.” The famous line I had been awaiting since these men set foot here. My father had been long turning in his grave, since all of this started and I am certain he turned until he stopped from tiredness. “This Mafu boy...” I want to snort so

bad. That hunk of mine would flip if he heard he was referred to as a boy. "He will pay heavily for this. I want him to cringe when checking his bank balance after paying the damages," my ruthless uncle says. If only he knew how many zeros are in that bank balance.

I do not get why he wants Mafu to suffer alone, it's not like I did not know that he was married traditionally, I mean I planned his wedding. "You go and get some rest ndodakazi, we will see you tomorrow morning." I nod and get up from the straw mat and head to the kitchen to check up on my cousin who is washing the dishes. "You know, dad forced me to come here. Not that I didn't want to come, I was just really tired." She says draining the dirty water from the sink. "Well I am glad that you came

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I really need a strong shoulder of someone my age to cry on." She giggles softly.

"Well, I am glad I could be of any assistance. Let's go, we have an early morning tomorrow." I nod and lead her to my bedroom, where my cellphone is vibrating all so loudly.

"Cebekhulu..." I earn a stare from Zotha as she perches up next to me. "Put him on speaker, I want to hear him," she whispers and I roll my eyes at her. "I miss you, my love." He says and I blush. "I miss you too." I do miss him. The last time I saw him, we were confessing our love to each other. The last night I spent with him, he made insane love to me which made me realize, I can't live without this man. I chuckle as I remember

how persistent he was, how sure he was that he could never be without me. He was fuming. He was so frustrated with me, he couldn't even keep it together. And I did it once more, I let him in. I allowed him to have his way with my body and for once, I did not feel guilty about it.

I was more convinced when he broke down in my presence. He tried to hide it but he failed. I comforted him, like the old clingy baby that he is and we finally made a decision. "There's nothing I want more than to have you by my side," he said, tears glistening in his beautiful eyes. "There's nothing I want more than to make you mine, Lumina. Heck, I want to wake up next to you and go to sleep with you in my arms. At this point, I do not really care about anyone but you and our baby," his tears rolled out and he quickly wiped them. "I want to be with you, I want you. I love you, Lumina Mthembu. I love you, sbani sami," I couldn't help but to blush and look away from him.

He took both my hands and placed them on his chest. "My heart beats for you, I live for you. From someone's perspective, all we did was have sex and move on with our lives but from my perspective, we did more than.." I knew he was not going to stop talking. He had a motive, to make me realize that I love him more than I could ever imagine. He was determined to spend the whole day trying to convince me to be with him, therefore I agreed. The man I knew for a couple of weeks, I was ready to sacrifice something dear to me for, something very important to me for. I could not care less about anything or anyone else but him and our baby. I wanted our baby to grow

up in a warm household filled with peace and love, a place he can proudly call home.

“You are not having cold feet, are you? I meant everything I said to you Lumina, I- ” one thing about Mafu, he talks a lot when nervous, which I find adorable. “Would you relax? There's no way in hell she's having cold feet, her feet are warmer than molten lava!” Zotha shouts as she snatches my cellphone from my hand.

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We arrived at the Cebekhulu household before twelve and we were given the time to settle in. We are going to sleep there because they have enough room for everyone and Mafu was against the idea of going back to my apartment. Their basement has two bedrooms and then there's the staff quarters at the back. There's three more guest bedrooms so everyone will have a place to sleep. The Nkosi family will not be sleeping here since they reside in town and have a house of their own. The meeting started at twelve and it has been going on for more than an hour. We were told to remain in our bedrooms until further notice but there has been no notice for an hour and a half now, I'm starting to worry.

I did hear one of my uncle shouting at the top of his voice and I know it's the eldest Mthembu brother. "What do you think they are talking about?" I ask turning to Zotha. She just chuckles and tells me to relax and not stress out the baby. "I can't Zotha, we've been in here since forever I'm starting to feel suffocated. A knock on the door startles me. My throat instantly dries up and my palms start feeling clammy. Zotha gets up from the bed and goes to open the door. "The elders would like to speak to MaMthembu." I sigh out loud and close my eyes. I hope they don't go hard on me. I already know some of the questions they are going to ask and to those I don't, I'll just try my best to answer as honest as possible.

I push myself off the bed and follow Zotha and Mafu's cousin out. He leads the both of us to the great room where the elders are sitting along with Mafu. Mam Mthembu, Mam Cebekhulu, Mam Nkosi and Nomalanga are seated in the middle of the room on a mat. Zotha and I sit there as well and wait for them to address us. Nomalanga looks defeated, you can tell she had been crying all night long with the eyebags and her eyes are red. Her nose is red as well and her entire face is swollen. "Ndodakazi, these people here told us everything you told us already but you did not tell us that you were in an accident because your car brakes were not working," my uncle says and I look at my mother. I told her about the accident but I didn't see the need to tell my uncles that.

"Why are you protecting her, ndodakazi? She almost killed you and our grandchild," he asks. I gulp then look at Mafu, he smiles faintly. They must have shown him flames while we were locked up in that bedroom, he looks uninterested in this meeting whatsoever but he has to participate because he called it. "There is no proof that Nomalanga tampered with my car brakes," Mafu chuckles then throws his head back. I know he has the proof, he probably found it in hours somehow. "She admitted to tampering with your car brakes. She says she wanted to scare you and not kill you but you were hospitalized because of her. There is no way we are going to let her live her life freely after this. The police must know this and my words are final!" The room remains quiet after my uncle's outburst.

I look at Mafu and he shakes his head. Is that how much he wants to get rid of her? Not only did he conduct an investigation, he managed to get my uncle's on his side. I need to talk to him after this. "As a wedding planner, you knew that Mafu was married traditionally and was about to get married in holy matrimony since you were planning the wedding. Why did you fornicate with your client?" Mr Nkosi asks. Mafu clears his throat and speaks. "My apologies for chiming in but I dragged Lumina into this whole thing. I am the one who pursued and convinced her into this whole situation. One thing none of you understand is that we love each other. Yes, we went about this the wrong way but I love Lumina and she loves me too." Gasps fill the room.

"This is God's will. And now that there is a baby involved then we have to be extra careful and considerate with our decisions." He adds on. "Did you fall pregnant on purpose, so you could trap my son in-law with a baby?" Mrs Nkosi asks and I shake my head. "I didn't even tell him when I found out, he found out on his own. I suddenly fell ill and he got worried and insisted we take tests, especially after his wife told him about pregnancy symptoms," I say softly. "Is anyone aware that the wedding is in a week?" Mrs Nkosi asks. "Unfortunately, there will be no wedding until this matter is resolved. In fact, there might be no wedding at all," Mr Cebekhulu says catching everyone's attention.

"My son here confided in me and told me everything as a son should. He told me he cannot go ahead with this wedding. Both

these children are not ready for marriage. Mafu is still confused and clearly not ready to settle down. Nomalanga on the other hand is nowhere near ready. She spends most of her time with her friends, she's out all night every night

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she doesn't perform the duties of a wife and she doesn't want to have children. And this situation we are in showed us how she would handle matters in her home. Yes, no woman should allow another woman to come in between her marriage but the way she handled this matter was both shocking and dangerous.

"She did not talk to her husband. She decided that MaMthembu was the villain and took matters into her own hands. As much as MaMthembu is in the wrong, Mafu is the root of all this. MaNkosi was supposed to talk to her husband and take it on with her then the both of them could bring it up to MaMthembu but she did not do that instead she almost took a life." We are all listening attentively and he's making some valid points which I know very well that they were instilled by Mafu in his head, he's very persuasive and manipulative. "Mafu has also informed me that he would like to get married to Lumina," more gasps. We spoke about this and we agreed on it but I somehow thought he wouldn't. I don't know why a part of me thought he was bluffing.

"Mafu, can we please talk... The three of us?" Nomalanga asks softly with pleading eyes. This whole situation and how she looks makes me feel guilty. Mafu nods and walks out. Nomalanga and I help each other get up and follow Mafu out.

We get outside and Mafu pulls me closer to him. Nomalanga sobs and shuts her eyes as she tries to take in what Mafu just did. "You disrupted the meeting, speak," Mafu says curtly. He really can't stand her. "Mafu you know I love you and I don't want to lose you," he snorts and rolls his beautiful eyes.

"Lumina please, you know how much I love him. I've told you this before, remember when we went to the wedding venue and I made that wish on the fountain?" she asks and I nod.

"Maybe Mafu does love you to the moon and back but he's also my soulmate, we can make this work," she says. Mafu and I look at each other then back at her. "Maybe we can share him, a polygamous marriage." I chuckle then shake my head.

"Lumina please, I can't afford to lose Mafu, I love him and I know you two love each other but I can't lose him." she starts pleading. I look at Mafu in disbelief and shake my head, there is no way in hell I'm doing this. "Lumina listen, you can give him something I can't. Polygamy is a compromise I'm willing to make but I can't give him children," she says taking my hands into her hold.

"Nomalanga, this is not going to work. What if I do something one day and you attempt to kill me?" I ask and she shakes her head repeatedly. "I wouldn't- I wouldn't do that to you, Mafu would leave me, he'd kill me." She's crying uncontrollably, her voice breaking as she speaks. I shake my head and wipe my tears. "Mafu maybe we shouldn't be doing this..." he shakes his head. "Nomalanga needs to understand that this wedding is not going to happen. I want you." This is all just complicated and it

just got more even complex. "Mafu..." he shakes his head. "No Lumina, you're not pulling out of this. Can't you see she's pulling an act? She tried to kill you Lumina, how sure are we that she won't try again?" I feel so terrible but then I'm not willing to become second best, I already was but not any longer.

“No.” Mafu deadpans, holding my hand tightly in his. He then pulls me back inside the house, leaving Nomalanga outside, on her own. A part of me is glad that Mafu is against polygamy. I either would have left him or even agreed because of the guilt that is consuming me. I practically stole Mafu from Nomalanga and whether I like it or not, what Mafu and I did was wrong. Nomalanga should have reacted the way she did, hence not wanting to open a case against her. Also because I fear what she may attempt to do afterwards. Mafu squeezes my hand tightly before freeing it, parting ways. I settle down on the straw mat and glare at my mom. She was already looking at me but she quickly looks away and I realize that she is still mad at me, still disappointed as well. But I am her daughter, she will always care about me.

Nomalanga walks back in right after us, wiping her tears from face. “Back to what I was saying, Mafu has confided in me that he would like to pay dowry instead of damages to the Mthembu family,” Mr Cebekhulu expresses. I see the Nkosi family is shocked, along with my mother while the rest of my family looks happy. I turn to look at Mafu and find him already looking at me, a small smile on his face. He looks satisfied, probably because his grand plan is falling into place. “Now while this seems rushed, these two are old enough to make their own decisions and if they want to be together, my family will not be the one to stop them.” Mr Cebekhulu concludes. The Nkosi family is not happy about this decision and they try

to press more on it. “So, what about our daughter? What happens to the dowry you paid for her?” Mr Nkosi asks, fury written all over his face.

“We will communicate with the ancestors and inform them of my son's decisions. As compensation to your family, we will cleanse your daughter and free her from the ties she has with this family. That will be all.” I can't say I am not happy about how things turned out. Although Nomalanga did scare me with her proposition to wanting to be in a polygamous marriage with the woman she tried to kill, everything else went well. “My daughter is already doing you a favor by not getting your daughter arrested. How will she be able to carry out her wifely duties behind bars?” My Uncle asks rhetorically. My uncle was always considered sharp-tongued, I have just always thought he was rude.

Soon, the Nkosi family leaves and Mrs Cebekhulu asks Zotha and I to help her in the kitchen. My mother decides to join us so we can give the men time to talk on their own. All we hear from the kitchen is laughter and the narration of stories. They seem to be having a good time. Nomvula is resting in her room, she must have been tired from what went on today, conflicted as well. Zotha and I take water basins to the men so they can wash their hands. It's strainous having to kneel while serving them but the cocky smile that Mafu plasters on when I serve him his food tells me he enjoys it. His mind has probably even wandered off, thinking of other possible reasons I could be kneeling in front of him.

He sure does deserve it after the show he put on today. Everything went according to his plan but I know the Nkosi family won't take this matter lying down. If anything, I hope Nomalanga doesn't attempt to take my life again. I retire to the kitchen and finally sit down to eat. I haven't realized how hungry I actually was with all the stress and anxiety I had today. The kitchen falls silent and as I look up to see why, I find the women already looking at me. Worry fills their eyes as I look at each and everyone of them. "Have you eaten anything today?" Mrs Cebekhulu asks. Zotha glares at me, her stern look reminding me of the two bites of toast I ate earlier on then the porridge I couldn't keep down because of my nerves. I look at my meal and hesitantly shake my head.

"She was too nervous to eat

" Zotha says. I would like to believe the pregnancy heightens my senses and nerves too. I cant seem to stomach anything when I'm nervous and stressed. "Stress is not good for you and the baby. We don't want you to be hospitalized again." Mom expresses, placing her hand on top of mine. She has not once hidden her worry for me but I didn't expect her to express it. She has barely spoken to me since I told her about Mafu and I. As if she can see the conflict in my head, she continues. "I don't care what you did to whom with who, you are still my daughter. I care about you and would never neglect you." I smile at her words and nod.

"Please don't tell Mafu, he'll stress over it which will cause me to stress along with him." Mrs Cebekhulu laughs gently at my words, somewhat amused. "Don't worry, we won't. I know how

he can fuss over you, I've seen it first hand.” She must be talking about when they came to visit me at the hospital. After leaving us for a while, Mafu came back and asked everyone to leave so I can eat and get some rest. They refused, saying they'd leave after I have eaten but then I couldn't really eat anything at the time. So Mafu fed me until there was not even a grain left and tucked me in. He kept on asking if I was not in any pain or if I wanted to vomit. The family left soon after but Mafu insisted on staying behind and we shared the small bed. “You know, I have never seen Mafu so smitten. When he first brought Nomalanga home, he was in love but with you, its nothing I have ever seen before.” Its not her first time saying something like this. I would also like to believe Mafu loves me more than anything or anyone. Because I do, and I don't want to love someone more than they love me. Its easier for them to betray you because they know you will always be there for them, and that you will always welcome them with wide arms. “And I see why Mafu is attracted to you. You have a very peaceful aura surrounding you.” At her words, we continue eating and chatting up a storm until we are done. Zotha and I offer to do the dishes while the mothers continue their own chat while drinking tea.

Later on in the evening, we all move outside where we all sit around a born fire. The elders are telling stories about when they fell in love with their partners. I am suddenly filled with joy and peace as jokes are passed around every now and then. The neighbours must be surprised about the laughter that has went on all day long. And when the sun finally sets and stars fill the night sky, we all bid each other goodnight and retreat to our

designated bedrooms. I am sharing a room with Zotha, which everyone saw was best fit because they don't want me to be alone incase I start feeling unwell. I can't share a room with Mafu because we are not married and that will just anger my family even more.

The bed is spacious enough for Zotha and I, pecks of being wealthy enough to buy expensive beds. As I struggle to fall asleep, I listen to the dead of the night. The house is incredibly quiet and I can hear dogs barking into the night. Zotha's light snores fill the room, telling me that she is in deep slumber. I sigh as I toss and face the other side. Its almost midnight when my cellphone vibrates from beneath my pillow. A text message from Mafu has me shooting up from the bed in pure ecstasy. "Meet me in the garage." The text reads. I smile as I slowly sneak out of the bed, slipping my robe on and sliding my slippers on. I look back to check if Zotha is still asleep before closing the door behind me. My heart is thumping hard in my chest as I make my way down the grand staircase, rushing to finally be alone with Mafu. I could barely talk to him all day long.

I find him already waiting in his car, a smug look on his face. Slipping inside the car, I pull him into a quick and tight hug, wanting to feel him close. "I missed you so much," I express, pulling away from him. He kisses my forehead as he murmurs. "I missed you too, baby. Lets get out of here before we are caught."

I didn't expect Mafu to take us to my apartment when we left his home. He however seems to have everything figured out as he even has the keys. He practically drags me out of the car and quickly locks it. His hand engulfs mine as he pulls me towards the elevator. I suddenly feel underdressed, even though there is no one but him around to see me in my sleepwear. As soon as the elevator doors close, Mafu hoists me up, my legs wrapping around his waist. Wrapping my arms around his neck, I lower my lips onto his and they feel soft yet cold. He is quick to kiss me back, taking over. His kiss is hard and desperate, as if he can never get enough of me.

I melt and completely surrender myself to him. I hold him tighter, wanting to feel all of him as I start to feel hot and flustered. I can barely hold it together when the elevator doors slide open. Mafu walks us to my apartment, quickly unlocking the door and locking it once we're in. "Mafu," I whimper when I feel his lips on the crook of my neck, sucking hard on my soft spot. I am intoxicated by both his heavenly scent and the pleasure he is giving me. "I missed you so much, I couldn't sleep thinking about you all night long," he admits, placing me on top of the kitchen island. His eyes are hooded with lust as he pulls his tshirt over his head and throws it on the floor.

I can barely wait for him to finish undressing before I start undressing myself. I pull my panties off then lift my nightdress up. Mafu pulls me in for another intoxicating kiss while he

strokes himself. I can feel him on my entrance, slightly pushing his shaft in before pulling out completely. I pull back from the kiss and whimper. "Mafu please..." I need to feel him, all of him. He smiles and pulls me back into the kiss again. His hands grip my waist tight as he sinks himself into me. His thrusts start off slow and awfully torturous. I move restlessly, grinding my own hips against his in an attempt to feel more pleasure. I can't help the series of moans that leave my lips as I cling onto him helplessly.

Mafu curses as he increases his pace, his thrusts growing more merciless and deeper. I moan out his name as a familiar itch settles in my core and I absentmindedly clench around him. He groans loudly at that and completely pulls out. "Why did you stop?" I ask him, desperate to have him fill me up. "I don't want to come so soon." With his words, he soars back inside me, resuming his powerful thrusts while devouring my lips. I roll my hips and curl my toes as I tip over the edge and for a moment, all I see are stars. I throw my head back and clench hard around his cock when my climax hits me hard.

Mafu's cock starts twitching inside me and his thrusts lose their power as he releases rope after rope of cum. He slowly pulls out, taking a deep breath before he carries me from the island to the bedroom. He gently places me on top of the bed, kissing my forehead before he disappears into the bathroom. "Are you okay?" I nod vigorously, my eyes locking with his. "We have to go back before they realize we are gone, baby." I am sure someone somehow heard when we left. Maybe someone

wouldn't sleep, just like us. Zotha could have awakened after I left and noticed I was gone.

Mafu carries me in his arms to the bathroom, where he has prepared a warm bath for us. The shea butter scent from my bath bombs lingers in the air, instantly calming me down. The water tingles on my skin as Mafu carefully puts me inside the tub. He then gets in behind me after leaving the towels to warm up on the racks. He reaches for the loofer and gently scrubs my wet skin with it. "We have to tell Mrs Davis that the wedding is canceled." Mafu kisses my shoulder and wraps his arms around my waist. "We'll tell her tomorrow then." I already know the outcome of that. I am going to lose my job which is something I never thought would happen so soon in my life and not for the reason that I fraternized with my client.

"I know what you are thinking of but you don't need to work there anyway." Mafu says gently, careful not to anger me. He has been watching his words a lot lately or rather, how he delivers them. I have been on edge, biting his head off whenever he comes on too strong. I am not sure if the pregnancy is to blame yet again or the drama surrounding our relationship. "You know I can help you start your business. I owe you that much at least." I have considered starting my own business, but I don't want Mafu's help with it. I don't want him to inject money into my business and then when we fall apart, he reminds me of all he has done for me. Or better yet, he manages to snatch the business away from me.

“I know what you are worried about and I can assure you that nothing of that sort will happen. I helped Nomalanga start her spa and salon and I won't ever take that from her. You can start any business that you want, all I will do is inject money and that's it.” As tempting as his offer is, I cannot do that to myself. All I have ever wanted was to be independent and now that I am, my independence might be snatched right from my grasp. “No one expects you to do everything yourself, baby. Let me help you with this.” I turn my head to look at him, a small smile on his face while his eyes are pleading with me. “How do you always know what I'm thinking of?” I smile softly, genuinely interested in his ability to sneak inside my mind.

His small smile turns into a coy one and the mood immediately changes. “Well, I find you incredibly easy to read.” I roll my eyes and look away from him. I lean back, laying my head on his chest and close my eyes. Mafu is the only escape I'll ever have. No matter how bad things get between us, I will always see him as my sanctuary, because that is one other ability he has and doesn't know of. When the water cools down, we decide its time to leave before we are caught- if we aren't already.

On our way back, Mafu stops to get me hot wings- which we end up sharing after I told him to buy some for himself. Mafu stops at the driveway as soon as we get to his house and bids me goodnight. I try by all means to sneak back inside the house while he parks the car in the garage. I sigh heavily as I finally make it to my designated room without being caught. “You two sure are sneaky,” Zotha's voice resounds in the midst of the

dark room. I flick the lights on and find her sitting upright, her back pressed against the headboard. “We needed a moment alone,” I say, trying to ignore the heat rising up my neck at the thought of the real reason we needed a moment.

“Trying for baby number two already?” I grab my pillow and playfully hit her with it. “Why else would you need to be alone, away from this huge house?” She continues interrogating me. I decide to ignore her, shrugging my robe off before slipping in right next to her. If anyone told me this would be me right now, I would have laughed so hard at their face. My phone buzzes from the nightstand. I did not expect to receive a text from Mafu, reminding me of how much he loves me. I giggle at his silly text which earns me an irritated huff from Zotha. “Please don't tell me you two are sexting.” She folds her arms, waiting for my response. “How did you know?” I wink at her but she doesn't seem to catch the meaning of the wink. “Never sharing a bed with someone's who's taken ever again,” she mumbles inaudibly, covering herself with the blanket.

Next chapters will be posted soon.....

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