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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nyathuko : Wake up.

(He kisses my stomach. When it comes to procreation my husband takes the cup. I wonder what his sperm are made of. We have 4 kids now. Zanokuhle, Ndlelenhle, Zibusiso and Zothani who are twins. Number 5 is on the way.)

Me : Nana ngilele, stop it.

I giggle.

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami, I was saying good morning to my baby.

Me : It's okay, baby.

(I play with his beard. 10 years later, he is still the same Nyathuko you know with no single grey hair. The same

Nyathuko who drives a red car. He is turning 40 in a few months. The bald is there, that's the only sign that he is old but because he is clever he went for chiskop. He still makes my heart go drr!!)

Nyathuko : What are you going to eat?

Me : I don't know. Wena uzodlani?

Nyathuko : Ngingena late mina.

Me : Really?

Nyathuko : Yeah, I'll take you to work.

Me : And the kids?

Nyathuko : Zano will drop them off.

(He kisses me. I wrap my leg around him)

Me : Nami ngizongena late

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Are you serious?

Me : Yeah, Nana. I want to stay with you.

Nyathuko : And do what? Mhmmm, baby?

(He sucks my lower lip)

Me : And make more babies.

We both burst into laughter.

Nyathuko : Mapholoba is going to kill me.

Me : He won't.

Nyathuko : Ngeke?

(He kisses my neck. I moan. His phone vibrates. I see his hand going under the pillow and the phone stops vibrating. I unwrap my leg and stop moaning. He continued to kiss my neck. He stops and looks at me)

Nyathuko : Sekwenzenjani?

Me : Ngani?

Nyathuko : Hawu Sthah wangibandela nje manje.

Me : I'm not. Suka Nyathuko ngivuke.

Nyathuko : Aibo sekwenzekeni?

Me : Are you asking me what happened?

Nyathuko : Ngibuze bani Maka Nasisipho?

Me : Ey please. Move away from me, I want to get up.

Nyathuko : No I'm not going to move away from you.  
Uzongitshela ukuthi ngenzeni.

(His phone vibrates again. I quickly reach for it before he does.)

Me : Thandeka? Seku Thandeka futhi manje?

Nyathuko : Sthah...

Me : Suka!!

(He gets up.)

Me : Akuseyena ke manje u Ashton seku Thandeka? Ngaze ngavelelwa.

Nyathuko : It's not what you think, sthandwa sami.

Me : Oh really? Then what is it? Yini le Thukeh?

(I want to strangle him.)

Nyathuko : Ay Sthah nawe uyawuthanda umsindo.

Me : Oh is this about me now?

Nyathuko : It is sthandwa sami. Uhlale unake ifoni yami njalo.

Njalo

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njalo into eyodwa.

(He says in a calm tone as usual)

Me : Oh you don't want me to question you about your incoming calls. Is that so?

Nyathuko : That's not what I'm saying.

Me : Uthini pho?!

(I yell and throw away the duvet)

Nyathuko : Weeh ayke thetha wedwa.

(He fixes the pillow and pulls the duvet. He covers his head. I pull it off)

Me : Why is Thandeka calling you?



Nyathuko : She is getting married.

Me : And how does that involve you? Is she inviting you to her wedding?

Nyathuko : What? No. You know ukuthi sashonelwa izingane mina naye. So kunezinto ezenzekayo empilweni yakhe that we need to fix.

Me : Izingane owaziphika!

Nyathuko : Ah! Ayke.

Me : What needs to be fixed?

Nyathuko : Hawu Sthah. The cleansing. Kumele mina ngigeze ngiphinde ngilande izingane lapha ka Mhlongo ngizifake edlozini lakwaZondi.

(I sigh.)

Me : Will it ever stop kodwa? Ikhona kodwa into eyoke ikuhlukanise with your ex girlfriends? Labo gogo abama ex akho?

Nyathuko : Ay Ay nango ke.

Me : Nango ke ini Thukeh. You are old now! Amasende aluhlaza, usungaba umkhulu noma inini but you are still chasing skirts! Ukhula nini kanti wena Nyathuko?

(He keeps quiet. I get out of bed.)

Me : Kulungile Bhambatha omkhulu. Yenze lento yakho. Ngesingisi bathi continue. Qhubeka, myeni wami.

(I open the curtains and head into the shower. I'm going to work. I'm not going to stay with a hypocrite.)

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(He is dropping me off at my workplace. You are looking at the new CEO of Auto Movers. Yes, that's me.)

(I didn't want him to bring me to work but when I found him in our bedroom looking all smashing. I said "wuuu! Uh-huh that's my man and he is going to take me to work" I love this bastard. I love him with every fiber of my being but he's an asshole. I quickly reach for the door before he gets out of the car and gets the door for me. He sighs. Good, I've bursted his whoring bubble. I'm outside the car now, fixing my bags)

Nyathuko : Sthah?

Me : Ey, Thukeh, please bandla.

Nyathuko : Icathulo zakho nesikhaf'tini

Me : Oh, thanks. Ngicela ungivezela.

(I open the door. He shakes his head like he is judging me or something. He gets out of the car and opens the back seat door. He takes out my slippers and my food container that has my fruit salad. I don't have an appetite, So I'll depend on it for the day. He insisted that I take my slippers with me to work because my office is cold. He gives me my things and tries to kiss me.)

Me : Please don't. Ngiyacela

(He presses his lips together. He still does that a lot. Ndlelenhle does it too)

Nyathuko : Okay. I'll see you later

Me : Yah

Nyathuko : I love you, Sthabile.

Me : You have a funny way of showing it sometimes.

(I say and walk away. I leave him leaning against his car. My phone rings while I'm waiting for the elevator to open. I don't know why he is calling me.)

Me : Yebo, Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : Why ungakuphethe ukudla?

(Jesus! This man.)

Me : I'm not hungry.

(He exhales deeply)

Nyathuko : Okay.

(He ends the call first. I walk out of the elevator and greet everyone in the reception. I get inside my office and put on my

slippers. I throw my heels under my desk and pull my chair. I sit down and sigh. My bladder is a bit heavy today)

Me : Okay. Let's see.

(I open my laptop. I sent out the planner of the day to our drivers. My schedule for the day is not busy. If my husband wasn't an asshole then I'll be home with him. I lean back on my chair and take my cell phone. I go through Whatsapp statuses. Zanokuhle posted a video of his sisters in his car. Speaking of Zanokuhle. He is a sangoma now. I never saw it coming but Nyathuko did. I send Zanokuhle a whatsapp message)

Your father said he would take them to school? : Me.

I need to buy a few things. I'll drop them off. Baba is still not here futhi, bazoba late. : Zanokuhle

Usahamba efeba emgaqweni : Me

(He replies with two emojis that are rolling eyes)

Beshiye ama jacket emotweni ngoba kuyashisa : Me

Okay : Zanokuhle.

Ungikhiphele izingubo from the washing machine : Me

(He blue ticks me. I knew he would. A message from Nyathuko pops up.)

I'll bring your lunch at 12h00. Tell me if you need anything else : Him.

Please don't come : Me.

(He replies with a thumb up emoji. Now I hate him even more)

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(I open my fruit salad. Nyathuko can go to hell with his lunch. I'm still enjoying the fruit salad when my phone rings. I close the container and take my cell phone.)

Me : 031.... Who could it be?... Hello?

"Hi, am I speaking to Nyathuko's wife?"

(My stomach turns. Something bad has happened to my husband. I stand up)

Me : Where is my husband? Who are you? What happened to Nyathuko?

"Sthabile ukhuluma no Thandeka"

(I sigh and sit back down. I wonder what this Magogo wants from me. Sthabile, calm down.)



Me : Hi

Thandeka : Can we talk?

Me : About what?

Thandeka : Kunento ekufanele sikhulume ngayo. Can we meet up for breakfast?

Me : No.

(She sighs)

Thandeka : Sthabile please. Sesikhulile manje. Can we put the past behind us?

Me : Can you ever be put behind Thandeka?

Thandeka : I apologized for everything I did.

Me : Yet you are still crowding my space!!! (sigh) What do you want?

Thandeka : I'm getting married.

(About damn time)

Thandeka : Kunezinto okufanele ngizilungise before I get married. Njengoba wazi ukuthi nginamawele ashona no Thukeh so kunezinto esidinga ukuthi sizenze for our babies.

Me : That was years ago. Manje lezinkinga eziqhamuka manje zisukaphi?

Thandeka : I don't know but izingane zifuna ukuya kubo. I told Nyathuko about it, wangicela ukuthi ngikhulume nawe kuqala before we do anything. Bekufanele ngikufonele last week but I forgot. He told me ukuthi sekukhona ukungaboni ngaso linye between the two of you ngenxa yayo lento.

Me : Is that what he told you?

Thandeka : Imina engibe nephutha. Bekufanele ngikhulume nawe kuqala njengoba eshilo u Thukeh kodwa iqiniso ukuthi nami uwuBaba wezingane zami and we have to do this. Ngiyathembisa ke kodwa ukuthi emuva kwayo yonke lento I'll stay away. Angiqondile ukudala izinkinga emshadweni wakho.

Me : But you are. Ungene ngekhandanda emshadweni wami and I hate it.

Thandeka : u Thukeh usewubaba wezingane zami noma zingasekho but it's fine. Asenze izinto ngendlela yakho nezo accommodater ama feelings akho. Ngimtshelile no Thukeh ukuthi I'm willing to do anything that will make you happy but as long as izokwenziwa yonke lento. I want my babies to rest in peace njengazo zonke izingane.

(Njengazo zonke izingane? She is including my kids now. My knees are already shaking.)

Me : You know what would make me happy?

Thandeka : I don't know and that's why I....

Me : Ukuthi wena uhlukane no myeni wami phansi.

(I get up)

Me : Izingane zakho lezi EZAFA! are not the problem and you know it. I'll tell you ukuthi yini inkinga. Inkinga uwena, you want the whole world to know ukuthi wake wamithiswa u Nyathuko bandla.

Thandeka : Sthabile....

Me : Mhlampe uNkulunkulu wasiza mina ngokuthi zife nalezozingane ngoba angabe angikutholi ukuphumula uwena. Angabe uyilomama wengane oyisiqalekiso emhlabeni.

Thandeka : That is.....

Me : I don't know what your problem is ngoba wena wagezwa kwaZondi. What more do you want? Ufuna u Thukeh ekushade?

Thandeka : No!

Me : Uma kukuthi lezingane zakho EZAFA zikunika inkinga then fine. Miningi kabi imizi yakwa Zondi la emhlabeni, hamba uye noma ikumuphi umuzi wakwaZondi and ask them to do the ritual for your kids.

Thandeka : Ngikwenze kanjani lokho ube ukhona umuzi waka Nyathuko e Ndwedwe naye u Nyathuko esaphila?

Me : Stay away from my husband, Thandeka Mhlongo.

(I end the call and throw my phone on my desk. I'm angry. My hands are shaking. I need water but I can't walk. My head is spinning. Anger is not good for my heart. I sit down and try to calm myself down. Someone is knocking.)

Me : Not now. Please, not now.

(I say with my hands covering my face.)

"Mrs Zondi, I'm sorry to interrupt"

(That's Portia, our receptionist. I uncover my face)

Me : Portia, I thought our meeting was at noon.

Portia : No, no ma'am. I'm not here for our meeting. Someone is here to see you.

Me : And who is that?

(She opens the door a bit wide)

Portia : Sir, you may come in.

(I laugh and push back my chair)

Me : Wow! Magic Maphumulo.

(He laughs. I stand up and welcome him in)

Magic : My! My! My! Sthabile is this you?

(He kisses the back of my hand)

Magic : You look stunning. Wenza ngani?

(I laugh)

Me : Ungitshela ukuthi ubekwa yini la.

(We both laugh)

Me : Portia, thank you. I'll take it from here.

Portia : Okay ma'am.

( She walks out)

Me : Magic, I can't believe you are here. Look at you! Please, please take a seat.

(He sits down. This man and I were battling over this CEO position. I got the position and after that he resigned and moved to Johannesburg)

Magic : Thanks. I'm actually heading back to Joburg tomorrow so I thought why not come here and see this pretty face before I leave?

(I smile)



Magic : Nothing much has changed here, huh?

(He is looking around)

Me : Noo! We are moving to Umhlanga Ridge so...

Magic : Oh, I saw on the website. So it's true?

Me : It is. Sithole amahhovisi amasha. Angcono kakhulu ukunalawa

Magic : I saw the pictures. Fancy, huh? Kusho ukuthi lenkampani isibhukuda emalini.

(I laugh)

Me : Not exactly. You know, sales declined but we've signed a couple of news deals. Unyawo lonwabu kodwa kuyalunga, Zikode.

(Why is he looking at me like that?)

Magic : I'm proud of you. Look, why don't I take you out for breakfast so that we could catch up?

Me : Ummm, I don't know. Usuku lwami luthanda ukumpintsheka nje namhlanje.

Magic : Come on Sthabile. I'm leaving tomorrow.

Me : You know what? Fine. Let's go.

Magic : Yes!

(I change shoes)

Me : Khona uzongitshela ukuthi ubekwa yini la eKZN.

Magic : I have all day.

(I laugh and pick up my office phone. I dial)

Me : Portia, please cancel all my meetings for this morning. I'm going out for a couple of hours.

Portia : No problem ma'am

(I put the phone down and take my handbag.)

Magic : Shall we?

Me : Of course.

(He takes my hand and helps me up)

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(We went to a nearest restaurant)

Magic : The business must be really booming. You are glowing.

(I giggle)

Me : My glow comes with a lot of things, Magic.

Magic : I see. And Musa? How is he doing in England?

Me : Pretty well actually. They started a family business. A restaurant. Uthi kuhamba kahle kakhulu.

Magic : That's great.

Me : It is.

(He leans back and crosses his thin legs.)

Magic : How are you, Mapholoba?

(What? He is only asking me that now)

Magic : Be honest, how are you really holding up?

(I smile)

Me : I'm holding up just fine.

Magic : Don't lie to me.

Me : I'm not lying. Ngi right ngempela.

Magic : But that's not what I saw when I walked into your office earlier. You were crying.

(My eyebrows furrow. When was I crying?)

Me : I wasn't crying.

Magic : How is your husband?

Me : My husband is fine!

(I snap)

Me : Can we not talk about my husband?

(He smiles)

Magic : Of course but I still need to tell you that umshado wawungasho ukuphela kwempilo yakho. Ungahlali emshadweni ongajabulile kuwona ngoba usaba ihlazo. Most people are stuck in toxic relationships and unhappy marriages ngoba nje besaba ukuba bodwa . There's nothing wrong with being alone.

Me : Magic, I don't know what you heard but you got it all wrong. Ngijabulile mina emshadweni wami.

(I lift up my cup of tea and take a sip)

Magic : Okay, okay fine. I'll take that. But I want you to know that I'm here for you. Whenever you want to talk, I'm one call away.

(Time was ridiculously moving and before I knew it we were having lunch together and later we went to a bar. He is drinking I'm not. I searched for my phone inside my bag.)

Me : Dammit!

Magic : What's wrong?

Me : I left my phone in my office.

Magic : Sizodlula sithathe.

Me : No, don't worry about it.

Magic : When are we going to do this again?

Me : We won't do it again. Magic, ngiwumfazi oshadile. Lokhu engikwenzayo akufanele angabe ngiyakwenza. Kumosha isithunzi somyeni wami.

(His eyes drops)

Me : Futhi sekufanele ngihambe. Seku late.

Magic : I'll drop you off. My friend won't mind.

(He is using his friend's car)

Me : No, I'll request Uber. Ungazikhathazi ngami



(I get off from the chair.)

Magic : Is everything okay?

Me : Yes, I just want to go home and rest. I'm tired.

Magic : Let me request a ride for you.

Me : Thanks.

Magic : Are you sure you are okay?

(I shake my head. Wait, I have tears in my eyes. Magic hugs me)

Magic : Let's go outside and get some fresh air.

(We walk out with him holding my hand.)

Magic : Sthabile, what's wrong? Why are you crying?

Me : Nothing, I want to go home to my husband.

Magic : You know that's not what you want.

Me : You don't know what I want. I said I want to go to my husband! Ngiyacela.

Magic : Do you cry everytime you want to go to your husband?

(My Uber arrives. Thank God.)

Magic : Sthabile, wait.

Me : Awuhlukane nami, please.

(I left. Uber took me home. Nyathuko is sitting in the living room with our kids. He is busy combing Zothani's hair. He's shirtless. I swallow. Stay still my beating vagina. They are watching Skeem Saam. That's how late I am. The kids scream for me)

Me : Sanibonani

(Nyathuko is not even looking at me.)

Zibusiso : Mah, sesigezile. Ubhuti uthe sigeze

Me : Wow that's nice

(I say this while looking at Nyathuko. I can't tell whether he is angry or not. His face is unpredictable)

Me : Nidlile?

Zothani : Daddy cooked, mommy.

Me : Oh, siyabonga. Ngisayogeza.

(I leave them and go upstairs. I take off my heels and squeeze my toes. Oh, my phone is here. This means Nyathuko went to Auto Movers. I suddenly feel his presence. He is standing behind me. I could also smell his cologne, yes Brut. I told you that he is still the same old Nyathuko)

Nyathuko : Sthabile?

(I close my eyes)

Me : Yes?

Nyathuko : Awungibuke.

(Shwele! I turn around. He is leaning against the door with his tucked in his track pant pockets. Nondaba is all up. There's a huge tent. Wait, why am I looking at his dick?)

Nyathuko : Uphumaphi?

Me : What?

(He takes out one hand and holds his dick with it. I clear my throat.)

Nyathuko : Uphumaphi?

(I blink a couple of times)

Me : Ngiphuma emsebenzini.

Nyathuko : Sondela la.

Me : Angizwanga?

Nyathuko : Sondela.

Me : No, I'm fine here.

(He is coming closer. He stands in front of me)

Me : Yini hawu

Nyathuko : Unuka ugwayi Sthah.

(Dammit! I was at the bar and they were smoking.)

Me : Ay ungangiqali! Please kabi Thukeh

Nyathuko : Uphumaphi, Sthabile?

(His face changes. He is angry now)

Me : Uhlanganaphi Thukeh? Uhlanganaphi?

Nyathuko : Bengisemsebenzini wakho kusukela ngo 12h00 kwaze kwashaya u 16h00 ungekho kuthiwa uhambe nenye indoda.

Me : Did they tell you that your girlfriend called me? Ngoba phela bakutshela yonke into.

Nyathuko : I don't have a girlfriend, I have a wife, Sthabile futhi angazi ukhuluma ngani.

Me : You know exactly what I'm talking about!! Thandeka called me. Unike intombi yakho inamba yami ukuthi ingifonele.

Nyathuko : Because you were angry. Bengifuna ubone ukuthi ayikho into engihlanganisa no Thandeka. She is not my girlfriend.

Me : Well guess what? Ukubize ngoBaba wezingane zakhe! Ileyo kuphela into abengifuqa ngayo la emadlebeni ami.

Nyathuko : Sthah, please calm down. Angifuni ustresse ingane yethu sthandwa sami.

Me : That's all you care about! Into oyaziyo ukugcwalisa izingane umhlaba wonke lo. Ipipi lakho ke lona ay ave lisebenza, jealous down.

Nyathuko : How many times do I have to apologize ngezingane engaba nazo no Thandeka? Izingane esaba nazo years ago, before you were even in the picture.

Me : I don't care!!!!

(I scream.)

Nyathuko : Is that why uhambe namanye amadoda ebusuku ukhulelwe ingane yami because you don't care?

Me : Yes.



Nyathuko : Sthabile what is your problem?

Me : You are my problem, Nyathuko!

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami, ngiyaxolisa. Can we sit down and talk? Ngiyazama Sthah, ngiyazama ukukukhombisa ukuthi angiseyena lomuntu enganguyena kudala but awuboni, Maka Zanokuhle.

Me : Usewuyena Nyathuko! Namanje usafeba!

Nyathuko : No!

Me : Vele! What else did you tell your girlfriend?

Nyathuko : Aibo Sthabile, what's wrong with you?

Me : Angisakufuni

(He is going to faint.)

Nyathuko : Ini?

Me : I don't love you anymore. Sekuphele lona.

Nyathuko : You don't mean that.

Me : I do! Angisakufuni Nyathuko!!

Nyathuko : Umsangano loyo. Ey! Ey! Lalela, stop stressing ingane yami ngemisangano yakho. Uphuzil....

Me : It's not your baby.

Nyathuko : Sthabile uthini?

Me : Akuyona ingane yakho le, now leave. Get out!!

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( He is busy changing a pillowcase. The guest room that was sleeping Ndlalifa and Makhosazana is now available but he won't be sleeping there because no one changed the bedding and Nyathuko is too for that. Tonight he'll be sleeping on a couch. I'm tired of this man. This has been going on for too long. We spoke about getting a divorce after I found out that he was still sleeping with Ashton. We agreed to it but he said we should wait until Zanokuhle came back from the initiation school. Our marriage has been suffering all this time but I tried to act strong for my kids. I'm done now. This is the only way.)

(Ndlelenhle can sense that something is not right. He is following his father all around.)

Ndlelenhle : Baba?

Nyathuko : Yah, mfan'wam.

Ndlelenhle : Are we going to visit Gogo e Mzinyathi?

Nyathuko : Yeah.

Ndlelenhle : Is mommy going to come with us?

Nyathuko : Sizohamba no Zothani no Zibusiso

(Like I give a fuck)

Ndlelenhle : What about mommy?

Nyathuko : Ndlela, not now, my boy. Baba is not okay, alright?

Ndlelenhle : When are you going to be okay?

Nyathuko : Take this pillow.

(Ndlelenhle takes the pillow and places it next to me)

Ndlelenhle : This is your side and that is mommy's side.

Nyathuko : No, take it downstairs.

Ndlelenhle : Why? You want to sleep alone?

Nyathuko : No, boy. Ngifuna ukubuka ibhola. Hambisa umcamelo ezansi

Ndlelenhle : Uzobuka ezansi?

Nyathuko : Yes

Ndlelenhle : Okay.

(He takes the pillow and gets out of bed)

Ndlelenhle : Please open the door for me.

Nyathuko : Sebelele osisi bakho?

Ndlelenhle : Mhmm-Mhmmm

Nyathuko : Go, ungawi.

Ndlelenhle : I won't.

(The door closes. There's silence.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile?

(He better not)

Nyathuko : Maka Sandisokuhle ngiyazi awulele, ngicela uvuke.

Me : No, what do you want?

Nyathuko : Iqiniso

Me : What truth? Yini le ofuna ukuyizwa?

Nyathuko : Why are you lying about the baby? Sobabili siyazi ukuthi ingane yami le oyikhulelwe.

(I sit up)

Me : Akuyona ingane yakho.

Nyathuko : Since when?

Me : Yini? Ufuna ukugqoka ibhantshi ngenkani and raise another man's baby?

(He is staring at me)

Me : I'm asking.

Nyathuko : Who is the father? Uqale nini wena ukujola?

Me : That's none of your business. Usuyizwile angithi into obufuna ukuyizwa? Yes, while you were cheating on me, uhamba la ungabuyi nami I was cheating. Ubufuna ngenzeni? Sit here and warm the bed for you? No. I was cheating on you! Now get the hell out!!

(He climbs on the bed and tighten his hand around my neck)

Me : Go ahead! Ngishaye! Ngishaye njengalezifebe zakho ohlale uzibhaxabula! Do it!

(He shakes his head and removes his hand. He jumps out of bed and heads out. I follow him)

Me : Phuma! Phuma la!

(He walks out)



Me : Ucabanga ukuthi uwena wedwa okwazi ukufebe? Ay fuck

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Thukeh!

(I slam the door. Tears rain down my face. God knows I'm tired.)

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(It's been 3 weeks already. Nyathuko has moved out. Today he is coming to fetch the rest of his clothes.)

(My phone rings. It's my mother. I take a deep breath and sit down)

Me : Sawubona Mah

MaKheswa : Sthabile, what's going on?

(There's panic in her voice. She knows about the divorce)

Me : Mah, please calm down.

MaKheswa : How can I calm down when Ndlelenhle's father showed up here ezintathakusa?

Me : Oh, kusukela nini yena engasasabi ukungena lapho ekhaya?

MaKheswa : Sthabile? Sthabile akuwona umdlalo lo. Do you know what Zondi told us? Uthi uqomile mntanami. Uthi wena umithi umithiswe ishende. Please tell me it's not true. Ngiyacela Fuze.

Me : Usegijime weza lapho Kwa-Mashu? Kanti kuyazwela kuyena?

MaKheswa : Sthabile!!

Me : Cha Mah. I'm not going to apologize. Akekho noyedwa ongayazi impilo engiyiphiliswa u Nyathuko kulomshado. Umndeni wonke uyazi! I told you and Mapholoba about it, ngatshela umndeni wakwa Zondi ngaze ngatshela umndeni wakwa Maphalala but guess what? Akekho noyedwa owake waphakamisa ucingo wafonela u Nyathuko. No one stood up for me, Mah! Ngosuku lomlindelo ka Khulu u Nyathuko waxabana nomndeni wakhe waduba wahamba waze wabuya ngakusasa, ngasala mina nezingane zakhe. Ubani owake wahlala naye phansi wamubuza ukuthi ulale kuphi? No one!

MaKheswa : Isingaphezu kwamandla ami ke le. Sizodinga ukuhlala phansi sonke nomndeni wakwa Zondi silungise lento mntanami. Musani ukujabulisa izitha. Musani ukujabulisa usathane.

Me : I don't care anymore. Nisho njalo ngoba seku Nyathuko manje okhalayo. Unamalungelo yena okufeba ngoba eyindoda?

MaKheswa : Aibo, mntanami.

Me : I am tired of this nonsense!!

(I dropped the call. My hands are shaking. The door opens and the devil himself walks in. He forgot his horns in hell. He doesn't greet or anything but he goes straight and opens the closet.)

Me : What do you think you are doing?

Nyathuko : Taking my clothes.

Me : Anginendaba nalokho! Who told you to go and speak to my parents?

Nyathuko : Kufanele ngitshela ba? They are your parents, ibona ekufanele bazi ngemikhuba yakho.

Me : Imikhuba? Ufuna ukukhuluma ngemikhuba?

Nyathuko : Maka Enzelwe, please. I don't want to fight with you.

Me : Yet you are fighting with me. Uma uhamba uyokhuluma ngegami lami Kwa-Mashu ulwa nami Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa.

(He packs his clothes.)

Nyathuko : Is it worth it? Lento oyenzile is it worth it?

Me : Nyathuko, please leave.

Nyathuko : Okay. Amaphepha e divorce aselungile. Uzowathola before the end of this week.

Me : And your kids?

Nyathuko : I can take them if that's fine with you.

Me : Cha, izingane zami aziyindawo. Iyodwa kuphela into ozongisiza ngayo. Ngicela ungakhohlwa ukuthi uwuBaba.

Nyathuko : Who is the father? Ubani lo okumithisile Sthabile?

Me : We are done here. Phuma

Nyathuko : Are you sure about this? Do you really want this?

Me : Yes. This is what I want, Nyathuko. Sobabili siyazi ukuthi lomshado kade waphela. Asingamoshelani isikhathi.

Nyathuko : Alright. Take care of yourself.

Me : I will.

3

KWA-MASHU

(My parents have been asking me to come here and I finally decided to come. I arrived this afternoon and I bumped into Bheki and Zenzele. Hate is nothing compared to what I feel for those men)

Me : Uma abantu bakwa Zondi befuna izinkomo zabo banikeni. Banikeni Baba!!

MaKheswa : Sthabile usakhuluma noBaba wakho. Sit down and show some respect.

Me : Ngiyaxolisa ukuthi nje ngikhathele.

(I sit down)

Ngcobo : Sthabile, what happened?

Me : UBaba usho ukuthini?

Ngcobo : Washada wena. We asked if you knew what you were getting yourself into wavuma wathi uyazi. Wahamba wayoshada manje kwenzekani?

Me : Izinto ziyashintsha Mapholoba.

Ngcobo : Uvumela kanjani izinto ukuthi zishintshe usumdala kangaka?

Me : I don't understand.

Ngcobo : Umdala uma umngaka. Unezingane ezingagcwala ibhasi. Iyiphi lendoda engaqhamuka manje ithi ithanda wena naloluquqaba lwakho kwezingane?

Me : Mapholoba....



Ngcobo : Ayikho. You know what the problem is with you? Uthi ungabona indoda ikusinekela, uvele uvule imilenze, uzale.

(Ay! Ay! He is insulting me right now)

Ngcobo : Sthabile angazi ngingakubekela ngayiphi indlela engcono ozoyizwa. Kodwa amadoda ayafana. Uyabona lendoda oyithole manje yakukhohlisa yathi phuma emshadweni wakho, leyondoda ikukhohlisile.

Me : Angilindele ukuthi uqonde ubunzima ebengibhekene nabo emshadweni kodwa....

Ngcobo : Awulithonga wena ithuba lokwazi ukuthi abafana bayafana. Everything was served to you on a silver platter. Kwathi mekushona umfana wakwa Dlomo wathola indoda ekukhombise uthando. Wakuzonda lokho, wazonda ukuthi unendoda ekuthandayo.

Me : That's not what I did.

Ngcobo : Uyabona lendlela ozikhethele yona manje iyahlaba mntanami. What hurts me the most ukuthi mina no nyoko sizofa noma inini. Impilo yakho ibuthakathaka. You had a heart operation

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ngiyathemba uyakwazi lokho ukuthi kuchazani. You are going to die alone in this house. Uzofa ungenamuntu. Mina no nyoko siyobe sesilele ngomqolo.

(He stands up and takes his knobkerrie. He whistles on his way out. I look at my mother)

Me : Why engizonda kangaka?

MaKheswa : He doesn't hate you. He is telling you what you need to hear.

Me : Uyangizonda u Mapholoba. Zonke izinqumo engizenzayo uhlale elwisana nazo.

MaKheswa : He is your father. Uyakwazi okukulungele.

Me : He doesn't.

MaKheswa : Uwubulele mntanami umshado wakho. Uyabona manje ushayelegele isipikili sokugcina.

(Tears burn in my eyes)

Me : I wasn't happy.

MaKheswa : You will never be happy. Uthando lunezihibe. Uyabona la ubheke khona manje kunentaba yezinkinga. Uthando alukaze lwabalula futhi alusoze lwabalula. All those people who look happy are people abakwazi ukufihla amahlazo abo. Abantu abangavumeli izinkinga ezincane zingene othandweni labo. Ngiguge ngingaka namhlanje umshado wami noyihlo awukaze wabalula but ngoba ngayazi indawo yami njengomfazi ingakho ngingakaze ngabuya emendweni.

Me : Mah...

MaKheswa : It's true. That's what you are mntanami. Ungumabuya emendweni and kuzofanele mina njengonyoko ngikufundise lelogama uze ulijwayele because that's what people will call you. Ngisho nalendoda ekumithisile kuzothi sekubheda othandweni lenu ikubize ngalo lelogama. Ngoba Sthabile mntanami awunalo ikhanda and I know very well ukuthi ayikho indoda ezomelana nawe njengoba u Zondi ebekwazi ukumelana nawe. You lost a good man.

Me : He cheated on me. Nyathuko cheated on me over and over again.

MaKheswa : Uke wazibuza ukuthi yingoba kwenzenjani?

Me : It's who he is, Mah. u Nyathuko udlala inkanuko.

MaKheswa : Wathola umfazi ongenalo futhi ikhanda, umfazi owenze izinto zaba worse. I thought I did better mntanami. I thought you learned something la kimi kodwa ngihlulekile. I failed as a mother.

Me : You didn't fail mama.

MaKheswa : I did.

Me : I've never cheated on Nyathuko. Bengilokhu ngisibambile isimilo sami njalo nje.

MaKheswa : Kodwa sagcina sikuthintile isandla sika sathane. Wathatha iblukwe nawe wagqoka walandela umyeni wakho wenza izinto azenzayo wakhohlwa ukuthi wena uwumuntu wesimame and you fell pregnant.

Me : I didn't forget.

MaKheswa : You did, Fuze.

Me : I did not. I wanted out, Mah. This was my only way out. Ibingasekho enye indlela engingaphuma ngayo kuloyamshado.

MaKheswa : What do you mean?

Me : I lied.

MaKheswa : You did what?

Me : u Thukeh iyona kuphela indoda engibe nayo after Nkazimulo. I've never cheated.

MaKheswa : So why....

Me : He is the father. Lengane eka Nyathuko but I want nothing to do with him anymore. I'm done, Mah. Ningixolele

(I stand up)

MaKheswa : Sthabile....

(I go straight to my bedroom. I'm done talking.)

4

( Zanokuhle is here. He is bringing the kids for some reasons that I'm yet to find out.)

Zanokuhle : Uphi pho umkhulu?

MaKheswa : He went to Bridge City. Uzobuya kodwa manje.

Zanokuhle : Wee! ngeke esangifica.

(MaKheswa smiles.)

MaKheswa : Kujahwe kuphi kanti kangaka? Aw waze wamuhle mfana wami. Look at you.

(Zanokuhle laughs. He really looks handsome. Him being a sangoma is doing him extremely good. He is single and definitely not available.)

Me : Ave emuhle. Noma ebhadazela ngezinyawo nje.

(They laugh. He walks around barefooted. If you happen to bump into a very handsome sangoma that dresses up so well but still puts on an ibhayi around his shoulders and carries a small shield walking around barefooted then that will be my son.)

MaKheswa : I'm proud of you mfana ka Gogo.

Zanokuhle : Ngiyazi Gogo wami. Baphi manje la....

(His phone rings)

Zanokuhle : Eish, eish, u Baba....Bhambatha?

(He answers. I look at my mother.)

Zanokuhle : Yes, yes. Sengifikile. Ngingena emotweni nje manje ngiyabuya....Okay, I'll call you.



(He hangs up)

Zanokuhle : I need to go, ngisafuna ukudlula nala ekhaya ngibheke u Gogozi.

MaKheswa : UBaba wakho lo okade ukhuluma naye?

Zanokuhle : Yeah, yeah. Ufuna sihlangane e Gateway. He wants to buy a few things manje ufuna ngimusize. Mah, abagezile o Ndlelenhle ngibafake emotweni bengcolile. Rush hour.

(He laughs)

Me : Uyothengani no Thukeh eGateway?

Zanokuhle : I think ufuna ukuthenga izinto ze braai. Usephumile manje emsebenzini, I don't want to keep him waiting.

(My heart is already pounding but I don't know why.)

Me : Braai? What braai?

MaKheswa : Othi ngibheke laba emnyango. Zano, ungitshela mase uhamba khehla.

Zanokuhle : Okay salukwazi sami.

Me : Awuze la

(He follows me to my bedroom. I close the door. I want to hear this loud and clear)

Me : Uthi kwenzekani?

Zanokuhle : Ngani?

Me : About the braai. Ngizwa izindaba ze braai.

Zanokuhle : Hawu, Mah. Baba is having a braai. Akazenzelanga futhi wenzelwe abangani bakhe

Me : For what?

Zanokuhle : For what kanjani manje? Nami angazi ngisayakhona njengawo wonke umuntu. I think it's a house warming or something.

Me : He bought a house?

Zanokuhle : Uthenge i flat la eMhlanga. Ubungazi?

Me : Ngihlanganaphi kambe mina? Ingakho nje athi akafuni ukuphuma nalutho emshadweni wethu ingoba he knew that he has money to buy flats. Engadli ke imali lapha emafulethini ekhohlwe izingane zakhe.

Zanokuhle : Uthi you signed divorce papers.

Me : I did. SenguNgcobo manje

(He shakes his head)

Zanokuhle : Okay. Ay I'm happy for you. Sekufanele ngihambe. Sisi Thina said she was coming, I don't know if she did but ngishiye ngikhanyisile endlini.

Me : Nawe ke uya e partini?

Zanokuhle : It's not a party ey....Ngicela unginika u R200, I'll pay you back.

Me : Kuzobe kukhona bani khona lapho?

Zanokuhle : Bhut'Thalente and others.

(I take out R200 from my purse and give it to him)

Me : Bazobe behamba nabafazi babo. Wena who asked you to come?... Thatha nayi imali. I want it back Zanokuhle.

Zanokuhle : Why are you giving me with your left hand?

Me : Sorry.

(I give him with my right hand)

Zanokuhle : Thanks. No, ngibizwe uBaba mina. Ey Mah I really need to go okwangempela ke manje.

Me : Okay. Ungifonele. OFiza base Phoenix?

Zanokuhle : Yeah. Nizobuya nini nina?

Me : Sunday ntambama.

Zanokuhle : Okay. Uphi ke u Gogo manje?

Me : Check outside.

Zanokuhle : Bye

Me : Bye, boy.

(Zanokuhle walks out. I take my phone and check my whatsapp. Nyathuko's last seen is 08h33 am. My picture is still his display photo. My mother walks in and I put my phone away.)

Me : Usehambile u Zano?

MaKheswa : Yes

Me : Ziphi pho izingane zami?

MaKheswa : Bahambe naye bathi bazokwehla esitobhini  
bebuye ngeziny....webabo!

(She sits down and flinches)

MaKheswa : Ey my ankle is getting worse. Kusafanele ungirabhe  
Sthabile ngeke.

Me : Nawe awuphumuli ntombi. You are always on your feet.  
Ngeke engabi buhlungu amaqakala.

MaKheswa : Yah. Uthini u Zanokuhle? Why did he bring my  
grandchildren here?

Me : Ubizwe u Baba wakhe. Kune braai.

MaKheswa : i Braai yani manje?

Me : Hawu Mah

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yokuthi sihlukene.

(I laugh. She frowns)

MaKheswa : Ini?

Me : Divorce party. Niyazi nje ukuthi abangani baka Thukeh hate me. So they are having a braai to celebrate their friend's freedom. Angithi lelidimoni eliyimi seliphumile phela.

MaKheswa : Sthabile don't say that.

Me : But it's true. Bathi ngidonsa umngani wabo ngekhala. Mina uyedwa kuphela umngani ka Nyathuko obengena emzini wami edle, loyo u Nqabayethu. Laba abanye bagcina emnyango. Aibo no Mzet waduka phela ngikutshele.

MaKheswa : uMzet ilo wentshebe ebomvu?



Me : No, that's Ntuzuma. UMzet ilo othanda kakhulu u Zano.

MaKheswa : Ohhe! Manje ikuphi ke leyo Divorce Braai?

Me : E flatini lakhe uBaba ka Ndlela.

MaKheswa : Usene flat futhi manje?

Me : Yebo sisi. Wathi ephuma nje e Ballito uBaba wakhe wamuthengele ingqovungqovu ye Ford Ranger.

MaKheswa : Unamanga!

Me : I'm telling you. I'm sure nalo leli flat ulithengelwe uBaba wakhe. Angithi phela his heart is broken, ufetshelwe umfazi.

MaKheswa : Kodwa ke nawe wemntanami, you need to tell Ndlelenhle's father the truth before things get out of hand.

Me : Mah, please.

MaKheswa : No, ungasho njalo. Lengane uzoyifihlela abantu bakwa Zondi kuze kube inini? Ize izalwe?

Me : Sezingamane ziphume esandleni izinto mezibona. I am not going to tell Nyathuko anything. Mina abantu bakwa Zondi sebezivezile ukuthi abangifuni. Bonke ngisho nalesalukwazi sase Mzinyathi esizenza u clever.

MaKheswa : They think you cheated on their son. Sthabile ihlazo lelo.

Me : Ihlazo lami ke. Indodana yabo kade yayingifebela kodwa mina angikaze ngithengelwe ama flat nezimoto.

MaKheswa : Ubabezala wakho wakuthengela imoto zaze zambili. Ungakhulumi nje iphutha.

Me : Okusalayo lamanga engiwaqambile showed me their true colours. Angikhombisile ukuthi abantu bakwa Zondi abakaze

bangithanda. Bebethanda amandla ami nokuthi ngithanda indodana yabo nje. That's all. Amaxoki bonke lapha ngisho nabo oSthenjisiwe no Ntokozo. None of them have called me to find out ukuthi kwenzekeni kodwa mekuwu mfowabo osephutheni bebefona into engapheli. Ngikhathele shame.

(She releases a deep sigh)

MaKheswa : Ay kulungile weSthabile. Ake wenze nje ngalendlela obona ilungele wena nezingane zakho.

(She stands up)

MaKheswa : Nayi nendodana yakho ilethe izingane kodwa angiboni ngisho isikhwama esisodwa esinezingubo.

Me : What? Zanokuhle didn't bring them with their clothes?

MaKheswa : Angiziboni. Ngizoke ngibabuze kodwa.

Me : Namanje abakabuyi?

MaKheswa : No

Me : Ave ngizobashaya Mah. Ngicela ungangivimbi

MaKheswa : Come and cook. Angipheki namhlanje.

(I laugh)

Me : As long as no one is going to complain about my food.

(I follow her out)

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(After washing the dishes I also went to bed. Everyone is sleeping now besides me. I don't know if I'm stressed or if it's

this pregnancy but I'm struggling to sleep. My whatsapp is very busy. The Braai gang is posting one way. Nyathuko hasn't posted anything. My picture is still his display photo. He is online. I see Ntokozo and Sthenjisiwe are also attending the Braai. There's a video of Nyathuko that Ntokozo posted. He looks so good. He is standing next to a braai stand. He drinks water and laughs. I can't help but smile. Yes we are no longer together but the truth is, Nyathuko is still the most beautiful and most clean man I've ever come across in my life. There's another one of him smoking. He is not happy in this one. He's leaning against the door, smoking. Maybe, just maybe the divorce was a bit extreme but there's no turning back now. All papers have been signed. I don't want us to be enemies though. He is still the father of my kids. Let me greet him. I finish stealing his video and click on his name)

Hey Thukeh : Me

Maka Zothani, are you okay? : Him

Yes. Please ask Zanokuhle why he didn't pack for the kids. : Me

Azikho izingubo? : Him

No : Me

Can I call you? : Him

(I am not ready for this. I ignore him. Oh Thalente has posted a new video. I view it. Something is probably wrong with my eyes. I sit up properly and watch the video again. No, there's nothing wrong with my eyes. Thalente posted a video of Nyathuko and Ashton. She is also at Nyathuko's flat. I increase the volume. In the video Ashton is holding Nyathuko's hand. She is trying to pull him up. She is begging him to dance with her. Nyathuko is shaking his head. The stupid, ugly asshole that I gave six kids is laughing. I hate him with eyes bigger than my mother's pots. I get out of bed and scroll down to Zanokuhle's number. I send him a whatsapp message)

Zanokuhle ngicela uhambe lapho manje!!

(He is not replying. Let me call him)

Zanokuhle : Mah

Me : Isikhathi sini manje?

Zanokuhle : Mah?

Me : Mah ini? I'm asking you what time it is.

Zanokuhle : It's 01h00 am

Me : Ukephi?

Zanokuhle : Hawu, Sthabile ngino Baba. Yinindaba?

Me : Ngicela ugoduke Zanokuhle.

Zanokuhle : Why?

Me : Don't ask me nonsense. Ngicela uhambe lapho endlini ka Nyathuko. Uma kukuthi kuyakuhlula ukuya e Ballito uze la Kwa-Mashu.

Zanokuhle : Ngobani?

Me : Hey! Ngiwumawakho and I'm telling you to...

Zanokuhle : Angiseyona ingane, Sthabile. Please stop treating me like one.

Me : Uhleli nalezozifebe zama coloured ka Nyathuko lapho. Go home Zan....

Zanokuhle : No!

Me : Zanokuhle? Hello?

(I look at my phone screen and scream. I quickly cover my mouth with my hand. Zanokuhle dropped the call. He hung up on me)



05

(I'm on my way from the bathroom. My phone is ringing. It's Magic.)

Me : It's wrong to call someone's wife so early in the morning.

(He laughs)

Magic : Do you want me to remind you that you are now a divorcee?

(We both laugh)

Me : Ey I shouldn't have told you. Sawubona Zikode

Magic : Mapholoba, how are you?

(I sigh)

Me : Uyazi. Kuya le kuya le

Magic : Where are you?

Me : Mina? Ngisekhaya. I just wanted to be with my mother  
ngithi ukuncela kancane.

(He laughs)

Magic : What are your plans for the day?

Me : Why are you asking?

Magic : Because I want to take you out.

Me : No, ngiyabonga. Nginosuku olumatasa kakhulu.

Magic : Busy with what?

Me : I'll be just busy, Magic.

Magic : Fine.

(Oh that was easy)

Me : Yeah.

Magic : Ayke usale kahle.

(So he is really not going to beg me?)

Me : Oh, okay.

(He hangs up. Wow)

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(I finished making breakfast for everyone and cleaned the house. Zothani walks in)

Zothani : Mommy?

Me : Ngicela ume lapho ungangeni la ngoba uyabona I'm cleaning and I don't know what you want.

Zothani : I miss daddy.

(Hell no)

Me : Zothani please, awuhambe uyodlala.

(I stop mopping the floor and laugh. Nuh is standing at the doorstep with her hands on her waist.)

Me : You are really pregnant!

(She laughs and brushes her stomach.)

Me : Ngena

Nuh : Hello Zo

Zothani : Hello

(She replies with a cold hello and walks away)

Nuh : What did you do to her?

Me : Iconsi lakwa Zondi, don't mind her. Come in

(She takes off her shoes and walks in. She sits down and sighs)

Nuh : Mngani wami, awuyeke leyonto and sit down.

(I laugh and sit down next to her. She hugs me)

Me : Mfazi ka Mkhuleko

(She laughs. Yes, she is Mkhuleko's second wife.)

Nuh : Ey wee oe.

Me : Umshado

Nuh : Umshado mngani wami! Wuuu!

(We laugh)

Me : How is it?

Nuh : Ay kuyasinda, my friend. Why didn't you tell me that you were coming home?

Me : I did. Check your whatsapp

Nuh : I don't have whatsapp, anymore. Mkhuleko deleted it.

(I laugh)

Me : What?

Nuh : Sasigudlana ngama status nomnakwethu, So Mkhuleko deleted our whatsapps. Athi simubukanisa nabantu.

(She laughs)

Me : Izinto enizenzayo Nuh.

(We laugh)

Nuh : Where's Mah?

Me : She went to a church meeting ne boyfriend yakhe.

Nuh : Okay. How are you kodwa mngani wami?

Me : I'm good, hey.

Nuh : Divorce pho? Really, Sthabile?

(Now I know why she is here so early in the morning.)

Me : It was time,my friend. I tried, Nuh. I really gave it my all. Ngazama but Nyathuko's cheating was like a disease. The Nyathuko I fell in love with was gone. I tried so much to revive our marriage but it was like crying in front of a dead body and begging to come back to life. I chose my peace.

(She sighs)



Nuh : But he loves you.

Me : Just not enough.

Nuh : Are you sure about this?

Me : I am. Sikhuluma nje uphezu kuka Ashton. They had a braai last night and Ashton was there.

Nuh : Don't lie!

Me : It's clear that Nyathuko was waiting for me to get out of his life khona ezophila kahle nentombi yakhe.

Nuh : So uyaqhubeka nje kanjalo nempilo u Nyathuko?

Me : Yep. And he seems really happy if you ask me.

Nuh : Are you happy?

Me : Does it matter? Mina sengiphilela izingane zami Nuh.

Nuh : Wakhulumisa okuka Gogo. Sthabile you are still young.  
Phila!

Me : Where do I even start nalesisu kodwa?

Nuh : You are pregnant?

Me : Don't judge me.

Nuh : No

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of course not. I'm just shocked. Hhaibo, uhlukana kanjani no  
Nyathuko ukhulelwe?

(I look away)

Nuh : Sthabile!!

Me : What?

Nuh : Is he the father?

Me : Of course he is the father kodwa yena akakwazi lokho and ngifuna kuhlale kunjalo.

Nuh : Are you crazy? Sthabile, you are not planning to hide this baby away uBaba wayo. It's not fair! Why ufuna ukuzithwesa umthwalo ongaka uwedwa?

Me : Nuh, I know what I'm doing.

(She shakes her head)

Nuh : Do you?

Me : I do. Wena uzovala lo mlomo wakho

Nuh : If that's what you want. Kodwa le yona angiyizwa. How far are you?

Me : Three months. Isikhathi sisekhona

Nuh : Usho ukuthi usazomtshela, angithi?

Me : No, I won't. I can take care of myself and my kids. I don't need Nyathuko. Come, woza ngiyokwenzela ukudla.

(We go to the kitchen)

Nuh : Ave uzofa indlala.

(I laugh)

Me : I'm too old for that. Yazi ucansi lungidina kanjani so I'll be fine.

Nuh : Mhmmmm.

(I laugh out loud)

Me : What?

Nuh : Kukhona ongifihlela kona.

Me : Hhayi! Vula lapha uthathe ubisi.

Nuh : Sthabile, what are you not telling me?

Me : Fine. Kunomuntu

(Her eyes widen)

Nuh : Already?

Me : It's not like sengifuna ukushada futhi. I want to forget about Nyathuko.

Nuh : That is wrong. Awukwazi ukungena kolunye uthando just because you want to get over olunye. Usamthanda u Nyathuko?

Me : I don't know. Look, ukuzijabulisa okuncane nje won't hurt. It's not like I'll sleep with the guy. I'm pregnant, remember?

Nuh : Sthabile are you crazy?

Me : No

Nuh : Uphezu kwani?

Me : Nothing. Okay, bengidlala.

Nuh : No, you were not. Mngani wami ngiyakwazi.

Me : I just love spending time with him.

Nuh : Kodwa usathanda u Nyathuko?

Me : Does it matter? u Nyathuko akasangifuni. Ukwenze kwacaca lokho ngakho I won't be wasting my time ngikhalela ubisi oseluchithekile.

Nuh : You know I love you, right?

Me : Yes

Nuh : So whatever you do, I have your back.

(I smile)

Me : But this pregnancy is going to complicate things.

Nuh : Does he know that you are pregnant? I mean the new guy.

Me : I told him but not in so many words.

Nuh : Mtshela ke manje. Isisu asisho lutho. He might surprise you.

Me : He called me wathi he wants to take me out but I turned him down.

Nuh : Why?

Me : Bengifuna engincenge but he didn't.

Nuh : So you were playing hard to get?



Me : Is it wrong?

(She holds my hand)

Nuh : Mngani wami uyedwa kuphela u Nyathuko emhlabeni and uyena yedwa indoda ekwazi ukuncenga. Please tell me that you won't be expecting any other man to treat you the way your husband treated you.

Me : Akukona lokho engikufunayo.

Nuh : Then good. Ngoba ngempela akasekho manje omunye uNyathuko. Christmas comes once a year.

Me : That's not true.

(She laughs)

Nuh : Ay wena uphila emhlabeni wakho wedwa. Call the mystery guy umtshela that you have changed your mind.

Me : Do you really think I should do that?

Nuh : You have nothing to lose. The sooner you forget about Nyathuko, the better. Ilokho okufunayo, angithi?

Me : Yes

Nuh : Call him.

(I take a deep breath)

Me : Okay.

06

THALENTE

(Nyathuko had a braai last night and we drank till the early hours of this morning. I'm going to love having him around. He is now staying right next door. He loves fun but he doesn't drink. He drowns me in alcohol and then laughs when I suffer from a hangover. I don't remember a lot of things that happened last night. I got drunk early and missed a lot of information)

My love, tsoha.

(That's my wife Lesedi waking me up)

Me : No, no, I have a headache.

Lesedi : Aowa, tsoha, baby.

(She removes the duvet)

Lesedi : Ana na u batla ho robala letsatsi lohle?

Me : I'm sick, baby.

Lesedi : Aren't you worried about your friend?

Me : Eish, Thukeh.

Lesedi : Exactly. He's probably hungry.

Me : I'll go and check on him. What are we eating?

Lesedi : Go and check in the kitchen.

Me : Let me go and check on Nyathuko first.

Lesedi : Ho lokile. Take a shower first.

Me : No

(She laughs and walks away.)

(I got up and went to check on Nyathuko. His door is half opened. The worst run through my head. I push the door)

Me : Thukeh? Nyathuko!!!

(I run to his bedroom. He is lying on the bed.)

Me : Nyathuko!!

(I shake him roughly. He opens his eyes and I sigh.)

Me : Ey ndoda waze wangithusa.

Nyathuko : Huh?

Me : What's wrong with you? Why ungakhiyile emnyango?

Nyathuko : Sekuyakhanya nje. What are you doing here?

(I look around. It's clean. There are a few boxes behind the door)

Me : Ngikulethele ukudla. Here

(I give him the food container)

Nyathuko : What is this?

(He sits up. He looks really miserable)

Me : Food. Who cleaned here? Ashton?

Nyathuko : Let me take a spoon. Aibo, u Ashton wani? I cleaned here angithi nina nishiye kubolile nahamba nayolala nabafazi benu.

(I laugh. He goes to the kitchen)

Nyathuko : The sotho woman cooked?

Me : Yeah and she said I must bring you some.

Nyathuko : Mhmmm

Me : Ey ndoda kanti uyasigumba yini le spoon?

(He comes back)

Nyathuko : My wi... Sthabile cooks better than her.

(He laughs)

Me : Wakithi uyazi angithi ngeke nje kuphele kalula kanjalo?  
Usazomubiza ngomfazi wakho and that's fine.

Nyathuko : Life goes on, Thalente. Eish, I need to throw these  
boxes away.

Me : Hlala phansi.

(He gives me the food and sits down. I knew he wasn't going to  
eat. Fuck Sthabile! I knew that woman was bad news. Nx!)

Me : What happened last night?

Nyathuko : Ngani? Ey ngikhumbula izingane zami kanjani bafo,  
yena u Ndlelenhle. Ngimukhumbule u mfan'wami.

Me : Call Sthabile.



Nyathuko : No. Wena ufunani la?

Me : I brought your food nje. Thukeh zithini ndoda?

Nyathuko : Ngani?

Me : What happened last night ngibone uxabana no Ashton ngathi ngiyabona seni right futhi. Zithini? Seniyathandana?

Nyathuko : No! Nothing is going on between me and Ashton.

Me : So she didn't come back here.

Nyathuko : No, she left wangabuya. Fonela u Thami umubuze. Ulandwe indoda yakhe la bahamba.

Me : Asisezona izingane manje ndoda. You need to make a decision.

Nyathuko : Kumele ngikhulume into eyodwa kuze kube inini bafo? You know very well ukuthi kwenzekani phakathi kwami no Ashton.

Me : She is a bitch. Uhlukane no Sthabile because of her nawe uyakwazi lokho. Phuma kuyena.

Nyathuko : Angithandani naye.

Me : I know Thukeh, ngiyazi ndoda but awufuni ukuzibona usulala naye futhi.

Nyathuko : U Ashton wazi izinto, you know that. She knows who I really am. She knows my deepest secrets. Kunezinto eziningi angisize kuzona. Kwesinye isikhathi bengingaphumi ekhaya ngoba ngiyolala no Ashton but you know what happened ngo Nqabayethu kwaze kwenzeka lezinto ezenzeka ko Mzet. Uyena u Ashton obengisiza kukona konke lokho. About the evidence. Sthabile doesn't know that Zanokuhle killed a man at the age of 8. So how was I supposed to tell her that the reason why ngisahlangana no Ashton yingoba ungisiza

ngokuthi indodana yethu ingatholi iqiniso ngokuthi yabulala umuntu? Huh Thalente?

Me : Are you sure she didn't threaten you to divorce Sthabile?

Nyathuko : Ashton is nothing like Nomzamo.

(I sigh)

Me : I know.

Nyathuko : Ngiyamubona ukuthi uzitshela ukuthi ngoba sengihlukene no Maka Ndlela nje manje shuthi mina naye sesi right. Ungizela ngalezinto zokuthi she will stop sleeping around uma ngivuma ukuthi mina naye sibe ne relationship futhi.

Me : And?

Nyathuko : Angisoze ngathandana no Ashton futhi empilweni yami. She is messed up. She is nothing like my wi...Sthabile.

Me : You still love Sthabile.

Nyathuko : Kakhulu. I wish ubengikholwa nje mengimtshela ukuthi angimujoleli. Yes, I slept with Ashton a couple of times kodwa kwaphelela lapho. Futhi kwayikona lokho into engayigcina mhlampe 3.. 4 years ago. Uyena onale idea yokuthi mhlampe mina naye siyathandana but deep down she knows ukuthi nothing is going on between us.

Me : But do you blame Sthabile for thinking something was going on between you two? Thukeh nami ubuze ungidide ndoda kwesinye isikhathi indlela obuziphatha ngayo around her. Umubiza ngo mama and all that shit.

Nyathuko : When my kids are involved

Advertisement

I'll do anything. You know that. Ngisho kungathiwa angidayise ngesende, I'll do it to protect them. Zanokuhle was involved, so I had to play along.

Me : I know wakithi. Can't you and Sthabile fix things? I don't know. Tell her the truth? Look at you. You are not coping.

Nyathuko : There is no way. Uyabona into ayenzile yinto.....

(He releases a deep sigh)

Nyathuko : Kubengcono sihlukane ngoba bengizovele ngimubulale Thalente. Nasi.

(He crosses his fingers.)

Nyathuko : Letting her go was the best decision.

Me : Kodwa Thukeh uyamazi u Sthabile. Akakaze nakanye wadidekela kwamanye amadoda.

Nyathuko : The pain I've caused her must have drove her that far. I don't blame her. Mhlampe kuthiwa ngavele ngamutshela nje iqiniso, ngamuvezela ukuthi ngusathane, umbulali mhlampe

angabe asikho la. Kunezinto engimufihlele zona thinking I was protecting her kanti I was destroying us.

Me : Ucabanga ukuthi u Sthabile ehlanya kanje wayezohlala emshadweni wenu esetholile ukuthi awuyena lomuntu ashada naye?

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : She was going to leave still. Ay shuthi kwakudaliwe ukuthi sohlukana

Me : Manje awucabangi ukuthi you and Ashton stand a chance. She knows who you really are Nyathuko kodwa usakuthanda kunjalo. She is a bitch, yeah kodwa usekhulile manje and I'm sure ungamushintsha. She loves you.

Nyathuko : Mina ngithanda u Sthabile.

Me : Sthabile left you.

Nyathuko : And I'm done with women.

Me : Bhambatha usuyabheda.

Nyathuko : Mhlampe ngizobuye ngizibone ezothando wakithi, okwamanje ngisahlanganisa izinto zami.

(He is dead inside. I don't understand why Sthabile did something like that to him.)

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(Magic and I met in Gateway. 15 minutes ago I bumped into Ntokozo and her husband. I have no idea of what the heck they are doing in Gateway. She didn't know what to say. She just looked at me and her eyes moved to Magic and after that she left. I know she is going to tell her brother. I don't care)

( We are sitting at Krispy Kreme. Maybe coming here was a bad idea. Magic has been on his phone ever since we got here. I feel like I'm talking to myself.)

Me : My cappuccino is almost finished.

(He laughs and puts his phone away. I blow out a sigh)

Me : Yey! Finally

(I giggle. He takes my hand and kisses the back of it)

Magic : I'm sorry about that. I was just fixing a few things but I'm all yours now.

(I smile)

Magic : You said that was your sister in law.



Me : Not anymore. Usewu aunt nje wezingane zami. Kuphelela lapho.

(He smiles)

Magic : Okay.

Me : So where are we going masiqeda la?

Magic : What do you mean?

Me : Don't tell me that I dropped everything just to come here and have a cup of cappuccino ngibuyele ekhaya.

Magic : You turned me down, remember?

Me : But ngilana manje, akunjalo?

Magic : That is not the point. The reason why I haven't gone back to Johannesburg is because I'm still busy with some things. When you turned me down I made other plans. To be honest, I shouldn't be here.

Me : Oh

Magic : But I am.

(I don't know if he wants me to say thank you)

Me : Okay. So, ufuna ukuhamba?

Magic : Ay manje but kuzofanele ngihambe soon.

Me : I thought we were going to spend more time together.

Magic : Oh, okay.

Me : Uh! What do you think?

Magic : Sthabile, what is this?

Me : What do you mean?

Magic : What are you doing?

Me : I thought that's what you wanted. Kade wawungibelesele ngokuthi uyangithanda kusukela eminyakeni edlule nje.

Magic : That was long ago sisasebenza ndawonye. I'm not saying angisakukhonzile but sesikhulile.

Me : Which is why kuzomele sithathe isinqumo sokuthi yini le esiyenzayo.

(He chuckles)

Magic : You don't get it but fine. Sthabile you don't know what you are doing. Uqeda ukuphuma nje emshadweni wakho and lento oyenzayo awuyazi. You are just desperate for I don't know what.

Me : I just want to forget. Magic, life is too short. Angizomoshisa isikhathi sami ngisheba isithupha nezinyembezi. I am going to move on.

Magic : Things are not the same anymore.

Me : Look, I'm not looking for a relationship. I just.....

Magic : I get it.

(His face lightens up with a smile. He holds my hand)

Magic : That's all I wanted to hear.

Me : Oh?

Magic : Yes. Sthabile nginomuntu. Asishadile naye kodwa ngiyamuthanda futhi ngiyamuhlonipha. She's the only reason I keep coming back here.

Me : Uhlala la e Durban?

Magic : Yes. I'm planning to move back here ngoba yena akafuni ukuthi ezohlala nami e Joburg.

Me : I see.

(No, I'm not disappointed. He is an old man so of course he's seeing someone but he is not married and that's all that matters)

Magic : Yes. But, but I like you. Mina nawe siyafanelana kade ngangikutshela lokho

(I laugh)

Magic : So we can do this sibone ukuthi kuphelelaphi.

Me : Njengoba sengishilo. I don't want a relationship. I... I am pregnant.

Magic : You told me.

Me : So you don't mind?

Magic : If you don't.

Me : Asibadala kodwa for this whole thing?

(We both laugh)

Magic : There's nothing wrong with having fun. Asibadala kangako. We have a connection and we both want the same thing. Uyazi ukuthi nginomuntu futhi nami ngiyazi ukuthi ukhulelwe. We know very well what we are getting ourselves into.

(He plants a peck at the back of my hand. Maybe this is what I need. Magic is exactly what I need for me to forget about Nyathuko.)

07

(I sneak inside my room and close the door. I sigh. I feel dirty. I'm disgusted with myself. Only Ndlelenhle is sleeping on my bed. My parents must have slept with the twins. I take off my clothes. I need to bathe all over again.)

Ndlelenhle : Mah ubuyile?

(Dammit! I cover him with a blanket)

Me : Yes boy, lala. Lala

(He goes back to sleep. I take the towel and wrap it around. I head to the bathroom. I get inside a bathtub and scrub myself. Tears stream down my face. What have I done?.)

(I finish and go back to my room. I take my phone)

Nuh, I messed up.

(I sent the message to Nuh and tried to get some sleep. My phone rings. It's Nuh. I'm not ready to talk so I ignore her call and call Magic instead. He is not taking my calls. I try until I give up. )

(I managed to get some sleep. I get up as soon as I hear my mother knocking on my door)

MaKheswa : Ndlela? Ndlela are you still sleeping?

Me : Mah?

MaKheswa : Usubuyile?

Me : Yes. Ndlelenhle is still sleeping.

MaKheswa : Oh



(I hear her singing. She is walking away. It's 10: 00 am. I can't hide myself in this room. I wake up. The sooner I face my mother, the better.)

(I find her cooking porridge in the kitchen.)

Me : Sawubona Mah

MaKheswa : Sthabile

(She is giving me a cold shoulder. She starts another song. I clear my throat)

Me : OZothani balale nani?

MaKheswa : Yes

Me : Oh. Basalele?

MaKheswa : Yes.

(Asshh!)

Me : Mah udiniwe?

MaKheswa : Why would I be angry? Ngiyakuphendula nje. Your kids slept in our room. They were waiting for you to come back but you didn't. Balale late ngakho bakhathele.

Me : Oh

(I wash my hands. I don't know what to do. I keep washing them.)

MaKheswa : Zizoze ziphume igolide inkosi impela.

Me : Mah?

(I close the tap.)

MaKheswa : Usubuyele ku Baba ka Ndlelenhle?

Me : No

MaKheswa : So where did you sleep last night?

Me : Mah? No, ngilale ka Nuh. Ukhona so ngilale kubo.

MaKheswa : I see.

Me : Sikhona isinkwa?

MaKheswa : Isn't it too soon?

Me : To eat?

MaKheswa : To be sleeping around. Usanuka inyongo yakwa Zondi wena. Lento oyenzayo nje ihlazo engingalazi.

(I keep quiet)

MaKheswa : Uhambe usule igazi leli eliphuma emakhaleni.

Me : Blood?

(I touch my nose. Shit! There's blood coming out of my nose.)

Me : Aibo.

MaKheswa : Ay ukuthi "Aibo" Sthabile. Uthwele ingane yakwa Zondi and you are busy sleeping around. Idlozi leli, likhuluma nawe.

Me : Ay kahleni Mah.

(I walk out. I'm not even going to entertain her and her beliefs. I go and wash my face. Ndlelenhle is busy in my wardrobe)

Me : Ubhekani lapho?

Ndlelenhle : I'm looking for my clothes.

Me : Zanokuhle didn't pack for you guys. Gqoka lezingubo obuzigqoke izolo. Vele, we are leaving today.

Ndlelenhle : But these clothes are dirty.

Me : Zingcole kuphi Ndlelenhle Zondi?

Ndlelenhle : Look at the t-shirt.

Me : Yini ke ungavele ugqoke mina?

Ndlelenhle : Mah?

Me : Gqoka isikibha ungiyeke. Nimubukile u Zanokuhle enganifakeli izingubo nathula and now you want to make your problems mine.

(He wears his clothes and walks away. I check my phone. Magic still hasn't returned my calls. Let me check my Whatsapp. Wow, he is online. I dial his number.)

Magic : Sthabile, this is not a good time.

Me : I thought you said you were going to call me.

Magic : I was busy.

(Wow)

Me : So lento eyenzekile ayisho lutho kuwena?

Magic : Sthabile we had sex and that was it.

Me : That was it?

Magic : Ufuna ngithini kanti? We had an agreement.

Me : I understand but....

Magic : But nothing, Sthabile.

Me : Magic, awuzongithatha kanjalo. Awuzongiphathisa nje okwamafinyilo angathi ngiyingane yesikole. Ngimudala kabi uma ngingaka.

Magic : What do you want?

Me : I want us to....

Magic : Sthabile please. Awukahle nje kancane.

(I bite my lips. I'm about to explode)

Me : Lalela la ungangithathi mina kanjalo. Ungangidakelwa nje Magic, ungisize kabi.

Magic : No, you listen. Awuzokhuluma nami angathi ukhuluma nendoda yakho. Uma kukuthi wajwayezwa umfana waka Zondi ukuthi mawukhuluma ukhulume angathi udilika esihlahleni then uzokugcina kuyena lokho.

Me : Magic....

Magic : And I would really appreciate it if you stopped calling me. I have a girlfriend. Imina engizofona ay wena.

Me : Excuse me?

(Silence)



Me : Hello?

(He hung up. My hands are already trembling. What the fuck did he say?)

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(My father can't even stand me. I heard he went to Bridge City again. He goes to Bridge City a lot lately. I hope he is not cheating on my mother and eating his pension money with ama 2000's.)

(Zibusiso walks in and sleeps on my thighs)

Zibusiso : Mommy?

Me : Yes, baby.

Zibusiso : Are we leaving today?

Me : Yes. Where is Zothani and Ndlelenhle? Sekufanele silunge manje seku late. No Petrol wami awumncane kanje

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I just hope we will make it to Ballito.

Zibusiso : Why don't we go tomorrow?

Me : No, kusasa niya esikoleni. We need to go today. Uphi u Gogo?

Zibusiso : She is with Zo outside.

Me : u Ndlelenhle yena uphi?

Zibusiso : Uyodlala.

Me : Go and call him. Umtshele ukuthi siyahamba manje. Uma engabuyi siyamushiya.

Zibusiso : Okay.

(She runs outside. I go through my Whatsapp. Heee!!! Magic just posted his girlfriend with "My heart" as a caption. My blood boils. I reply with a question mark under his girlfriend's picture.)

WeSthabile?

(My mother calls out for me. Wrong timing Mah.)

Me : Ey Ey u Mah ufunani manje? Mah!

MaKheswa : Sondela

Me : Ey! Ey!... Okay

(I throw my phone on the bed and go outside. I find a bunch of kids and a woman)

Me : Kwenzenjani?

MaKheswa : Nangu u Maka Sbahle.

Me : u Maka Sbahle?

Maka Sbahle : Sawubona

Me : Yebo

(I'm confused. My eyes search for Ndlelenhle. Oh there he is, leaning against the wall)

Maka Sbahle : Your son broke my sliding door.

Me : What?

Maka Sbahle : Isicabha sami esibizayo.

Me : Ndlelenhle?

Maka Sbahle : Usishaye ngetshe.

"It was him. Usijikijele ngetshe wabaleka but we saw him. "

(One of the kids says)

Me : Ndlelenhle wenzeni?

Ndlelenhle : Akumina

(He starts crying.)

Maka Sbahle : It was you!! Uphikani? Angithi bayasho ukuthi bakubonile?

(Oh this woman has attitude)

MaKheswa : Ngicela wehlise umoya mntanami. Sthabile, asihambe siyobheka umonakalo ukuthi ungakanani.

Maka Sbahle : Please. Sibiza kabi lesiyasicabha. Ngeke mina ngilale endlini engenaso isicabha, amaphara emaningi kanje la kwaMashu!!

Me : Angikaze mina ngithume ingane ukuthi iyobulala izicabha zakho ngoba usulwa nje.

Maka Sbahle : He is your son!!

Me : Yey! Ungang....

MaKheswa : Sthabile, Sthabile, please.

Me : No Mah, engakhulumi nami angathi ukhuluma nesilima.  
Wena Ndlelenhle ngathini kuwena? Ngathini ngokuzula?

MaKheswa : Let's go, please.

(We went to see the damage. It's bad. The door is badly broken.  
She was right, it is an expensive sliding door. Maka Sbahle  
wants it fixed today. I want to kill Ndlelenhle)

Me : Kunini Mah ngitshela lengane ka Nyathuko ukuthi ihlukane  
nemizi yabantu? Kunini?

MaKheswa : Sthabile, sekwanele. Usumshayile kwanela.

(Yes I've whipped him but he is not even showing a single tear.  
My mother grabs the stick away from me.)

Me : Aghaa! Angikaze mina ngijime emzini yabantu ngithetha  
amacala. My son is 19 years old today kodwa akakaze wahamba  
ephahlazana nezicabha zemizi yabantu!!! Are you going to fix  
that door? Do you have money to fix that door? Huh?

(He shakes his head)

Me : Shlama sengane namehlo amakhulu!!! Ulokhu ungikhulumisa nalabantu bakwaMashu engibanyanyayo.

MaKheswa : Calm down, Sthabile.

Me : Wake wangibona mina ngihamba imizi yabantu? Huh Ndlelenhle?

Ndlelenhle : No

Me : Waze wangidina ngane ka Nyathuko. Nxi! Phuma la endlini yami!!

(His sisters are now all over him, trying to console him. They all walk out.)



MaKheswa : Kodwa into ezothiwani le?

Me : I don't know. I don't know Mah. Indlela esibizayo ngayo lesiyasicabha, I don't even know where I'm going to get the money to fix it.

MaKheswa : Nami anginalutho. Imali yonke iphelele kuleliya gate elilapha esangweni.

Me : I know. Mhmmm!! Ngaze ngahlupheka!!!

MaKheswa : Ew mntanami.

Me : I don't have a choice. Kufanele ngifonele u Thukeh ke manje.

MaKheswa : There's no other way.

Me : Mhmm! Mhmm! Waze wangiyala u Ndlelenhle!!

(I take my phone and call Nyathuko. He answers immediately.)

Nyathuko : Sthah?

Me : Hey

Nyathuko : Kwenzenjani?

Me : Ingane yakho nayi izobulawa abantu la.

Nyathuko : What? Who?

Me : U Ndlelenhle usebulala izicabha zabantu la kwaMashu.  
Angithi yena uyigongo ushaya izicabha zabantu ngamatshe.

Nyathuko : Where is he?

Me : Angimazi

Nyathuko : Sthabile usho ukuthini mawuthi awuyazi ingane yami?

Me : I'm telling you that your son broke someone's door, Isicabha esibiza enkulu imali le and you want to know where he is.

Nyathuko : Ufuna ngithini umthetho wakho Maka Zothani?

Me : I don't know!! Uwena owona lezingane. U Ndlelenhle uwumudlwembe nje namhlanje because of you! You are spoiling him. Umama waloyamuzi ubhodla umlilo ke ngikutshele. She wants her door fixed today! Anginayo imali mina Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : How much does she want?

Me : Uthi isicabha sakhe wasithenga ngo R7000. Where am I going to get R7000? Ngizoyithathaphi mina leyomali?

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : I'm coming.

(I hang up)

MaKheswa : Uthini?

Me : Uthi uyeza.

MaKheswa : Siyabonga nkosi.

(He did. He came and transferred R7000 to Maka Sbahle. We are now standing outside his car that is parked up the road.)

Me : So awuyiboni into e wrong ngalento eyenziwe ingane yakho?

Nyathuko : Ngani?

(He asks while staring at my neck. I wonder what he sees)

Me : You didn't say anything. Awuthethanga nokuthetha.

Nyathuko : Yini ebakusafanele ngimuthethisele yona ngoba wena ubusumshayile?

Me : Oh. He told you? Usekhulume zonke izindaba ufika nje.

Nyathuko : I'm taking them with me. Ngizobaletha ekuseni.

Me : You can't. Nyathuko ubuzokhokha imali yesicabha wena la ubungazile ukuzolanda izingane.

Nyathuko : They are my kids too. Awukwazi ukunqaba nezingane zami.

Me : Ngihamba nabo nje manje.

Nyathuko : I'm here now. Ngizohamba nabo. I'll bring them to Ballito tomorrow morning.

Me : Thukeh....

Nyathuko : Why don't you go and argue with your boyfriend le ebikumunca umqala.

Me : What?

(I touch my neck)

Nyathuko : Isdididi esisabeka umama omdala njengawe ama love bites.

(Oh no. How did I miss that?)

Me : I....

Nyathuko : Ndlelenhle? Ndlela!

Ndlelenhle : Baba?

Nyathuko : Woza no Sisi bakho sihambe.

(He gets inside his car and slams the door. I make my way home. Am I sad about the love bite he saw on my neck? No. Definitely not!)

08

THALENTE

(That must be Nyathuko knocking. He left his flat keys here. I open the door and find Ndlelenhle instead.)

Ndlelenhle : Hi

Me : Boy, boy how are you?

(I brush his head. He's barefooted)

Ndlelenhle : UBabah uthe ngicele ukhiye.

Me : UBabah? Uphi yena u Baba?

Ndlelenhle : He's smoking.

Me : Oh, okay. Wait here.



(Nyathuko doesn't smoke in front of his kids. What's wrong with him?)

Lesedi : What's wrong?

Me : I don't know. U Thukeh ufike nezingane la. Where are his keys?

Lesedi : His kids? Check in that drawer.

(I open the drawer and take out his keys)

Me : Yeah. Ngiyeza

Lesedi : Okay, baby.

(I walk out and lift up Ndlelenhle.)

Me : Why are you growing so much?

(He laughs)

Me : Huh?

(Nyathuko is leaning against the balcony railing, smoking. The twins are leaning against his door like homeless kids)

Me : Yey, mawele ka Thukeh

Zothani and Zibusiso : Hello

Nyathuko : Yey nayi lendoda.

(He throws away the cigarette)

Me : Thukeh

(I give him the keys and he opens the door. We get in and he switches on the lights)

Nyathuko : Where are the clothes we bought?

Ndlelenhle : In the car

Nyathuko : Hawu mfan'wami awusamukhumbuzi ngani u Baba ezithathe? Hambani niyogeza, I'll go and fetch them.

(He kisses them on their cheeks and they go away)

Me : And then?

Nyathuko : Buka izingane zami zingcole kanjani.

Me : What happened?

Nyathuko : Ey wakithi, I don't know.

(He sighs and rubs his face. We sit down)

Me : Uphuma kwaMashu?

Nyathuko : Yeah. U Ndlelenhle usengilethela amacala webafo

(I laugh)

Me : What did he do?

Nyathuko : He is breaking people's doors.

Me : Are you serious?

Nyathuko : Angizicabangelanga izingane zami, Thalente. You see this divorce is going to destroy them. Uyamazi u Ndlelenhle, umfana wami uyazithulela and manje mase ephihlizana

nezicabha zabantu ungishayisa ngovalo. What if he hurt someone?

Me : Ah Thukeh come on.

Nyathuko : I'm serious. What if ulimaze umuntu ngaleliyatshe? Itshe elingakanani Thalente.

Me : Are you sure it was him?

Nyathuko : Uvumile. Uthi akazi why. Mubuze uzokutshela. Ndlela? Ndlelenhle, woza la.

(He is coming. He comes and stands between his father's legs)

Nyathuko : Yah mfana ka Baba, tell Malum'Thalente what you did.

Ndlelenhle : I'm sorry.

Nyathuko : I know boy and uBabah uyakuxolela angithi?

Ndlelenhle : Mhmmm.

Nyathuko : Tell him.

Ndlelenhle : I was angry.

(I look at Nyathuko)

Me : Why?

Ndlelenhle : Bengikhumbule uBaba

Me : Yeah?

Ndlelenhle : I didn't mean to hit the door.

Nyathuko : Kodwa mfan'wam umuntu akajikijeli amatshe mekhumbule u Baba

Ndlelenhle : Okay

Me : It won't happen again, right?

Ndlelenhle : I promise.

Nyathuko : Go and check on your sisters. I'll come now.

(He kisses his father's cheek and runs. I smile)

Me : This boy is angry, Nyathuko.

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : I know. Ey Thalente, ngisafuna ukuyobathengela ukudla la e Gateway.

Me : Did you see Sthabile?

(He sighs and leans back on the couch. He stares up at the ceiling)

Nyathuko : I did.

Me : Nakhuluma?

Nyathuko : She had a love bite. She had a bloody love bite on her neck.

(He chuckles)

Me : What?



Nyathuko : You know what that means, right?

Me : Thukeh ubani lenja emithise u Sthabile?

Nyathuko : I don't know Thalente. Yazi angikaze nakanye ngacabanga ukuthi u Sthah uyajola. Not even once.

Me : Gqashula lenja Thukeh.

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : No, I won't kill him.

Me : But you know you can.

Nyathuko : Yes I can but things are different now. U Sthabile akasangifuni. Yazi indlela engimuthandayo ngayo ngisho naleyongane bengizoyikhulisa, ngimuthande nayo. Ngibulale lenja ngibuyise umndeni wami but I can't. U Sthabile akasangifuni, I saw it in her eyes.

Me : Ngiyaxolisa bafo.

Nyathuko : Yini engiyenzile Thalente?

Me : You did nothing wrong

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even if you cheated kodwa ubumthanda u Sthabile. You almost gave her your heart.

Nyathuko : It wasn't enough. Maybe I needed to do more ukukhombisa umfazi wami ukuthi ngiyamuthanda.

Me : No. Ey ndoda you showed Sthabile all the love. Leave her, Thukeh.

Nyathuko : I wish I could just go away for years ngize ngikhohlwe uyena. You know?

Me : Maybe you need to talk to someone.

Nyathuko : No, no, I don't need therapy. I'm fine.

Me : Thukeh listen, muyeke u Sthabile. Munike ithuba lokuphila, mhlampe uzobona ukuthi amadoda ayafana .

Nyathuko : No, I've lost her. Kodwa nginezingane zami, angithi? And that should keep me going.

Me : Sho

Nyathuko : Ngizoya e Mzinyathi for a few days ngithi ukuyopholisa ikhanda nje kancane.

Me : No, that's fine.

Nyathuko : Othi ngibheke labantu ukuthi benzani ngale.

Me : Okay

(He blows out a sigh and stands up. I've always known that he loves Sthabile but today I'm sure that she is his life.)

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STHABILE

(I got home late last night. It's now 06:30 am and my kids are still not here. I wonder what Nyathuko is thinking.)

Me : uNyathuko ukuthi uhleli kuphi manje nezingane angimazi. He knows very well that they need to go to school.

Zanokuhle : I'm sure he'll be here any minute now.

Me : I hope so.

Zanokuhle : Are you expecting a call?

Me : Excuse me?

Zanokuhle : Ngibona ulokhu ubhekisa ifoni phansi naphezulu.

Me : No

Zanokuhle : Yini le oyigcobe emqaleni?

Me : Hhayi Zanokuhle! Nali ibhadi lami. Yazi angikaze ngikubuze lutho mina nge braai yenu but here you are questioning me.

Zanokuhle : Ihlangana kanjani i braai nomqala?

Me : Ay amadlozi akho akuthumele kimi namhlanje ngiyabona.

(The door opens and my babies run in)

Me : Aibo nazi izingane zami!

(I go and hug them)

Me : Sanibona

Hello mommy!

Me : Yeah, uphi u Baba wenu?

Zibusiso : He left us by the gate, wahamba. UBaba usenemoto enkulu

Me : Mhmmm, I know. Yini le eniphethe?

Zothani : He bought us clothes.

Me : Othi ngibone?

(I open the bag)

Me : Yini nje le anithengele yona?

Zanokuhle : There's nothing wrong with these clothes. Zinhle nje futhi.

Me : Kufanele zibe zinhle angithi uwena ongafakelanga izingane zami izingubo

Ndlelenhle : Uthe uBaba singcolile

Me : Uxakwe yini uma ningcolile?

Zanokuhle : Vele sebeyangcola ngoba u Baba engekho.

Me : Ngicela ungiyeke wena. Bekukhona bani ke?

Zibusiso : Endlini ka Baba?

Me : Ehhe

(Zanokuhle shakes his head and goes upstairs)

Zibusiso : No one

Me : Akafikanga umama ofana nomlungu?

(They look at each other and say no in unison)

Me : Uthe u Baba wakho ningasho?

Zibusiso : No. There was no one.

Me : Okay. Hambani niyephezulu. I'll make breakfast

Ndlelenhle : We ate at daddy's house.



Me : Oh, okay. Hambani ke niyongilinda phezulu.

(My phone rings. This is the call I've been waiting for)

Me : Hello

Magic : Mapholoba, Hi.

Me : Unjani, angisakwazi. Sengikugcina ko Whatsapp u poster umfazi wakho.

Magic : I was going to call you.

Me : Why Magic? Ubuwazi kahle that ngizobona but no wathi vele ngisdididi.

Magic : Ilento ke esizoyibanga, awukwazi ukukhuluma.

Me : Ufuna ngithini?

Magic : I didn't call to fight with you.

Me : Ngiyaxolisa.

Magic : Look, I need your help.

Me : My help?

Magic : Can you give me R2000, I'll pay you back.

Me : R2000?

Magic : Kunento encane engifuna ukuyilungisa but if you can't I'll understand. Ngizocela u Ayanda.

(Ayanda is his girlfriend's name)

Me : No, no, no it's okay. I'll help you. You don't have to ask her.

Magic : Thanks. I'll send you my details.

Me : Okay.

(Silence. He hung up. I'll wait for him to send me his account details)

09

(I arrived at work. I've already transferred the money to Magic.  
I'm talking to Musa over the phone)

Me : Are you serious?

Musa : Yes, I'll be there on Wednesday morning. I hope you  
have enough wine.

(Gosh! He is coming. I'm so excited)

Me : Sam, you have no idea how happy I am to hear that.

Musa : I want to take you to a doctor and find out what is really  
wrong with you.

Me : About what?

Musa : Divorcing Thukeh. That was wild.

Me : What? You thought I was lying?

Musa : So you are happy?

Me : Things are coming together just fine. Yes I still love him and I miss him everyday but I'm doing my best to get over him.

Musa : And how are you doing that?

Me : There's someone.

(He coughs. He's being dramatic right now.)

Musa : Sorry. What?

Me : He's nothing like Nyathuko. Nothing at all.

Musa : Break up with him.

Me : No! Why the hell would I do that?

Musa : He is going to bore you, especially in bed. I know Sthabile.

Me : I can't say I was bored but he wasn't as wild as Nyathuko. His penis is small but it did the work.

(I expect him to laugh but no)

Me : Did you hear what I said?

Musa : Sthabile am I missing something?

Me : What do you mean?

Musa : You've slept with the guy already?

Me : Yes

Musa : Tell me, when did you and Thukeh split up?

Me : You are not going to judge me now.

Musa : I'm not, I'm not. I'm just shocked. It's unlike you.

Me : I need to move on.

Musa : I really need to come to South Africa. Things are falling apart.

(I laugh.)

Me : Let me get back to work. Love you.

Musa : Love you too, bitch.

(I put down the phone. Let me ask Magic if he got the money. I call him.)

Magic : Sthabile this is not a good time. I told you not to call me kodwa.

Me : Are you busy?

(He sighs)

Magic : Yes, please. Ey Sthabile.

(He ends the call. I click on my whatsapp. Hee! It's Ayanda's birthday. Today is going to be a long day. He has posted already. I can't believe this. I send him a message)

Is that why you needed money? To buy a gift for your girlfriend? : Me

Can I see you later? : Him



No : Me

Come on, please book for us : Him

Fine : Me

(I put my phone away. He better explains this when I see him.)

(I couldn't wait for the day to end. As soon as I got home I cooked and got ready.)

Me : Mhlampe sekufanele sithole umuntu ozosiza layikhaya.

Zanokuhle : Mhmmm.

Me : Ngiyahamba ngizobuya ekseni. Please stay with the kids.

Zanokuhle : Uyaphi?

Me : Kodwa Zanokuhle usuzongibuza yonke into manje?

Zanokuhle : No, I'm just asking.

Me : Ngiyabuya Zanokuhle nkosiyami. It's not like uzobafunza ke ONdlelenhle or uhlale ubagadile. I just need you to be around. Angihambi unyaka wonke

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ngizobuya ekseni.

Zanokuhle : Yini le oyenzayo?

Me : Zanokuhle, please.

Zanokuhle : Okay

(He walks out. This one thinks he owns me.)

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(Magic and I met at the hotel)

Me : I thought you were going to stay with your girlfriend since it's her birthday.

Magic : No, ukubo. Her mother is not well.

Me : I see.

Magic : Ngiyabonga ke about the money nokuthi u booke la.

Me : It's okay.

Magic : Sthabile I enjoy being with you but I feel like I need to set a few things straight.

Me : Magic, I understand that you have a girlfriend but nami ngikhona empilweni yakho lokho awuzoshaya angathi awukuboni.

Magic : I know ukuthi nawe wenza kakhulu. Sthabile we are not in a relationship kodwa wena uvele wenze angathi sesishadile and I hate it!

Me : Mhlampe kuzofanele unghloniphe! Uyazi ukuthi ngikhona on your whatsapp list. Bekunganjani ke unghihle if you are posting your girlfriend?

Magic : I'll just delete your number.

Me : Ay kulungile nalokho..

Magic : Can we stop fighting now? Tomorrow I'm going back to Johannesburg so I just want us to enjoy this.

Me : Uzobuya nini?

Magic : When do you want me to come back?

Me : I don't want you to leave.

(He laughs)

Magic : I can always come back. Wena ufake imali nje mina ngizobuya.

Me : Imali?

Magic : Kuyabiza ukuza la.

Me : Okay, sizokhuluma ngalokho.

(He kisses me)

Me : Are you hungry?

Magic : Yeah.

Me : Okay, what are we going to eat?

Magic : Mina anginayo imali kodwa.

Me : No, don't worry. I covered all that.

Magic : Okay

(His phone vibrates)

Magic : Eish, eish it's Ayanda. She is video calling me.

Me : So?

Magic : Please hide bandla ngiyakucela

Me : What?

Magic : Ngicela umboze bandla. I'll only take 5 minutes. Just 5 minutes.

Me : Aibo

Magic : Ungakhulumi Sthabile, Ngiyakucela. Don't even cough.

(I'm still shocked when he covers my head with a duvet.)

Magic : Hey, baby.

(He is speaking to his girlfriend and I'm suffocating under the duvet. I cannot fucking believe this!!)

10

(I'm talking to Magic over the phone. I didn't say a word after he boiled me under that duvet. This morning I woke up and left . He only called now.)

Me : You did what you think was best. Nguwubani mina ukuma endleleni yakho no Ayanda?

Magic : Sthabile, please don't talk like that.

Me : But it is true. Mina njengamanje ngifela ukuthi I like you and I love spending time with you and wena ucabanga ukuthi ngiyislima.

Magic : That is not what I think. I like you too.

Me : No, it is. I don't think this will work Magic.

(I get out of my car and walk inside the house. Zanoluhle is here)



Magic : No! Don't say that. Sthabile look, ngiyakuthanda. Ngiyaxolisa futhi nangendlela engikuphathe ngayo. Ukuthi nje Ayanda and I lost a baby a couple of months ago manje usangidinga but I'm willing to do anything ukukukhombisa ukuthi ngiyafuna sizame, sibone ukuthi lento esiqalile isibekaphi.

Zanokuhle : Ndlelenhle ngithe wozani nizodla!!!

(He shouts.)

Magic : Who's that?

Me : Zanokuhle akubonakali ukuthi ngikhuluma nefoni?

Zanokuhle : Sorry.

(Why are his eyes looking like that?)

Me : Sorry about that.

Magic : As I was saying. I am willing to try. Kuthiwa kuyangami angabe ngibuyela ngisho e Auto Movers sisebenze ndawonye so that we can get to spend more time together but ke ngiyazi ukuthi awunawo umsebenzi for mina.

Me : Do you really mean that? Usholo ukuthi ungabuya ngempela e Johannesburg uzosebenza e Auto Movers.

Magic : Mapholoba, I'm willing to try.

Me : Can we talk about this later?

Magic : Of course.

Me : Bye

(I hang up and look at Zanokuhle)

Me : Kwenzenjani?

Zanokuhle : Lezingane zakho azifuni ukuzodla kanti sekufanele ngihambe.

Me : Zanokuhle are you okay?

(He shakes his head. I throw my bag on the couch and rush to him. I hug him)

Me : My boy, what's wrong?

Zanokuhle : Ndlalifa.

Me : Wenzeni u Ndlalifa? Are they back?

(He shakes his head)

Me : Zano khuluma nami.

Zanokuhle : Ndlalifa passed away, Mah.

(I immediately pull away from him)

Me : Ini?

Zanokuhle : Ushonile u Ndlalifa. I tried to call you kodwa I couldn't get hold of you. Bathi ushone izolo.

Me : No, no, no, usho u Ndlalifa waphi? Ukhuluma ngani Zanokuhle?

Zanokuhle : He is gone Mah.

(My body heats up and my head starts spinning. Tears drop down from my eyes)

Zanokuhle : Mah? Mah? Ndlelenhle!!!

Me : Aaaah!!

(I scream out loud. No, not Ndlalifa. Not that boy God

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no.)

Zanokuhle : Mah, please drink some water. Drink.

Me : No. No!!!!

(I run to my bedroom and throw myself on my bed.)

Zanokuhle : Zibusiso phumani

Zibusiso : Why is mommy crying?

Zanokuhle : Hambani ningilinde ezansi.

Ndlelenhle : Okay.

Zanokuhle : Mah? Mah, can I get you anything?

(I can't even talk. I'm crying)

Zanokuhle : Ngenzenjani Mah?

(His phone rings. I hear him walking away. My heart is bleeding.  
I can't describe the pain I'm feeling.)

(The door opens)

Zanokuhle : Mah? Mah, nangu u Baba uzolanda izingubo zika  
Ndlalifa lezi ezasala la.

(He is really dead. I cry even more. He is right here next to me. Nyathuko is right here. My room is now smelling like him. He touches my arm)

Nyathuko : Sthah?

(I shake my head. He pulls me into a tight hug. My heart pounds. My heart does this only for him. I don't like how I'm feeling right now but I don't have the energy to fight anything)

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami.

(I won't even fight that he is calling me his love)

Nyathuko : Nkosana ka Baba please get her some water.  
Akhona lawa akhe awaphuzayo?

Zanokuhle : No

Nyathuko : Awuhambe uye e mall Nkosana ka Baba.

Zanokuhle : No, problem Bhambatha.

Nyathuko : Maka Zibusiso, what else do you need?

Me : Nothing

Zanokuhle : I'll just get her everything that will calm her down.

Nyathuko : Okay. Take my card.

Zanokuhle : Ngibayise o Zothani esikoleni?

Nyathuko : No, no, no, don't. I'll call the school.

Zanokuhle : Okay. Ngizohamba nabo. Which card is this one?  
Ngiyayazi i pin?

Nyathuko : Yeah



(Zanokuhle sounds better now. I think it's having their father around. Tough because he is leaving soon. The door closes and now it's just me and Nyathuko. I'm sniffing non stop.)

Nyathuko : Awufuni ukulala kancane?

Me : No

(I wipe my nose)

Me : Thukeh what happened ngempela? What happened to Ndlalifa? He was fine. Bebelana just a few days ago and now he is gone. Kwenzekeni?

Nyathuko : It was his mother. Umugwazile ezitshela ukuthi umuntu ozomuhlasela kanti u Ndlalifa. Kube ingozi.

Me : What?

(I'm confused.)

Nyathuko : Yeah. She thought it was Ndlalifa's step father.

(My body trembles)

Me : Oh my... Oh my....

(I struggle to breathe)

Nyathuko : Sthah? Sthabile, look at me. Breathe.

(I breathe in and out)

Nyathuko : It's okay. Come here

Me : Ingane Thukeh. Ingane yenzi kodwa?

Nyathuko : It's okay. Lala kancane.

(I lie on his chest with his arms wrapped around me.)

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(When I woke up Nyathuko was gone. Zanokuhle walks in and switches on the lights)

Zanokuhle : Mah

Me : Hey

Zanokuhle : uBaba uhambile.

Me : Okay. Nizitholile izingubo zika Ndlalifa?

Zanokuhle : Yes. He bought you a few things wathi ngimazise ukuthi usunjani mase uvukile.

Me : I'm going to be fine.

(He sits down and sighs)

Zanokuhle : Ndlalifa found his father.

Me : Ngempela?

Zanokuhle : Yes ubesemtholile uBaba wakhe before eshone but naye ushonile. He was killed kanti his step-father is missing.

Me : Zanokuhle what are you saying?

Zanokuhle : Naye bacabanga ukuthi ushonile because they found his clothes full of blood but there was no body.

(I sit up)

Me : Yenzeke nini yonke lento?

Zanokuhle : I'm not quite sure.

Me : Ubani owenze yonke lento?

(He shrugs)

Me : Yoh! Yoh! U Ntombikayise ulingwa yini ngempela? U Makhosazana yena ukephi?

(He shakes his head)

Zanokuhle : ENdwedwe. It's bad Mah, kuthiwa ever since they told her about Ndlalifa's death akadli, akakhulumi.

Me : Oh my God.

Zanokuhle : The funeral is on Saturday.

(How did we get here? How did we lose Ndlalifa? )

Me : Okay.

Zanokuhle : And your boyfriend called kade kukhona uBaba la.

.

Me : What? Wathini? Aibo!

Zanokuhle : So uyajola ngempela?

Me : Zanokuhle ngibuze umbuzo!!

Zanokuhle : He spoke to my father, not me. Ungangibuzi izinto engingazazi mina Sthabile.

(He walks out)

11

(It's Wednesday and guess who is here? Musa!!)

Musa : So it's just you and the kids?

Me : Yes, u Zanokuhle use Ndwedwe with his father.

Musa : Bitch, he was so young, what the fuck happened?

(He is looking at Ndlalifa's picture)

Me : He was killed by his mother.

Musa : What?

Me : It was an accident. Yazi namanje umqondo wami usazula. I can't believe his gone. He was sleeping in this bed izolo lokhu and today he is dead. Hhayi u Nkulunkulu unephutha Musa.

Musa : Girlfriend, I'm so sorry.

Me : It's okay.

Musa : Geez! This world is fucked up.

Me : It is. I am supposed to be in Ndwedwe by now. His mother needs all the support she can get but ke u Zanokuhle uthi he doesn't think it's a good idea for me to come today kungcono if I come on Friday.

Musa : Yeah?

Me : Yeah, he thinks the living arrangement is not so good.

Musa : Shame man. Are they struggling?

Me : They are. I went there once and I made a promise to myself that I'd never allow Ndlalifa and Makhosazana to go back to that house.



Musa : Aibo! And who is going to help with the funeral?

Me : UThukeh. Akekho phela omunye.

Musa : Mhmmm! Mhmm! This is bad.

Me : I know.

Musa : Well, thanks to Nyathuko.

Me : Yeah.

Musa : And you? How are you holding up, besides Ndlalifa's death, how are you my friend?

Me : I'm fine.

Musa : And the new guy?

Me : Awungiyeye ngaloyo. He said he was coming down to Durban for the funeral but I'm not sure if he is coming.

Musa : Was he close to the deceased?

Me : Ndlalifa, Musa. Ndlalifa.

Musa : Yes, Ndlalifa.

Me : No but he is close to me and he is coming to support me.

Musa : You are aware that Nyathuko is going to be there?

Me : So?

Musa : Sthabile! His family will also be there. Do you want them to see you with a boyfriend?

Me : And you think Nyathuko's girlfriend won't be there?

(He sighs)

Musa : Do you even love this guy or you are just trying to make Nyathuko jealous?

Me : I love him.

Musa : Wow. And you are pregnant with Nyathuko's child?

Me : With my child! Musa you know what? We are not going to discuss my failed marriage, okay? Nyathuko and I are over. Let that sink in!!

(He raises his hands in surrender)

Musa : Fine. I just hope you know what you are doing.

Me : Angiyona ingane. Of course I know.

(My phone rings. My ex- husband)

Me : Nyathuko

Nyathuko : Hey

Me : Is everything okay?

Nyathuko : Yeah, yeah, everything is fine. Sise Verulam sibheka imbuzi.

Me : Oh

Nyathuko : Yeah, for Ndlalifa's funeral .

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Wena uright?

Me : I'm fine Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Okay. Uhhmmm.... Thina will come to fetch the kids tomorrow. Zizohlala no Gogo size.... Uze ubuye emngcwabeni.

Me : Oh, thanks.

Nyathuko : Sho

(He ends the call.)

Me : Angisiboni isidingo sale call.

Musa : He still loves you. You know that.

Me : Ay. Let's go and have lunch. Yazi ngishiye intaba yomsebenzi lapha e office, I just hope Zack will manage.

Musa : Zack from the Finance Department?

Me : Yep. He's been there long enough. He knows all the ins and outs.

Musa : I miss them.

Me : Don't worry, Monday you are coming with me. I'm sure they'd love to see you.... Hey, I was thinking.

Musa : About?

Me : About giving Magic the Head of Finance department position.

Musa : Magic?

Me : Magic Maphumulo, do you remember him?

Musa : The ugly guy?

Me : He is not ugly.

Musa : He is. With those things on his face, ew!

Me : Musa, he had a skin condition but he is fine now.

Musa : I thought he was in Johann.... Sthabile wait. You are not talking about Magic. Please tell me that Magic is not the new guy. Please, please.

Me : He is a great guy!

Musa : He is a crook! Wow Sthabile! Are you out of your mind?

Me : You are exaggerating.

Musa : Am I? You know what? I need to breathe. I'm going out with the kidoz. Babies let's go and have ice cream.

(My kids scream in excitement)

Me : Musa

Musa : No!! I don't want to hear it.

(He takes my car keys and walks out with the kids. I shouldn't have told this drama queen)

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ENDWEDWE KO NKOSI

(I was hoping that Ndlalifa's body would arrive before I got here but no, I found them still preparing to go to the mortuary. I know Ntombikayise has no family but I didn't think it was this bad. She has no one. Nyathuko, Mr Makhedama and Zanokuhle



are the only people who are ensuring that everything is in order. Ntombikayise is still confused, she is lost. Even the things she says, some of them don't make sense. Makhosazana is dead. No, she is still breathing but she is dead. She is not talking

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she is not crying and she is not eating. The only time she moves is when she is going to the toilet or going to take a bath.

Ntombikayise is a strong woman, I give her that. If I was her I'd be dead. I can't imagine the pain of losing a father, a son and a husband at once. )

Ntombikayise : I don't know how I'd ever thank your husband.

(She's been saying the same thing over and over again)

Me : He was just helping.

Ntombikayise : He did everything. Namanje angikholwa. He did everything.

(Ndlalifa's sister walks in.)

Hlengokuhle : Mah, uthi u Baba ka Zanokuhle ucela ngikubize.

(I wonder who he was calling the whole week when I wasn't here.)

Me : Okay.

(I get up and walk out. I find him waiting for me outside. He is wearing those black overalls. They tied around his waist. He is wearing them with a black t-shirt and a black beanie hat. He needs to cut that beard a little.)

Nyathuko : Maka Ndlelenhle

Me : Yeah. What's wrong?

(He takes my hand and we go and stand at the back of the rondavel)

Me : Yini Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Sekufanele siyolanda u Ndlalifa and the problem now is that I don't have money to pay the hearse.

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Eish! Eish! Angithi bebengenayo i funeral cover manje yonke into I bought it cash ngakhohlwa indaba ye hearse.

Me : You bought everything?

Nyathuko : Sthah bekufanele ngenzeni? U Makhedama ubengenayo imali.

Me : Angilwi nawe mina bengibuza.

Nyathuko : Ngibona uvula amehlo phela.

Me : No, Ndlalifa was like your son so I understand futhi  
ngiyabonga.

(I sigh.)

Me : So uzokwenzenjani? Mina anginayo imali Thukeh. Kade  
nginika uMaka Ndlalifa imali la yokuqasha amabhodwe  
nezitsha.

(He blows out a sigh)

Nyathuko : Uhhh.... Eish. Awuze la

(We go to his car. The Ford Ranger)

Nyathuko : Lizongena ibhokisi la?

Me : Yoh! Ndlalifa was tall and ngicabanga ukuthi nebhokisi lakhe lide.

Nyathuko : You think so?

Me : Kodwa lizongena, I think. Uzovula la?

( He removes the tonneau cover and climbs in. He shakes his head.)

Nyathuko : Eish, ngeke. It won't fit.

(Makhedama and other men are now here. They are discussing the issue of the coffin whether it will fit in Nyathuko's car or not. You know what? I shouldn't be standing with these men)

Me : Thukena?

(I signal him to come closer)

Me : What are you going to do?

(He scratches his head. He looks like he hasn't slept for days. I actually feel sorry for him. It's like he is carrying everything on his shoulders. You know God really has a way for everything. Now I know why Ndlalifa had to meet us in his life.)

Nyathuko : I don't know Maka Enzelwe... Ngizobona, ngizobona. Ngisazofonela no Thalente no Thami. Damn! Ngimukhumbula mekunjena ke u Nqabayethu.

Me : Kanti u Zano yena yini engafikanga nge Kombi? Ngoba I'm sure belizongena kuyona.

Nyathuko : Ufike nge Mercedes. No, no, it's okay. Ungazikhathazi ngalento. I'll see what I can do.

Me : Udlile kodwa?

Nyathuko : No.

Me : Hhaibo! You didn't eat?

Nyathuko : I'm fine Sthah.

(Makhedama calls him. Weeh! I leave them and go back inside the house)

(Later they arrived with Ndlalifa's body. Seeing Ndlalifa's coffin squashed like that in the back of Nyathuko's car feels like we failed our boy. I couldn't stop myself from crying. God knows we wanted better than this. Yes Nyathuko bought him a very beautiful coffin but how they had to transport it here breaks me.)

(The body hasn't entered the house. This is a Mkhize household. Ndlalifa was not a Mkhize by blood and he wasn't introduced to the Mkhize ancestors. Zanokuhle has performed some ritual "wokuvala isikhali" it's basically a ritual of ensuring that after Ndlalifa no one else in the family should die the way

Ndlalifa did. Now my son has to burn the incense and ask the Mkhize ancestors to welcome Ndlalifa's body in their home.)

(This is the moment, the moment I was trying to run away from. Seeing Ndlalifa getting inside this house in a coffin. I can't believe Ndlalifa is lying in that coffin, my boy boy, my Shaka Zulu. What a brave young man. How did he end up in that coffin? Death be not proud. Makhosazana breaks the scream I've never heard before. It stabs right in my heart. I can't, my body, my soul and my heart can't take it. I get up and run outside.)

(I stayed in Hlengokuhle's rondavel. Judging by how everyone is crying I'm sure it's time for body viewing. I don't even want to see what he looks like. The picture of Ndlalifa I have in my head is what I want to keep. I'm not going to ruin it by looking at his dead, stabbed body. A few minutes later the door opens and Nyathuko walks in. Whatever it is in that brown bag I want it. It smells scrumptious.)

Nyathuko : Hey



Me : Hey

(He blows out a heavy sigh and sits down next to me)

Nyathuko : I bought you some food.

(He places the food next to me)

Me : Hawu ngiyabonga. You didn't have to.

Nyathuko : It's okay. Ngikhathele, yezwa.

(He rubs his face. Zanokuhle walks in.)

Zanokuhle : Baba ngiyakucela kancane.

Nyathuko : Woza

Zanokuhle : Baba, please come in.

(Makhedama walks in. They sit down)

Makhedama : There's a problem.

Nyathuko : What's wrong?

Makhedama : Ndlalifa can't be buried here. UNtombi uthi akangcwatshwe layikhaya kodwa ngeke kulunge.

Nyathuko : No, iphutha lelo. He was not a Mkhize.

Zanokuhle : Exactly!

Makhedama : Nondaba, please come and talk to her.

Nyathuko : I don't think it's my place.

(I nod)

Makhedama : I'm only counting on you. Inina kuphela abantu abasithwalile kuyona yonke lento. Ngiyacela, Bhambatha.

(Nyathuko looks at me and I shrug. He sighs and stands up. They walk out. I'm starving. I eat. I try to call Magic but his phone is off. I just hope he won't make it.)

(After an hour Nyathuko and Zanokuhle walked in)

Me : Uma uMaka Ndlalifa engafuni u Ndlalifa eyongcwatshelwa e Molweni then akahambe eyongcwatshelwa kubo kwaZulu.

Nyathuko : He can't.

Me : Why not?

(They look at each other)

Me : Yini le eningangitsheli yona?

Zanokuhle : Kushoniwe kwaZulu. Nabo bazobe betshala inkosi ksasa. They don't care about Ndlalifa so he can't be buried there.

Me : Why not? Akangcwatswe noBaba wakhe.

Zanokuhle : Umkhulu wakhe.

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Sthah, it's complicated. Kunezinto ongazazi ezenzekile which are none of our business. U Ndlalifa uzongcwatshwa e Molweni.

(He stands up and walks out)

Me : What is your father talking about?

Zanokuhle : Nothing. Yazi Mah selokhu ngafika I've never seen my father eating. Awumzamele naye ukudla.

Me : Why would he buy me food, engadlile yena?

Zanokuhle : Maybe that's because he cares about you but unfortunately I can't say the same thing about you.

(He walks out and follows his father. Why are they angry?)

(After Zanokuhle walked out, I heard someone screaming and I jumped. I ran outside. Nyathuko is carrying Ntombikayise to his car)

Me : What's going on?

Hlengokuhle : Mah!!!

Me : Zanokuhle, what's going on?

Zanokuhle : She fainted. We need to go to the hospital.

Me : What?

(Nyathuko leaves Ntombikayise in his car and runs to me. He hugs me.)

Nyathuko : We need to go. She is not breathing. Please take care of the kids. Siyabuya

Me : Okay, okay.

(Zanokuhle, Makhedama and Nyathuko get inside the car. They are taking Ntombikayise to the hospital. I am left with Makhedama's kids, Ndlalifa's body and his siblings. Makhosazana is just staring at Ndlalifa's coffin without blinking. How do you explain this?)

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3 AM

(Ntombikayise is in hospital. She won't be here to bury her son because she is in ICU. Makhedama refused to leave the hospital so he is there with her. Who is left to finalize all funeral arrangements? Me and Nyathuko. It's a lot. I have had this terrible headache since last night. I've been on my feet all night until now. There's a lot to do in a short space of time but luckily Ntombikayise's friends have arrived and they are helping around. Nyathuko's car is going in and out of this yard. I feel sorry for him more than I do for anyone else. He's been busy with funeral arrangements from day one. No wonder everyone here calls him Ndlalifa's older brother. I don't know why they chose brother and not his father. People think Nyathuko is young kanti weee! Well, "Ndlalifa's brother" hired a generator and the noise is deafening that you can't even hear people who were here for Umlindelo singing in the tent. Never mind the smell of petrol. I want to vomit.)

MaNtuli : Sthabile no, you need to sit down a bit. You must be tired.

(I think this one suspects that I'm pregnant. The way she keeps looking at my stomach is suspicious. I try to pull out a smile. I am really tired.)

Me : I'm fine.

MaNtuli : Please eat. There's samp in that pot.

(Samp? No)

Me : Okay.

(I leave them talking about Ntombikayise and Makhosazana. I walk out and search for Zanokuhle. I find Nyathuko smoking at the back of the house. He quickly throws away his cigarette. Will he ever stop doing that? I know he smokes for God sake.)

Nyathuko : Maka Zanokuhle

(I lean against the wall and sigh)



Me : Hey.

(He pulls me by my arm and wraps his arm around me.)

Nyathuko : Yinindaba?

Me : I'm tired

(I whisper. There's a burning lump in my throat. I want to cry.  
Fuck this pregnancy)

Nyathuko : Huh?

Me : Ngikhathele Thukeh

(He is so warm plus he smells good. I'm not going to shift. He  
brushes my arm.)

Nyathuko : Where is your jacket? It's cold here.

Me : I left all my jackets nezicathulo zami but I asked Musa to bring them.

Nyathuko : Is he coming for the funeral?

(He takes off his jacket)

Me : Yeah

Nyathuko : Gqoka le.

Me : And what are you going to wear if I take yours?

Nyathuko : Don't worry about me.

(He helps me put on his jacket. We stare at each other. I want to kiss him. I know how much he makes me better. Why did he

have to cheat? His hand touches my stomach and he immediately pulls away)

Nyathuko : I need to go. Don't you want to sleep?

Me : I do. Where is Zanokuhle?

Nyathuko : I told him to go and sleep kwa Zondi.

(Nyathuko's home is a few minutes away from here.)

Me : Okay

(I yawn)

Nyathuko : Wena awufuni ukulala kancane? You look tired.

Me : Where am I going to sleep?

Nyathuko : In my car.

Me : Uzongivusa?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ngizokuvusa.

Me : Kuvuliwe?

Nyathuko : Nawu ukhiye. Woza ngikuphelezele.

(He took me to his car and I got in and slept. He came back to bring me food. I ate and slept again.)

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11 AM

(I knew it. I knew she was going to be here. There was no way she could stay home instead of coming here to protect Nyathuko's dick. I hate that coloured Gogo. There she is standing with Nyathuko's friends next to Nyathuko's car. She is the only woman surrounded by men. Bloody old bitch!)

Musa : Are you sure you are okay?

Me : I told you she was coming, right? So why wouldn't I be okay? Nyathuko and I over anginendaba ukuthi wenzani!

Musa : Okay, calm down.

Me : I am calm.

Musa : You know she is the one who always follows him around. It's not like.....

Me : I don't care. Eyami indoda isendleleni. Leya eka Ashton kanti ke engenza noma yini ngayo uma ethanda!!

Musa : Oh nkosi!

(I'm glad he still remembers how to speak IsiZulu. There's a car approaching the gate. That's Magic. I can feel it)

Me : That's Magic.

Musa : Ow. And how do you know?

(He gets out of the car. I knew it was him. He is wearing cargo shorts and an oversized v neck t-shirt with leather double strap sandals. I want to hide. Musa laughs out loud)

Musa : What the hell is he wearing? Look at those legs.

Me : Musa, please.

Musa : No

did you see your ex husband? He looks like he just wrapped up a Hugo Boss cologne advert.

Me : Who cares? Okusalayo uyafeba.

Musa : Oh wow. Let me go and show him his seat before he faints.

Me : He is not sick.

Musa : He looks sick.

Me : You know what? I'll handle it.

(I fix my scarf and make my way to Magic. Oh there is Makhedama's daughter)

Me : Amanda

Amanda : Maka Zanokuhle

Me : The service is about to start. How is Makhosazana?

Amanda : Zanokuhle spoke to her and I must say she seems better now. Uze wacela namanzi.

Me : That's good. Nina seniright? Where are the kids?

Amanda : With Hlengokuhle and Vusi.

Me : Okay.

(We don't have a choice, we are going to bury Ndlalifa without his mother here. Oh Ntombikayise!)

( I don't see Nyathuko. I walk past Nyathuko's friends and Ashton. My ears are wide open. I want to hear what they are talking about.)



Thalente : Are you serious?

Ashton : I posted.

Thami : Congratulations.

(I'm not going to greet them. They are laughing now. I hate it when people laugh after I just walked past them. Magic smiles)

Me : Kodwa yini le oyigqokile.

(I mumble to myself and pull out a wide smile)

Me : Mashimane

Magic : Hey kanti kugcwele kanje la. I thought it was a kid's funeral.

(He looks around)

Me : Ndlalifa was not a kid. Did you get lost?

(I hug him. I can feel that all eyes are on us. Good!)

Magic : No.

Me : Liar. Usho nini nje ukuthi ungena o Tongaat.

Magic : Maybe I did, just a little.

(We both laugh)

Me : Thank you for coming. I thought you weren't going to come after some stranger answered my phone.

Magic : Stranger?

(Oh Zanokuhle lied. What is wrong with my son?)

Me : My ex husband.

Magic : Oh yes he did answer your phone. A few days ago? He told me you were sleeping.

Me : Oh he did?

Magic : Yeah.

Me : And you don't have a problem with that?

(I whisper)

Magic : What problem?

(I sigh. No jealousy at all.)

Me : Let's go in.

Magic : Okay. You know I had to cancel my trip to Johannesburg so that I could come here and support you.

Me : You canceled?

Magic : Yes.

(I smile)

Me : Thank you Zikode.

(We walk past the hypocrites again)

Magic : Sanibona

(Only Ashton responds. Why did he greet them?)

(We went inside the tent. My boy looks so cute in that picture. He is in a school uniform. Ntombikayise chose the picture. Makhosazana can't even look at Ndlalifa's pictures. The Zondis have started to walk inside the tent in groups. Maxwell walked in with Vee, Sthenjisiwe and Ntokozo. Kwanele walked in with Ntuthuko, Lubanzi and Wandile.)

(Makhosazana will never get used to the fact that Ndlalifa is gone. After everything has settled I'm taking her for counseling. She needs it. This whole time she is staring at Ndlalifa's coffin without blinking. She is scaring me to be honest.)

(My eyes are busy searching for Nyathuko all around the tent. I don't know why because I have Magic sitting right next to me. He walks in, an older version of Ndlelenhle. He goes and sits right next to Ashton. My heart pounds. My brain freezes. He is brushing Ashton's stomach. I can't hear anything anymore. My body is trembling. My face is sweating)

Magic : Are you okay?

(I nod. That's the only thing I can do.)

Magic : Are you sure?

(I don't want to be here anymore)

Me : Ndlalifa I'm sorry my boy.

(I mutter. I get up)

Magic : Sthabile....

(I'm out. I go straight to Hlengokuhle's rondavel and grab my bag. I search for my keys with tears blurring my eyes. I bump into Musa on my way out)

Musa : Sthabile, where are you going?

(I shake my head)

Me : Please ask Magic to bring you home.

Musa : No! Where are you going?

(I run to my car and get in. I throw my bag in the back seat and start the engine. Musa is banging my window)

Musa : Sthabile!

Me : Leave me alone!!

(I drive off)

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UMZINYATHI

(I'm here to fetch my kids and then go to Ballito. I'm trying so hard to calm myself down. I park my car and take a deep breath. I thought I'd find them running around the yard but it's quiet. I open the door and get out. I see Gog'Maphalala stepping out of the house with somebody. She is still strong and that's because she knows how to take care of herself.)

Gog'Maphalala : Obani laba?

(We both laugh. I make my way towards them)

Me : KwaMaphalala

Gog'Maphalala : Mano, is this you?

Me : Ninjani Gogo?



Gog'Maphalala : Siyaphila sthandwa sami. Maka Bheka, umawezingane zika Nyathuko lo.

(I smile)

Maka Bheka : Aibo, kanti umawezingane zika Thukeh usemncane kangaka?

(I laugh)

Me : Aibo I'm old.

Maka Ndlela : Isitufuza esihle.

(My smile disappears. Screw the beauty part, she called me fat and that ruins every complement. I leave them outside and walk inside the house. My kids are sleeping in Gogo's room. Whenever they are bored they sleep. I leave them and go sit in the living room. My phone rings. It's Musa. I switch it off. Gog'Maphalala walks in.)

Me : Ngizolanda laba

( I get straight to the point. It's not like she wants me here. Not that I do either. I'm just here to fetch my kids)

Gog'Maphalala : I thought you went to the funeral.

(She sits down)

Me : I did.

Gog'Maphalala : Aw, sekuphelile njalo?

Me : No, I had to leave before they finished.

Gog'Maphalala : I see.

(Can somebody stop these fuckin tears)

Me : Ngicela ukuhamba

(I stare up at the roof and blink back the tears)

Gog'Maphalala : Why are you doing this to yourself? What went wrong, Sthabile? I thought you and Nyathuko loved each other. Bengibona ukwethembana, ngibona abantu ababili abangasoze bahlukaniswa yilutho.

(I shake my head. I don't know what to say)

Gog'Maphalala : After everything you've been through kodwa uzovumela izinto ezingelutho nje zibhidlize umshado wakho?

Me : Nyathuko was cheating on me.

Gog'Maphalala : Pho? What's new? Nyathuko's grandfather cheated on me. Your father-in-law cheated on my daughter.

Lento yobusoka yinto endala nje emndenini wakwa Maphalala kanye nakhona kwa Zondi. All men cheat.

Me : Kusho ukuthi amadoda ayengadalelwe ke mina. Angisoze mina ngahlalela indoda eqonywayo. I'm not going to get comfortable with the false belief that all men cheat. If he cheats then he is not for me.

Gog'Maphalala : Umthetho wakho uhloseni? Uhlose ukupha enye indoda igazi lakwa Zondi?

(What? Who told her?)

Me : I have no idea of.....

Gog'Maphalala : Deep down you know that Nyathuko is the father. Ingane yakwa Zondi le.

Me : Cha

Gog'Maphalala : Do you know what you are getting yourself into? The mess you are creating for yourself? Mntanami awuyazi lento oyenzayo. Lungisa izinto kusenesikhathi.

Me : I don't know what to do!

(I break down)

Gog'Maphalala : Do you love Nyathuko?

Me : It doesn't matter. I'm not enough. I'll never be enough. Ngangazi ukuthi u Nyathuko akayena owami. Akakaze angithanda

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into ayenzile nje ukungifuhla ngezingane. U Nyathuko unomuntu athandana naye, umuntu wesifazane ongcono kakhulu ukunami.

Gog'Maphalala : Waze wakhulumisa okwengane. Sthabile, awuseyona ingane. Umdala! Unendodana ende ngangami engakulethela abazukulu noma inini. Wake up! Open your eyes!

Musa ukuvumela onondindwa ababuya emendweni  
bekucindezele ngalendlela. Fight for your man, fight for the  
father of your kids. Uma kufanele umthakathe do that!  
Ungangicasuli wena ulokhu utetema la!

Me : Bewitch him?

Gog'Maphalala : WeSthabile u Nkulunkulu akahlalele ukulalela  
umthandazo wakho wedwa lapha ezulwini. Some things don't  
need a prayer. Kufanele usukume wena uzibambe ngezandla.

Me : I don't understand.

Gog'Maphalala : Make him yours! Yours alone!

(I'm confused)

Me : Ngimudlise?

Gog'Maphalala : There's no need for that. Nyathuko loves you. There are other ways. Awuphaphame Sthabile! Awuphaphame uyeke ukuthithiza!

(She hits my thighs and stands up. Why is she angry?)

Gog'Maphalala : Phaphama ntombazane. Umshado awusifuni isidenga

(She is insulting me right now.)

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(She begged me to sleepover. I did not sleep in Nyathuko's room. I slept in a room that used to be my mother-in-law's. It's close to Gogo's room. The way I left Ndlalifa's funeral saddens me even now but I had no choice. I can't sleep. The fact that Ashton is carrying Nyathuko's child breaks me. I regret the day I met Nyathuko.)

(The time is 01:10 am. I'm wide awake and then Boom! Respect Life by Mandoza breaks the roof all the way from outside. The song ends and starts all over again. I can hear Gogo already complaining. I get up and open the door)

Gog'Maphalala : Awuzwe lembongolo ka Ndabenhle izovusa izingane ngomsindo. What is wrong with Thukeh?

Me : I don't know.

(I follow her to the living room. She opens the door)

Gog'Maphalala : Hlonipha uGogo noMkhulu kephi khona ungibangela umsindo ngilele? Thukeh switch off that thing!

(Gog'Maphalala shouts on top of the loud music. I shake my head)

Gog'Maphalala : Hhaibo! WeThukeh? Nyathuko?



(He is here with the red car yobufebe! I don't know where he left the Ranger. Gogo bangs the bonnet. I sit down and sigh. The music switches off)

Gog'Maphalala : Uxolisa ini? Do you know what time it is?  
What's wrong with you Nyathuko?

(They are coming. I wonder if he knows that I'm here.)

Gog'Maphalala : Usuyaphuza futhi?

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami.

(They walk in. He smells like shebeen with a little bit of mint. I can't believe he is drunk!! Nyathuko doesn't drink.)

Me : Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Ufunani lo la?

(My eyes widen)

Gog'Maphalala : Akayena umawezingane zakho u Sthabile?  
Nyathuko yini ngawe? Uloyiwe ngane ka Ndabenhle?

Nyathuko : Leave.

Me : Excuse me?

Nyathuko : Hamba. Hamba layikhaya.

Gog'Maphalala : Udakiwe! Ehambe eyephi?

Nyathuko : Sthabile, leave.

Me : Nya....

Nyathuko : Come. Woza, woza. Take your bags and leave.

(He goes to his mother's room and grabs my bag)

Me : Is this how you treat me now?

Nyathuko : Yah.

Me : Oh ngiyabona. Ukumithisa u Ashton lokhu okukubhampisayo.

(He looks at me)

Nyathuko : Ngimithise bani?

Me : You know exactly what I'm talking about!! I know she is pregnant. I knew ukuthi awungifuni wena. You never loved me Nyathuko. All you wanted was to destroy my life!!

Nyathuko : Okay. Mina ke..... Thatha, thatha isaka lakho uhambe.

(My hands are itching. I want to slap him. I can't believe he is doing this to me.)

Nyathuko : Hamba Sthabile.

Me : Nyathuko what happened to you?

Nyathuko : I don't want to talk. Hamba ekhaya lami Sthabile. Akuwona umuzi wakho lo. Leave.

(He pushes me out)

Me : Ngicela ukuthatha izingane zami!!

Nyathuko : No, my kids are fine here. Hamba

Me : Nyathuko leave me alone!!!

Gog'Maphalala : Kodwa yini Thukeh ungibukanisa nabantu? Yini kodwa le eniyenzayo emzini ka Maphalala nibadala kangaka?

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa, Msuthu. Sthabile hamba! Yini inkinga yakho?

Me : I want my kids!!

Nyathuko : Fuck off!

Gog'Maphalala : Nyathuko!

(He drags me out. He throws my bag and all my keys on my feet.)

Nyathuko : Don't ever set your foot here ever again.

Me : Uloyiwe wena ngikutshele!

Nyathuko : Fine. Go

(Hhaibo! Hhaibo! I can't believe this. I bite my lips in frustration. I pick up my bag and my keys. I go and get in my car. Gog'Maphalala is trying to talk to him but she is not winning. I start the car and drive off.)

14

(I arrived in Ballito. I called Musa to come and open the gate.  
We walked inside the house. Musa looks worried)

Musa : Sthabile what's wrong? Where are you coming from at  
this time?

Me : I want to sleep.

Musa : Where are the kids? You are scaring me.

Me : My kids are fine. UNyathuko kicked me out of his house.

Musa : Where?

Me : Musa I don't want to talk. Can we sleep?

Musa : Magic is here.

Me : What?

Musa : You said I should ask him to bring me here and I did.

Me : I didn't say you must let him sleep here.

Musa : I didn't. He just asked me to show him your room.

Me : Yazi ngizohlanya.

I run up the steps. I open the door to my bedroom. Hhaibo! He is sleeping with his knees up in my bed.

Me : Nayi indoda izongimisela amadolo emzini wami.

(I mumbled. I'm still angry at Nyathuko and to be honest this is the last thing I need.)

Me : Magic?



(I shook him once and he woke up.)

Magic : Hey ubuyile.

Me : Yes. What are you doing here?

Magic : Why are your eyes swollen? Kade ukhala?

Me : No

Magic : Sthabile what's wrong? What did he do to you?

(He wraps his arm around my shoulders)

Magic : Did he hit you?

Me : No

Magic : Sit down.

Me : You can't be here.

Magic : But this is your house, my girlfriend's house. I have every right to be here!!

(I look at him. He sighs)

Magic : I'm sorry. Ukuthi ukukubona ufika ngalesikhathi unjena doesn't sit well with me. Sthabile I love you. I know our agreement but I'm falling for you. Yicala lelo?

Me : Magic, please. My life is a bit complicated.

Magic : Your life is not complicated. Uwena ovumela leyanja yakwa Zondi ilawule impilo yakho. He left you Sthabile.

Me : I left him.

Magic : So why are you following him around? Akakufuni. He was with his girlfriend at the funeral. The coloured woman? Do you know her?

Me : I don't want to talk.

Magic : What do you want, Sthabile?

Me : I....

Magic : Because mina I want to be with you. Ngifuna ukukuthwala kulendlela ohamba kuyona but I feel like you are shutting me out. You left me just like that nabantu engingabazi. Ngahlala lapha and I listened to everyone praising you and your husband. Mina bengithi you two are divorced kodwa angisaboni kanjalo. I don't understand Sthabile, I just don't get it. I mean you've been pushing for this and here I am meeting you half way but you are pushing me back.

Me : You have a girlfriend.

Magic : Can we not talk about Ayanda? Sthabile I am here because I want to be here.

Me : For how long?

Magic : What do you mean?

Me : How long are you going to be here until you realize that you don't need me? After 3 months, 12 months? 10 years?

Magic : Where is all of this coming from?

Me : I just want to know.

Magic : Sthabile just say it. Isho ukuthi usulungise izinto no Baba wezingane zakho. Ungalokhu ungibuza izinto ezingasile.

Me : No, no. That's not what happened. We didn't fix things.

Magic : So where the fuck are you coming from?

Me : I went to fetch my kids but they refused.

Magic : You need to decide on what you want.

Me : You don't know what you want.

Magic : I do. I want to do this. I'm willing to go all in and risk my relationship with Ayanda. If we get caught angisenendaba.

(My mouth gape open. I didn't expect that)

Magic : Is it worth it?

Me : Yeah. I.... I have nothing to lose.

(He kisses my lips. The way he kisses me still disgusts me. I don't know if that's because I'm used to the way Nyathuko kisses me or what.)

Magic : Let's have sex.

Me : What?

(Wuuh uh-huh that's just weird. He takes off his t-shirt. Wait, he is wearing Nyathuko's t-shirt. I gulp)

Me : Is that yours?

Magic : No, I found it in your closet.

Me : I'd appreciate it if you stopped going through my things.

(He laughs sarcastically)

Magic : Woman, you are unbelievable. You know what? I'm leaving. Please request an Uber for me.

Me : No, no. You don't have to leave. I was just saying.

Magic : Saying what exactly? Ucabanga ukuthi ngizontshontsha lento mina?

Me : No

(I try to kiss me)

Magic : Sthabile I can't do this. Ngiyeke ngihambe ubuyele endodeni yakho.

Me : I don't want to. I want to be here. I want you to be here.

Magic : Are you sure?

Me : I want us to try.

(He sighs)

Magic : Take off your clothes.

Me : Uhmhhh... Can we sleep in the guest room?

Magic : Why?

Me : I just....

Magic : Whatever. Where is it?

Me : I'll be back now.

(I walk out and go to the guest room where Musa is sleeping. I catch him running inside)



Me : Ubucuthile!

Musa : Of course! And what the hell was that about? You let him speak to you like that?

Me : Musa please, it's too early for that. Please go and sleep in my bedroom.

Musa : Why?

Me : I can't sleep with Magic kuleyandlu.

Musa : Oh really? May I ask why?

Me : No.

Musa : Why are you doing this?

Me : Ngizosangana abantu bengibuza into eyodwa. Just go, Musa.

Musa : You don't want him to sleep in your husband's room. Simple!

Me : Did I say that?

Musa : You don't have to. It's...

Me : Don't put words in my mouth.

(He takes his phone)

Musa : Remember to use protection. Your kids still need you. That man is sick.

(He says and walks out. I want to scream)

^

^

(I'm glad that he didn't even touch me. I guess he is angry. The sun is out now. I know Nyathuko will be bringing my kids soon. He can't find him here. He moves his arm. He is awake. I shift away.)

Magic : Are you sleeping?

Me : No

Magic : I thought you'd make breakfast.

Me : Are you hungry?

Magic : Ukhulumela nokudla?

Me : What? No.

Magic : No

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kumele usho phela ukuze ngazi ukuthi kufanele ngenze iskhafthini mengiza la. Ngiphathe umphako.

(Wow.)

Me : Are you still angry?

Magic : I'm hungry.

Me : Fine. I'll go and make breakfast. Ungabe ugeza. Amathawula alapha.

Magic : I'm going back to Johannesburg.

(Ohh hhayi! I'm tired of hearing about this Johannesburg)

Me : I thought you were not going back anytime soon.

Magic : I have nothing keeping me here. Lomsangano wami nawe won't work.

Me : Madness?

Magic : What do you call this?

Me : Magic I'm sorry. Mhlampe ngithathe izinto ngamawala kade ngifika. I was just angry. Nyathuko refused with my kids.

Magic : No, it's okay. Nginomuntu Sthabile. Ayanda loves me but I was willing to risk it all for us. Kodwa ngiyabona ukuthi ngizosisola. I'm too old for these games. Yinto yezingane le and.....

Me : You won't regret it. I'm sorry. I'll do better. I'll give you a job. You don't have to go back to Johannesburg. Ungathola indawo yokuhlala and I'll give you a job lapha e Auto Movers. I'll give you the Head of Finance department position.

(He smiles)

Magic : Are you serious?

Me : Yes. Ngithembise nje ukuthi ngeke uhambe.

Magic : You don't have to give me a job. Mhlampe ku.....

Me : No, I want to. Look, my life is a bit complicated okwamanje and I need you to be here for me.

Magic : Where am I going to get money to pay rent? Angithi kuzofanele ngikhokhe phambili?

Me : Leave that to me.

(He hugs me)

Magic : Thank you Mapholoba. I promise you won't regret this.

(I sigh)

THALENTE

(After the funeral Nyathuko disappeared. I left without seeing him and this morning I went to his flat and he wasn't there. During my lunch at work I decided to go and check if he wasn't at his Sneaker Shop. I found him there with his kids.)

Me : What are you doing here? Zibuke amehlo anjani.

Nyathuko : Ngiphethwe ikhanda but I'll be fine. Ndlelenhle stop that.

Ndlelenhle : I'm bored.

Nyathuko : We are leaving now. Ngishilo angithi?

Ndlelenhle : But you said that an hour ago.

(He sighs and closes his eyes)

Me : My boy, hamba uyobuka i TV kancane lapha e reception.

Ndlelenhle : Dad.....

Nyathuko : Ubanga umsindo lapha, ulwa nosisi bakhe.

Me : You won't make noise, right?

Ndlelenhle : Yes.

Nyathuko : Go. Ngizoza manje sihambe uyogunda lesihluthu esisekhanda.

Ndlelenhle : Okay



Nyathuko : Woza kuBaba phela kuqala.

(He kisses Ndlelenhle's cheek. They both laugh and Ndlela runs away. He grabs a bottle of water and drinks.)

Me : Did you drink last night?

Nyathuko : No.

Me : Uzobuyela ekuphuzeni utshwala? Are you serious?

Nyathuko : What was I supposed to do?

Me : I don't know but alcohol, Thukeh? Aibo wakithi. Is this about that idiot?

Nyathuko : Why Thalente? Ibizonzani indoda ka Sthabile lapha?

Me : I don't know.

Nyathuko : I should have killed him. Ngimubulale ngiqede ngimungcwabe lapha emathuneni ase Molweni kanye no Ndlalifa.

Me : I'm proud of you mfanakithi. I'm proud of how you handled yourself, your temper and everything else yesterday. Uwuhloniphile umngcwabo waleyantwana.

Nyathuko : U Sthabile why enza kanje? Thalente I'm going to lose my mind. I can't take it anymore. Yazi impilo iyangijezisa nje ngezinto engingazazi.

Me : Uthini u Ashton?

(He blows out a sigh)

Me : Fuck Thukeh!

Nyathuko : Yeah.

Me : Yoh! Yoh! You! Haaa!

(I scratch my head)

Nyathuko : I don't know. I don't know what to do! Impilo  
iyangicindezela.

Me : Fuck!!

(I bang the table)

Nyathuko : What am I going to do now?

Me : Wait, wait, what does she know?

Nyathuko : Angithi uyazi that I suspected that Mzet knows  
something about what happened to Nqabayethu and I asked  
her ukuthi ezisondeze kuyena ukuze ethole iqiniso.

Me : Yeah, yeah.

Nyathuko : She got me the evidence I needed. I told her that I would speak to Mzet and ask him not to get my son arrested. She believed me wanginika i evidence kwawuyena futhi ongitshelyo that Mzet was going to meet up with Zanokuhle. Izinto zenzeka ngaleyandle ke.

Me : Yeah?

Nyathuko : I lied. I told her that mina no Mzet sikhulumile and uthe usafuna ukupholisa ikhanda ngakho uyahamba for a few months.

Me : So she thinks Mzet is away for a few months?

Nyathuko : Yah. Akazi ukuthi ufile. She didn't care. All this time she didn't care until this fuckin.... Shit! Manje usengiqalela izitori. She wants to know where he went. Nxi!

Me : Damn!

Nyathuko : U Ashton akakwazi ukuvala amathanga. Isfebe esingihlukanise nomfazi wami sisuka lapho sesimithi ingane ka Mzet! The same Mzet I killed.

Me : How far is she?

Nyathuko : 3.....4 months. Lapho nje. Ngithi mina ngoba wena uhamba ulala nawo wonke amadoda how sure are you that this is Mzet's child. Uthi une sure because u Mzet uyena kuphela abelala naye without protection and.... Ey! Ey! Thalente angazi bafo. Angazi, angazi.

Me : Let's kill the child.

Nyathuko : No. Ingane ka wakithi leya. As much as he screwed me up, kodwa u Mzet was like a brother to me. Igazi likamfowethu leliya. Angikwazi ukulibeka ezandleni zami.

Me : What are you going to tell her?

Nyathuko : Nothing.

(He sighs and presses his forehead against his desk)

15

(Musa is angry because I want to give Magic a job at Auto Movers. He left and went to see his biological father. Musa's feelings are the least of my worries. I have bigger problems. My kids are still not here. Magic has left. I take my phone and call my mother)

MaKheswa : Amen, mntanami.

Me : Mah ninjani?

MaKheswa : We are fine, ninjani nina?

Me : Ay we are fine. How is your ankle?

MaKheswa : Uthixo emuhle ngivuke lehlile namhlanje.

Me : That's good. That's good.

MaKheswa : How was the funeral?

Me : Oh kuhambe kahle. I just got a call from the hospital bathi no Ntombikayise usephapheme.

MaKheswa : Oh makadunyiswe uJesu Kristu.

Me : Amen.

MaKheswa : Kwangathi umorosi nje.

Me : Ngimorosi ngempela ntombi.

MaKheswa : What happened?

Me : UNyathuko ungigile lezo adume ngazo but ke this time it's worse. Uvele wamithisa.

MaKheswa : Ini?

Me : I'm telling you. Intombi yakhe kade sinayo lapha emngcwabeni. Eyiphulula isisu.

MaKheswa : Unamanga Sthabile!

Me : I wish. Ngizibonele ngalawa awami. Ngihambe umfundisi engakasho nokuthi Amen.

MaKheswa : Kanti what's wrong with this Zondi boy?

Me : Ay u Nyathuko wazalelwa ukulinga impilo yami.

MaKheswa : Don't say that, mntanami.

Me : It's true. Simithi sobabili ke manje naloyamfazi we coloured.

MaKheswa : Haa! Haa! Ibizwa ngani ke lento weSthabile?



Me : I don't know. Angazi nokuthi kumele ngenzeni.

MaKheswa : You need to tell Baba ka Ndlelenhle the truth. Uma ungalikhulumi iqiniso uzoyikhulisa wedwa leyongane ngikutshele.

Me : Ngizothini kodwa Mah?

MaKheswa : Tell him the truth.

Me : UNyathuko akasafuni nokungibona. Ukwenze kwacaca lokho. Ungikhiphise okwenja lapha kwaMaphalala.

MaKheswa : Kodwa akasoze walahla ingane yakhe.

(I sigh)

Me : Kulungile. Let me call him. Bengithi uzofika la kodwa ngiyabona nakhu kushona ilanga engazilethile izingane.

MaKheswa : Zise Mzinyathi namanje?

Me : I don't know weMah. I'll call you later. Othi ngifonele lo ngizwe ukuthi uthini.

MaKheswa : Okay mntanami. Please let me know ukuthi kuhambe kanjani.

Me : Okay.

(I hang up and dial Nyathuko's number)

Nyathuko : Hello

Me : Hey. Can you talk?

Nyathuko : I'm driving.

Me : Ay kahle phela Thukeh lento engifuna ukuyikhuluma ibalulekile.

(Silence)

Me : Baba ka Ndlelenhle?

Nyathuko : Khuluma. Angithi ngiyasho ukuthi ngiyashayela futhi ngihamba nezingane la.

Me : Okay.

Nyathuko : Ah! Usuthuli ke manje.

Me : Are you coming here?

Nyathuko : No, siyogunda no Ndlelenhle.

Me : When are you bringing them back?

Nyathuko : Ksasa.

Me : Okay. Thukeh I need to tell you something.

Nyathuko : Ini leyo?

Me : The baby is yours. Ngangidlala mengithi akuyona.

Nyathuko : Which baby?

Me : Aibo Nyathuko uthini manje? Ingane engikhulelwe.

Nyathuko : Le owafika wifuthe esiswini nama love bites agcwele umqala?

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Since when is it my baby?

Me : You know it's yours. Uwena nje onezimendlela zokungimithisa

Nyathuko : Ay I don't know about that.

Me : Bengifuna ukukutshela lokho.

Nyathuko : Mina izingane enginazo nawe izingane zethu ezashona, u Zanokuhle, Ndlelenhle namawele kuphela. I don't know about that baby.

Me : Excuse me?

Nyathuko : You heard me. That is not my baby.

Me : Uyadlala angithi?

Nyathuko : Do I sound like I'm joking?

(No

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he is serious. Dead serious)

Me : Nyathuko awukwazi ukungenza kanjalo. Sesingathi sesibadala uqale phansi uphike isisu? Aibo kahle.

Nyathuko : Am I wrong for doing that? I asked you if the baby was mine and you said no. Anginayo ingane engilindele nawe mina.

Me : Nyathuko can you please come here so that we could talk?

Nyathuko : I don't have time. I'm busy.

Me : Nyathuko ungasidideki. I'm not telling you this because I want you back in my life, Cha! I just want you to know ukuthi ingane eyakho nje kuphela. I don't need you back. Sorry kabi.

Nyathuko : Mina Nyathuko Zondi anginayo ingane yami ekhulelwe uwena. I have no idea what you are talking about. I don't know anything about the baby but you are welcome to take your family niye ekhaya kwa Zondi niyobika isisu. That's all.

(My eyes widen in disbelief)

Me : Ngibike isisu mina?

Nyathuko : It's up to you. Now please, if there is nothing else....

Me : Nyathuko what is wrong with you?

Nyathuko : No, what is wrong with you? Ufuna ngikhulise izingane engingazazi manje ngoba nakhu ngiyislima sakho.

Me : Nyathuko....

Nyathuko : Sthabile please, leave me alone. Ngikuyekile manje nawe please do the same.

(Call ends. I put my arms over my head)

"Yoh! Yoh! Yoh! Isukile?"

(I quickly turn around. It's Zanokuhle.)

Me : Why ulalele izindaba zami?

Zanokuhle : I did?

Me : What are you doing here?

Zanokuhle : Wenzeni, Sthabile?

Me : Excuse me?

Zanokuhle : Ay good luck, Mapholoba.

(He walks away)



16

(It's been a week since Magic joined Auto Movers. A week of headache and stress. I'm sitting in my office. Physically I'm here but mentally, no. I squeeze the stress ball in my hand. My door opens. I lift up my eyes)

Magic : Hey

Me : Hey

Magic : Are you going out for lunch?

(I shake my head)

Me : No, I cooked.

(He steps in and closes the door)

Magic : Oh, unghathelile mina?

Me : No.

Magic : Is everything okay?

(He kisses my cheek)

Me : I'm fine. You can take my food.

Magic : Okay.

(I rub my stomach)

Magic : About the apartment. Wawuthe you'll help me with the rent money.

(I look at him)

Magic : So I need to know ukuthi uzoyifaka nini.

Me : I'm not going to give you money for rent. I gave you a job. Isn't that enough?

Magic : Sthabile we spoke about th....

Me : Nginezingane Magic. Izingane ezifunda isikole. I cannot take care of a grown man like you.

(He narrows his eyes and chuckles)

Magic : Right. You spoke to your gay friend, angithi? Uyena lo okutshela ukuthi ukhulume nami kanje. When is he going back to England?

Me : That's none of your business.

(His face changes.)

Magic : I will not allow you to speak to me like that.  
Uzongihlonipha ngoba....

Me : I'm still your boss, Mr Maphumulo.

(He laughs and shakes his head)

Magic : Oh is that so? Yazi, I think I understand why Nyathuko left you. You are full of.....

Me : Keep Nyathuko out of this. Awufuni ukukhuluma ngendoda ene pride njengo Thukeh. Yazi there's a huge turn on about indoda ene pride. Indoda ezaziyo ukuthi iyindoda. Indoda enganciki kumuntu wesifazane njalo nje. Indoda ethi I will not allow a woman to take care of me. UNyathuko is exactly that. Are you sure ukuthi ufuna ukukhuluma ngaye?

(His face drops.)

Me : Magic, ayikho into enesidina njengendoda ehlale ibalisa. Indoda ehlale njalo iqhatha usizi. Indoda ehlale njalo ikubikela ngokuhlupheka kwayo. Isicefe sendoda lesa.

(His jaw tightens)

Magic : You know what? It's fine. I'm leaving.

Me : Close the door on your way out.

Magic : What is wrong with you?

(I signal him to get out. He shakes his head and walks out. I take my phone and call Nyathuko.)

Me : Baba kaNdlelenhle

Nyathuko : Sthabile

Me : How are you?

Nyathuko : What do you want, Sthah?

Me : I tried to call you for the past 4 days ungathathi izingcingo zami Thukeh kanti kwenzenjani ngempela?

Nyathuko : Ufunani Sthabile?

Me : Angisakwazi mina ukulala. I'm stressed Thukeh. Lento yokuthi kufanele ngiye kini ngiyobika isisu ingibangela isifudumezi.

Nyathuko : Okay.

Me : Thukeh please. Ngicela ungayenzi lento kumina.

Nyathuko : Yiphi?

Me : I'm talking about what you are doing now. Please don't do it. You know this is your baby.

Nyathuko : No, I don't.

Me : Nyathuko.....

Nyathuko : Ngeke ngivume isisu engingasazi. Wangitshela emehlweni Sthah ukuthi the baby is not mine. I have all the proof I need. Ngiyakucela Maka Zanokuhle ungiyeke.

Me : Nyathuko waze wayinja. Usungaphika ingane yakho ngempela nje.

Nyathuko : Kulungile uma ngiyinja. Wena inkinga yakho ufuna ngizwe ngawe. Unezinkinga zakho and you are putting me down to raise yourself up.

Me : Sathane! Yey waze wawumsunu Thukeh. Uphika ingane yakho?

Nyathuko : Ay, hlukana nami. Don't call me ever again. Izingane zami zinamafoni zizongifonela uma zingidinga wena please leave me alone.

(He hangs up. My heart is boiling. I sit down and drink water. I breathe in and out. How the hell am I going to deal with this? I was prepared to raise my baby myself but Ashton being pregnant changed the whole thing.)

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(I couldn't wait to get home. I'm glad Musa is still around and he is very useful around the house. He is always cooking.)

Musa : So what do you think?

Me : It's delicious.

Musa : We call it Arancini rice balls. Italiano flavor



(He says dramatically)

Me : Oh

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I see.

Musa : My father called. He wants me to come back and cook for him.

(He laughs)

Me : Shame man. Unjani yena u Zungu?

Musa : He is fine. We went to visit my brother's grave.

Me : Oh yes.

(He sighs)

Musa : He needs a better tombstone. Nqabayethu was like a king and seeing him lying underneath that....

(He shakes his head)

Me : Mhmmmmm.

Musa : I spoke to Zanokuhle and I told him that we need to do something about it.

Me : Zanokuhle is not Nqabayethu's child.

Musa : Hello? Where did he get the money to buy all those fancy cars? That house?

Me : No, you....

Musa : I'm not going to have this conversation. Why didn't you tell me that Ashton is pregnant?

(I rush and stand in front of him)

Me : You know? Who told you?

Musa : I saw pictures on the gram. "I'm going to be a mommy. What a miracle" that was her caption.

Me : Show me.

Musa : My phone is upstairs.

Me : When did she post that?

Musa : Last night. Oh and she posted Thukeh's picture and she was thanking him for...

Me : Where is Zanokuhle?

Musa : Are you okay?

Me : Where is Zanokuhle? Endumbeni?

Musa : Umhmm....yes, in his hut. He was working....Is everything alright?

Me : I need to see him.

Musa : The kids are....

Me : Tell them not to follow me.

Musa : O.....

(I ran to Zanokuhle's hut but I stopped. The luxury cars that come here everyday, I swear some people may think that

Zanokuhle helps with the process of ukuthwala. Someone is inside. I wait in the garage. The moment I see a woman and a man walk out of his hut I prepare myself to go in. They get inside the car and drive out of the gate. I walk inside the hut. I don't know what Zanokuhle is busy with there. I sit quietly.)

Zanokuhle : I didn't know there was somebody else waiting  
ou....

(He turns around and lifts up his eyes to me.)

Zanokuhle : Hhaibo! Mah?

Me : Zano

Zanokuhle : What are you doing here?

(He knows I hardly set my foot here)

Me : Can you sit down?

Zanokuhle : Sthabile, I need to pray. Ngiyeza endlini enkulu.  
Ngicela sikhulume khona.

Me : No, no, that's not why I'm here.

Zanokuhle : What's wrong?

Me : Sit down.

(He sits down. He looks so confused)

Zanokuhle : Yes.

Me : U... uyahlola?

Zanokuhle : Mah?

Me : Uyabahlolela abantu....

(I swallow)

Me : Abantu basekhaya?

Zanokuhle : Uhmhhh... I.... Why? Why?

Me : I think bangifake isichitho futhi.

Zanokuhle : Oh, I see.

Me : Yes.

Zanokuhle : Okay. I'll give you holy water ugeze ngawo.

(I clear my throat)

Me : What else do you do?

Zanokuhle : What do you mean?

Me : Do you... do you. You know.?

(I stutter. He slightly shakes his head with his brows furrowed. )

Zanokuhle : I don't understand.

Me : I.. I mean bring...

Zanokuhle : Bring?

Me : Bring back. Bring back Los... lost lovers. Do you... do you do that?

Zanokuhle : Mah!



Me : Zanokuhle I need your help mfana wami. Your father is....  
We need to fix things.

Zanokuhle : I don't do those things.

Me : You have to do them. Awusona kanti isangoma?

Zanokuhle : Mapholoba, I....

Me : No, you have to help me ngoba uma kungenjalo lengane yakwenu engiyikhulelwe izokhula ingenalo ikhaya.

Zanokuhle : I.....

Me : Cha Zanokuhle. You have to do it. Gog'Maphalala said I need to...

(He rubs his forehead and blows out a heavy sigh)

Me : WeZanokuhle you don't understand wena. You don't have to understand. You just need to help me.

Zanokuhle : I can't believe this is happening. Mah, please leave.

Me : Excuse me?

17

(If I get another complaint about Ndlelenhle's behavior then trust me I am going to strip off my clothes and run from here to KwaMashu with my breasts bouncing. I opened the email from his teacher. She wants to see Nyathuko and I. I haven't finished reading the whole thing but I've lost all my energy already. I forward it to his father and continue with my work. I pick up the phone and call Zack)

Me : Zack, can you please come to my office?

Zack : Yeah, sure.

Me : Cool.

(3 minutes later he walked in. He sits down)

Me : Are you ready to move to our new offices?

Zack : I can't wait to have a bigger office.

(We both laugh)

Me : We should be out of here in 3 days.

Zack : Are they done?

Me : Yep.... Uhm... yes, yes. There we go. Nayi ke lento Zack.  
Look at this.

(He looks at my laptop)

Me : I don't know if it's me but those figures are not adding up.

Zack : What do you mean?

Me : If you look at the manufact....scroll down. Scroll.....Open  
that.

Zack : Okay.

Me : If you look at the manufacturer's actual costs to transport from our assembly plant to the dealer they are not reflecting but they've been added to the system.

Zack : What is this?

Me : No, no, that's a destination charge.

Zack : Yeah, yeah. And now this?

Me : I didn't see that one. Let's see.

Zack : Last week our costs were the same.

Me : Same?

Zack : For large pickups and small compact cars. How is this possible? I thought we were still using the same old strategy.

Me : We are.

(I sit down and lean back on my chair. Zack looks at me)

Me : What?

Zack : We are being chowed.

Me : Chowd?

Zack : Someone is stealing from us.

Me : But who, Zack?

(My phone rings)

Me : Who? I don't understand. Let me take this. Zanokuhle?

Zanokuhle : Mah, ukephi?

Me : Usho ukuthini mawuthi ngikephi? I'm at work

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Zanokuhle.

Zanokuhle : Oh bengithi usendlini.

Me : Why?

Zanokuhle : Bengifuna ukwazi ukuthi u Ndlela usebuyile yini esikoleni.

Me : But they weren't going to school when I left.

Zanokuhle : Ndlelenhle did. Uyamazi unenkani.

Me : Manje mawuthi ufuna ukwazi ukuthi usebuyile yini usho ukuthini? Ngoba seku 15:00 nje manje uthini ngempela?

Zanokuhle : I forgot to pick him up.

Me : Ini?

(I get up)

Zanokuhle : Kubekhona indlela ephuthumayo ebekufanele ngithathe so I forgot.

Me : Ukhohlwe ukulanda umfowenu omncane esikoleni?

Zanokuhle : Mah ngiyaxolisa.

Me : How could you? Ubucabangani ngempela Zanokuhle? Why didn't you call me ungitshela ngizilande ingane yami uma kukuthi ubungafuni? Ubumuyisaphi nje khona esikoleni? Ucelwe ubani?

Zanokuhle : Hawu Mah I was....

Me : Ay shut up. Uzothini ingane yami mekukuthi ifile layikhona?

Zanokuhle : I'm sorry. But mhlampe usesekhaya. I asked Mkhulu to go and fetch him kodwa manje angisabatholi efonini no Siso abayibambi.

Me : Waze wazikhipha kumina ngikutshele. How can you forget to pick up ubhuti wakho omncane?

Zanokuhle : Ngiyaxolisa ngempela.

Me : Ay suka!

(I hang up. Now I know what that email was about. I need to go home now)



Me : Zack I need to go.

Zack : Problems at home?

Me : Something like that.

Zack : Don't worry I'll look into this and get back to you.

Me : Please. Thank you so much Zack.

Zack : Can I keep your laptop?

Me : Yeah sure. I'll use this one.

Zack : Cool. See you tomorrow.

(He closes my laptop and gets up. He smiles and walks out. I pack my things and make my way out too.)

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(I was talking to myself all the way from work. I'm angry at Zanokuhle for forgetting my son. Hhaibo ngomangqumana wami. I hope he is here. Woooo! Guess which car is here? The red devil's car. Hell is about to break all loose ends. I wonder who called him. Zanokuhle or Ndlelenhle's teacher.)

Me : Ayke namhlanje ziyahamba izingane zami.

(I take a deep breath and get out of the car. I drag myself inside. I find Zanokuhle, Musa, Nyathuko and some lady. Her face looks familiar. Musa and Zanokuhle stands up)

Me : What's going on here?

Musa : Hey friend.

Me : Zanokuhle?

Zanokuhle : I was joking. Ndlelenhle is fine. Ukhona.

Musa : We wanted you to come home. Meet Wendy. She is a therapist.

(I laugh. I can't believe this)

Me : Really? Really Musa? A therapist? Ningishiyise umsebenzi for this nonsense?

Zanokuhle : Mah, wena no Baba niyayidinga. Yazi u Baba kade efika la akazange elwe. Uyazi ukuthi both of you need help so can you also just calm down and do this?

Me : Asiyizamanga lento yasihlula? Wena ngithe ngisize wanqaba manje usungibizela ama therapist emzini wami?

Zanokuhle : I wanted to help you kodwa ay ngaleyandlela. Please go and sit down.

(I sigh)

Me : Fine.

(They go upstairs and I go join Nyathuko and Wendy in the living room. Wendy smiles)

Wendy : Hello

Me : Hi

Nyathuko : Unjani?

(Which one is this one? I ignore him and sit far from him. He sighs)

Wendy : It's good to see you again, Sthabile. It's been a while.

Me : Mhmmm.

(A "while" is four years ago. I don't remember why she was here but she came.)

Wendy : How was your day?

Me : Good.

Wendy : What happened?

Me : I worked.

Wendy : Good. How did you feel finding your ex husband here?

Me : I didn't feel anything. Ngibone indoda nje ephike ingane yayo. Isilwane sendoda.

(He presses his lips together and shakes his head. I don't know what that means)

Wendy : Nyathuko, what really happened?

Nyathuko : Sthah lied. Even though I can't really say she lied. I don't know what to call it. She is pregnant. We were married and I knew the baby was mine but esithubeni she told me the baby wasn't mine. She told me that she was cheating on me and ngakubona lokho. She came to me with love bites all over her neck.

Wendy : And when was that?

Nyathuko : After our divorce. Manje useyajika futhi uthi the baby is mine.

Wendy : Sthabile, is that true?

(I sigh)

Me : Yes.

Wendy : Why would you lie? Tell me what was going through your mind when you lied.

Me : I was angry and I wanted to lie. I wanted to hurt him.

Wendy : By lying to him?

(I close my eyes. My anger level is rising)

Nyathuko : Wenza njalo. Uhlale efuna ukungizwisa ubuhlungu for things I don't know. U Sthah akalaleli. Ufuna mina ngizwe yena.

Wendy : Is that true Sthabile?

Me : Does it matter? Does it matter what I say? Angithi vele you are taking his side.

Wendy : Sthabile this is not about picking sides.

Me : No it is. I see how you are looking at me. Nawe ucabanga ukuthi ngiyisilwane!!

Nyathuko : Wenza njenake. Akafuni kukhulunywe uvele edinwe. Ekhethe ukukholwa lento ayitshelwa ingqondo yakhe. U Sthah mina angikwazi ukukhuluma naye. When we do talk kuhlale kukhulunywa ngemali. "Thukeh imali this, imali that" mekungeyona imali kukhulunywa ngezingane or she is busy nefoni yami mase kuyaliwa. It's always been like that.

Me : Stop lying Nyathuko!!!! (sigh) You know what? Vele mina akekho umuntu ongilalelayo. Wena everyone chooses to believe your side of the story and no one wants to believe mine. Umndeni wakho uhlezi ungakuwena, umndeni wami uhlale ungakuwena ngisho izingane zethu zihlale zithatha i side lakho. No one listens to me.

Nyathuko : Maka Sandisokuhle, that is not true.

Me : It is true! Sala naye la u therapist wakho. Umbhebhe mawuthanda. Sfebe ndini! Nxi!

Nyathuko : Sthabile... Sthah?

(I walk away with tears blurring my eyes. I don't have time for nonsense.)



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(I open the door for Musa and go back to sit on the bed. I refill my glass)

Me : Wine?

(He shakes his head)

Musa : You are pregnant Sthabile. What about the baby?

Me : I'm trying to send it back to its ancestors. Ayina Baba nje.

Musa : What?

Me : Ama disprin ne coke kusasebenza mawufuna ukukhipha isisu? I'm 3 months pregnant so it should work.

(I laugh. Musa shakes his head)

Musa : Wendy has left.

Me : Hooray!

Musa : Nyathuko wanted to talk to you but I told him to let it go (sigh) He took Ndlelenhle and Zothani. He needs his kids. He is not okay.

Me : Of course. And where is Zibusiso?

Musa : Downstairs with Zanokuhle.

Me : Thanks.

Musa : Sthabile what you are doing to Nyathuko is not fair. He doesn't deserve it. He doesn't deserve what you are doing to him.

Me : Do you think so?

Musa : I know so. It's not fair.

Me : Life is not fair. Especially to people that you people think are ugly.

Musa : What?

(I laugh and shake my head)

Me : This reminds me of something.

Musa : What?

Me : Do you remember when we went to watch soccer? Was it last year or last of last year? Nakhu sihambe no Ndlela.

Musa : When he lost his bottle?

Me : Yeah.

Musa : Last year.

Me : Do you remember that little boy who was with his grandfather? He and Ndlelenhle had the same water bottles. Ndlelenhle lost his and tried to fight the boy thinking he took his bottle. Do you remember what people said? The nasty comments they were throwing at the poor child "Izingane ezingafundisiwe emakubo buka ziyantshontsha" "Manje uBaba wayo akasayifinyisi ngani nobubi" "icabanga ukuthi ingalithathaphi nje kodwa ibhodlela elihle kanje?" Do you remember? Everyone was blaming that little boy noMkhulu wakhe and they were calling Ndlelenhle "cute" "little champ" do you remember?

Musa : Sthabile where are you going with this?

Me : What I'm trying to say is some people suffer because of their appearance and some are saved by it but we are not ready to have that conversation.

Musa : Bitch, come on.

Me : Emshadweni wami wonke. For 10 years ngiphile leyompilo. I was that kid and Nyathuko was Ndlelenhle.

(I laugh as tears burn in my eyes)

Me : People look at me and think "Who the hell does she think she is ezo complainer enje?" "Look at her husband and look at her. Umenzela I favor nje ngokuba naye". Just because Nyathuko is handsome and all that shit yonke into ayenzayo i right! Nayo ivele ibeyinhle njengaye! He has every right to treat me the way he does ngoba vele nginje! I should be grateful ukuthi indoda enhle njengaye yakhetha umuntu onjengami. Yazi yini ehlekisa kakhulu?

(I laugh)

Me : They have a funny way of saying it. They use my kids. Bathi ubani ozokuthatha unezingane eziningi kanje angabe bayasho

nje straight ukuthi ubani ozokuthatha unje Sthabile Ngcobo!  
Bengacashi ngezingane zami neminyaka yami.

Musa : Sthabile there's nothing wrong with you. What do you even mean?

(I shake my head)

Me : You don't have to lie to me. People think Nyathuko is right for cheating on me. Bacabanga ukuthi ngikhalela ubala, ngifuna i attention. Abayazi into ela kumina!

(I bang my chest and my tears fall)

Me : They think everything he does is alright because he is the most handsome man with a huge dick but he married an ugly fat, flat ass woman. Ofanele ukuthi ehlale ebekezele ngoba vele ayikho indoda eyomuthanda. Men don't even look at her twice. Am I wrong?

Musa : That's it. I think you've had enough. Alcohol is not good for you.

Me : No, no, don't blame alcohol. I know exactly what I'm saying. Yey u Thukeh unendlela enhle anibambe ngayo and nobuhle bakhe buyamusebenzela. He gets away with everything. Akadingi nokuchaza. Uvele evule lamehlo akhe amakhulu ekhiphe izifaca and everyone believes he is right and I am wrong.

Musa : Sthabile...

Me : Mina nginja ke. Angisakhathalele kuthandwa nakuthenjwa. Ngiyinja ezivezayo ukuthi iyinja and angisabile ngalokho. Angincenge lutho mina, fakol!! Impilo ingenze nje u Nyathuko wangenza nje and lento engiyiyona ngeke ngiyifihle. I will not bow my head down ngizithobe and watch indoda ingifebela just because amadoda afana nayo awasekho and I should appreciate that he chose me! Ngoba nakhu yinhle inuka kahle inemali I should bow? Yey never!! Angisoze! Indoda uma iyingcili iyingcili ukuthi injani I don't give a fuck. Akekho umuntu weslisa oyophinda egijime la ekhanda lika Sthabile Ngcobo.

Musa : What happened to you?

Me : Life happened. Nyathuko happened. Yazi yini ke ebuhlungu ngo Nyathuko? Ukuthi he doesn't even see why I'm fucking crying and for that he can go to hell!!!

(I bang my bed)

Musa : My friend, listen. Listen, maybe you need to sit down with him and tell him how you feel. Nyathuko doesn't understand what's going on. Akanakhi, you know him. You need to tell him everything.

(I shake my head)

Me : Akanaki? You know what? It doesn't matter. Liliodwa nje iphutha engilenzile. Ngifake ingane yami ezinkingeni zami and I regret it now. Ngiyiphuce yonke into ingane yami but I'm hoping that the Zondis will understand and accept my baby. Ilokho kuphela engikufisayo ngoba uma kungenjalo (sigh)



lengane ayisoze yangixolela. He or she will blame me for everything. Imagine ubekwa icala ingane, a child that I didn't even ask for.

(I gulp down my wine)

Musa :Sthabile don't say that.

Me : Did I ask for it? Wena wazi okudlula wonke umuntu. Did I?

(He hugs me tightly and we both cry)

Musa : I love you so much baby.

Me : I love you too.

(He wipes my tears)

Me : Now drink with me.

Musa : How about we eat first?

Me : Amazambane ashisiwe ababayo?

(He laughs out loud)

Musa : Yes.

Me : Bring them.

(He kisses my cheek and walks out. Soon after that Zibusiso walks in.)

Me : Hey baby!! Come here, my angel. Why unгахambanga noBabah?

Zibusiso : Hello mommy!!

(She jumps to the bed and hugs me. I feel all the anger drifting away)

Zibusiso : Ew! What is that smell?

(I laugh)

Me : Juice. Why did you stay behind?

Zibusiso : Because you were sad.

Me : I'm not sad anymore Nana, okay?

(She smiles)

Zibusiso : Okay. Kiss me.

(I laugh and press my lips on her cheek)

Me : I love you my angel.

Zibusiso : I love you too mommy.

(She makes herself comfortable on my thighs and plays with my stomach. They all know that I'm pregnant)

Zibusiso : Is it a boy?

Me : I think so.

Zibusiso : When is he coming out?

Me : Soon Nana.

Zibusiso : What is his name?

(Jesus! This kid)

Me : Cebolozakha

Zibusiso : Cebol....I don't like it mommy. Why don't you call him Kwesta or K.O or Chris Brown or....

Me : K is fine.

Zibusiso : It's K.O. Do you know Skhanda Love?

(She sings and we both laugh. She stops laughing and her eyes narrow)

Me : What's wrong Nana?

Zibusiso : Who is K.O's father? Uzalwa u Babah?

(I smile)

Me : Yes baby.

(She is not smiling back)

Zibusiso : No. Uthe uBaba yena akayena uBaba wakhe .  
Akayena uBaba walengane.

(My heart shutters)

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(I run to the bathroom and vomit)

Me : Ahhhh!

Zanokuhle : Sies! Saze safa!!

(He shouts from my bedroom)

Me : Ngizokuphoxa

(He laughs)

Zanokuhle : Uyasinyanyisa sisi

Me : This is my house.

(I finish and wash my face.)

Me : What are you looking for?

Zanokuhle : School socks for Zothani and Ndlelenhle.

Me : Did you check in their room?

Zanokuhle : Yes. Yinindaba waphalaza?

Me : It's one of those days. Uzohambisa ama uniform le?

Zanokuhle : Yep. Kuse early.

Me : Uyabona nje lomqansa owenziwa u Nyathuko manje. Why didn't he bring back the kids izolo?

Zanokuhle : I don't know. Ngicela ungibhekela.

Me : Gudluka. Is Musa still sleeping?

Zanokuhle : No uyapita emgaqweni

(I laugh)

Me : Uyahlanya wena. When did he start jogging?

Zanokuhle : He was complaining about his belly. Uthi usenomkhaba

(We both laugh)

Me : Here. Zano, usheshe bandla. Bengabi late laba.

(I give him the socks)

Zanokuhle : Relax. Hawu weMah I need to tell you something.

Me : Ay Zanokuhle please bandla ngicela ungangilokothi.



(He laughs)

Zanokuhle : Ngani?

Me : Ngoba usucijisa amadlebe nje ufuna imali.

Zanokuhle : No. I'm going away for a few days.

Me : Yah?

Zanokuhle : Khona la engiya khona before Amahle start with ukuthwasa.

Me : Oh, so uzomuthwasisa?

Zanokuhle : Yes.

Me : And where are you going?

Zanokuhle : I'm going away with Fisisani and our boys.

Me : That's nice.

Zanokuhle : Manje shuthi izingane zakho uzozilandela mngani wami.

Me : Eish

Zanokuhle : Uphinde ubahambise.

(I bite my nails)

Me : Mhlampe sekufanele beyohlala KwaMashu no Mah no Baba.

Zanokuhle : Aibo, Mah no.

Me : Ngeke ngikwazi Zano. I won't manage but I'll talk to your father.

Zanokuhle : Okay. I was thinking ke ukuthi sihambe no Makhosazana. Maybe some time away will be good for her.

Me : Ah, boy boy. That's good.

Zanokuhle : So it's a good idea?

Me : It is aibo.

Zanokuhle : Okay, let me call her.

Me : Uhambe no Siso njalo. She is still eating kodwa.

Zanokuhle : Mengaqedi ngiyamshiya.

Me : Ngizokubhonya.

(He laughs and walks away)

AT AUTO MOVERS.

16:04

Zack : The money was transferred from our account to this account.

Me : Let me see.

Zack : This one. I can't pick up more account details but our IT department is looking into it.

Me : Please tell them to speed up. I need feedback first thing tomorrow morning. We spend a lot of money transporting vehicles to the dealers. I can't lose money. I need to know who is behind this and deal with them.

Zack : Sure

Me : Thank you Zack

Zack : Are you leaving now?

Me : Next hour. These guys are almost done.

Zack : I can't wait to move.

(We both laugh)

Zack : Shout if you need anything.

Me : Will do.

Zack : Sharp.

(He gets up and walks away. He bumps into Magic on his way out.)

Magic : Mapholoba....

(He closes the door)

Magic : Is everything okay?

Me : Yeah. Why?

Magic : I don't know but I'm seeing Zack in and out of your office.

Me : We suspect that....

(My phone rings)

Me : Can I take this?

Magic : But we are still talking. What do you suspect?

Me : Magic please, not now.

Magic : No! When are we going to talk about it?

Me : Tomorrow morning. I need to take this.

Magic : I'll be back after that call.

(I answer my phone and raise my thumb. He walks out)

Me : Nyathuko

Nyathuko : Maka Enzelwe

(Wherever he is there's wind and I'm struggling to hear him)

Me : Angikuzwa ke mina. Ukephi?

Nyathuko : Hello? Sthah?

Me : Khuluma

Nyathuko : Yah

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u right?

Me : I'm fine. Sengiyakuzwa

Nyathuko : Ngifelwe imoto la ngaka Seme.

Me : Again?

(His car broke down 2 days ago.)



Nyathuko : Yeah. I don't know what's wrong.

Me : Manje mina ngenzeni Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Udiniwe yini pho?

(He doesn't want to know)

Me : Ngidinwa yini?

Nyathuko : Ey leliconsi lakho. Ngicela ungilandela izingane endlini yami and take them to Ballito with you.

Me : Ngivele ngabona ukuthi ungizela nezinkinga. Benzani endlini yakho?

Nyathuko : Ungalwi. I didn't know ukuthi bazoza after school. Zanokuhle called me wangitshela ukuthi bathe bafuna ukuya endlini. Bengingekho mina.

Me : Wavuma nawe kodwa wazi kahle ukuthi awukho you are at work. Imina manje esekufanele ngiphume la emsebenzini ngigijimele koMhlanga. Ay nina nidlala ngami serious.

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa mamah. I was going to bring them home but nayi lemoto isiyenza izinto zayo. I'm waiting for my father to come and help me.

Me : Bahleli nobani endlini?

Nyathuko : With Lesedi. Ngithe ehlale nabo endlini yakhe.

Me : Awungicabangeli kodwa uyabona?

Nyathuko : Sthah ngiyaxo.....

Me : Ay suka!!

(I hang up on him.)

Me : Nxi!

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(I had to drop all my duties and drive to his flat. I've only been there once but I didn't go in.)

(I knock and Thalente's wife opens the door)

Me : Hi Lesedi

(She smiles)

Lesedi : Sthabile, Dumela.

Me : Hey. I'm here to fetch my kids. Bakhona la?

(She shakes her head)

Lesedi : Uh-huh abakhona la. Zano o ba siile ko tlung.....I mean o bashiye khona yendlini ya Nyathukho.

(I laugh. I don't know why she bothers herself with isiZulu. After 10 years she is still trying.)

Me : Okay. Thanks.

Lesedi : Bye

(I smile and make my way to Nyathuko's flat.)

Ndlelenhle : Mommy!!

(They see me and they all scream in excitement)

Me : Hello my angels. Naze nayingcolisa indlu ka Thukeh.

(I look around. The house is a mess. It's fully furnished though. Small but I like it. It screams Nyathuko's name. Everything here is just him)

Zothani : Are you going to sleep here with daddy?

Me : No, sweetie. We are leaving. Ngizolanda nina.

Zothani : Oh

(They are all disappointed but they'll be fine.)

Me : Wear your jackets. Sekuyanetha emnyango. Where is Zothani's jacket?

Zibusiso : Here

(Ndlelenhle's big eyes widen)

Me : What?

Ndlelenhle : Izingubo zika Baba emnyango.

Me : Uwashile?

Ndlelenhle : Mhmmm and he took his clothes out this morning.  
They are at the back. His sneakers too.

Me : Uzoyithatha uma ebuya. Take your bags. Let's go

(Ndlelenhle's eyes well up with tears)

Me : Yini ke manje?

Ndlelenhle : Zizonetha izingubo zika Baba.

Me : Lord give me strength

(I mumble)

Me : Manje ukhaliswa ilokho?

(He wipes his tears. They are looking at me)

Me : Ngilindeni la.

(I went and fetched Nyathuko's clothes from the clothing line.  
They take their bags and we head out. I pull the door and I stop.  
I look around and sigh)

Me : Othi ngimu cleanele lo.

Zibusiso : Mah?

Me : Ngenani kancane. Let me sweep here before we go.

(We go back inside. I start cleaning. There are packs of beers inside his fridge. I take them all out. I open each and put it in the sink. He will face his problems like a man. SOBER. I wash his pots. I see he cooked macaroni last night. He loves home cooked meals.)

Me : Othi ngisale sengibekela i rice lenja le. Nxi. Uzoziphekela u curry. Sorry kabi.

(I don't know what happened to that because the next thing I was cooking curry for him.)

Me : Edle lamangqumu ngamehlo ukudla kwami esuke lapho ethole amandla okuphika izingane. Ave eyinja u Nyathuko. What is he going to wear tomorrow? Ey Ey.

(I search in his wardrobe while talking to myself)

"Mah, are you angry?"



(I turn around. It's Ndlelenhle)

Me : No, boy. Why?

Ndlelenhle : Because you talk to yourself when you are angry.

Me : I'm fine. Go and watch TV. I'll finish ironing your father's clothes, sihambe.

Ndlelenhle : You are done cooking for me, angithi Mah?

(I roll my eyes. I don't have energy for this)

Me : Yes. Hamba uyogada osisi bakho bengangcolisi.

Ndlelenhle : Okay

(I don't have time for small talks)

(I finished ironing Nyathuko's clothes. I don't know why I did all of that because I hate him. I prayed that he doesn't find me in his house and God answered my prayers. We are almost in Ballito. My kids are now sleeping. They are still in their school uniforms. My phone rings.)

Me : Why would Zack call me at this time?

(I mean it's 20:00. I answer)

Me : Zack is everything okay?

Zack : I'm sorry for calling you so late but this couldn't wait.

Me : Yeah?

Zack : Magic Maphumulo is behind everything.

Me : What?

Zack : I'm serious. I'm still at the office and everything we got here points to him.

Me : No, I'm sure there's a mistake.

20

THALENTE

(We just came back from the hospital. What happened today feels like a nightmare.)

Me : Let me open for you.

Nyathuko : Nginuka u Petrol umzimba wonke.

Me : Ay mina I don't understand what happened. Kodwa uzoba grand wakithi. How is your arm now?

Nyathuko : Ey Mbambo ngizoba right.

(We walk inside. We both look around)

Nyathuko : Aibo

Me : Who cleaned here?

(We look at each other)

Me : Do you think it was Ashton?

Nyathuko : Akasenawo ukhiye wami loyo.

( We go to the kitchen)

Me : Ubezosho futhi u Lesedi uma kuthiwa ufikile.  
Umawezingcosi?

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Ungizonda kabi u Sthah. Aibo kuphekiwe la.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Uyena

Me : U Sthabile?

Nyathuko : Yah.

(His face lightens up. Sthabile made his day)

Nyathuko : Awufake ukudla la ngidle. Ngilambe kanje. Aw mfethu umawezingane zami.

Me : Kupheke u Sthabile phela sekudliwa manje.

(We laugh)

Me : Ukusizile kodwa. It's like she knew that you only got one arm.

(He laughs. It's not a laughing matter though. Today around 3pm he was coming from Bhambatha\*s Lounge and he had an accident. The bonnet of the car he was driving caught fire out of nowhere. When he was trying to stop the car he lost control and the car rolled a couple of times. The car is badly damaged but luckily it threw him out with his cellphone. Imagine. The cellphone is perfectly fine. He is also fine but he broke his arm. He is wearing an arm sling.)

(He is smiling non stop. He can't believe Sthabile did all of this for him. My boy loves that woman. It's all in his eyes.)

Nyathuko : Wangisiza u Sthah yazi. Cabanga ngoba she was the first person I thought of when I opened my eyes and saw my phone. Lapho bengingakholwa ukuthi ngiyaphila. Imoto yami ngiyibona i roller ibheke phansi lapha emathuneni ase Tafuleni.

Me : Mhmm! Mhmm! I can't believe you are here wakithi. Did you see that car?

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : I don't think ubuthongo buzifika.

Me : Was she the first person you called?

Nyathuko : Yeah. Ngimufonele umqondo usazula. Ngicabanga nezingane zami ukuthi zizodwa la endlini. I lied to to her ngathi my car broke down lapho ngiyayibona iyaphenduka. Nangu u Maka Ndlelenhle la uyalwa uthi mina ngidlala ngaye.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ay I'll never forget this day.

Me : Lithini i tayma?

Nyathuko : Uthi sohlanganisa indaba yemoto. He wants me to move in with them kuze kuphole lengalo.

Me : And?

Nyathuko : UBaba no Mamncane uyabazi wena kahle?  
Khohlwa.

(I laugh out loud)

Me : Nasi ispoon.

(We have eaten on one plate ever since we were young, that's how we eat. Sthabile can't cook but I'll eat anyway.. His ex husband here seems to be enjoying the food..)

Me : Kodwa ndoda uyazi angithi ukuthi that accident had something to do with Sthabile nalento yenu? I don't know if you noticed that every time uma nixabene wena uyalimala.

(He stops eating and sighs.)

Nyathuko : Ngisayogeza



Me : Siyakhuluma wakithi.

(He rubs his face)

Nyathuko : I don't get it. I don't understand why Zothani and Zibusiso are punishing me. Angikaze mina ngihlukane no Sthah. Angikaze mina ngifune i divorce. Into engiyenzile I gave Sthabile what she wanted. Uyena oqomile washiya mina. Kanti why bengakuboni lokho ngoba be busy nje bengigingqa nezimoto?

Me : Amadlozi ayizithutha you know that.

Nyathuko : Uyena u Sthabile udiniwe. She is angry for no reason. Uthuka labantu. Babizwa ngani kambe labantu bengqondo?

Me : Yeah, ama therapist.

Nyathuko : Kona lokho. We were supposed to fix our problems lapha kodwa yena walwa. Akangifuni umawezingane zami Thalente.

Me : But you do love her.

Nyathuko : And I will always love her kodwa ngeke ngisalungisa izinto naye. Uyabona kade ngigcina lapha endlini e Ballito ngavele ngabona ukuthi it's over. Wathi engena I asked myself "Uyibonile indoda yakhe namhlanje?" "Did he touch her"... All those questions were running in my head.

Me : Kodwa wakithi nawe....

Nyathuko : Sthabile was my wife Thalente! Uqomile walala nenye indoda skoon Thalente SKOON. U Sthah wami, wakithi? Walala nenye intshebe. Do you understand that? i vrou yakho nenye indoda! u Sthah ngiyamubona ngamehlo engqondo evule imilenze eyivulele enye indoda. Liphuma elibuyisela. Echanyelwa enye indoda. I can't forgive that shit.

(His eyes turn red. His back in that dark place)

Nyathuko : U Sthabile akayena u Ashton okanye u Thandeka okanye esinye ke nje isifebe esengike ngalala naso. Sthabile is my heart. Abangibulale uZothani beno Zibusiso. I don't give a fuck anymore.

(He goes and opens the fridge. He blows out a sigh)

Me : What's wrong?

Nyathuko : Sthabile took my beers.

(He sighs and slams the fridge. It's not safe to laugh now)

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Me : Sam, please come and help me with the kids.

(He quickly gets up from the couch)

Musa : Bitch

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thank God you are back.

Me : What's wrong?

(He points upstairs using his eyes)

Musa : Your boyfriend is here. He is eating non stop.

Me : My boyfriend?

Musa : Magic

Me : What? Lalela, ngicela uthathe izingane lapha emotweni. I'll deal with Magic.

(I head upstairs. I'm already fuming. He is sleeping in Nyathuko's bed with his skinny legs up)

Me : Hi

(He turns his head and looks at me)

Magic : What time did you leave the office?

Me : I don't know. Bekufanele ngiyolanda izingane zami endlini ka Baba wazo.

(He looks away)

Magic : What time did you leave the office?

(Ayke!)

Me : Before half past four.

Magic : And what time is it now?

Me : Ayke akuyona indaba yami leyo. Ngicela uhambe bandla.

Magic : Why? Usulungise izinto no Baba wengane yakho?

Me : Cha.

Magic : Do you remember how you were pushing for our relationship to be successful?

Me : I don't recall.

Magic : You don't?

Me : Magic you can't call what we have a relationship. I don't.....

Magic : What was Zack doing in your office? With your laptop?

(He cuts me off)

Me : Magic akuyona indaba yakho.

Magic : I asked you a question!

(He gets out of bed)

Me : Why are you worried about this whole thing? Are you stealing from me? Is it true?

(He chuckles)

Magic : Sthabile you probably think that you know me but you don't. Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I hate it when people stand in my way. Getting here wasn't easy for me. Akekho mina owanginika izikhali zempilo ngakho ngazakhela ezami.

(He is getting closer. I take a step back)

Me : I knew I shouldn't have trusted you. Uyenzile ngempela lento? After everything I did for you? Ngikunika umsebenzi wena uyangena uzongintshontshela.

Magic : Do not stand in my way.

(Now I wish Nyathuko was a serial killer or something. I step back until my back touches the wall. His eyes flash with anger)

Me : Mhlampe nami kufanele ngikuxoxele ngami ngoba ngiyabona awungazi. Uyabona lomuzi engishadele kuwona kwa Zondi, umuzi wamadoda. Abasipetuli isihlama Magic. Bazogcwala la manje. U Bheki uyinkabi ke ngikutshele, he will.....

(My cheek burns. He slapped me. He fuckin slapped me. My mouth gape open. I can't believe this. This man slapped me. A



single tear squeezed out of my eye. Trust me, I'm not crying, I don't know where this tear is coming from.)

Me : Wemsunu ucabanga ukuthi wenzani? Do you know who I.....

(He punches me. I feel my lower lip getting heavy with immediate effect. He pins me against the wall. His hand is around my neck. My lips are quivering. Tears are burning in my eyes. I don't want to cry. I don't want to give him that satisfaction. I fight back the tears.)

Magic : Tell Zack and his team to back off or I will make your life a living hell. I will kill you. I will kill your children and I will kill that gay friend of yours. Umfana wakwaZondi uyoqamba efika la lezindonga ziyobe sezipendwe ngegazi.

(My heart races. What have I gotten myself into?)

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(He has left. I lock the door and sit down. My mouth is bleeding.  
Tears roll down my face. I hear a knock on my door)

"Sthabile it's me. Open the door"

(I get up and wipe the tears. I clear my throat)

Me : Sam, I'm showering. Do you need anything?

Musa : Are you okay?

(I sniff)

Me : Bitch come on, I'm good. Did you see Magic going?

Musa : Yeah. Finish up, I miss you.

(I fake a laugh)

Me : I'm coming.

(There's silence. He's gone. I take off my clothes and shower. I finish and sit in front of the mirror. I cover the bruise with makeup. Magic is here to take everything away from me. One day I'll be left stranded. What about my kids? Nyathuko is a great father. He will take care of his kids but what about the baby I'm carrying? I let out a sigh and take my phone. I dial my mother's number)

Me : Yah Gogoh

MaKheswa : Amen mntanami.

Me : Niyaphila?

MaKheswa : What's wrong, Sthabile?

Me : Mah, I....

(My throat close up)

MaKheswa : Come home, mntanami. Buya ekhaya.

(I shake my head)

Me : I'm fine Mah. Kukhona engicela ungenzele kona.

MaKheswa : Yini leyo?

Me : Ngicela ungikhulumele no Thukeh Mah. Please tell him the baby is his. Ngicela umtshele ukuthi nawe ngakutshela.

MaKheswa : Kodwa Sthabile.

Me : Ngiyakucela Mah. Uwena kuphela manje ithemba lami.

(She sighs)

MaKheswa : Kulungile. Let me call him.

Me : Ngizokuthumelela manje i airtime.

MaKheswa : I do have airtime.

(I laugh)

Me : Thatha Kheswa. Wadla Pholoba.

(We both laugh. It feels good to laugh. I now have strength to face Musa)

MaKheswa : Awuthi ke ngimufonele.

Me : Ngiyabonga mawami. Ngicela ubuyele kimi mase nikhulumile.

MaKheswa : Okay.

(I hang up and sigh. I go downstairs. Musa is watching TV)

Me : What are we eating?

Musa : Oh

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you are hungry. I thought you guys had family d.....

(He frowns)

Me : What?

Musa : Are you okay?

Me : I'm perfectly fine.

Musa : You look different. Come and sit here.

(I sit down and rest my head on his lap)

Me : Are my kids sleeping?

Musa : Uh. And?

Me : And?

Musa : Magic. Why was he here?

Me : Oh no. He was just worried about me. I wasn't taking his calls.

Musa : Oh?

Me : Yes. Why are you asking?

Musa : He didn't say goodbye. He just walked past me and just like that he was gone.

Me : Don't mind him.

Musa : Did you see Nyathuko?

Me : No

Musa : And where were you all this time?

Me : I was..... I cooked for him.

(He smiles)

Musa : Really?

Me : I don't know why but I did.



Musa : He is still the father of your kids. There's nothing wrong with what you did.

Me : Then why do I hate myself so much?

Musa : You and Nyathuko didn't split because there was no love but.....

Me : I don't love him anymore. Now please.

(I get up)

Musa : I'm leaving soon.

Me : How soon?

Musa : In 2 days.

Me : Hawu, I thought you were going to stay longer.

Musa : The family business needs me.

Me : I know. When am I going to see you again?

Musa : I'll be back soon. You know there's no place like home.  
Come, let's feed that baby.

(We laugh)

Me : Did you tell Zanokuhle that you are leaving?

Musa : He is not here.

Me : He went to see Makhosazana. Ngicabanga ukuthi uyabuya  
ksasa.

Musa : I'll tell him tomorrow. Your phone is ringing

Me : Oh it's my mother. Mah?

(I answer)

MaKheswa : You need to come home.

Me : Why? Utheni u Thukeh?

MaKheswa : Akuhambi kahle. Uthi yena akangeni kuyona yonke lento manje.

Me : Did he say that?

MaKheswa : Sthabile asikwazi ukulinda esinye isikhathi.  
Kufanele siye kwa Zondi

(My head spins)

Me : Akavumi?

MaKheswa : Akavumi mntanami. Usho izinto eziningi. Lokho ke kusishiya nendlela eyodwa. Yokuthi sidle ngoludala.

(I rub my face)

Me : What have I done?

MaKheswa : No, don't do that. Sizoyilungisa lento. His family will understand. Nabo bayazi ukuthi lengane ifike wena usahlala no Zondi. Abakwazi ukuphika igazi labo.

Me : Kodwa Mah ngisibika kanjani isisu sengimudala kangaka? Phela mina Angiseyona intombi.

MaKheswa : Sthabile usiko alukhulelwa mntanami. We have to do this before it's too late.

Me : Okay. Ngizofika ekuseni.

MaKheswa : Kulungile.

Me : Mah?

MaKheswa : Yes

Me : Bengicela singamufaki u Mapholoba kulento.

MaKheswa : But he needs to know what's happening. He is your father.

Me : Mah ngiyacela. Kuningi engibhekene nakho. I don't want to deal with Mapholoba.

MaKheswa : Kulungile

Me : Ngiyabonga.

MaKheswa : Nilale kahle ke. Sobonana kusasa.

Me : Nani futhi. Ungikhonzele ku Baba

MaKheswa : Okay.

(She hung up. She is not happy. I've disappointed my mother.)

Musa : And?

Me : You don't want to know. I'm going to bed.

(I go to my room. I feel drained)

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ENDWEDWE

(My mother has been complaining about me arriving late. I don't know why she is worried about time. We are not here to pay lobola.)

MaKheswa : Uyabona nje ilanga seliphumile. Akwenziwa kanje. Get out of the car.

(I clench my teeth and get out. I can't believe I'm doing this at my age. Bheki is busy inside the kraal. Do these men have jobs?)

Bheki : Maka Njabulo? Maka Njabulo?

(His wife walks out of the rondavel)

Bheki : Obani laba abangena ngesango?

(His wife shields her face with her hand)

Bheki's wife : Kwangathi u MaNgcobo.

(All the wives come out)

Me : Ay i Bioskop inkosi impela.

(I mumble. Shlangu's wife showed us in. It's going to be a long day.)

(Everyone walks in one by one. Even the old man Zenzele is here. Nyathuko must have told everyone that we were coming. That was fast.)

MaKheswa : Sanibonani kwaZondi

(I'm angry at myself for putting my mother through this.)

"Yebo"



(They all say. There's silence after that.)

MaKheswa : Eh! Angazi lento ngingayibeka kanjani kodwa ke asingenzi angathi asazani. We are family. We are still family.

Bheki : Mam'mfundisi kwenzenjani?

(Very rude)

MaKheswa : Sthabile is pregnant.

(They look at each other)

Zenzele : Again?

MaKheswa : Yes again. Your son is responsible.

Zenzele : Oh. U Nyathuko?

Bheki : Akuyona into eshiwo u Nyathuko leyo.

(This man still has a big mouth. Even at his age. I can't believe I used him to defend myself from Magic.)

Zenzele : Bheki please....

Bheki : Cha bafo. Asingamoshelani isikhathi. Besazi ukuthi bayeza kanti u Thukeh ukubeke kwacaca ukuthi ingane akuyona eyakhe.

Me : Uphi yena loyo?

(I hear a lot of "Ha" "Aibo")

MaKheswa : Sthabile akuyona indawo yakho yokuthi ukhulume la mntanami. Please keep quiet.

Me : Cha Mah. Angizodelelwa abantu bakwa Zondi. Nonke nazi kahle ukuthi yonke leminyaka I was with Nyathuko.

Bheki : Kodwa ushendeza ngaphandle. Akunjalo?

Me : Lento akufanele angabe ikhulunywa abafazi?

(I look at my mother. She looks away)

Bheki : Hee! Wentombazane. Who do you think you are?

Zenzele : It's okay Bheki.

Shlangu : She has a point.

Bheki : What point? Shlangu nizokholwa intombazane yezizwa okudlula ingane ka mfowethu? Lalela ke ntombazane. Yebo into yabafazi le kodwa umfazi walayikhaya akasekho emhlabeni ngakho yithi amadoda nabafazi balelikhaya and we are going to do things this way.

Me : Yebo

Bheki : Good!

Zenzele : Lento ilula kakhulu. Siyabonakala isisu salayikhaya.

Me : Angikakabi naso isisu esibonakalayo.

Bheki's wife : Zingaki izinyanga?

Me : 3 months.

Bheki's wife : Ay isisu sezingane zakwa Zondi umugqa wazo uvela nje usuna 2 months.

(I laugh)

Me : Akulona iqiniso lelo Maka Njabulo.

Zenzele : It is.

Bheki : Bafazi bakwa Zondi check her.

(The men stand up and walk out. I look at my mother. She shakes her head)

Shlangu's wife : Ungaguqa nje la uphakamise iyembe

(I look around. Maybe if Mabuyi was here she was going to defend me but she is not here. I kneel down and lift up my shirt. Bheki's wife presses my stomach)

Bheki's wife : She is pregnant.

(Wakhuluma u nurse omkhulu)

Bheki's wife : But I don't see any Linea nigra. I don't know if it's my eyes. Awubuke Maka Lubanzi ukuthi uyawubona yini wena umugqa la.

Shlangu's wife : Ngibona ngilana nje ukuthi there's no dark line.

(I shake my head.)

Bheki's wife : Angibize u Baba ka Njabulo. You can sit down.

(After a long quarrel I was taken inside the kraal. I kneeled there shirtless and waited for their stupid cows to lick my stomach but none of them did. Tears stream down my face. I know this is Nyathuko's baby. I know it. I don't understand why this is happening.)

Bheki : We don't recognize this baby. Usungaphuma

MaKheswa : Woza mntanami.

(I put on my shirt and got up. I am definitely losing my mind.)

Me : Mah ingane ka Thukeh le. Ingane yakhe.

Bheki's wife : Akuyona. The cows were supposed to....

Me : Awuthule!!

(I yell)

MaKheswa : It's okay ,mntanami. It's okay. UNkulunkulu uzolenza icebo

(I stop crying the moment I see Nyathuko's car. He parks the car and remains inside. I watch his car as we go back into the house. I know he is here to sort out all my problems. We sit down and wait for him)

(My mother is busy brushing my back. He walks in. Wait, why is he wearing that in his arm? What happened to his arm? I want to stand up and hug him. I want to know what happened)

Bheki : Thukeh, usufikile?

Nyathuko : Yes.

(He removes his cap and sits down)

Shlangu : How is your arm?

Nyathuko : Better

(We sit in silence. My eyes are glued to him. He is busy playing with his cap)

Bheki : Naba oMaka Ndlelenhle. Ukhuluma udaba oluhlukile la. She claims that the baby is yours.

Nyathuko : Aw

(What does he mean "Aw")



Me : Thukeh you know this is....

Nyathuko : Sthah please. Angithandi ukuxabana nawe.

Me : This is your baby! Awukahle ukwenzisa okwengane.

MaKheswa : Sthabile....

Me : Cha Mah! Sengihlazeke kwanele. Nyathuko please vuma ukuthi ingane eyakho. Stop this nonsense. I want to go back to work.

Nyathuko : Cha

Me : What?

Bheki : Umuzwile. MaNgcobo ulethe ihlazo emndenini wakwa Zondi saxola kodwa namanje you are busy....

Nyathuko : Baba Omdala ngicela singabe sisabuyela emuva. If Sthabile thinks the baby is mine then that's fine. Niyalwazi usiko lwalayikhaya.

Zenzele : Sizobona ngengane.

(Nyathuko stands up and walks out. Tears blurry my eyes. My lips tremble.)

MaKheswa : Let's go, mntanami.

(I dropped my mother in Bridge City. She wanted me to go home with her but that wasn't a good idea. From Bridge City I came straight home. I've been locking myself in this bedroom ever since I got back. I don't want anything. Musa picked up the kids. I heard them knocking here until they gave Up. I've been crying since this morning. I can't describe how angry I am. I can't believe Nyathuko did that to me in front of his family. My body is shaking because of anger. The flashbacks of me kneeling inside that kraal in front of disgusting cows keep playing in my head. The more it plays, the angrier I get. I get up and unlock the door. I head downstairs. Musa is playing some games with the kids. They stop the moment they see me.)

Musa : My friend....

(I shake my head and he sighs)

Musa : Your mother called. She said she can't reach you. Zack called as well. They can't get hold of you.

Me : Uphi ukhiye wemoto yami?

(My kids are looking at each other. They seem scared of me)

Musa : Where are you going at this time?

Me ; Please stay with my kids.

Musa : Sthabile where are you going? It's almost 20 :00.

(I grab my keys and head out)

Ndlelenhle : Mommy are you....

(Sorry kabi. I walk out.)

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(I drove to his flat and he wasn't home. His friend told me he went to Emachobeni. The drive to Emachobeni felt very short.

Before I knew it I was approaching the gate. The gate is open. His Ford Ranger is here. I drive in and turn off my engine. I make my way to the door. Before I knock I listen. I can hear the sound of the TV and him laughing. I bang the door knocking. My blood is already boiling. He is taking his time opening up. I'm about to kick the door when he opens. Why is he not opening the door in full? And why is he blocking the way?)

Me : Ngicela ukungena.

Nyathuko : Ngobani?

Me : Ungangibuzi amasimba mina Thukeh. Ngicela ungangihlanyisi.

Nyathuko : No, what do you want? What are you doing here?

Me : Ufihle bani layindlini?

Nyathuko : Ungazongisanganela wena. Please leave.

(I push him)

Nyathuko : Uzungithunuka mase siyaxabana Sthah.

Me : Get out of the way!! Ngifuna ukungena Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : No

Me : Nyathuko? Nyathuko, I don't want to hurt your arm so please move.

Nyathuko : Why? Ufunani?

Me : Who is inside? Uvalele isfebe la?

Nyathuko : Isfebe sani? Hamba Sthabile.

(I hit his broken arm. He thinks I'm here to play. His jaw clenches)

Me : Suka!!

Nyathuko : Uyahlanya wena, nxi! Ngena!! Ngena ubone lento ofuna ukuyibona! Nxi!

(He clicks his tongue and drags me inside. I get in and search everywhere. There is no one and nothing smells off. He is sitting on his bed watching me)

Nyathuko : Are you done?

(I release a deep breath. I'm sweating)

Me : Nyathuko why are you doing this to me?

Nyathuko : Ngenzeni?

Me : What did you do? Ungiphathisa okwenja Thukeh!  
Uwubonile umndeni wakho indlela ongiphathe ngayo?  
Bangifake esibayeni ngihamba ngamabele! I saw you coming  
and I thought "Nangu u Baba wezingane zami uzongisiza" kanti  
no. You watched them disrespecting me.

Nyathuko : I should have known ukuthi uzongidakelwa la.  
Sthabile please leave, angifuni ukuxabana nawe.

Me : Vele ngizokudakelwa. Vele yonke leminyaka nginawe  
imina obekudakelwa. Everything I've ever said and done  
bengidakwa emehlweni akho. Nyathuko I'm in this situation  
today because wena ubucabanga ukuthi ngiyadakwa.

(Tears roll down my cheeks and he immediately looks away. I  
know how he can't stand my tears. I didn't want to cry. I  
thought I was done crying but clearly I'm not.)

Me : After the twins were born I sat down with you ngakucela,  
ngakuncenga ukuthi ungivumele ngiyojova kodwa you refused  
wathi ngiyakudelela lento engicelayo. Ngathatha amaphilisi oku



preventa wangicela ukuthi ngiwayeke and I stopped. You promised me that we would use condom but we didn't. Ngangithi mase ngikubuza ukuthi iphi ungigolozele ungibuze ukuthi " i condom yani manje Sthah. Ama condom ani ngoba sishadile?" kusho wena. You told me that you want many kids. Wathi ufuna iqembu lebhola lezingane. Kodwa angikhumbuli nakanye uhlala nami phansi ungibuza if I wanted the same thing. if I wanted zonke lezingane esinazo.

Nyathuko : Sthabile awukahle please. Awukahle ukukhuluma angathi sengikumithise izingane ezu 20. We only have 7 kids and 3 of them died.

Me : That is not the point!! That's not the point. The point is awukaze wanginika ithuba lokuthi ngizilele izingane zami ngendlela engangifisa ngayo Thukeh. I didn't mourn for my kids the way I wanted. Enzelwe died in front of us. Okay

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fine sathola u Ndlelenhle ngakwamukela lokho and life went on. Ngakhohlwa ingane yami. Nawe wakhohlwa iyona. Angase ngikubuze manje ukuthi when was the last time we visited his grave I'm sure nawe awusakhumbuli.

(He swallows his Adam apple)

Me : Nasisipho and Sandisokuhle died in our car. Bashonela la ezandleni zethu. Angitholanga nethuba lokubazilela. Angitholanga nethuba lokwamukela ukuthi izingane zami azisekho, wangimithisa futhi wena. Nyathuko angikaze mina ngithole ithuba loku deala ne pain yokushonelwa izingane zami. Ubulokhu usicindezela nje isikhumbuzo sezingane zethu Thukeh. You wanted me to deal with the pain ngendlela yakho. Wena you dealt with the pain by replacing our kids.

Nyathuko : Sthah....

Me : You did. Mina akuyona ke indlela engangifuna kwenzeke ngayo leyo.

Nyathuko : I thought....

Me : You thought what? That our kids will replace all the kids we lost? That they will stop my pain? No, they didn't.

Ngisazibona namanje izingane zami zilele emotweni sezithuli.  
Ngisamubona u Enzelwe ekhihliza amagwebu.

(He sighs)

Me : Nyathuko usakhumbula lapho ngisuka khona? Ngigulile mina ngenxa yakho. Ngacisho ngafa ngithakathwa izifebe zakho. Ngaphenduka isishosha because of you! I lost so much because of you!!

Nyathuko : Maka Zano.....

Me : Uzobatshela nini abantu bakini ngalengane yethu owayibulala wena nezifebe zakho 3 years ago?

Nyathuko : It was a miscarriage.

Me : Miscarriage my foot!! i miscarriage eyadalwa nguwe nobufebe bakho. Ngangibulawa yi stress ne depression kwaze kwafa ingane yami ngenxa yakho nezintombi zakho! You heard the doctors besho ukuthi isisu sichitheke ngenxa ye stress.

Awukaze nangelilodwa kodwa ilanga waxolisa. You carried on with your life like nothing happened. Ungafuni ngisho sikhulume ngengane yethu because you were guilty! Msunu wenja!! Wasuka lapho wangimithisa lengane osuyiphika namhlanje.

Nyathuko : Uthe akuyona ingane yami leyo.

Me : You know very well that I lied. You know very well that this is your baby.

(He keeps quiet)

Me : I wanted to hurt you. I wanted you to feel the pain that I've been carrying ever since I met you. Ukufeba kwakho kucisho kwangibulala. You were there. You saw everything. You saw me almost dying in your hands ngenxa yezifebe zakho but awufundanga lutho. Namanje usangihlupha. Namanje usafeba after everything I've been through. Awunandaba.

Nyathuko : I do care.

Me : You don't. Ubungibuka emehlweni la and telling me how beautiful I am. Uwena ongifundise ukuthi ngamukele umzimba wami and gain some confidence. You told me my body was perfect kodwa usuke lapho uhambe uyojola with women who were better than me.

(Tears stream down my face. I laugh trying to hide them)

Me : And you know what's funny? Angikaze ngikubone ujola nomuntu wesifazane onjengami okanye ocishe ke efane nami. Why?

Nyathuko : Sthabile that.....

Me : No, no, no. Don't answer. Ngiyayazi impendulo. Wabona mina wabona isigubhu sakho ongachamela kusona. Wabona umuntu ongamumithisa nje noma kanjani over and over again!!! Mase ulokhu uyamukhohlisa uthi "your body is perfect" yes perfect to carry your kids. That's all. Awungifuni wena uthanda isibeletho sami!!! I... I... I thought you and I were... (pause) I thought you loved me Nyathuko. I didn't know that all

of my life was a lie. Umshado wami wonke. Isikhathi sami engisichithe nawe. All of it was a lie.

Nyathuko : It wasn't a lie Maka Ndlelenhle.

Me : I was loyal to you. I never cheated. Bengingayibheki nokuyibheka enye indoda. Bengikuhlonipha. Bengazi ukuthi u Thukeh akawuthandi u one no two so I won't do it. I left my job because of you. Not just any job but my dream job. Ukuba yintatheli kwakuyiphupho lami but I left it ngoba ngifuna ukujabulisa umyeni wami. Ngathi u Thukeh akawuthandi lomsebenzi engiwenzayo so let me quit. Ngawashiya amaphupho ami esefezekile. For what? For what Thukeh? For you to cheat on me? Ukuthi ngifice amaphenti engingawazi emotweni yakho? Ngifice izithombe zezingquza engingazazi efonini yakho? For me to sleep alone ungekho wena?

(His eyes well up with tears)

Nyathuko : Sthabile ngiyaxolisa. Ngiyakuthanda Maka Ndlelenhle. Ngikuthanda ngayo yonke into engiyiyona.

Me : Stop lying to me.

(He stands up.)

Nyathuko : I'm not lying sthandwa sami. Sthah I admit that I cheated but it's not what I wanted to do. You need to believe me when I say I cheated because I had no choice.

(You see now he is getting on my nerves)

Me : Stop lying!!!

Nyathuko : I'm not lying!

Me : You know what? I'm leaving. Angazi nokuthi bengizokwenzani la. Benginethemba lokuthi uzoqonda lapho ngisuka khona but I was wrong. You still don't get it.

(I head to the door but he grabs my arm)

Nyathuko : Sthabile stop it!! I get it, Maka Zibusiso.  
Sengiyabona ukuthi inkinga ikuphi futhi ngiyabonga ukuthi  
ukhulume nami kodwa akuwena wedwa ohlukumezekile  
kuloluthando. I carried so much ngingedwa wena u busy  
accusing me for bullshit! I needed you to see that I wasn't  
coping but you didn't. I needed my wife but you.....

Me : Now you are trying to defend yourself. Usuqalile.

Nyathuko : I suffered for our love. I killed to save our love. I  
killed to protect uthando lwethu but you don't know that. I  
couldn't even talk to you ngoba uhlale ulwa nami.

Me : Oh and mina bengikwazi ukukhuluma? Bengikwazi  
Thukeh? No! Ubungekho ufeba!!

Nyathuko : I didn't sleep with those women because I wanted  
to. I did because I wanted to protect your son! Our son!

(What is he talking about?)



Me : Ay musa nje ukuqamba amanga.

Nyathuko : Zanokuhle killed Nqabayethu.

Me : Ini?

Nyathuko : I told you not to mess with Nqabayethu Zungu. I told you not to mess with the Ghetto King but you didn't listen. He wanted you to pay for what you did. He wanted you to pay ngokuthi ukhulise ingane efana naye, ingane eyabulala isencane njengaye. It wasn't about Zanokuhle or me. He was punishing you for what you did to him. But you are punishing me for trying to protect my son, my family and my wife.

Me : Nyathuko angikuzwa. Ang... ang... angikuzwa ukuthi uthini.

(He takes a box of his cigarettes and walks out. What the hell did he say?)

23

(I'm pacing up and down. My heart is bouncing. I've spoken to Nyathuko and told him how I feel which is something that I've been longing for all these years but just when I thought I've offloaded the weight from my shoulders he drops a bomb. I've given him enough time to finish that box. He needs to come back. The door opens. I wipe the tears.)

Me : Thukeh

(He sits down)

Me : Uthi u Zanokuhle wenzeni?

Nyathuko : Something happened when you were in the hospital. Kade uyokwenza i operation yehliziyo.

Me : That was long ago.

Nyathuko : Nqabayethu died. You know ukuthi he was shot.  
Zanokuhle...

(He explains to me. I don't know how I feel. This feels like a  
nightmare)

Me : He was a kid. He didn't do it Thukeh. Wayemuvale amehlo.  
Umfana wami wayengazi ukuthi kwenzekani.

(He squeezes my hand)

Nyathuko : I know. I know he didn't do it. That day changed a  
lot of things. U Zanokuhle uthi wangenwa idlozi laka Zungu....  
It's too much Sthabile.

Me : How? U Zanokuhle akasona isihlobo sakwa Zungu. Kanti  
awungenwa abantu bakini kulento?

Nyathuko : I don't know but he is fine.

Me : Does he know that he killed Nqabayethu?

Nyathuko : No. I don't understand ukuthi kungani engazi kube imanje. He asked me something the other day kodwa kwaphelela lapho futhi. Ngiyajabula ukuthi akazi.

(He sighs and stands up. I want to know what happened to his arm but we have bigger problems.)

Nyathuko : All I did was to protect my boy. Angifuni azi ngalento. We can't raise a version of Nqabayethu Zungu. Nqabayethu was brutal. Engenayo inhliziyo. Angifuni inkosana yami ibe iloyomuntu. This will destroy him (He stares up) Izinto engizenzile angizenzanga ngoba ngithanda. Kwakufanele ngenze lento eyayifunwa u Nomzamo ukuze ngikwazi ukuvikela umfana wami. I had no choice Sthabile. You have no idea how hard was it ukulala no Nomzamo. Uyakwazi ukukhala kwendoda? I cried every night uma sekufanele ngilale no Nomzamo. Ngangigibela phezu kwakhe izinyembezi zehla but I had no choice! It was either that or my son. She was threatening me Sthabile. Kwakufanele ngenzeni? Nqabayethu was my brother. Do you honestly think that I'd want to sleep with his girlfriend?

(I can't talk. I'm crying all over again)

Nyathuko : I was in the darkest place of my life. Yazi kwafika isikhathi la umhlaba engawubona khona u empty. I had no one to turn to. noNkulunkulu wayengasangizwa and that's when I kneeled down and prayed. Lapho ngangingasabizi uNkulunkulu but I called inkazimulo. I prayed to a man who gave me you. If Nkazimulo was still alive then you and I wouldn't have met. He trusted me with you, with your heart. He trusted me with his kids. Niyisipho sami esivele kuyena. That's what I believe but at that moment it didn't feel like it. I asked him if he was punishing me for being with you? I asked him if he was blaming me for his son's death? Sthabile ngiyakuthanda. Ngikuthanda ngempilo yami yonke nangenhliziyo yami yonke. I will never disrespect you because disrespecting you would be disrespecting the father of your kids, u Nkazimulo.

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : It's still a long journey. Nanoma isiphi lesono engisijezelayo isigwebo sakhona asikakapheli.

Me : What... What do you mean?

(Silence)

Me : Nyathuko?

Nyathuko : I'm still fighting for my son. Namanje ngisalwa kodwa ngifuna wazi ukuthi ngiyakuthanda. Mhlampe angiyena lomuntu ocabanga ukuthi ngiwuye but don't ever doubt my love for you futhi ungalinge ucabange ukuthi kukhona ingane yami engingayifuni noma engikhohliwe iyona. I have a reason why ngikubiza ngo mama wayo yonke ingane yami ephilayo nesilele kwelamathongo. I've made mistakes, yebo kodwa angikwenzayo manje akusewona amaphutha. I am fighting for my family. I will kill for you and my kids and I will not apologize for it.

(Silence)

Nyathuko : Ashton is pregnant.

(I swallow hard)

Nyathuko : It's not my baby. She is carrying ingane ka Zithulele.

(My eyes widen)

Nyathuko : Mzet is not coming back and I am responsible for that. He was threatening to get my son arrested.

(My knees start shaking)

Me : Uthini pho u Ashton? Uphi yena u Zithulele?

Nyathuko : She thinks he is coming back but he isn't. Sthabile angazi, mhlampe ngisazoboshwa. Mhlampe ngizofa ngibulawe abangani baka Nqabayethu. Ashton's knows too much and I don't know what she will do uma ethola ukuthi ngenzeni.

(I try to stand up but my knees fail me. I fall back)

Me : What did you do Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Angisathandi ukukuzwisa ubuhlungu. Angisafuni ukukubona ukhala ngenxa yami. I want to be a father to my kids kodwa impilo iyangicisha lokho. Ngizama ukulungisa lokhu kuqhamuke okunye. Sometimes ngize ngicabanga ukuthi kube yimi ozinikela emaphoyiseni ngithi ngabulala u Nqabayethu ukuze iphele yonke lento.

Me : Thukeh please don't say that....

(He releases a long sigh)

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa for everything I did. I need you to understand that whatever you went through you went through it because I love you. You suffered because mina ngiyakuthanda and mina yonke lento engidlula kuyona manje ngidlula kuyona because I love you. Yingoba ngithanda wena nezingane zami. Everything revolves around you. Yonke lento eyenzeke kumina



nawe it's because I chose you and I keep choosing you. Sthabile those women, o Nomzamo

o Thandeka, o Ashton it's all because of you. Because I love you and I choose you. Kodwa awukuboni lokho.

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Wagcina nini ukuzwa ngithi siyehla siya ekhaya no Baba no Sthenjisiwe?

Me : Ngomngcwabo ka Khulu.

(Hhaibo now that he has asked I remember. They don't visit their family anymore)

Nyathuko : And before that?

Me : Beningasayi

Nyathuko : Have you ever asked yourself why?

Me : Phela mina ngangithi anithandi Thukeh.

Nyathuko : No I love my family. Siyalwa and everything but ngiyakuthanda ekhaya. Namhlanje asingeni thina ekhaya kwa Zondi. Imina uBaba osisi bami asisakwazi ukuya ekhaya siya uma kufiwe kuphela or kuphoqa because I chose you and my family supported me. Abakufuni wena ekhaya e Ndwedwe. Lokho ngizokutshela nje kona. They hate you bafisa angabe ngaqhubeka no Thandeka.

(I've always known that those people hate me.)

Nyathuko : Something big happened but I won't tell you what exactly happened ngoba ngiyazi that one day they will realize that they were wrong and when that day come angifuni lufike wena nezingane zami sekuyinina esenithwele inzondo yabantu basekhaya. We don't know what tomorrow holds. So angifuni ukuthi mina mhlazane ngifa ngishiye izingane zami zingakwazi ukungena kubo because of the past.

Me : So ngeke Ungitshele?

Nyathuko : Cha. What you need to know ukuthi mina ngiphalazisiwe ngathweswa izinkukhu ezifile ukuze ngizoyeka ukuthanda wena but I still do. I still love you. Almost everyone is against our love. Wonke umuntu Sthah. Everyday ngiyalwa because I love you. Ebusuku ngilwa nama dimoni ami ongazi lutho ngawo. Sometimes it got too much and I needed my wife but she shut me out. Ungithuke ulwe nami.

Me : Nana, I'm sorry.

Nyathuko : No, I'm not blaming you for that. I am the reason you are like this. Awungihloniphi ngoba nami angikuhloniphi.

Me : I do respect you.

Nyathuko : Awungihloniphi sthandwa sami. Ungakhulumi iphutha.

(I look away)

Nyathuko : Futhi angikaze ngathandana nomuntu wesifazane ongangihloniphi njengawe.

(I glare at him)

Me : Pho why wahlala nami yonke leminyaka if I don't respect you?

Nyathuko : Yingoba futhi akekho umuntu wesifazane esengike ngamuthanda njengawe empilweni yami yonke.

Me : Why? I'm not your type.

Nyathuko : You carry my heart. Angidingi isizathu sokukuthanda Sthabile ngoba kuzokwenzekani mhlazane lesosizathu singishintshela or ngingasasiboni?

(He looks at me)

Nyathuko : Sthabile do you really think I wasn't scared of losing you?

Me : Yes.

(He shakes his head and releases another long sigh.)

Nyathuko : Sengikhathele ukukhuluma so ku right. I'm not going to try and explain why I love you. Kholwa noma yini Sthabile.

(Why is he getting angry?)

Me : I'm not going to compete with Thandeka. Uma umndeni wakho ufuna u Thandeka then fix things with her before she gets married. Lomuntu abangamufuni kini usephumile empilweni yakho.

Nyathuko : You still don't understand.

Me : No, I understand. Abangifuni kwa Zondi. Mhlampe kwayona leyongane ka Ashton eyakho akuyona eka Mzet. Angithi nonke benilala naye?

Nyathuko : Sthabile kanti yini ngempela? Why can't you....

Me : Don't. Is my son going to be fine?

Nyathuko : Yes.

Me : Thank you. Ngiyabonga futhi for protecting him. Kodwa ke no Nqabayethu wayefike ngawe ezimpilweni zethu.

(I don't mean that. I'm just angry, not at him but at his family. I don't know why they hate me so much. I'm also angry at myself for not being there for him when he needed me. He's been suffering as much as I did and I couldn't even see it. There's no hope for us so I might as well just....)

Nyathuko : Are you still blaming me?

(I get up and head out. He grabs my arm)

Nyathuko : Ngicela unгахambi Sthah.

Me : Nyathuko, please let....

Nyathuko : Ngiyakucela. Ngizolala ku sofa. Ngifuna ukuba nawe layindlini nje kuphela.

(I turn around and lick my lower lip. Tears are already filling up my eyes. Am I ever going to stop crying?)

Me : Thukeh....

Nyathuko : Woza lana.

(He pulls me closer and lifts up my chin. He caresses my lower lip.)

Nyathuko : Who did this to you?

(He is talking about the bruise. I shake my head)

Me : No one. Ngivuke nginje.

Nyathuko : Don't lie to me.

Me : I'm not lying. I'm not lying.

(I'm shaking now. I want him to hold me. I want him to hold me. I stare him in his eyes and he wraps his arm around me. I break down. He presses his lips on my forehead. His heart is beating very fast. Like never before.)



24

"Sthah? Maka Zanokuhle, wake up"

(I open my eyes to his face and my heart races soon after that. Have you ever woken up from a bad dream and seen the best thing in your life? I never thought I'd ever see this again. I can't describe how I feel.)

Me : Thukeh

(I rub my eyes. He is laughing)

Nyathuko : It's 04h00 am vuka. I made you breakfast.

Me : Oh thanks.

(I sit up. I don't remember when I slept. I look at the couch. There's a pillow and a blanket. He slept there. I search for my phone)

Nyathuko : It's charging. Your battery ran out.

Me : Ngiyabonga.

Nyathuko : Musa called.

(He gives me my breakfast and wraps his arm around me)

Me : Oh. And?

Nyathuko : I told him ukuthi ulana.

(I wonder what Musa is thinking)

Me : Okay.

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : Uh. Idla nami.

Nyathuko : I'm fine sthandwa sami.

Me : Hawu Thukeh isinkwa esingaka kodwa.

Nyathuko : Yeah, finish it....

(He gets out of bed.)

Nyathuko : I went to fetch your clothes. U Musa unginike lezi.

(He opens the wardrobe)

Me : You went to Ballito?

Nyathuko : Yah. Izolo ebusuku. I ironed them kodwa angazi ke ngoba mina ngingengalo eyodwa.

(We both laugh)

Me : There was no need. Bengizodlula endlini.

Nyathuko : Uzophuzani?

Me : Nana, come here.

(I tap on the bed. He comes and sits down)

Nyathuko : Do you want coffee?

(I shake my head)

Me : What happened to your arm?

Nyathuko : Ngagingqika nemoto

Me : What? When?

Nyathuko : Kade ngikucela ukuthi ulande oNdlelenhle endlini yami.

Me : And you didn't tell me? Thukeh wena!

Nyathuko : I'm fine sthandwa sami. Imoto yami kodwa...

(He shakes his head)

Me : I'm sorry. Uyabona ke ukuthi i insurance ibalulekile?

Nyathuko : No, I'll see what I can do.

Me : Kwakufanele ungitshela kodwa. Ay this is wrong.

Nyathuko : I know. Ngiyaxolisa

Me : So imoto ebomvu ayisekho?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Vele ubungayifuni

(I laugh)

Me : I loved it. You know that car was close to my heart.

(I sigh. He pecks my cheek)

Nyathuko : It's okay.

(He touches my lower lip. Not again.)

Me : I was thinking.

(Time to change the subject)

Nyathuko : Yeah?

Me : If Nomzamo knew what happened to Nqabayethu then....

Nyathuko : Nomzamo killed herself Maka Enzelwe. U Nomzamo wayehlanya.

Me : But....

Nyathuko : Can we not talk about it?

Me : Yea.....yeah sure.

Nyathuko : How is the baby?

Me : Fine.

(He blows out a sigh)

Nyathuko : Good. Ngizokuhambisa emsebenzini

Me : Thukeh akunankinga. I'll drive myself to work. Ingalo yakho ili.....

Nyathuko : I'm fine.

Me : Okay.

(I finished eating and got ready for work. He drove me to work with his Ranger. )

Nyathuko : Here is your food.

(I take it and smile)

Me : You cooked?



Nyathuko : For you.

Me : I wonder ukuthi ulale nini kanti wena.

(He laughs)

Me : Thank you. Uzobuyela eMachobeni?

Nyathuko : Yeah. I need to think and leyandlu iyangenza ngikwazi ukucabanga

Me : Ufuna ukucabanga ngani?

Nyathuko : About a lot of things.

Me : Nyathuko, please tell...

(Dammit! Magic. Here is Magic. There's a car dropping him off)

Nyathuko : What's wrong?

Me : Noth.. Nothing.

(His eyes follow my eyes direction. Fuck)

Nyathuko : And then? Ufunani lo lana?

Me : Baba ka Ndlela, he.... I...

Nyathuko : Imoto yakho ngizothumela umuntu ezoyiletha la.

(He goes and gets in his car)

Me : Thukeh? Thukeh please asikhulume.

(He drives off. I take a deep breath.)

Me : Eish.

(I make my way inside. I bump into Zack)

Zack : Thank God you are here. Did you see my emails?

Me : Uhmhhh. No but, but I know what it's all about. Look, we have a meeting at 10:00.

Zack : Sharp

(I go to my office and find Mr skinny legs sitting on my chair like a real boss)

Me : Mr Maphumulo

(He lifts up his eyes)

Magic : I saw you with that Zondi boy.

(If he calls Nyathuko a Zondi boy one more time I'm going to fire him)

Me : Yes

Magic : Care to explain?

Me : I have nothing to explain to you.

(He stands up)

Magic : You clearly have no idea who Magic Zwelibanzi Maphumulo is? Do you?

Me : I don't care. Please leave my office.

Magic : Okay

(He leaves. I sigh and sit down.)

(At 08:45 am my phone rings. It's Ndlelenhle's Principal. Now I know why Nyathuko hated this school. It's a very good school but ay they are breathing down my neck shame. )

Me : Mrs Subramoney

Mrs Subramoney : Ms Ngcobo, how are you doing?

Me : Very well, thanks.

Mrs Subramoney : Good. I'm calling regarding our meeting that was scheduled for today. I was hoping to see you.

(Dammit!)

Me : Oh yes, I got the email from my son's teacher. I'm really sorry about that. I'm just caught up with work and...I'm really sorry.

Mrs Subramoney : This is really unacceptable. Ndlelenhle has been acting differently lately and we need to address his behavior as soon as possible.

Me : What has he done now?

Mrs Subramoney : We need to sit down and talk.

(Fuck)

Me : I'll ask his father to come.

Mrs Subramoney : Thanks.

Me : Bye.

(I hang up and call Nyathuko. He answers after forever)

Me : Baba ka Ndlela, I need your help.

Nyathuko : Sthabile I don't want to talk.

Me : No

Advertisement

no, it's about Ndlelenhle. Kade ngithola i call evela e Flambel.  
Bafuna ukusibona.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakhona manje

Me : Oh, ngempela?

Nyathuko : I told them I would come manje angazi ukuthi yini  
sebefonela wena.

Me : Ngicela ungabahlekeleli Thukeh. Besho futhi uma bengasayifuni ingane yami esikoleni sabo.

Nyathuko : Ayke.

Me : Serious Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Ngisahamba

Me : About this morning, I'm really....

Nyathuko : It's fine, Sthabile. Ungangichazeli

(He ends the call. We are back to square one)

(This is our last meeting in this building. Tomorrow we roll with the new. We all settle down. The boardroom is not the same anymore)



Thabisa : This boardroom looks small after the one I saw in Umhlanga.

(We laugh. Magic walks in with his shoulders up high. He pulls out a chair and sits right opposite me. He glares at me. I clear my throat. Why am I sweating?)

Zack : Guys this is not our usual meeting. We have a problem.

Me : Zack? I'll handle this.

Zack : Oh, okay.

Me : Ladies and gentlemen thank you for coming at such short notice. I'm going to keep this short. I'm sure we are all aware that last week we had a shortfall in our sales. The investigation was done and....

(I look at Magic)

Zack : I don't know why Magic is here because he is not supposed to be here. This is not a hearing.

Me : Zack please.

Zack : No Sthabile! We are talking about our jobs here. If the head department finds out about this we are screwed. We have children to feed. We can't gamble with our jobs.

Millicent : What's going on here?

Zack : Magic is stealing from us. This man is stealing from us.

(Gulps)

Me : We are still running an investigation Mr Rampasard.

Zack : No! The investigation has been done. He is stealing from us.

(Magic is staring at me)

Me : Mr Rampasard, I don't appreciate what you are doing.

Malcom : Ms Ngcobo is this true?

Zack : I have proof.

(Magic stands up and heads out.)

Me : Magic please.... No, no, it's not true.

Zack : What?

Me : Zack, shut up.

Zack : No, what did he say to you? Is he threatening you?

Me : I can't do this.

(I get up, take my things and walk out. I run to my office and lock the door. I can't be here. Fuck! I can't go home. How am I going to face Musa? My son killed his brother. How am I even going to face Zanokuhle? I'm not ready to see him. I'm going home to Kwa-Mashu.)

Me : Eish, my car.

(Fine I'll take taxis. I'm definitely not staying. I pack my laptops and other things. An Uber will take me to Gateway and from there I'll take taxis.)

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KWA-MASHU

(I can't believe I'm home. I sent Musa a message. I can't remember when he is going back to England but I know if it's today he will postpone. He loves my kids so he won't leave them alone. My life is a mess. How can I leave my kids?)

MaKheswa : Hhaibo iphi imoto?

Me : Ifile

MaKheswa : Hawu nini? It was fine yesterday.

Me : I know. Kwathuleka kangaka layikhaya.

MaKheswa : Asinagesi.

Me : What? Uhambe nini?

MaKheswa : Izolo. Kunemoto eshayise isigxobo.

Me : Ha! Manje bayalungisa kodwa?

MaKheswa : I don't know. Sixakekile nje, namanzi awekho.  
Ahamba kuthangi ke wona.

Me : Kodwa bengiyaphi jehova?

(My mother laughs)

MaKheswa : Wafika ekuseni nawe. I knew you would come but I didn't think uzofika namhlanje.

Me : Ngisadinga ukushawa umoya.

MaKheswa : Ehhe?

(I sigh)

Me : Yes.

MaKheswa : Ay mina mntanami bazikhiphile nje abantu bakwa Zondi kimi. UBaba ka Ndlelenhle bengimethemba kodwa lento ayenze izolo ungikhombisile nje ukuthi ufana nse noBaba bakhe.

(I woke up in his bed today)

Me : Yeah

(I don't know what to say.)

MaKheswa : UBaba wakho udinwe uyafa.

Me : Hawu Mah! Umtsheleleni kodwa?

MaKheswa : Ay ibingidla lento weSthabile bengingeke ngingamtsheli u Ngcobo.

Me : Yoh! Mah bengithi unesifuba ntombi.

MaKheswa : Isifuba kanjani mntanami when those people disrespected us?

Me : Uphi yena u Baba?

MaKheswa : Uyabuya

Me : Akayile futhi emsebenzini?

MaKheswa : Cha

Me : Kodwa bengizonzani nje la.

MaKheswa : Kukini la. Ngeke udlale abantu bakwa Zondi.



(Wait, my mother is angry)

MaKheswa : Wena yini manje angathi awusanendaba nalento eyenzekile?

Me : No, I do. Ukuthi nje mina sengiyabazi and I don't care anymore

(She shakes her head)

MaKheswa : Kukhona isinkwa.

Me : No, I'm not hungry.

MaKheswa : Okay. Ngisawasha emnyango

Me : I'll come and help you.

MaKheswa : No, get some rest. I'm almost done.

Me : Okay.

(She walks out. I'm frustrated. I log onto my Whatsapp and greet Nyathuko. I finish and go through my contacts. Oh Magic blocked me. You know what? I don't care. He is going to be fine. That man never really loved me. He used me. Nyathuko replies.)

How did the meeting go? : Me

Where are you? : Him

Home : Me

Ndlelenhle is not coping. My son is not coping. He is doing things, Sthabile. : Him

What things? : Me

You don't care vele wena : Him

Are you blaming me ngendlela aziphethe ngayo u Ndlelenhle? :  
Me

That's not what I said. : Him

No, it is. : Me

Vele mina ngumama omubi yingakho nomndeni wakho ufisa  
angabe izingane zakho zizalwa u Thandeka : Me

(He didn't respond. Later my father came back from wherever  
he was. We are eating in the kitchen. The electricity is coming  
and going)

MaKheswa : Kuzobhoma ama fridge inkosi impela ilogesi  
wakwaMashu olokhu uphayiza.

Me : Shuthi bayalungisa.

MaKheswa : Let's hope so.

(My father is eating in silence. He clears his throat. There we go)

Ngcobo : Your mother told me what happened.

Me : Yebo

Ngcobo : Ucabanga ukwenzenjani?

Me : Baba?

Ngcobo : Mina ngifuna sibuyisele izinkomo zakwa Zondi emuva.  
It's about time. Angisafuni lutho oluzosihlanganisa  
naloyamndeni.

Me : Wathi u Baba ka Ndlela zingabuyiswa izinkomo.

Ngcobo : That's not what his uncles said.

(I keep quiet)

Ngcobo : Abantu bakwa Zondi bayisuse bona lempi.

Me : This is not a war Baba.

Ngcobo : Babukise ngendodakazi yami! Kade ngangibabekezelela abantu bakuloyamuzi ngoba ngithi ngihlonipha umfana wakwa Zondi. Ngizitshela ukuthi akafani nabo kanti angibuzanga elangeni. Loya mndeni kade wawungigibela ekhanda. It's enough.

MaKheswa : Uqinisile uBaba. Kwanele manje.

Ngcobo : Izingane ngifuna zibuye ngonyaka ozayo zizohlala nathi. uThixo emuhle mina no Ka Kheswa sizobe sisaphila. We

will look after them. Angisafuni abazukulu bami belubhade kuloyamuzi.

(Ay! Ay!)

Me : Cha Baba

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phela izingane ezakwa Zondi.

Ngcobo : I don't care. Nyathuko will never see those children again. Lengane oyimithi ukhululeke ngayo mina ngizoyinakekela. Uma becabanga ukuthi thina sidla imbuya ngothi futhi ngeke sikwazi ukunakekela lezingane then they don't know me.

MaKheswa : Yes. Uma uNyathuko ephika lengane eyodwa kusho ukuthi uziphika zonke.

(Ay, my mother is on her boyfriend's side today. I have no backup)

Ngcobo : Bazobona ngengane, Bazobona ngengane. Bazobona ngengane bewobani bona? Bacabanga ukuthi ngazala isifebe mina esihamba simithiswa yiwo wonke amadoda? Badelela mina?

(Eish)

Ngcobo : Angifuni muntu ozofika la ethi uzobona izingane zakhe. U Zondi akasenangane layikhaya. Kusukela namhlanje!

(He bangs the table and gets up.)

Ngcobo : I'm going to bed ka Kheswa.

MaKheswa : Kulungile Mapholoba.

(I've also just lost my appetite)

MaKheswa : Awuwedwa wena. Bengacabangi nje ukuthi ulahliwe abantu bakwa Zondi. Awuqhumanga nje etsheni. We love you and we are going to take care of you and our grandchildren. Buyani ekhaya.

Me : Yebo

MaKheswa : Please eat. Ungaziwashi izitsha ngoba namanzi asinawo.

Me : Okay

(My phone rings. She looks at me)

Me : Oh, U... U Musa.

MaKheswa : Okay. Ake ngiyophumuza leliqolo likathixo ke nami.

Me : Goodnight Mah.



MaKheswa : Goodnight my baby.

(She walks away)

Me : Hi

Nyathuko : Ngicela uphume ngila ngaphandle.

Me : Nyathuko, no. Seku late.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakucela.

Me : Fine

(I hang up. What the hell is he doing here? It's 19:30. How am I going to go out?)

Me : WeMah?

MaKheswa : Sthabile uyakhuluma?

Me : Yes. Musa is outside. Ulethe... Ulethe imoto.

MaKheswa : Ohho.

(Thank God.)

(I find him standing next to his car. He is wearing black and white tracksuits. )

Me : Yah Thukeh

Nyathuko : Yah sthandwa sami. Woza phela.

(He opens his arm)

Me : Angabe uyaphi ebusuku nengalo eyodwa.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Maka Sandisokuhle, that's not funny.

(He hugs me)

Nyathuko : Awukho ugesi?

Me : Awukho and wena ungihambisa ebumnyameni.

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami.

Me : What are you doing here?

Nyathuko : Huh?

(He sucks my lips)

Nyathuko : Ngilethele uMchumane amanzi.

(I pull away)

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Ngilethe amanzi sthandwa sami.

Me : Who told you that we don't have water?

Nyathuko : uMkhuleko

(He takes my hand and we go to the back of his car. There are six buckets full of water. I laugh)

Me : Wow. Okay, siyabonga.

Nyathuko : Azongeniswa ubani pho?

(I laugh)

Me : I don't know. Let's ask those boys

(There are boys riding bicycles. Kids from KwaMashu are not scared of the dark. Never. Nyathuko calls them and asks them. They agree. He opens the door and takes out something. He gives me)

Me : And then? Aybo is this Nandos?

Nyathuko : Akuyona eyakho eka Gogo no Mapholoba.

(He laughs)

Me : Shame man, ngiyababongela Nana.

Nyathuko : Uzobuya angithi?

Me : Yes

Nyathuko : Okay

(I take the boys home with the buckets. My mother opens for us)

MaKheswa : Aibo

(I laugh)

Me : Yini?

MaKheswa : Amanzi aqhamukaphi?

Me : Ngithe u Musa esilethele.

MaKheswa : Amen. Uphi pho yena Ngibonge?

Me : u Musa? u Musa usakhuluma nomunye umuntu.

MaKheswa : Aw bakithi ungibongele Sthabile. Waze wawenza umusa. Iphi imoto?

(Oh no)

Me : Ikhona. Ubengithengele la kodwa hamba udle no Mapholoba.

MaKheswa : Hawu siyabonga mntanami. UBaba usezophatha emsebenzini ksasa. Anibaboni kodwa abantu bakagesi belungisa?

Me : No but I'm sure they are fixing it.

MaKheswa : Thank you.

Me : I want to give him my laptop. Kunezinto engifuna engilungisele zona.

MaKheswa : Okay. Usheshe ubuye ke Sthabile. It's not safe.

Me : I know.

(I wait for her to go to her room and I go back to Nyathuko)

Me : How much did you give them?

(I saw him giving those boys money and the way they were thanking him I'm sure he didn't give R2s. He laughs)

Nyathuko : I didn't give them anything.

(Lies)

Me : UBaba udiniwe Thukeh



Nyathuko : Why did you tell him kodwa sthandwa sami?

Me : It wasn't me. U Mah.

Nyathuko : Eish.

Me : How was the meeting?

Nyathuko : u Ndlelenhle uyahlupha Sthah. Unabangani abangekho right and they are doing wrong things. Baphatha ama sprays esikoleni befuthe izindonga. It's too much.

Me : Kodwa usithaphi u Ndlelenhle leso spray?

Nyathuko : I don't know.

(I sigh)

Me : Mkhuleko needs to talk to him. Uyamulalela uMkhuleko.

Nyathuko : Ndlelenhle is my son. Akayena owaka Dlomo.

Me : That's not what I meant.

Nyathuko : I'll talk to my son.

Me : UBaba akasafuni ubabone.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Aw ngempela?

Me : Thukeh angidlali futhi I need to go now engaze eze lana.

(He tightens his arm around me)

Nyathuko : Angathi uNgcobo uzoshumayela yedwa ngoba mina ngihamba nawe.

Me : What? No, you can't.

Nyathuko : Hawu Sthah ngiyakucela. Ngicela ukuhamba nawe.

Me : Thukeh....

(He kisses me. He stops and stares at me)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakucela.

(I don't know what we are doing but I want to go with him.)

Nyathuko : Sthah?

Me : Yah?

Nyathuko : Vuma sthandwa sami. Ngizokubuyisa ekseni.

(I sigh)

Me : Okay.

(He kisses me. Now I have to come up with another story. I hope MaKheswa buys this one as well.)

(One thing about the father of my kids he will make sure that I eat until I can't eat anymore. I don't know how many times we ate on our way back from Kwa-Mashu after that we went bowling. Today was one of those amazing days. Anyway I told MaKheswa and Mapholoba that Musa needed to fly back to England ASAP so I need to go back to my kids since Zanokuhle is not home. They believed me. We are in Nyathuko's flat now. Tomorrow we are moving into our new building so I need to wrap up a few things. I'm sitting on a fluffy white carpet and Nyathuko is laying on the sofa. He is trying to pick a movie for us. I don't think we are going to sleep today. After this I want his dick. It's been a while since I've had a real dick. I'm sure my body thinks I'm dead. Don't ask me about Magic.)

Nyathuko : Baby buka phela. Which one?

Me : Noma iyiphi Nana. I need to finish this.

Nyathuko : Ngizovele ngifake amakati amancane mina.

(I lift up my head and glare at him. He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ngiyadlala sthandwa sami. I'm joking.

Me : No, it's okay. Ungakhohlwa ukufaka eyezinkukhu ezimnyama ezinempaphe ezicwebe....

Nyathuko : Sthah stop it!

(He hits me with a cushion. I laugh out loud)

Me : Ngiyadlala, baby.

Nyathuko : Awufuni ukudla?

Me : What? No, baby. I'm fine.

(I close my laptop and put it away. I get up)

Me : I want to sit here.

Nyathuko : Woza sthandwa sami.

Me : Am I not going to hurt you?

Nyathuko : Woza

(I smile and sleep on top of him. He is shirtless. I'm only wearing his shirt and my panties. The shirt is unbuttoned because yes, I'm big. He smells so amazing. I can already feel his hard dick twitching and touching my ass. I missed this. I missed us)

Nyathuko : Why did you go to KwaMashu?

(Wee!)

Me : I didn't have the strength to face Zanokuhle.

Nyathuko : You can't punish my son for something he is not aware of.

Me : I'm not punishing him. I wasn't ready to face him.

Nyathuko : When are you going to be ready?

Me : Thukeh please.

Nyathuko : Awuzoyithatha ingane yami ngalendlela yakho. If you want somebody to yell at ungamane uze kumina. My son is off limits, Sthabile.

Me : I'm not going to yell at him. I actually don't blame him for what happened.

Nyathuko : Kungcono.

(I don't want to talk anymore. I want that hard dick inside me. I feel wet already.)



Nyathuko : U Maphumulo uhamba nini?

(Really now? Did he have to bring Magic's name in the middle of this? Wow. My clit stops throbbing)

Me : I don't know.

Nyathuko : Awazi kanjani sthandwa sami?

Me : Ngeke ehambe manje. The company needs him.

Nyathuko : Aw

(What does that mean?)

Nyathuko : Uhlukene manje naye. He needs to go.

Me : Who said we broke up?

(I'm playing with wildfire here)

Nyathuko : You wanted to see if I could live without you. That was the point. Yah, usubonile ukuthi angikwazi. Angikwazi Sthabile. Living without you is impossible. It makes me sick kube angathi ngiyahlanya. Now end whatever you had with that man.

(Not what I expected.)

Me : What if you leave me?

Nyathuko : Why would I leave you?

Me : Umndeni wakho awungifuni.

Nyathuko : Nawe umndeni wakho awungifuni.

(This time he is right)

Me : Thukeh, what are we doing ngempela?

Nyathuko : I don't know about you sthandwa sami kodwa mina I'm doing what I know and what I live for and lokho ukuthanda wena nezingane zami.

Me : Thukeh I love you. I do, Nana. Kodwa ngiyasaba ukuthi uma imindeni yethu ingathola that we are back together kuzobakhona umsindo kungcine sekungena nezingane zethu kuyona yonke lento. Your family doesn't believe that the baby I'm carrying is yours futhi nosiko lwenu luyaphika which is something I don't understand because I'm certain that this baby is yours. Umndeni wami ngapha awusafuni lutho oluzongihlanganisa nawe.

Nyathuko : How many times did you sleep with him?

Me : Thukeh please bandla asingabuyeli emumva.

(He keeps quiet. I lift up my head)

Me : Baby?

Nyathuko : Sthah I'm not going to break up with you. Sikwenzile lokho kwangasebenza, kwavele kwamosha izinto kakhulu. I'm not going to repeat the same mistake twice.

Me : Uphike ingane yakho.

Nyathuko : Are you sure that the baby is mine?

Me : Aibo Thukeh! Yebo nginesiqiniseko. This is your baby. U Zondi lona okulesisu sami. No doubt.

Nyathuko : Then I have no reason not to kill Magic.

(I laugh out loud. Wait, he is not laughing. I look at him.)

Nyathuko : Yini?

Me : Did you hear what you just said?

Nyathuko : Yah.

Me : Uqale nini ukukhuluma ngokubulala? It's so unlike you.

(I say with my brows furrowed. What's wrong with him?)

Me : Thukeh?

(He runs his hand on my back and undoes my bra)

Nyathuko : Yinindaba?

Me : No

nothing. Please don't talk about killing.

Nyathuko : Okay. Woza ngiqabule.

(I shake my head and kiss him.)

Nyathuko : Siya nini ukuyoluka?

(I laugh)

Me : Is it that bad?

Nyathuko : Kumbi.

(I laugh and he pulls me back for another kiss. There's a knock on the door)

Me : Ubani?

Nyathuko : Ignore it.

Me : Thukeh wait. Mhlampe u Thalente.

(I mean who else can knock on his door at this time?)

Nyathuko : Yah, please open for him.

(I put on my bra)

Me : No, angigqokile mina.

Nyathuko : It's okay, go and open for him.

Me : Oh, okay.

(I'm half naked so why am I opening the door for his friend and why is he okay with that? I look back where he is sleeping and open the door. Boom! The coloured Gogo with an old whistling vagina is at my man's doorstep. She is fucking weeping)

Ashton : Th... Oh Sthabile. I thought....

(I smile)

Me : Hi Ashton.

(She immediately wipes her crocodile tears)

Ashton : I'm sorry. I didn't know you were here. I thought you were in KwaMashu.

Me : Really?

Ashton : Yes.

Me : I see. Baby? Baby, nangu u Ashton.



(We wait for Nyathuko. She can't even look at me. She is busy fixing her hair.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami, who is it?

(He asks. He is standing behind me. I turn my face to him with a smile)

Me : It's Mzet's baby mama, Nana.

(I bring my gaze back to Ashton)

Nyathuko : Oh.

(He kisses my neck)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : Yes, speak to her.

(He stand in front of me and kisses my lips)

Me : Go

(I whisper to him)

Nyathuko : Are you sure?

(I shake my head. He steps out but he's a bit hesitant. I close the door and my hands start shaking. I'm boiling with anger. I breathe in and out. In and out. I go back and sit down.)

Nyathuko : Ulokhu ungisanganela la... No, Ashton. No!

(I hear him saying and the door closes after that. He is coming. He keeps clicking his tongue. Now I can feel him standing behind me. Akana plani. I chuckle and shake my head.)

Nyathuko : Maka Nasisipho?

(I stand up and face him)

Me : Uzofunani u Ashton la ngo Eleven ebusuku?

Nyathuko : Angimazi. Uthi akazizwa kahle ucabanga ukuthi uguliswa ingane.

(I raise my eyebrows in disbelief)

Me : Oh, really? Yena uma engazizwa kahle uza kuwena? Is that what she always does?

Nyathuko : Cha

Me : How far is she?

Nyathuko : 3 months.

Me : Uzophela nini u nine months Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Sthabile...

Me : Uzwe ngobani ukuthi ngiKwaMashu?

Nyathuko : Uzwe ngami.

Me : Uhlanganaphi u Ashton nalokho Thukeh?

(He clears his throat)

Nyathuko : Sthabile ngiyaxolisa ke. Can we let this go?

Me : Kuzofanele ulande u Mzet lapho ahleli khona. Umuntu wesifazane okhulelwe unemizwa ephezulu yocansi. U Ashton udinga uBaba wengane yakhe or uwena ofuna ukulala naye?

Nyathuko : Aybo Maka Zothani.

Me : Tell Mzet to come back. Call him now.

Nyathuko : I can't.

Me : Ngobani? Yazi Thukeh uyangi...

(I pause and sigh)

Me : I don't want us to fight. Ngicela uyolala ngiqhubeke ngisebenze.

Nyathuko : Sthah....

Me : Please go. Do it for us. Hamba ulale Thukeh.

(He exhales deeply and shakes his head. He takes his lighter and heads out to burn his lungs.)

Me : Usuyamulandela?

Nyathuko : Cha

(He walks out. I sit on the floor and continue with my work. After a few minutes he walks back in and heads to the bedroom. I look at him and snort.)

(It's been an hour now. I miss him. I put everything away and go to the bedroom. He is fast asleep. I smile and watch him sleeping. Sometimes I understand why those women go gaga over him. This man is... Mhmmm. I have no words to describe it. He scratches the side of his face and I quickly look away. I take off his shirt and climb on the bed. I thought we were going to have sex but not anymore. I kick his feet. He is not waking up. I find a way to put my head on his chest without hurting his arm. He wraps his arm around me)

Nyathuko : Hand

(I laugh. Oh he is not sleeping. I put my hand over his dick. He pecks my forehead)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(I smile. I know he does. I'm tired of Ashton following him. Maybe it's time to find Mzet. I sigh.)

Me : I love you too, Nana.

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THALENTE

(Nyathuko is talking to his father over the phone. I haven't seen him in a while. He looks different. Something is different.)

Nyathuko : Mina ngisho into engitshelwe uwena. I told you I was fine wathi I shouldn't worry about anything. Wena uzoyilungisa indaba yemoto. Ngikufonele namhlanje ngo 10h00. Manje usuyoqedela ama tattoo. Usungitshela izindaba zokuya overseas.

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Nondaba asiyiyeke lento Baba ngiyakucela.... Aibo that's not what I'm doing.

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : Okay. Ngizofika ntambama



(Silence)

Nyathuko : Okay.

(He ends the call)

Nyathuko : Ey Mbambo

Me : Bhambatha. Kuhamba kanjani wakithi?

Nyathuko : Ngiyaphila bafo

Me : Yah. Lithini i tayma?

Nyathuko : Sikhuluma indaba yemoto la. Usengitshela izinkinga zakhe. UBaba uma ebona u Vee uvele ehlanye enze izithembiso ezinkulu ezingenasidingo.

(I laugh)

Me : Kade ngizokubheka la ekseni ngafika ungekho.

Nyathuko : Yeah kade ngihambise oZothani esikoleni. U Zano use Cape Town.

Me : Oh. Eish uzofa ukuhamba.

Nyathuko : Kakhulu. Ngifuna ukubafaka la e Ballito next year. Sikude lesikole sabo esiso Tongaat.

Me : It is far ndoda. Manje ama hairdryer nama Tresemme lawa? Uwena wonke lo?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Izinto zika Sthah lezo.

Me : Haa! Are you serious? Ubelana?

(He smiles. My boy is happy)

Nyathuko : Yah

Me : Shuthi seni grand?

Nyathuko : Siyazama bafo.

Me : Yeah? Yeah? Ay into eright leyo. Mina ngiyajabula, Wakithi.

Nyathuko : I know. Kwafika u Ashton

Me : Unamanga bafo.

Nyathuko : First knock, I knew it was her. Ngavele ngagxabelwa ikhanda. Ngathi hamba uvule Sthah. Wathi uyanqaba...

(I laugh)

Nyathuko : Ngathi hamba sthandwa sami uyovula

Me : Wavulisa yena?

Nyathuko : Uyamazi u Sthah kuthiwa kuvule mina ubezothi uvulela izifebe zakho ngikhona.

(We both laugh)

Me : Uzofunani kodwa u Ashton nkosiyami?

Nyathuko : Uzongitshela ukuthi ubechama wathi mesula wabona igazi. Manje useyasaba

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Ey Wakithi mina ngisenkingeni

Me : Wathini u Sthabile?

Nyathuko : "Fonela u Mzet manje Thukeh"

(We laugh)

Nyathuko : Kwathi angithi u Mzet ufile.

Me : Ubezofa

Nyathuko : Yah. Ay kodwa mfethu she surprised me last night. Indlela enze ngayo kade kukhona u Ashton noma esehambile. It took me by surprise. I went for a smoke ngabuya ngalala and I wanted nothing to ruin that moment. For the first time u Sthah

ungithembile. Akaphumanga wahamba or.... (sigh) Mbambo  
Ngiyayithanda leyantombazane yaka Ngcobo. Sthabile owns my  
heart. She is my life bafo.

(I smile)

Me : I know bafo. I know mfanakithi.

Nyathuko : I don't want to hurt her anymore. She's been  
through hell because of me. When she mentioned indaba  
yengane....

Me : Eish

Nyathuko : It's hit me mfanakithi.

Me : Did you tell her what happened?

(He shakes his head and sits down)

Nyathuko : Mbambo, kunezinto ongafanele ukuthi uzikhulume ukuze wakhe ukuthula. Ekhaya bayazi ukuthi ngiyazi ukuthi what happened kodwa ngithuli ngamabomu because I know how big this is. Uma ngingasusa lempi manje ngisho sesifile izingane zethu zingaqhubeka nayo. That's not what I want. Impi yasekhaya iyingozi. Uyayazi wena.

Me : I do mfanakithi.

Nyathuko : Kunezimpi okufanele zife nathi. Sishiye ukuthula ezinganeni zethu. Zingasali zilwa izingane zethu "UBaba wakho wabulala umfowethu" "UBaba wakho did that" Yimpi ende leyo futhi engeke iphele. Ngisho izingane zika Ndlelenhle ziyokhula ziyilwe.

Me : Mhmmm, ey Thukeh, this is serious.

Nyathuko : It is. Kwenzeka yonke nje lento yingoba mina no Njabulo sisalwa izimpi zoBaba bethu. Engikholwa ukuthi kuthiwa abasekho angabe sesabulalana mina naye. Do I want

that for my kids as well? No. I don't. Ngifuna izingane zami nezika Njabulo zizwane.

Me : Kodwa Thukeh lenja ikukhawathe blind. Ngengcosi yakho? Ayngeke.

Nyathuko : Ku right. Namanje ngisasho the same thing ukuthi umndeni wami ngiyawuthanda kodwa iwona ongafuni mina. But still, angisoze ngakhipha umphefumulo wasekhaya. But mina ke ngiphethe abasembathaMkhonto, oMaphalala. They fight for me. oKhulu bashawa unembeza bakhetha ukufa.

Me : Shit.

Nyathuko : Sebeyobuza yena ke ngamacala entandokazi yomzukululu wakhe. Ephendule nangomphefumulo wengane yami lo aziyo ukuthi waphuma kanjani.

(His eyes turn red. He stands up and takes his cigarettes and lighter. He walks out. I rub my face and blow out a sigh.



Sometimes I wish I could at least carry half of his problems because this is too much for one man)

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^

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(Today we decided to throw ourselves a welcome party at our new building. I'm not drinking so I'm bored but everyone else seems to be having fun. Zack joins me)

Me : Mr Rampasard

(He laughs)

Me : Nobody will notice if I sneak out and go home.

(We both laugh)

Zack : I'm leaving in the next hour.

Me : Me too. I'll see you guys tomorrow.

Zack : Sthabile what is he still doing here?

(He points at Magic who is standing all alone with beer in his hand)

Me : Zack give him a break. He is just desperate.

Zack : What if he steals from us again?

Me : It won't happen again, I promise.

Zack : What did he say to you exactly?

Me : Ummm..... sorry.

(My phone is ringing. I take it out of my purse and smile. He is calling me for the 100th time.)

Me : Can we finish this later? I need to take this.

Zack : Sure

(I step away and answer)

Me : Hey Nana

Nyathuko : Yah muntu wami

(I laugh)

Me : Sawubona muntu ka Sthabile.

Nyathuko : Ikukhumbule indoda yakho

Me : Nami ngiyikhumbule

Nyathuko : Vuma ngikulande lapho phela sthandwa sami.

Me : You can't Nana.

(I don't need any drama between him and Magic. He sighs)

Nyathuko : Okay. Ngisaya e Gateway.

(He's been updating me about almost everything today. Where he is going, you know. All that and I love it. It's new and I love it)

Me : Uyonzani Nana?

Nyathuko : Ndlelenhle wants to visit me tomorrow. Uyamazi akapheli kwi fridge

(I laugh)

Me : Uthe umlande?

Nyathuko : Yah. Ungitshele ekseni. Ethu ngingabizi o Zibusiso ufuna ukuza yedwa.

(I laugh)

Me : Uzophoxeka ke because you are visiting us.

Nyathuko : Nini kodwa sthandwa sami?

Me : Namhlanje ntambama. Sohlangana endlini.

Nyathuko : Yazi ngibizwe uBaba.

Me : Aw

Nyathuko : Kodwa ngizoza baby.

Me : Please usho mawungeke ukwazi Thukeh. I don't want to give the kids false hope. Ngithi uyeza ujike ungezi.

Nyathuko : I'll come sthandwa sami.

Me : Okay.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : I love you too

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baby.

(I hung up with a smile on my face. Someone clears their throat behind me. I know who it is.)

Me : Magic

Magic : So you two fixed things?

(I turn around)

Me : Yes we did. Now if you'll excuse me.

(I walk away. I don't have time for his nonsense.)

oooooo

( After the party I went to fetch my kids from school. We are on our way to fetch Musa from Gateway. I don't know what he is doing there. This morning I thought it was going to be hard to face him but it wasn't. Thank God Zanokuhle is on that vacation so I won't have to face him anytime soon. Ndlelenhle is playing games on my phone. Zothani is sleeping. Zibusiso is standing between the seats asking me countless questions.)

Ndlelenhle : Ungangigxobi!

Zibusiso : Sorry!

Me : Ningaxabani

Ndlelenhle : She is stepping on my feet.

Zibusiso : I said sorry!

Me : Okay, that's enough.

Zibusiso : Mommy where were you?

(Oh no)

Me : I'm sorry I left you baby.

Zibusiso : Were you happy where you were?



Me : Yes my angel, I was happy.

Zibusiso : Then it's okay. We don't mind staying with uncle Musa.

(I look at her through a rear view mirror)

Me : Really?

Zibusiso : They made you happy.

(Oh my baby!)

Me : Kiss mommy

(She giggles and presses her tiny lips on my cheek)

Me : I love you baby

Zibusiso : I love you too mommy

(I smile)

Zibusiso : Is uncle Musa a boy?

Me : Yes Nana

Zibusiso : But he feels like a girl?

Me : Uh.

Zibusiso : But she is a boy?

Me : Yes

(She is silent for a moment. I wonder what she is thinking)

Zibusiso : Mhmmm. God is creative

(Wow! I smile and shake my head)

(We arrived in Gateway. We go to Woolworths while we are waiting for Musa to finish whatever he is doing. I'm carrying Zothani who is still sleeping. Ndlelenhle is pushing a trolley.)

Me : Siso thathela u Ndlelenhle ikhekhe, Nana.

Zibusiso : Which one do you want, Ndlela?

Ndlelenhle : I want that one. The bigger one.

(His love for cake is unmatched.)

Me : Ningaliwisi

Zibusiso : There is Aseyanda's mother.

(What? Aseyanda is Njabulo's last born. What is his mother doing in Gateway?)

Me : Go and greet her

(Ndlelenhle shakes his head)

Ndlelenhle : I don't want to.

(She sees us and smiles. She makes her way towards us.)

Lindiwe : I was sure ukuthi inina laba

(I laugh)

Me : Sawubona Lindi

Lindiwe : Maka Ndlelenhle ninjani?

Me : Siyaphila sisi

Lindiwe : Siyaphila nathi. Siso, Ndlela? Sanibona. Heh!  
Senikhule kangaka nina? Ulele u Zo?

Me : Yes. Ukhathele umntanami bakithi

(She laughs)

Lindiwe : WeNdlelenhle sawubona wena namangqumu ka  
Thukeh. Ave ufana no Baba wakho.

(She likes Ndlelenhle more)

Ndlelenhle : Sawubona

Lindiwe : Uphi u Baba?

Ndlelenhle : At his house

(I laugh)

Lindiwe : Hawu, is he not at work?

(Ndlelenhle quickly shakes his head)

Ndlelenhle : Akasasebenzi uBaba wami futhi nemoto akasenayo.

(I frown. What?)

Lindiwe : Really?

Ndlelenhle : Yes, akaseyena futhi u businessman uBaba wami. Useyaphuza utshwala.

(Asshh!)

Lindiwe : Aibo Sthabile is this true?

(I swallow and fix Zothani)

Ndlelenhle : Mommy doesn't know. Sebehlukene no Babah.

(Aibo lengane. My phone rings. Thank goodness)

Me : Lindi, I'm sorry sisi but we need to go. Nangu efontu lomuntu esimulindle

Lindiwe : Oh okay sisi. Ngizonikhonzela ekhaya.

Me : Let's go. Uncle Musa is waiting for us. Sizobuye sibuye.

(We walk out. Ndlelenhle doesn't even care that we are leaving his cake. What's wrong with Ndlelenhle? No, I need to ask him before we get to Musa.)

Me : Boy boy?

Ndlelenhle : Mommy

Me : What was that all about? Why did you say all those things to Aunt Lindi?

Ndlelenhle : Nothing.

Me : Tshela u Mah mfan'wami. Why ufishela u Babah zonke lezinto ezimbi ozitshela u Aunt Lindi?

(He looks at me with watery eyes. He shakes his head)

Ndlelenhle : Angimufiseli u Baba wami izinto ezimbi mommy.

Me : So why did you say those things, boy boy?



Ndlelenhle : Because they won't kill daddy if they think he is poor.

(My eyes pop out. I quickly look around to see if there's anyone else who heard what he said.)

Me : Wh...What?

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(I think Musa is seeing someone. He was on his phone all the way from Gateway and he was smiling non stop. Oh and he came with a bunch of roses. We arrived here and we only stayed an hour and then he told me he was going out.)

Me : Who is he?

Musa : I don't kiss and tell. Bitch, you and Nyathuko are back together and you didn't tell me.

(I laugh and open the door for him. His ride is here)

Musa : My ride's here.

Me : Maybe you should call your parents and tell them you are not coming back.

(He laughs)

Musa : Bye kidos.

Me : Wait. Thukeh is coming over.

Musa : So?

Me : I slept with Magic what if I'm..... you know.

(I look at my kids)

Musa : That was ages ago

Me : But still. I want him to feel me. Phela mina angikaze ngilale nenye indoda besides Thukeh. Magic was the first... So I'm a bit scared. Ngingenzani?

(His eyes widen)

Musa : You do know that I'm still a man? I'm gay but....

Me : Sam

(He opens his purse and takes out black Halls)

Me : What are you doing with these?

Musa : For my ass.

Me : What?

(I'm shocked)

Musa : You won't get it. Wena you need to eat them with Stone. I saw it in the fridge. One of my bitches uses that method. Good luck. Bye babies.

"Bye"

(The kids say)

Musa : Sthabile eat with your mouth not your ass. Gosh. I need to go now. Don't wait up.

(I raise my eyebrows)

Me : Oh?

Musa : Bye!

Me : Musa wait. How do I....

(He runs away. I laugh and shake my head)

Me : Jesus

(I mutter)

Zibusiso : Where is he going, Mah?

Me : He is visiting his friends.

(I check the time. Where is Nyathuko? He is supposed to be here by now. I go to the kitchen. I chew the Halls and take it down with Stone. I don't know if this is how it's done.)

Zothani : Mommy, I would like some juice.

(I almost jump)

Me : When did you get here?

Zothani : Mah?

Me : Nothing baby. What do you want?

Zothani : May I please have some juice?

Me : Okay, baby. Hamba uhlale phansi. I'll give you now. Let me finish setting up the table first.

Zothani : Okay

Ndlelenhle : Daddy!! Daddy!!

(They all scream in excitement.)

Zibusiso : Mommy, Daddy is here!!

(I laugh and make my way to the living room. His hands are full now. Oh wow, his arm is better. He is not wearing an arm sling anymore. He is carrying Zothani and Zibusiso. Ndlelenhle is climbing on his back.)

Me : Ningamuwisi phela u Babah.

(Nyathuko laughs. He goes and sits with them on the couch. I leave them playing and close the door. Nyathuko stands up)

Nyathuko : Sawubona sthandwa sami

Me : Hello Nana

(He opens his arms and hugs me. He lifts up my chin and kisses me)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(I giggle)

Me : I love you too Nana. Usu right ingalo?

(He looks at his arm)

Nyathuko : Yeah. Uyazazi izinto zamabomu



Me : What do you mean?

(He kisses my neck)

Nyathuko : I missed you.

Me : I mi.....

Ndlelenhle : Woza babah. Woza uzohlala la.

(He taps on the couch. Nyathuko laughs)

Nyathuko : Okay mfan'wami.

Me : Izingane zakho zinomona

(We both laugh)

Me : We were about to have dinner.

Nyathuko : I thought we were going out.

Me : Are we?

(His narrowed eyes are searching all over my face. He has this charming smile on his face. I wave my hand)

Me : Hello? Nana?

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(I laugh and shake my head)

Me : I love you too. You say we are going out?

Nyathuko : Mhmmm

(He kisses me. He massages my vagina. I push him away and laugh)

Me : Izingane Thukeh.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : BoBhambatha let's go.

Zothani : Where are we going?

Me : Asambeni nizobona

(The level of excitement is high. I'm happy too. Way too happy.)

(We went out to have dinner and we came back and put our kids in bed. We are watching TV in our bedroom. I'm sitting

between his legs. He is planting kisses all over my neck and my shoulders.)

Me : Did you hear Zothani? "Babah ngivuke ukhona ke njalo"

(We both laugh)

Nyathuko : How was the bash?

Me : Bash?

(I laugh out loud)

Nyathuko : Yini kanti le ebeniyenza?

Me : Party Nana. Just a small party.

Nyathuko : Yeah?

Me : It was nice. Hee! Something happened today. Angithi uyakhumbula ufona ngithi siya e Gateway siyolanda u Musa?

Nyathuko : Yeah.

Me : Yes. Sabona u Lindi.

Nyathuko : U Lindi?

Me : Yes baby, umawengane ka Njabulo. Weza wasibingelela and he asked Ndlelenhle ukuthi wena ukephi

(I explain to him and he laughs)

Me : Thukeh it's not funny. Yazi ngivele ngadideka.

Nyathuko : No, sthandwa sami. Don't worry about it.

Me : No. Ingane engango Ndlelenhle ngeke nje ivele isho into enjeya out of nowhere.

Nyathuko : Ey u Ndlela.

(He laughs)

Me : What's going on Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Nothing baby. Umfana wami got it all wrong. Wezwa u Thalente ekhuluma edlala futhi ethi u Njabulo uzongibulala because ucabanga ukuthi nginemali okudlula yena. Wathi umndeni awukuhluphi uma uhlupheka. They don't want to see you doing better than them. Esho yonke leyonto.....

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ey uNdlela. Manje umfana wami ucabanga ukuthi bazongibulala?

Me : Ukube umubonile ebusweni. He was so serious.

(We both laugh)

Nyathuko : Ah! My boy was trying to protect me. I need to tell Thalente about this.

(We laugh)

Me : Umtshele ukuthi he must watch his tongue around Ndlelenhle.

(He brushes my stomach)

Nyathuko : When are we going to see the doctor?

Me : Next week Nana.

Nyathuko : u right kodwa u Thukeh omncane?

(He kisses my stomach and I giggle)

Me : She is fine.

Nyathuko : Umfana lo.

(I laugh)

Me : Manje, when are you going to tell your family? We need to fix things, Thukeh.

(He heaves a sigh. I turn and face him)

Me : Baby? Yinindaba?

Nyathuko : Sthah

there's no need to fix anything.



Me : What do you mean? Thukeh uphike ingane yakho phambi kwabo.

Nyathuko : I know and I have a reason why I did that.

Me : A reason?

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami, ngicela nje izinto siziyeke ngalendlela eziyiyo until my baby is born.

Me : Why?

Nyathuko : Sthah abantu bagangile. I'm trying to protect my baby here.

Me : Protect your baby from who? Your family?

Nyathuko : And everyone else. Angifuni umsindo. My baby has been through a lot already. Kwanele manje.

Me : So how are we going to do this? Are we going to hide the baby from your family?

Nyathuko : Umndeni wami uBaba, Sthenjisiwe and Ntokozo kanye nomndeni wakwa Maphalala. They know about the baby. Ayikho ingane efihliwe.

Me : Abantu baseNdwedwe basewumndeni wakho.

Nyathuko : I know that. Kodwa ngicela uhloniphe isinqumo sami, ngiyacela Maka Enzelwe.

Me : Your decision doesn't make sense.

Nyathuko : It doesn't have to make sense okwamanje.

Me : Yini le ongangitsheli yona?

Nyathuko : Ayikho sthandwa sami.

Me : When is Mzet coming back?

Nyathuko : U Princess usebuyele e England?

Me : Uh-huh Thukeh, ngikubuze umbuzo. Don't ignore me.

Nyathuko : Uzobuya?

Me : Umcashisephi ngempela and how do you know ukuthi lapho ekhona ngeke ezame ukubophisa u Zanokuhle?

Nyathuko : Zanokuhle is not guilty of anything. Maka Zothani, I'm not trying to save my son from getting arrested. Ngizama ukumuvikela from something that I'm sure ukuthi it will destroy him.

Me : What if uyahlangana no Zanokuhle emtshele?

Nyathuko : He won't.

Me : And how do you know that?

Nyathuko : I know.

Me : Mina angisafuni u Ashton eduze kwakho.

Nyathuko : I know Mam'Zondi.

(I laugh)

Me : Mam'Zondi?

Nyathuko : Usewuye u Mam'Zondi ukuthi nje uyazihlanyisa.

(I laugh)

Me : Am I?

Nyathuko : Uh! Kodwa ke kulungile ube intombi yami nje okwamanje....

(He kisses my neck. I giggle)

Me : Okwamanje?

Nyathuko : Ungowami wena. Uyisidudla sika Thukeh. Woza la

(I laugh. Gosh, I love him. We kiss. Clothes on the floor. He is on top of me. He tries to reach for a condom but I stop him.)

Me : It's okay.

(He kisses me. He slides in his dick and pulls out. He tightens his grip on the pillow and roars. He is tense. Way too tense. He

rolls off and throws himself next to me. He covers his face with his hand and sighs)

Me : Thukeh what's wrong? Is it the Halls?... Oh my God I shouldn't have listened to Musa. What does he know?

(He looks at me)

Nyathuko : What?

Me : No, nothing. Ungiyekelani?

Nyathuko : Sthah....

Me : I disgust you, right?

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami, no.

Me : Vele. Usacabanga indaba ka Magic

Nyathuko : I am sthandwa sami. Ukuthi nje angikwazi ukuyidlulisa yonke lento ekhanda lami.

Me : Thukena ngiyaxolisa. Uyoke ungixolele kodwa?

Nyathuko : Imina engixolisayo sthandwa sami. I don't know what's wrong with me. I drove you to another man's arms kanti nami angikho msulwa ukuthi nje....

( He blows out a sigh. I kiss him)

Me : I get it, baby.

(We kissed again. I climb on top of him. We are on for a rough ride. He taught me well)

29

(It's 07:00 am. I should be cuddling with my man but how when Musa is on a honeymoon phase with his boyfriend? He's busy showing me his pictures. He arrived here at exactly 06:15)

Me : So you guys partied all night?

Musa : I had a blast.

Me : Sam, we are heading to 40, don't you think we are too old to be partying all night? Maybe you need to tone down a little bit.

Musa : I'm 37. Speak for yourself.

(I laugh)

Me : He is cute, I like him. I hope he treats you well.



Musa : But he is so small....wait, are you sure that Nyathuko is sleeping?

(I giggle)

Me : Yes he is sleeping and he is not going to wake up anytime soon.

Musa : Long night, huh?

Me : Very long. I'm burning.

Musa : Viva Halls Vi....

Me : It wasn't Halls actually. My vagina kno....

Musa : Spare me, please.

(I laugh)

Musa : Geez! You! Anyway, don't you want to join me for a young run?

Me : Me? Jogging? Never! Aren't you late for it? Phela wena ugijima ekuseni ukunalokhu.

Musa : Don't worry about time.

Me : Or maybe ungahlala nje namhlanje and help me with our Saturday breakfast.

Musa : No thanks.

(He laughs)

Musa : Come on, come with me. Nyathuko is sleeping. You'll just walk.

Me : I don't need to exercise. U Thukeh wami ungithanda nginje

(He smiles)

Musa : Bitch you have no idea how happy I am now that you guys are back together. I can now fly back to England in peace. I'm warm and content.

Me : When are you going back?

Musa : Tonight

Me : What? Tonight?

Musa : Come on, I was supposed to leave 2 days ago.

Me : Sam, I'm going to miss you.

Musa : I'll be back soon. Chumani is also sad.

Me : Oh man. Kufanele, you guys just hooked up and you are leaving him already.

Musa : My Xhosa man. He will be fine

Me : Please come back sooner

Musa : I will. Now I better go.

(He puts on his headphones and stretches his arms. I laugh)

Musa : Give me my bottle of water and stop laughing.

(I give him. I don't know what he is doing now but he is kicking the air.)

Musa : Tell Nyathuko I'll be back now.

Me : Okay

(He runs all the way outside. I laugh and shake my head. It could never be me, wuuuh! Huh-huh. I go back to my bedroom and I find Nyathuko dressing up.)

Me : Baby?

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami

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I need to go.

Me : Go? Why? Kuse early nje.

Nyathuko : Kune delivery ekufanele ngiyisayinele lapha ka Bhambatha.

Me : I didn't know that.

Nyathuko : I know baby. Bangitshela manje nami.

Me : Uzogeza endlini?

Nyathuko : Yeah.

(Something is off)

Nyathuko : Where is Musa?

Me : Uyogijima. Uthe umulinde.

Nyathuko : No, I'll see him later..

Me : Baby are you okay?

(He sighs and wraps his arm around my waist.)

Nyathuko : Kade ngikhuluma no Mapholoba.

Me : Ey nkosiyami uBaba. Usetheni ke manje?

Nyathuko : He wants to see me. Uthi ufuna ukunginika imali yelobolo.

Me : Hhaibo uBaba. Sakhuluma nje ngalento bakithi.

Nyathuko : He said he'll give me half. Lena enye ucela ngimubekezelele kancane usayihlanganisa. Sthah, what's wrong with your father? That money was paid 10 years ago and I told him that I don't want it back.

(He is definitely not happy about this)

Me : I know. UMapholoba unenkani. Nana, I'm sorry.

Nyathuko : Angiyithandi lento ayenzayo u Mapholoba.  
Angiyithandi ngempela.

Me : Ngiyaxolisa Thukeh. Mhlampe kufanele ngibatshele that  
we are fine now.

Nyathuko : That will bring us more trouble. Don't worry about  
it, sthandwa sami. I'll handle your father.

Me : Are you sure?

Nyathuko : Woza ngiqabule

(I smile and he kisses me)

Nyathuko : U Max ufuna abazukulu bakhe bemuvakashele.  
Uthini wena?

(He kisses me again)



Me : Today?

Nyathuko : Manje. I'll leave them lapha kuyena.

Me : Yey! Ngiyayidinga leyo break

Nyathuko : Hamba nami phela siye ka Bhambatha.

(I laugh)

Me : Ayngeke baby. Kugcwala kanjeya lapha. I'm sure nje khona abantu abazokhipha ibhabhalazi kuyimanje.

Nyathuko : Hawu awufuni ukuyodla inyama nendoda yakho?

Me : I do, baby. But Musa is leaving tonight so I need to spend some time with him. Asiyidle ntambama lenyama uyabo?

Nyathuko : Musa is leaving tonight?

Me : Yes.

Nyathuko : Oh. Ntambama sizoya ngempela?

Me : Yes, my love.

Nyathuko : Okay. I'll tell Ntokozo and Sthenjisiwe to come with us.

Me : Okay

(He kisses me)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami, Nondaba wami.

Nyathuko : Sizoluka nini? Awufuni ngikuphelezele? Nami ngifuna ukugunda.

(He cuts his hair almost every week.)

Me : Usaba impandla

(He pinches me and I laugh)

Me : Ngiyadlala sthandwa sami. Thukena mina anginayo imali yokuluka. I'm broke

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Sthah wena awukaze ungabi broke sthandwa sami.

Me : Hhawu! Angikaze ngikunike imali yokugunda?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ay kulungile sizoluka.

Me : Thank you baby. What time are you going to pick me up?

Nyathuko : Mase u right uzongifonela.

Me : Okay baby. Let me wake your kids up. Are you guys going to have breakfast with me?

Nyathuko : No sthandwa sami. Ngizoba late

Me : Aw

Nyathuko : Okay, let's go and eat. Uzobuye ubavuse

(I kiss him)

Me : I love you

Nyathuko : Uthandwa imina Mam'Zondi.

(We had breakfast and after that they left. The time is now 10:00 am and Musa is still not here. I'm about to go out and look for him when my phone rings. It's my mother)

Me : Gogo

MaKheswa : Amen mntanami. Niyaphila?

Me : We are fine mama. Niyaphila nina?

MaKheswa : We are fine.

Me : Ay nathi. Kade ngikhuluma no Zanokuhle nje la ku Whatsapp uthi nabo ba right.

MaKheswa : He called me last night.

Me : Mina akangifoneli.

(I laugh)

Me : Kade ngithi ngizokufonela yazi.

MaKheswa : Mina ngihluleke ukulinda. Your father is losing it, Sthabile. Ufuna ukukhokha imali yakwa Zondi. Udayisa imoto ke manje. Angisazi mina

Me : Kodwa ihaba elingaka ku Baba yini ngempela?

MaKheswa : I don't know. Ukhulume no Mpatho la wathi akamushuthele imoto emufakele yona kulezinto zenu.

Me : Hhaibo Mah, are you serious?

MaKheswa : Nizoyibona nje kulezinto za online. Iyifakile ingane ka Nuh.

(I close the door)

Me : Mina uBaba usengehlule ke manje. Why would he sell his car? U Thukeh uthe ingakhokhwa imali yelobolo nkosiyami.

MaKheswa : He doesn't understand. Uthi nezingane azibuye nje next year zifunde la ekwakufunda khona u Zano.

Me : That's not going to happen.

MaKheswa : Please call him ukhulume naye. Maybe he will listen to you.

Me : Okay Mah. Nami ngisabheka u Musa la uhambe eyogijima ngo seven and akakabuyi kuze kube imanje.

MaKheswa : Okay mntanami.

Me : Please don't stress yourself. I'll talk to Mapholoba.

MaKheswa : Okay.

Me : I love you

MaKheswa : I love you too, my baby.

(I open the gate and walk out. I look at my left then right. I don't see Musa.)

Me : Kanti uphi lo ngempela?

(I take a walk and look for him. No, he is nowhere. I go back. Wait, there is something on the ground. My eyes widen. It's Musa's headphones. They are broken. I pick them up and look around)

Me : Aibo

(I look at them closely. They have blood stains. My heart races.)



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(I run back inside and close the gate. I get inside the house and lock the doors. I dial Nyathuko's number while I close the curtains.)

Nyathuko : Yah mamah. Usuyangifuna njalo?

Me : Thukeh... Thukeh. Musa... Musa is missing. I think he was abducted.

Nyathuko : Musa?

Me : Yebo Thukeh uMusa. I found his headphones by the gate.  
Anegazi

Nyathuko : What?

(I cry)

Me : I'm scared Nyathuko. Please come to me. Ngiyasaba

Nyathuko : I'm coming. Ngiyeza sthandwa sami. Ukephi?

Me : Ngisendlini.

Nyathuko : Stay inside Sthah . Ngiyeza manje, uyezwa? Give me one minute. One minute nje kuphela.

(Does Nyathuko understand what one minute is?)

Me : Okay.

Nyathuko : U Zanokuhle yena ufikile lapho?

Me : Zanokuhle is in Cape Town Thukeh.

Nyathuko : I got a call from someone othe uwumngani wakhe bathi u Zanokuhle uyabuya. Something happened. Naye futhi u

Zanokuhle I spoke to him wathi ula e Thekwini ucela simunike imali.

Me : Imali yani?

(I ask while looking around the house. I am really nervous)

Nyathuko : Ngithe akeze. Don't worry about it sthandwa sami.  
Ngiyeza

Me : Okay

(I hang up. I don't know if I should lock myself inside the wardrobe or fridge. I almost jump when my phone rings again.)

Me : Uthini manje futhi u Thukeh?... Thukena

(I answer)

Nyathuko : Baby, are you okay?

(Ash! Didn't I end our call a few seconds ago?)

Me : Usukephi?

Nyathuko : Ngiyeza baby. Please ungavali ifoni Sthah, just keep talking to me ngize ngifike lapho.

Me : Thukeh, you can't be on your phone while you are driving. Ngizoba right mina Nana.

Nyathuko : No, no, no. I want to keep you on the line ngize ngifike lapho. Keep talking to me sthandwa sami.

(I keep quiet)

Nyathuko : Sthah! Sthabile?

Me : I'm here. I'm fine Nana. I'm fine. Where are the kids?

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : Baba took them. Did you try to call Musa?... Ey fakof wena!!

(Why is he fighting with other drivers now?)

Me : Yini manje? Thukeh ngicela ungadali ingozi bandla.

Nyathuko : No... Uthi yini oyibonile ka Musa?

Me : His headphones. Ubewafakile kade eyogijima. What if uthathwe izitha zika bhuti wakhe u Nqabayethu? Nqabayethu had enemies Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : Nqabayethu died. Akasekho.

Me : Musa is still a Zungu. Mhlampe nje...

Nyathuko : No, no. I don't think abantu abahlangene no Nqabayethu who took him.

Me : Uthi ngithini kodwa?

(We spoke until he arrived. Thami and Thalente are also here. We tried to call Musa. His phone is ringing but he is not answering.)

Nyathuko : Lezinayi zama security zithi azibonanga lutho.

Thami : Dammit!

(We sit on the steps and I sit between Thukeh's legs. He kisses my cheek)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : What if he is dead?

Thalente : No, he is fine.

(My phone rings. I don't know this number)

Me : Nana, please answer it.

(He takes my phone)

Thami : Faka ku loudspeaker wakithi.

(Nyathuko answers and remains silent)

" I see you are not responding to my messages. You still don't understand what the fuck I'm capable of, Sthabile. Do you think this is a game?"

(That is Magic's voice. I snatch the phone away from Nyathuko.)

Me : It was you angithi? Uwena othathe u Musa?

Magic : Musa?... Hey, hey. I don't have time for your nonsense. Give me my money or I kill him.

Me : Please don't kill him.

(Nyathuko tries to take the phone but I stop him)

Me : Please don't kill him. Tell me what you want and I'll give you.

Magic : R500 000, today. No delays. You have my details.

Nyathuko : Hey....



(The call ends. Nyathuko rubs his face)

Me : It was Magic. Uyena othathe u Musa. Uthathe u Musa. He is going to kill him Thukeh

(I break into tears. Nyathuko hugs me)

Nyathuko : He won't sthandwa sami. Musa is going to be fine. I'll find him

Me : Awumazi wena u Magic. You don't know him!!

Thami : Maka Ndlela calm down.

(I don't want anyone telling me to calm down. I went to my room. I cried. How am I going to help Musa? What if he dies?)

(After an hour I went back downstairs. I sit alone on the couch. Nyathuko stands up and he comes and sits next to me. He wraps his arm around me and places my head on his shoulder)

Nyathuko : R270. Iwona kuphela engingawuthola manje.

(R270? What are they talking about?)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

(He whispers in my ear. What's wrong with Nyathuko? How can I be okay? Does he even understand what's going on right now?)

Me : Mhmmm.

Thami : Thalente you said 50?

Thalente : Yes

Thami : Eish. That's 380 including mina. Dammit! We need to call Ntuzuma.

Nyathuko : You don't get it Shuku. Imali enginayo akuyona imali engizoyinika u Magic.

Thami : What?

Thalente : What?

Me : Nikhuluma ngani? Isikhona imali?

Nyathuko : Sthah let's go. I'll leave you at my father's house.

Thami : Thukeh, yini inkinga yakho? Musa's life is in danger. Sikhuluma ngobhuti ka King la. Ibhande lakho. Why are you being difficult?

Nyathuko : I'm not being difficult. Ayikho imali ezophuma la. Let's go sthandwa sami.

Me : Kwenzekani?

Thalente : uNyathuko akafuni sihambise imali.

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Sthah

Advertisement

don't worry about this. Let's go.

Me : Cha!! Angiyindawo nawe. How can you do this to Musa?  
Uyamazi wena kahle u Magic? U Magic wangibuka la  
ezinhlamvini zamehlo wangitshela ukuthi uzongibulala mina  
nezingane zami. Kanye naye u Musa.

Nyathuko : Ini?

(His face changes. His breathing grows louder)

Nyathuko : I need to go.

Me : Ngicela u ngithembise ukuthi nizomunika lemali.

Nyathuko : Yeah.

(I hug him)

Me : Let me give you his details.

( I run back upstairs. I message Nyathuko Magic's details. My Whatsapp is buzzing. I'm sure Zanokuhle is sending me more of their pictures. I've seen enough. I run back downstairs)

Me : Munikezeni

Nyathuko : No, asikwazi ukwenza kanjalo. We need to collect more money from Thami's house khona sizoyifaka kwi account yami and after that we will....

Me : Izokwenzeka kodwa yonke lento namhlanje?

Nyathuko : Yes. Give me his number.

Me : Okay.

(I give him my phone.)

Nyathuko : Ntokozo and Sthenjisiwe are on their way. Bazohlala nawe.

Me : Okay

(He kisses me. He breaks the kiss and stares at me. There's something different about his eyes)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : I love you too Nana and thanks for doing this.

(He walks out. Thalente and Thami follow him. I close the door and sigh. I need to call my mother. I'm still trying to decide if I should call my mother or not when someone knocks on the door. I open thinking that Nyathuko forgot something. I see his car going out. Oh it's Thalente's wife.)

Me : Lesedi

Lesedi : Sthabile. They've left.

Me : Where were you all this time?

Lesedi : Ka koloing

(She points at Thalente's car)

Me : Aibo! Why?

(She smiles)

Lesedi : Nothing

(I'll never understand why she is so scared of me.)

Me : Come in.

Lesedi : Thanks.

(I sigh and rub my face. She gives me a very unexpected hug)

Lesedi : I'm sorry.

Me : I'm scared Lesedi. What if he kills him?

Lesedi : Aka se ke. Please don't stress about it.



(My phone rings. It's Magic again. This desperate son of a bitch.)

Me : Magic

Magic : I'm still waiting. Why aren't you opening my messages?

Me : Magic R500 000 is a lot of money. Ufuna ngenzeni ke manje? Ngiyifake e Boxer?

Magic : You think this is a joke, huh?

Me : No, I..... Magic, why are you doing this?

Magic : You don't care about your son. Do you?

Me : My son?

Magic : I warned you Sthabile.

Me : Wait, wait. What are you talking about? Why are you talking about my son?

(He laughs)

Magic : Awungazi wena, huh?

Me : Magic? Magic? Musa is enough. Ngicela ungayilokothi ingane yami. Uyabona ke manje udlalela ezitsheni ezifayo.

(He laughs)

Me : Where is Musa?

Magic : Yey! Yey! Listen, I don't have time for this bullshit. Ngihlanganaphi nestabane sakho mina? I want my money Sthabile. The clock is ticking. Ngizoyibulala indodana yakho

(He drops the call. Saying I'm confused is an understatement. What was that? I mean Zanokuhle is in Cape Town. I spoke to him this morning and.... No. I log onto my whatsapp. I click on his contact. There are countless pictures and videos. I scream)

Lesedi : Sthabile what's wrong?

Me : Magic, Magic....

(I give her my phone. There are pictures and videos of Zanokuhle being beaten up. There are others of him tied up in a chair. My body is shaking)

Me : My son, Lesedi. My son.

Lesedi : But how? Zanokuhle is....

Me : I need to call Makhosazana. I need to call Fizisani.

(I search for her number with my hands shaking. I dial)

Me : Fiza.... Fisisani. Where is Zanokuhle?

Fisisani : Mah?

Me : U... U...Uphi u Zano? Iphi ingane yami?

Fisisani : Mah, u Zano uhambe la ngolwesine. Wathi ubuyela e KZN because kunomsebenzi ekufanele ewenze. Wathi mina no Makhosi sisale nezingane. Mah, is everything okay?

Me : I.... Ugcine nini ukukhuluma naye?

Fisisani : Ngikhuluma naye manje ku Whatsapp.

(I end the call and go back to Whatsapp)

Lesedi : What is she saying?

Me : Wait.

(I whatsapp Zano)

Zano, where are you my boy? : Me

(He is typing. A picture comes in. It's a picture of Zanokuhle lying on the floor)

"Here is your boy. Unfortunately he can't attend your messages right now. Talk to Magic"

(The reply. I read it and my blood boils)

Me : Fuck!!

(Tears stream down my face)

Lesedi : Sthabile what's wrong?

Me : Magic took my son.

Lesedi : What?

Me : Hawemah!

Lesedi : Sthabile, If Magic has Zano then who took Musa?

Me : Zanokuhle!!! Aw ngengane yami!!

(I break down)

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10PM

(I'm sitting on the floor with my legs stretched out. I'm staring at Lesedi. She smokes weed. Thalente's wife smokes weed. Right now she is smoking inside my house. I want to tell her to get out but I don't have the energy. The only thing that is running in my head is Musa and my son. I know Magic won't kill Zanokuhle because he needs the money. Musa? I don't know who took Musa but something tells me that Magic has both Musa and Zanokuhle. We tried to call Nyathuko but his phone was off.)

Me : Awungiphe insangu

(Lesedi shakes her head)

Lesedi : You don't need this.

(I don't know what happened to her voice. It has changed.)

Me : Okay

(She is right. I don't need that voice. I'm crying again.)

Lesedi : Don't worry they will bring him back home alive.

Me : Maybe we need to call the police?

Lesedi : Mapolesa?

Me : Yes. What if u Magic uyayinqaba lemali? Imali yakhe ayiphelele Lesedi.

Lesedi : Let's wait for them to call us.

(My phone rings and we both jump)

Lesedi : Is it them?



(There's a knock on the door as well.)

Me : Please get that.

Lesedi : Okay. Who is calling?

(I look at the screen and my eyebrows furrow. I get up.)

Me : It's Musa.

Lesedi : Really?

Me : Yes. Please open the door

Lesedi : Okay, okay.

Me : Musa? Musa, where are you?

Musa : Hey bitch

Me : Where are you?

Musa : My man kidnapped me but I'm fine now. We are fine.

Me : Kidnapped you? Chumani kidnapped you?

(He laughs)

Musa : He didn't want me to go back to England so he kidnapped me. Isn't that wild? Bitch I love him.

Me : What? You... You love him? Musa, we need to report him. Where are you?

Musa : At his apar.... Baby stop it.

Me : Musa?

Musa : Bitch, I'm fine. I had a little fight with his guys that he sent to kidnap me and they.... Sthabile, we went to the hospital. I'm fine now.

Me : Musa do you.....

Musa : Chumani wants to say Hi. Babe, here she....

Me : Oh fuck!

(I end the call. Jesus! Musa, really!!! Is he for real? How childish? Wow.)

Lesedi : They are here

(I turn around. Oh, she is talking about Ntokozo and Sthenjisiwe.)

Ntokozo : Hey, come here.

(They hug me)

Sthenjisiwe : Musa is going to be fine.

(Where do I even start to tell them? I can't)

Me : I want Nyathuko.

(I take my car keys. Ntokozo stops me)

Ntokozo : Sthabile, no. Awukwazi ukuhamba ngalesikhathi. Ngeke ngivume untante nalesisu sika Thukeh ebusuku. You are pregnant.

Sthenjisiwe : U Thukeh uzobuya Maka Zanokuhle. Please sit down.

Me : No, no!!

Lesedi : Aowa, Sthabile. Calm down.

Ntokozo : Siwe awumulethele amanzi.

Me : I don't want water. Magic is going to kill my son. U Magic uthathe u Zano.

Sthenjisiwe : Hhaibo! Nini futhi manje?

(I can't talk anymore. I'm crying again. Lesedi explains to them.)

(I wanted to talk to Nyathuko. There was no way I was going to sleep without him. Unfortunately we couldn't get hold of any of them. We sat down and stared at the walls for the rest of the night.)

THALENTE

(We left Ballito together using Nyathuko's car and we went to my flat. Nyathuko asked to go out for a smoke and he never came back. He left his car and his phone. We looked almost everywhere for him. We even drove to Mzinyathi to look for him but he wasn't there. From there I knew where he was but I couldn't tell Thami. There are some things that are just between Nyathuko and I. I know his deep secrets. And I'm taking those secrets to the grave.)

00:35 AM

Thami : Where would he go with his father's bike?

(The only thing we have is that when he left here he walked all the way to his father's house and he borrowed his bike.)

Me : I don't know anymore.

Thami : But his father said he was fine and that's why he gave him his bike.

Me : Maybe he went to the police station.

Thami : Ubani? U Thukeh namaphoyisa? Never.

Me : Pho uphi?

Thami : Do you think umtholile lo Magic wakhona?

Me : Huh? No, no, I don't think so. Angabe usefonile.

Thami : That's true. I hope u Magic ngeke enze into ewubulima.

Me : Ey yah.

Thami : That will mean we failed King.

Me : Yeah, yeah. Yazini? Awuhambe wakithi. Asivele sihlehlele yonke lento okwamanje. Uma kuze kuphuma ilanga u Nyathuko engabuyi kuzofanele sifake amaduku kulento.

Thami : Yeah, true. Uzofona?

Me : Sho. Hamba uye ku mamah, wakithi. I'm sure naye ukhathazekile manje ngawe. Nami ngizolanda u Lesedi lapha e Ballito.

Thami : Okay

(We stand up and shake hands)

Thami : Keep me posted, wakithi.

Me : I will.

Thami : Sharp.



(He walks away. I close the door and wait for a few minutes.)

(I took Lesedi's car and drove to a location that I knew Nyathuko was at.)

(It's in the middle of nowhere. Inside the bushes. I get out of the car and walk a short distance. Here he is with Magic. Magic is lying on the ground.)

Me : Is he dead?

(I put my foot over his face. He is alive)

Me : Where is Musa?

Nyathuko : He didn't take Musa. He took my son.

(Nyathuko is busy connecting something. I don't know what those small things are and I don't know why he is connecting them together.)

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Gwinya la Maphumulo.

(He hands it to Magic. There's a red light flashing on that thing.)

Me : Bafo, what is this?

Nyathuko : Isiqhumane. Take it, Maphumulo.

Me : Thukeh, wait, wait. These are time bombs.

(They are small pipes connected together. But these are time bombs.)

Nyathuko : I know.

(My eyes widen)

Me : Wakithi, no

no.

(He sits on top of Magic and punches him.)

Nyathuko : Swallow it!!!

Magic : I can't! I can't!

(He continues to punch him.)

(Out of all the friends I've ever had in my life, Nyathuko is the most brutal one. Especially when you touch his family. Touch his family and he will put down his heart and show the devil he

really is. Right now Magic has a bomb tied up around his his dick and another one in his mouth.)

(Nyathuko tightens the belt around Magic's mouth. The two bombs will explode in less than two hours. I don't know why I'm sweating because I know how Nyathuko is when it comes to his family. But I didn't expect this.)

(He pulls up Magic's pants and ties his hands together behind his back)

Nyathuko : Hamba

(Magic looks at me. I'm surprised that he is still crying.)

Nyathuko : I'm setting you free. Hamba, Maphumulo.

(Magic looks at Nyathuko and back at me. He turns around and runs like a maniac with his hands at his back. I'm sure he hopes that someone will save him on time. No, maybe in a different world. Not here. Nyathuko climbs on his father's bike and

follows him. He is chasing Magic with the bike. I follow them. I get in the car and follow the bike.)

4:24 AM

(Nyathuko is revving that bike. The single light of his bike is moving between the trees. It's the only thing I see now. The trees are moving like there's a heavy wind. I take a different direction. I can now see everything from here. Magic manages to make it out of the bush after 1 hour and 24 minutes of running. I see Thukeh slowing down and I stop the car. I look at the watch on my wrist and do a holy cross. Boom!!!! Human explosion.)

(By the time my mind comes back to life Nyathuko was parking the bike next to the car. He is smoking)

Nyathuko : I'm going to Machobeni.

(I shake my head and he takes off. There is a very bad smell. I close the window as I'm about to drive past the explosion area.

So those small bombs finished him like this? Damn! I drive past his remains. I see there are small flames that are still enjoying his remains. I sigh. This feels like another horror movie. Eish, life.)

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( A call from the hospital was the first call we received this morning and we drove there as soon as possible. My son was alive and safe. I sat next to his bed and waited for him to wake up. His face is bruised. Oh, my baby.)

(He opens his eyes and I quickly get up)

Me : Boy, boy.

Zanokuhle : Mah.

(I kiss him)

Me : I'm sorry baby.

(He smiles)

Zanokuhle : It's not your fault, Mah.

Me : It is Zano. But I promise you mfan'wami, uyabona u Magic uzoboshwa engaphinde ephume ejeli. Look what he did to you.

(I wipe the tears)

Zanokuhle : Uphi u Baba?

Me : U Thukeh? U Thukeh akekho okwamanje. Akashongo ukuthi uyaphi?

(He shakes his head)

Me : We didn't find him here.

Zanokuhle : Sthabile, please find him.

Me : Why? What happened?

Zanokuhle : He is going to kill him.

Me : Kill who? Zano what happened? Utheni u Nyathuko?

Zanokuhle : Find him.

Me : Where am I going to find him? Ubani kanti okulethe la esibhedlela? Huh?

Zanokuhle : Call her.

Me : Zanokuhle, who brought you here?



Zanokuhle : Aunt Ashton

(My head spins)

Zanokuhle : UBaba uthe akangilethe.

Me : Ini?

Zanokuhle : Call Ashton.

(I think I'm going to vomit my heart because I can feel it in my throat. Zanokuhle closes his eyes)

Zanokuhle : Please, Mah.

(I walked away. I made sure that no one saw me when I left the hospital. Especially Ntokozo or Sthenjisiwe because they were going to stop me. I went to Ballito first, hoping that I would find him there but he wasn't there. I found myself taking uMqondisi

wami and I put her in the back seat. Nyathuko wasn't in his flat and Thalente wasn't in his. I drove to Machobeni.)

(There are two cars and a bike. I don't see Nyathuko's car though. It's very quiet in the yard. I park the car outside the gate and grab Mqondisi from the back seat. I leave the car outside the gate and make my way in. There's a bitch laughing inside the house. I tighten my grip on Mqondisi. I find Nyathuko smoking just outside the door. He immediately throws the cigarette and blocks the door.)

Nyathuko : Maka Ndlelenhle

Me : Ngasho ngathi ngizokubamba. Suka Thukeh ngingene.

Nyathuko : Sthah, it's not what you think.

Me : Suka emnyango Nyathuko Zondi.

(My blood is already boiling)

Nyathuko : Okay. Letha la lemvubu kuqala. Ilethe sthandwa sami.

(What? Mqondisi is not going anywhere.)

Me : No

(Thalente asks him who he is talking to. I use that moment to find my way in. I whip everyone I find inside the house. Ashton, Thalente, Thami.)

Thalente : Maka Ndlelenhle aibo!!

Me : Maxoki ndini!! Ningenza islima ningibiza ngomfazi ka mfowenu kanti nigigitheka nesifebe sika Nyathuko!!!

(I continue to whip them. Ashton is screaming for Nyathuko.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile, stop it!!

(He grabs my arm and tightens his arm around me.)

Me : Phumani la!! Get out!!!

Nyathuko : Thami ngicela uhambise u Ashton bafo.

Me : Uhambiswa amasimba u Ashton? Akakwazi ukuzihambela?

(Thalente is staring at me with his eyes wide open. I want to whip him again. Bloody hypocrites!!)

Thalente : Maka Ndlela ufuna ukuboshwa? Please, give me this sjambok.

(He takes Mqondisi and shakes his head)

Thalente : Thukeh, no wakithi. Fix this.

(He walks out and Thami follows him. Thami is laughing. He thinks I'm a joke. He always thought I was a joke. I don't know when Ashton got out. I can't remember seeing her walking out.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile, yini inkinga yakho?

(He locks the door)

Me : Uwena inkinga yami! Wena nobufebe bakho niyizinkinga zami!! Ufunani u Ashton la Thukeh? Didn't you promise me that you were going to stay away from her?

Nyathuko : Yini ungafuni ukulalela?

Me : Ngilalele amasimba? Our son is in hospital wena ubhebha ogogo bama coloured la? Ngempela Nyathuko?

Nyathuko : U Ashton ingane ukunawe, akayena uGogo.....  
Sthabile, awungificanga no Ashton kuphela la. Ungifice naye  
kuphela?

(He is defending Ashton!! I'm going to kill him. I try to hit him)

Nyathuko : Stop it Sthabile!! Usuyahlanya?

(I cry)

Me : Why unghlukumeza?

Nyathuko : I am not.....

Me : Shut up!!! Yazini? Qhubeka naye Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : Sthah wait.

Me : No!!! Angithi awufuni kubuye u Mzet ngoba ufuna ukulala nomawengane yakhe? Who the fuck am I kidding? Mhlampe akuyona ingane ka Mzet le.....

Nyathuko : I killed Mzet!

(My throat closes up. I cough)

Me : You did what?

Nyathuko : Yah Sthabile! I killed Mzet. He wanted to kill my son ngamubulala. I killed him the same way that I killed Magic and Delani.

(My mouth gape open. My heart and brain freeze)

Me : No

(I shake my head)

Nyathuko : Yes Maka Zothani. I killed them. Futhi angizisoli.

Me : Nyathuko, no, no. No!! Awuyena umubulali wena.  
Awuyena.

(I try to touch him)

Nyathuko : When it comes to my family I could be anything.  
Konke engikwenzile ngikwenze ngoba ngithanda wena.

(He lifts up a pillow and takes a gun. He hands it to me)

Nyathuko : I will not apologize for what I did. Konke  
engikwenzile ngikwenze ngoba ngivikela izingane zami.  
Ngikwenze ngoba ngithanda wena.

(My chest bounces. I'm sweating)



Nyathuko : Angisoze ngayeka ukuk'thanda. Lokho kusho ukuthi angisoze ngayeka ukukuvikela wena nomndeni wami. Take this gun.

(I shake my head. I can't believe this is happening)

Nyathuko : Take this gun and kill me khona ngizoyeka ukuthanda wena. End this once and for all. Kill me.

(I quickly shake my head)

Me : No.

Nyathuko : Yeka ke ukungisanganela.

(He puts the gun back under the pillow. He takes a box of his cigarettes and makes his way to the kitchen. I can't be here. I can't. I unlock the door and run into my car. My head is pounding. I drive off.)

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THALENTE

(Nyathuko is busy cleaning his stove. I don't know why he is cleaning it because it's clean. Sometimes his level of hygiene gets too much. We are busy laughing and talking about Sthabile.)

Me : She is crazy. Thami took the sjambok. Uthe uyokhombisa umama.

(We laugh)

Nyathuko : Ashton wanted to open a case of assault.

Me : What?

Nyathuko : I told her to fakof.

Me : U Sthabile ufuna usiko bafo ngeke

(He laughs)

Me : Or maybe you need to take a second wife ethobe kancane.

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Sthabile is the only woman I love. Leyongane yabantu angabe ngidlala ngayo nje angase ngiyishade. Sthabile owns my heart. Yonke. Noma ehlanya nje kodwa uhlanya lwami loluyana bafo. I wouldn't change a thing about her.

Me : Sho. Umshiye Emachobeni?

Nyathuko : No

Me : Udiniwe?

Nyathuko : I told her everything

Me : Eesani! And?

Nyathuko : She left. I had no choice. Bekufanele ngimutshele ngoba u Ashton usazoba ingxenye yempilo yami for a very long time.

Me : Umzwile naye eselokhu ekhuluma ngo Mzet?

Nyathuko : Usemthanda ngoba esefile. I don't know how I'll get that woman out of my life.

Me : Akamuthandi. She is trying to make you jealous.

Nyathuko : It's not working. Mina ngicabangela ingcosi ka Zet nje kuphela.

Me : But she is forcing things now. Usehlala ela. Ingakho nje umama esigaxe imvubu.

(We laugh)

Me : Amaduku afikile lapha. Someone saw the remains.

Nyathuko : I heard ezindabeni.

Me : Lendoda isihlangana kanjani manje nentwana?

Nyathuko : He played him. Wazenza umuntu ogulayo odinga usizo from Zanokuhle. Wamucela ebuye e Cape Town.

Me : Fuck! U Musa?

Nyathuko : Musa is fine.

Me : U Magic ubehlanya.

Nyathuko : The reason why I didn't kill him all this time yingoba nje bengingabaza indaba yengane. Ngithi eyakhe and I didn't want to kill uBaba wengane ka Sthah. Leyonto ibizongifaka emanyaleni Mbambo. Even though I knew ukuthi ingane eyami but u Sthah masehi akuyona futhi....ey.

Me : He almost killed your boy.

Nyathuko : I was going to kill him twice.

(I laugh)

Nyathuko : U Thami uyakhala bafo. Kade ngikhokhela ingane yakhe nje manje imali yesikole.

Me : Ngempela wakithi?

Nyathuko : Yeah, 2 years ingane ayikhokhile u Thami ulokhu enza angathi yonke into ihamba kahle.

Me : Ukutshela nini ukuthi kuyabheda?

Nyathuko : Manje ngisuka lapha eMachobeni. He was waiting for his provident fund. Ayingeni.

Me : U Thami uyagula.

Nyathuko : Ey Mbambo. Ungidinile. Ngithi mina bafo wena uthuli nje sonke lesikhathi you are not telling us that you are struggling. Uthi ay akafuni ukuba umthwalo.

Me : Umthwalo wani?

Nyathuko : Ingane abasafuni ibhale esikoleni.

Me : Wakhokha?

Nyathuko : I did.

Me : How much?

Nyathuko : R5000

(I don't know what we would do without this guy)

Me : Bhambatha usebenzile mfana omdala.

Nyathuko : We need to go and check on them ksasa.

Me : Sho. U Thami uyasidinga ke manje ispani. Eyeke lento ye pride.

Nyathuko : Yah. I need to go ngiyobona izingane zami la ku Baba.

Me : Balana kambe?



Nyathuko : Yah. I need to meet with Sthabile's father futhi.

Me : Why?

Nyathuko : Umkhulu ka Ndlela uyangigulela straight manje.

Me : Uthini?

Nyathuko : Ey Mbambo, it's a long story.

Me : Take it easy wakithi.

Nyathuko : Ngiyazama bafo. No Maka Ndlelenhle uyangisanganisa nje manje naye.

Me : Eish.

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(From Emachobeni I went to see Zanokuhle in hospital. I found him sleeping so I just stared at him and came back. I'm not in the right state of mind. What Nyathuko told me still rings in my head. There was a time where I thought he was capable of killing but I quickly swept away the thought of it. Nyathuko is not a murderer. Yes his friends are..... I don't want to think about it. I take my phone and dial Nuh's number but I clear everything. I called my mother instead.)

Me : Yah Mah

MaKheswa : How are you, my baby?

(My throat is burning)

Me : Ngi right Mah

(I wipe my tears)

MaKheswa : Baphi abazukulu baka Gogo?

Me : Bavakashele umkhulu wabo

MaKheswa : Oh?

Me : Yes. Unjani uBaba?

MaKheswa : Baba is fine. He is meeting with the buyer later.

Me : Aw, buyer?

MaKheswa : The person who bought his car. I tried to talk to him kodwa kwafana nokuthela amanzi emhlane wedada.

Me : Ay u Baba izinto azenzayo nkosiyami. Usheshile ke bo ukuthola umuntu.

MaKheswa : Kakhulu. It's a man from Emthwalume. Udinga iveni ngokushesha for his business.

Me : Okay.

MaKheswa : It's his birthday at the end of the month.  
Usakhumbula?

Me : Oh, yah. Yes

(I forgot)

MaKheswa : Yes. Kukhona abamuhlelele kona enkonzweni.

Me : Something like what? A party?

MaKheswa : Yes and kuzofanele ufike. Akuyona into enkulu but you need to come.

Me : I'll come. Mah, u Zano usesibhedlela.

MaKheswa : Ini? U Zano? Why? What happened?

Me : No, it's nothing serious. Ngicabanga ukuthi i Cape Town ayimuthandanga. Umkhuhlane nje but he is going to be fine.

MaKheswa : Hhaibo Sthabile. Kuzofanele sehle.

Me : No, no

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no. There's no need to come all the way here. Uyaphuma namhlanje.

MaKheswa : Oh. That's good. Mina sengikhathazekile

Me : No, don't be. He is fine.

MaKheswa : Kuzofanele ngimufonele. When did he come back?

Me : Ubani? U Zano? He came back today... Mah, kukhona engifuna ukukubuza kona.

MaKheswa : Yes?

Me : What do you think about Baba ka Ndlelenhle?

MaKheswa : Usho ukuthini?

Me : Is he a good man?

MaKheswa : U Zondi uyindoda ezithandayo. He is clean, he loves his kids kanti futhi uthanda nawe. Uyindoda enomusa kakhulu. Ngaphandle nje kwalezinto esezenzekile kodwa wawukhethe kahle mntanami. Akumina ngedwa obona lokho kodwa nje ngisho nasenkonzweni bakuthulela isigqoko.

Me : And me?

MaKheswa : What about you?

Me : Nginjani mina?

MaKheswa : Ufana no Baba wakho. Awunalo ikhanda.

(She laughs)

Me : Ucabanga ukuthi lomuntu engiwuyena engakwazi ukushintsha u Baba ka Ndlelenhle emenze isilwane?

MaKheswa : Isilwane? Sthabile there's nothing wrong with you mntanami. Ukuthi nje unendlela yakho ehluke obona ngayo izinto kanye noxazulula ngayo izinto.

Me : Am I a bad person?

MaKheswa : No. Mntanami, you are not a bad person.

(What was I expecting? She is my mother. Of course she will tell me what I want to hear. Okay, there's a car hooting at the gate.)

Me : Ngiyabonga Mah. I need to go. Kukhona osesangweni.

MaKheswa : Are you okay?

Me : No, I'm fine Mah. Bengikukhumbula nje

(Musa is twerking outside the gate. I'm about to open for him but I stop and go to his room.)

MaKheswa : Okay, ungifonele ke ntambama. Ungazise nokuthi ingane injani.

Me : I will Mah. Bye.

(I end our call. I place my phone on the bed and take his things. I won't even put them in plastic. I go back and open the gate)



Musa : Hey bitch!!!

(I wait for the gate to fully open. I notice there is a bandage around his arm. I guess that's where the blood on his headphones came from. When he was fighting with his so-called kidnappers.)

Musa : Are you doing laundry?

Me : No

(I throw his clothes on the ground)

Musa : These are my clothes. Aibo! My things.

Me : Yes. Go back to your kidnapper. Angithi ujola nemigulukudu wena? Ngihlale mina la ngingazi noma ufile yini. Hamba Musawakhe.

Musa : Sthabile, wait. I can explain

(I close the gate)

Me : Buyela eginseni Musa. Buyela eginseni lakho. Ngeke mina ngisanganiswe uwena umdala kangaka. Ngithi buyela eginseni.

(I leave him. He is screaming. I will not entertain his drama. Not today)

TODAY'S HEADLINES

"TOURISTS BUMP INTO HUMAN REMAINS IN GREYTOWN"

"KUHLONZWA IZICUBU ZOMZIMBA OTHOLAKELE BUDE  
BUDUZE NEHLATHI E GREYTOWN"

(That is the story that is all over the news today. I'm crying because deep down I believe they are talking about Magic. If Nyathuko killed Delani the way he did then this has his name written all over it. Now I'm sure that he killed that Umhlali Detective. How did I fall for a serial killer? What happened to the man that I love with every part of me?)

(I turn down the TV volume. I think someone is calling me. I am expecting my kids after all. But that's better not be Musa. I don't want to see him. Not now.)

Mommy!

(I smile and wipe my tears. My kids are here. I head downstairs. Okay, only Zibusiso is here. She is holding red and white roses. They are burying her little face. I giggle)

Me : Hhapona ingane ya Mah ihamba yodwa.

Zibusiso : Yah Mah.

(She smiles)

Me : Hello baby. Where is Ndlelenhle and Zothani?

Zibusiso : They refused to come back. Basale noMkhulu. Kodwa mina ngibuyile mommy.

Me : Aibo basala? And what about school?

Zibusiso : Umkhulu uthe uzofonela u ma'am.

Me : Ngiyabona. Wena kodwa ubuyile my angel.

Zibusiso : Mhmm-Mhmmm. I missed you. Buka uBabah ukuthengelile. Uthe ngikunike.

(She gives me the roses)

Zibusiso : UBabah ungenile layindlini.

Me : Oh he did?

Zibusiso : Uh. Ukuthengele nalokhu u Babah.

(It's a silver carry bag. I put down the roses and lift up my baby)

Me : So you missed mommy?

(She giggles)

Zibusiso : Yes

(I kiss her)

Me : I missed you too, my angel.

(Her eyes widen)

Me : What now?

Zibusiso : Were you crying mommy?

(I try to pull out a smile)

Me : Oh me? No baby. No. Look, go and put your bag in your room and I'll make you noodles. Okay?

Zibusiso : Are you not going to work?

Me : No baby. Go

(I kiss her cheek and put her down. She takes her bag and runs to her room. I sigh and look at the roses from the serial killer. I opened the carry bag. There is a big round gift box. I open it and my eyes widen. I don't know when was the last time I saw so many R200s. They are so clean. Like they just came straight from a bank. I take the card and read it.)

"Eyokwenza izinwele zakho sthandwa sami. Ngiyakukhumbula and ngiyakuthanda Maka Ndlelenhle ngenhliziyo yami yonke"

(I finish reading the card and throw it on the sofa. I take out the money and count it.)

(R10 000 to do my hair?)

Me : Oh wow.

(My phone seems so far right now. I take Zibusiso's phone and dial his number)

Nyathuko : Nkosazana ka Baba

Me : Are you robbing banks as well?

Nyathuko : Oh Maka Sandisokuhle, it's you.

Me : Where did you get this money?

Nyathuko : From your father.

Me : Why are you lying?

(He is lying. My father hasn't paid him. There was a problem with the buyer so I'm sure that he didn't give him any money.)

Me : Unamanga Thukeh. Ngigqale nini mina ukwenza ikhanda ngo R10 000?



Nyathuko : Izinwele zakho ziyabiza sthandwa sami.

Me : Washiya ingane yodwa layindlini nemali.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami ubukhona nje wena.

Me : I was in the bedroom. What if kungene umuntu wathatha imali?

(He sighs)

Me : U Ndlelenhle no Zothani abasafundi?

Nyathuko : Bayafunda. Ngizobaletha ntambama

Me : Thukeh wenzeni ngempela? Uyena angithi? U Magic lo ekukhulunywa ngaye ezindabeni?

(He deeply sighs)

Me : Nyathuko ngikhuluma nawe?

(He drops the call.)

Me : Wow

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(At 11am I put away my laptop and took my baby girl out for lunch. We ate and we went to Precious Brands Hair Couture. I bump into a massive sale . I bought myself two weaves just for control. I paid R7600 for both. They are worth it. Now I'm ready to give birth. One weave is for when I'm going to the hospital to give birth and another one is for coming back. I'm all set. After that we went to do Zibusiso's hair. My baby wanted braids. I'm now waiting for her to finish. The lady who is doing her hair complained about Zibusiso's hair being long so that's why it's taking long. She is just slow. That's all. My daughter is

frustrated now and so am I. To calm myself I decided to read a magazine I found here.)

Zibusiso : Mah? Mah!

(I lift up my head)

Me : What's wrong baby?

Zibusiso : Nangu u Babah

Me : What?

(God here he comes. He is smiling like he didn't just kill a man. He is wearing his plain white hoodie with a grey denim jacket and black sweatpants. On his feet he is wearing slides with white socks. Such a relaxed serial killer. Judging by his outfit I don't think he went to work today. Well guess what? Bitches here still find him attractive. All eyes are on him. He is carrying two Steers paper bags . He smiles at Zibusiso)

Zibusiso : Daddy!

(She jumps and runs to hug her father. The lady doing her hair is too busy staring at Nyathuko to notice that her client is gone)

Nyathuko : Hello Princess

(He lifts her up and greets everyone)

Nyathuko : Sanibona Makhosazana

"Hi, Hey"

(The ladies at the salon greet back with horny voices. Shame they don't know he is a serial killer.)

Nyathuko : Usumuhle kanje Nkosazana ka Baba

Zibusiso : Mhmm-Mhmmm. Nangu u Mah

(She points at me with a smile on her face.)

Nyathuko : Okay. Hamba uqede ukuluka ke sthandwa sami.

Zibusiso : Okay.

(He kisses her cheek and puts her down. He comes and bends on his knees in front of me. He places the food on my thighs)

Nyathuko : Sawubona

Me : Hi

Nyathuko : Waze wamuhle

(I roll my eyes)

Nyathuko : Ngicela ukushela

(Oh wow, he wants to court me now.)

Nyathuko : Uyezwa? Ngicela ukushela kancane.

(He takes the magazine and puts it away)

Me : I was reading that.

(The noise is dying down. Now people are listening to us.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda.

(Why is Nyathuko drawing attention?)

Me : Thukeh, please stop.

(I whisper to him)

Nyathuko : Ngikuthanda ngempela. Ama X-ray azokwazi ukukubona la enhliziyweni yami noma awakwazi ukubona izinto ezinhle?

(Gosh, I don't want to laugh)

Me : Who told you ukuthi silana?

(He gets up. His face is now right in my eyes. I'm literally between his arms. Nowhere to run.)

Nyathuko : I brought food. Ngicabange ukuthi mhlampe senilambile.

Me : No, we are fine. Suka.

Nyathuko : Umuhle

(I look away. He pulls my face back and sucks my lips. I am going to allow this kiss because I don't want to embarrass him in front of these women. But I quickly break the kiss and clear my throat.)

Me : Please leave.

Nyathuko : Ngicela ukukubona ntambama

Me : Okay. Now please go.

(He smiles)

Nyathuko : Okay

(He kisses my forehead and goes back to Zibusiso. I see Zibusiso giggling)



Nyathuko : Sho

Zibusiso : Sho

(He heads out and stops by the door. He looks at me. I shrug)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(Oh hell no. What's wrong with this guy? I mean everyone can hear that)

Me : Nami

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(He repeats.)

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami, now please go.

(He laughs and walks away. He won. The ladies laugh)

"That was beautiful to watch. Are you guys married?"

(One of the ladies asks)

Me : Yes

(I lie. More questions followed after that. They wanted to know how we met. How many kids we have. If he has any brothers. Wuuh! Huh-huh he is a serial killer.)

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THALENTE

(Today Nyathuko and I were both not working so we decided to visit Nqabayethu's grave. From there we went to Thami's house.)

Thami : Think about it, Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Bayaphi?

Me : La Ru la ngase Mount Moreland. Leyandawo isemobeni kodwa inswempu. Ithotela leliya Thami?

Thami : B&B

Nyathuko : Manje bahamba bodwa?

Thami : Yeah, u Zandi, u Lesedi no Ashton.

Me : U Ashton ungene kanjani manje?

Thami : U Thukeh uzomukhokhela or she will pay for herself.  
Ashton has her own money.

(Nyathuko chuckles)

Me : Ubahlanginisa kanjani u Sthabile beno Ashton?

Thami : Kufanele bezwane.

Me : U Bhambatha akathandani no Ashton.

Thami : That's even better. Abahambe bonke ke.

Nyathuko : Ashton can go. Ukumukhokhela akuyona inkinga kodwa umawezingane zami akayi lapho. Akayi ezimobeni engingazazi.

(Thami chuckles)

Thami : Are you worried about men?

(Thami is moving this to a very wrong direction. Eish. He is the only one laughing now. I don't know what kind of a joke he thought he was making when his very own wife cheats like nobody's business.)

Thami : U Magic ukugile ngempela wa....

Me! : Thami no, bafo.

(Silence. Nyathuko clears his throat after quite some time.)

Nyathuko : Lesithembu ozama ukungakhela sona ngeke sisebenze Shuku. Kanti ke futhi mina nawe siyazi ukuthi this is not about me. Inzondo yakho onayo ngo Maka Ndlelenhle isihleli obala. Lokho kungenza ngizibuze ukuthi ngimiphi nawe.

Thami : Wakithi I don't have a problem with Sthabile.

(Nyathuko shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Even if you did anginendaba nalokho. Sthabile is mine, not yours. And what you need to know is that I trust Sthabile. Amathanga ka Sthabile awavuleki kalula. Ngisho ngingamufaka endlini egcwele amadoda ngeke mina ngibe novalo lokuthi uzoxegelwa ismilo ngakho ngiyakucela ungazami ukuzenza uzizwe ungcono ngokuthi usebenzise iphutha elilodwa elenziwe umfazi wami. Sthabile is nothing like your wife, Thami.

(He says and goes back to his phone. Fuck Thami. He asked for it. I don't feel sorry for him.)

Thami : Wakithi bengingasho kanja....

Nyathuko : Drink your beer Shuku.

(Eish! Eish! Thami!!! Now we are sitting in awkward silence)

Me : Wakithi, asambeni ngoba usahambisa u Ndlelenhle no Zothani e Ballito, angithi? Nayi nalemvula isiqala ukunetha

(I'm trying to rescue him here.)

Nyathuko : No, ngizobahambisa late. Kuse early. Asihlalani.

(He said what he said. He doesn't need any rescue. He is now talking to Thami like nothing happened.)

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(He decided to bring Zothani and Ndlela at 8pm. He thought I would let him in and serve him my vagina just like that. Well

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I didn't. I didn't let him in. He is currently sitting in his car outside the gate. He played me well at the salon and now it's my time.)

(I finish putting my babies to bed and go to him. Aw, it's raining again but the rain is light. He is not inside the car. Oh, there he is coming. I see, he decided to take a short walk. I wait for him)

Nyathuko : Ngena. Ivuliwe imoto

(I open and get in. His car is so warm and smells good. 3 minutes later he gets in. He rubs his hands together. Let me check if he is still angry about not letting him in.)

Me : Why uhamba emvuleni?

Nyathuko : It was hot here ngaphuma. But ngiphume kunganethi yazi. Iqala manje nje.

(He takes off his jacket)



Nyathuko : Lapho ngiqalwa umkhuhlane. Kubuhlungu ikhanda.  
U right kodwa baby? Sondela kumina phela.

(He wraps his arm around my neck. No he is not angry)

Me : Thukeh no

(I remove his arm. He sighs)

Nyathuko : Ngenzeni Sthah?

Me : You killed Magic. Nyathuko ubulale abantu I'm not talking about two or three people. 4 Thukeh. 4 people, loyo 4 uhlanganisa nomngani wakho u Zithulele. What does that make you? Kukwenzani lokho Thukena?

(He heaves a sigh)

Me : Kukwenza umbulali. Mina Sthabile Ngcobo ngithandana nombulali. Ngashada nombulali kanti nezingane zami zizalwa umbulali

(He scratches his beard)

Me : Ngoba nje Uhleli ukhululekile uzothini uma kukuthi ufunwa amaphoyisa? You killed a man, Nyathuko. Akuwona umdlalo loyo. What if you get arrested? What will I tell your kids? Ngiyozikhulisa kanjani mina lezingane zakho ezingaka?

Nyathuko : Maka Zanokuhle ngeke ngiboshwe.

Me : How do you know?

Nyathuko : Nangoke u Sthah. Ay Ay Ay Sthabile awume kancane.

(He rolls down the window)

Me : Ungasho ukuthi angime kancane. Ngikutshela iqiniso. So ungasho ukuthi ngime kancane.

Nyathuko : Okay

Me : Mina Nyathuko izingane zakho ngiyoziletha kuwena ejeli uhlale nazo bhuti.

(My voice is shaky. I want to cry)

Nyathuko : Sthah you have nothing to worry about.

Me : How did we get here? Uthando nje olumsulwa oluqale e McDonald's lufike kanjani la Thukeh? Our relationship was pure. Your love was innocent and.....

Nyathuko : My love is still innocent.

Me : Ungumbulali

Nyathuko : Angiyena umbulali bengivikela izingane zami.  
Bengivikela wena, uthando lwethu.

(We are now staring at each other exchanging words. Tears are streaming down my face.)

Me : What you did was selfish?

Nyathuko : Maybe I was selfish kodwa nami angizenzi. Uthando lwakho engikuthanda ngalo lonke lolu.

Me : Uthando ongithanda ngalo luyingozi. Luyakuhlanyisa Nyathuko!!

Nyathuko : Kusho ukuthi ngizimisele ukuhlanya impilo yami yonke.

(I shake my head)

Me : Ingabe imina okwenze nje? Did I turn you into this animal?  
Did I change you?

Nyathuko : Yes you did.

(He holds my hands)

Nyathuko : You changed me. Ungishintshile wangibonisa ukuthi luyini uthando. You are my definition, incazelo yami yothando. Uthando engikuthanda ngalo ilona kuphela uthando engilwaziyo. Please don't punish me for it. It's all I know.

Me : What kind of love is that? Uthando alufanele lube njena Thukeh!! You said you love me. Awushongo ukuthi uthando lwakho luza nokubulala. Does your love means kill....

Nyathuko : That I would kill for you, yes!!

(We stare at each other in silence)

Me : Uthando lwakho lu....

Nyathuko : Uthando lwami lungunaphakade. Nangalena kwethuna eyami inhliziyo iyobe isashaya ishayela wena.

(He explains while wiping away my tears)

Nyathuko : Uthando enginalo ngawe akulona nje oluyophelela la emhlabeni kuphela. I want to love you nangalena kwelanga.

Me : Thukeh...

Nyathuko : Ngoba ngeke ngiphile ngaphandle kwakho. I'm not innocent. Izinto engizenzile nazo azikho msulwa kodwa uthando engikuthanda ngalo lumsulwa Sthabile. Mhlampe indlela engikukhombise ngayo ukuthi ngiyakuthanda ayikho msulwa.

(I sniff)

Nyathuko : Kodwa ngiyakuthanda. You are the only woman I love. Akakaze abekhona futhi akekho kanti futhi akasoze abakhona umuntu wesifazane engimuthanda njengawe. Wena uwu Alpha no Omega wenhliziyo yami, wothando lwami.

(He smiles. I laugh and my tears fall over again. I bury myself in his chest and cry. He wraps his arms around me.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami.

(God knows how much I love him)

(NGIYABINGELELA LAPHO KWISTHEMBU SIKA THUKEH. I SEE YOU 😊😊)

## KWAMASHU

(The end of the month is here. I'm home for my father's surprise birthday party. I arrived yesterday (Thursday) for preparations. I know this was his church's idea but he is my father and I want to make sure that everything is perfect. He is turning 66 so this is a big deal. Yes at 66 he is still working and he is not planning to retire any time soon because his bosses are so good to him. Zanokuhle is fine now. He is back home but he is not coming for the party because he is busy. Nyathuko's father is bringing the kids tomorrow since he has a meeting with my father. They tried to convince my father to keep the money but Ngcobo is stubborn. Well, if he wants to give back the lobola money then that's fine. It's a pity they don't know that Nyathuko and I are back together so we will eat that lobola money together.)

(It's Friday. The sun is out today. Mapholoba is on leave. We are sitting in the living room. The Ngcobo couple is singing together as usual and I am busy chatting with Thukeh on Whatsapp.)

Ngcobo : Usuyayona mkami. Ishaye kahle



(We laugh. My mother definitely can't sing)

MaKheswa : U Zanokuhle sebasiphuca yena kwa Zondi.

(I giggle)

Me : Zanokuhle is busy Mah.

Ngcobo : U Zanokuhle uyohlale ekhetha abantu bezizwe okudlula unina.

MaKheswa : That's not true Baba kaMongezi. Sthabile did you tell him what happened?

Ngcobo : Zanokuhle is not a child. Ubona kahle ukuthi kwenzekani phakathi kwabazali bakhe. Akadingi ukutshelwa.

MaKheswa : Mina kodwa angiboni kanjalo.

Ngcobo : Mina ngijabulela ukuthi isihlangene imali yakwa Zondi.  
Abathathe imali yabo behlukane nendodakazi yami phansi.  
Angifuni ukuphinda ngibone umfana wakwa Zondi after this  
whole thing.

MaKheswa : Imali uzoyihambisa kwa Zondi angithi?

Ngcobo : Ngithi ngikwenzelani lokho?

Me : To show respect, Mapholoba. Mina no Thukeh sinezingane  
ndawonye lokho kusho ukuthi ubudlwelano bethu nabantu  
bakwa Zondi obaphakade.

Ngcobo : Sthabile, the Zondis have no respect for me.  
Angikhumbuli nangelilodwa ilanga ngifika emagcekeni  
akwaZondi ngithola ukuhlonishwa.

MaKheswa : Mapholoba.....

Ngcobo : Cha ka Kheswa! Kwanele manje. Ngilidayisile i van lami yahlangana imali yakwa Zondi. Abafike ksasa bezolanda imali yabo.

MaKheswa : Kuzofika yena umkhulu ka Ndlela?

Ngcobo : Yes

MaKheswa : Ay abafike idlule yonke lento. Ngiyabonga nje ngoba u Sthabile usephumile kuloyamuzi. Asithembeke ukuthi u Baba ka Ndlelenhle uzobatholela lomfazi abamufunayo ngoba ingane yami bebengayifuni.

Me : Mhmmmm

MaKheswa : Usemncane kabi wena Sthabile. Uzoyithola nje indoda mntanami.

Ngcobo : Akayidingi naleyondoda. Sthabile indoda ayilona iphilisi lempilo. You can live a happy life without a man. Uziphilele nezingane zakho.

(Webabo!! Never. I want Nyathuko mina)

Me : Yebo Mapholoba

(My phone rings. Their enemy is calling. I quickly silence the call)

Me : Ay it's hot here. Othi ngiyokwenza i juice

Ngcobo : Hamba uthenge i drink

(He opens his wallet and gives me R100.)

MaKheswa : Cela izingane lapho emnyango zikuyele estolo ngoba phela wena awusenangane.

(I laugh)

Me : Ay ngizohamba mina anginqeni

MaKheswa : Okay. WeSthabile ungiphathele ne yeast bandla ka jeqe wami. Baba ngizokukhokhela u R3 wakho

(We laugh)

Me : Uzwile ke Baba angithi?

(I leave them laughing. Nyathuko is calling again)

Me : Nana

Nyathuko : Baby yini kodwa?

(I laugh)

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Ayibanjwa ngani kodwa ifoni muntu ka Thukeh? Yazi sengiyongena emotweni manje ngithi ngiza lapho ngoba phela wena awuyibambi ifoni

(I laugh out loud)

Me : Ngiyaxolisa Nana

Nyathuko : Uyaphila sthandwa sami?

Me : Ngiyaphila Bhambatha. Guess ukuthi ngenzani?

Nyathuko : Wenzani?

(I laugh)

Me : I said guess. Okay fine, ngiya estolo.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Umdala kanje

(We both laugh)

Nyathuko : Uyonzani estolo sthandwa sami? Usuyathandiswa?

Me : Angikakathandiswa namanje baby cabanga.

Nyathuko : Uthandiswa nini kanti Mam'Zondi? Angathi usuzoba na 4 months.

(I laugh. I honestly have no cravings)

Me : U Thukeh omncane uhalela noma yini Nana. Kodwa namhlanje ngihalela inyoka

Nyathuko : Uhalela ipipi lami baby?

(I laugh)

Me : No, Nana, I mean sweets. Inyoka le ewuswidi. I want a sour one.

Nyathuko : Usho lenyoka ethandwa u Zothani edliwayo?

Me : That one.

Nyathuko : Ingane yami ifuna leyonto?

(I laugh.)

Me : Ehhene Nana. Ngizoyithengela ngemali ka Baba.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Ithandani enye namhlanje?



Me : Lutho baby. Ibithanda u chocolate ekseni yabuye yawuduba.

Nyathuko : Umfani wami uyangidabukisa ke manje

(I laugh out loud)

Me : Udabukisa ngani? Ngoba ngimuncishe u chocolate?

Nyathuko : Ayngeke Sthah

(I laugh)

Me : What Nana?

Nyathuko : Angithandi leyonto.

Me : Ngeke ngisaphinde ngimuncishe baby. Baphi o Siso?

Nyathuko : Bakhona sisaya la e Gateway

Me : Mhmmm niyazikhipha. Aibo weThukeh kade ngifonelwe u Cindy. Uthi kade kufone u Ayanda wathi ngimufonele back.

Nyathuko : Ayanda?

Me : Magic's girlfriend

Nyathuko : Oh yah.

Me : What if ufuna ukubuza ngaye?

Nyathuko : Uhlanganaphi wena naye?

Me : Ayke nangoke u Thukeh.

Nyathuko : You have nothing to worry about. Sekufanele ngihambe ke manje baby.

Me : Okay. I'll call you.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Love you too.

(I bought what I came to buy and went back home. My mother was supposed to make steam bread but she didn't. She complained about the heat. It's 6pm and she is chilling with her boyfriend outside. I'm cooking and sweating in the kitchen.)

MaKheswa : WeSthabile?

(She calls me from outside)

Me : Mah?

MaKheswa : Woza

(Ay Ay what does she want?)

Me : Mah?

MaKheswa : Woza. Someone is here to see you.

Me : Ubani loyo?

MaKheswa : Woza

(I wipe my hands and head out.)

Me : Ubani lo....

(I pause. Manhlo is here. She stays next to our spaza shop. She is only 18 years old. I know her mother but we are not close. So I don't know what brings her here. She is carrying two Woolworths plastic bags.)

MaKheswa : Nangu u Manhlo

(I look at Manhlo with my eyebrows furrowed. I really am confused.)

Me : Yah sisi

Manhlo : Yebo. Ngisacela wena Maka Zano

Me : Oh Okay

(We distance ourselves from my parents)

Manhlo : Bengisathunywe u Baba ka Zano.

(She says while scratching her hair. She is so shy with her tiny voice.)

Me : What is he doing here? Ukephi nendawo?

Manhlo : Cha Maka Zano akekho la. Ngimubone e rank e Gateway wase wangiphathisa kuwena. Uthe ucela ngikunike la.

(She gives me those two plastic bags. I laugh)

Me : Waze wadlala ngawe u Thukeh

Manhlo : Akunankinga, vele mina I didn't have any plastics. Uze wanginika nemali yokugibela nkosiyami.

(I laugh out loud.)

Me : Aw nkosiyami.

(She laughs)

Me : Thank you so much baby girl.

Manhlo : Akunankinga Mah. Usale kahle

Me : Uhambe kahle baby.

(I go back)

MaKheswa : Oplastiki baphumaphi?

(Ohhe)

Me : Oh laba? No

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izinto ezincane nje ebengicele u Nuh ukuthi engiphathele zona.  
Something came up wangabe esakwazi ukuza so she asked  
Manhlo to bring them.

Ngcobo : Ayasha amabhodwe la phakathi

(I laugh and walk in. I check on my pots. What the fuck did I just cook? No, it's time to make peace with the fact that I can't cook. I switch off the stove and go to my bedroom. I open my plastics. I laugh and throw myself on the bed.)

Me : Uswidi omngaka Jesu!

(Inside there are many bottles of candy, chocolates and coconut water. I have the best man in the world shame. I can't stop laughing. I take my phone. There's a message from him. He sent it hours ago)

Message : Mamah bathi abanayo inyoka la e Woolworths sthandwa sami.

(I giggle. I finish reading his message and call him)

Nyathuko : Yah mamah

Me : Yah babah. Yini kodwa Nana ngempela?



Nyathuko : Sengenzeni sthandwa sami?

Me : Uswidi omngaka.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Uwutholile?

Me : I did Nana. You didn't have to kodwa ngiyabonga  
Bhambatha.

Nyathuko : Cabanga ngime lapha e rank isikhathi eside kanjani  
ngingaboni muntu ohlala lapho ngakini. Besengithi ngiyahamba  
ngavele ngabona leyangane ingibuka. Yathi iyangazi nawe  
iyakwazi baby.

(I laugh)

Me : Yeah ike ikubone phela mawufike la KwaMashu.  
Ngiyabonga, Nana.

Nyathuko : Bengithi ngikulethela mina sthandwa sami ngavele ngathola i call from Bhambatha's Lounge. Angithi namhlanje ulwesihlanu sthandwa sami manje kufika ama celebrity lapha. Bekumele ngiye and make sure that everything is in order before they arrive.

Me : It's okay Nana. U Max useza ksasa?

(We call his father by his name sometimes)

Nyathuko : Yah uyeza sthandwa sami. Angithi u Baba wakho akafuni ukuyiyeka yonke lento.

(I sigh)

Me : I know. Ay muyeke Thukeh u Baba eyikhokhe imali uma efuna. UBaba mdala phela ukuthi singalokhu simuncenga ngento eyo.....

"Sthabile?"

(Oh God, speak of the devil. Did he hear me?)

Me : Baba? Wee Thukeh nangu.

(Nyathuko laughs. The door opens and he walks in. I change the call conversation fast)

Me : Ngibonge kakhulu Nuh oe. Ngizokubona Sunday ke.

(Nyathuko is laughing)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Nami sisi.... Okay... Okay sure.

(I end the call and try to pull out a smile)

Me : Mapholoba

Ngcobo : Awungifakele le airtime.

Me : Okay

Ngcobo : Uyaphila u Nuh?

(I swallow)

Me : Uyaphila Baba.

(I finish loading his airtime and give back his cell phone)

Ngcobo : Ngiyabonga Fuze.

Me : Ngizoniphakela manje, ngiyeza.

Ngcobo : Okay

(He walks out and I sigh in relief. Phew! That was close.)

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SATURDAY

11AM

(Nyathuko's father is supposed to be here by now. Mapholoba is already fuming. My father is such an impatient man. Wuuuh! Huh-huh. I can't. )

MaKheswa : Wena why are you dressing up, uyaphi?

Me : Ngiya e town ntombi. Ngeke mina ngihlale ne boyfriend yakho iquve kanje.

MaKheswa : Akaquvile Sthabile. Ukuthi nje ubona angathi umndeni waka Zondi uyamudelela.

Me : Ay ukhulumela umuntu wakho. Ngiyadlala. I need to buy him a gift for his birthday.

(She smiles)

MaKheswa : That's good. Uzojabula

Me : Manje wena why umorosi?

MaKheswa : Do you think Mkhulu ka Ndlela is coming?  
Sekushaye o 11 phela manje kanti uphi?

Me : Ey I don't know yazi. Angazi lutho mina Mah.

MaKheswa : He is wrong.

Me : Khona imoto edumayo

(I check through the window.)

Me : Aibo!!

MaKheswa : Yini?!

Me : Isn't that Baba's van?

MaKheswa : Gudluka ngibuke!

(We look at each other)

MaKheswa : It is. Uyidayisile nje manje iqhamukaphi?

(We rush to the living room. Baba is already standing on the veranda. His van parks in front of the house and guess who is

getting out? Yep! Maxwell Ndabenhle Zondi. He looks like a huge brick now. He is wearing a red golf t-shirt and tight jeans. The tattoos are covering his arms. His beard is almost touching his stomach. Aibo!!)

Maxwell : Fuze

(I don't even want to see my father's face right now.)

Ngcobo : Gagashe

(I run back to my bedroom and close the door. What the fuck?)

(The door opens and my mother walks in. She locks the door)

Me : Baphi?

MaKheswa : Ngale.



Me : Izingane zami akafikanga nazo?

MaKheswa : Awume kancane ngezingane. What is he doing with Mapholoba's van?

Me : I don't know mah. I don't know. Anishongo ukuthi imoto ithengwe indoda yase Mthwalume?

MaKheswa : That's what your father said.

Me : Ay mina angazi lutho.

(I continued dressing up. Things are heating up in the living room.)

Me : Ay mina ngiyolalela

MaKheswa : Bengakuboni Sthabile.

(I open the door and stand in the passage.)

Ngcobo : This is disrespectful!! Ngidayisa imoto nina niyayithenga. Usuka lapho uza ngayo layikhaya uzolanda imali eniyithenge ngayo.

Maxwell : I bought the car because I love it. Imoto ayihlangene nemali u Nyathuko alobola ngayo.

(He is lying. My father's van is old. He didn't buy it because he loves it. He bought it to spite him.)

Ngcobo : Ilangene Gagashe. I sold that van to raise money engizoyikhokhela nina kwa Zondi.

(My mother is now standing next to me. We are both eavesdropping)

Ngcobo : Ungiqambele amanga wathi uyindoda yase Mthwalume.

Maxwell : Mapholoba lento asingayenzi inkinga ibe ingeyona. I paid you more.

Ngcobo : I don't care!!

(Maxwell is low key fighting his son's battle. Buying my father's van is a fight.)

Maxwell : I'm not here to fight.

Ngcobo : Kulungile. Take the money and go.

(My father places a big red black on the table. Wait, is that bag full of money? Kanti, how much did Nyathuko pay for my lobola?)

Maxwell : Fine

Ngcobo : Angifuni ukuphinde ngibone indodana yakho la emagcekeni oFuze. Edlalele kude futhi nabazukulu bami.

Maxwell : Uyagagamela Mapholoba. Nyathuko won't stay away from his kids. Abazukulu bami nami.

Ngcobo : Nibaphikile. Nahudulela isithunzi sami phansi.

Maxwell : Ngiyaxolisa ngalokho okwenzekile kodwa....

Ngcobo : Hamba Gagashe.

(Maxwell stands up and grabs the bag)

Maxwell : Mapholoba ngiyakuhlonipha. Wasizalela umfazi wakwa Zondi wena. I don't want to fight with you.

Ngcobo : Please leave.

Maxwell : Usale kahle Fuze

(Maxwell walks out. We went back to my bedroom.)

MaKheswa : Waze wabazalela abantu abayinkinga Sthabile

(She says and gets out. She is fighting her boyfriend's battle now but she is fighting with the wrong person. I'm definitely going to town. I'll call Nyathuko on my way. I wonder if he knows about this. I take my car keys and my handbag. Why am I scared of going out? I can hear my father breathing fire. I take a deep breath and head out.)

Me : Ngiyabuya ke Mah

MaKheswa : Okay

Ngcobo : Uyaphi u Sthabile?

(What?)

Me : Baba?

Ngcobo : Where are you going?

Me : I'm going to town. Bengimutshelile u Mah.

Ngcobo : Hlala phansi. You are not going anywhere. Usulandela abantu bakwa Zondi laba abangidelelayo?

Me : Baba mina angazi lutho ngendaba yeveni lakho.

Ngcobo : This is not about the van!!! Your father in law disrespected me. Uzoba isgora la emzini wami nomzimba ogcwele upende. Uzongidelela!

Me : Kodwa Mapholoba....

Ngcobo : I don't want to hear it. Sit down!

Me : Yaze yangiyala iveni.

(I throw my bag on the couch. I'm frustrated. I didn't ask him to sell his van and definitely didn't tell the Zondis to buy it.)

Ngcobo : Bazonginsakela ukuthi bona banemali bathenga iveni lami. Aghaaa mahn!!

(He yells and walks out. Hhayi I give up)

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(My phone is ringing under my pillow. I remember speaking to Nyathuko yesterday around 16h00 and he told me that he knew nothing about my father's van and after that we never spoke again. I'm tired. I can't even open my eyes. I take out my phone and open a single eye. It's a video call from Nyathuko. I answer and wave my hand. He laughs)

Nyathuko : Yah baby

Me : Yah Nana

Nyathuko : Kade ngikufonela

Me : Nami kade ngikufonela and you didn't answer your phone izolo ebusuku

Nyathuko : You called?

Me : Aibo Thukeh



Nyathuko : No Sthah ifoni ibiku Ndlelenhle. Akashongo ukuthi ufonile

Me : Aw

Nyathuko : Ay uyabona ke. Ngicela ukukufonela mase bevukile khona bezokutshela ukuthi benginabo layindlini mina. I didn't go anywhere.

Me : No, I believe you.

(He smiles)

Nyathuko : Uzovuka nini?

Me : Lesisu sesiqala ukungikhathaza. Kufanele angabe sengivukile but I'm tired. Ngisho izolo I went to bed at 19h30.

Nyathuko : Usenjani u Mapholoba ukudinwa?

Me : Udiniwe Nyathuko. Ngeke engadinwa u Baba.

Nyathuko : Sthah ngempela mina bengingazi ukuthi u Baba uzothenga i van ka Mapholoba. He didn't say anything. Ngamutshela ukuthi u Baba wakho udayisa imoto yakhe because he wants to pay back the lobola money kodwa akashongo lutho uMax ngokuthi uzoyithenga yena lemoto.

Me : Akayidingi u Baba wakho leyamoto. Ufuna ukuhlupha uBaba nje.

Nyathuko : I'll talk to him. Izolo ngifike engekho lapha endlini.

Me : Okay. Sekufanele ngivuke. I need to go and help lapha esontweni. Lapho nginqenani jesu.

Nyathuko : Abekho abantu abangasiza mase mina ngiyabakhokhela?

Me : No, no, that will be a waste of money. Ngizoya baby. Vele ukupheka nje nokwenza amasalad, that's all. Izolo we cleaned and decorated.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami I don't want you to overwork yourself.

Me : I'm not, Nana. Wena uzofika what time?

Nyathuko : Eish, about that. Sthandwa sami laba abasafuni ukuza KwaMashu. U Zano usebatshela ukuthi uyobuka i movie ntambama. Nabo bathi sebehamba naye.

Me : Ave engidina u Zanokuhle ngalento yakhe ayenzayo. Everytime the kids are coming here usho into ezokwenza ukuthi izingane zihalele ukungezi. Ave engidina

Nyathuko : Ehlisa umoya sthandwa sami.

Me : Manje wena awusezi?

Nyathuko : Angisezi mamah. Ngizokulanda ksasa ntambama.

(Tears burn in my eyes. That's how much I miss him and the fact that he is no longer coming is breaking my heart.)

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Ngizokulanda ekuseni, yezwa?

Me : Ey Thukeh, whatever. Ngicela uvale ifoni.

.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami yini ke manje sekwenzenjani?

(I cover my eyes with my hand)

Nyathuko : Sthah? Khuluma nendoda yakho sthandwa sami.

(I shake my head.)

Nyathuko : Ukhalelani muntu ka Thukeh?

Me : I'm not crying Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : Kulungile ngizoza sthandwa sami. Ukuthi kukhona inkinga encane ngemoto but I'll come. Ungakhali mamah.

Me : No, ungezi.

Nyathuko : Ungayenzi leyonto baby. Ngizoza.

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Ngikuphathele ini?

Me : Foldover yase McDonald's. The spicy one.

Nyathuko : Okay sthandwa sami.

Me : Bhabhayi ke

Nyathuko : Waze wangixosha.

(I laugh)

Me : I'm not chasing you. I need to wake up, Nana.

Nyathuko : Okay vuka ke sthandwa sami. Ngiyakuthanda.

Me : I love you too Nana.

(I got up and went to the kitchen. My mother is busy cleaning)

MaKheswa : Aibo Sthabile is still in her gown Moya oyingcwele.  
Hhaibo Sthabile kanti yini?

Me : Sengiyahamba manje Mah.

MaKheswa : Hhaibo sekungaze kubuye u Baba wakho ePhayindane.

(She meant PINETOWN. Yep, she is rural like that sometimes.)

Me : Sengiyogeza

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sengiyogeza. Please put some porridge in the microwave for me. Ngilambile mina Mah.

MaKheswa : Okay. Awuhambe ugeze Sthabile nkosiyami. Ey ngaze nganengane eyivila.

Me : I'm going.

(I laugh and run to my room)

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(My father's party started very well and everything is still going well. He is happy and he was indeed surprised. It's a pity that I didn't get him a gift. He told me to sit down yesterday and that's why I couldn't get him a gift. I'll give him a hug.)

(Nyathuko is still not here. I go to the back of the church and call him)

Nyathuko : Mamah

Me : Yah babah. Ukuphi?

Nyathuko : Ngidlula la ka Bester. Ngiyeza manje sthandwa sami.

Me : Okay. Woza ke. I love you

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda nami Mam'Zondi.



(I hung up. It's packed here. I don't know who invited all these people. I lean against the wall and wait for my man. My father walks out of the church)

Ngcobo : Fuze

(I smile)

Me : Mapholoba

(He hugs me)

Ngcobo : Liyangitshela ibandla ukuthi uwena owenze lolusuku lwaba impumelelo. Ngiyabonga Mashiya amahle.

Me : Happy Birthday Baba. Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu Fuze.

(I can't believe who is watching us from the gate. The father of my kids. Doesn't he look like a dream? Jesus! My vagina is beating. Can Mapholoba let me go? I want to go to my man. I wave him. He smiles and goes to hide behind the tree.)

Ngcobo : Ngiyabonga mntanami

(He finally let go.)

Ngcobo : Wahhlala wedwa emnyango.

Me : No, ngiyangena manje Baba.

Ngcobo : Okay. Bakunikile ukudla? Engalambi phela umzukulu ka Mkhulu

(I laugh)

Me : Sidlile Mapholoba.

Ngcobo : Let's go in. Woza

(Oh no. We walk inside the church. I sit at the back. My father goes and sits in the front. As soon as he sits down I sneak out. I find Thukeh standing under the tree. I laugh)

Me : Nana

(He wraps his arms around my waist and kisses me)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami. Uphi u Mapholoba no Mchumane.

(I giggle)

Me : They are inside. Woza singene, they won't see you.

Nyathuko : Are you sure?

Me : Uh. Where is your car?

Nyathuko : Ikhona

Me : Ikuphi?

Nyathuko : Ngipake ezansi. Let's go

(He gives me my McDonald's)

Me : Thank you Nana. I'll leave it in my car. Ngidle late

(I kiss him. We head in and sit at the back. My father is giving a long speech. This pregnancy is messing with me. The moment I sit down I feel asleep. I keep closing my eyes and open them. Nyathuko places my head on his shoulder.)

Nyathuko : Lala kumina baby

Me : Why engagedi kanti?

(Nyathuko laughs. He kisses my forehead and brushes my hair. I fall back to sleep leaving my father preaching.)

(Nyathuko woke me up after some time)

Nyathuko : Sthah? Vuka sthandwa sami. Sebeqedile.

(I open my eyes and look around. Most people have gone outside)

Me : Sebeqedile?

Nyathuko : Baqedile baby. Are you okay?

Me : Yeah. Let's go before my father sees us together.

(Nyathuko walks out first and I follow him. We go and sit in my car. We are kissing. My windows are tinted so I have no eyes to worry about. If we weren't parking in the church's yard then I'll be asking for a quick fuck. Nyathuko is whole turn on today. He always is but today it's a bit extra.)

Nyathuko : Ngicabanga ukuhamba manje Maka Sandisokuhle.

Me : Aibo ungadlile?

Nyathuko : Angilambile mina sthandwa sami.

Me : Why ujahe ukuhamba? It's only half past three.

Nyathuko : Angifuni u Mapholoba engibone. Angiphathanga ngisho isipho.

(I laugh)

Me : Ubengeke esithathe vele. He is angry about his van.

(We both laugh. I kiss him for the hundreth time.)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami wangihalela kangaka namhlanje?

(I laugh)

Me : It's not me. Ilesisu

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Uhlale uphika ngengane yami. Uyangihalela and that's fine. Ngiyindoda yakho Sthah.

Me : Okay ngiyakuhalela ke baby.

(He kisses me)

Nyathuko : Angikuntshontshe sihambe ke sthandwa sami.  
Uyabo?

Me : No, ngizobuya ksasa, Nana.

Nyathuko : Ngobani? Sthah ngiyakudinga nami.

Me : I can't just go without telling my parents.

Nyathuko : Asizona izingane baby. We can just leave. Angithi sthandwa sami?

(He kisses my nose)

Nyathuko : Angithi baby?

Me : No, not today. Usuku olubalulekile lolu ku Mapholoba,  
Nana.



Nyathuko : But seluphelile....

(I continue to kiss him. I feel so wet. His phone rings. He takes it out. I look at the screen and my vagina goes dry immediately. Did I say he was turn on? Yes I did and I was lying. He looks like a horse. Yey, I hate Nyathuko Zondi.)

Me : Why are you ignoring her call? Bamba ifoni

Nyathuko : No

Me : Ufunani u Ashton?

(She calls again)

Nyathuko : Ngicela ukhulume naye.

Me : Angifuni!!!

(My body is already shaking. He answers and puts the call on the loudspeaker)

Nyathuko : Ashton

Ashton : Hey Tiger, where are you? I'm at your apartment.

Nyathuko : I'm with my wife.

Ashton : Oh, I'm here to bring your car.

(His car?)

Nyathuko : Ubuyaphi nemoto yami Ashton? Who told you to take it?

Ashton : I thought you wouldn't mind driving my new car.

Nyathuko : Fakof. Nx!

(He clicks his tongue and hangs up. I chuckle)

Me : Usuyi Tiger wena?

Nyathuko : Maka Nasisipho, please.

Me : Ngiyabuza! Awuseyena u Nyathuko wena usuwu Tiger?

Nyathuko : Sthabile it's not what you think.

Me : Get out of my car.

Nyathuko : Sthabile ngicela.....

Me : No!!!! Phuma emotweni yami!!

(He opens the door. I hit his shoulder)

Nyathuko : Awuyeke lento oyenzayo. Ngiyaphuma emotweni yakho angithi uyabona?

(My chest is bouncing up and down. He gets out and walks away. My head boils. I get out of the car and follow him. I can hear my mother calling my name. I ignore her. There's a car parked down the road. It's not just any car but it's a black Lamborghini Urus. The number plate is personalized "Mimo". I lose my mind. I run and grab Nyathuko by his clothes from behind. He turns around and I bang his chest.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile stop it! Yini inkinga yakho?

(I'm not hearing anything)

Nyathuko : Sthabile sizoxabana. Awuyeke lamasimba owenzayo.

(I try to slap him but he blocks me.)

Nyathuko : Get in the car Sthabile uyeke ukuzibukanisa nabantu ngoba ngizovele ngikukhahlele.

(Nyathuko has never threatened to hit me. Ashton is really winning.)

Me : Angifuni!!

(I'm not getting inside Ashton's car)

Me : Ifunani lemoto la?

(He looks around and sighs)

Nyathuko : Ashton took my car without my permission. Ungifice ka Thami izolo ebusuku wangizwa ngikhuluma ukuthi ngiza la. Wantshontsha okhiye bemoto yami washiya abakhe. That's why bengingafuni ukuza la because I knew ukuthi lemoto izosixabanisa.

Me : Stop lying Nyathuko!!!!

(I try to kick him but I trip and fall.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile wenzani ngempela? Usuyahlanya Maka Ndlela?

(He lifts me up and wraps his arms around me. I wail.)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami ngiyaxolisa. Please ngicela uhambe n.....

"Sthabile? Sthabile!!!!"

(Oh crap! That's my father's voice. This is a disaster. Nyathuko quickly wipes my tears)

Nyathuko : Dammit!

Ngcobo : What's going on here? Are you hitting my daughter Zondi?

Nyathuko : Cha.... Cha Mapholoba. Akunjalo Fuze.

Ngcobo : Bathi abantu niyalwa nje la. Why is Sthabile crying uma kukuthi awumshayi? Ikhalelani indodakazi yami?

Nyathuko : She....

(What is Nyathuko doing? He is removing the number plates of Ashton's car.)

Nyathuko : It's tears of joy Baba. We bought you a car.

(What the fuck?)

Ngcobo : Ini?

Nyathuko : This your car Mapholoba. Sikuthengele yona njengesipho sakho sosuku lokuzalwa. Unwele olude Fuze.

(He gives him the car key. My father smiles)

Ngcobo : Aibo wezingane nithini? Esami lesilwane?

Nyathuko : It's yours Baba. Ngidayise iveni khona sizokuthengela le.

Me : Nyathuko...

(What the fuck is he doing?)

Ngcobo : Sthabile is this true?

(I wipe my tears and try to pull out a smile. Nyathuko is shaking his head like a mad man. I clear my throat)



Me : Yes, it's true Baba. This is your car. Sikuthengelile.

Ngcobo : Mfana ka Zondi umthetho wakho awufuni ukuthatha imali yakho yelobolo. Usungithengele ngayo imoto ke manje?

(Nyathuko laughs while rubbing his hands together)

Ngcobo : Nondaba anginawo amazwi. Angikaze ngisibone isipho esingaka.

(My father hugs me. I glare at Nyathuko. He finishes hugging me and shake hands with Nyathuko)

Nyathuko : Ngena Mapholoba. Ngena uyizwe.

(My father has a wide smile on his face. Nyathuko throws away the number plates and opens the door for my father. Does Nyathuko understand the heck he is doing right now? There's no way to describe this? Yeeeerrr!!!)

(You ladies are too beautiful for this serial killer 😊😊😊 Don't catch. Very DENJARASI this one 😊😊... Love you girls ❤️👍)

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(Have you ever been praised for bullshit? Today Nyathuko and I are being praised for bullshit. My father is over the moon. He is driving like a new president all over the streets of KwaMashu and telling everyone how proud he is of me and the father of my kids. "Njengobani owake wathengelwa umkhwenyana wakwakhe imoto la KwaMashu? Njengobani?" That's what he keeps asking people. I'm so embarrassed. Nyathuko left me to deal with his mess. It also got a bit too much for me and I came back home. This day feels like a very crazy fairytale.)

(Musa is busy calling me. I've been ignoring him for too long. I sigh and take his call.)

Me : Musa

Musa : Sthabile please don't hang up.

Me : What do you want?

Musa : How are you?

Me : Musa please stop. You didn't call to ask me ukuthi nginjani.

Musa : Okay, I wanted to say happy birthday to your father. I saw your status on Whatsapp.

Me : Thanks. I'll pass the message.

Musa : Friend, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for all the trouble I caused you... All the trauma. It was childish, I admit. I got a little bit over excited and....

Me : You didn't think.

Musa : Bitch I'm sorry. I don't know how I chose a dick over us.

(I smile. I actually miss him and right now I wish he was here.)

Me : What you did was stupid Musa. You don't even know Chumani so well. I don't know him at all. So ukuvele unyamalale nje naye mina ngithole ama headphones akho esangweni enegazi, that was.... I don't know.

Musa : I'm sorry friend.

Me : It's okay. Are you good?

Musa : Bitch, I'm hundred.

Me : And Chumani? Is he treating you well?

Musa : Like a Queen that I am. I've found my own Nyathuko. Bitch I can't believe I was crushing on your husband all this time. But I'm good now.

Me : Wait, were you crushing on Nyathuko?

Musa : But I told you.

Me : You did?

(I don't recall)

Musa : I have my own man now. Chumani is a good man. He is a doctor.

Me : Oh, doctor? I thought he was a gangster.

Musa : He is a good doctor. My wild good doctor.

Me : Wild. Right.

Musa : We are going to England soon. I want to introduce him to my parents.

Me : Isn't that too soon?

(I'm really not sure about this Chumani guy. He kidnapped him for Christ sake.)

Musa : Men like him are hard to find. You know that. So I need to hold tight.

Me : As long as you are happy, friend. I am happy too.

Musa : I know. Thank you, Sthabile. Anyway, how are you?

Me : It's hectic, Sam. Ngisekhaya KwaMashu and trust me awufuni ukwazi into eyenzeke namhlanje.

Musa : Bitch, what happened?

Me : Ngizodinga ibhodlela lewayini mase ngingaba phansi ngikuxoxele kahle.

(He laughs. There's Ashton's car approaching the gate. I close the window. My parents are back.)

Me : If you knew what happened you wouldn't be laughing.

Musa : It can't be that bad.

Me : Sam, it's bad. (sigh) I need to go. Can we talk later?

Musa : Yeah sure. Take it easy hey

Me : I will. Love you

Musa : I love you too honey.

(I finished talking to Musa and walked out. I find my father brushing Ashton's car with a wide smile on his face. What has Nyathuko done?)

Me : Mapholoba

(He turns around and opens his arms)

Ngcobo : My daughter.

(I go and hug him. Ey Nyathuko!!!)

Ngcobo : I can't begin to tell you how happy I am. Muhle uthixo mntanami

Me : Very beautiful... I mean Good. He is really good.

(I pull away)

Me : Uphi u Mah?

Ngcobo : Basaqaqa izitsha lapha esontweni. Ngithe ake ngilethe nasi isilwane somhlola emagcekeni ako Fuze naso sibone phela kubo kungaze kushone ilanga.



(He laughs. I've never seen my father this happy.)

Me : I see. Kodwa Mapholoba don't you think this car is too much? Phela wena Fuze usumdala ukuthi ungahamba ngemoto enje.

(He laughs)

Ngcobo : Me? Old? Aibo Sthabile.

(He laughs and shakes his head. Ay angisazi ke)

Ngcobo : Fuze ungadidwa ilezinwele ezimhlophe nalentshebe emhlophe egcwele ubuso. I am still very strong and very young.

(Ay did he say young?)

Ngcobo : Uyabona lemoto, iyimina nje izihlalele. Ithi mina.

(He laughs. I rub the back of my neck)

Me : Ay ngiyezwa.

Ngcobo : Uyabona le ingcono kakhulu ukunalena ka Gagashe efana nemoto yomujaho.

(I don't know why he is talking about Maxwell now. He is nothing like Maxwell)

Me : Mapholoba wena awufani no Baba ka Thukeh.

Ngcobo : He behaves like those men from overseas. Vele mina angifani naleyandoda.

(He is judging him, Father God)

Me : Mina Mapholoba ngikhathazekile. Sihlala KwaMashu Baba

So what if you get hijacked?

(He laughs)

Ngcobo : Never. Mina wonke umuntu uyangihlonipha kulendawo. Mntanami yinina nje eningithengele lemoto manje kwangathi usuyangabaza.

(No, I didn't buy any car. I hate the owner of this car wholeheartedly)

Me : Yes we did kodwa akuyona le engiyikhethile. U Thukeh okhethe lena Baba.

Ngcobo : Ngiyayithanda. Ukhetha kahle umfana ka Zondi.

(He smiles and gently kicks the tyres. I've never seen an old man like him so in love with a car. Aibo u Baba!!)

Ngcobo : Kodwa bengacabangike ukuthi lemoto isilungise yonke into. Bebone ngoba nakhu ngithathe imoto mase becabanga ukuthi ngiyabaxolela for what they did to you. No. This car doesn't change anything. Empeleni ngiyayideserva lemoto, yes, I deserve it. Phela mina ngabelethela emhlabeni enhle indodakazi le. Indodakazi eyafika kwa Zondi yabazalela izingane ezinhle okudlula zonke izingane emhlabeni.

(I close my eyes and release a long sigh. Ay no, i life iskorokoro for real.)

THALENTE

(We are at Nyathuko's flat. We are staring at him in disbelief)

Nyathuko : After that I took a taxi. ithe ifika e Bridge City i taxi wafona. "Woza uthathe imoto" Ay u Sthabile uyangivuruvaya.

Me : Uthi imoto ka Ashton yenzeni? Wenzeni?

Nyathuko : Oh imoto. Ay bafo ayikho into ebengizoyenza. I had no choice. U Ngcobo ubezitshela ukuthi ngishaye ingane yakhe. People saw us arguing. Bamubona u Sthabile ewa phansi and I'm sure they thought I pushed her kwakhona ohambayo kubona wayobiza u Ngcobo. U Ngcobo ufika lapha kuthina u Sthabile usakhala. He was angry. Bekufanele ngenzeni wakithi?

(Thami shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Ubekholwa ukuthi ngimushayile u Sthah and no one was going to defend me. Bekuzophela nya ngami no Sthah. Ka Ngcobo abasangifuni vele eduze kwendodakazi yabo and if I didn't do what I did then things would have gotten worse. I had to do something ezokwehlisa umoya ka Mapholoba and it worked.

Thami : Thukeh umunike imoto ka Ashton. Do you know how much that car is?

Nyathuko : I don't care. Why did she take my car? Ubefuna ukungixabanisa no Sthabile vele. She is trying to ruin things for me.

Thami : Kuphambane okhiye. It was an honest mistake. U Ashton akasenandaba nawe Thukeh.

Me : What you are saying now doesn't make sense.  
Uphambana kanjani ukhiye we Ford Ranger nokhiye we Lamborghini? Aibo!

Thami : It doesn't matter. We need to get it back. Yintsha kabi leyamoto. Ayikwazi ukudlala ikhehla lakaMashu.

(Nyathuko is quiet. He keeps cracking his fingers)

Me : And how are we going to get it back?

Thami : Lizotshelwa lelikhehla ukuthi liyasangana kwenzeke iphutha. Lona uma lisile kahle licabanga ukuthi lingathengelwa imoto? A whole Lamborghini?

Me : Thami you sound rude njengamanje. Kahle kahle udelela u Thukeh. The same Nyathuko who asked his father to give you a job at Bhambatha Logistics, the same Nyathuko who paid your child's school fees.

Thami : I'm not trying to sound rude kodwa ngizama ukuthola isixazululo kuyona yonke lento.

Me : Your solution is kak.

(He leans back to the couch)

Thami : But we need that car back. If that doesn't work then we can make it look like a hijack.

Nyathuko : Thami thula manje wakithi. Vele uthule ngoba sizoxabana.

(Nyathuko gets up. He opens the door.)

Me : Bhambatha hlala pha.... Oh.

(Ashton walks in.)

Ashton : Hi

Thami : Ash

(She sits down. Nyathuko leaves us and goes into his room.  
Ashton snorts and grabs a beer from the table. She opens it)

Ashton : Is he okay?

(Thami laughs)

Thami : Why don't you follow him and see if he is okay?

(I glare at Thami and he raises his hand in surrender)



Ashton : No, thanks. (sighs) I love my body without bruises.

(Mhmmm tense. She drinks her beer. She doesn't care about her unborn baby. Ashton... Ashton is a very beautiful woman with such a great body but something is just off about her. I don't know if she has slept around a lot and she requires cleansing or what but something is off. She is irritating. But otherwise she is a whole lot of a woman. Between her and Sthabile she is a match for Thukeh. Sthabile is beautiful too. Unique. She is way too different from Nyathuko's ex girlfriends and his types.)

Ashton : Thale, please tell him that I'm here to fetch my car. I'm not here for him.

(She explains while staring at her beer bottle and moving her head like a snake. She does that a lot when she is talking. If she is not moving her head like a snake she'll be fastening and unfastening her hair. Maybe she has a calling or she needs igobongo. Ay, my boy knows how to pick them.)

Me : Uhhh... There was a little problem with your car.

Ashton : What? What problem are you talking about?

Thami : Thukeh was hijacked kaMashu.

(Thami and his hijack stories)

Ashton : Are you serious? Oh my God, is he okay?

(She is worried about Nyathuko and not her car)

Thami : He....

Me : Thami is lying. The police took your car.

(Thami is trying to push Ashton to Nyathuko's arms and I won't let him.)

Ashton : Police?

Me : Yeah... You know how it is. He is owing some money so they took the car.

Ashton : How much?

Me : 40...45.. Somewhere there.

(She puts the beer on the table)

Ashton : Okay. But he can afford that so why....

(She pauses. Nyathuko is making his way back)

Nyathuko : Imoto yakho ngiyinikeze umkhwe wami.

(He tells her straight in IsiZulu)

Ashton : What? I don't understand.

Nyathuko : You are trying to ruin my relationship Ashton and I'm not going to allow you. Ngikufonele ubusuku bonke ngithi buyisa imoto walokhu usineka. I called you again this morning ngithi buyisa imoto yami and you didn't. Ubufuna ngixabane no Sthah, angithi? You wanted her to break up with me.

(Ashton stands up)

Ashton : That is not true.

Nyathuko : What is true? Yazi, lento oyizamayo kade wayiqala and ayisebenzi. Ngithanda umawezingane zami Ashton.

Ashton : Who said I want you? I don't, Thukeh. Just give me my car.

Nyathuko : I gave it to Sthabile's father. You are not going to get it back.

(Ashton drops her mouth)

Ashton : You did what?

Nyathuko : I did. Ubungayifuni.

Ashton : You want Sthabile's family to accept you by giving them my things? You are busy making things right for yourself while you ruin mine. You are doing all these things because you know that Zet is not here to defend me.

(Tears drop from Ashton's eyes. Welele! This is going to be a long night.)

Ashton : Why am I being punished for loving you?

Nyathuko : Ay Ay Ay Ashton, please leave.

Ashton : Tell me where he is and I'll leave and never come back. I'm tired of this. Tell me where Zet is and I'll leave. I want to

start over with my baby daddy. Give me a chance to build what you have.

(Eish)

Nyathuko : I don't know where he is.

Ashton : You told him to leave because you wanted to protect your son. I want him back.

(Eesani! Thami can't hear this one)

Me : Thami asibadedele kancane wakithi bethi ukuxoxa.

Thami : Wait.

Ashton : You promised to take care of me.

Nyathuko : You didn't tell me ukuthi ukhulelwe.

Ashton : I didn't know!! Tell me where he is and I'll take it from there. Let me go and find him myself. Give me the location and I'll go. Please tell me where my baby daddy is.

Nyathuko : Can you calm down?

Ashton : I am calm Thukeh. I'm calm. Please give me the number. You say he calls you everyday. So give me his number at least. Give me something.

(Nyathuko darts his gaze to me)

Nyathuko : Okay, okay. I'll give you the number.

Ashton : Please. I don't want to involve the cops in this situation so don't force my hand. I'm tired of this shit. I'm tired of you and your wife. It's enough Thukeh!! You've been playing me ever since I was a kid. I'm a grown woman now and I'm fighting for myself. You don't love me and that's fine. Zet loves me so please...

(Nyathuko wraps his arms around her and she cries all over again. I shake my head)

Thami : Call Zithulele and tell him to come back. This is not fair, Nyathuko. She is a human too.

(He says and walks away. Ashton wails. Nyathuko takes her to his bedroom. )

(I finished my beer and 5 minutes later Nyathuko came back. He sits down and rubs his face and his head. He is losing it.)

Me : U grand ndoda?

(He takes out his phone and dials. His eyes turn red)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami



(He stares up at the ceiling and swallows)

Nyathuko : Yah ngihambe kahle. Ngise flatini.

(His voice is breaking)

Nyathuko : Ngicela ungalwi nami Sthah ngiyakucela.

(He shuts his eyes and rubs his forehead. I blow out a sigh.)

Nyathuko : Yah. Ngizokulanda ksasa. Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu mawezingane zami futhi ngiyaxolisa ngayo yonke into. Ngikuthanda ngenhliziyo yami yonke Sthabile.

(Nyathuko is crying. I can see the tears literally coming out of his eyes. My throat burns)

Nyathuko : Okay mamah. Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu.

(He throws the phone next to him and rubs his eyes. He snarls before grabbing a bottle of vodka. He opens it and gulps it down)

Me : Thukeh slow down.

Nyathuko : She is sleeping over.

(I stand up and stretch out my hand to him. I help him up and our shoulders collide. I press his head on my shoulder.)

Me : Bulala lesfebe Bhambatha. It's time.

(I tap his back and walk out.)

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(The time is 01:27 am. I don't know why Nyathuko is calling me at this time. I told him that I was tired and I needed all my beautiful sleep. I answer)

Me : Nyathuko

Nyathuko : Sthah, Ulele?

(It's after 1am of course I'm sleeping)

Me : Yinindaba akulaleki?

Nyathuko : No

Me : Did you go to Ballito?

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : No, Zanokuhle said they were fine.

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Ngicela uphume ngila ngaphandle

(I get up)

Me : What?

Nyathuko : Ngiyakucela Maka Sandisokuhle.

Me : When did you get here?

Nyathuko : Please come.

Me : Thukeh udlala ngami kodwa wena. You know I'm pregnant. Ngikhathele.

Nyathuko : Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami.

(I hang up. Aysuka! I get out of bed and put on my nightgown. I can't find the keys. How am I going to get out? I go and search in the kitchen. My mother walks in. Why did she wake up?)

MaKheswa : Sthabile what's wrong?

Me : Mah, I'm sorry. Ngikuvusile?

MaKheswa : Ngizwa umsindo.

(I might as well just tell her)

Me : UBaba ka Ndlelenhle ula emnyango.

MaKheswa : What?

(We are both whispering)

Me : Angimazi ufunani.

MaKheswa : Aibo, is he here to fetch you?

Me : No, I'll come back.

MaKheswa : Lengane izobulawa abantu. Ayibusabi ubusuku.

Me : Ukhiye uphi?

MaKheswa : I'll go and get it.

Me : Thanks Mah.

(She goes and comes back with the keys.)

Me : Ngiyabonga. UBaba Ulele?

MaKheswa : Yes

(She washes her hands and opens the fridge. She takes out my father's birthday cake that we came back with from church. She cuts it and puts the slices in a Tupperware)

MaKheswa : Umunike

(Oh man. See? She doesn't hate Nyathuko.)

Me : Ngiyamubongela.

MaKheswa : Hamba before your father wakes up.

Me : Ngiyabuya

MaKheswa : Okay. Usheshe Sthabile. Kusebusuku kabi manje. Umutshele u Baba ka Ndlela ukuthi angiyithandi lento yobusuku.

Me : I'll tell him.

(I find Nyathuko standing outside his car. I wonder where he left mine. I hope he didn't give it to Ashton because he is so good at giving away other people's cars.)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami

(He kisses me and presses me against his car. His hands are moving all over my body. He is squeezing my ass and my boobs. He wraps my leg around him. His dick is hard as a rock. He is moving too fast. I push him)

Me : Thukeh, what's wrong?

Nyathuko : Ngani?



Me : No, unuka utshwala. Were you drinking?

Nyathuko : No

(I leave him and get inside his car. Why did he drink? Never mind drinking and driving. He gets in and presses his head against the steering wheel.)

Me : Unani Thukeh? What happened?

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Nothing

Me : Uma ungakhulumi nami uzokhuluma nobani Baba ka Ndlelenhle?

(He raises his head and pulls me closer to him. He kisses my forehead.)

Nyathuko : Ngi right sthandwa sami.

Me : No, you are not. Kwenzenjani?

Nyathuko : Ngicela sihambe siye eMachobeni.

Me : EMachobeni ngalesikhathi?

Nyathuko : Ngiyakucela baby. I need you, Sthabile.

Me : Uma ngike ngabuyela endlini ngeke esavuma u Mah ukuthi ngiphume.

Nyathuko : Ungayi. Ungabuyeli endlini.

Me : My clothes are.....

Nyathuko : You don't need clothes. Uzogqoka ezami

(Really now?)

Nyathuko : Okay, ngeke sigqoke. Ngiyakucela Sthah.

(I sigh)

Me : Fine.

(He kisses my lips and starts the car. I take my phone and send my mother a message. She'll deal with her boyfriend.)

(We stopped at Engen Mondlano Convenience.)

Nyathuko : Uzodlani sthandwa sami?

Me : Nothing. I'm fine.

Nyathuko : Aw

Me : Ngempela Thukeh.

Nyathuko : No, sizogeda la mase siyahamba siyothenga ukudla.

Me : I'm fine. Ngidinga ukuchama nje kuphela

(He kisses me)

Nyathuko : Okay. Othi ngikubuzele i toilet la.

Me : Okay

(He kisses my stomach and gets out. He is coming back but someone stops him. It's a man. They shake hands and the man hugs him. I see him pointing to this car. The man shakes his head and goes inside the garage. Nyathuko opens the door)

Nyathuko : Woza baby

Me : Nale gown jehova.

Nyathuko : Woza sthandwa sami. Umuhle

(I roll my eyes and get out. He wraps his arm around my waist)

Nyathuko : Umubonile lomuntu engikade ngikhuluma naye?

Me : Yeah

Nyathuko : U Mzwayi, baby. He is the owner of this garage.

Me : Oh, really?

(I look at him. His eyes look different. They are red. He also looks different nje. I don't know. This shall be discussed when we get to Machobeni.)

Nyathuko : Ngingene nawe?

(I giggle)

Me : No

(Mzwayi walks out)

Mzwayi : Nkosazana

Me : Unjani?

Mzwayi : Siyaphila.

(He looks at Thukeh and smiles while shaking his head)

Nyathuko : Umfazi wami udinga i toilet bafo.

Mzwayi : Okay. Ngena la Nkosazana and ask that lady to show you the toilet.

Me : Thanks.

Mzwayi : Thukeh, unгахambi bafo. Ngiya la endlini ngiyajika manje. Kade ngidinga kanjani ukukubona.

Nyathuko : Okay. Ngizokulinda bafo

(I go in and the lady shows me the toilet. I pee and come back. Nyathuko is smoking. I wonder what's eating him.)

Nyathuko : Baby

ungayi emotweni, woza.

(He throws the cigarette. He wraps his arms around me. The way he loves attention, wow.)

Nyathuko : There's some business that I need to discuss with Mzwayi. Uyabuya manje.

Me : Okay

(My arms are also wrapped around him. He is kissing me.)

Me : I got a call from Ndlalifa's mother.

Nyathuko : Nami ungifonelile u Makhedama. Bayashada baby

(We both laugh. Yes they are getting married. They called to invite us. I'm so happy for Ntombikayise. After everything she's been through. She deserves all the happiness.)

Nyathuko : Nangu u Mzwayi engena.



Me : I'll wait in the car

Nyathuko : No, sthandwa sami unghambi.

(Aybo, he wants us to be all lovey dovey now in front of Mzwayi. Some people find that annoying but Nyathuko doesn't care. I do)

Me : Ngiyagodola mina, Nana.

Nyathuko : Take my jacket.

Me : No ngizohlala emotweni baby.

(I leave while he takes off his jacket and I go sit in his car. He is talking to Mzwayi. That was quick. Here he is coming. He knocks on my window. I roll it down)

Nyathuko : Baby washiya i jacket manje.

(He gives it to me)

Me : Thukeh, come on. I don't need it. I'm fine.

Nyathuko : Sho. Ngababona lapha e Ntuzuma.... Thatha baby

(Ay he is talking to Mzwayi and not listening to what I'm saying.  
. He leaves the jacket and goes back to Mzwayi. He fixes his cap  
and they both lean against Mzwayi's car. You know what? I  
don't know how long that will take. I fix the chair and cover my  
face with his jacket. I do what I do best.)

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(I don't know when we got here. I woke up when he lifted me  
up and carried me to the house. He puts me on the bed.)

Nyathuko : U Mzwayi ucabanga ukuthi ngivule enye i Lounge.  
Sibambisane kuyona.

Me : What? Kephi?

Nyathuko : Ungitshele indawo ekude kakhulu. Baby, ngisavala i  
gate. Ngiyeza.

Me : Okay

(He puts his phone in the charger and walks out. The phone  
rings soon after that. I get up. The demons must be celebrating  
in hell. It's Ashton. I take his phone and answer)

Ashton : Why did you leave me alone? Where are you?

Me : Hello

(She keeps quiet)

Me : Ufonile kodwa awusakhulumi Ashton. What exactly do you want from Nyathuko?

(She drops the call)

Me : Sfebe ndini. Aghaaa!!

(Nyathuko walks in and locks the door)

Me : Your girlfriend called.

Nyathuko : What?

Me : What amasimba Thukeh?

(I tried to hit him with his phone but he ducked and the phone hit the wall. He grabs my arm and holds me tightly. I can't move.)

Me : Ngiyeke Thukeh!!!

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami, please don't do this. Ngiyakucela Sthah.

Me : What does she want? Nisathandana angithi?

Nyathuko : No

Me : Ufunani pho? Yazi Nyathuko ngiyazama kodwa cha u busy wena ungipetula umoya. Ufunani kulesfebe Thukeh? Am I not enough?

Nyathuko : You are enough

Me : Umushiye kephi yedwa? Uthi umushiye yedwa.

Nyathuko : Endlini

(My eyes widen and my heart stops.)

Me : Nyathuko, uphuma ku Ashton manje? Awukwazanga ukuya ezinganeni e Ballito because you were busy fucking Ashton?

Nyathuko : Sthabile.....

Me : Ungangithinti!!!!

Nyathuko : Sthabile, I don't know what to do anymore.

Me : Ayikho vele Nyathuko into wena okwazi ukuyenza ngaphandle kokuhamba ubhebha zonke lezifebe ezigcwele i South Africa.

Nyathuko : You are doing exactly what Ashton wants. Ufuna njalo sihlale silwa mina nawe. She is trying to ruin us Maka Zibusiso and you are allowing it.

Me : Stop trying to defend yourself nobufebe bakho!!!

Nyathuko : I'm not. Ashton wants me to bring Zithulele back.

Me : What?

(He sits down)

Nyathuko : Uthi uma ngingamutsheli ukuthi u Zithulele ukephi uzotshela amaphoyisa kube iwona amubhekayo.

(I sit down next to him)

Me : Useyasola yini ukuthi wena wabulala u Mzet?

Nyathuko : No. She thinks I love her and mina angifuni ebuyele ku Mzet. She wants me to break up with you ngoba mina

ngamuthembisa ukuthi I'd take care of her uma engisiza about lento ka Zano.

Me : Wait, wait. U Mzet uphi? Where is his body?

Nyathuko : I buried him alive.

(My throat close up)

Nyathuko : Akekho umuntu ozomuthola but Ashton knows me Sthah and if she digs deeper uzomuthola and uzothola ukuthi imina engamubulala.

(I take a deep breath)

Me : But she won't get you arrested.

Nyathuko : She won't but she will do the same thing that Nomzamo did. Sthabile, angikwazi ukuphinda ngibulale omunye umuntu wesifazane. Ngiyalisaba igazi lomuntu wesifazane. She



is carrying Mzet's child. Uma ngibulala yena ngizobe ngibulala nengane ka Zithulele.

Me : Wait, what do you mean? Usho ukuthini mawuthi ngeke ukwazi UKUPHINDA ubulale omunye umuntu wesifazane?

(He swallows. My eyes widen)

Me : Ubulale no Nomzamo. Nyathuko you killed Nomzamo.

Nyathuko : She was hurting you. Ngangingasakwazi ukukubona ukhala everyday ngenxa yakhe.

Me : You killed her.

Nyathuko : Yes.

(He gets up and goes into the kitchen. This is it, I can't take it anymore. I take my phone and send Musa a message)

Musa, I need your help.

(I include crying emojis and send it)

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(I woke up at 5am. I actually didn't sleep. The serial killer is sleeping. I keep looking at him and shake my head. I don't know how many times I have said "aibo" because honestly I can't believe this is my Nyathuko that I fell in love with and still love so much. He looks so innocent. I wonder how he killed all those people. I'm busy sweeping. Yes at 5am. I increase the volume of the radio. Wenhliziyi by Deborah Fraser is on repeat. I'm singing along.)

Me : Zikuhaqile izitha zakho, zivukelaaaaa!! Wena.

(I sing on top of the loud music. He fixes the pillow and covers his ear using his arm. The Devil is a liar. I will continue singing.)

Me : Cela ngezinsuku zonke. Inkosi inamandla. Celaaaa!!!

(He sits up and looks at me. I can't hear what he is saying so I'll continue singing. He shakes his head. I turn down the volume)

Me : Uyakhuluma?

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : Yes. Awukakaqedi uku cleaner la?

Me : I'm done. Sengiyo cleaner ekhishini

Nyathuko : Okay, ngicela ungehlisela i radio sthandwa sami.  
Ngiphethwe ikhanda

Me : Uphethwe yikhanda?

Nyathuko : Yes

Me : Good. Nobufebe buyagulisa Thukeh

(He slightly shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Okay

(I turn up the volume)

Nyathuko : Hawu Sthah

Me : Sengiya ekhishini manje ngifuna ukuzwa kahle ingoma.  
Sorry about your headache

(I say and go to the kitchen. His house is actually very clean so I don't know what I'm cleaning but I'll clean. I clean the cupboards and take his dirty clothes. I go and wash them outside. He will listen to that song whether he likes it or not.)

(I finished with the laundry. Nothing much. It's just the clothes he was wearing last night. I head back inside. I turn off the music. His head is now buried under the pillow. I remove the pillow.)

Me : Thukeh awuvuke

Nyathuko : Ngivukile

Me : I'm meeting up with Musa and his boyfriend.

Nyathuko : Okay

Me : I need clothes. Uthe angishiye izingubo zami kwaMashu so I don't have anything to wear.

(He turns his head to me)

Nyathuko : Kanti usho namhlanje?

Me : Yes, I'm meeting with them today. From tomorrow I'll be working so I won't get a chance. Kubalulekile ukuthi ngibabone.

Nyathuko : Why is it important?

(That's none of his business)

Me : Bangicelile

Nyathuko : Sthah....

Me : I need clothes. Ngeke ngihambe ngigqoke i gown.

Nyathuko : Sthabile ngizozithathaphi mina izingubo?

Me : I don't know. Kukuwena ukuthi unghambisa e Ballito manje noma uya Kwamashu yini ufike ucele u Mah ekunikeze izingubo zami.

Nyathuko : Aibo Sthah

Me : The choice is yours. Kodwa ngibona kungcono unghambise e Ballito.

(I tell him and go to the kitchen. I'm going to make breakfast.)

Me : Asikho isinkwa

(I tell him from the kitchen. It's 06:15. The shops are open now. I'm busy frying eggs when he walks past me and opens the door. He is wearing tracksuits and white All star. He has clothes and I don't. He steps out and fixes the laces. He closes the door and walks away. I'm sure he wants to kill me too.)

(He came back with bread and went to his bathroom that is built outside. I only made breakfast for myself. Ashton will make one for him.)

Me : Ungihambisa e Ballito?

Nyathuko : Cha

(He is wearing jeans and a t-shirt now.)

Me : Uya KwaMashu?

Nyathuko : Yes

Me : Wow

(He takes his car keys and his broken phone. He kisses my cheek and walks out. I don't why he bothered with the kiss because he didn't want to. I guess ukudlula nje.)

(I had a chat with Musa until I fell asleep. I woke up when he came back around 12:00. Aibo! He bought me new clothes. This guy is something else. I love my floral dress though. It's chilled.)

Me : Thanks. But you didn't have to.

Nyathuko : Do you really have to go?

Me : Yes.



(I comb my hair and put on my straw hat that I left here months ago. It goes well with this dress. I love the sandals he bought me as well. The serial killer got taste, shame. He gets up and wraps his arms around my waist)

Nyathuko : Waze wamuhle

Me : Ngiyabonga

(He kisses my neck. He is hard. I can't have this. I need to go. I pull away.)

Me : Ngicela ungihambisa

(He looks at his hard dick. I don't care. He fucked Ashton yesterday so he is fine.)

Nyathuko : Okay

Me : Uzungilanda noma ngiphume ngiye e Ballito?

(I know he doesn't want me to go to Ballito today. I swear, the way he loves "me and him" time, sometimes he wishes that we didn't have kids.)

Nyathuko : Kanti mina angihambi nawe?

(He asks and looks away.)

Me : Aibo no! Uyasala. Thukeh u Musa umngani wami, ay owakho.

(Aibo he can't tag along. He can't!!!)

Nyathuko : Okay. Bengithi...

Me : No

Babah. It's just us. Akuwona u two by two. Musa wants me to meet his boyfriend.

Nyathuko : Uzongifonela. Ifoni yami ifelwe i screen but ngiyawathola ama calls.

(I should have slammed it harder)

Me : Oh, u Ashton usekufonele wabona ukuthi ayangena.

Nyathuko : No, Thalente called me.

(He fastens my sandals. I roll my eyes. He finishes and takes my phone. I don't even have a purse. What a disaster!)

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(He played Indoda by Mandoza until we got to Gateway. That's what we call revenge. We found Chumani and Musa already waiting for me.)

Nyathuko : Uzungifonela

Me : Yes

(He gives me his bank card)

Nyathuko : If you need anything.

Me : Thanks

(He kisses me. His hand is squeezing my ass. Serial killer loves inviting attention. I pull away and clear my throat. He fixes my hat.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : I love you too

(He kisses my neck and walks away. I finally let out a breath. I join Musa and Chumani on the table. I greet Chumani. Chumani is.... He is fine. He looks like Zola 7. I smile. I think I like him. Our good doctor.)

Musa : Is this the right spot to discuss this?

(Musa looks around)

Me : I think it is.

Musa : Bitch, are you sure about this?

Me : Yes, maybe if I leave then u Nyathuko uzothi ukuqaqeka umqondo kancane. I can't take it anymore Musa

Musa : England? Sthabile no

Chumani : Eh marn kwawume kancinci. You are pregnant, aren't you?

(He is getting really comfortable with me)

Me : Yes. And his girlfriend is pregnant too

(I lied to them and said Ashton is carrying Nyathuko's child)

Chumani : But that guy loves you. He will follow you

(How does he know that he loves me? Ay Ay this Chumani is going to give me problems)

Musa : Baby is right. You are his life. I really don't like this idea .

Me : Ngikhathele Musa

Musa : I know. She's been through a lot because of that bitch.  
Ashton is like a deadly disease .

(Musa explains to Chumani)

Chumani : But that guy loves her.

(He keeps repeating the same thing)

Me : Wuuu! Uh-huh awukhulume naye Musa

Musa : Baby she almost died because of that woman.

Me : No, Sam. U Thandeka owayefuna ukung....

(Musa shush me)

Me : Okay

(He goes ahead and explains to Chumani. Chumani leans back)

Chumani : Oh, I see.

Musa : Yeah. So maybe England is not such a bad idea

Chumani : That guy loves her.

(Hhayi!!!! Here we go again)

Me : Yes but uthando alufanelanga ukuthi lube nje.

Chumani : Have you ever loved someone?

(What kind of a question is that?)

Me : I love Nyathuko very much and....



(I look at both of them)

Musa : What?

Chumani : What is it?

Me : I think I know what I need to do.

Musa : What?

Me : I have a better plan. I'm not leaving my man for any other woman.

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(I'm officially six months pregnant. It's only August but it's hot. It's hard to sleep but tonight it's better. Nyathuko is here. His kids want him on their faces all the time. Mapholoba is still driving a Lamborghini. No one touched him. Magic was buried last month after a long DNA process. Ayanda believes he was killed by one of his enemies because apparently he owed a lot of people money. Amahloni kimi knowing that my man killed her man. I'm glad that everything is finally over. Nyathuko and I are fine. I'm not going to let Ashton win. Over my dead body.)

Me : But he is older than you. Why engaceli abantu abangangaye bamumise?

Nyathuko : Ayisho lutho leyonto Sthah. Uselele u Ndlelenhle.

Me : Aybo Nana, ingane yami ingadlile?

Nyathuko : Uselele. Woza umubone

Zothani : He is sleeping

Nyathuko : Ngiya komlalisa.

Me : Okay, baby. Uzodla ekseni

(They go to put Ndlelenhle in bed and Nyathuko comes back alone.)

Me : Baphi owele?

Nyathuko : Bathi basuthi. Baby usanawo amapainkillers?

Me : Yeah, why?

Nyathuko : Kubuhlungu amazinyo yazi

Me : Amazinyo futhi?

Nyathuko : Yeah

Me : Akhona phezulu. Kanti why lamazinyo asebuya futhi?

Nyathuko : Abuhlangu kancane

Me : Are you going to be able to eat?

Nyathuko : Yah sthandwa sami

(I set up the table. He comes and wraps his arms around my waist. I laugh)

Me : Ufunani ke manje?

Nyathuko : Ngifuna isthandwa sami.

(I turn around and wrap my arms around his neck. He kisses me and pulls up my dress. I push him and laugh)

Nyathuko : Lizobangcono izinyo mengibhebha kancane

(I laugh)

Me : Aw, really? Since when ucansi selulapha izinyo?

Nyathuko : Uzobona Sthah.

(I giggle)

Me : Usile wena

Nyathuko : Woza sthandwa sami

(He lifts me up and we go to the living room.)

Me : Izingane zakho zizobuya

(He switches off the lights. I laugh)

Me : Bazosibona

(He kisses me while we undress each other. I push him to the couch and get on top of him. I kiss him from his chest and down to his dick. I wrap my fingers around his dick and take it all in while keeping my eyes glued to his face. He is enjoying this as much as I do. I sit on his dick and slides it in. He strokes me. I don't know if his dick is too big today or what but I'm in pain. Aibo, aibo. I hit his chest.)

Nyathuko : What's wrong?

Me : Kubuhlungu Thukena.

Nyathuko : I'm sorry, sthandwa sami.

Me : Ay, please don't be rough.

Nyathuko : Okay

(No, it's not getting any better. I bang his chest)

Nyathuko : Musa ukuminca ipipi Sthah relax, just relax.

Me : Angiliminci

Nyathuko : You are and that's why kubuhlungu.

(Okay maybe he was right but I won't admit it. We change positions. Sex is amazing. Damn!)

(We finished making love and ate.)

Me : Kusasa sizodlula sikhokhele ama account ethu. Kumele sihambe early uyabo?

Nyathuko : Yah baby. Ngiyakuthanda, uyezwa?

(I giggle)

Me : I love you too, Nana.

oooo

(Nyathuko is tossing and turning. I switch on the side lamp. He is pressing his face with a pillow)

Me : Nana, amazinyo futhi?

(He shakes his head. Since last week he has complained about a toothache. The problem now is that all his teeth are aching. His teeth look perfectly fine so I don't understand.)

Me : Let me get you painkillers.

(I get up. I give him painkillers.)



Nyathuko : Lala baby, lala. I'll be fine

Me : Okay Nana

(I kiss his forehead and switch off the light. I slept hoping that the painkillers would help but no. He is now holding me tightly. He is groaning and cursing. I switch on the lights. He presses his head on my breasts. I brush the back of his head)

Me : Kusabuhlungu baby?

Nyathuko : Mhmmm

(I've never seen him in so much pain. He gets up and goes to the bathroom. He comes back and sits on the floor.)

Nyathuko : Fuck!!!

(He punches the floor. Tears roll down my cheeks. I can't stand seeing him like this. I don't know what to do anymore)

Me : Thukena ngenzenjani manje? Huh Nana?

(I sit down next to him. He wraps his arm around me and presses his head on my shoulder. He squeezes me tightly. He gets up and paces around. I take my phone and call Zanokuhle)

Me : Zano

Zanokuhle : Mah

what's wrong?

Me : Your father is sick.

Zanokuhle : Amazinyo futhi?

Me : Yes. Akakwazi nokulala

Zanokuhle : Eish, uxubhile ngempepho?

Me : He did. Waphuza namaphilisi but akusizi

Zanokuhle : Eish, okay. I'm coming. Ungakhali Mah.

Me : Okay. Let me call your grandfather.

Zanokuhle : Okay

(I hang up. The time is 1am)

Nyathuko : Sthah lala sthandwa sami. Ngizoba right

Me : No

(I wipe the tears. I call Maxwell. Vee answered)

Vee : Is everything okay?

Me : No, please....

Vee : Hold on.... Baby it's Sthabile.

Maxwell : Maka Ndlelenhle

Me : Baba. Ngiyaxolisa ukuniphazamisa. U Thukeh Baba

Maxwell : What's wrong with Thukeh?

Me : U Thukeh uphethwe amazinyo futhi Baba. Akalele nje manje. I don't know what to do. He.... He....

(I cry)

Maxwell : Okay, calm down ndodakazi yami. Sisendleleni

Me : Okay

(He hung up. Nyathuko is pacing around with his hands over his head. He takes the painkillers and throws them in his mouth. He swallows them without water.)

Me : Bayeza Nana.

(He shakes his head. He is really in pain)

Me : Xubha ngempepho futhi baby

(I give him and he goes to the bathroom. It's a pity because tomorrow we are going to Ntombikayise's wedding but the way Nyathuko is sick, I don't think we'll make it. He comes back and takes his cigarettes. He opens the balcony door and steps out. I follow him. He is not smoking. He is pressing his forehead against the balcony railing. I wrap my arms around him)

Me : I'm sorry baby

(I can't stop crying.)

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( They finally arrived. Zanokuhle, Maxwell and Vee.)

Maxwell : Imaphi abuhlungu Thukeh? Imihlathi?

Nyathuko : Wonke. Sekubuhlungu namadlebe

Maxwell : Aw mfan'wami. Kanti yini ngempela?

Vee : Let's go to the hospital.

(The kids are awake now. They are staring at their father.)

Ndlelenhle : Is daddy going to be fine?

Me : Yes, boy boy. He is going to be fine.

Zanokuhle : Ayidingi odokotela lento ka Baba.

Me : What do you mean?

Zanokuhle : Sthabile, izinto zesizulu lezi.

(Nyathuko walks out. Zanokuhle and Maxwell follow him)

Vee : This is bad.

Me : It is. I don't think we will make it to the wedding

Vee : Eish, the wedding.

(Zanokuhle called us to his rondavel.)

Me : Yini Zano?

Zanokuhle : Yinto encane le Mah. Mah, you lost a baby.  
Nangatshela muntu.

(Oh, no. Not this)

Zanokuhle : Ingane ifuna igama, nokuthi iye kubo. Izingane zika  
Baba zonke lezi ezihleli phezu kwakhe.

Me : Which kids?

(I look at Nyathuko. He is pressing his forehead over his knees.)

Zanokuhle : Baba

Nyathuko : Izingane zika Thandeka

Me : Nakho ke smakade sezulu.



Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami I....

Me : No Thukeh!!! We are not going to discuss this. Ufuna ukubuyisa uThandeka manje empilweni yakho?

Zanokuhle : Mah, this is not about that. This is about the kids. Kufanele zibikwe emadlozini akwa Zondi. Nani nenzele ingane le eyaphuma umsebenzi idlule yonke lento.

Me : No. Ingane yami no Baba wakho sizoyenzela umsebenzi. Ileyo kuphela into esizoyenza. Thandeka's kids can go to hell. Anginaso isikhathi samasimba mina. That woman tried to kill me.

Zanokuhle : Kodwa....

Me : Zanokuhle, ngithe cha. Kanti usaguliswa ubufebe Thukeh?

(Fuck his pain. I get up and walk out. The devil is really testing me. I thought I was done with Thandeka.)

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(We only slept around 5am. Nyathuko slept but I couldn't sleep. I was staring at him this whole time. I was nervous. Haha! What if I slept and he died? People die from anything these days. When we slept we were not talking to each other because of the kids' ceremony story. Deep down I'm worried about him. I can't stand seeing him sick.)

(He is sleeping. He sleeps on his back. That's how he sleeps. I turn and shift closer to him. I slowly wrap my leg around him. I place my head on his chest. He puts his arm around me and kisses my forehead. He clears his throat)

Nyathuko : Isikhathi sini baby?

(He asks with a very husky voice)

Me : Lala baby. It's half past six

(He takes my hand and puts it inside his pants. His dick is hard. I'm getting wet. My clit is pounding. I keep rubbing my leg against his leg while moaning softly.)

Me : Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Lala baby

(Goodness me! I close my eyes and sleep.)

(For a moment I thought I was dreaming. I slept horny and now I'm opening my eyes to myself cumming. My legs are trembling. Nyathuko's head is buried between my thighs. In my entire life I've never woken up like this. Nyathuko looks at me and laughs. I see he is better now. He moves up and kisses me.)

Nyathuko : Mam'Zondi

Me : Morning Ba....

(He kisses me. He kisses me while rubbing his dick on my wet vagina. He rubs it up and down. He continues to rub it on my clit and I feel my body stiffening. My eyes cross. I tighten my arms and legs around him until I feel normal again. He kisses my forehead)

Nyathuko : Good morning sthandwa sami.

(He gets out of bed and goes to the bathroom. He comes back with a towel and cleans me)

Me : Morning baby

(I finally have the strength to talk.)

Nyathuko : Vuka manje. What time are we leaving?

(I'm staring at him. I'm listening to the voices in my head. "Do you see why Ashton can't let him go? She feels the same things that you do" "You will never be alone in this man")

Nyathuko : Sthah?

(I snap back to my senses)

Me : Huh?

Nyathuko : U right sthandwa sami?

(He asks with his eyes narrowed)

Me : Uhmhhh, yeah.... yes. Ubuthini?

Nyathuko : Ookay. Bengithi sizohamba ngasikhathi sini?

Me : Thukeh, u Ashton naye umenza lezinto ongenza zona? Do you make her feel the things that you make me feel?

Nyathuko : What?

Me : Embhedeni

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami uthini?

(I shake my head)

Me : No, nothing. (sigh) Are you feeling better now? Sizokwazi ukuya emshadweni?

(He sits on the bed and peck my nose)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

(I smile. I'm not going to let Ashton mess up with my head like this.)

Me : I love you

Nyathuko : Uthandwa imina sthandwa sami. Akekho omunye umuntu engimuthanda ngalendlela engikuthanda ngayo.  
Uyezwa Sthabile?

Me : Ngiyezwa baby.

Nyathuko : Woza la sthandwa sami.

(He pulls me up and hugs me. His hug is so comfortable and warm. Why did everything about him have to be so perfect? I know he has done some bad things but in my eyes he is perfect. He is staring in my eyes. I stare right back. His eyes are searching mine and mine are searching his. We are staring at each other in silence.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami Bhambatha.

ENDWEDWE

(Before we came here we had to drop off the kids at Maxwell's house. He and Vee are babysitting. From there we had to go and pay our accounts. Nyathuko is one of the groomsmen and I was scared that we wouldn't make it on time.)

Me : Hamba Nana, I'll lock the car.

Nyathuko : Woza ngiqabule kancane

(I laugh)

Me : Thukeh awuhambe. Buka imoto ka Zanokuhle. Usefikile

Nyathuko : Woza Mam'Zondi, woza.

(He pulls me closer and sucks my lips)

Nyathuko : Mase ulambile ukudla kwakho kulana emotweni



(I laugh. Yes, he bought me food. He knows how hunger can strike in these weddings and he knows that his girlfriend eats.)

Me : Okay Nana. Hamba ke uyogqoka manje

Nyathuko : Ngiyahamba. Ukhiye lemoto Sthah.

Me : Okay. Love you

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda nami mamah. Umuhle.

(I laugh)

Me : Awuhambe bhuti

(He laughs and walks away.)

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(The wedding was held at a nearby church. Ntombikayise and Makhedama were absolutely stunning. My man was gorgeous in his suit. Maybe we need to get married again, ha! ha! ha!. My best part of their wedding was when the pastor said "Okuhlanganiswe uNdlalifa makungahlukaniswa muntu" I felt it. Ndlalifa made this day possible. He made sure that Ntombikayise and Makhedama ended up together. He is definitely looking down and smiling.)

(The newlyweds are still at the Botanic Garden taking pictures. Makhosazana didn't go. She is sitting with me in the tent)

Me : Waze wamuhle baby

(She smiles)

Makhosazana : Ngiyabonga mawami

(She hugs me.)

Me : How are you? How are you feeling? I mean your father just got married

Makhosazana : I'm on top of the world. UMah u Ntombikayise uyasithanda kanti futhi yena no Baba are happy.

Me : That's good.

Makhosazana : Kukhona ebengifuna ukukuxoxela kona.

Me : Yeah?

Makhosazana : Last night I had a dream. Ngiphuphe u Ndlalifa Mah. Engemuhle kanje u Mumbo.

(She speaks like an adult)

Me : Really?

(She smiles)

Makhosazana : Angikaze ngimuphuphe ever since he died but last night I did. Besihleli ngasemfuleni, holding hands.

Wangibuza ukuthi nginjani. I told him I miss him and he smiled. Ngamuxoxela ukuthi batheni esikoleni. Uthe uyangithanda.

Me : Oh baby

Makhosazana : I woke up and prayed. Ngathandaza ukuthi iNkosi ingisize ngimuthande u Ndlalifa ngize ngife Mah. We will meet again, akunjalo? If I die ngizoya ku Ndlalifa?

(I swallow)

Me : Khosi

usemncane sisi. Ndlalifa will give you somebody else. Angithi nami kwashona u Baba ka Zano but God gave me u

Bab'Thukeh? Manje ngimuthanda ngayo yonke inhliziyo yami. Angiyiboni impilo ngaphandle kwakhe.

Makhosazana : Kodwa mina Mah angifuni ukuthanda omunye umuntu.

(She is still young. She'll understand one day.)

Me : Okay baby girl. There's nothing wrong with that. Wena nje focus on school. Batheni khona esikoleni?

Makhosazana : Bafuna ngibuyele ka Grade 11 cabanga Mah.

Me : Kufanele sisi, angithi awubhalanga ama exams ka Matric.

Makhosazana : Mhlampe kufanele ngiyofuna umsebenzi and forget about school.

Me : No, no, don't say that. Uzoya esikoleni. Angithi wamuzwa uBaba u Thukeh. Wathi mawuqeda isikole uzokuyisa e University.

Makhosazana : Angifuni ukuba umthwalo ku Baba

Me : Awuwona umthwalo sthandwa sami.

(Zanokuhle walks in laughing)

Me : Yini Zano?

Zanokuhle : Khona amakhehla alwayo la emnyango.

(Old people are fighting and he thinks it's funny. Sometimes I wonder why the ancestors chose him. The kid in him is fully awake today.)

Me : Aibo Zano musa ukuhleka

Zanokuhle : Leli elinye baligqomise ngekhandanda phansi

(He laughs out loud. I shake my head)

Zanokuhle : Yah Royalty

Makhosazana : Ave ngizokuphoxa

(They both laugh)

Zanokuhle : Woza siyodla inyama

Makhosazana : Iphi?

Zanokuhle : Come

(She helps her up)

Me : Abakabuyi o Thukeh

Zanokuhle : Aibo yazi kade ngikubheka. Baba is sleeping in the car.

Me : What? When did he get back?

Zanokuhle : Akayanga e Botanic. Awumbheke Mah

Me : Okay

(Now I'm worried. I went to his car. I knock on the window. He opens the door and I get in. He is wrapping my scarf around his mouth)

Me : Bhambatha wami, amazinyo futhi?

(He shakes his head. He is wearing his clothes now. He really didn't go for a photoshoot)

Me : Hawu baby. Why ungangibizanga?

Nyathuko : Bengingafuni ukukuphazamisa sthandwa sami



Me : Aibo Thukena. Abuhlungu kakhulu?

Nyathuko : Ey ibuhlungu lento Sthah

(I kiss his forehead)

Me : Sigoduke?

Nyathuko : Ngiyacela sthandwa sami

(Tears are already burning in my eyes. God, I can't stand him in pain)

Me : Okay. Let me tell Zanokuhle

(He shakes his head and closes his eyes)

Me : Baby?

(He opens his eyes and pulls down the scarf)

Nyathuko : Ngizoba right Sthah.

(I shake my head)

Me : Ngeke. You won't be fine if we don't do it. So let's do it.  
Let's do the ceremony for the kids.

Nyathuko : Sthah, no.

Me : Yes, I want us to do it.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami angifuni senze into ongayifuni. I can handle this pain but what I can't handle ukubona wena uphatheke kabi. Don't worry, sthandwa sami. I'll handle the pain for as long as it takes. Mekujabule wena nje konke ku right.

Me : No, angisafuni ukukubona ugula so let's do it. Let's do it baby.

Nyathuko : Are you sure?

Me : Certainly

Nyathuko : Woza la

(He wraps his arms around me and presses his lips on my forehead)

Nyathuko : Ngiyabonga kakhulu Mam'Zondi.

(I kiss his lips)

Me : Asigoduke ke

(He smiles)

Nyathuko : Uzodriver angithi?

Me : Yes baby. Othi ngiyotshela u Zano ukuthi siyahamba

(I reach for the door)

Nyathuko : Sthabile?

(I turn and look at him)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda mamah.

(I smile)

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami Bhambatha wami.

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(Today we went to see a doctor. For my normal check up. The doctor confirmed that I'm carrying twins. Zanokuhle is going to kill me this time. This means more kids and he thinks we have more than enough. Nyathuko is over the moon. He is thanking me like it's his first time having kids. Wuuh! Uh-huh mina I'm tired of these kids. I'm talking to him over the phone, yes the biggest baby maker in the world. After my appointment I dropped him off at his sneaker shop and I also came to work. We are discussing Thandeka's issue. When it comes to Thandeka the Zondis go gaga. We told them on Tuesday that Nyathuko is sick and we told them the reason. Today it's Thursday and the ceremony is on Saturday. They want everything to be done immediately. You know what is the worst part of it? Thandeka is coming too. I don't know for what reason. I need to keep Mqondisi very close to me. Just in case)

(Nyathuko is better now. I guess Zanokuhle was right. His sickness didn't require medical attention.)

Me : I understand what you are saying but what I don't understand ukuthi uyaphi pho u Thandeka. Thukeh wena no Thandeka ninezingane ezashona. Wena no Thandeka anikaze

nishade manje lento yokuthi mina naye sizobe sishayisana ngezifuba lapha kini I don't get it.

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami uyabazi abantu basekhaya. Ibona abathe akeze.

Me : Mhlampe kungcono mina ngingayi ke. Vele nathi asisashadile.

Nyathuko : Sthabile, you are my woman. Ngikudinga eceleni kwami.

Me : I don't want to see Thandeka.

Nyathuko : You don't have to see her. Ksasa uma sifika sizoshisela ingane yethu impepho and after that we will go and book a room sibuye ekseni Saturday sekwenziwa umsebenzi wokubuyisa izingane zami no Thandeka.

Me : Isicefe sodwa nje lento

Nyathuko : Ngiyazi sthandwa sami. Ngiyaxolisa futhi ukukudlulisa kuyona yonke lento.

Me : Bengalindeli nje abantu bakini ukuthi ngizofika ngibe isikhweshekhweshe lapha ngishiswe ilamabhodwe abo amakhulu angcolile. I won't help with anything Nyathuko. Ngizohlala endlini yakho ngize ngibuye. Angiseyena vele umfazi wakwa Zondi

Nyathuko : You don't have to do anything.

Me : Kungcono ke ngoba siyavumelana.

Nyathuko : Ngicela ungazikhathazi ngalento Sthah. Uzophatha kabi amawele ami.

(Here we go)

Me : Ay abangifuni kini. Finish and klaar.

Nyathuko : Ufunwa imina nje.

Me : Yeah, I know.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu

Me : I love you too.

Nyathuko : Ungakhohlwa ukungilanda

Me : Ngeke Nana

Nyathuko : Okay, ngiyakuthanda. And Sthabile please stop stressing.

Me : I love you too.



(I end the call and sigh. Being with Nyathuko Zondi is really not easy. How can I stop stressing?)

"Knock

Advertisement

knock"

(The door opens and Portia walks in. She is carrying a beautiful basket that has a balloon. She smiles)

Me : And then?

Portia : A delivery for Sthabile Ngcobo

Me : For me?

(I stand up)

Portia : Yep

(She places it on my desk. It's a basket full of goodies. The Balloon has number 10 written on it. I take the card and open it)

Message : If I had to choose a woman for myself I'd choose you over and over again. Ngiyasizonda isikhathi engisiphile ngaphandle kwakho. Mam'Zondi ngiyabonga ngokungivusela umuzi ka Baba. Ngiyabonga ngokuthi uthande izingane zami. Ngibonga isisu sakho esithwale inzalo yami. Amazulu abusise mina ngawe engibusisele wena. You are the most strongest woman I've ever met. Ngikuthanda ngenhliziyo yami yonke sthandwa sami. To ten and more.

(To ten? My eyes widen. He's right. We have 10. 10 kids. I laugh. Maybe I don't deserve a vagina shame. Anyway, let's not forget Thandeka's twins. That brings the number to 12. )

THALENTE

(I'm with Nyathuko at his sneaker shop. He spends more time at the sneaker shop than he does at Bhambatha's Lounge.

Bhambatha's Lounge came from nothing to the biggest thing that South Africa has ever seen. Sometimes I can't believe that Nyathuko started the whole thing from scratch and I was there witnessing everything. Today Bhambatha's Lounge is visited by famous people.)

Me : Amawele?

Nyathuko : Bafo ngijabuleni. I'm blessed.

(I get up and hug him.)

Me : Ngiyakubongela wakithi

Nyathuko : Ngiyabonga Mbambo. Ey lendaba ka Thandeka iyona ke manje esilwisayo.

Me : Yah neh. But there is no need for Thandeka to be part of the ceremony. Ukudelela umama nje lokhu.

Nyathuko : Abamufuni umawezingane zami ekhaya. Angisazi ngenzeni.

Me : Bayeke. Wena ugade ingozi nje wakithi. Batheni ngendaba yengane?

Nyathuko : Ngitshela uBaba u Zenzele. Angichazanga izinto eziningi ngithe mina no Sthabile saphunyelwa ingane. Ngimutshele into ayaziyo kodwa wazithusa ke. Washaya angathi akazi.

Me : Sho

Nyathuko : Uthi angishongo ngani. Ngiyamutshela ukuthi ingane yaphuma sengithi ngizonitshela. Yazi uthini ke bafo la angiqede khona amandla? Ungibuza ukuthi saya yini kumuntu obonayo wasitshela ukuthi ingane ikhishwe yini .

Me : Haaaa! Wathini?

Nyathuko : Ngathi hhayi. Ngivele ngadinwa ngagcina sengimubuza ukuthi kuzoba wrong yini mengenza lento yengane yami emzini ka Baba. Wathi alikho idlozi lapho uzobe udlala ngesikhathi.

Me : But he is right.

Nyathuko : Bathi u Max wantshontsha idlozi labo nje ingakho enemali okudlula bona. Kanti babesho liphi idlozi?

(I laugh)

Me : Siphuma emndenini eyinkinga but ngeke siyilahle.

Nyathuko : That's true.

Me : U Ashton uthini indaba yemoto? Uyakhokha?

Nyathuko : Mbambo yeka indaba yemoto, imoto eka Mapholoba. U Ashton uyahamba.

Me : Uyahamba?

Nyathuko : Uthi ufonelwe umuntu othize wathi ubone u Mzet e England.

Me : Ini?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Yey bafo. Uthi uyahamba.

Me : E England?

(Nyathuko is laughing)

Me : Thukeh awukahle ndoda. U Ashton wazi bani e England? i tayma lakhe linomnndeni e UK angithi?

Nyathuko : After her father died babuya e UK.

Me : Manje ubani ose England owazi ngo Zet no Ashton?

(He is laughing)

Me : We both know ukuthi ayikho lento. Umithi ndoda lomuntu akakwazi ukuhamba eye emazweni angawazi.

Nyathuko : Mina anginendaba. Yazi yini ehlekisa ngayo yonke lento? U Sthabile no Musa are behind this thing.

Me : What? Fuck, England! UMusa!

(We both laugh)

Nyathuko : Ngivele ngabona esasho u Ashton ukuthi wee! U Sthabile ke lo. Kanti khona izolo ngifice u Sthah e Googlisha nge England. Enza i research ngomuntu okhulelwe nokuhamba ngebhanoyi.

(I laugh. This is unlike Nyathuko's girlfriend.)

Nyathuko : Mengibuza ukuthi why efunda nge England wathi ucabanga ukuvakashela u Musa e England.

Me : Why would she lie to you?

Nyathuko : Angimazi noma ucabanga ukuthi izongidina yini mina lento ayenzayo ngoba engifihlela nje.

Me : Yeah. Wakithi, singakhohlwa futhi ukuthi u Sthah unobungane nje obungafuni ukuphuma kuyena. She is too scared of losing you and uzitshela ukuthi uyena yedwa onovalo lokulahlekelwa uwena. Wena awunandaba. Manje ubona ukuthi mawuthola about what she is up to uzomshiya or uhambe naye u Ashton.

Nyathuko : U Ashton esaphila u Sthabile akasoze akholwa ukuthi ngiyamuthanda.



Me : Noma ekholwa ukuthi uyamthanda kodwa akakholwa ukuthi u Ashton awumthandi.

(He sighs)

Me : Kodwa wakithi asiyifakele amehlo ke lento abayenzayo. Uyazi ukuthi uma u Ashton ethola ukuthi someone played her Uzofuna ukwazi ukuthi why and she will start digging.

Nyathuko : Sthabile is innocent, bafo. Yonke lento ihlanganiswe u Musa.

Me : U Princess phela unegazi lika King. Ukwenza into ekanje kufana naye.

(We laugh)

Nyathuko : Ngifuna ukwazi ukuthi utheni ko Musa because I'm sure akabatshelanga iqiniso.

Me : Sure case.

Nyathuko : Angikwazi ukuvimba u Ashton. Ngizothini mina bafo? Kuyafana mengilokhu ngimuvimba uzogcina esezitshela ukuthi shuthi mina ngiyamuthanda angifuni eye ku Zet. Lento azitshela yona vele kuyimanje.

Me : Eish yah

Nyathuko : Akahambe. Mhlampe lento yo Sthah izosebenza.

Me : But she will come back.

Nyathuko : I'll make sure she doesn't. U Sthah uma eke wakwazi ukukhipha u Ashton la e South Africa mina I will make sure ukuthi akasaphinde ebuye. Ngifunga inzalo yami esilele kwelamathongo.

(I raise my eyebrow. Nyathuko and his girlfriend are up to no good.)

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ENDWEDWE

ZONDI RESIDENT.

(I told Nyathuko that coming here early was a bad idea. We arrived around 3pm and now it's only 5pm. Nyathuko is somewhere in that rondavel. The kids are playing outside and I'm sitting in Nyathuko's room. Sthenjisiwe and Ntokozo are only coming later. See my life? Yeah. I only hear Ndlelenhle talking outside. I don't hear the twins. I wonder where they are.)

Ndlelenhle : Akuzona izingubo zokuhamba lezi, Phiwe.

(Phiwe is one of many kids in this family)

Phiwe : You play with a Polo t-shirt and Nike shoes?

Ndlelenhle : Yah! UBabah uyasithengela.

(I get up and stand by the window. I need to listen to this loud and clear)

Phiwe : He buys you expensive clothes. Akathethi mawudlala ngezingubo ezinhle?

Ndlelenhle : Azikho zinhle lezi. Ezokuhlala ekhaya. UBabah ngeke ethethe.

Phiwe : Ha!!!

(Phiwe is staring at Ndlelenhle with his eyes wide open. His hand is covering his mouth)

Ndlelenhle : Ngigqokiswe umawami phela. Futhi thina asinazo izingubo ezimbi. Umawami no Babah basithingela ama Polo, ama Nike nama Adidas. Basithengela e Woolworths ezinye izingubo nezinto zesikole. Hamba ubuze u Siso uzokutshela.

Phiwe : Nigqoka nswempu nina. Nami ngizotshela u Baba engithengele.

Me : Noma ngikuphe izingubo zami mase sengikhathele ukuzigqoka, uyabo? Uyabo Phiwe? Angithi wena no Mnotho ninezingubo ezimbi? No.....

(I can't believe this kid. Isn't it the same Ndlelenhle who said he wanted people to think his father is poor?)

Me : Ndlelenhle? Ndlelenhle!

(I bang the window. He comes running)

Ndlelenhle : Mah?

Me : Close that door and sit down.

(He closes the door)

Me : Ufuna ukubukwa ubani la emnyango?

Ndlelenhle : Mommy?

Me : Mommy amasimba? Yinindaba ukhulume kanjeya nezinye izingane?

Ndlelenhle : I'm sorry.

Me : You want those kids to go and tell their parents ukuthi wena uyazidelela? Is that what you want?

Ndlelenhle : No, mommy.

(His chest is already bouncing up and down. He covers his ears with his hands)

Ndlelenhle : Please don't squeeze my ears, mommy. Not my ears please. Not my ears.

Me : Why ufuna ukungibangisa umsindo emzini yabantu?  
Nibukisa ngami ngoba nikini? Nifuna abantu bakini beqhubeke bengizonde?

(He shakes his head)

Me : Why are you crying? Did I hit you?

Ndlelenhle : No

Me : Awusule lezozinyembezi ngingaze ngikubhambabule ngesicathulo manje

(He wipes his tears)

Me : Hlala phansi! Awusayi ukuyodlala emnyango ngoba wena uyazikhukhumeza lapha emnyango. Sit down!

(He sits on the carpet. Why am I feeling bad now? The problem is I don't want troubles and Ndlelenhle wants to bring them to me.)

Me : Come and sit on the bed. Where is your phone?

Ndlelenhle : Uyibekile uBabah.

(He comes and sits next to me. He rests his head on my thighs)

Me : Baphi osisi bakho?

Ndlelenhle : They went to buy candles noMkhulu uKwanele.

Me : Amakhandlela?

Ndlelenhle : Mhmmm. Amakhandlela kaBaba.



(I continue trying to call Nyathuko. I miss him now and I don't know why he is not coming to check on me. He is not answering his phone)

Ndlelenhle : Mah, mina ngifuna ukusoka.

Me : Ukusoka? Who told you about ukusoka?

Ndlelenhle : There's nothing wrong with circumcision.

(What the fuck does he know about circumcision?)

Me : Who told you about it?

Ndlelenhle : Bab'Njabulo. Uthe "Sies awusokile" esho kumina kade ngichama. Wathi uyihlo kumina.

Me : Wathi uyihlo wenzeni?

Ndlelenhle : Uthe uyihlo ufuna ube isitabane.

(I wonder why Njabulo hates Nyathuko so much. He literally picks anything to start a fight with him. It's starting to disgust me, honestly.)

Me : Don't listen to him boy boy. Ubedakwe utshwala.

Ndlelenhle : Uzofika nini u Zano?

Me : Uzofika ksasa.

(There's Nyathuko passing by the window. My heart dances.)

Me : Vulela u Babah isicabha.

(He gets up and opens for his father. Nyathuko is eating something.)

Nyathuko : Yah mamah. Kade ngikukhumbula

Me : Nami kade ngikukhumbula Nana. I even tried to call you but you didn't pick up.

Nyathuko : Ifoni yami angiyazi ukuthi ikuphi yazi baby.  
Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami. Khamisa

Me : What is this?

Nyathuko : Idumbe

Me : Hawu elilodwa? Futhi u half lona.

Nyathuko : There was only one remaining sthandwa sami.  
Nginikwe u Mnotho.

Me : No, Nana eat.

Nyathuko : Ngifuna ukudla nawe.

(He gives me. It's a small half. Ndlelenhle won't get it.)

Nyathuko : Mfan'wami why uhleli endlini ungadlali?

Me : Utshela o Phiwe ukuthi uyena yedwa ogqoka kahle bona bagqoka kambi.

Nyathuko : Baby mina ngifuna ukuxubha.

Me : Aibo Thukeh did you hear what I just said?

Nyathuko : Yah baby, uthi wenzeni u Ndlela?

(He asks while planting kisses all over my face)

Me : Udelele ezinye izingane Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Wathini sthandwa sami? Buka nginjani?

(He points at his dick using his eyes. Thank God Ndlelenhle is not looking at him. He is busy with my phone)

Me : Thukeh no, please khuluma no Ndlelenhle. Uthe ezinye izingane zigqoka kambi. Ndlelenhle tshela u Thukeh ukuthi utheni?

Ndlelenhle : Babah?

Me : Letha la ifoni

(I take my phone)

Me : Tell your father.

Ndlelenhle : Ngixolisile Babah.

Nyathuko : Uxolisile mfana ka Baba pho bafuna wenzeni manje?

Me : Nyathuko uyayibona lento engihlale ngikutshela yona? Akasoze azi uma enze into e wrong.

Nyathuko : Ndlelenhle ngizokufaka ibhande yezwa? Ungaphinde udelele ezinye izingane.

Ndlelenhle : I'm sorry Babah.

Nyathuko : Awuzibheke lento efana nami.

(He laughs.)

Nyathuko : Baby buka u Ndlela ufana kanjani nendoda yakho.

(I glare at him)

Nyathuko : Hawu Sthah sengimuthethisile nje

Me : Do you call that shouting?

Nyathuko : Ayngeke Sthah ingane yami yafela ubala manje.  
Woza ku Baba mfan'wam.

(He lifts him up and raises him up to the roof. Ndlelenhle is giggling. I give up.)

Nyathuko : Baby asambeni siyothenga ukudla.

Me : Ukudla? Why?

(He kisses his son)

Nyathuko : Bapheke istambu ekhishini

Me : I don't have a problem with samp.

Nyathuko : Ay. Asambeni. Ndlelenhle nangu u Mkhul'Kwanele engena asambe siyobheka ifoni yami emotweni yakhe. Baby ungilinde emotweni, yezwa?

Me : Aibo Thukeh u serious yini?

Nyathuko : Yah.

Me : Aibo ngeke. Asiyindawo

Nyathuko : Ngoba kwenzenjani?

Me : Ay Nyathuko uyathanda ukungibukanisa nabantu bakini. Usufuna bengikhulume manje bethi ngiyazitshela ngidla ama out.

Nyathuko : Udla imali yendoda yakho ay yabo.



Me : Nyathuko, plea....

Nyathuko : Ngeke ngiphinde kabili Maka Enzelwe. Hamba ungilinde emotweni.

(He walks out with Ndlelenhle)

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(We went to buy KFC in Verulam. Nyathuko was just being dramatic. The incense has been burnt. Nyathuko named our baby Sizamokuhle. I'm happy that our baby has finally met with the rest of our angels. Sthenjisiwe and Ntokozo are here. We are sitting in Nyathuko's room and they are drinking)

Me : Uyeza uskwiza wenu ksasa

(They laugh)

Ntokozo : U skwiza wethu my foot. U Mabuyi uthe uyeza, uzele yena nje kuphela. Plus abakaze bazwana. Yinja nekati

(We laugh)

Sthenjisiwe : Thandeka is getting married next week. Yena no Thukeh are history.

Me : Kodwa.....

Ntokozo : But nothing. Maka Ndlela you have nothing to worry about.

Me : Yeah.

Ntokozo : Tell me, what do you love about my brother?  
Ngaphandle kokuthi muhle.

(We laugh)

Me : No, asizokubeka lokho ngaphandle (laugh) Okay where do I start? Can I start with his sex game?

(We laugh)

Sthenjisiwe : Everything

Me : His sex game doesn't get old. Usangihlanyisa namanje. Yazi, after 10 years u Thukeh usanginika ama goosebumps. Mengimubona ngisashawa uvalo. I love how he loves me, how he loves his family, his kids and everyone else. I love....

Sthenjisiwe : Tell us about the sex game

(We burst. Sthenjisiwe is weird)

Me : He's a dream. You know what I love the most? Mase ephezu kwami pounding me ngicabanga ukuthi there are

bitches out there who would die to have him on top of them.  
Niyazi ngisho obani

(They laugh)

Ntokozo : Yes

Me : I love that he chose me and that he loves me. Nyathuko is everything that people thought I would never have. Nami ngike ngizibuze ukuthi angiphuphi yini. Is he really mine?

(I laugh)

Me : He is my dream come true. I prayed for a man like him but he is definitely not what I prayed for.

(They all look at me. I smile)

Me : He is more than what I prayed for. Sometimes I look at him and hate him

ngimuzonde for how perfect he is. I always say if he wasn't so perfect then I wouldn't be so scared.

Ntokozo : Scared?

(I'm going to cry so I laugh instead.)

Me : He is perfect and perfect is what I prayed for.

(Ntokozo shakes her head)

Ntokozo : The reason why ngikubuze ukuthi uthandani ngaye it's because I want to remind you that all those things that you love about him are yours. All yours, no one will ever take them away from you. I don't want you to die thinking that you are not enough to a man ekuthanda ngenhliziyo yayo yonke. Stop doubting yourself.

(I smile. I needed to hear this. Not from Nyathuko but from someone else. We are still laughing and enjoying the night. Bheki's wife walks in. She sits down.)

Bheki's wife : Aningipheni i Savanna.

(I didn't know she drinks.)

Sthenjisiwe : Sebuphelile utshwala benu usulana ke manje.

Bheki's wife : Wiiih! Aybo yeka ngane ka Ndabenhle. Nginemali yami mina

Sthenjisiwe : Thatha utshwala uyeke ukuzenza inkinga la.

(Bheki's wife opens the cooler box and starts drinking.)

Bheki's wife : Maka Ndlela, asisakwazi. Sakugcina uzobika isisu

(Wow)

Me : Yeah. Ay u Thukeh wayivuma ingane yakhe.

Bheki's wife : That's good. Ngimuzwile etshela oBaba omncane.

Me : Yebo

(They continue drinking. We are laughing and enjoying the night and she decides to come for me out of nowhere.)

Bheki's wife : Sthabile are you getting fat all over again or wenziwa isisu?

(I clench my teeth)

Me : Ay udali nje ongiphethe kahle.

(She laughs)

Sthenjisiwe : U Maka Ndlela wayevele emungaka siqala ukumazi. Umzimba wakhe lo.

Bheki's wife : Ayngeke use worse manje. Buka amathanga nezingalo

(She laughs out loud. God, give me your strength.)

Bheki's wife : U Thukeh uyojima eze efe inkosimpela. Udinga amandla phela ukubamba lomzimba ongaka.

Ntokozo : Lapho uwuthandani ke wona lomzimba ongaka u Thukeh. U Code 14 wakhe. Usho kahle ukuthi angabe akamthandi kuthiwa unomzimba omncane u Sthabile.

Bheki's wife : Ay Ay ayikho leyonto

Ntokozo : Maka Njabulo wonke umuntu une preference yakhe and Nyathuko prefers a woman like Maka Ndlelenhle.

Bheki's wife : Yey! musa ukuqamba amanga. U Thandeka akafani nhlobo nje no MaNgcobo. U Thukeh kusukela



esemncane he dated same type of women. Amantombazane amancane ngomzimba kodwa anezinqa. Amantombazane ame kahle nje. Mina ngathuka nje ngibona u Maka Ndlelenhle agisaphathike ethi u Thukeh uyashada naye. I mean we all thought he was going to marry a model.

Sthenjisiwe : Shuthi wa thoughta wedwa Maka Njabulo. Mina no Ntokozo sasazi ukuthi u Thukeh uzoshada umuntu amthandayo.

Bheki's wife : Ay suka

(Something burning is stuck in my throat. No, I'm not going to cry. Not today)

Bheki's wife : Mina ngimubone ngokuphika ingane yakhe phambi ko Baba ka Njabulo ukuthi nje u Thukeh akasoze ashintsha. He is like his father, akasoze ahlukana nesiketi. Ephinde ke ebe nogazi kubantu besifazane, bayaziwela nje kuyena. Mina ngithi u Maka Ndlela akashiye isikhala sokuphoxeka.

Ntokozo : Space of disappointment where? U Nyathuko uthanda u Sthabile nje and that will never change. Thukeh is getting older, akaseyona ingane. Leli player ayebizwa ngalo wayeka ukuba ilona mhlazane kufika u Maka Ndlela empilweni yakhe.

Bheki's wife : Ukhule kuphi? U Nyathuko Ukhule ngeminyaka kuphela nje kodwa akashintshile. We are all women in this room and women unite. They stand together. Asingenzi u MaNgcobo isilima la. Mina njengomfazi omdala layindlini I'm going to be honest with her. Maka Ndlela ungavumeli u Thukeh edlale ngawe elokhu ekumithisa into engapheli. Akekho umuntu oseke wamitha njengawe la emhlabeni. Lomfana ka Ndabenhle udlalal ngawe yazi ngisho izinkukhu azizalisani kangaka. Umncane Maka Ndlelenhle awufikile naku 40 kodwa u Nyathuko usho ukukufuqa ngezingane ezingaka? Aybo. Thukeh is busy giving her countless babies uzothi esuka lapho ebe emushiya nalezingane ebuyele kulama coloured akhe abonwa nawo eThekwini.

Sthenjisiwe : Maka Njabulo....

Bheki's wife : Wena unezingane ezimbili ayikho into engizoyikhuluma nawe. MaNgcobo amadoda izinja futhi awaka Zondi aholo ibutho lezinja. It's time you think about yourself and put yourself first. Buka u Nyathuko ukona umzimba wakho, usuphenduke ibhavu engingalazi nje. Some women gain more weight after giving birth and that's what is happening to you nangalena nje kokuthi umithi. Umzimba wakho ubesewonile vele u Nyathuko. Lelibhelunde oyilona lizomucika nje maduze mase eyakushiya eyofuna umuntu wesifazane ongcono ukunawe. U Thukeh usewumfana usabhayiza.

Ntokozo : Kodwa akuyona indlela....

Bheki's wife : Don't listen to them. Bayamazi umfowabo and bayazi ukuthi udlala ngawe.

Sthenjisiwe : Wenzeni ngempela u Thukeh? Udlale ngo Sthabile kephi? Aibo musani ukubheda Maka Njabulo. Kanti u Nyathuko uneminyaka emingaka? 20?

Bheki's wife : Sthabile take my advice.

(I chuckle)

Me : Sengibona ngithatha i advice edakwe iSavanna. Aibo.

(I say while shaking my head and after that there was absolute silence. I'm actually boiling with anger. I want to cry. Nyathuko walks in. Bad timing)

Ntokozo : Uwena lo onezigi ezingaka?

Nyathuko : Huh? Aibo why is it so dark here?

(He rubs his eyes)

Bheki's wife : Akumnyama layindlini yingoba nje kade uhleli entuthwini isikhathi eside.

Nyathuko : Eish yah. Uphi u baby wami?

(I snort. I hate him right now. Our eyes lock and he winks at me.)

Nyathuko : Yah muntu ka Thukeh. Sthah wena awuyikhumbuli indoda yakho sthandwa sami. Yazi kade ngihleli lapha ekhishini ngilokhu ngithi kuzongena ingane ithi uyakubiza u Maka Ndlela kodwa ay lutho akufiki muntu sengize ngiyazizela mina baby, hawu.

(His sisters laugh. I slightly shake my head)

Ntokozo : Ave uyithanda i attention mntakamah

(He laughs. He comes and bends in front of me. He tries to kiss me but I look away)

Nyathuko : Yini manje Mam'Zondi?

(I shake my head)

Me : Unuka intuthu

(He smells his jacket and then plays with my stomach)

Nyathuko : WeNtokozo amawele izingane zami.

Ntokozo : Usengitshela okwesifotifo jehova.... Ehhe mfana ka Mah ngiyakubongela. Ave ngizoba spoiler

Nyathuko : No, what did you say before that? Uthi sengikutshele kangaki?

(They all laugh.)

Nyathuko : Uyamuzwa u Ntokozo baby?

Me : Mhmmm.

(I nod. He lifts up my head and his eyes search all over my face.  
His face goes dark)

Nyathuko : Yinindaba? Kwenzenjani?

Me : Lutho. Thukeh awungiyeye bakithi ay. Awubuyele  
ekhishini.

Nyathuko : Sengenzeni mina?

Me : Lutho Thukeh nkosiyami, please go.

Nyathuko : No. Ngicela ukukhuluma nawe emnyango

Me : Ay it's cold outside

(It's very warm outside, I just don't want to go outside with  
him. He takes off his jacket and puts it over my shoulders)

Nyathuko : Woza ke

Me : No

(I throw his jacket on the bed)

Me : I told you ukuthi inuka intuthu le jacket.

Nyathuko : I want to talk to you

(He pulls me up)

Nyathuko : Woza baby, woza.

(I stand up and he wraps his arm around me)

Ntokozo : Niyaphi?



Me : Usevukwe ukuba ne drama ubhuti wakho

(Ntokozo is whispering something to me. I shrug)

Ntokozo : Tell him. Umtshele ukuthi utheni

(She whispers while she points at Njabulo's mother with her eyes. I raise my thumb. Nyathuko and I went to stand at the back of his room.)

Nyathuko : Khuluma nami, kwenzenjani?

Me : Nothing

(I don't want problems so I'm not going to tell him)

Nyathuko : Sthah udinwe yini?

Me : Angidiniwe Thukeh ay bakithi kanti ufuna ngithini ngempela?

Nyathuko : Udiniwe Sthabile ngiyakubona. Ngeke ngihlulwe ukubona wena uma ungekho right mina. Tell me what happened.

(I sigh. Jesus, what am I going to say?)

Me : I just don't want to be here

Nyathuko : Okay asambeni ke

Me : Ngisho layikhaya mina. Angithandi ukuba khona

Nyathuko : Nami ngisho ukuthi asambeni layikhaya

(Aibo!)

Me : No, phela angisho ukuthi sihambe Nyathuko.

Nyathuko : Vusa izingane zami uzifake emotweni. Sizobona ukuthi silala kephi

Me : Thukeh no

Nyathuko : Siyahamba, we will come back tomorrow morning. Asingaphikisani Maka Nasisipho.

(He peck my lips and walks away. I sigh. My phone vibrates inside my jacket's pocket. I take it out. It's a message from Musa.)

Message : Bitch, it's bad. Ashton knows something. Call me ASAP!!.

Me : Dammit!

(Can this day get any worse? I sigh. It's time for plan B)

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(I managed to convince Nyathuko and we didn't go. Leaving was just going to bring me more headache. I honestly don't want any problems with the Zondis. I come in peace and I plan to leave as much. Nyathuko walks in. He tries to lift me up.)

Me : Forget it. I'm heavy now

(He laughs. I sit down)

Nyathuko : Sthah awufonele u Max ukhulume naye sthandwa sami.

Me : Aibo, ngithini?

Nyathuko : Akafuni ukuza namhlanje uthi he is coming tomorrow. Angisazi ngithini kuyena.

Me : Leave him, Thukeh. Unqena lomsindo walayikhaya. Phela this whole thing is about you.

Nyathuko : Uwu Baba wami.

Me : Do you blame him for choosing peace?

(He deeply exhales)

Nyathuko : No

Me : Muyeke

(He kisses Zothani and Zibusiso)

Nyathuko : Banqabile ukulala no Ntokozo.

Me : Yeah, they refused. Where is Ndlelenhle?

Nyathuko : Uzolala no Baba omncane

Me : Okay

(He opens the suitcase)

Me : Seniqedile ekhishini?

Nyathuko : Siyaqeda nje manje.

Me : Usuyashintsha futhi Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami le jacket inuka intuthu, iyangihila manje.

Me : Ayngeke Nyathuko don't wear the white one. Lezingane zalana ngoba zihlale zikutapa nje

(He takes my black one and puts it on. He thinks I'm going to stop him. I won't)

Nyathuko : Awufuni lutho?

Me : No

Nyathuko : Maka Sandisokuhle what's wrong?

Me : Nothing is wrong.

(I stand up and stand in front of the dressing table. My reflection stares right back at me. I can handle all my problems. I have a plan in place but what about this body? I brush the stretch marks on my arms. Nyathuko is busy packing clothes in the wardrobe.)

Me : I want to join you at the gym. Uzungikhokhela?

Nyathuko : Gym?

Me : Yeah

Nyathuko : Is that what you want? Ukujima?

Me : Uh

Nyathuko : Why? Why now?

Me : Because I'm gaining weight.

Nyathuko : Okay

(Wow)

Nyathuko : Ungalali sthandwa sami. Ngiyeza manje

(He heads out.)



Me : What makes you think that you love me?

(He turns around)

Nyathuko : Sthabile....

Me : You don't know.

Nyathuko : Ungifaka amagama emlonyeni sthandwa sami.

Me : Tell me.

Nyathuko : Isukaphi manje yonke lento?

Me : It's a simple question Nyathuko... Please don't touch me.

(He sighs and sits down)

Nyathuko : What is love?

(Tonight we are going to break up. For good this time)

Me : Love is what I'm feeling for you. Kuthiwa mina bengingakuthandi angabe kade ngahamba after everything you put me through. Kodwa ngoba ngiyakuthanda here I am.

(I chuckle)

Me : Wena awulazi uthando?

Nyathuko : Uthando alubonakali ngamehlo enyama. Iso lothando lujulile, uthando yinto ongeke wayichazela umuntu eyiqonde ngoba kunzima ukuchaza into engabonakali. Sthabile maybe I don't know what love is. We see love in different ways and we show love in different ways. Kunabantu abakholwa ukuthi indlela owenza ngayo ikhombisa into oyizwa ngaphakathi. Uthando silutolika ngezindlela ezihlukene kodwa ekugcineni sisuke sichaza uthando.

Me : Ngizophinda futhi. What makes you think you love me?

Nyathuko : I don't think I love you but I know that I love you. Ukuthanda wena kimi kuyisinkwa sami semihla, Ukuthanda wena yinto ephila ngaphakathi kimi. Yinto engiyiphefumula ubusuku nemini. Into egijima eziqwini zami zoboya.

(It's like he always knows what to say.)

Nyathuko : Into enjalo awuyicabangi uyayiphila.

(He gets up and wraps his arms around me. He kisses me from my shoulder and all the way down to my hand.)

Nyathuko : Everything that you are, carries my love. Umphefumulo wakho, imicabango yakho, umzimba wakho kuyincazelo yento engiyizwa ngaphakathi kimi, engikholwayo ukuthi uthando. Into engiyaziyo ukuthi angikwazi ukuphila ngaphandle kwakho.

Me : How do you know?

(He kisses my neck)

Nyathuko : Ngoba konke engikwenzayo isizathu sakho uwena.  
Konke engikucabangayo nengikuhlelayo uhlale uyingxenye yakho.

Me : And if you remove me?

Nyathuko : Angikaze ngikwenze lokho ngoba anginaso isizathu.  
You know, I always pray that mhlazane kufika ukufa, kufike kuthathe mina kuqala.

(I've heard that before)

Nyathuko : Ngoba mina Sthabile ngeke ngiphile ngaphandle kwakho. Engiyokwenza ngiyohamba namathuluzi okwakha enye impilo nawe ngale kwelanga. Uyothi ufika ngibe sengikulindile.

(I laugh and shake my head. He is crazy)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami ngiphilela wena lokho kuchaza ukuthi in everything you do I will support you. Uma ukujima kuyinto esuka ngaphakathi kuwena ongaphoqwanga isimo esithize esingasile noma umuntu othize ukuthi uyenze then I'm going to support you.

(It's definitely not what I want.)

Me : Ngizobe ngikwenzela wena.

Nyathuko : Mam'Zondi do you remember when you were sick? You lost weight and kwathatha isikhathi eside ukuthi ubuyele emzimbeni wakho. Ngangikhona and my feelings for you didn't change. Mina baby noma ungajima okanye ungajimi akushintshi lutho kumina. Mina ngithanda u Sthabile Ngcobo.

(I turn around and look at him)

Me : Are you serious?

Nyathuko : Stop allowing people who don't want to see us together mess up with your head. Sthabile, uma enye yezingane zethu ingakhula ibe nomzimba wakho sthandwa sami nayo ungayiphatha kanje? Ungayenza izizwe angathi umzimba wayo uyiphutha?

Me : No

Nyathuko : Lento oyenzayo angiyithandi.

Me : Ungithanda nginje?

Nyathuko : Kanti unjani Mamah?

(I laugh)

Me : I'm fat.

Nyathuko : There's nothing wrong with that. Uwumuntu wesifazane othandwa u Nyathuko Zondi, uwumama wezingane

zami. Uyinsika yami. Umuntu wesifazane owangithanda ngingenalutho kodwa wabona okuhle kumina. Wangibekezelela noma sekufika amadimoni ami elwa nawe kodwa you never gave up on me. You almost died, ufela uthando lwami nawe. Sthah, after everything we've been through usacabanga ukuthi umzimba wakho ungangihlukanisa nawe? No, Sthabile. You are the only woman for me. Kanti uzokwamukela nini lokho?

Me : Nana, ngiyaxolisa. I just wish people would stop looking at me and think I don't deserve to have a man like.....

(He kisses me)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami Bhambatha

Nyathuko : Ngiyabuya. Ungalali

(He kisses me again. I giggle)

Me : Okay

(He opens the door)

Me : Thukeh?

Nyathuko : Maka Sizamo?

Me : Ngiyabonga.

(I'm done feeling bad about my body. Nyathuko is mine, dark or blue and I'm finally allowing that to sink in.)

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(Nyathuko woke up early this morning and drove Zenzele, Bheki and Khambule to the Mhlongos. I don't know what they are



fetching from there. Maybe the grave soil or the twins' spirit. I don't know.)

(I thought I was going to stay in his room until we go back to Ballito but not anymore. I will go and help outside. I'm doing this for Nyathuko. To be honest I woke up feeling different. I feel alive and I feel like everything is going to be okay, like I have nothing to worry about anymore. I finish speaking to Musa over the phone and fasten a doek around my head. I walk out and greet everyone outside. I take four buckets and head down to the river to fetch water. Phiwe and his sister Luthando are following me.)

Phiwe : When is Ndlela going to wake up?

Me : U Ndlelenhle uyalala boy, boy but he is going to wake up soon. Thathani ujeke sihambe ke

(I put the bucket over my head.)

Phiwe : I heard them talking about you in the kitchen. Bathi wena ugoyile

Me : Aw

(I'm definitely not interested. They can say whatever they want.)

Phiwe : Uyasebenza angithi wena Maka Ndlela? Awulali?

Me : Angilali mfan'wam.

(I'm almost done with those buckets. I just need to fetch one more.)

Shlangu's wife : Usabuyela yini Maka Ndlela?

Me : Yebo, sekusele elilodwa.

Shlangu's wife : No, no, leave it. The kids will fetch it. Phumula manje.

Me : No, it's okay.

Shlangu's wife : Cha sisi. Sekwanele. O Wandile bazolilanda.

Me : Okay. Let me help you with breakfast.

Shlangu's wife : Ngiyabonga. Nalezingane azilifuni iphalishi but those who are hungry will eat it. Abanye bazozibonela.

(I laugh)

Me : No it's fine. Ngizothenga isinkwa

Shlangu's wife : No, no, do you see the number of these kids?  
How much bread are you going to buy? No Maka Ndlela

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don't waste your money.

Me : It's okay Gogo ka Lubanzi. I'll buy bread.

Shlangu's wife : Siyabonga Fuze.

(Some men from the area have arrived. They are slaughtering goats in the kraal. I send kids to go and buy bread. I help with chopping veggies. As far as I know I'm no longer allowed to go to the kitchen so I'm doing everything from outside. My phone rings.)

Me : Nana

Nyathuko : Yah sthandwa sami. Are you okay?

Me : Yeah, I'm fine.

Nyathuko : We are on our way back. Ngikuphathele ini?

Me : Lutho, Nana. I'm okay.

Nyathuko : Are you sure?

Me : Yes

Nyathuko : Ngicele u Ntombenhle ukuthi ekusize if you need anything.

(He thinks I'm locking myself in his room)

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : I'm okay Bhambatha

Nyathuko : Baby angithi uyakhumbula ukuthi o Baba omdala bazobuya no Thandeka?

Me : Yes

Nyathuko : Okay. Ngiyakuthanda

Me : I love you too.

Nyathuko : Has Zanokuhle arrived?

Me : No uthe uzofika emini khona izinto asazilungisa

Nyathuko : Okay. Ngiyeza ke mamah

Me : Okay, Nana.

Nyathuko : Are you sure you are okay?

(I giggle)

Me : I'm sure baby.

Nyathuko : Okay sthandwa sami. Ngizokubona manje, singena e Verulam manje.

Me : Okay Babah.

(I end the call.)

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(Time moved and the rest of the family arrived. Mabuyi and her kids. Maxwell, Zanokuhle and others that I have forgotten their names. Finally I saw Nyathuko's car approaching the gate. It was followed by a green Uno. Who still drives a Uno? Well Thandeka does. She came with her sister and her cousin. They were taken by Ntombenhle to go and sit in the living room. That's where they are sitting till now. The ceremony has begun and I'm still not sure why Thandeka is here. I heard she was

crying. I don't know how the ceremony triggered the pain of losing her twins. Ey I don't care.)

(I'm washing dishes at the back of the kitchen. Nyathuko is blowing my phone. He was surprised to find me outside but we haven't gotten a chance to speak. I don't know why he is calling me because I could see him. I answer my phone and laugh)

Me : Why are you calling me?

Nyathuko : Ukephi sthandwa sami?

Me : Turn around.

(He turns and smiles)

Nyathuko : Woza lana baby wami.



(I hang up and wipe my hands. I make my way to him. He hugs me and kisses my cheek. For the first time I don't care who is watching.)

Nyathuko : Ubonile ukuthi ngikuphatheleni?

(I laugh and shake my head)

Nyathuko : Go and see. Buka baby sengilimele.

Me : Hawu Nana ulimazwe yini?

Nyathuko : Knife lapha esibayeni

(It's a small cut)

Me : Woza ngikubhandishe

Nyathuko : Okay baby kodwa u Baba....

(His father calls him)

Maxwell : Thukeh usu right? nayi i plasta.

Nyathuko : Ngiyeza. Baby kade ngifonelwe ama security athi lapha endlini kukhala i alarm.

Me : E Ballito?

Nyathuko : Yeah, Kodwa seku right.

Me : Okay. Yini le?

(There's money in his hand)

Nyathuko : Imali. Kade nginikwa u Baba omncane u Kwanele.  
He borrowed it two months ago.

(We both laugh)

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Hamba uphumule manje sthandwa sami kancane

Me : I'm fine. How much is this? Ongiboleka yona nami Nana.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : It's R700. Ay ngiyakupha yona sthandwa sami.  
Ungayiboleki.

(We both laugh. I take the money and kiss his small cut in his hand)

Me : Usuzobangcono ke manje

(We laugh. I frown. There's a beaded bracelet around his wrist. There are 3 actually but the one in the middle has my name.)

Me : And this?

(I laugh)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda, yezwa?

Me : I love you too Nana. Wait, where did you get this? I...

(Bheki is coming)

Bheki : Thukeh, awusondele. We want to speak to you and MaMhlongo about something.

Nyathuko : Ngisakhuluma nomfazi wami kodwa Baba

Me : Thukeh, please go bandla

Nyathuko : No, sisakhuluma. Kufanele sihloniphane phela layikhaya

Bheki : Nyathuko...

Me : Thukeh please go.

(I leave him and go to his room. I find his sisters, Mabuyi and our kids eating)

Ntokozo : Sthabile awuhlale phansi udle manje nkosiyami.

(I laugh)

Me : Okay, ngisawasha izitsha lapha emnyango.

Sthenjisiwe : No, leave those dishes. Someone else will wash them.

(I laugh and kiss my kids)

Ndlelenhle : Mommy, please feed me.

Me : Okay, boy boy.

Mabuyi : Woza ku Gogo ekufunze khehla khona u Mamah ezophumula kancane. Where is Nyathuko?

Me : Ubizwe u Baba omdala bathi bacela ukukhuluma naye no MaMhlongo.

Mabuyi : Bheki?

Me : Yes

Ntokozo : Baba omdala likes forcing things shame.

Mabuyi : Unezimendlela. U Thandeka yena ubezele ukuzokhala layikhaya ngoba kade esekhihla esika Nandi nje?

(They laugh)

Mabuyi : Ekhaliswa ubufebe

Ntokozo : Buyi, khona izingane zika Bhuti wami layindlini.

Mabuyi : Nimuxolele u Gogo usezidakelwe

(We laugh)

Sthenjisiwe : Are you okay?

Me : Yes, sisi I'm fine. Udlile kodwa u Baba wezingane zami ngoba sekuthiwa angidle nje mina?

(They laugh)

Ntokozo : Asimazi. Oh he said that is for you.

(There are three beaded bracelets and Cardbury chocolate. I laugh)

Mabuyi : WeSthabile loluthando lweni nenza ngani ngoba alupheli?

(I laugh. I put on the bracelets. One has his name. I put that one in the middle. I love this. I love him.)

Mabuyi :... Kudala. Ngithi Kwanele ngempela ngiyayibona indoda uma isibona ithanga elisha. You are guilty.

( They are laughing. I didn't even hear what they were talking about. I'm looking at my gift.)

Sthenjisiwe : It's beautiful. Uthe bamenzele lapha o Tongaat. Mina ngifuna ebhalwe ukuthi Nondaba.



Ntokozo : I want it too.

(We ate and laughed. I thought maybe my eyes were deceiving me when I saw Ntuthuko walking in with Thandeka. I don't know what Mabuyi is searching for. Probably a sjambok.)

Thandeka : Sanibona

"Yeeeebo"

(She sits down and greet my kids)

Thandeka : Naze nabahle. Akasafani ke kanje u Ndlela no Thukeh.

(We ignore her. She sighs)

Thandeka : Sthabile bengicela ukukhuluma nawe.

Ntokozo : Ay, I don't think Nyathuko would....

Me : It's okay Ntoko.

Ntokozo : Okay. Asambeni siyowasha lezitsha

Sthenjisiwe : Yeah

Mabuyi : Sthabile, sizobe sibona yonke into. Silapha nje ngasemuphongolweni waka MaXulu. Don't worry.

(I want to laugh)

Me : Okay sisi.

(They walk out with the kids. I fix my bracelet)

Thandeka : Uyaphila Maka Ndlela?

Me : I'm fine.

(She clears her throat)

Thandeka : Sthabile, I just wanted to thank you. I know that you are the one who made this day possible. Bekungeke kwenzeke ngaphandle kwakho.

Me : Ngiyakuzwa

Thandeka : Futhi ngifuna ukuxolisa ngakho konke engikwenzile kuwena. I was young ngalalela abantu aba wrong bethi angenze izinto ezi wrong. Yes, I loved Nyathuko kodwa ukumuthanda kwami kwakungasho ukuthi ngihlukumeze omunye umuntu wesifazane. Nami ngiyashada maduzane and.....

Me : What if zonke lezinto ongenze zona mina ziyabuya zishaya wena?

(She looks away)

Me : Deep down you know that I didn't steal Nyathuko from you. Ngathandana no Thukeh senihlukene waba nomona wena and you wanted to kill me. Wangithakatha ngabola ubuso nezinyawo. Wangitshela emehlweni ukuthi u Ndlelenhle ngiyomuzala ngomlomo.

Thandeka : I was young. I'm sorry.

Me : What if kwenzeke into efanayo nakuwena nalendoda oshada nayo? Kufike intombazane efana nawe nje ikuhlukumeze like you did to me. Wawuzothini?

Thandeka : You don't deserve what I did to you. Ekhaya babemuthanda kakhulu u Thukeh and....

Me : Ngangenzeni mina? What if ngafa ke mina u Nyathuko wathandana nenye intombazane, were you going to do the same thing to her? Nayo niyithithakathe ife?

(Silence)

Me : I forgive you.

(She lifts up her eyes)

Thandeka : You do?

Me : Izimpi zami ngizikhetha kahle mina. Angifuni impi phakathi kwami nawe. I'm only asking you to respect me. Ukuhloniphe ukuthi ngithandana no Nyathuko. Unembeza wakho uvuke, ukhumbule ukuthi nawe uwumuntu wesifazane. Lezinto ozenza kumina izinto ongeke uthande nawe uma zingenzeka kuwena. Thandeka, I didn't force Nyathuko to love me, angikaze ngisebenzise ngisho amanzi asechibini ukuze u Nyathuko ezongithanda. All that you see, kuyintando ka Nkulunkulu. Ngicela ukungafeli izinto ezidalelwe mina.

(She blows out a long sigh)

Thandeka : Iwona unembeza wami lo ongilethe la kuwena. I wanted to see you and apologize ubuso nobuso. Kade ngitshela no Baba lapha e dining room ukuthi bamukele ukuthi mina no Nyathuko sasingadalelwene ngoba akuwona umndeni wami wodwa obulwela uthando lwami no Nyathuko.

Me : What do you mean?

Thandeka : Angizile ukuzoxabanisa layikhaya. I'm here to apologize to you.

(I guess Nyathuko's family were also pushing her not to give up on Nyathuko.)

Me : Fine. Ngiyabonga and I hope ezinkingeni engisazibekelwe yimpilo awuyona eyodwa yazo.

Thandeka : I'm not. Nyathuko and I are done. Useyenzile into ebekufanele ayenze ngakho akusekho okuyobuye kusihlanganise.

Me : Ngithemba kanjalo.

Thandeka : Ngiyabonga ngempela Sthabile.

(She stands up and opens her arms for a hug. No, here I'll pass.  
Once bitten twice shy.)

Me : Asikho isidingo sama hug. Asihloniphane nje Thandeka.  
Ilokho engikucelayo.

(She smiles)

Thandeka : Okay

(There's something dark about her smile or am I seeing things?  
Maybe.)

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(The ceremony was a success. We went back to our daily lives. Kids went back to school and we went back to work. Nyathuko has been with us ever since we came back from Endwedwe. We didn't speak about Thandeka.)

Me : Maybe you need to move in with us.

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Sikipite?

Me : Sakipita nje e Machobeni?

(We both laugh)

Me : Nana, sengizobeletha and I need you to be close to me.

Nyathuko : I know Mam'Zondi. Asishade ke futhi.



Me : Baby, we spoke about this. Let's wait. Siyathandana kanti futhi azikho izinkinga.

Nyathuko : Ungithanda ngiyisoka lakho?

(We laugh)

Me : Noma uyini Bhambatha . But let's wait.

(He kisses me)

Nyathuko : Okay.

Me : I love you Nana

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda nami Mam'Zondi.

Me : Ungilande ke ngo 15:00

Nyathuko : Okay mamah. Uzodla nami i lunch kodwa angithi?

(I laugh)

Me : Yeah, uzoza?

Nyathuko : Ngizoza sthandwa sami

Me : Ngizokwenzela i surprise!!

(We both laugh. I open the door for him.)

Nyathuko : Yiphi i surprise sthandwa sami?

Me : Ay you'll see emini. Ngena emotweni Nana

Nyathuko : No, I want to kiss you.

(I giggle)

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Baby kanti wena uyeka nini ukusebenza, buka amawele asekhule kanjani.

(He kisses my stomach)

Me : When we get to eight

Nyathuko : Ayngeke sthandwa sami. Mekuphela lenyanga

Me : Okay fine.

Nyathuko : Nami ngizothatha i... yini kambe baby?

(I laugh)

Me : Yiphi?

Nyathuko : Maternity leave.

(I burst)

Me : Ngempela?

Nyathuko : Yah mamah

(He kisses me. He deepens the kiss. He pulls my skirt. I'm leaning against his car but we are in a bloody parking lot. Anyone can see us. But I can't resist the pleasure I'm feeling. I break the kiss and bury my face in his neck. The level of my breathing is loud. I moan and squeeze his dick. His fingers are doing wonders deep down me.)

Me : Thukena ngizochama baby

(He rubs my clit and my body trembles. My head falls back and he balances it with his hand. I release the warm juices. I lift up my eyes to his beautiful smiling face. He sucks my lower lip.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(My throat is dry. I swallow)

Me : I need tissues.

(He laughs and tightens his arms around me)

Nyathuko : Usu right?

Me : Uh

Nyathuko : Are you sure?

Me : Yes Nana

(He gets inside the car and I close the door for him)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

(I smile)

Me : I love you too.

(I feel so dirty, my panties are wet. I get inside my office and wipe myself. I take off my panties. I can't wear this.)

(Around 10am my cell phone rings. Not what I expected at all.)

Me : Oh, Ashton.

Ashton : I know what you did but my question is why?

Me : I don't know what you are talking about.

Ashton : Why would you want to send me away? To a foreign country?

Me : I don't know what you are talking about!

Ashton : Sthabile, do you know me?

(I stand up)

Me : Do I want to know you?

Ashton : Maybe it's time. If you think what Thandi did to you was bad then I'm going to show you worse.

Me : Is that a threat?

Ashton : I tried to show you that I respect you but you are taking it for granted. Is this how far you are willing to go for love?

Me : How far?

Ashton : By trying to mess with me? Do you know how sensitive Mzet's issue is to me but yet you are carrying it as a game. Is this a game to you and Thukeh?

Me : I said I don't know what you are talking about! What more do you want me to say?

Ashton : Which one are you trying to protect here? Your relationship? Your son or yourself? Why would you want to send me away?

Me : Because I am tired of you. Because Nyathuko is tired of you. Don't you see it? Akakufuni Ashton! He chose me.



Ashton : And he messed up my life. I know about Zet. I know that he killed him to protect his bastard son. Am I lying, Sthabile?!!

(She yells. My knees start shaking)

Ashton : Did Thukeh kill Zet? Did he kill my baby's father?

Me : No!!!

(I scream)

Ashton : Then where is he? Where is Mzet?

Me : I don't know!! (sigh) Ashton, I don't know.

Ashton : Stop lying to me.

(She sniffs)

Ashton : Stop lying to me. I know you are hiding something.  
Why did you lie to me?

Me : Because I was trying to protect my relationship.

Ashton : No, no!

Me : It's true. I was only trying to protect uthando lwami.

Ashton : Then you went too far. Listen

I am giving your man one week to bring Zet back and if he doesn't... If he doesn't you will become a widow. You and I will raise fatherless babies. I am going to kill him.

Me : You don't mean that.

Ashton : You don't know me, Sthabile but your man does. He knows what I'm capable of. I am going to make your life a living hell. I am going to show you how far I'm willing to go for love. I

am going to kill Nyathuko and trust me I will give you the red rose to put inside his grave for the last time. I will be there to hold your hand when we watch his body go down his grave. Forever!! And I will send your son to jail for the murder of the Ghetto King!

(Everything she is saying is flashing before my eyes. I scream)

Me : No!!!!

Ashton : Nyathuko knows how ruthless I can get. I thought he knew which line not to cross but I guess I was wrong.

Me : Ashton, Ashton listen. I'm sorry. Ngiyaxolisa for trying to send you away. Look, don't kill him. I'll leave. Imina ozohamba eye e England. Ngizokushiya naye. Mhlampe wena umthanda kangcono ukunami so I'll leave. Ngizokushiya naye. Please don't kill him. I'll leave and never come back. Vele ezami izinsuku zokuphila sezibaliwe. Inhliziyo yami ayisa....

(Tears pour down my face)

Me : Ngizokunika yena. Just give me a chance ukuthi ngizale izingane zami and after that I'll leave.

Ashton : You know you won't do that.

Me : I will, I promise. Just give me three months and after that I'll leave. Ngicela ungithembise ukuthi you will take care of my kids and him.

(Silence)

Me : Please promise me.

Ashton : Stop it!! Stop playing with my head. You know he is going to protect you. He will do anything to protect you. You will tell him everything and then I will die.

Me : I won't tell him. I promise I won't.

Ashton : You better not Sthabile because I will squash you and your whole family. You don't know me!! You don't know what the fuck I'm capable of!! So you better not mess with me. I know things about your man. I was there when he killed Nomzamo!! I bought that poison so you have no idea who the fuck I am!! Do you understand me?!!!

(She yells and I close my eyes. My body is shaking, I sit down.)

Me : I understand.

Ashton : Your man is responsible for everything that I am. He made me like this, he created the monster that I am!! and what he created will kill him!

Me : Ashton...

Ashton : All I ever wanted was for him to love me. Was that too much to ask?

(I shake my head)

Me : It wasn't, it wasn't. He is yours now. Konke owawukufisa sekuzokwenzeka manje, okay?

(Silence)

Me : Ashton?

(She hung up. I bang my desk.)

Me : No, no!!!!!!

(I scream. I take my phone and search for Chumani's number. My hands are trembling.)

Me : Chumani, it's me.

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(Chumani and Musa are telling me to calm down. They are right. If Nyathuko start suspecting that something is wrong he might want to take matters into his own hands and things may go wrong. I'm at the office. It's not busy so I'm thinking of calling it a day, plus I'm tired. Last night we hardly slept. I don't know what was wrong with me. I had Nyathuko's dick all night. I don't think I'll be having sex anytime soon. I think I had enough. After last night, thinking about a penis makes me sick. The last time we had sex like that was probably 7 years ago. Who would have thought that I still had that kind of energy.)

Me : I'm sorry nana. Kade ngise toilet and I left my phone.

Nyathuko : Ngicabangile ukuthi mhlampe uphumile. Usunjani manje sthandwa sami?

Me : I'm still tired.

Nyathuko : Ngikulande siye kudokotela?

(I laugh)

Me : Thukeh I'm not sick, senze ucansi ngamawala nje. Phela sesibadala mfethu. Iqolo liyasho.

(He laughs. Ay yena he is fine. Nyathuko started fucking when he was still in his mother's stomach so I really can't compete with him.)

Nyathuko : Ngila estolo baby and they don't have that black shampoo. Khona le engebhodlela elimhlophe.... Nkosazana ile kuphela?..... Okay. Sthah ayikho.

Me : Did you go to the same shop engase Salon?

Nyathuko : Yah baby e Mtshebheni and ayikho. Ngiyithathe emhlophe?

Me : Ayngeke Thukeh, what if unuka kambi?



Nyathuko : Ngenzenjani sthandwa sami?

Me : Thatha eyodwa Thukeh.... Ay, Ay, leave it. Ngizothenga le ebizayo ka Clicks ntambama ayikho into engizoyenza.

Nyathuko : Usuzodlula ka Clicks futhi?

Me : Yes, ngizophuma early namhlanje so ngibona kungcono ngivele ngikuthengele lezinto zase flatin namhlanje and get some rest tomorrow.

Nyathuko : Kanjani baby because I have a meeting ezophela late? Ngeke sikwazi ukudlula e Gateway.

Me : No, I'll go alone. Wena uzongifika endlini yakho ntambama.

Nyathuko : Usuhamba wedwa futhi? Ay yabo lento yakho Sthabile.

Me : What thing Thukeh? Ay wena uyathanda ukwenza angathi ngiyagula. I'm not sick, ngimithi Nyathuko ngakho asikho isidingo sokulokhu njalo ngilinda wena if there's something I need to do.

Nyathuko : Ukhuluma kanjani pho mawukhuluma kanjalo?

Me : Ay wee! Ngiyaxolisa ke Thukeh. Ay

(I dropped the call. Why is he like this?)

15 MINUTES LATER

(I pick up my phone and call him)

Nyathuko : Sthah

Me : Yah Nana, are you still in the shop?

Nyathuko : No, ngiya e Lounge manje ngidlula ngaseMqhawe.

Me : Awuyithenganga i shampoo?

Nyathuko : Ngiyithengeleni manje because you said ngiyiyeke?

Me : Kuthiwa bengazi bengizothi take a picture of it ngiyibone ukuthi injani. Mhlampe ayibhedi nje.

Nyathuko : Awushongo baby. Sengikude manje

Me : Eish kwaze kwakude e Mtshebheni yazi angabe ngiyaziyela and buy yona le ekhona because I know ngeke ngiyithole le engifunayo nase Clicks. Plus it's very expensive lapha ka Clicks. Ay okay Thukeh.

(He sighs)

Nyathuko : Kodwa Sthah ngikubuzile and you said no. Ay Sthabile.

Me : I know and ngithi okay nje Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Ayikho into othi okay yona.

(He says and hang up on me. Wow)

(I continue chatting with Chumani. Musa needs to come back from England ASAP. There are whatsapp messages coming in from Nyathuko. I laugh. Why is he sending me so many pictures of shampoos?)

Me : idrama ekulobhuti. Ay waqoma shame Sthabile

(He video calls me soon after sending me pictures. Why is he looking so handsome?)

Me : Baby

Nyathuko : Awusaphenduli ke manje.

Me : I was still opening the pictures, bengizophendula Thukeh.  
Why did you go back Nana? mina angishongo ukuthi buyela esitolo.

Nyathuko : Should I take it?

Me : Yeah, I think izobaright. Please take one. Ngiyabonga baby.

Nyathuko : Okay, ngiyakuthanda.

Me : I love you too

Nyathuko : Nkosazana please give me two.

(I end the call. Wait, why is he asking them to give him two when I said one? Oh well)

(I'm waiting for Zanokuhle to come and pick me up from work. Nyathuko brought me to work and now he is not available. I'm talking to my my mother. Speaking of my mother

I think my parents are aware that Nyathuko and I are back together but why are they not asking me anything? Does that mean they are fine with us being back together? I guess Ashton's car did the most. Or maybe they don't know anything. I'm just reading too much into it.)

Me : Nizohlangana e Bridge City on Saturday no Zanokuhle nithenge lezinto ezishodayo. Mase ngiholile I'll come.

MaKheswa : Siyabonga mntanami, kwande nalapho uthathe khona.

Me : Ngizonibona ke, soon I'm going to maternity leave.

MaKheswa : Okay Fuze. Ay nami ngihleli ngibambe umoya layindlini. Ugesi uyaphela esigubhini.

Me : Aibo Mah, uBaba akalithengi ngani ikhadi?

MaKheswa : Imali kayihlo isiphelela kulemoto yakhe nalapha esontweni. Angithi he wants everyone to think he is rich lapha enkonzweni nokuthi yena uyikholwa eliqavile? Do you remember the meeting we had esontweni ngithi bekukhulunywa ngokuthi kufanele kushintshwe i roof kufakwe nama tiles?

Me : I remember.

MaKheswa : Imali kaNgcbo iphelele lapho ke yonke. Ngiyamutshela ngithi Baba ka Mongezi angase uphike nalezimali ezihlale zifunakala lapha esontweni shuthi thina ngeke sidle layikhaya.

Me : Ay Mah uBaba engalinge ke nje eyenze leyonto. Engasanganiswa nje ileya Lamborghini mase ezitshela ukuthi u rich. Efune ukubukwa ngemali yena esontweni kodwa ekhaya kube kulanjiwe. Aibo engalinge.

MaKheswa : That's what I told him.

Me : U Mapholoba kanti yena usebenzela isonto? UBaba useqala phansi nalento yakhe yokufuna ukungigqilaza. Yazi nale mali engithi you guys will buy groceries with imali engiyinikwe u Thukeh ethi eyokugada izingane zakhe if they need something. I can't be asking money from Nyathuko all the time. Ngizoze ngibe nesdina phela nakuyena.

MaKheswa : I know my baby. I'll try and speak to your father again.

Me : Please bandla. Ngizokuthumela manje ugesi.

MaKheswa : Uma kungalungi ungakhathazeki mntanami. I'll wait for your father. Uzowuthenga uma esefikile.

(I take my cell phone and log into my bank app. I buy the electricity)

Me : It's okay Gogo sengiwuthengeli



MaKheswa : Hawu, ngiyabonga Fuze.

(My cellphone rings. It's Nyathuko)

Me : Sizobuye sixhumane ke

MaKheswa : Amen mntanami

(I put the phone down and answer my cellphone)

Me : Yah Nana

Nyathuko : Mam'Zondi uthi u Zano uzama ukukufonela kodwa akakutholi sthandwa sami.

Me : Unamanga loyo, he never tried to call me.Ube busy no Fisisani ngihleli mina ngilinde yena.

Nyathuko : Uthi he is waiting for you in the parking lot mamah.

Me : Okay Bhambatha ngiyabonga. Is your meeting over?

Nyathuko : No, ngiyishiye phakathi.

Me : Hawu Thukena, I'm sorry Nana. Please go back.

Nyathuko : Okay baby, ngiyakuthanda.

Me : I love you too Nana.... Thukeh wait.

Nyathuko : Yah baby

Me : Ngikuthengele izinto zokugcoba?

Nyathuko : No sthandwa sami. Ungithengele isixubho

(Every month he buys a new toothbrush)

Me : Okay Nana... And shaving cream?

Nyathuko : I still have one evaliwe.

Me : Ngiwuthathe ushintshi?

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Uwuthathe ushintshi wendoda yakho mamah.

(I smile. I'm rich. He gave me R4000 to buy his groceries. But what I know is that his groceries don't even reach R2500. Since he spends a lot of time in Ballito, he doesn't cook much in his flat. So I'm over R1500 rich.)

Me : Okay baby. I'll see you later, u Zano uthe uzolala e Ballito nezingane.

Nyathuko : Okay mamah. Ngizobuye ngifone. Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Sharp

(I hung up.)

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(Later I was with my man in his flat. I bought Pizza for us but here he is drinking Amasi. We are sitting on the couch watching TV. I fix the white fluffy blanket and place my head back on his shoulder. He kisses the top of my head)

Me : Mina phela ngazi ukuthi angivumelekile ukungena ekhishini

(His family has started to talk about me behind my back)

Nyathuko : Kodwa phela sthandwa sami this is not a big deal. Bengikwazisa ukuthi baphatheka kabi bebona ungangeni ekhishini.

Me : Ay Thukeh. If that saddened them that much, why didn't any of them come to me ezobuza ukuthi why was I doing everything from outside? Why ngingangeni ekhishini?

Nyathuko : Khohlwa abantu basekhaya Sthah.

Me : Nabo abakhohlwe imina. Kade ngithi ngizokutshela. Ugogo ka Lubanzi posted my picture on Whatsapp manje ntambama but ngithe ngiyabona usesikhiphile.

Nyathuko : Who?

Me : Umfazi ka Shlangu. Wasikhipha futhi fast. Ngasho ngathi weeeh sebemutshelile ukuthi awukhiphe loyomuntu.

Nyathuko : Bayahlanya laba. Amawele ami awahaleli lutho?

(I giggle)

Me : No but mina ngihalela i yogurt

Nyathuko : Did you buy it?

Me : Uh. Ise fridgen

Nyathuko : Let me get it for you.

Me : Ngizoyidla nawe

Nyathuko : No baby, mina angiyithandi.

(I laugh)

Me : Bhinca

(He laughs and playfully bite my cheek)

Nyathuko : Anginendaba

(I laugh)

Me : Uke uyizwe ingane yakho mase isho njalo?

Nyathuko : U Ndlelenhle?

Me : Yeah. Ethu anginendaba! Ngezwi elingakanani lona

(We laugh. He kisses my cheek and goes to the kitchen.)

Me : Izinyawo zami sezibangcono ukuvuvukala

Nyathuko : Baby angikuzwa lomshini unomsindo.

(My phone rings. I don't know this number. I answer)

Me : Hello

"Where is he?"

(Fuck! I sit up)

Me : Ashton

Ashton : Look at the door before he gets back.

(I slowly turn my head towards the door and see the door opening. She smiles and lowers her phone from her ear before she closes the door. What the hell? A message follows after that.)



Message : Now you know that I can kill him just like that. Enjoy it while it lasts. Remember, DON'T SCREW UP!!!

(My heart is going to burst. I'm sweating)

"Sthah?"

(I stand up immediately and my phone falls to the floor)

Me : Thukeh

(He frowns)

Nyathuko : What's wrong?

Me : Huh?

(He puts the yogurt on the table and rushes to hug me)

Nyathuko : Kwenzenjani sthandwa sami?

(I swallow the air and pull out a fake smile)

Me : Nothing, I'm fine.

Nyathuko : Uthuswa yini?

Me : Mina?

Nyathuko : Sthabile what's wrong?

Me : No, khona i video engikade ngiyibona e... enamakati amancane.

Nyathuko : Othi ngiyibone.

(I move my eyes to the door and back to his face)

Me : I... I think you should consider changing your locks.

Nyathuko : My locks?

Me : Door locks.

Nyathuko : Ngobani baby?

(I shake my head)

Me : I'm... I'm just saying.

(I shrug)

Nyathuko : Sthabile kwenzekeni kade ngingalena ekhishini?

(I swallow hard.)

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THALENTE

(Nyathuko is packing his things. He is ready to go home.)

Me : Bengithi sizobamba inyama ka Bhambatha ngo time

Nyathuko : I'm tired Mbambo. Ngifuna nje ukuya endlini ngihlale no Sthah nezingane zami bafo.

Me : It's Friday. Uzophumula ksasa ndoda

Nyathuko : No, no, umzimba wami awuvumi wakithi.

(I laugh)

Me : Yinindaba usuzoshona yini?

Nyathuko : Mhlampe

Me : Uyasangana

Nyathuko : Mbambo, we can't run away from death.  
Kuyingxenye yempilo. Impilo ifana nencwadi mfoka Mbambo,  
ekugcineni inesiphetho. Isiphetho salencwadi yempilo ke  
wakithi, ukufa.

Me : Ey fakof Thukeh

(He laughs)

Nyathuko : Yazi bafo, Sthabile is acting differently kulezinsuku.  
Uthukile.

Me : Kanjani?

Nyathuko : Angazi, wakithi. Uma kuwa something uyathuka,  
noma sibuka i TV nje uvele ejampe nje esithubeni.

Me : Aibo ndoda, ucabanga ukuthi yini?

Nyathuko : I don't know. Kodwa yena uthi u right. You know what I've noticed? Ukuthi she communicates with Ashton.

Me : Uboneni? Ama message?

Nyathuko : No, ama calls. Bayafonelana. I asked her about it wangitshela into engingayizwa.

Me : Do you think she is threatening her? Ashton?

Nyathuko : Ashton doesn't make threats, she acts.

(He paces around)

Me : Manje le plan yase England shuthi ayisebenzanga?

Nyathuko : I knew it wasn't going to work. U Ashton uyanaka.

Me : Isigebengu phela loyamdlwembe

Nyathuko : Mhmmmm

Me : Manje Bhambatha uphezu kwani?

Nyathuko : For the first time empilweni yami ngikhathele.  
Ngikhathele ukulwa, ngikhathele ukubulala. I'm tired Mbambo

Me : This is not the time for you to be tired.

Nyathuko : I know. Ukuthi nje something is....

(He sighs and rubs his face)

Me : Thukeh what's going on?

Nyathuko : Uyacabanga ukuthi ngisele nomuntu oyedwa manje oyinkinga empilweni yami. Bonke laba abanye ngikwazile ukubaketula and I'm only left with one.

Me : A woman, a useless pregnant woman.

Nyathuko : Uwumuntu wesifazane u Ashton bafo kodwa khona indoda lapha ku Ashton ngaphakathi. Indoda eyingozi. Eyazi izinto eziningi ngami. Ekwazi ukufunda imicabango yami.

Me : Indoda lesiyasfebe. u Nkulunkulu wasifaka amabele esikhundleni samasende. Amasende uwathwele ngesifuba.

Nyathuko : What if uyena oketula mina?

Me : Amasende akhe awaqinile ngaleyondlela.

(He shakes his head)



Nyathuko : She said something kumina izolo. Uthi ngingacanangi ukuthi yena uwu Nomzamo.

Me : What?

Nyathuko : That's what she said. Mbambo, Ashton is up to something kodwa lento aphezu kwayo naye akayithembi.

Me : Thukeh asicime lomuntu.

Nyathuko : Uhlanyiswa isisu u Ashton. Uyabeletha nje ezinyangeni ezimbili ezintathu and after that she will focus on her baby. Ekhohlwe u Mzet. You know how she is. Inhliziyo yakhe ithambiswa ubala. Uzothi nje engabamba ingane ngezandla zakhe inhliziyo iluthwale lonke uthando lwengane yakhe.

Me : Or we can kill her naleyongane. Kuzobukeka njengengozi. Wakithi hlukana nokucabangela ingane ka Zet. Zet was willing to bring you down. Wamufica embela intwana yakho ithuna

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efuna ukuyibulala.

(He turns around and looks at me. He is finally getting the picture.)

Nyathuko : You are right.

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(I finish putting the dishes in the machine and stare at the empty sink. Any day might be my last day in this house. Nyathuko might die. I might have to leave my family and move to another country. Telling Nyathuko what's going on is going to ruin everything. His life is at stake. I'm dealing with someone who knows his moves. Ashton probably knows him more than I do.)

(Nyathuko is playing with the kids outside. He came back very late last night. My heart almost stops as he walks in with the

kids. Everything scares me these days. I take the dishcloth and wipe the counter)

Nyathuko : Sthandwa sami

Me : Hey

(He wipes his head)

Nyathuko : Sekuyanetha futhi emnyango

Me : Oh... Lunch is almost ready.

(He kisses my stomach and wraps his arms around my neck)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : Uh!

(He kisses my neck)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda

Me : Help me set up the table

Nyathuko : Aibo

Me : Ngiyakuthanda nami Nana... U Zanokuhle uthe ubuya ksasa... Ndlela wozani nizodla Babah.

Nyathuko : Umkhumbuzile ukuthi ksasa sivakashela ithuna likamfowabo?

Me : Were you serious about that?

Nyathuko : Baby we spoke about it.

Me : I know, I know ukuthi nje angihaleli ukuya emathuneni.

Nyathuko : Ngobani Sthah?

Me : Thukeh why are you pushing this?!

(Everything he does tells me he is going to die. I'm observing everything that he is doing. They say people behave a certain way when they are closer to death and I feel like that's what he is doing.)

Nyathuko : Sthah asixabani

Me : Can we do this later? Ngaphandle kwezingane, please?

(He shakes his head)

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuzwa Sthabile

(We sit down and eat.)

Zothani : Mommy, are we still going to watch a movie after eating?

Me : Yes baby kodwa nizohamba niyogeza kuqala ngoba ngeke nihlale kosofa baka mommy ningcolile

(They all smile. I feel tears burning in my eyes. Why is Ashton doing this to my family? I've never wronged anyone so why is life so hard on me?)

Zothani : Okay

Zibusiso : U Ndlela udlala ngokudla

Ndlelenhle : I'm not.

(Nyathuko takes my hand and kisses it)

Nyathuko : Are you okay?

Me : Mhmm-Mhmmm

(His phone vibrates.)

Me : Ubani?

Nyathuko : It's Ashton. She is leaving

Me : What?

(He stands up and goes to open the fridge. I take his phone and read the message. )

Message : I need some time away before the baby comes. This should give you enough time to bring Zet back or we are going to have a problem. Take care. Ashton.

(I finish reading the message and get up. I rush to him.)

Me : What? Where is she going?

Nyathuko : England

(He laughs)

Me : Nyathuko stop it! Akavumanga u Ashton ukuya lapho

Nyathuko : So I was right. Benifuna ukumuhambisa sthandwa sami.

Me : Uthi uyaphi?

Nyathuko : I don't know. Angazi ngempela Sthah.

(No man, he knows something)



Nyathuko : Let's go and watch a movie

Me : Ngiyeza

(He kisses my cheek and walks away. I take out my phone and text Chumani)

What's going on? She is leaving : Me

Relax : Chumani.

(I squeeze my phone in my hand)

Me : Fuck!

(I mutter. What was I thinking involving Zola 7 in this thing? He knows nothing. He's been telling me to relax from the very beginning. Dammit!)

(Now I'm sure that Ashton is 10 steps ahead of us. I'm sure that she is giving me enough time to spend with my family before she steps in. She once mentioned something like that. This is it. It's over.)

Nyathuko : Which movie do you want to watch sthandwa sami?

(My phone beeps with a message.)

Message : Don't forget the deal. I'll be back. Ashton.

(My body sweats)

Nyathuko :.... bona. Uyangiziba ngempela.

Zothani : Mana!!!

Me : Huh? What? What?

Zothani : Daddy is talking to you.

Me : Oh... Uthini Thukeh?

(He looks at my phone and up to my face)

Nyathuko : Who was that?

(I clear my throat)

Me : No one.

Nyathuko : Aw

Me : SMS Love to 31316, you know those messages Thukeh.  
Iwona lawa

Nyathuko : Ayajulukisa?

Me : What?

(He shakes his head)

Me : I want to go home for a few days

Nyathuko : Ngobani?

Me : I just want to spend time with my family. My parents.

Nyathuko : Sthabile yini le ongifihlela yona?

Me : I'm not hiding anything.

Nyathuko : Okay.

Me : How dangerous is Ashton?

(He looks at each of his kids)

Nyathuko : Ini?

Me : I'm just asking.

Nyathuko : Ngicela siyokhuluma phezulu

Me : Okay

Nyathuko : Mfana ka Baba, pick a movie for your sisters.

(He gives him the remote)

Ndlelenhle : Ungayithathi Siso. Ubabah usho mina

( I leave them arguing and go to our room. I wait for Nyathuko.)

(He walks in)

Me : How dangerous is she?

Nyathuko : Why ungibuza leyonto?

Me : I just need to know.

Nyathuko : Ngobani Sthah?

Me : Please tell me.

Nyathuko : Utheni u Ashton kuwena?

Me : Nothing, she didn't say anything.

Nyathuko : Give me your phone.

Me : No!... No, Thukeh.

Nyathuko : Sthabile, what's going on?

Me : Ufuna ngihambe Thukeh ngikushiye. She is threatening to kill you.

Nyathuko : What?

(I explain to him)

Nyathuko : Iqale nini yonke lento?

Me : Kade ungifika googling about England. She managed to trace Musa's number wathola ukuthi isuka kubangani baka Musa e England and they told her everything. Ukuthi u Musa uwubani nokuthi wazi mina.

Nyathuko : Do you remember that I asked you ukuthi uphezu kwani but you said nothing. Labo nothing bakho ohlale ubasho Sthabile.

(Why is he angry? I was trying to protect us!)

Me : Thukena ngiyaxolisa.

Nyathuko : Wenza ukuthi u Ashton egumbe lendaba ka Zet manje Sthah and leyonto izobuya ibheke kumina.

Me : I'm sorry.

Nyathuko : No, it's fine. Woza la sthandwa sami.

(He hugs me and kisses the top of my head. I want to cry. He takes out his phone.)



Nyathuko : Mbambo, awubuze u Thami ukuthi akazi lutho yini ngalento yokuhamba kuka Ashton. There's something I don't understand here.

(I lift up my eyes to him. He kisses my forehead)

Nyathuko : Yeah she sent me a message wathi uyahamba....  
Good? Wathi good Thalelente? Lento ingizela nezinkinga wakithi.

(Silence)

Nyathuko : Thalente? Thalente, lalela mina. Buza u Thami ngalento

(He looks at his phone screen)

Me : Uthini?

Nyathuko : He.... Baby ngicela ukuhamba kancane, ngizobuya manje.

Me : Uyaphi ke manje Thukeh nkosiyami?

Nyathuko : I need to fix something.

Me : Thukeh, wait.

(He is gone)

## **Final Chapter!**

KWA-MASHU

(We have reached the ninth month. This means I need to pack my bags and go to the hospital to deliver my babies. I don't wait for labour pains anymore due to my heart operation. I'm talking to Nyathuko over the phone.)

Nyathuko : Kanti Maka Ndlelenhle why ungafuni ngihambe nawe ngiye esibhedlela?

Me : Thukeh, come on. Asikho isidingo

Nyathuko : There is. Nalento yokuthi ufuna ukubeletha ulapho kwaMashu nje I don't get it.

(Here we go again)

Me : But I told you that I'm trying to protect myself and our babies from Ashton.

Nyathuko : Ashton is gone. It's been two months.

(I know very well)

Me : But what if ucashile, ulinde ngibelethe mase eyangiphoqa ukuthi ngihambe?

(I say while rolling my eyes)

Nyathuko : She won't. Naye ukhulelwe, mhlampe usebelethile futhi wakhohlwa ithina.

(I smile)

Me : Yeah.

Nyathuko : Ngicela ukukulanda ubuye sihambe siye esibhedlela.

Me : No, no, not today. Ungangilandi namhlanje Nyathuko.

(Oh hell no)

Nyathuko : Ngobani Sthah?

Me : Ngizofika ksasa... uzongilanda ksasa.

(There is another call coming in. A very important call)

Nyathuko : Okay. Ksasa ekseni.

Me : Okay, nana. U Mapholoba uyangibiza baby.

Nyathuko : Ngiyakuthanda.

Me : I love you too. Ungikhonzele emagundaneni akho.

(We both laugh)

Nyathuko : Sthah angithandi leyonto

Me : I'm joking. Bye baby

Nyathuko : Ngizokufonela late

Me : Okay

(I hang up and Chumani calls again)

Me : Chumani

Chumani : It's done. We are set for tonight

(I release a long sigh)

Chumani : Do you remember why we are doing this?

Me : Yes, I know. This is the only way.

Chumani : It is.

(If they knew the truth behind this then they wouldn't be helping me. They think I'm only doing this to protect my relationship. What they don't know is that I'm doing it to save Nyathuko, my whole family and Zanokuhle who killed Musa's brother, Nqabayethu Zungu.)

Me : I'm ready.

Chumani : Musa is coming.

Me : Okay.

(Call ended. I don't know why I'm feeling sudden cramps in my lower stomach. The clothes are packed. I'm all ready.)

(I find my parents in the living room.)

Me : Mah, Mapholoba.

Mapholoba : Ndodakazi yami

Me : Sekuyisikhathi sokuthi ngihambe ngiye esibhedlela.

MaKheswa : Hawu, kanti uya namhlanje?

Me : Yes. Sengiqala nokuzwa izinhlungu ezincane nje, okuyinto engafanele. So I need to go today.

MaKheswa : Shuthi uBaba uzokuhambisa

Me : Cha, Cha Mah.



Mapholoba : Fonela u Baba ka Ndlelenhle ekuhambise ke.

Me : Baba?

(I thought they hated Nyathuko)

Mapholoba : Mntanami isikhathi esiphila kusona manje akusona esamagqubu. Kanti ke mina nonyoko asizona izingane, siyazi ukuthi you and Nyathuko are still seeing each other.

(I almost choke)

MaKheswa : Kade sakakwazi futhi lokho. Zanokuhle told us everything.

(Jesu)

Mapholoba : Wena no mfana ka Zondi niyohlukaniswa ukufa inkosimpela. Ay thina mawujabulile nje ndodakazi nathi sijabulile. Ekugcineni umuzi wenu lo eniwakhayo, akuwona owabantu bakwa Zondi futhi akuwona futhi owakwa Ngcobo. Naninobabili nishelana ngakho thina asinalo ilungelo lokunihlukanisa.

(I sigh in relief)

Me : Yebo Baba. Ngiyabonga.

Mapholoba : Ungasabi ke thina. Call your boyfriend and tell him to come and take you to the hospital. Isikhathi sokwamukela abazukulu bethu lesi. Akusona isikhathi sokubamba izinhliziyiyo.

Me : Ngiyabonga Mah no Baba. Kodwa ngempela asikho isidingo sokuthi ngilandwe u Thukeh. Sizoficana phambili

MaKheswa : Oh okay.

Me : Ngicela nje sikhuleke

(Prayer is the only thing I need right now.)

Mapholoba : Okay Fuze.

(They hold my hands and we begin praying)

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(I watch her laying on the bed. I can't believe she's been stuck here for almost three months. I don't know if this is a private surgery where Chumani does all his dirty work or what but it belongs to him. How did I ever doubt Chumani and Musa?)

Me : Oh woman

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you are something else. I give you that. Uyabona wena no Thandeka kanye no Nomzamo nginichoma uphaphe legwalagwala.

(I brush her flat stomach)

Me : Uyakhumbula ungibuza ukuthi uma u Thukeh engashona ngiyosho yini ngithi I loved him enough? Usakhumbula?

(I brush her hair)

Me : Namhlanje ngiyakukhombisa ke ukuthi ngimthanda kangakanani u Nyathuko. This is how far I'm willing to go for love. Nyathuko is mine, sweetie. He has always been mine.

(He opens her eyes and I laugh)

Me : Hello baby girl.

Ashton : Where is my baby?

Me : I don't know. Dead?

(She shakes her head)

Ashton : No

Me : You don't know me Ashton.

(I take the pillow and she quickly shakes her head.)

Ashton : Don't do that, Sthabile. This is not you! This is not you!  
Don't let him turn you into this monster. Don't let him.

Me : But you were willing to turn into his monster. You wanted  
me to disappear khona uzongena emzini wami.

Ashton : No

Me : You threatened to kill him. Wathi ngizoba umfelokazi.

(My blood boils. I press the pillow on her face. She fights until death overpowers her. Chumani and Musa walk in.)

Musa : It's over friend

(I throw myself in his arms and cry.)

Chumani : We need to take you to the hospital.

(I wipe the tears.)

Me : Yeah.

Chumani : I'll take care of the body.

(Musa grabs the same pillow and suffocate Ashton all over again)

Musa : Bitch!!!

Chumani : Baby, she is dead.

Musa : I know.

(It's done. One day when one of these two try to blackmail me, I have all the proof in my phone. I will not go down alone. I'm still shaken by what I just did. I'm not a serial killer like Nyathuko so this is not easy.)

Chumani : Remember why you did it.

(He is right. Fuck feelings)

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(We left the dodgy surgery around 23:00. Before we got to the hospital I spoke to Nyathuko and I told him I was tired and wanted to sleep. My poor man believed me. When I got to the hospital I had to pretend that the cramps were severe because I

found it weird to just show up at 23:00 to give birth without feeling any pain. The doctors shouted at me a little.)

(Now help me welcome my two brand new baby girls. I held them in my arms and smiled. I couldn't wait to call Nyathuko)

Me : Nana, sengibelethile.

Nyathuko : What?

(In my head I can see him jumping out of the bed. Everything was worth it.)

Nyathuko : Sthabile how? When?

(I laugh)

Me : Ngibelethe manje ekseni ngo 1am



Nyathuko : Kodwa mina uzongitshela manje ngo seven sthandwa sami?

(I laugh.)

Me : I was in theater

Nyathuko : Ngisendleleni baby, ngisendleleni.

(He sounds so shocked and excited at the same time. I laugh)

Me : Okay baby

Nyathuko : Sthabile, Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu.

Me : I love you too Bhambatha wami. Manje sengiyazi ukuthi ayikho into engingeke ngiyenze ukuvikela uthando lwethu.

Nyathuko : Mam'Zondi I don't know what to say.

(Musa walks in pushing my biggest secret)

Me : Come and see your girls. I have a surprise for you.

Nyathuko : Surprise?

Me : Uh!

Nyathuko : Okay, baby, okay.

(I hang up and smile)

Me : Thank you Manzini.

Musa : You are my ride or die. You know that.

Me : Come here.

(He comes and I hug him tightly)

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(Nyathuko came with the whole squad. The twins, Ndlelenhle and Zanokuhle. Eish, I don't like how Zanokuhle keeps looking at me. Can he see what I did? Nyathuko is over the moon.)

Nyathuko : Triplets? Kanjani sthandwa sami? Wathi udokotela babili nje.

(I swallow)

Me : Odokotela bayalenza iphutha Nana

(He looks at the "triplets" and rubs the back of his neck with a wide smile on his face)

Nyathuko : Amantombazane ka Baba. Sthah kanti UNkulunkulu ungithanda kanje baby?

(Oh man. Touchy)

Me : Yes Nana

Zibusiso : Sesibawu five manje mommy amantombazane nabafana abawu two.

(We laugh)

Me : Yes baby ka Mah.

Zothani : Ndlela who are you going to play with ngempela ngoba ubhutina mdala?

(We laugh. I can't believe Ndlelenhle is the only boy.)

Me : Nizongiqaqa izitishi nina.

Nyathuko : I need to call Max.

(He kisses me. He can't stop kissing me.)

Zanokuhle : This one is a bit different. Look at her hair.

(Hell no!! Zanokuhle, don't do that to mama.)

Me : Mhmmm

Zanokuhle : Kodwa bayafana bonke. Yeah.

(He sighs. I hate Zanokuhle's gift)

Nyathuko : Banike amagama phela Nkosana ka Baba.

(Zanokuhle laughs)

Zanokuhle : Mina nginamagama amabili kuphela. Kodwa ke kulungile. This is Zemvelo

(I smile)

Zanokuhle : And this is Zendalo. U miracle ke lo...

(Why is he lifting up Miracle? He didn't lift up the twins. Anyway we are laughing but I'm just faking it. What if he names her Ashton?)

Zanokuhle : Elakhe igama ke u Zamathongo

(He says and looks at me. He knows what I did. I know Zanokuhle will never throw me in the bush. I finally let out a sigh of relief. This baby is mine now and no one will ever take her away from me. No one will ever take my family away from me. I am going to fight.)

Nyathuko : Ngiyabonga Nkosana ka Baba

Zanokuhle : Bhambatha

(Nyathuko kisses me again)

Nyathuko : Ngiyabonga Mam'Zondi.

Me : Ngiyabonga nami Bhambatha.

His Definition Final Season

By Nomfundo Mbhele

.....**THE END**.....

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