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Prologue

I was sitting in this foreign place holding and rubbing my tummy tightly. All I could think of was the baby I'm carrying inside me. How will I protect her and make sure that she's fine. I didn't know much about the city because I come very far from here, in a village called Centane. I didn't come by choice but because I was kicked out by my parents for being pregnant at a young age, I'm 17.

Mom knew about it and we kept it a secret. Till I started showing unfortunately as soon as Dad found out he got very mad and literally threw me out after giving me a beating of a lifetime.

Thing about me is that I was raised by parents who are true believers of Christ. My Dad is a Pastor and all he cares about is his reputation. My Mom? can't really lean on that one. She only speaks when given permission to, even going to the bathroom she has to ask. That's how controlled she is in that marriage. So how can she defend me, her daughter in a situation like that?

My mistake was falling inlove with a boy back in the village named Mtyhileli Malahle. He was a risk taker not many boys were able to reach out to me because they were afraid of my father. But with Mtyhileli he managed turning me from a good church girl to a bad one. Cause I used to sneak out by windows to meet him. And that's how I got pregnant.

Being kicked out, he was the first person I thought of running to. He denied everything and of knowing me in front of his parents. Luckily his older brother knew me and because he had a heart he offered taking me to Gauteng with him. Because he works that side and few days being with him everything was okay. Till his girlfriend made an appearance and saw me. They've been forever fighting ever since I got here and it gets ugly and noisy to a point where I'm unable to sleep.

After an hour of their argument he got out rubbing his face.

Zolisa: Uhm Vuyelwa..

I got up from the couch

Me: It's fine bhuti I'll leave if being here is causing fights.

Zolisa: Hayi maan uzoyaphi? (Where will you go?)

I shrugged

Me: Andazi kodwa nzoyenza icebo (I don't know but I'll make a plan)

Honestly I don't even know where I'll go.

Zolisa: Vuyelwa you're too young and pregnant. It's not safe for you out there.

Me: Ingxaki bhuti (Problem is) if I don't leave now things will get out of hand and your girlfriend will attack me. My baby's safety comes first.

He glanced at my tummy and closed his eyes in frustration.

Zolisa: Ey uMtyhileli naye.

He sighed rubbing his face

Zolisa: I regret taking you from the village to this place. We should've begged your parents maybe they were gonna feel sorry for you and let you stay there.

I shook my head

Me: Not my Dad. I know him he cares about his image more than anything. I embarrassed him and the way he cursed me. I knew by then he meant everything he said to me. My Mom doesn't even have power.

Zolisa: Oh mntanabantu.

I saw him getting teary. He made me to cry worse. He gave me a hug.

Zolisa: Xolo sisi, xolo (I'm sorry) look I'll accompany you to the train station to go back home. I'm sure you'll be better safe there than here.

I wiped my tears

Zolisa: Vha?

Me: Yah

He helped me take my bags and got ready to accompany me to the station. But his girlfriend got more crazier and shouted throwing things around. He had no choice but to stay behind. So he secretly slid some money inside my pocket and told me to go home. Unfortunately I had to find a way by myself and I got so lost, not knowing the city. On the way I ended up getting mugged. They took my clothes and money. I was stripped off not knowing where to go but thank God they didn't do anything worse to me.

Months Later I was in the streets. I was 9 months pregnant lying and sleeping on cardboards, eating from trashbins being unhygienic was something that was a norm for me. I was very skinny only left with my belly. I couldn't even hustle because of being heavily pregnant.

We were on a rank busy helping people with parcels and asking money till I started feeling contractions.

Me: Yhuuu!

I stopped and held my hips

Ndileka: Yintoni petla? (what is it friend?)

Me: Uyeza umntana (The child is coming)

Ndileka: Hee?

Me: Uyeza umntana Ndileka ndithi uyeza!!!! (The baby is coming!!)

I shouted.

Ndileka: Yhuyu Vuyelwa hee can't we go to the bridge?

Me: Yey sundibuza ububhanxa andizokwazi uhamba indlela ende mahn. (Don't ask me nonsense I won't be able to take long walks)

Ndileka is my best friend we met in the streets that lady can make things happen, a real hustler also she's a selfless person.

She organized one of the street boys to come with a trolley and placed me inside it. They ran with me under the bridge so that I can give birth to a hideous place.

The boys left us there. Ndileka helped me deliver a baby girl. She was so beautiful and looked so like me. I named her Ncumolwam cause I never smiled like that before in my life when I saw her. Ndileka disappeared for hours and she came back with a plastic as I breastfed my baby.

Ndileka: Look what I brought you

Me: What's this?

Ndileka: Jonga (Look)

I opened the plastic and saw blue baby rompers, napkin and blankets.

Me: Heee?

Ndileka: Doesn't matter how the colour looks right now the baby needs to wear something.

I looked at the items again

Me: Uzifumana phi? (Where did you get them?)

Ndileka: Stole them at another house on the washing line. Doesn't matter now as long as the kid has something to wear.

I became emotional

Me: Thank you Ndileka you're a real friend.

I hushed my baby and stared at her while asleep.

Me: I can't take care of her while in the streets. She's not safe, and she's a baby girl. I have nothing so that I can look after her and raise her.

Ndileka: So ucinga ntoni? (What are you thinking?)

Me: I'll give her up

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maybe drop her at an orphanage.

I took a moment and kissed my baby while crying.

Ndileka: Oh mahn petla. Yazi I know a place, just rest a little.
We'll go.

Me: Okay

We walked to an orphanage this was very heart breaking for me to do. Knowing that I can love this child and do anything for her. But given the circumstances, I had to give her up. So that better people can raise her up. I couldn't stop crying.

Ndileka: (whispering) Pssst masambe! (Let's go!)

Me: (crying) Ohh Ncumo!!

I dropped her on the gate and we ran away and stood behind the tree watching her. We waited till we saw her being taken in then we left. I felt like a part of me inside was dying as I walked away. I kept on looking back as I held my tummy.

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My name is Vuyelwa Krila I'm still looking for my Ncumo.

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YEARS LATER

♪♪ Brown skin girl, your skin just like pearls.

The best thing in the world

Never trade you for anybody else, singin' [X2]♪♪

I was dancing and jamming to the song while swirling my hips side to side. Today was my day off work, dancing is my therapy. It has a way of relaxing and soothing my body and soul. Makes me forgot about all the problems I have and just focus to the rhythm of the music with my movements. I even had a designed dancing room made for me.

The door opened and Mom walked in, she smiled widely at me.

Mom: Ah my Bebita! (My baby girl!)

She walked in and joined me while pulling my arms and turning me around while dancing.

Mom: "The men 'dem gon' fall inlove

With you and all of your glory

Your skin is not only dark, it shines and it tells a story

Keep dancin', they can't control you

They watchin', they all adore you

If ever you are in doubt, remember what Mama told you."

I hugged her tightly. Those words are really what she used to say.

Me: Ah Mamá that just warmed my heart. How do you know the song?

Mom: I'm not that outdated Ashanti

I chuckled.

Mom: I hope you keep those words in Bebita. I knew I'd find you here. Come let's go, I prepared us a Gordita meal.

Me: Ohh Mamá mi favorita comida (my favourite meal.)

She pulled my hand

Mom: Ven vamos (Come let's go)

We went to the lounge. My Mom is the best Mommy in the whole world.

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My name is Ashanti Quintero. I am adopted by a Mexican family. This is my story.

Chapter 1

ASHANTI

Was woken up by an alarm. Today I'm going to work, I feel like crying but it is what it is. As much as my parents are well-off financially but they taught me to be an independent woman and work for my own money. In case something happens to them.

I went to shower. As soon as I stepped off I received a call from a guy I just recently hooked up with. Can't exactly tell what we really have but we're close.

Me: Mayi

Mayihlome: Why don't you ever call me by my full name?

Me: You know I'm struggling

He chuckled

Mayihlome: Just calling to check if you're still coming to work

Me: Yes definitely, miss me already?

Mayihlome: A lot was so lonely when you were not here.

I smiled

Me: It was only a day off

Mayihlome: Of torture yaz

I giggled

Me: You're being overboard right now

We went silent.

Me: Look I just got out of shower we'll talk again.

Mayihlome: Okay bye

Me: Bye

Mayihlome: Ashanti... I love you

Me: Thanks

I giggled and dropped the call. He finally admitted, just wanna play hard to get a little. I like him too but it's not that deep.

I went to dress in my suits.

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LAURA (ASHANTI'S MOM)

I was setting up breakfast. I knew soon my husband and daughter will show up.

Armando: My lovita

He kissed my cheek I smiled

Me: Good morning

Armando: Morning. Bebita is running late today?

Me: She's never late she's soon gonna come.

Armando: Okay

I looked at him as he sat down and we started eating.

Me: Last night's call seemed to bother you. What was it?

He sighed

Armando: It's our son no one else

Me: What has Alessandro done this time? Let me guess, he got himself in jail?

Armando: As always. I don't know when will this child stay away from drugs.

Me: Biggest drug dealer in Mexico, impossible.

Armando: Why does it seem like you've given up on our son?

I dropped the fork

Me: Cause honey I'm tired really tired of this child. One day we talk to him to stop he agrees to stop. Then following day he'll go back way more. Maybe that's the life he wants to live and there's nothing much you and I can do about it.

Armando: Don't talk like that cariño (honey)

I shrugged shaking my head

Me: Honestly, what I'm expecting right now is to bury him. The only child I have is Ashanti and he should better stay there in Mexico and not come here to attract more troubles.

Armando: Laura!

I closed my eyes

Armando: Take back those words. This is our son we're talking about, we don't give up on him. No matter what happens.

Me: One day we'll die of bullets because of him.

Armando: We'll play our role and we're going to bail him out.

I moved back in shock

Me: You mean we're going back to Mexico for a crook? Why doesn't your brother fix the mess he created.

Armando: Basta!!! (Stop it!!)

He shouted while banging the table

Armando: I said we're going back home to bail our son. We'll fix him, that's what we ought to do as his parents.

I breathed heavily stressed by this. We saw Ashanti standing there, seemed like she heard our conversation. I quickly got up and went to her with a fake smile.

Me: Oh Bebita, good morning. How are you?

I said kissing her cheek and hugging her but she remained still, looking at us in suspicion.

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ASHANTI

I think I heard my parents arguing. I took time staring at them and walked towards the table taking my seat. Mom ashamedly sat down too. They hate arguing in front of me though I understand cause I'm old enough.

Me: Morning Mamá and Papá

Them: (lowerly) Morning

I continued observing them

Me: Is it Sandro again?

They looked at each other

Dad: Yes sweetheart you know how your brother gets.

Mom: He never stops

Me: So what does that mean?

They kept quiet

Me: Cause I can't leave South Africa this time. I've got a good job and I enjoy it more this side.

Mom: Was about to tell Papá to leave you behind if we're leaving cause I don't want to endanger your life over there

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again.

Dad: Won't you just shut up Laura

Mom: No! the least we can do is consider our daughter's life.

Dad: Ashanti needs to be there too

Me: Papá?

Dad: You can get a good job in Monterrey.

Me: No Dad Sandro will get back to his tricks when I'm there. I don't wanna be part of his shenanigans.

Dad: I'll protect you

Me: You know how good he is with mind games. He managed fooling you all those years, he's even worse now.

He sighs

Me: Please Papá, you're the one that told me to be independent. Now I'm trying to build something for myself and

I'm getting used to it plus I love this friendly country. Don't let me go down that path again.

(Silence)

Dad: Promise me you'll take care of yourself?

Me: Lo prometo (I promise)

He looked at Mommy then back at me.

Dad: Okay, fine then. You may stay but we won't be gone for long.

I smiled. Mom angrily threw her napkin down.

Mom: I hate this! Now we have to leave our baby girl alone? For someone who'll never change his ways, utter nonsense!

Dad: Laura...

She got up and walked away. He sighed defeatedly and looked at me.

Dad: I'm sorry

Me: It's fine. We're driving together?

Dad: Oh so you want to deplete my petrol?

Me: Dad why you gotta be this way?

We chuckled. I collected the plates and placed them on the sink then we left for work.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

I helped her drink a cup and she made a funny face as she couldn't take in the taste. I giggled till tears came out.

Candice: Damn! I have never in my life tasted something like this.

I giggled once again

Me: But you love it.

Candice: Because it heals me, more than the pills Mom and Dad give me. I throw them every time.

Me: Hayi wena don't let them hear you say that or else I'll lose my job

She chuckled

Candice: Never whilst I'm still here. I'll defend you with everything I've got. You're the best and kindest housekeeper we've ever got.

I smiled.

Me: Ah my child.

Candice: And please Mavuyi dig them all out of your garden and bring them to me in packets.

I chuckled

Me: This sounds like an addiction

Candice: It works magics Mama yoh.

We were talking about Umhlonyane. I don't know it's translation in English, but I think it's an African Wormwood. I have dozens of them in my garden planted at the back. So ever since working for the Smith family for 10 years now. Their daughter Candice has had a problem of getting sick constantly and her parents wouldn't know what to do. They'd take her to all the doctors and she'd be given medicine that wouldn't help her.

Her fever would get worse and she'd become real sick. Even with the antibiotics they weren't helping that much, she has Pneumonia.

I decided to secretly step in and help her cause she's like my daughter and I felt their pain.

I'd take Umhlonyane at home and boil it then make her drink.

The fever would get much better. It's a remedy Mommy used on me. long time. But since they're a white family I have to do it secretly. Though I keep on telling Candice to continue eating her treatment but this child doesn't listen. I have to find a way to scare her cause she doesn't take my warnings seriously.

Me: You hungry?

Candice: No

Me: You need to eat Candice

Candice: Only when you make me your African cuisines.

Me: Your parents don't have those.

Candice: It's not for them but me.

I shook my head with a smile

Me: I'll go buy one for you then

Candice: No no I want to taste one prepared by you.

Me: Are you sure you're not my husband?

She giggled

Candice: Please Mavuyi.

Me: Mxm wena you are forcing for me to get fired.

Candice: Never. How much will you need?

Me: R25 is enough

She went to look for her money and gave me R100.

Me: R25

Candice: I have no loose money.

Me: Okay I'll be back then.

I walked to the shopping centre and went to buy 1litre of Amasi (Sour fermented milk.) Then I got back home and made her Umphokoqo, a crumbled pap with Amasi. I added some sugar so that it can be more nice and sweet. My daughter says it's the best.

An hour later I dished out for her. Heee this kid emptied her plate finish and told me it was good and she tipped me with the change from the R100. We laughed and spoke many jokes together till her parents came back. They called me and she hid her plate.

I went to make it to the lounge and sat down opposite them. I was afraid their look scared me.

Me: Mr & Mrs Smith you called for me.

Mrs Smith: Yes true Mavuyi

She looked at her husband with her eyes getting teary. They took long to speak.

Me: Am I in trouble Madam?

Her: No no definitely not.

Mr Smith cleared his throat.

Him: Uhm Mrs Vilakazi we called you here to inform you that... we'll be moving to Poland.

I swallowed a dry lump feeling hurt.

Him: Uhm we erm both got a job over there. So it's necessary for us to leave and move overseas.

I fold my lips and felt like crying

Her: So, you know what that means right?

Me: (cracky voice) I do it's okay

They pushed an envelope to me

Him: That's your pay for the month. It'll be your last week working here.

I slowly reached for the envelope

Her: Apologies Mavuyi. You are such a great person not only were you a housekeeper but you were like family. It has been a smooth 10 years with you.

I nodded

Me: Thank you

Her: Will make sure to refer you to my friends who are in need of housekeepers.

Me: Thanks. Can I please be uhm excused?

Him: Ofcourse

I got up and rushed to the bathroom. I began crying, I don't wanna lie I enjoyed working here. And they paid me good money. I was even bonding with Candice this will hurt her. Now I'm back to being dependent on my husband, eish.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 2

MAVUYI

I arrived home early because I got dismissed before my knocking time I was too emotional. My daughter wasn't yet back from school and my husband was still at work. So I took it upon me to call my friend, just to have someone I can talk to and de-stress. It didn't even take her long to come.

Ndileka: Motsoalle waka! Batsho mos neh? (My friend! Is that what they say?)

I laughed while hugging her.

Me: Yah but I like it more when you say petla.

Ndileka: Aww petla yam

We giggled and took a seat. Yes, we've kept the friendship going all these years. Even though we got off the streets but we remained friends and never lost our bond.

I made sure not to forget her when things got brighter on my side, cause she has sacrificed so much for me. The least I could do, was to take her with me. Though she couldn't stop getting me into trouble. And I'd get scolded because of her but I still love her though. And I'm glad she's in a better place today.

Me: What do you feel like eating?

Ndileka: No lovin'gs. I dropped everything for you into ingawe.
So tell me what's going on.

I sighed and looked away.

Ndileka: And I know it's unusual for you to be home this time.

I sighed loudly and rubbed my face.

Me: Tshomi ndiphelelwe ngu msebenzi (I've lost my job friend)

Ndileka: Iyho

Me: They're going overseas they've been offered a job that
side. So baya hamba (they're leaving)

Ndileka: Zindaba ezimbi ezo worse ubusu baqhelile (That's bad
news and you were used to working for them.)

Me: Ewe (Yes)

Ndileka: I'm sorry tshomi yam yazi

She rubbed my shoulders.

Ndileka: Those are really bad news but... I think it's about time
now

Me: Time yantoni? (of what?)

She smirked lifting her shoulder up.

Ndileka: Yoqabela kule nqwelo yam. (To cross over my forte)

I shook my head fastly

Me: No no no no I can't Ndileka soze (never)

Ndileka: Why not hii? You'd live a great life petla. See how I've managed building my own home? My kids? They know nothing of poverty.

Me: I'm married Ndileka got a family to consider before living off by shoplifts. This time I have to think of my dignity.

Ndileka: Mna andina sdima dahn? (Don't I have a dignity?)

Me: That's not what I'm saying. What I'm trying to say Ndili is that I'm not about that life anymore, it's in my past and I'd rather leave it there. Ngoku I'm a married woman I can't live looking over my shoulders every now and then, worried about the cops. Atleast I've got everything I've wanted why should I go back to that life? It's really not worth it.

She kept quiet feeling my point.

Me: Nawe petla you managed hustling yourself to the great life you've always wanted. You have a nice house, raised your beautiful kids. I think it's time you sat down and let them look after you.

She snickered shaking her head

Ndileka: Hayike mntakabawo

Me: Don't you get tired of going in and out of jail? Don't you think someday you might lose your life with the life you living?

She smiled.

Ndileka: Yabona Vuyelwa (See Vuyelwa) it's nice of you to speak like this cause you have a backup - your husband, I don't. I don't want to be those parents who add more stress to my kids and be the reason they don't wanna come home. By making them suffer iblack tax. Their money is theirs, they should only spend it on me only when they feel like it. Otherwise maintaining all the house bills, it's all on me. And I'll do what I know best to provide for them.

Me: Don-

She puts out her hand.

Ndileka: I already have a bad reputation. Andi funwa ndawo (I'm unwanted everywhere) so please I don't need another judgement from you. I'm doing this for my kids.

Me: I wasn't judging you was just worried about your safety.

Ndileka: Don't worry about me. I'm a big girl, ndingu Gabadiya.

We giggled.

Me: Wow! You never change but honestly I do care.

Ndileka: I know but enough about me. What about you? What are we gonna do about you?

I shrugged

Me: Guess I'll have to look for a job somewhere. I wish to find a loving family like the Smiths.

Ndileka: Lonto vele ozohlala uyiyo? (Is that what you'll always be?)

I frowned

Me: Is that you throwing a judgement too?

She giggled while shaking her head.

Ndileka: Hay hay hay 10 years yonke doing the same thing? Go look for something else mahn. Maybe cleaner kwi restaurants, schools or even cook for the feeding schemes. Just please... different environment. There's many things we could work on. And I'll help you since I know how you hate being dependent on your husband.

I closed my eyes

Me: Okay ke

Ndileka: Good

Me: Also need you to help me on buying something special for my husband with my last salary. I wanna spoil him he works too hard.

Ndileka: Mh! Akumandi ubangoo Bhekisizwe (Must be nice being Bhekisizwe.) What are you thinking?

Me: I need your help. I don't know much about men and things they like. My Zulu man is just too old-fashioned I just need to bring out that voom in him.

Ndileka: Hee yiza nencwadi (come with a book)

I went to look for a book and paper.

Ndileka: How much are we talking about?

Me: R4000

Ndileka: Okay bhala iwatch, ooTsolo point, iqula (write a wristwatch

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sharp formal shoes, cologne,) tie and a set of underwears & socks.

I noted down.

Ndileka: Shaving machine?

Me: No yhu! It's too much. I'm yet to save for my daughter too have you forgotten?

Ndileka: I'm just carried out askies.

Speaking of my daughter she got in singing and dropped her bag down.

Letty: Sanibonani (greetings)

Us: Hello

Letty: Yini le ngizo gcinelwa yona? (What is it that'll be saved for me?)

Me: It's a surprise darling

Letty: Oh I love surprises and why would you be back so early Ma?

Me: Belungu bam (My employers) wanted to give me some time to rest.

Letty: They really love you

Me: Mhm.

Ndileka: Ntombi unxibe usize bani esinqeni? (What size do you wear?)

Letty: 28

Ndileka: Okay I've got nice dress and shorts I think they might suit you.

Letty: Really?

Ndileka: Yes and it's summer mos

Letty: Thank you so much bring them on.

They giggled

Me: Ayizokwenzeka lonto leyo (That's not gonna happen)

Letty: Aybo Ma ngobani? (Why?)

Me: Because I say so

Letty: Kodwa Mam'Ndee brings me cool clo-

Me: Lethokuhle! I said it won't happen. Go to your room now.

Letty: Mnk shoo

She picked her bag

Letty: Bye Mam'Ndee

Ndileka: Bye sweetheart.

She disappeared. Ndileka smirked at me.

Ndileka: Jealous?

Me: Of what?

Ndileka: That I'm more stylish than you even your kid can see it.

Me: Hasuka keep fooling yourself

She laughed.

Ndileka: So are we drowning in tears or we go on a spree?

I squint my eyes

Me: Shopping with you never goes right.

Ndileka: I promise I'll behave

Me: Good

I got up and went to dress up in much better clothes before leaving.

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ASHANTI

I just got off the boardroom and headed in my office. I placed all my files in my bag. Just hope my superiors will approve of my planning. We can receive a great deal if we carry on with it.

Mayi walked in

Mayihlome: Mrs Pendla

Me: Stop it okay

Mayihlome: Nothing wrong with wishing on yourself right? It may come true.

I smiled.

Me: Remain convincing yourself but I am off limits so don't even try.

Mayihlome: I'm so hurt I thought you felt the same too.

Me: Being close with you doesn't mean I have a thing for you.

Mayihlome: I understand. I guess we're okay as friends then.

Me: Yeah friends will do. Which site are we visiting today?

Mayihlome: Sinoville

Me: Your team is all gathered?

Mayihlome: They always ready but they're on break.

Me: Meaning I've gotta change

He touched me.

Mayihlome: Before you do uhm can I take you out for lunch?

I placed my hand on my waist

Mayihlome: Come on we're still an hour early. Just a harmless lunch.

Me: You don't give up do you?

Mayihlome: Just love being around you Miss Quintero can't help it.

Me: Don't get used to it.

We giggled and went out of my office.

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LAURA

I was packing all our clothes feeling a little bit down. Whenever we go back home, we have never left Ashanti behind but now things are different. It really upsets me I don't wanna lie.

Armando: Lovita

I closed my eyes he hugged me from behind.

Armando: I'm sorry I know how you love our daughter but I think she'll manage on her own. She's old now.

I moved away from him and took a set of clothes to go iron them downstairs. He followed me.

Armando: Please say something

Me: It doesn't matter what I say cause you've already made a decision and that's us going back to Mexico.

Armando: But did you expect us to enjoy our stay here whilst our son is stuck in jail?

Me: It's because he likes it that way honey, no matter what we do.

I huff shaking my head.

Me: Feels like I was cursed with him you know. When we moved here as a whole family we told ourselves that we're not going back there. You were running away from your brother's dodgy dealings. Alessandro was still a good boy back then I miss his innocence.

I wiped my eyes

Me: Then we made one mistake just one and it costed us.

Armando: True but we can't undo the past. All we have to do is to deal with the present. I have faith that Sandro is going to change. We just shouldn't fail him as parents, he'll one day realize all the efforts that we're doing for him and how much we care.

I shrugged

Armando: Don't give up on him please.

Me: What can I say. Did you book the flight?

Armando: Yes

Me: Good, hope this won't take long.

He smiled.

Armando: Let me be useful so long and make my wife something to eat.

Me: Do so marido (husband)

He walked away and I focused on my ironing.

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MAVUYI

The shopping went well. Ndileka and I separated in town. I got home a bit late and found my daughter standing on the stove.

Me: Sweetheart

Letty: Mama

Me: Are you cooking?

Letty: Yes just started

Me: Ha.a drop everything down. I brought us takeaways.

Letty: Oh really? Okay.

She switched off the stoves and went to sit back on the desk, continuing with her schoolwork.

I gave her one of the parcels.

Me: Look what I brought you

Letty: For me?

I nodded. She got up and checked. She then screamed and jumped on me.

Me: Hawu Letty!

She let go of me and continued beaming.

Letty: Ngiyabonga Ma

Me: You like them?

Letty: I love them! Yho awuthi ngiyo linganisa (Let me go fit them.)

She kissed my cheek

Letty: You're the best Mama

I smiled I brought her clothes.

I continued offloading the grocer then dished out for us. I checked out my husband's gifts and placed them inside the room divider.

I walked to where my daughter's books were lying and picked one of her pages. "Teenage Pregnancy" was written boldy. Seems like it'll be a topic for her essay. I instantly slump on the chair while touching my tummy. This triggered me all over again.

Me: Ncumo

I lightly uttered covering my face and cried silently

Letty: Mommy how do I.. look?

I removed my hands and wiped my face clean.

Letty: Ma uright?

Me: Yah yah I'm alright. Come sit down.

I patted the chair next to me. I looked at her and took a deep breath.

Me: We need to talk. You're 17 and we haven't had this kind of talk. I'll need you to relax and be free.

She nodded.

Me: Are you dating?

The question caught her off guard. She became silent.

Me: You don't need to be scared we're just having an open talk. Plus I won't judge you and won't shout at you neither.

She sighed nervously

Letty: Yes I am dating

Me: For how long?

Letty: It's just few months

I nodded and swallowed preparing for this next heavy question.

Me: Uyalala naye or sekhe walala nomntu? (Are you sleeping with him or have you ever you slept with someone?)

She shyly shook her head.

Me: So awungeke uMind'e ume uBaba akuse Natal uyohlolwa ubuntombi bakho? (So won't you mind if Dad sends you to Natal for virginity testing?)

Her breathing changed as she shot her eyes open.

Me: Thetha inyaniso Lethokuhle (Speak the truth)

Letty: Uzo kwata Mama (You'll be angry)

Me: I won't. I also have my mistakes so please mntanam tell me the truth

She bites her nails all ashamed.

Letty: Cha Ma angilona itshitshi (I'm not a virgin)

I shut my eyes and tilted my head up letting off a heavy breath.

Me: Did you use a condom?

Letty: Yebo

A mother in me was angry knowing that my child at this age is no longer a virgin. I was scared of the cycle of repeat cause I was pregnant at her age. But I'll try to handle this as calmly as

possible cause I don't want her to end up running away like I did when I handle this matter harshly.

I finally dropped my head looking at her.

Me: Okay so the first step we'll do from here my child is to go for an HIV/AIDS testing. I hope you know that a condom can burst and it is not 100% accurate. Doesn't mean you'll be safe from these diseases or from pregnancy. Contraception is the route you'll have to take, you know you're having sex. I advice you to go to the clinic and have an injection. Your card will stay with me so that I can remind you everytime you need to go.

She nodded.

Me: Lethokuhle you are in grade 12 my child. You need to focus, boys should be the last thing on your mind and focus on your studies. But even I know that it's all up to you, you will remain doing what you want to do at the end of the day. So only thing I'm asking from you is to just make sure that you always use condoms, always! And be on contraceptives please.

She nodded

Me: Please do me that favour or I'll tell your father if you can't obey.

Letty: Cha Ma! Ngiyathembisa ngizolalela (No Mom! I promise I'll obey)

Me: Please my child. I'm so happy that dress suits you by the way.

Letty: Thank you

Me: Let me go dish up

ASHANTI

I was now driving my parents to the airport. I was so sad that they were leaving. I shed a few tears as they got off the car and took their luggage in the boot.

Me: I'll miss you Mom and Dad

We shared a hug

Dad: We'll miss you too Bebita

We broke the hug and tears ran down my cheeks.

Me: The house will now feel empty. I'll be alone and... not seeing your faces.

Mom: Hija mía, no hables dolorosamente. (My child, don't speak so painfully)

Me: Pero es la verdad Mamá (but it's the truth Mom)

She cupped my cheeks.

Mom: Oh baby you'll make me cry. We'll always speak on the phone always.

She hugged me

Dad: And sweetheart don't worry about your safety. I've organized men who'll guard around the house day & night. All you got to do is to look after yourself.

Me: I will Papá

Dad: I trust you Bebita you're smart and a big girl. I love you so much, come give Papá a hug.

I went to hug him and we had another group hug.

Their flight came and seeing them leave made things worse. Mom opened her hand and gave me a pendant.

Mom: Keep this with you sweetheart

I held it and smiled

Me: I will thanks.

She kissed me and I bid them farewell. I held tightly on the pendant till they disappeared. I wiped my falling tear I'll surely miss them. I left the airport and drove back home.

>>> To be continued...

Chapter 3

ASHANTI

I opened the door and was welcomed by an empty house. How cold it felt being inside this big house right now, the quietness got to me. I'm just used to Mom running to me first thing when I walk in, then she'd give me kisses. I looked at the table, I can already imagine her singing while preparing food and laying it out on the table.

Now I won't be getting any of that, I'll be alone. Completely alone. I swear I'm gonna go crazy.

Voice: Mad-

I screamed dropping my keys.

Me: oh Lord! You gave me a fright

Him: sorry didn't mean to scare you. Sir Armando instructed us to wait in the house till you come back and tell you about us being your guards.

I sigh in relief

Me: I know about that

Him: great

Me: so how much should I pay you?

Him: no he said he'll take care of that

I curved my lips to a smile

Me: oh it's fine. So what's your name?

Him: Dwayne

Me: nice, I'm Ashanti. Are you head of the guards or whatso they call it?

Him: yes

Me: please you can guard the house. But where I go, please make sure that you do not follow. I just need my personal space respected.

Dwayne: clear enough

Me: yeah. Welcome, you can make yourself home. I just need to go lie down.

Dwayne: it's fine, goodnight.

Me: night.

I walked upstairs. At first I went to go lie down but then no sleep came I kept on thinking about my parents. I even had no appetite to eat and besides I can't cook anything. I don't feel like ordering too. Mommy spoilt me too much, I'm so used to her food.

I decided to change my clothes and wore my tights and sports bra. First went to grab a wine before making it to my dancing

room. Wanted to play and dance to something soulful. Opted for an Indie Arie song.

I drank the wine and began dancing slowly to the song. I'd stop whenever I felt like drinking more and continued dancing till I became tipsy.

I fell on the floor and took out a phone, wine has put me on another level, so I decided to write a risky text.

"Hey🐱 I think I can take the offer of becoming a Mrs Pendla."

I giggled while sending the message. Decided to write another one.

"And damn! Did I tell you how hot you are on the working ground? Argh! all that sweat dripping from you, can't get off my mind😊"

I sent the text and threw my phone afar as I rolled on the floor laughing. I'm so lonely I think I need somebody and Mayi could be the one for me.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

My daughter helped me set a romantic dinner for her father then she went to sleep afterwards. Her father is almost on his way back home. He works as a security guard, so he knocks off quite late.

I played softly a Letta Mbuli & Caiphus Semenya "Ndiphendule" song. I warmed his food and placed it on the table.

Just then the door opened.

Bheki: hhabe yini manje le? (And then what's this?)

I smiled getting up.

Me: good evening Tata

Bheki: evening nkosikazi (wifey)

He pulled my waist and pecked my lips.

Bheki: wee Bhodlinja what are you up to?

I giggled embarassly

Me: yhuu Tata why do you call me like that. Come take a seat.

"Bhodlinja" is part of my clan name. It's a very funny word I don't like it. I wish he didn't know that part of my clan name cause he tends to call me publicly and people would laugh at me. Sometimes he does it deliberately so that men can get their eyes off me. He's so jealous of his wife lol that's why he quickly wed me so that he can have me all to himself.

I held his hand

Me: this isn't much. I know it's not everyday that I get to do this sthandwa sam. But tonight I'm thanking you and appreciating you for all that you've done for me and us as a family. This is a way of saying that I love you so much. I enjoy being your wife. It shouldn't be always you who's spoiling me but I should do the same too.

He smiled at me taking off his cap

Me: with the little that I have I decided to make you happy and spoil you a little. One day it shall be big. Maybe ndik'khuphe siz'voca-voce si massage iimizimba yethu (I take you out and pamper you then we massage our bodies)

Bheki: awu, manje ufuna ngithinta-thintwe ngabanye abafazi?
(So you want me to be touched by other women?)

Me: no andithi nam I'll also be there

Bheki: mmm hay akho nkinga ma usho njalo (it's no problem if you say so)

He likes to over-exaggerate. He lifts my hand up and kissed it while making his charming smile.

Bheki: ngiyabonga sthandwa sam. Ngiyazi ukuthi ngela langa nga hlangana ngalo nawe, azange ngenze iphutha. Ngabona umfazi wange mpela, uMama wekhaya manje ngamthola.

Wanga khela umuzi, ngiyabonga MaThangana. (Thank you my love. I knew the day I met you that I didn't make a mistake. I saw a wife, mother of my kids and I got her. You've build a home for me, thank you MaThangana)

Me: kubulela mna Tata (I'm also grateful)

He smiled and yawned while wiping his lips.

Bheki: yey angikhathele, waze wasebenza kanzima umuntu.
(I'm so tired, I work so hard)

Out of the blue I cried. I became emotional thinking of how he helped taking me off the streets.

I was helping him with his parcels and he kept on directing me to his rank, little did I know that he was taking me straight to where he lives. From there he offered me food

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told me to bath and just before you know it he gave me a place to stay.

Funny how I easily trusted people back then but maybe it was because I was desperate and naïve maybe. And that's how I earned myself a husband.

I felt his hand on my face as he wiped my tears.

Bheki: ungakhali (don't cry)

Me: I'm just thinking way back when we-

Bheki: savumelana ukuthi yonke lampilo siy'shiya ngasemuva. Angeke siy'phathe futhi (we made an agreement that we're leaving all that behind, we're not touching that part of the story again.)

I nodded. He kissed me.

Bheki: ngiyak'thanda yezwa (I love you okay?)

Me: I love you too.

I giggled and took out his giftbag and handed him.

Bheki: what are these?

Me: your gifts

Bheki: was it your payday that you spoiling me this much?

I chuckled

Me: won't kiss and tell all that matters is that you're enjoying.

Bheki: and I am, thank you yini le (what's this?)

Me: cologne

Bheki: wubani manje uCologne? (Who's cologne?)

I burst in laughter

Me: hayibo Baba iqula. Ulithi fafa kuwe kuvakale xa udlule ebantwini. (You puff it on you so that when you pass by people it smells good)

Bheki: eeh seng'zo chayisa manje kwaba ngisebenza nabo. (I'll show off to my colleagues)

Me: aww Baba

Bheki: woza sidanse (come let's dance)

♪♪ "I've been watching you

Everyday of my life, mhhh

Messing round with all the guys

Now let me tell you one more time

You gonna burn out, all my love. x4" ♪♪

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ASHANTI

Today I was a mess a complete mess. I woke up on the floor in my dancing room a bit hungover. I had to go to work with jeans, I was late so very late.

Didn't have time to iron my clothes, didn't have time to eat breakfast or tie my braids. I was a disaster but I'll fix myself on the way.

Dwayne: madam you fine?

Me: yah

I collected my things for work which were all over the place.

Dwayne: I can help you find a nanny

Me: I don't need a nanny I'm fine by myself I'll cope.

I took my stuffs. I got irritated by my phone ringing non-stop. I don't know why Mayi can't leave me alone.

Dwayne: can I drive you to work?

Me: no I'm fine. Stay well, just go hang in the pool or something. Bye.

I ran outside to my car and got inside. I ignited it but it didn't want to start. I got more frustrated and kicked it as I groaned.

I got startled by a knock on the window.

Dwayne: again I'm still asking if I can drive you? Infact move. I'm driving you whether you like it or not.

I sighed

Me: okay fine.

I moved to the back. This was a perfect time for me to facebeat myself. My phone rang again.

Me: what!!!

Voice: woooo who's annoying you that much?

I froze and checked the caller. It was Mom.

Me: oh Mamá I didn't know it was you. Thought it was someone else, please forgive me.

Mom: first day we're away and already it's that bad

Me: it's the worst day Mamá! Everything is upside down.

She giggled

Mom: awwh Bebita it can't be that bad

Me: it is Mom I'm telling you. I can't deal.

Mom: it will be fine just breathe, give yourself time. Or hire someone to help you out.

Me: lo ententaré (I'll try that)

Mom: please my baby. Otherwise just called to tell you that we've arrived safely in Mexico. We are preparing to see your brother in jail.

Me: oh well good luck. Send my greetings.

Mom: I will. We'll speak again when you come back from work. Will send you a list of schedules & tips on how to take care of yourself, plus recipes.

Me: thank you Mom you are a life saver.

Mom: it's because I love you. Bye sweetheart.

Me: bye I love you so much too.

We ended the call and I was dropped to work. I rushed inside the restroom to go rather change in my overalls.

When I got out I was told that the boss is looking for me in his office. I rushed there and there were my other working mates, Mayihlome was there too.

He smiled at me but I kept a straight face.

Boss: right, so I like both of your presentations Miss Ashanti & Christian but I think the one we'll go for is Mr Christian's.

The team clapped their hands. I did too and smiled, yeah mine didn't work out but next time it will. Who am I to be jealous? My time will come too.

He handed us the pages of Christian's plans and explained thoroughly where we'll work. How we'll renew and construct old worn-out buildings to become utilities for public use. We're also looking for sites in ghost towns to run this project successfully.

As he was explaining thoroughly. I suddenly heard a strong roar, it's been a good while hey.

I instantly glanced on the floor, I saw footprints trailing on Christian's direction.

The leopard roared again moving its head side to side as it stood ontop of the desk.

Only I was able to see it. It's been years since growing up seeing this leopard. As unexplainable as it is but at first I was scared of it and would run away from it. But as I grew older I realized that it appears to protect me from dangerous situations. No one at home knew about this, for some weird reasons I kept it to myself. And it has saved me and my family in many occasions.

I quickly threw the paper down.

Me: let's restart with this whole planning all over again.

Boss: excuse me?

Me: something's wrong with Christian's planning

Christian: what?

Me: I'm saying let's start over with it. Come to see of it there's an imbalance right here.

Christian: right now you sound like a jealous loser.

I scoffed

Me: loser? I don't give a damn about that. I give a damn about people's lives.

They all looked at me with puzzled faces.

Me: your planning is perfect it beats mine 10-0. But something's dodgy with your budget. The products and infrastructure doesn't seem of good quality and remember we're building an enormous building.

Boss: what are you implying Miss Quintero?

Me: that something is foul and we have to double check everything before we distribute the products.

Christian: you're mad!!!

Me: something bad is going to happen, you better listen to me.

Boss: don't you think you need some air?

Me: why would I need some air? Because I'm a woman and into a male dominated field? No! I don't need some air if you're continuing with this. Then I'm excluding myself out. At least I tried warning you.

Boss: I think you should get a warning Miss Quintero.

I chuckled in disbelief

Me: for what exactly??

Boss: for disresp-

Me: you know what so be it. But soon you'll think of me and call me.

I charged out. Mayihlome tried to chase after me and held me back.

Mayihlome: Ashanti don't do this. Go back there and apologize

Me: that's not what I'm going to do... You also carrying on with this too?

He kept quiet

Me: well good luck.

I walked away.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

Told my daughter to come at my workplace after school for testing. Mr & Mrs Smith weren't here it was only Candice and she was very understanding.

We finally went to the clinic and did the test. After an hour of waiting, her results came back negative. I was so happy that she was clean. She also didn't contract any STI's so from there she

decided to start with her contraceptions. Her card was kept by me.

We were walking to a rank but we were taking a different route.

Letty: Mom you sure we're not getting lost?

Me: ha.a (no)

Letty: then where are we? Mama.

I stood still at the spot where I dropped her.. that was almost 30 years ago, can I still find her? Where do I even begin. I stared at the orphanage, it looked so different

Guard: Mama can we help you?

Me: no, I'm fine bhuti don't mind me. Stay blessed.

I walked away as I felt something inside me moving. It still inflicts and pains me so much.

Letty: Ma are you really okay? Why were you standing and staring there.

Me: my child when we get home. I'll tell you something important, something I was supposed to tell you a long time ago. Let's continue walking. We're almost there.

She furrowed her eyebrows in confusion and we continued with our path.

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MAYIHLOME

I was walking to a men's loo. But I stopped on my tracks seeing this Christian guy talking with a dodgy guy on some corner outside the fence.

I saw an exchange of money and furrowed my eyebrows.

I watched them more as they continued chatting deeply with giggles there and there. I took my phone and dialed Ashanti but she wasn't answering.

So I decided to take a picture of them. I captured every moment of them and made sure to zoom the camera to find the face of this other dodgy guy. My gut feeling doesn't sit well with Christian and I know this will be helpful someday.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 4

[WEEK LATER]

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MAYIHLOME

So we continued carrying on with Christian's plan. We were making good progress within these couple of days. Though it makes me feel somehow sad about Ashanti not joining us, she's been dismissed to this project. I must say though she has opened my eyes regarding this guy. I've been watching him closely ever since and tracked his moves without him knowing. I managed getting few valid evidence against him. I'm just waiting for anything on his side to flop. But that hasn't just happened yet. Funny enough today I decided to leave my phone behind back home.

Today the weather was windy. But I resumed climbing on the extension ladder anyway, till I reached to the roof surface. I was hammering the roof forming a purlin frame, to support the outer corrugated material that will be placed over it.

The wind was getting bad whilst the other team was busy gathering a cold rolled steel. And then all of a sudden the wind blew hard and it fell off, worst thing followed after.. the ground began to shake and the whole building collapsed with the bricks

falling and cracking down. The men got out of spiral as they ran for their lives, ducking.

I also tried to quickly get off the ladder but it was too late. I screamed as it went all the way down with me. As soon as I hit the ground I immediately blacked out.

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NDILEKA

Decided to take a break today from my criminal activity. Some may judge the way I live but it's the only thing I know and good at. I'm so used to this life, though I know one day it might backfire so bad. I'm turning almost 50 and worried about my sons. This might catch up with them and all that I've built might be all for nothing. Maybe Vuyelwa was right. But what about my clients? Eish this won't be easy it already runs in my blood.

I drank my coffee with baked bread, watching Rea Tsoetella. I got disturbed by my son slamming his car door. He came running inside. It's my lastborn, I have two sons.

Malwande: Mama! Mama!

Me: yhini nha? (What is it?)

Malwande: you have to dress up quickly Mama.

He said in a distressed tone

Me: why Lwande?

He ran his hand over his mouth

Malwande: cause we need to rush immediately to the hospital.
Something bad happened to Mayihlome.

I sprang up the couch spilling my coffee.

Me: Mayihlome? what happened to my son? Huh. Yintoni
Malwande!!!

My voice began to break as I shouted

Malwande: one of the constructions he worked on collapsed
and many of them got hurt, he is amongst them. We have to
go.

Me: how? Like yimi nyaka uMayihlome esebenza phana zange
kwa dilika zakhiwo, njani? (it's been years him working there no
buildings has ever collapsed)

Malwande: Mom I just don't know let's go check him.

Me: oh Nkosi yam yhini Bawo!! Yilento ndilisela mhlambi?
Nzoguquka ke Bawo ndacela please sindisa unyana wam. (Oh
Lord why!? Is it because I'm a thief? I'll change I promise but
please save my son)

I begged while crying.

Malwande: isela? (A thief?)

I quickly wiped my face looking at him

Me: never mind I said anything. I'll go change I won't even bath.

I ran straight to my room

Malwande: Mama?

He doesn't know how I go on about this life. Only his big brother knows, God can't take him like this it's too soon. I quickly wore my tracksuits and sneakers then we rushed straight to the hospital.

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ASHANTI

This week hasn't been joyful for me. Being suspended from work got me all sad and depressed. I really love my job more than anything but everytime I encounter with the leopard I just become brave and don't really mind putting anything in jeopardy.

My parents are still checking up on me, I haven't mentioned my suspension on them. I don't want to stress them more already

they're dealing with Sandro's case. All I pray for is things to go well that side.

Being home for the week I focused more on learning how to cook and doing basic house chores. Tried all Mommy's recipes. Now I'm watching cooking shows I also want to learn South African dishes cause it's like I'm a citizen too.

I also meditate and focus on my dancing, I wanna consider being a Choreographer it's what I'm passionate about afterall.

I think this is the week I needed for myself. It helped relief more stress and discover myself.

Me: so how does this taste?

Dwayne: lemme try it out.

He sliced it with the fork & knife then took a bite.

Dwayne: mhhhh, mhhh. I have never in my entire life tasted something so scrumptious as this.

I giggled

Me: do you think you and the others are going to enjoy it?

Dwayne: yes definitely. And what do you call this meal?

Me: in Mexican we call it Milanesa. Easy to make, just take a chicken, beef or fish you slice it. Dip it in the beaten eggs that's

seasoned with salt & parsley. You roll it against the bread crumbs or flour then you bake it then, wala!

Dwayne: wow please make sure to write down those recipes for my wife.

I chuckled I guess I was that good.

Me: will do so. Take it

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it's your meal. I will dish out the rest for the guards.

Dwayne: thank you Madame

My phone rang

Me: uhm let me go get you some desert.

Dwayne: fine.

I walked away and answered the call from my boss.

Me: Mr Phillips

Him: Shante can you please make it quick to work? it's urgent.

Me: now??

Him: yes now

He dropped the call. That didn't sound good. I wasn't even going to change I was just fine by my summer dress.

I took my car keys then took the desert and placed it next to Dwayne's table.

Me: you'll just dish up for the rest of the guys. I'm called for work it seems urgent.

Dwayne: must I drive you?

Me: no it's fine I can manage

Dwayne: oh okay. Adiós (goodbye)

I smiled

Me: I see you're a fast learner. Goodbye.

I walked out and drove straight to work. When I got in it was so busy inside like some sort of an emergency has happened. I looked around trying to ask what happened but no one took time to answer me. They were all busy on their phones.

"Shante!"

I looked up it was my boss.

Mr Phillips: this side.

I walked straight to his office.

Me: yes? What's going on? It seems like something happened.

He sighed rubbing his eyes

Mr Phillips: I'm so sorry. I am really sorry I should've listened to you. I should've went for your model rather.

I narrowed my eyes

Me: I am confused sir.

He blew out a long sigh seems like he's about to say something bad.

Mr Phillips: the building collapsed while the workers were still busy on the field.

Me: what!! All of the building? You mean like all of it.

He nodded sadly. I covered my mouth while gasping.

Me: did anyone get hurt?

Him: many got hurt. We've lost 6 workers others are still injured. As you seeing me now I have to handle the press and my PR is preparing something for me.

Me: Lord no..

I whispered while tears threatened to come out.

Him: ...I blame myself I should have listened to you and please, I immediately need you back here.

Me: it's fine.

I blinked while shaking my head.

Me: Mayi.. Mayishome where is he? Is he safe?

Him: I don't know he's one of the people that got injured too.

Me: (panicking voice) which hospital? Please give me the hospital he's admitted in.

Him: Faerie Glen

Me: okay let me just go check him

Him: okay, go well.

I literally jogged out with my heart beating against my chest. I got in my car driving straight to the hospital. God he can't die, don't let him die yet.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

Her: Mama I don't know. There are many cases of kids being dropped right at the gate I can't even count. Even the docketts are missing, we've arrived to a lot of change here.

Me: just try harder mntanam please I'm begging you, I need something. Just anything, give me just one lead the rest will follow.

So this week my work for the Smiths came to an end. Before I could focus on job hunting I just wanted to try lucks on finding Ncumo.

So I dragged myself back in this orphanage. I had already told my family about everything, and they're showing me all the support I need. I thought my husband would overreact since he thought I had no child before Letty but amazingly he's handling this all well. I am really blessed with a good husband.

Her: what year was it again?

She said looking through the file.

Me: it was 1991

Her: okay. Yho! these writings are hard to be seen.

She looked carefully at the file. While I crossed my fingers nervously and twitching my legs.

Her: I think I'm finding a case here, of that certain year... a child being picked outside the gate.

My eyes brightened as I fixed my posture on the chair

Me: really?

She stick out something and handed me. Oh my God! I immediately giggled and smiled covering my mouth. I became teary.

Me: it's her. This is my daughter.

It's a picture of Ncumo still a baby. It was black & white and she looked a few months older with a beautiful smile. I admired the photo for a while.

Her: you sure?

Me: yes I am 100%

Her: okay. It seems like she was adopted by a Mexican family.

Me: huh?? Mexicans?

She nodded. I was so shocked no lies. My hope is slowly dropping down. My throat just went dry.

Me: uhm do you think they're still in South Africa?

Her: I'm not sure of that Mama

Me: oh Nkosi yam, Mdali weZulu noMhlaba ngoku sendi sondele. (I'm so close Lord)

I faced up pleading.

Her: she was fostered by the Quintero family and her name seemed to be errhm... "A-A-shanti" yeah, Ashanti.

Me: oh my Ncumo, what did they do to your name? Sounds so foreign.

I looked at the lady and sighed in relief with my hands together.

Me: atleast I am one step closer. Thank you sisi for your help I appreciate it, may God bless you. Can I have this photo?

Her: it's yours you may take it.

Me: enkosi. Bye bye

Her: bye

I stood up and placed it inside my bag then left. I stood on the gate with a huge smile on my face

Me: Ashanti Quintero atleast I have somewhere to start searching you Ncumo. Ah! Ungu Thixo weemi mangaliso Bawo (you're a God of miracles)

I walked at the streets so happy and joyful as I sang.

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ASHANTI

I got in his ward like I was blown in by a strong wind. I didn't care who was there and whatnot.

I ran to him and held his hand. I cried rubbing it and kissed it. His head was all bandaged and his face was bruised.

Me: Mayi I love you too. I love you so much please wake up. It's me Ashanti. I promise I'll stop ignoring you, I'll stop giving you a hard time. Just please don't die now.

I coughed while crying

Me: I still need more of that smile. You're a great person and a fighter you can do this. Please.

I burried my face on his bed crying more. Later on I felt his finger moving inside my hand. I quickly rose my head up.

His eyelids began moving and he slowly opened his eyes and looked around.

Me: baby

I held his face. He looked at me and made a weak side smile.

Mayihlome: Asha- can I have water please.

Me: okay okay.

I went to pour him a glass of water. I handed him and fixed the pillow as I helped him drink.

Me: you scared me. God I'm so happy that you're back.

Mayihlome: I'm so surprised that you actually care

Me: I do I do and... It's more than that. I think I'm inlove with you.

He coughed. I stood up.

Me: can I..?

He raised his hands

Mayihlome: no I'm fine just that, it's shocking news to digest in.

He coughed again

Me: uhm I know

Mayihlome: I mean not long ago you hated me.

Me: I never hated you was just... wanted you to sweat a little.

He giggled

Mayihlome: well I should get injured more often so that my Queen may soften up.

Me: don't say that!

Mayihlome: otherwise I really love you. I'm glad you feel the same too.

Me: I really do

I pecked his cheek. He smiled

Me: how are you feeling?

Mayihlome: like I was crushed by a truck. I can tell I have broken joints. I'm worried if I'll be able to walk or maybe I might lose my career.

Me: oh no baby!

I rubbed his arm. He bit his lips controlling his vulnerable side.

Mayihlome: we should have listened to you. Cause it turns out you were right.

I frowned. He reached for my hand

Mayihlome: listen, I'll give you my home address. I need you to go there and find my brother, his name is Malwande. Tell him I said he must give you my phone it has all the evidence of Christian's dodgy dealings. It might get him fired and it's all we need after what he has caused today.

I slowly made a nod

Mayihlome: make sure it first reaches the boss before anything. Please do me that favour sweetheart

Me: I will.

Mayihlome: thank you I love you

Me: I love you too.

He pulled me to lie on his chest, listening to his heartbeat.

Our moment was ruined when we heard someone like his Mom coming in and she got surprised to see her son awake. She sort of had a weird vibe like that "lady gangster" kind of vibe. She also gave me creepy look. I decided right there that it was my cue to leave. I'm just glad that he's alive that's all that matters out of all this mess.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 5

ASHANTI

I was making a video call to my new bae. He was still kept in hospital for observations after his operation. He's also having his physiotherapy sessions at the hospital. As soon as he gets out he'll use crutches.

Mayihlome: mine!

He said as soon as he picked. I smiled

Me: mine, how are you?

Mayihlome: I'm doing fine, more especially being called by my favourite human.

Me: mm.hm

Mayihlome: how's my querida (darling?)

I raised my eyebrows in shock

Mayihlome: what?

Me: I'm shocked. Just a few days of us dating and already you're hijacking my lingo.

He giggled

Mayihlome: just got curious since I'm dating a Mexicana. So Google translate has been helping me.

Me: I'm flattered I won't lie. You should tell me your lingo too so that I don't miss out the plane.

Mayihlome: mmmh I can imagine that sweet voice of yours speaking it, so sexy.

I giggled

Me: come on now, so are you telling me?

Mayihlome: it's isiXhosa

Me: woo I'll have difficulties in spelling that. It must be worse speaking it.

Mayihlome: I'll help you

Me: atleast.

We smiled at each other

Mayihlome: you still haven't answered me.

Me: oh I'm doing fantastically great too.

Mayihlome: that's much better. Where are we driving?

Me: to work boo boo

Mayihlome: aaah you lie!

Me: yes I'm back honey. Mr Phillips knew he couldn't live without me.

We giggled

Mayihlome: isn't that great news?

Me: it is. I'm so happy I feel like jumping around.

Mayihlome: have all your moment baby. I'm just glad I played my part. They need someone like you in the team, and they're so lucky to have you.

I immediately felt sad for him

Me: oh uhm I apologize baby for-

Mayihlome: no don't, maybe with time I'll be fine. So that I can come join the team again I don't know but... I'm glad I made a move on you in time. So that I can get to see that beautiful face more often even when I'm no longer working there.

I smiled and made a puppy face.

Me: I still feel sad though. No one is gonna make my working days more better than you.

Mayihlome: hello! hello! This is our new communication love.

I giggled

Mayihlome: I know that you feel different and more like a foreigner. I know it's not easy to fit in with others that's why you tend to be alone. I, on the hand was there to force through and invade your space..

He paused and we laughed. How true that is.

Mayihlome: how thrilling it was to invade your space, enjoyed every second of it. I know I can be such a nag but you were forced to like my company.

He paused

Mayihlome: I'm glad we started off as friends and.. you allowed me to be part of your life.

Mayihlome: though I don't know how long it'll take me to heal. But for now that I'm home, we'll always hang around at work through video calls. And trust me I'll join you in lunch. Till I get better and it gets more physical.

Me: yeah I appreciate that. You already showing commitment and putting my happiness & needs first. Even though you need them the most right now.

Mayihlome: I'm a good boyfriend ain't I?

Me: 100%, I'll also try my best

Mayihlome: good girl.

Me: okay so I'll come check you later on. What lunch should I bring you?

Mayihlome: you know what I like

Me: aah Mayi! Kotas? No honey I'll bring you pizza atleast

Mayihlome: I'm a simple guy babe you know that

Me: I don't care. Right now you need some essential care and allow your lady to treat you.

Mayihlome: okay then I won't stop you.

Me: great

I blew kisses to him

Me: mwa, mwa, mwa. I love you and I'm approaching the traffic jam right now.

Mayihlome: okay I love you too sweetheart, have a great day at work.

Me: thank you honey. Will see you, bye

Mayihlome: bye.

We hang up. I smiled staring at my phone can't believe we're really hitting it off.

Hasn't been long since I spoke to my parents, they managed bailing Sandro out. They say he seems to have changed and is humble lol I know my brother he has another big trick coming. They won't see this coming. I'm not much of a prayer but in this situation I pray alot for my Parents' safety. Because I know my brother will one day get them killed, he's deep into the drug

business and has mixed himself with dangerous people not that he's a saint. But that life is really draining.

I walked straight inside work. I signed in and saw many people walking inside the boardroom.

Me: we having a meeting?

I asked the receptionist

Her: yeah Mr Phillips called in everyone just now. Except for us and the cleaning staff.

Me: oh okay, thank you.

I wonder what's new. I also made my way inside and sat down.

After we settled he stood up.

Mr Phillips: okay good morning ladies and gentlemen.

We greeted back

Mr Phillips: don't be alarmed this isn't a bad meeting... Well as you all know that we've lost 6 workers, I'd like for us to take a break this whole week to prepare for the funeral arrangements. We'll also conduct a memorial service to show respect to these honourable men. Here's our venue.

He hand out pamphlets.

Mr Phillips: I've also took it upon me to represent the company and contribute something to bury these men. Their families won't spend a single cent, because they were breadwinners and died under our hands.

He sighed

Mr Phillips: Christian Philander is in jail and he's going to pay for what he did, thanks to you Ashanti for the provided evidence.

Me: Mr Pendla sir

Mr Phillips: yes yes I'll personally thank him.

I nodded

Mr Phillips: and as you know that Christian has been fired with immediate effect. We have managed finding his replacement.

We all went silence in suspense

Mr Phillips: let's all welcome our new engineer, Limile Mhlahlo. Let's clap our hands for him.. Get up sir so that they may see you.

A good looking gent in a nude suit with white Tees, got up and went to take a stand next to the boss. While he was given claps, I could see many ladies were drooling over him.

Mr Phillips: make him feel at home. We'll be working with him after the funeral. This is the chance to get to know him better. And hey, if they give you problems come to me.

He giggled with his clear vampire teeth revealing. Gosh!

Mr Phillips: you'll be working closely with our architect, Miss Ashanti.

He pointed at me and the gent looked at me, he sent a nod.

Mr Phillips: she'll show you around this place.

Limile: pleasure meeting you all

He said waving his hand a little.

Lady: no hunky, you need to get to know us one by one with our names.

Everyone laughed

Mr Phillips: you'll get all the time for that ladies. I first need to introduce him to the reception and our cleaning staff... Ashanti follow us.

I pointed myself

Me: me sir?

Mr Phillips: there's only one Ashanti.

The new guy smiled rubbing his chin.

Me: oh uhm

I got up and followed them while fixing my pencil skirt.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

Me: "uJesu uno, unobubele ngam ×4

Wangithatha la, oh wangibeka lana

Wangithatha la, wangibeka la, wangisusa la, wangibeka la

Unobu bele ngam"

I sang joyfully as I stirred the Pap on the stove. I have never been so happy in my life, all these years I've finally found a lead to my daughter. I'm glad God is making a way for me.

Letty: Mama

Me: my sweetheart

I grabbed her face and kissed her forehead. She made a weird look with her eyes.

Letty: we're in a good mood today

Me: there's no reason not to, being alive is a wonderful blessing

Letty: neh?

Me: yebo

Letty: mmmh

Advertisement

anyway good day

Me: good day sweetheart. How was school?

Letty: school was long ass tiring

Me: long what?

She cleared her throat

Letty: uhm ngiyaxolisa Ma (I'm sorry)

Me: wabale amazwi wakho (count your words)

She opened her bag and took out something from her file. She handed me.

Me: what's this?

Letty: we're going out on a school camp actually more like a prefect camp.

Me: R450?

Letty: k'phela nje (just only)

Me: ungathi k'phela nje yimali enintsi leyo (don't say "just only" that's a lot of money)

Letty: hau Ma ngiyazi maw'so zabalaza uzoyithola. Zinto ezincane lezo. (I know when you make ends meet you'll get it. That's minor for you)

Me: andisa phangeli Lethokuhle (I no longer work) and I know there's also things I have to cover on top of that 450.

She made a sad face. I exhaled.

Me: ifunwa nini? (When's the due date?)

Letty: month end

Me: I'll talk to your father. Masithembe ukuba uzopeya phambi kwe xesha (Let's hope he'll get his salary soon)

She smiled

Letty: ngiyazi uBaba ngeke angiphoxe (I know Dad won't let me down)

Me: wee! intombi ka yise (Daddy's girl)

She chuckled leaving the kitchen.

Me: Lethokuhle!!

Letty: Ma?

She came back

Me: please help me with something

Letty: anything

Me: when you want to search for someone where do you go?

Letty: I'll show you.

Me: just teach me and leave your phone with me so that I can do it.

She eyed me in a funny way.

Letty: who are we searching for?

Me: mmm your sister.

She jumped in excitement

Letty: oohh yes, this will get interesting. Come come come.

She grabbed my arm

Me: wait the stove.

I switched off the stove and went to sit down.

Letty: our first search will be on Facebook. So it's Ncumolwam.. what's her surname?

I shook my head

Me: she's not using that name. She is adopted by a Quintero family. Let's try Ashanti Quintero.

Letty: mmh nice.

She typed on the search engine and we saw few people appearing.

Letty: I see one Ashanti Quintero maybe she's the one we're looking for.

She clicked on the account

Letty: wow what a dark beauty, aah I've got a sister you guys!

She screamed

Me: yima yima (wait wait)

Letty: where are you going?

I ran to go get the photo I got from the orphanage and went to sit back next to my daughter to try and match.

Letty: Ma! There's no need to do that. (Points her phone) this is your daughter it's unquestionable look at her, she looks so much like you.

I smiled while touching my face staring at her.

Me: really?

Letty: yes!

Me: oh my God.

My eyes were glued on the phone still amazed by this. It felt so surreal seeing her so grown.

I wiped my eyes

Me: can you just show me more of her pictures?

Letty: just slide like this

Me: okay

I stood up

Me: can you uhm borrow me your phone for an hour?

Letty: eish Ma ngi-

Me: don't worry I won't read your stuffs. I just want to admire my daughter.

Letty: okay

Me: thank you.

I walked to my room and looked myself. I giggled while browsing all her pictures. I just can't wait to meet her. The happiness I'm feeling right now overtakes the pain I've always after giving her away. Especially seeing that she's made it in life. I wish to thank the family that raised her.

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LIME (LIMILE)

My name is Limile Mhlahlo but I prefer being called Lime. I come from Eastern Cape in Grahamstown but I am transferred to work in Pretoria. I like a new environment, just taking a break from my hometown cause I have lived almost my whole life there. I like the way they welcomed me at work, it's amazing liked how friendly they were. Glad I will first rest for a week before I can start.

I managed finding myself a place to stay in Centurion and I must say I'm settling in well.

I video called my parents. I saw my niece's face popping first thing.

Me: hey wena! Give your grandparents the phone.

Her: they're asleep.

Me: hey hey don't lie. Give them or else I won't buy you a new phone.

Her: aaah Lume (uncle) but I wanted to speak to you more.

"Imo!!" I heard my Mom shouting in the background.

Mom: sapha sapha (give it here). Nx, this child... Oh hello my son

I smiled

Me: hey Mamzo

Mom: how are you that side?

Me: I'm doing good and how are you guys?

Mom: we're fine too

Me: where's Dad? Can I also speak to him.

Mom: he's asleep. Let me wake him he can't miss this call

Me: tuu

She went to the bedroom and woke him.

Me: eyy Fetty Wap.

Dad: nzok'betha kwedini (I'll beat you boy)

Me: unjani Fetty Wap? Seems like old age is catching with you.

We giggled crazily. We like to tease each other I tease him with his eye. It's still unbelievable when he tells us that Mom had done that to him lol he has one eye.

Dad: so how you're settling over there?

Me: very well. At work they gave me a warm welcome. I also found a place to stay in Centurion, so this is it guys.

Mom: so wonderful, when are you starting?

Me: next week cause they're burying fellow workers who died on the construction.

They looked at each other

Dad: that's bad, and then you trust working for such company?

Me: Taima let's not get negative please. I just want to give it a shot I can't miss this opportunity if it really gets that bad then I'll leave.

Mom: Lime..

Me: Mom please anqabile ke amathuba omsebenzi anje (such job opportunities are scarce these days). Aren't you happy for me?

Dad: we are son. Just that I don't wanna lose another son

Me: you won't Daddy please trust me.

They sighed.

Mom: okay fine when you say so. Please mntanam just bring us a Makoti hayi I need a daughter in-law yhu. Both you and your brother are forever bachelors hay hay.

I giggled

Me: I will don't worry.

We spoke more till we ended the call. From there I called my siblings and retired to bed.

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MAYIHLOME

Ashanti finally came to visit and brought me lunch. She leaned forward and gave me a good kiss.

Me: mmh those lips. Feels like I'm in some dream.

Ashanti: no it's not a dream honey. It's real and these are real thick lips.

I giggled and rubbed her lips.

Me: and very soft lips.

Ashanti: ahaa

She kissed me again.

Me: why are you so affectionate lately?

Ashanti: ain't that what a girlfriend supposed to be?

Me: just.. I thought you'd make things difficult.

Ashanti: life is too short babe. If I'm not gonna cherish these moments while I can, then I don't know what might happen next.

Me: true.

I smiled holding her hand and kissed it.

Me: I love you so much querida

Ashanti: I love you too... Twowam.

I cracked up. She covered her mouth in shame.

Ashanti: did I say that wrong?

I nodded while tears came out

Me: it's mntuwam

Ashanti: argh I feel like dying right now

Me: you're trying baby don't be too hard on yourself. That's good for a starter.

We laughed and began eating our food.

Me: so how was work?

Ashanti: work was good. We have a newcomer who replaced Christian's place.

Me: oh that's good

Ashanti: he uhm... will be working closely with me. I hope you won't have a problem with that.

I looked at her and smiled

Me: ofcourse not babe I trust you okay? What we have is new I'm in no position to control you. Plus I know you'll remain loyal to me.

She smiled

Ashanti: yes I'll remain loyal to you mthuwam

We both burst in laughter

Me: we're getting somewhere I'm impressed. Can I kiss those sweet lips again?

Ashanti: m.hm

We kissed again smoothly. I've never felt this way for a woman in a while. I really love this lady I swear I can worship every ground she walks on. The power she carries within her I'm really captivated.

We finally broke the kiss and ate our pizzas, giving each other random stares every while. Wow love is beautiful. I think I've found the one.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I just came out on a call with my twin brother. I'm so glad that he settled well in Gauteng. Though I feel so much void when he's gone. But now we're grown and I have to accept that we'll live separate lives.

Let me introduce myself, My name is Limise Gog' Manyano Mhlahlo. I live alone in Butterworth, EC. Since I am working this side as a Social worker. I am also a healer and I also dedicate most of my time to my clients.

I just came out of bath and wore my PJ's then I heard a knock. I opened and saw a lady standing there.

Me: hello Sisi

Her: molo Gogo, I came for you I don't know whether I came at the right time or...

Me: it's 7pm sisi, 7.

Her: yhuu

She covered her mouth begging me with her eyes.

Me: zondibethisa ngabadala wena (you'll get me in trouble)

Her: uxolo wethu Gogo I'm really desperate

Me: I can see. 6pm I stop everything but I'll have mercy with you. See I'm already in my PJ's? Just give me a moment to change.

Her: okay

I went to change in my traditional attire and went to the room I use for practice, at the backyard.

I lit the candles and incense and sat on the grassmat.

Me: how can I help you?

Her: I came to consult

Me: R150

She took the money and placed it down. I took a little portion of snuff and shoved it in my nose.

Me: Malahle is your surname?

Her: Malahle-Qunta

Me: oh because you're married..

I knelt and started calling out on her ancestors.

Me: ndanibiza nina boo Ndluntsha, Majeke, Mthwembotyi, Noqazo, Nyawo ezimbini ezi pink (clan praise)

Me: nanku mntana ezofuna uncedo, khanyisani nisivezele konke. (Your child is here seeking for help, bring us light and reveal everything)

I looked at her and began whistling.

Me: you've just been evicted from your house, you lost your job, lost your car soon you gonna lose your husband.

She covered her mouth and nodded

Me: your life is yet to get worse. It's yet to get more painful and stagnant.

Her: oh yhini Gogo (crying)

I closed my eyes

Me: you have just recently lost two brothers?

Her: yes, we buried them on the same year (crying)

I nodded.

Me: don't look far away and think that you're bewitched by people. Ha. a mntase ziz'nyanya zakuni (it's your ancestors)

Her: my ancestors how? We are always doing customs that need to be done. Even thanksgiving.

I laughed

Me: you will do customs till you run out of money. It will never satisfy them. a'Strong amadlozi akokwenu and e'strong'e nje ano msindo ngakuni (your ancestors are powerful and as powerful as they are, they at wrath with you)

She frowned.

Me: your dad is bedridden right?

Her: yes

Me: he's slowly turning into a skeleton but he's not yet to die, not anytime soon. He's yet to live for a long time they want him to suffer. They want him to watch his family perish in his eyes till he brings back their lost good.

Her: a lost good?

Me: talk to your father. Tell him to tell you the truth cause all this, is happening because of him. Tell him if he doesn't soon it'll be you.

Her: I don't understand.

I closed my eyes again

Me: I'm restricted to say anything further... Look I feel touched by what's happening in your life on a personal level. I want to help you

She nodded with tears.

Me: ungakhali jonga (don't cry look)... give me your number, and take me to your father. I need to see him immediately.

Her: okay okay

Me: any questions? Just ask anything.

Her: what do I do now? Knowing I'll die and lose my marriage for my father's sins.

Me: do you believe in a power of prayer?

She nodded

Me: right now you have to pray hard sweetheart. Give yourself time to go back in Centane village, call your uncle. Buy a bottle of Viceroy and plead with your ancestors to not punish you for your father's sin. Tell them you got their message and you will look for the lost relative, your dad is gonna explain everything.

Her: okay

Me: okay?

She nodded.

Me: and also let your husband be. For now it involves the ancestors, when all this is over he'll come back to you.

Her: okay

Me: right.

I switched off the candles with my hand and we got up and left.

We exchanged numbers.

Me: your name?

Her: Kolosa

Me: okay Kolosa we'll speak more over the phone neh. Kuzo khanya mntanam, kube chosi, kube hele.

Her: camagu Gogo

Me: go safe.

Her: bye

She left and I got in my house. This situation made me think of my long lost brother. It triggers me that's why I offered to help. I pledge to help this family get through this cause things will get more ugly for them if they don't obey the ancestors.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 6

LAURA (ASHANTI'S MOM)

Woke up early in the morning and bumped into my son sitting on the stairs while resting his head on it.

Me: Alessandro!

He lift his head up.

Sandro: Mamá

Me: why are you here at this time?

I fixed my robe and went to check the clock.

Me: it's 5am and it seems like you haven't had a sleep.

Sandro: it's true I haven't

Me: por qué? (Why?)

He stood up and went to sit on the chair.

Sandro: because I have a lot on my mind.

Me: like?.. Sandro you better not-

Sandro: no es algo malo Mamá (it's not something bad). I promise.

I gave him an unsure look.

Sandro: I promise okay?

Me: then if not what exactly is it?

He took his time telling me

Sandro: I want to change

I giggled in a mocking manner

Me: ohhh try a different tune my son

Sandro: I'm serious I do really want to change.

I fold my arms with my eyes fixed on him.

Me: probarto a ti mismo (prove yourself)

Sandro: esperemos a qué Papá se despierete. (Let's wait for Dad to wake up)

Me: (short laughs) hah! Let's see.

I went to make breakfast in the kitchen. Honestly I am really tired of this child's schemes and I won't fall for them again. We might as well go back to South Africa because what we're here for is done, we bailed him out.

Sandro: why didn't you come back with my hermanita? (Lil sis?)

Me: because she has a life back there.

He giggled

Sandro: and what kind of life is that?

Me: don't start! Just don't.

He shrugs

Sandro: what? I mean coming to show little support for her brother wouldn't hurt. Then she can go back and enjoy her fancy life.

I placed my hands on my waist. I was about to say something but my husband walked in.

Armando: mmmh I see there's a bond in here. Good morning my familia.

He came to kiss me

Armando: wife

Me: honey

Sandro: so since both of you are here. Can we take a seat? I wanna discuss something with you.

We went to sit down.

Sandro: uhm... I just wanted to let you know that I bought you a house in Barcelona.

We made a quizzical look.

Sandro: I want you to forget about this place. I know it's your hometown and holds lots of memories but it's for the best. It's no longer safe for you

Armando: and where would you get the money from?

Sandro: doesn't matter fact is... I have alot of rivalries at this place, I don't need you to be caught in my shit-

Me: language!

Sandro: lo siento (sorry) but.. this is my battle to fight. I need you very far from it. Because I love you as my parents. And you still need to be there for Bebita. So please I'm begging you to not refuse this offer.

My husband and I exchanged a look and we gave it a thought.

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ASHANTI

First thing I was called by my Mom early in the morning.

I smiled as I sat up, picking the call

Me: Mommy dearest

Mom: my daughter, how are you?

Me: I'm doing good and how are you?

Mom: I'm good too. Just waking you up for work.

I chuckled

Me: I could've managed don't worry. Plus we're no longer going to work we're given a break since we're preparing for a burial.

Mom: oh oh you did say

I frowned

Me: everything okay back there? When are you coming back?

She sighed

Mom: we're unsure my child

Me: acerca de? (About what?)

Mom: well... Sandro bought us a house in Barcelona.

I widened my eyes and immediately got off bed, chuckling.

Me: whaaat?

Mom: says he wants us safe from his goons. And actually, your father and I love Barcelona. We're still considering it.

I nodded

Me: I'm actually glad he thought about your safety this time around. Atleast he was not selfish.

She giggled

Mom: yes

I rubbed my arm with my thumb

Me: so what about me?

Mom: nosotros vendremos, lo prometo. (We'll come back, I promise)

Me: please don't take long cause I miss you alot.

Mom: we miss you too. We'll surprise you soon.

Me: please.

Mom: yes, te quiero (I love you)

I smiled

Me: yo también te quiero (I love you too)

Mom: we'll talk soon

Me: okay bye

We hang up.

I smiled and opened my messages on WhatsApp. Mayi sent me a good morning photo. He was so cute I like how small his eyes are when he wakes up.

I smiled and also took a hot picture of myself in my night dress, made sure to make my strap fall off my shoulder. And messed my braids a little.

I sent him the picture too.

Mayihlome: "🤔😊😊you're all kinds of sexy. I'm so glorified ❤️
☐"

I giggled

Me: "well I can't say the same, till I hear your voice when you wake up. Whether you're good or bad but... know that singing should be a norm for you. Cause it's a key of joy in my heart. Even if I'm mad at you I'll immediately melt"

Mayihlome: "Lol wow.. just give me few minutes"

I got so excited and made my bed so long. I'm falling deep for him cause he doesn't hesitate to do anything I ask him.

Mayihlome: ▶ _____ (🎤 ☐ 01:24)

His voice note got in and I stopped everything I did and listened to it.

Mayihlome: "lo sisi ngimbon' izolo, edlula ngasekhaya

Ehamba nabangani bakhe

Kwavela kwa jama ingqondo

Ngaphathwa nayikhanda, kwangathi ngiya sangana

Wee bantu anishoni, nakhe nayibon' intwe njena

Ngamthanda umuntu, ngiqala ukumbona

Ngamthanda umuntu, ngifisa ukum' Lobola x2"

I really didn't understand the words but I really enjoyed how he sang it. I was even moving my body slowly along the way he sang it. It seemed like a love song sensing the vibe to it. I'll marry this guy I swear, he has an amazing voice.

Me: "I can now say I'm glorified❤️👉. Amazing voice, didn't understand the lyrics but I am inlove with it. Tell me the title of the song."

Mayihlome: "thanks🙏🏻👍🏻. Linda - Ngamthanda umuntu"

Me: "I'll always remember you by this song and I'll download it. Now I can finally start my day"

Mayihlome: "I love you querida, always remember that. Have a nice day"

Me: "I love you too and enjoy yours too"

We sent many inlove emojis and I placed my phone down and prepared to go shower and attend the memorial service.

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MAYIHLOME

I was done dressing up today I'll be fetched by my mother. I'm finally discharged, I'm so happy to be out.

Hospitals can be really depressing.

Mom already walked in.

Mom: Hlohlo

Me: ouledy

She made a serious look as she pointed me.

Mom: I hate when you call me that. Rather call me by my name if you can't just simply say Mom.

Me: why not iOuledy?

Mom: that makes me seem old

Me: aren't you?

I groaned as she twisted my ear

Mom: I said don't call me that you're ruining my chances.

Me: hayi Mama you're still on it?

She giggled.

Mom: tshee! I'll never stop. Where's your stuffs so that we can go.

I made a disappointed look to what she just said.

Mom: ziphi!? (Where are they!?)

Me: over there

I pointed. My Mom is dating Ben 10's who are even younger than me. Who are my Lil bro's age. She doesn't feel ashamed of that

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she says her agemates can't get it up so she can't settle for that. Yes, we talk openly like that with my Mom.

She says those kids are a reason she hasn't aged. I so hate how she behaves really. Imagine me having a stepfather who's a young boy like my brother. That'd never happen.

I took my crutches and we walked out of the hospital.

Me: and how did you get that car from Malwande?

Mom: blackmailed him

Me: on what?

Mom: just like I date Ben 10's, he's also dating sugar Mamas, a married one.

Me: Mama! For how long have you known about this?

Mom: about a year

Me: what? And you let this happen right under your nose?

She shrugged

Mom: bendizothini ke? (What was I going to do?) Mos they say an apple doesn't fall far from its tree.

We got inside the car and she started driving

Me: kodwa Mama awuna ngqengqesho yaz. (you don't know how to discipline)

She laughed

Me: I'll talk senses to Malwande. There are many good girls he can have who are his age. What does he want from old women? Hay hay maybe he wants to die. Ayikho le (this is not on)

Mom: good luck son. Remember you can't deny what the heart wants.

Me: asizova nga ntliziyo apha! uLwande akazodyola noo Mama abadala qha, tshi. Ahambe echitha iimizi yabantu ngoku. (We won't listen to anyone's heart! Lwande won't date old women end of story. He'll not wreck other people's marriage)

She giggled

Mom: okay Oupa Hlohlo

Me: ncoske ndibengu Oupa. Into ewrong iwrong Mama. (I'd rather be an Oupa. What's wrong is wrong)

She laughed again.

Mom: how's your girlfriend?

I suddenly got tickled by my cheeks and smiled.

Me: she's fine. How do you know I've got a girlfriend?

Mom: you think I was born yesterday wena. I've been around for a long time.

I giggled

Mom: you should bring her over for dinner

Me: really?

Mom: yes. It's been a while since you brought a girl. And maybe you'll stop being uptight since you have a lady.

I chuckled

Me: awwh Ma?? Okay I'll bring her over.

Mom: good. What do you feel like eating?

Me: home cooked meal

Mom: kwoah! You think I'm your wife wena, you are exactly like your father.

I held my chin

Me: hm! And we never talk about him

Mom: he was a jerk that's why. And I don't want you to turn out like him.

I looked at her. Out of the blue she raised the volume high in the car. Playing the Mercedes piano. Unbelievably she danced to it while wearing her shades. This woman is full of surprises.

Mom: yay'funa Mercedes? (Do you want Mercedes?) I can bring it to you if we make a bet.

Me: Ma yeka uncinza please (stop stealing)

Me: hayike!

I looked at her dancing and laughed, shaking my head. My Mom is really corrupt thank God I didn't inherit that from her.

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MAVUYI (VUYELWA)

Ndileka paid me a visit after she fetched her son from the hospital. We were chatting but my mind was not here. I couldn't focus throughout her whole visit.

I kept on stirring my cup of coffee with my mind zoned out. I felt her touch.

Ndileka: Vuyelwa, utyiwa yintoni nha sisi? (What's eating you?)

I sighed placing my hand on my face.

Me: I think I've found my daughter.

Ndileka: Ncumo??

I nodded

Ndileka: what! How?

Me: I just kept on searching and searching. Paid a visit on the orphanage though it was hard to get the information but I pushed through to finally know about my daughter

Ndileka: okay?

Me: she's adopted by a Mexican family. I know who she is cause I searched for her and I...

I began to smile

Me: I saw how grown she is. I know where she lives, thing is how do I approach her?

Ndileka: yho and she won't immediately jump to you and say "ooohh Mommy I'm so glad you finally found me!"

Me: ubone ke (you see)

Ndileka: and ama Mexican awaqhelwa ke (you don't mess with Mexicans) the parents might flip out ngoba tshomi it's been 29 years. Now you're going to fetch a child who's already have everything sorted out.

Me: eish yinyani emsulwa (that's true)

She held my hand

Ndileka: but mandinga kutyhafisi (let me not discourage you) give it a try petla. You won't know unless you try.

Me: I'm scared at the same time

Ndileka: don't be sweetheart. Leave everything to God.

Me: look at you!

She laughed

Ndileka: I also do pray tshini

Me: (giggling) I didn't say you're not.

I sighed

Me: it'll be really hard to approach this. I think I should go to that suburb as a woman who's looking for a job.

Ndileka: neh?

Me: yeah just to get close to her and learn certain things about her before spilling out everything

Ndileka: not a bad idea

Me: eyy wish me good luck

Ndileka: relax friend.

Me: ayy

I got up and dished out chicken heads. We were going to dung them with bread.

Ndileka: yazi heee

Me: yintoni? (What?)

I smiled sitting down and gave her a plate.

Ndileka: I think your daughter might be closer as we think.

Me: why do you say so?

Ndileka: I think she's very very close

I frowned

Me: I don't understand

Ndileka: I think my son might be dating Ncumo.

Me: huh!!?

She nodded

Me: which son?

Ndileka: Hlohlo

I snickered trying to make sense of this

Me: uyazi njani lonto? (You know this how?)

Ndileka: the other day when we were at the hospital, I saw a young lady that resembles you alot. I think she's working together with my son but their closeness was more you know... So I figured out that they're dating, my son confirmed it today. And I ended up suggesting that he must bring her over for dinner, to make sure I'm not mistaken.

I nodded

Me: okay okay

Ndileka: only then we can know. Mind if you join?

Me: no not yet. I just don't want to ruin my chances of being close with her. Go ahead with the dinner and I'll continue looking for the job. You can never know how these kids react when angry, though I will not blame her.

She nodded

Ndileka: ndiyakuva (I get you)

Me: yah

Ndileka: mhh! Awamnandi lama nqina (nice chicken heads)

Me: you know me kaloku petla

Ndileka: since old time

We laughed and continued eating our food. I wish myself luck on the process I'm about to put myself through.

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KOLOSA

I felt very nervous as I placed my bags down and stood outside the door at our house. I was shaking with nerves, my husband can be so insensitive and mean towards me lately. Like he has never fallen in love with me. It all seems like a tale today.

I had everything under control, had my own house on the side incase he acts out. Now since the ancestors are involved I've lost everything. I'm literally broke and I just need one thing from him, just one.

I made a silent prayer before knocking. The door opened, it was him. He was shirtless only wearing sweatpants.

Loyiso: Kolosa

Me: hi

Loyiso: ufuna ntoni apha? (What do you want?)

Uhm excuse you? This is OUR house. But I had to humble myself before him before he turns into a beast.

Me: uhm I need your help

Loyiso:

I swallowed hard. I'm not used to begging cause I was used to having everything and my own money.

Me: ndicela undiboleke okwe R100 ndibuyele emakhaya.
(Please borrow me just R100 I'll go back to the village)

He laughed out loud

Me: please Loyiso I'm begging you. I'll leave you alone and stay away from you I promise. Just please help me out.

Loyiso: hehee where is Mrs "I'm too good for this shit you're putting me through" huh? Mrs "I've got my bank balance overflowing like River Jordan?" Where is she? What happened to her?

Me: Loyiso

Loyiso: ndiphendule Kolosa! (Answer me!)

I bit my lips

Me: life happened

Loyiso: I'm glad that you know life happens... We don't need crappy people like you.

He said pushing me with a poke on my forehead. I staggered back and cried.

Me: what did you expect me to do?? You cheated on me Loyiso!!! I was supposed to act ratchet. You disrespected me in my house and I gave you respect enough to move out. Now all I ask for is for you to borrow me a lousy R100 so that I can leave you to enjoy yourself with your mistress peacefully. What's difficult about that?

Loyiso: it's because usafosta nangoku!! And andizoyenza lonto Sisi, lo lousy R100 asoze uyive (it's because you coming with an attitude! And you're not getting that lousy R100)

Me: please

I placed my hands together and got closer to him.

Loyiso: fokoff'a eyardini yam. Hamba! Hamba!

He pulled me and pushed me out.

Me: I'm so glad I never gave you kids, you're a last number of a bastard. Rha sies.

Loyiso: hamba! (Go!)

He pushed me. I spat on him and on an instant he threw a slap on my face. I fell down.

He left me there crying as I held my cheek. This is not the man I married.

After few hours I spent sitting outside crying. I saw his mistress tiptoeing to my side.

Her: hi

I ignored her wiping my tears

Her: I know I'm not your favourite person at the moment but..

She placed two notes of R100 on my thighs and left. I was surprised, I looked back at her but she was already gone.

Me: thank you

I uttered softly and quickly picked my bags and didn't think twice, I rushed out of the gate and went straight to the rank.
I'm going home.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 7

KOLOSA

It took me an hour to make it in Centane. I normally come this side only on big holidays, say only in June & December. Since my job used to be a demanding job and I made sure to send money monthly to take care of my father. I also hired a nanny to look after him I'm so stressed how am I even going to pay her this month, knowing that I lost my job.

Dad lost all his siblings except for his older brother in Soweto. His wife, our mother, died when we were very young. Our youngest brother was staying in this village taking care of him. Unfortunately he also died, followed by my other brother who comes after me. I'm the first born.

Me: nkqo nkqo molweni ngaphakathi

I greeted as I made my way in. But I got embarrassed seeing how dirty it was inside. Seemed like the house wasn't cleaned for months the way it was so filthy. It looked like a pigsty, no living person would stay in such environment.

I dropped my bags.

Me: Push!!! hee sis'Push!!?

I walked around yelling for our nanny what exactly am I paying her for, when she isn't doing her job?

I heard faint coughs in one of the rooms. I made my way in and I immediately covered my nose.

There was a terrible smell.

Dad: Phumla nguwe lo? (Phumla is it you?)

I ashamedly removed my hand off my nose

Me: ndim Tata (it's me)

Dad: Kolosa? Oh Kolosa mntanam. Thank God it's you!

My father has a problem with his eyesight, he doesn't see properly.

I walked to him and realized he messed himself on the bed.

Kanti where is this lady?

Me: uphi kanti uPush Tata? (Where's Push?)

Dad: akekho, unee ntsuku engasekho. Ukuba ukhona uyandi nyhukutya endithuka endicekisa. Kube worse xa um'peyisile. Umka neetshomi zakhe bayo nxila andishiye ndedwa ndilambile, ndizimoshela. (She's not here, it's days her not being here. If she's here she mistreats me and feels disgusted by me. It's worse when you send her money. She goes with her

friends to get drunk and leave me alone to get starved and mess on myself)

That totally pissed me off.

Me: uthini nha? Iyaphela ke lonto, iphela namhlanje! Lo Christmas ayisekho tuu. Tshini uyandiqhela uPhumla. Mna ndimthumela imali yam endiy'sebenzele nzima kanti akaqalisanga ukuhoya? Rha izophela lonto. Ngeske wahlala nam mos xa kunjalo (what? That ends today! That Christmas is over. Phumla is full of it, I send her money that I worked hard for yet she doesn't look after you. That ends, I should've taken you if that's the case)

Dad: akunanto mnta- (it's no big deal-)

Me: no! I'll deal with Phumla the best way I know how, nx. Here I was worried about her next income yet she does this? She'll never get it. Yhu akhonto ingumntu.. ndiyabuya ngoku. (She's inhumane... I'll be back)

I walked back to the lounge taking my bags and changed to rough tights and an oversized T-shirt.

Then I placed my bags in my room. I looked for gloves and took a bucket with water.

After I boiled water to bath my father. As soon as the water got boiled I went to his room. Got him up a little so that I can take out all the duvets and sheets to wash them. I then bathed him and dressed him clean, I made him sit on his wheelchair and drove him outside to feel the fresh air of the village meanwhile I spring cleaned the house, and opened the windows. I went to finish washing the duvets and sheets then hang them on the line.

After an hour I drove him back inside and gave him a plate of food.

Dad: enkosi mntanam, oh! Kuyabonakala xa ukhona. Isandla sakho semfudumalo siyabonakala. (thank you my child, it's shows when you're here. Your warm hands)

I laughed

Me: I'm not going anywhere anytime soon Tata.

Dad: that's good

He smiled then it soon disappeared

Dad: yima kengoku (wait)... what about work and your husband?

I took a deep breath

Me: that's why I'm here Tata

Dad: yintoni mntanam? (What is it?)

I painfully swallowed and sniffed

Me: I lost everything

Dad: (exclaims) hiii?

Me: I lost my job, lost my husband, lost my house, my car andinanto (I have nothing)

He kept quiet

Me: even my bank balance. It's bad Tata... And I'm wondering what else am I gonna lose? My life perhaps.

Dad: hayi hayi! Please don't talk like that. You're the only child I have left ngoku.

I wiped my tears.

Me: our ancestor are not happy. All we went through is because of them. They're angry at us and in a matter of time I might follow next. Please Tata tell me what you've kept from us all these years. Tell me about the lost relative we have. Cause all this is related to both of you and they won't stop until we bring back the lost relative.

He began breathing heavily and covered his face instantly. Trembling as he was, he cried out loudly.

Me: Tata? Tata?

He continued weeping. I felt so broken to hear my Daddy cry like that. I got closer to him and comforted him.

Me: Tata

I gave him a moment and let him be.

Later on he calmed down and wiped his wet face.

Dad: I know why they're doing this

Me: you know?

He nodded

Dad: yes I know. It's because... because you have a sister.

I widened my eyes

Me: a sister?

Dad: yes.

I gasped holding my chest in shock

Me: wow uhm..

I became speechless

Dad: before I met your mother, I once dated a nice beautiful girl. She was a church girl, she was in her teenage years and I was still in my early 20's at the time. Everyone feared for her parents especially her father. But I turned out to be the bravest boy in this village to pursue her (clears throat)... Then I got her pregnant.

He made a heavy sigh

Dad: when her parents found out they kicked her out. She had nowhere to go therefore she came here.

Tears filled his eyes

Dad: she needed a place to stay. My parents were willing to welcome her in, who knows maybe they might've helped raising our baby but I... I denied everything about her. I made her seem like a stranger.

Me: Tata!

Dad: her eyes Kolosa, she was so disappointed. I betrayed her big time and her eyes still haunt me even today... My brother then decided to leave with her since he felt pity for her, because she was heavily pregnant.

He paused

Me: and then what happened to the woman?

Dad: I don't know. They went separate ways with my brother since his girlfriend acted out of character. Ever since then no one knew where she went. She was considered missing with the child.

He blinked and faced up

Dad: I still wonder whether she's still alive or not. And if my child is still doing okay out there, and how grown is she.

(Silence)

Me: you've denied us an opportunity with our sister. You're the reason why we're here, reason you lost both your sons

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reason you sick, reason I lost everything. It could've been prevented if you handled this all well and accepted your child. We would've been a happy family if you helped the mother!

Dad: I'm sorry my child

Me: there's nothing we can do now. Except to find my sister, or things will get even worse.

He swallowed

Me: we need to find her

Dad: I think our first lead could be her mother, Vuyelwa Krila.

Me: how?

He huffed

Dad: we should pay a visit where she used to live. She lives down there next to the field.

Me: bungathi ulahlekile? (Didn't you say she's missing?)

Dad: yah. Maybe if we find one of her family members maybe they might give us something.

Me: okay, let's eat finish first then we'll go.

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ASHANTI

When the memorial service got done. I decided to drop by Checkers and buy myself grocer. I have realized that if I don't do it now I will never have another chance.

I grabbed the trolley and walked isle to isle picking things I needed for the house. While still at it, I received a call from my boyfriend.

Me: mthuwam

Mayihlome: querida, how are you?

Me: I'm doing fine how are you?

Mayihlome: I'm fine too. Thought I should check up on you.
How was the memorial service?

Me: it was beautiful. We carried it out well. (Sighs) though it got to me seeing their wives crying and the kids...

Mayihlome: death be not proud. It's really painful losing a loved one it's always a thorn in someone's heart. But all we have to do is pray for them. Pray to God for their healing and strength.

Me: yeah, damn I'm still upset at what Christian did.

Mayihlome: you need to let it go sweetheart. Christian's deeds won't go unpunished.

Me: he has to be punished!

Mayihlome: so you're home?

Me: no I'm doing some shopping, my grocer.

Mayihlome: oh how I wish to be next to you right now. Helping you with the trolley and giving you stolen kisses.

I giggled

Me: you always want to be next to me.

Mayihlome: yeah especially now I'll no longer be working. You're my girlfriend so I gotta claim my girlfriend.

We both chuckled.

Me: true, don't worry we'll see each other more often.

Mayihlome: oh about that..

Me: mhm?

Mayihlome: my mother suggested you come over for a dinner.

I popped my eyes out

Me: whaat!! Your Mom? Mayi why did you tell your Mom about us? it's too soon!

Mayihlome: she didn't hear it from me I swear but she already knows

Me: but how?

I asked in both aghast and sarcastic tone.

Mayihlome: don't ask me I don't know too.

Me: man I'm scared of your Mom you have no idea.

Mayihlome: argh she's so harmless don't worry about her.

You'll also see for yourself that she's a cool person

Me: but still..

Mayihlome: trust me babe if ever she bothers you. She'll have me to deal with, trust me.

Me: you're way too sweet

Mayihlome: so is that a yes?

Me: uhhhhh y-eah

Mayihlome: Sunday?

Me: oh my that's too soon.

Mayihlome: Sunday it is

We giggled. I drove the trolley as I walked backwards reaching for a tuna.

Mayihlome: I love you

Me: I lo-

I screamed a little as I bumped into someone and the tuna fell.

Mayihlome: are you okay?

Me: yeah yeah just dropped something

Mayihlome: okay we'll talk again

Me: okay I love you alright?

Mayihlome: alright, love you million dollar times, mncwa!

He hang up. I smiled lowering my phone.

Voice: I think you dropped this

Me: tha-

I stopped and stared at him

Me: oh uhm???

Him: Limile

I snapped my fingers

Me: yeah Limile, thank you.

He smiled

Limile: pleasure. Be careful next time Shant.

He said handing me the tuna. I got hold of it.

Me: how about we just stick to Ashanti?

Limile: if it's what you want

Me: it is what I want

Limile: cool by me

Me: good

I drove my trolley away

Limile: have an amazing day Shant!

I stopped without turning back at him and resumed once again with my walk. I felt like turning my head back. When I did, he was still standing there staring at me. He waved his hand at me. I shook my head ignoring him and continued with my path.

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LIMILE

I smiled alone as I watched her paying on the till. I'm glad we'll work closely together, just want to see if she's really as fierce as she appears or maybe she's trying too hard. Cause on my side I'm convinced that she's trying hard. And it's a satisfaction knowing that I can even weaken those who seem powerful, thank God I'm past the "heartbreaker" stage.

My wild thoughts were disturbed by my sister's phonecall, from overseas.

Me: Tools

Thuli: Lime

Her tone wasn't pleasant. I'm in trouble.

Me: sweetheart

Thuli: I hate what you did

Me: hate what I did?

Thuli: you know! why did you buy my daughter a new cellphone without consulting me first?

Me: I promised her nje

Thuli: I don't care whether you promised her or not fact is you had to ask me first.

Me: I'm sorry but she was going to hold it against me

Thuli: Limile I don't-

Me: I'm trying to be the best uncle here kill me for trying.

Thuli: Limile don't spoil my child okay? Mom & Dad are trying to discipline that child and you're ruining her. Don't prick me or else I'll have to fly there myself and deal with you.

I closed my eyes

Me: askies then it's the last time doing what I did.

Thuli: good!

Me: how's Dubai?

She sighed

Thuli: very good though I miss my whole family.

I smiled

Me: please make sure you come back married. I wanna have an experience of sitting down and handle your Lobola negotiations.

We giggled crazily and caught up more till I went to pay for my items.

When I was out I texted my friend, Shiv to come spend the weekend with me. I lied and said my sister is around I know he'll come flying from Durban to this side in a blink of an eye. Cause he has a huge crush on Thuli. I just need some company don't want to start no new friends as yet.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I received a call from Kolosa while still at work. I smiled and picked up.

Me: Mam'Kyks

She giggled. It was good hearing her laugh she's been through alot.

Kolosa: Gogo

Me: how are you on this lovely day?

Kolosa: I'm good thanks and you?

Me: I'm good too

Kolosa: just called to let you know that I've arrived safely in Centane and I'm with my father right now.

Me: ohh torho camagu! That's great, how did it go?

Kolosa: it wasn't nice sisi yho, wasn't nice at all. My day started off with a commotion between me and my husband. It didn't get better, from there I arrived to my home being in a bad condition. Dad was neglected and he messed himself on the bed. I had to first clean him up then the house. Yet we hired a nanny for him but she didn't do her job

Me: eish sisi I'm so sorry to hear that, askies vha? Your efforts are recognized trust me.

Kolosa: shu! hay. Then afterwards Dad told me everything I needed to know. He told me I have a sister, and on how he denied the mother of his baby. He also denied my sister from being raised by my grandparents.

She exhaled

Kolosa: imagine if we grew up all together with her. How I've always wished to have a sister.

I made a weak smile playing with my pen.

Kolosa: we also tried asking around for the mother's whereabouts but someone else happened to live in their house apha eCentane. The last owners of her family were no more. Now we don't know where to start... seems like this will be a difficult journey.

Me: ungalahli themba sisi (don't lose hope)

Kolosa: andisayaz nam ngoku (I don't even know)

Me: have you asked your uncle?

Kolosa: I'm about to call him

Me: yes. Don't forget to tell him to come over to the village so that you can together plead with your ancestors. If you mention to the ancestors that you'll look for your lost sister, they'll make the path less complicated.

Kolosa: okay nzomfownela (I'll call him)

Me: please, mna nzoza ngo Lwehlano apho nzothetha no Tatakho (I'll come Friday to talk to your father)

Kolosa: thank you that means alot

Me: no sweat. As long as you'll give me the directions.

Kolosa: I will

Me: right, let me get back to work. We'll speak again.

Kolosa: okay Gogo goodbye

Me: goodbye sweetheart

We ended the call. I smiled, I'm glad atleast they're getting somewhere.

I fixed my files but something bothered me. I went to my laptop to search for my prodigal brother but there were no results of him. I sighed and sat back biting my pen.

I saw my twin's story partying with Shiv.

"Be careful Half. You know your hangovers affect me too. Don't make me drunk while I'm focused."

I sent him the text.

Limile: "????? awwh wele! (twin!) YOLO"

Me: "stop being reckless toe, argh!"

I sighed and got off WhatsApp. I concentrated back to work.

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MAVUYI

I was busy ironing my clothes for tomorrow. I was so nervous for tomorrow but this is happening. I am meeting my daughter and I pray she gives me the job. I also pray she's a nice person.

I felt a cold kiss on my cheek. It was my husband. I didn't hear him get back.

Me: Tata

Bheki: sthandwa

Me: yazi andik'vanga ngoku ungena (I didn't hear you get in)

Bheki: bow'ngeke umatasa kanje (you wouldn't as busy as you are)

Me: (sighs loudly) owwhu!

Bheki: good evening though

Me: evening, your food is in the microwave

Bheki: thank you.

He took off his cap and placed his bag on the counter.

Bheki: ikhomba kuphi indlela? (Where's the road headed?)

Me: mm?

He took a seat

Bheki: since we're ironing clothes

Me: ohh!

I switched off the iron and placed it on the ironing board

Me: indlela ithi Hazelwood sana

He turned back to look at me in a questionable look.

Bheki: Hazelwood??

Me: yes. I'm meeting with my daughter. That's where she lives

Bheki: ukwaze njani manje lokho? (And how did you figure that out?)

Me: I searched her and found useful info about her. So I'll be on her doorstep looking for a job has a housekeeper.

He raised his eyebrows

Bheki: kwakhona? (Again?)

Me: yes

Bheki: hay! Why ungaveli ushone endabeni umtsheli nje ukuthi wuNyoko wakhe? why mele uyitsale lento (Why don't you just get straight to the point and tell her that you're her mother? Why do you have to drag this?)

I shook my head

Me: that won't bring good outcomes Tata. My method will work trust me

Bheki: hayike

He shrugged.

Me: wena just give me busfare to travel to Hazelwood. It will work trust me, I wouldn't have reach this far if God didn't want me to find my daughter. So this is exactly the time... time to be negative is gone.

Bheki: ukhulumile ke uMam'Krila. Awuthi ngisukume mina ngidle okuza esuswin. (Mam'Krila has spoken. Let me get up and eat my food)

He got up and warmed his food. This is a do or die situation and there's no turning back.

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>>>To be continued.

Chapter 8

ASHANTI

I decided to call my mother. She knows me better than anyone and she'll surely know what's best for me. I don't want to lie it's been hard for me to get a decent sleep lately. I'm so anxious and nervous to meet Mayi's mother.

Stressed about what am I going to say? Or act? Is she going to judge me when she realizes I can't speak their language? Lord help me.

Mom: Bebita

Me: Mom

Mom: just when I thought of calling you. How are you?

I exhaled

Me: I'm okay. And you?

Mom: me too. I sense there's more to it. Tell me, what's going on?

I let out a breath and rubbed my eyes.

Me: Ma I'm so nervous

Mom: of what?

I sighed

Me: necesito decirte algo (I need to tell you something)

Mom: mhmm estoy escuchando (I'm listening)

I pressed my lips

Me: I'm dating

Mom: ayeee!!!

She screamed and beamed in excitement.

Me: my ears Mamá ayy

She giggled

Mom: I'm sorry, forgive me child. I couldn't control myself.

Wow!

We giggled

Mom: is that the reason why you didn't want to come back to Mexico?

Me: no this relationship is brand new from the box.

Mom: oh! Wow so who is he? How old is he and what does he do?

I smiled while biting my upper lip.

Me: his name is Mayi, I can't pronounce his full name. He's an African man, a strong built one.

Mom: is he Zulu!!?

She asked in aghast. I giggled Mom is so obsessed with Zulu people. Ever since she watched the Shaka Zulu film.

Me: no Mom he's not

Mom: then what is he?

I held my forehead

Me: oh my Gosh! He's a.. a.. Cosa

Mom: Xhosa?

Me: Má!!! How did you click your tongue like that?

Mom: I've lived in South Africa for a long time Bebita, before you were even born.

Me: wow!

Mom: so where did you meet?

Me: at work. We worked together, he's been a buddy at first then we took things on another level.

Mom: wow I'm so happy for you, huh! When last have you've ever been inlove? With Enrique.

Me: oh I was so young and naïve at that time.

We giggled

Me: and Sandro had to ruin that

Mom: he has always been a protective brother. But he's out of sight now and you're growing old. You're reaching 30, I need some grandkids. I can't die without any little nietas & nietos (grandkids)

I laughed

Me: no no you're not going to die yet. Just wait a little, there's plenty of great things I still need to do for you.

Mom: mmh okay sweetheart.

(Silence)

Me: another thing I need your help

Mom: on what?

Me: I'm invited by my boyfriend's mother for dinner. So I need you to help me on what I should wear.

Mom: that's easy Bebita very easy

Me: I'm listening

Mom: the dress I bought you on your 21st, it still has its good quality.

I opened my mouth wide in ecstasy

Me: ohhh yes! yes! fantastic

Mom: you see?

Me: where can I find it?

Mom: your old room, where I usually pack your old stuffs. And when is this dinner?

Me: el Domingo (on Sunday)

Mom: okay you still have a chance to wash your dress. And please curl your braids the way I used to. Doll yourself sweetheart, smell nice. Remember that the first impression lasts.

Me: I will

Mom: don't forget to be yourself. Always be yourself and not try to be someone you're not, please. The mother will like you if she wants too, if not then tough luck. As long as the son remains madly inlove with you.

Me: it's like you already know

Mom: make babies as possible

Me: Mom!!

We giggled loudly. Dwayne walked to my side.

Me: uhm Mom we'll have to chat later. I have to attend something

Mom: okay baby, I love you.

Me: I love you too, bye

Mom: goodbye

We hang up. I lift my eyes to Dwayne.

Me: yes?

Dwayne: there's a lady on the gate she needs to be attended by you.

Me: me?? Who is she?

Dwayne: she didn't say

Me: o-kay strange. I'm coming.

I got off the pool and wrapped my cloth over my hips while wearing my sandals... And walked to the gate.

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MAVUYI

The rate of my heartbeat right now was hazardous, the way it was pounding. If ever she'd say one thing out of line, I swear I'd hit down the floor and be pronounced dead right there.

I jumped and startled when the gate got opened.

Oh God of Israel!! It was really her, my daughter. I was seeing a complete reflexion of myself before me. She's so beautiful, I began drifting away as I took time admiring her bit by bit.

My heartbeat was slowly going back to its normal pace because I was too focused on her rather than my nervousness.

Ashanti: hi, can I help you?

I was still staring at her, her accent was different. Screaming that she wasn't locally groomed. Is this the Ncumo I held in my arms? Like it's really unbelievable that she amazingly grew like this.

Ashanti: Ma'm??

I finally came back to reality

Me: oh sorry, sorry. Hi!

We made eye contact for the first time and I caught my breath.

Ashanti: you okay? You're sweating

I held my face and wiped my forehead.

Me: oh sorry I tire easily especially when I take long walks

Ashanti: oh

I cleared my throat

Me: I uhm.. don't mean to bother or anything. I just came in need for a job. Just anything please. I can be your maid and help you manage your life a lot more easier. And I uhm.. am really good at what I do, anytime you need me I can start and If you need referenci-

Ashanti: I don't need a maid.

I parted my lips in disappointment as she shot that.

Me: ohh?

Ashanti: yes, try elsewhere. Keep walking down this road I'm sure you'll eventually find a household that needs a maid. There are many of them, don't lose hope. I'm sure with your energy, you might definitely score yourself one.

Me: uhm I.. th-thank you

She made a fake smile

Ashanti: wish you all the best.

I made a slight nod

Me: okay

Ashanti: byeee

I made a turn and dragged my feet though my heart was refusing to walk away. I was in all sorts of pain. Taking a slow walk of disappointment and began crying silently.

Me: did I make the right choice Lord?

I muttered in between my silent cries as I covered my lips.

Me: help me, I can't leave while I'm already here. Give me courage Lord please give me c-

"Ma'm!!"

I brushed my cheeks and continued walking.

Me: please I beg you Lord

"Ma'm!!"

I looked back. She waved at me, indicating I should come back, I was already a bit distant from her premises.

I rubbed my nose smiling and placed my hand on my chest, indicating whether she's calling for me or not.

Ashanti: yes you Ma'm!!

She yelled. I sighed in relief and walked to her, wiping my face.

Me: yes?

She stared at me for a long time and made a beautiful genuine smile.

Ashanti: I changed my mind. God may punish me if I let a good woman like yourself down. Therefore I think it wouldn't hurt hiring you as my maid. I feel like it would be a blessing having

someone like you around, I mean I already have a lot in my plate. So..

She raised her shoulders

Ashanti: please work for me as my maid?

Me: (screaming) aaah yes! Thank you

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thank you, thank you.

I couldn't hold myself I immediately suffocated and crushed her into a hug then kissed her face.

Ashanti: wooah, we are that excited aren't we?

I embarrassedly broke it off and composed myself fixing my dress.

Me: oh uhm... forgive me I couldn't control myself, just that I've been always looking for a job and I'm glad to finally get it.

She held the side of my arm.

Ashanti: don't even apologize, enjoy your moment. If you're done let me show you around.

I smiled.

Me: I am done you may show me around.

She smiled and let me get inside. I looked around the place.

Me: is this all your house?

Ashanti: my parents left it for me

I swallowed a big painful lump

Me: ohh

Ashanti: I didn't get your name?

Me: my..my.. my..

She giggled holding my arm

Ashanti: relax and breathe

I took few breaths and smiled

Me: my name is Vuyelwa Vilakazi you can call me Mavuyi.

Ashanti: okay nice to meet you Mavuyi. My name is Ashanti Quintero.

Me: it's nice to finally meet you too Ncu- I, I mean Ashanti

Ashanti: yes let me introduce you to the rest of my body guards.

Wow!! I was taken by her smooth life.

Me: oh okay.

We walked inside this heavenly looking house. What can I say?
I'm so happy that God heard my prayers. I finally met my

Ncumo, seems like she's a nice person but she also has an intimidating persona. She has to know who I am while we're still laughing. This feels like a dream, God made it so easy for me. After all these years.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

My mother, father and niece were here. They drove all the way from Grahamstown to Butterworth, they'll be staying over my place for the weekend. I told them about going to Centane.

Me: Imo!

Imolathile: Auntie!

She gave me a hug.

Me: Heyy you've grown young lady.

I tickled her developing boobs and she chuckled.

Imolathile: can I go to my room?

Me: yes sweetheart feel welcomed.

She took her bags and walked to the room. I noticed an iPhone in her hand. I widened my eyes looking at my parents.

Me: Mom, Dad is that an iPhone?

They nodded.

Me: did Thuli buy her?

Mom: no ngu mntakokwenu (it's your brother)

Me: Benny?

Dad: no

Me: Lime??

Dad: yes.

Me: hayibo Limile unjani nah? How can he buy a 13 year old an expensive phone like that whilst her Mom just bought her a brand new Huawei P40.

Dad: I'm not getting involved

He said walking away. I looked at Mom.

Mom: hayi yona ingqondo ka bhuti wakho idada eOil'in, uyacaca nje uba uliwele nyani. (Your brother has a loose screw, it's really obvious that he's a twin)

Me: aww Ma I'm offended right now

My niece giggled.

Mama: what did I say to you about eavesdropping?

Imolathile: I wasn't Makhulu I just forgot my charger.

Mom: nzok'betha wena (I'll beat you)

She said pointing at her. Dad appeared again.

Dad: okay ladies I think it's time to go.

Mom held my hands and brought me close.

Mom: oh baby I hate it when you're leaving.

Me: Mom you know this is part of my gift. I help people and this is how I'm supposed to live my life.. and I love it just the way it is.

She closed her eyes

Mom: I know and I understand I just want you to be safe

I smiled and squeezed her hands in mine.

Me: I will don't worry I'm a big girl. The person you should be worrying about, is your new baby girl Imo.

Dad: you mean the naughty girl over there?

We laughed.

Me: honestly I'll be fine Mom. I've been through worst this is just a minor.

Dad: when my girl says that, best believe she means it.

Me: see? That's the spirit Dad.

He gave me a tight hug and brushed my back then we let go.

Mom: okay fine then. Imo go fetch her bags.

Imolathile: okay, am I also coming along?

Dad: have we ever left you behind? Knowing that you're a girl and it's unsafe for you.

Imolathile: no Khulu

Dad: now go fetch the bags.

So they got my bag. They were going to drive me straight to Centane. Not that I can't drive or don't have a car. But they take it as part of their tradition to drive and drop wherever I go for practice. They always take concern of my safety. That's how much my parents care for me.

We immediately got in the car and started off with our journey.

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KOLOSA

My uncle just made it home from his long journey. My father and I gave him a warm welcome. And filled him on everything

he needed to know, we also told him our way forward regarding the matter.

So he then went to purchase a bottle of Viceroy then we went to speak on the alter and pleaded with our ancestors. We didn't forget to mention that we'll start looking for their daughter and bring her home.

We got inside immediately when we got done.

Zolisa: I believe things will get better starting from today. We've almost lost the whole family, it's too much ngoku.

Me: too much nyani Tatomkhulu

Zolisa: ewe mntanam it's enough. Mtyhileli.

Dad: bafo (brother)

Zolisa: I hope you took this as a lesson.

Dad: kakhulu mkhuluwa (yes brother)

Zolisa: I hope you will improve your actions as from today. You have only two children left, I hope you will do right by them.

Dad: yes I will

Zolisa: another thing, we should always remember that every word we utter on the altar, are words we should always stick by and really mean them.

We nodded

Zolisa: already we're not on the good side with our ancestors. Let's not make them more upset by making empty promises. Ngakho ke (Therefore), what I'm trying to say is.. looking for the prodigal daughter should be our main priority. And we have to make sure that we do find her. Agreed?

Us: siyavumelana (agreed)

Zolisa: it's for our rescue and healing, then for her, it's for her roots.

Dad: injalo (exactly)

Zolisa: sisavumelana mos? (We still on the same page?)

Us: yes

Zolisa: good, I'll call my son to fetch us and we'll soon start with this journey.

I held my hands together and exhaled

Me: uhm can I also bring something to attention?

Zolisa: khululeka ntombam (feel free my girl)

I scratched my nose

Me: uhm remember I was kept in the dark about this. Till I had to lose everything in order for me to make a movement. So I went to seek for help and received it from a healer.

Zolisa: e.e (yes)

Me: she brought it out to light. Ngoku ke she volunteered herself on helping us more with the journey we'll take.

I glanced at Dad

Me: and iskakhulu befuna udibana nawe Tata akhe athethe nawe... Ndiyathemba anina ngxaki nalonto. (And mostly she wanted to talk to you Dad... I hope both of you won't have any problem with that)

Dad: hay kulungile sanalwam (no it's okay my child)

Zolisa: right now baby girl we're in no position to refuse any form of help directed to us.

I smiled widely

Me: hayike I'm happy. Ebethe ke uzofika namhlanje (She said she'll arrive today).

We immediately heard a hoot and saw a car coming and parking next to our house.

Me: oh this must be her! Seems like she's bringing her family along.

Zolisa: oh tshini, masiyoba khawulela (let's go meet them)

Dad: niyayaz ke eyam imeko (you know my situation)

Zolisa: no it's fine mninawa.

We got up and went to meet Gog' Manyano on the gate. Exchanging greetings with her and her family, she really had lovely parents. I'm so happy she came through to assist.

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MAYIHLOME

I was busy installing more decorated lights on our ceiling. I sent my brother to buy them at CTM and he did as I asked. I really don't like the idea of just sitting home all day, doing nothing. I want to always keep my hands handy and useful. Mom will be happy to see this.

"Heee!"

Speak of the devil...

Mom: ubangu makhi kuk'hleli entloko nangona ungu mqhwaleli. (Being a builder is in your head even though you're now a Trotter)

I chuckled and got down the chair still limping

Me: Ma why do you put it that way?

Mom: hay it's a compliment my son don't be offended.

Me: I know with you, it's all about the survival of the fittest.

Mom: good I'm glad you still know. Andinalo tuu mntanam ixesha loni totona (I have no time to nurse your feelings)

I chuckled.

Mom: nice lights by the way. It was good of you to think of buying them. Andinalo nexesha lo jonga ezonto (I don't even have time to notice such things)

Me: kanti ngeliphi ixesha ode ubenalo kakade? (Exactly what time do you really have?)

She grabbed a dishcloth and hit me. I whimpered dramatically.

I then later smiled thoughtfully.

Me: she agreed ke Mama

Mom: agreed?

Me: my girlfriend to come over for dinner?

She almost choked.

Mom: what!? Wow that's awesome, great news ever. Nini?
(When?)

Me: Sunday

Mom: Sunday!? Wow that's sooner than I expected but it's no problem.

She smiled taking out her phone.

Mom: let me cancel all my plans for Sunday to meet my potential daughter in-law.

I gave her an unimpressed look

Me: na Sunday nah Mama? (Even on Sundays Mom?)

Mom: a hustler never rests my son always remember that.

Me: kodwa Sunday is a Holy day Mama.

She curved her lips in a crooky way.

Me: hayi yho you're Devil's child wena Mama.

Mom: say what??

She charged to my direction. I apologetically raised my hands cause I'm not able to run.

Me: xolo xolo xolo, ina ke

I said snucking a stack of money in her boobs to distract her from slapping the back of my head. It will itch for quite some

time, her hands have a bad effect. She's supposed to be a mechanic or something cause her hands, yho.

She stopped and smiled

Mom: oh so you're bribing me now?

Me: yah I got paid, so go treat yourself. Get some weave, manicure & pedicure kaso.

Mom: this feels wrong yaz

Me: just enjoy your son's sweat.

Mom: mhhh then Mathousand will later drool and sweat on me later on.

Eeeuw! My face immediately changed

Me: sapha sapha ke imali yam (give my money back) if you're doing this for those young boys. Have you no shame Mama?

Mom: nikile-nikile (you already gave me)

She walked away. I slightly hit the table. I really don't like this idea of her dating Ben 10's and it's really getting to me now.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 9

MAYIHLOME

I was woken up by the sound of music playing softly in the house it wasn't that loud. I turned on the bed while rubbing my eyes and yawned. I sat up straight and checked the time, it was about 8am.

I took my phone about to text my girlfriend but she beat me to it. She was telling me how nervous she was about today. I giggled and typed her a "good morning" text trying to calm her down.

I got up, wore my vest and flops then went out of my room.

♪♪" The closer I get to you

The more you make me see

By giving me all you've got (tell me more)

Your love has captured me

.

Over and over again

I tried to tell myself that we

Could never be more than friends

But all the while, inside, I knew it was real (oooh)

The way you make me feel" 🎵🎵

Standing there staring at my Mom working her way in the kitchen humming along with the song was something new. I was beyond surprised.

She turned and squeaked in shock

Mom: ooh! hayi mahn Hlohlo eyy

Me: I'm sorry I didn't mean to fright you.

Mom: eish..

I looked around and over the pots.

Me: wow this is perfect, especially your setting in the dining area. You are really outdoing yourself Mom I should give you that.

Mom: manyan? (Really?)

I nodded

Me: yes, Mathousand put you all in this mood?

Mom: rhaaa! esa sleg'e angavuya. (He'd wish).

I suspiciously raised my eyebrows

Me: mmhh!

Mom: "mmmh!" (spanks my arm), this is all for your girlfriend silly. You better be grateful I put up so much effort.

I giggled

Me: I am, I am. While I was standing there watching you I was still recovering from the heart attack, like wow. I wish to see you like this everyday, I never knew you can work your magic when you put your mind to it.

She snickered while pointing at me.

Mom: uyandi cuntsa wena, ndijonge kahle mfana wam ndingu Ndili kay'1, kabini espilini. (You're undermining me, take a good look at me boy. I'm Ndili at once, twice in the mirror)

She slammed her chest.

Mom: got great potential mna

Me: yes wena!

Mom: multi-talented mna awtam. Nothing I can't do, I can be a chef, entrepreneur, designer jonga you name it.

I covered my face laughing uncontrollably

Me: wena nah!

Mom: even a singer

I lift my hands disagreeing with her.

Me: ha.a (no) Mama

She frowned placing her hand on her hip.

Mom: ha.a ntoni? (No what?)

Me: ha.a Mama sundibuz' ba ntoni, ha.a qha (No Mom, don't ask me what just no!)

I said walking out. I left her confused and out of words. Lol she can't sing that's the fact. I hope it doesn't get to her that she even loses interest in preparing this dinner. With her anything is possible.

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LAURA

I was sitting drinking coffee as I stared at Ashanti's picture in my phone smiling.

I felt a kiss on my cheek.

Armando: esposa (wife)

Me: marido (husband)

He took a seat and held my hand.

Armando: let's go for shopping then we go view our house.

I smiled

Me: okay.

Armando: I'm still curious where would Sandro receive such money from. Though I'm tempted because it's been always my dream to live in Barcelona.

Me: mmmh

I sipped on my coffee still staring at my baby's photo. He snatched my phone.

Me: Armando!!

Armando: I don't like speaking to myself... Ohh! My princess, she's looking so beautiful.

I smiled

Me: true

Armando: South Africa really loves her. I just got on a call with her not long ago.

Me: really?

Armando: yes, was just checking if she's still doing okay and if the men are not giving her problems. I'm happy knowing that everything's still going fine that side.

Me: that's good

I sipped on my coffee again

Me: was that all you spoke about?

Armando: también me dijo que contrató a una sirvienta. (she also told me that she hired a maid)

I frowned placing my cup down

Me: sirvienta? (A maid?) Why would Ashanti need a sirvienta I mean (laughs).. I thought she's doing okay with everything I taught her.

He shrugs

Armando: well cariño you know how busy our daughter's life can be. Maybe she really can't manage with everything on her own.

I curved my lips and shrugged.

Me: maybe you're right. But why couldn't she tell me first?

Armando: aah Laura really now.

Me: no you know me and my daughter share everything

Armando: maybe she didn't have time

Me: Bebita always has time for me

He giggled. And looked at me

Armando: estás asustada tal vez? (Are you scared maybe?)

Me: de que? (of what?)

He swallowed and rubbed his lips

Armando: that maybe she might bump into her real parents?

I smiled

Me: that's impossible. It's almost 30 years why would the appear now? If they really wanted their child they would've shown effort years before... They must be dead or something. Or they're better off without her, I don't know either those two things but please marido... Let's not get on that topic ever again.

Armando: I was just wondering

Me: well wonder in your thoughts not out loud! I don't have to hear it. No one is going to come and take my Bebita away from me. Never!

Armando: Laura..

I stood up and walked away then came back again.

Me: and also our house in Barcelona will have to wait. Our destination back to South Africa better be quick. My motherly instincts are telling me something I don't like. Sandro will have to forgive us.

Sandro: "Sandro will have to forgive us" about what?

He asked while walking in. I looked at him then stormed out of the kitchen. I was quite upset that my husband brought this up. Those real parents better not dare, they'll come get a well

ready groomed child without contributing anything? Over my dead body.

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MAVUYI

I was giggling on a phonecall with Ndileka. I can't believe she made an effort on making this dinner come together for my daughter. I haven't told her though I already know that she's my daughter. I don't want to ruin their dinner. It's really a small world knowing that Hlohlo is dating Ncumo like... It's so funny, but I like them they're suited for each other.

I got done with the call. Letty and her father walked in with parcels

Me: another clothes? Hee lucky is you Letty.

Letty: it's for the camp Mama hau. Don't be jealous I'm daddy's only child he has to spoil me, angithi Baba?

Bheki: yiqiniso vele (she's right)

Letty: ehee! Sala ke neskhwela sakho Mama (remain with your jealousy)

She said sticking out her tongue

Me: nzok'betha Lethokuhle (I'll hit you Lethokuhle)

She giggled running away. I shook my head smiling.

Me: mna ndiphathelwe ntoni kengoku? (And what have you brought for me?)

Bheki: siyeza iskhathi sakho hayi okwamanje (your time is coming unfortunately not today)

Me: I doubt I'm loved her

He gave me a serious look

Bheki: ungang' bhedeli (don't be mad)

I chuckled.

Bheki: you know I had to cover all the bills for the house and add more savings for our daughter. Her camping interrupted with our budget. Plus she's a girl, you know I have to make her feel pretty amongst other girls.

I laughed

Me: I understand no need to explain further.

He smiled

Bheki: kodwa ke nawu shinshi (here's the change)

He took out some money and stretched out his hand to me. No matter how financially tight he can be. He always makes sure to save money for me so that I can spoil myself.

I smiled and reached his hand, closing it with his money.

Me: yazi ntoni Tata? (You know what?)

He looked at me a bit confused

Me: how about with that money you just go and relieve yourself with your friends? Abo Bab' Sol hii? Niyotya inyama nibenge, nisele nizo nwabise ngo Maskandi. (Go eat out braai'ed meat, have drinks & fun listening to Maskandi music)

He raised his eyebrows with a thrilled look.

Bheki: ah! Mkami? (Wife?)

I nodded with a smile

Me: ewe Tata mahn usebenza nzima gqith. Khawuke uhambe uyozo lula nge Mali yakho. (Yes hubby you work really hard. Just go and flex yourself with your money)

He giggled

Bheki: meanwhile what will you be doing?

Me: mna? Don't worry about me. I'll do what a wife's supposed to be doing. And since you now I'll be a relief on you in terms of

money, cause now I'll be earning my own money. I'll be starting with the job tomorrow.

His face immediately changed.

Bheki: kanti uyitshela nini lengane ukuthi uwu Ma wayo?
(When are you telling this child you're her mother?)

Me: siselapho kanti? (Are we still there?)

Bheki: yebo. Vuyelwa ko mele uyitshela lengane ukuthi uyay'zala. (Yes. You have to tell this child that she's yours)

Me: when the time is right and when everything is all settled.

Bheki: there's no better time than this

I closed my eyes and sighed

Me: ndinike ixesha (give me time)

Bheki: iskhathi nasi unaso! Yii mfaz, usu dala uqhushululu manje and ngiyasaba lo mlilo uwuthayo, uyokushisa uzwe ubuhlungu obunzima. Ngiyak'cela... (Here's the time you have it! Wife, you creating chaos and I'm afraid this fuel you're adding

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will get you burnt so badly that it hurts you. Please..)

He pointed out.

Bheki: tshela lengane. uNkulunkulu ukuphe elinye ithuba lolungisa izinto ungak'phuci lokho. (Tell this child. God has given you another chance to fix things, don't deny yourself that)

He walked away. I sat down letting those words sink in has I placed my hands on my face. He was right, deep down I know he's right and part of his words got me shaken. But I'm afraid at the same time. I'll have to try harder than this.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

Yesterday arriving at Kolosa's place. I didn't want to immediately get straight to the business, just wanted to first settle then familiarize myself with the family, catching up. Today is the day I'll finally get to talk to the father.

Kolosa: Gogo

Me: Kolie

Kolosa: I hope you slept well

Me: I did sis, I slept very well.

Kolosa: intle lonto (that's nice). I made us some food. May I bring it?

I chuckled I liked her modesty

Me: not yet. I first want to talk to your father, can you check if he's available?

Kolosa: okay I will

She left and came back shortly

Kolosa: uyedwa ungayombona (he's alone you may go see him)

Me: okay thanks

I went out and made my way in his room while knocking.

Me: Madala (old man)

Him: Gogo

He smiled.

Me: awu, uvuka njani namhlanje? (How did you wake up today?)

Him: fine my child thanks for asking and you?

Me: I woke up well too

Him: that's good. I hope my daughter is giving you all the nice treatment neh?

Me: ewe yhu she's very sweet

Him: hayi ndatsho ndaxola ke (I'm happy then)

I cleared my throat and went to take a seat next to his headboard.

Me: Tata kukhona into endifuna sithethe ngayo. (There's something I want us to talk about)

Him: kulungile (it's okay)

I cleared my throat and looked at him.

Me: andithi uba nengxaki yongaboni? (You have a problem with your sight?)

Him: yes.

Me: sometimes you see cloudy or blurry?

Him: yes

Me: but that happens certain times

Him: true

I nodded

Me: tell me emveni koko (after that) what else do you see?

He thought for a while.

Him: (exclaims) eyy!!

Me: I'm listening

Him: ifunny lento mntanam kodwa.. emveni koko kulandela ndibona Ingwe. (This is weird my child but.. after that I see a leopard)

Me: yah.. yah... yah

I nodded repeatedly. I reached for the snuff in my boobs and snuck it in my nose.

Me: tell me how does the Ngwe react to you?

He began blinking and his eyes became moist.

Him: iyagrama ibeno dlame, iyathanda undibamba ngamazinyo ayo indi rhuqe phantsi indlu yonke ogqiba indishiye. iNanny yam yayithanda ubhidakala qho xa efika ndiphantsi. (It becomes violent, it likes to dig it's teeth in my skin and drag me around the whole house and leave me there. My nanny would be lost to find me on the floor)

He snuffles and lifted his sweater showing me his hips and I saw many marks on him.

Him: nalapha emlenzeni (even on my legs)

I nodded.

Him: I haven't told anyone about this. I have been greatly tortured.

Me: uyasazi isilo sakokwenu uba yintoni? (Do you know your totem?)

He shook his head

Me: tuu tuu? (Not at all?) not even your parents have told you about your historical heritage?

Him: no

I nodded

Me: okay. Tata la Ngwe sis'hlwele sakokwenu. (The leopard is your ancestor)

He widened his eyes

Me: with what you've experienced. That's how angry the ancestors are with you. But it's aim is not to kill you, but to torment you till you bring the child back.

Him: kodwa si shwelezile nje (but we asked for forgiveness)

I smiled looking down then back at him.

Me: Tata, you know the leopard.. when it pays you a visit it means that it also paid the lost daughter a visit too, ngemini enye (same day)

Him: heee??

Me: only difference is to your daughter it acts as a guardian, protects her in every dangerous situations then with you, it

comes in anger and attacks you. Because they feel like "if it wasn't for you" that child wouldn't go through such things.

I began poking my ear as I snorted loudly.

Me: they showing me guns, drugs, ammunition. Showing me borders across the sea. Can mean only one thing that that's where your child has been...

I looked at him

Me: meaning ukhule ebona iimi bonakaliso enjalo. If bekunga songesa sihlwele simkhuseleyo, ngeku dala wafa umntana wakho zimbumbulu. (She grew exposed to such violence. If it wasn't for the animal ancestor, she would've long been killed by bullets)

He exclaimed covering his mouth.

Him: I thought this child was raised by Vuyelwa

I shook my head

Me: I don't see the mother connected with her daughter.

Uzuqonde when we find her, you'll have to come along with the mother too and you both explain what has been happening at the altar.

He nodded

Me: it claims 4 things only. Imbeleko to be carried for the child, a "thank you" to the totem that has been protecting this child throughout, for her to know her culture and she must never go abroad again.

Him: okay.

Me: I'm willing to help you with the search but only if you want me to.

Him: I do, I'm sure they also want to as well. But I need to talk to my brother to cover certain things financially.

I nodded

Me: okay, it's fine. So you understand what's been happening and all the damage?

Him: yes I really want to find her

Me: we will but it won't be an easy journey that you must know.

Him: I'm willing to go through all the trouble.

I smiled

Me: it's time to redeem yourself Tata. I'm impressed that you learnt your lesson.

Him: ewe mntanam, ewe. Enkosi nkosivula amehlo (yes my child. Thanks for opening our eyes)

Me: akhonto (it's well). Can I bring us food?

Him: please ntombi

I got up and went to get us food meeting Kolie along the way and we went to chill with her father. He told us all about the old time stories, you know one of those myth stories. They were so funny. He's a man that's full of sense of humour lol I also see he's a smooth talker. I enjoyed my stay.

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ASHANTI

I looked at myself with the dress on me. So amazing that 8 years later it still fits me well, but it's exposing my structure more now. It's not tight as in suffocating tight. But it hugged me in an appropriate way. The curls and make up made me look more wow and amazingly stunning. It's like I'm going to a Gala dinner or something.

I'm so close with my Mom so I snapped pictures of myself before I dressed up even now I'll send her and alert her when I'll leave.

Mayi is so clingy and I love him so much for that. He just checked if everything is still going fine. He wanted to send his

brother to come fetch me. He says they're all ready for me. But I told him, I'll come by myself.

I'm nervous though.

Finally reached for my clutch bag and went downstairs. There was Dwayne and three other guards. They stopped whatever they were doing and froze like statues looking at me. I swear it's like their breaths was gone, with their eyes bulging and jaws dropped down the floor.

I giggled while smiling

Me: guys stop it you're scaring me.

Only then they got their breaths back and started fidgeting.

I laughed

Me: guys act normal. It's still me Ashanti.

Dwayne: you're just... you're...

He caught his breath

Dwayne: we've never witnessed such beauty before our eyes

I smiled.

Me: thanks. Well honour the moment then.

They giggled. I looked at my wristwatch.

Me: well I've got a date to get to. I don't want to be late.

Dwayne gave me his arm

Dwayne: we should get going Madame

I smiled and gave him my arm.

Me: guys take care of the house please.

Them: okay okay.

We got out with Dwayne and he drove me to Thembisa. I gave him all the directions.

Later on we arrived and parked next to his house.

Dwayne: you're sure it's the house?

Me: yes I am.

Dwayne: call him to come fetch you. I want to make sure you're safe

Me: okay.

I was about to dial him but I saw him coming. Tucked in nice golf Tees and Chino pants with sneakers. He looked really handsome and yummy, just simple and plain. He didn't overdo it like I did.

I continued smiling as I admire him over the window.

Dwayne: well good luck on your date

I sighed

Me: thank you

Dwayne: call me when I should fetch you.

Me: okay.

Mayi walked over and I got off the car with Dwayne.

Mayihlome: hello sir

Dwayne just nodded at him then looked at me.

Dwayne: bye

Me: bye

He got in the car and drove off. Mayi was left gazing at me taken by how I looked.

Mayihlome: woww!

That's all he uttered before grabbing me in his strong arms and kissed me

Mayihlome: I'm so happy you're here, you look gorgeous and smell so good.

I smiled

Me: thanks. You look good too

Mayihlome: I tried.. Damn I chose well. Mrs me, come meet your future in-laws.

I giggled as he held my waist while we walked inside.

Me: oh my gosh I'm so nervous

Mayihlome: relax. You'll actually enjoy their company trust me.

Me: wow okay.

He kept staring at me.

Me: what!?! Stop I'm tired of blushing Mayi

Mayihlome: just that I love you so much

I giggled.

Me: I love you too

He pecked my lips and stood in front of me.

Mayihlome: you ready?

I took a breath and nodded. He smiled as he opened the kitchen door pulling me in, lol God please be with me. I hope they'll like me, This is it.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 10

ASHANTI

We walked in while Mayi's hand was still over my waist. The house looked beautiful and clean, as for the dining area it looked super impressive seems like they went all out for me.

A lady seemed to be Mayi's Mom turned around and gave us a smile.

Her: ohh hey there!

She waved and came to give me a hug.

Me: hi

Her: how are you sweetheart?

Me: I'm good thanks. How are you Ma'm?

Her: I'm perfect now that you're here

I gave her a smile then looked at Mayi. His brother came forward, he's also here. I know him.

Malwande: hey Shanti

We shook our hands

Me: Malwande

Her: oh you know each other?

I giggled

Me: yes we've met before

Her: wow seems like I'm the only one left behind.

Mayi held me tight.

Mayihlome: uhm Mom this is my lover Ashanti and Ashanti this is my Mom Ndileka . And as you've already met my brother.

Me: Yeah, nice to meet you Ma'm

Her: ohh please darling call me Ndileka or Ndili if you're struggling. No formalities, and as you can see I've still got fresh meat. I'm not frail to be called with those other names, they'll make me age soon.

I raise my eyebrows while folding my lips together, holding a laugh back.

Me: well I'll stick to Ndili then

Her: great, nice to meet you by the way. Let's all go take our seats.

Mayihlome: finally

We went to take our seats. I sat next to Mayihlome. Infront of us was a buffet of food, we said a prayer before serving ourselves. Mayi passed me a dish.

I froze realizing that it was one of my traditional dishes.

Me: is that a..?

Ndileka: Puntas de filete

Me: how did you know that it's my...

I looked at Mayi did he really tell his Mom? Not that I wanted it to be a secret. Though he made a face I couldn't quite describe.

Ndileka: well sweetheart we talk about anything with my son. Knowing you're a Mexican I had to impress.

Me: oh? Uhm wow I'm impressed that you had to go all out. This is exceptional

Ndileka: wait until you taste it.

I took a spoon and had a taste of it. I closed my eyes and smiled, I found myself missing Mamá.

Me: perfectly cooked. But don't be cautious with those spices I'm not gonna die.

Ndileka: yet I felt like that was alot.

Me: no

We giggled. Seemed like she specially made this dish for me cause it was set aside.

Ndileka: So Ashanti tell us about yourself

That question hey, I smiled

Me: well as you know I'm Ashanti Quintero, I'm 29 years old. Working in the same company as your son. I'm an architect. I am aware I was born in South Africa but with my parents we'd fly every now and then to Mexico, during holidays since I was young till now.

I sighed

Me: but now I refused cause I believe I have a life this side. Luckily..

I held Mayi's hand giving him a smile

Me: I just found something or rather someone whom I look forward starting that life with.

Her mother admired us with a happy smile

Ndileka: wonderful. Do you have any siblings?

Me: I have only a brother, he's currently in Mexico with my parents.

Ndileka: oh nice.

Malwande: you look nothing like Mexico. You look like one of us, Xhosa to be specific.

Mayihlome: hayi! (no!)

I gave Mayi a reassuring look

Me: well I'm not hiding that I'm adopted.

Ndileka: is it?

Me: yeah. At first it bothered me being different from them. But as time went by I accepted myself, my mother taught me how to love myself as I am.

Ndileka: and you're hella beautiful on top of that.

Me: thank you. So Malwande is not the first person to say that. I get it alot and some people approach me speaking in South African languages thinking I understand and that I'm part of them, yet not.

Malwande: has to be hard

Me: at work they think I'm faking it. But your brother is the only one who's been very accommodating.

He kissed me.

Mayihlome: I had to

Malwande: so how long have y'all been together?

I glanced at Mayi

Me: it's been a week

Mayihlome: and we're aiming for good more long years.

Ndileka: manifestani banta bami, manifestani. It is possible.

She said drinking her wine.

Ndileka: as a mother I'm happy you're dating my son thus all the effort. All my kids know I'm full of nonsense.

We chuckled lightly

Ndileka: but I decided to be decent and representable cause it's been a good while since my son has brought a woman, I was even starting to think-

Mayihlome: Mom don't embarass me please

Ndileka: askies mfanam. But I'm happy you've found a lovely woman. I wish great things for your relationship. I love seeing young people happy. And as long as you're happy son then I'm more than happy.

She smiled and looked at me

Ndileka: I wish we can be close as possible Ashanti. I'd love to teach you everything about our culture only when you're ready.

Me: yeah I don't mind.

We focused more on our food.

Ndileka: so what would you do if your real parents make an appearance?

I coughed and rubbed my chest.

Mayihlome: babe? babe? Quickly pass me water Lwande.

He gave me water and I drank it.

Mayihlome: Ma! Don't ask such questions maan you're ruining this dinner

Ndileka: I was try-

Mayihlome: it's personal

Ndileka: I'm sorry Shasha I didn't mean to cross the line.

Me: it's okay Ndili

I said placing the glass down. I was really not ready for that question. It really did left me with a question mark, what would I really do? Well I'd first need to hear their side of the story on why did they abandon me.

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KOLOSA

My uncle's son was here to fetch us. We had already packed everything that we needed. Our journey starts today. Though Gog' Manyano won't be able to join us because of work she has to first ask for a leave if it doesn't go well. Then she'll have to travel back and forth to Soweto, on weekends to assist us. And we'll keep contact and speak over the phone.

Uncle: packed everything?

Me: ewe Tatomkhulu

Uncle: your father is ready?

Me: I'm sure he is

Uncle: okay let me go check him. Sihle!!

Sihle: Ta?

Uncle: izonceda nyana siqhube lomfo (come help me drive out my brother)

Sihle: okay.

They left. I stood outside admiring the village one more time.

Mhise: so how do you feel?

I looked behind me as she took a stand next to me. I exhaled.

Me: I don't know I feel scared. I know this isn't going to be easy. Just hoping things to go well ngoba ndayazi uba azihambanga kahle

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kukumka kwam (because I know if things don't go well I might die)

Mhise: sizomfumana uDade wakho (we'll find your sister) trust me.

I sighed

Me: I hope so

Mhise: ukuthandaza kona usakwenza? (Do you still pray?)

I closed my eyes

Me: haven't had time I'm too stressed.

Mhise: just spare few minutes. And have a one on one with God
He listens.

I nodded. My uncle and his son drove Dad to our side.

Mhise: all I can say is, have a safe journey

Me: you don't need a lift?

Mhise: yah I do just drop me in town. My parents will fetch me
there.

Me: okay

I saw Push making her way in and she was about to faint seeing
us all being here, I can tell she didn't expect us.

I charged at her

Mhise: Kolosa wait..

Me: ufuna ntoni? Usafuna ntoni apha!? Jika, Jika uphindele
apho ubuya khona! ungaphinde ulibeke. Shiye nezo z'tixo.
(What are you doing here? Return back from where you come
from and never come back! Leave all the keys behind)

Phumla: uxolo wethu (I'm sorry)

Me: "nyolo" ntoni "nyolo" ntoni hee?

I was so angry that I jumped for her but Gogo held me back by my waist.

Uncle: yintoni nha ngoku Kolosa?

Me: I don't want to see this woman ever again!! After what she did? She won't receive a single penny from me. Leaving Dad by his own for months yet I send her money to take care of him... She even mistreats him.

Sihle: Sisi sicela uhambe torho ushiye izitixo ngasemva phambikoba iguquke ibe ngenye into le. (Please leave Ma'm and leave the keys behind before this turns out ugly)

She left everything to him and ran out of our yard.

Me: rha!

Mhise: calm down

Me: touch anyone not Dad, nx. Please let me go.

She removed her hands off me and I fixed my jacket.

Me: we should get going.

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ASHANTI

We were still in the middle of the dinner. Knowing each other more, speaking about Mayi's childhood and personality. His mother also opened up about being a crook as shocking as it was but she didn't care. She told us how she's made for the streets since from a young age. I felt touched by her upbringing it was so tough. I was surprised that both her sons were hearing this for the first time. I love how honest and open-minded she is. Though she's funny and can be bold at the same time but I love her.

Malwande had to leave midway through the dinner. And then minutes later Ndili's phone beeped.

She smiled looking at it.

Ndileka: let me leave you youngsters to feel yourselves. I've also got a man waiting for me.

Mayihlome: are you serious right now?

Ndileka: I'm sure you need some "me" time with your girlfriend. Let me not disturb, Shasha next time hun.

Me: next time Ndili

Ndileka: no one has ever called me so nice as you do. I'm inlove with your accent.

She winked at us and left. I giggled looking at her rushing out.

Me: wow, why did she have to leave so soon?

Mayihlome: look who's speaking now?

Me: I just love her character man I can't get enough of her.

He turned my chair and pulled it towards him for a kiss.

Mayihlome: just like I can't get enough of you.

Me: Mayi

I giggled feeling tickled by his kisses all over my neck

Me: Mayi it's... not like this.

He moved back

Mayihlome: so what do we do in the meantime huh?

Me: chill maybe do dishes

Mayihlome: they can wait

He kissed me again and while in it I pulled out of his lips.

Me: babe

Mayihlome: you're also a 90 day rule girl?

Me: maybe but let's take things slow please.

He bit his lip with his eyes shut and squeezed my hands in his. Then he gave off a long sigh.

Mayihlome: okay fine. We won't do anything silly. So are we doing these dishes?

Me: now you're talking

I tried standing up but he pulled me back to my seat.

Mayihlome: man you look so good, you got me craving for you.

He placed my hand on his crotch. Omw! He had a boner.

Me: oh no, what did I just witness?

He made a silly grin.

Me: as tempting as it is but I'm not ready

Mayihlome: eish

I giggled getting up and packed the plates to the kitchen. He got there and spanked my butt. It was really hard completing the dishes with him being all over me. But we eventually got done.

He pulled my hand.

Mayihlome: come let's take a ride

Me: where to?

Mayihlome: just showing you where I hang out and reason behind it.

I squint my eyes

Me: are you sure this is not about you showing me off?

Mayihlome: ohh yes that's the whole point darling. I have to show off my querida.

Me: and I wouldn't say no to that

He piggybacked me and I screamed. We went outside to his car. I don't know where he was driving us but I'm really having a great time with him. I'm glad he's showing me more of the Kasi life.

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MAVUYI

I went to work, the guards let me in. My knock in time is 7am but I arrived early by 6:30am.

I got in and I'm seeing no trace of Ncumo. I wasn't lost though cause she's already shown me how everything works around here.

I bumped to one of her guards who seemed to be close with her.

Me: hi

Him: Ma'm

Me: uhm is Ashanti going to work today?

Him: yes

Me: oh okay

Him: is that all?

Me: yes that'd be all.

He left. I sighed looking around this big house. Where do I start? Food. She has to first have breakfast. I went to scan for something I could make in the kitchen. The grocery was weird but I could manage.

So I decided on making her a sandwich, with waffles and fruit salad.

Afterwards went to ironing and organizing her work clothes. She still wasn't waking up so I went to check her.

Me: Ashanti wake up

I shook her

Ashanti: mmmm

Me: you'll be late for work wake up. Ashanti!

Ashanti: okay okay

She rubbed her eyes and sat up

Ashanti: what's the time?

Me: 7:15

Ashanti: holy crap! I'm late.

She jumped up and ran around like a mad person.

Me: relax I prepared everything for you; your clothes, your essentials and even ran you a bath. All you need to do is bath and get ready.

She started relaxing.

Ashanti: aah! Gosh thank you. I'm beginning to love you.

An involuntary smile came out

Me: oh really?

Ashanti: yes, you are a star. I don't regret hiring you.

I shrugged

Me: well that delights me... Let me uhm leave you to it.

I got out and began cleaning around the house. I don't want to lie it felt good hearing her say that. I can't blurt it out already that I'm her mother atleast I'll prepare for this evening and give myself to gather courage on telling her the truth.

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LIMILE

Finally got back to work today. I couldn't wait for this day it took almost forever. Miss Ashanti was showing me around where I'll work or rather where we'll work.

Ashanti: that's your rest room when you want to change to your Helmets, glasses and overalls for work inspection.

She stretched her hand

Ashanti: the keys

I took them

Me: thank you.

She walked to a spacious office.

Ashanti: our brainstorm room, where we share our ideas and Three-dimensional images.

I nodded. We walked out and she showed me the office "I'll" be working in.

Me: I thought we'll share the same office

Ashanti: uh no. I have my own office and you have yours. We may work closely but we'll have our own separate space.

Me: oh.

I couldn't stop gawking at her though at every given time. I really like the way she speaks.

Ashanti: anything else you need from me?

I finally snapped away

Me: tell me what's our next project so that I can work on something.

Ashanti: Industrial. Constructing steel mills, oil refineries and pipelines will be our next project. Mr Phillips will explain further later on since everyone is still settling after the funeral.

Me: site?

Ashanti: we'll go check the site during our interval.

I smiled

Me: okay

Ashanti: done?

Me: dusted

She nod and walked away

Me: Shant

Ashanti: "Ashanti"

She emphasized. I suppressed my smirk

Me: mind if you also show me places where I can have lunch?
Mind if you can you join me if that won't cause you problems.

Ashanti: Lemi-

Me: just call me Lime

Ashanti: Lime there are many men around here. I'm sure you can make friends and ask them to show you places where you can have lunch. I'm just not cut for it, our relation is only at work not out of the building.

I cross my arms

Me: hmm a beautiful lady like you so mean with words.

Ashanti: listen if you tryna get flirty with me just know I have a boyfriend.

Me: I know I mean I can tell you've already had a good bang last night.

Her eyes grew wide in shock and those juicy lips parted, mmhh.

Ashanti: huh?

Me: huh?

I giggled

Me: let me enlighten you, over here.

I illustrated by touching my neck to show her.

Ashanti: what's on my neck?

Me: hickies, oh and fix your button too.

She embarrassedly hide her neck and covered her small cleavage. Then shamefully took a turn and slowly walked away.

Me: aww Qhwinksi maan! Don't forget your confidence Qhwintero. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

She stopped on the doorstep without looking back at me. She was speechless and I could hear her audible escalated breaths. Then she quickly rushed out. I laughed out crazily as soon as she left.

Me: ncnncnc tsii hay madoda ingathi I'll enjoy working here.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 11

MHISE (LIMISE)

"♪♪ (Because I'm happy)

Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof.

(Because I'm happy)

Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth

(Because I'm happy)

Clap along if you know what happiness is to you

(Because I'm happy)

Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do ♪♪"

I giggled watching my brother dancing to the song on Skype.

Me: heeeey. Who made you happy?

Limile: dude I had a great day at work.

Me: is it?

Limile: uh-huh

I furrowed my eyebrows as he sipped on his smoothie. He was shirtless.

Me: who's day did you ruin ke manje?

Limile: awhu wele why would you think so bad of me?

Me: cause I know when you're happy someone gets hurt.

He giggled

Limile: ayy mahn Mhise my jerky days are over

Me: oh is it?

Limile: honestly

I gave him an eye

Me: mmmh

Limile: like I said I had a nice day at work, it's just it wele

I nodded

Me: I believe you. You'd tell me when you're inlove andithi?

Limile: Limise are you being for real now?

Me: I am. I don't want to suddenly have weird feelings out of the blue not knowing where they come from yet it's you.

He smiled

Me: so you haven't found anyone yet?

Limile: not yet

Me: you'd tell me when you do?

He sipped his smoothie

Limile: ermmm

Me: mmhh? Phofu (Actually) you don't need to answer that. I'll know, I always do.

He giggled

Limile: you're creepy you know that

Me: I've always been.

Limile: so usese Gcuwa okanye? (You're still in Butterworth?)

Me: yep. Our parents were here not long ago, they've just left kodwa

Limile: argh I've missed them but I'll make sure to call them later on.

(Silence)

Limile: what's bothering you?

I sighed heavily

Me: I'm assigned to help a client kwelocala (that side)

Limile: apha? (Here?)

Me: yep eSoweto qha

Limile: oh okay. Ngoku? (So?) It's not the first time you travelling to help someone mos

Me: true but I'm touched yazi

Limile: e.ee?

Me: she lost a sibling just like we lost Luniko.

Limile: damn it's been how many years now... Do you still have hope that he's alive though?

Me: he is alive Limile don't even start to talk like that

He shrugged

Limile: I mean like bekuk'dala mos dad'wethu (it's been long)

Me: jonga if you're gonna start getting negative Limile I might as well drop this call now

Limile: awwh Sisi nah

Me: no Lime if we're gonna get negative ngoku we'll make it more difficult to find him.

Limile: okay ke, okay we'll find him I promise you.

Me: goodbye

Limile: aww not even I love you?

Me: goodbye

Limile: I love you

Me: nx!

I dropped the call while he was giggling and rubbed my hair. I decided to call my older brother in Upington, he knows many connections. He can help me get another good PI to track my brother. I'm so not going to give up on my brother.

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ASHANTI

I arrived home a bit late. I saw Mavuyi sitting in there a bit far with thoughts, seems like she was waiting for me.

Me: good evening

She made her everlasting smile while getting up.

Mavuyi: good evening

Me: how was your day?

Mavuyi: it was peaceful and quiet I'm not complaining though.
How was yours?

Me: it was the worst!

I said with a groan. She giggled.

Mavuyi: because it started off badly?

Me: no not because of that. Because there's an annoying guy at work who I work closely with. He embarrassed me today.

Mavuyi: how??

I covered my face.

Me: I missed few buttons of my shirt so it revealed my tits, not all of them thank God though I'm not blessed in that department.

She laughed

Mavuyi: what! you were in a hurry though.

Me: yeah, guess what else?

Mavuyi: what?

I adjusted my collar showing her my lovebite. She covered her mouth in shock.

Mavuyi: so you're dating someone?

Me: yes. I've been dating this guy, my colleague for a week and so... Yesterday I was invited by his mother for dinner. It was nice really nice, his mother was sweet towards me and welcoming too.

Mavuyi: wow that's good news

Me: yes. So from there... We didn't immediately jump to sex but he took me for a ride and then showed me more of his township, then we got naughty there and-

Mavuyi: hay hay I'm old my child I don't need to hear more of it, too much details

She said shaking her hand high. I giggled.

Me: we didn't have sex though

She became thoughtful. I sighed.

Me:and you know now since my parents aren't here. I need someone I can talk to and I'm glad that you're here, I don't know for some weird reasons I trust you. And atleast I'll have someone to talk to and maybe get wise advices from?

She just smiled thoughtful and gave me a nod.

Me: isn't it a bit late for you?

Mavuyi: actually Ashanti there's something I'd like to confess.

Me: okay?

She sighed fondling with her fingers

Mavuyi: I am your moth-

Dwayne walked in I called for him.

Me: Oh sorry Ma just a second... Dwayne.

Dwayne: yes?

Me: please come closer

He walked closer. I looked at Mavuyi.

Me: starting from today onwards I'll need you to drop Mavuyi everyday at her house. She knocks off at 6pm

He frowned

Dwayne: uhhm...

Me: I can add a little extra on your salary if it's going to be a problem

Dwayne: no it's fine

Me: thank you.

Dwayne: where do you live Ma'm?

Mavuyi: Tembisa

Dwayne: ohh? no problem.

I smiled at her

Me: so you were saying?

She cleared her throat. I looked at Dwayne

Me: you can give us some space I'll call you again.

Dwayne: sure

He left. I gave her a look to proceed

Mavuyi: as I was saying.. I am your real-

My phone rang.

Me: excuse me. It's my Mom let me get this.

I walked away picking the call

Me: Mamá

Mom: Bebita. How are you?

Me: I'm fine thanks

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how are you Mamá?

Mom: I'm fine too. Just missing you, I see I'm deserted.

Me: no it's not true Mom I was gonna call it's just for a day

Mom: a whole 24hrs? it's alot. Many things could happen in 24hrs.

Me: okay true. It's just that there's too much work and I've been very busy and had no time to rest.

Mom: hmm. Ni siquiera tuviste tiempo de decirme que contrataste una sirvienta? (Didn't even have time to tell me that you hired a maid?)

I grinded my teeth cautiously as I bit my nails with my eyes closed.

Me: uhm I... Telo iba a decir pronto (I was going to tell you soon)

Mom: pronto (soon) you say? Explain why do you need a maid when I helped you with everything?

Me: Mom honestly I can't cope on my own. Work is really hectic it needs all my attention right now. More especially when we've recently lost workers and-

Mom: wait you've lost workers when?

I held my mouth

Mom: Ashanti por qué eres reservada últimamente? (Why are you secretive lately?)

Me: no Mamá no soy reservada (no Mom I'm not secretive)

Mom: then what is it you're not telling me?

I swallowed and exhaled

Me: Mom you're stressing over nothing I was going to get time to tell you about everything that happened this week... And look there's something I've got to attend now

Mom: Ashanti..

Me: I love you Mama

Mom: Ashanti-

I dropped the call and took a breath. And walked back to Mavuyi.

Mavuyi: is everything okay?

Me: yeah it was just my Mom being worried about me

She nodded

Me: what did you want to tell me again?

Mavuyi: no it's late now my baby I have to get back home.

Me: you sure you didn't want to tell me something?

Mavuyi: no I need to get home.

Me: okay. Dwayne!!!

He showed up and I walked her to Dwayne. I said my goodbyes to her and went back upstairs to my room. I realized last night I came back without my earrings. So I texted Mayi.

Me: "I think I left my earrings over to your place I need them back. Good evening by the way💕"

I decided to go shower and go for my therapy (dancing) it's been a while, can tell by my body it's tense and stiff.

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MAVUYI

The guard drove me back home with me giving him my directions. The drive was awkward and silent.

He parked at my house.

Dwayne: for how long have you been staying here?

Me: more than a decade it's been a really long time.

He nodded

Me: why?

Dwayne: just getting to know the lady that looks after us during the day.

Me: oh, uhm thanks for the lift

Dwayne: don't mention it. See you tomorrow

Me: bye

He nodded waiting for me to get off. He then hooted and drove off. I got inside feeling a bit down, again I failed dismally telling Ashanti about the truth.

Bheki: nkosikazi!

He jumped up as soon as I got in.

Bheki: why take so long to come back? I was worried about you.

I didn't say anything just dragged my feet and slumped on the couch

Bheki: akusa bingelelwa lana endlini? (we don't greet anymore?)

Me: ndine stress mnyenam yaz khathobe ilizwi phantsi. (I'm just stressed just tone down a bit)

He looked at our daughter

Bheki: Letty ekamereni (go to your room)

She didn't hesitate she left.

Bheki: yini nkinga? Ngikuphakela ukudla? (What's wrong? Should I dish for you?)

Me: no I have no appetite.

He held my hand

Bheki: talk to me.

Me: ndihlulekile umxelela na namhlanje umntanam ba ndingu mamawakhe. (I failed once again to tell my daughter that I'm her mother)

He let go of my hand with a turned off facial expression

Bheki: sengiyali phosa ke manje itawela mina. (I totally give up on you this time)

Me: hake! uthetha ukuthini nangoku Tata? (What do you mean?)

Bheki: ngisho lokho! Ungazi ukhala la kimi ngoba ngikutshele kaningi indaba eyodwa. (I mean exactly that! Don't come crying to me because I told you the same thing all over again)

Me: awukandiva noba ndizothini Bheki (you haven't even heard what I was going to say)

He lift his hand.

Bheki: haawe! Mam'Krila sengikhathele manje usho into eyodwa kuwena iskhathi sonke. (I'm tired of saying the same thing to you over and over again)

Me: yhi wethu Tata-

Bheki: cha hay hay awulaleli wena umthetho lowakho. And le yonto iyok'shaya ngempela uzwe ubuhlungu. (You don't listen and that's going to strike you bad)

Me: I tried to talking to her Tata but qho there's something that disturbs us.

Bheki: ubuse msebenzini usuku lonke wohlulwa yini uqonda nqo endabeni nkosikazi, yii? Awung'tshele kahle kahle (You've been to work almost the whole day what's difficult to get straight to the point? Tell me)

Me: please listen to me..

Bheki: hay hay angisaz' ngene manje ngiqedile nyaa usuzo zibonela ukuthi uzokwenza njani. Mina ngiphumile kulo ndaba. (No no I'm excluding myself now I'm done you're on your own)

Me: Bhekisizwe!

Bheki: shu! Cha yimpangelo ngomuso ngisayolala mina. (No I'm working tomorrow I need my sleep)

He left.

Me: heee Bhekisizwe!! Nanku mntu endinika intloko phez'kwa le ndinayo. (Someone is giving me a headache on top of the one I have)

I sighed while massaging my forehead I felt a pain arising from there.

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MAYIHLOME

I was drinking a glass of water in the kitchen. Mom also entered singing a strange song while carrying her plastic.

Mom: "sise round'in s'yophanda. Kwathi gqi ooRhata vele sajika kuthi gqaa!! gqaa!! hayibo. Kuthi gqaa!! gqaa!! Khali ntshiza."

Me: Mom??

She kept on dancing while offloading the parcels and people got in with furnitures.

Me: Mom have you seen Ashanti's earrings?

She continued singing.

Me: Mama? Mama?

Mom: "... Kuthi gqaa!! gqaa!! Khali ntshiza"

She sang next to my ear while dancing.

Me: Mom what kind of song is that nah?

Mom: it's a signature song for hustlers.

She continued moving her legs in a funny way.

Me: so have you seen Ashanti's earrings?

Mom: "Khali ntshiza!!"

Me: Mom get serious mahn.

She made that dance walk as she pointed making her way to the lounge. Showing where the men should move the furnitures.

Me: where did you get the money to buy these furnitures? Hii Mama?

Something immediately dawned on me.

Me: no no no you didn't, ohh hell no you didn't. You didn't steal Ashanti's diamond earrings, did you?

Mom: "Khali ntshiza!!"

I covered my mouth in so much disappointment as I looked at her in disbelief. She continued making that dance walk like nobody's business. Anyone who needs a Mom guys? I'll give her away free of charge yho aa.a I've had it this one doesn't listen tuu.

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KOLOSА

We've finally arrived in Soweto. We arrived at my cousin's place, Sihle who's fullname is also Esihle. He stays with his wife and his teenage daughter in Meadowlands.

It was negotiated that I will stay with them. While my Uncle, Zolisa will take my father and go stay with him at his place in Snake Park. Him and his wife will take care of my father. I was quite emotional that I'll be separate with him yet we'll be embarking the same journey. I hope I receive a good treatment at this place.

Later on Dad and my Uncle have left. So they showed me the room I'll use it was a nice big house. Esihle also has been making good money, he's few years older than me.

His wife's name is Motlatsi and they have a daughter named Dimpho. I hope they're treatment won't be bad.

Sihle: how do you find this room mntase?

Me: it's perfect and fine for me

He smiled

Sihle: that's good to hear then. What would you like to eat?

I brushed my tummy

Me: yhu ha.a don't stress mntase I'm fine. I become sick during & after trips you'll have to give me just few hours to let my tummy adjust and I'll be fine.

Sihle: okay but we'll leave food for you okay?

Me: okay thank you for everything

Sihle: it's nothing wethu.

He smiled. My phone rang

Me: I need to answer this

Sihle: let me give you space

Me: thanks.

He left. I answered with a smile

Me: Gog'zin

She giggled on the other end

Mhise: Kolie

Me: hey

Mhise: I'm checking if you've arrived safely?

Me: yeah we've made it safely. I like this place I must say.

Mhise: oh wow I'm glad then. Your Dad settling in well?

Me: yeah we're divided though. I'll be living with my Uncle's son and his family. Dad will live with his brother. I just hope they treat him well.

Mhise: he will lala just relax a bit and don't forget to make that prayer. I have a feeling your sis is not far. Your ancestors really want one of their own back.

Me: I'd be really glad. I don't like being dependent mna tjuu! I'm used to living for myself with my own things.

Mhise: ewe neh? But this will also teach you something out of it sweetheart, to learn to live with people. Everything will be okay though don't stress.

Me: okay. So weekend you're coming right? And where will you stay.

Mhise: eish will have to find maybe a hotel in Johannesburg. My twin brother is in Centurion though I don't know whether I should bother him or what.

Me: bother him tshini!

We chuckled. I bit my inner lip

Me: or maybe come this side we'll share a room

Mhise: sounds tempting but I don't want to crowd.

Me: hayibo uyasineda nje. (You're helping us)

Mhise: sweetheart not everyone believes in what I do.
Especially your cousin's wife.

I frowned.

Me: what do you mean?

Mhise: me and my big mouth though. Listen we'll talk again,
take care and sleep well.

Me: but what did you mean by that?

She hang up

Me: Mhise?? Argh.

What did she mean by that? Or maybe she only believes in
Christ not Customery stuffs. But each of us will mind our own
business mos, right? As long as we obey that then everything
will be cool.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 12

[FEW DAYS LATER]

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LAURA

My husband was helping me pack our belongings. We are returning back to S.A I had to force this through because I didn't have much of a choice. Our house in Barcelona will have to wait. I created a story to my husband that I knew would make him jump and insist that we immediately fly. When we get there I'll tell him the real reason.

He patted his pockets

Armando: uhm I think I forgot the passports. I'll be back.

Me: okay will wait.

He walked away. My son appeared soon after his father left and gave me a strange look.

Sandro: will you ever come back?

Me: I don't know

He nodded

Me: honestly there's no better place other than South Africa for us. Your people won't be able to trace us there... And if you promise us that you'll behave whilst we're gone

Sandro: I will, I mean I'm tired of going in and out of prison. But though I'll strike back if ever attacked.

I tilt my head and sighed

Me: Sandro you need to stop living this life honestly

Sandro: life like this is hard to exit Mom.

He tucked his hands deep in his pocket staring at me.

Sandro: so no more house in Barcelona?

Me: we'll make a plan to come back son. Give us time, we're not rejecting. Maybe we might come back with Bebita

Sandro: didn't she say she's enjoying life over there not so long ago?

I closed my eyes and inhaled

Me: le recordaremos dónde está su casa. (We'll remind her where her home is)

He giggled with a nod

Sandro: does she even know she's being fetched back home?

I didn't say anything

Sandro: exactly, is this all about the woman?

Me: what woman?

Sandro: the woman that caused you to collapse.

I scoffed

Me: hijo (son) what are you talking about?

Sandro: the South African lady that looks like hermanita (my sister)

I gasped in shock and pulled him aside.

Me: hey! Bring your voice down. Have you been going through my phone?

Sandro: was just being curious

Me: just stop it and listen here!

I said through my gritted teeth and lowered my head closer to him.

Me: this stays between us, promise! Your father and Bebita shouldn't know about this.

Sandro: I understand with Bebita but I don't understand why we should keep it a secret from Dad.

Me: I will tell him soon but for now I need to get us there asap and deal with the situation myself.

Sandro: and how are you going to do that?

Me: leave it all to me. Now better make a promise

He nodded

Sandro: as long as we're not losing my sister then I promise you, it'll stay between us.

I smiled

Me: good

Sandro: aunque hay mucho parecido. No crees que finalmente se darán cuenta? (Though there's lots of resemblance. Don't you think they'll finally notice?)

Me: I'm fighting for that to not happen. I can't lose my one and only daughter. They can't take her from me.

He squeezed my shoulder

Sandro: luchar para mantenerla (fight to keep her)

Me: that's exactly what I'm going to do.

"Mmh are we gossiping now?"

We both jumped to his voice.

Me: aah Marido

Armando: esposo

Sandro: we just bonding nothing much.

Armando: you bond alot these days

I smiled and turned to him

Me: isn't that a good thing?

Armando: yes it is. I'm not criticizing I definitely like what I see.
You often misunderstand each other alot.

Sandro: I just realized that I'm going to miss you both of you
guys alot. Therefore I can't afford any beefs

They giggled.

Armando: true

Me: so you got everything in order?

Armando: yes honey I think we should go

Sandro: let me drive you to the airport.

Armando: wise thought son.

We took our stuffs and prepared to leave. I can't wait to get
back there and hug my baby.

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ASHANTI

I was on the way jogging back to my house from my morning jog. Till I saw Mayi standing outside my gate, a bit distant though. He really respects my place he doesn't want to get in I don't know why. We had experienced a bit of a fallout and it was quite bad.

Mayihlome: querida

Me: Mr Pendla sir

Mayihlome: "Mr Pendla sir?" Is that what I've become?

Me: what do you want?

He sighed

Mayihlome: you are not answering my calls and you're not talking to me. Ashanti please don't do this. I said we can solve this I'm your partner, we have to talk.

Me: I said I'm not going to talk to you till I have those earrings

Mayihlome: so those earrings are more important than anything? Than us?

Me: I did tell you they are sentimental. They were a gift coming from a very important person. So you should know the answer from now.

Mayihlome: I'll-

I lift my hand to cut him

Me: don't tell me you're gonna buy them cause you're not going to get them in South Africa. No other earrings will ever replace them.

He sighed making a pleading face

Mayihlome: please let's not fight about this. They are somewhere around the house. I promise I'll look for them and find them.

Me: you and I know where they are.. and it would be by luck if they're still around.

He swallowed

Me: now if you excuse me.. I need to get inside and prepare for work.

Mayihlome: so this is it?

Me: it's for you to figure, now can I pass?

He shifted for me to pass. I walked in my house. He held my arm.

Mayihlome: Ashanti please..

I looked at his hand. He let me go then I entered inside. It's clear that his Mom is yet to steal many things of mine. How can I trust them? And I'm definitely not gonna separate a Mother and a son. This just greatly turned me off in so many levels.

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NDILEKA

I was in the kitchen peeling vegetables. Mayihlome walked in and passed without greeting.

Me: aww Hlohlo? Why don't you greet?

He continued walking

Me: Mayihlome

He stopped walking

Me: what's wrong with you?

Mayihlome: what's wrong with me? Are you happy?

Me: am I happy? Ofcourse I'm a happy person

Mayihlome: thank you. Maybe I should move out.

I chased after him as he got in his room

Me: hayi ngoba? (No why?)

Mayihlome: cause I'm staying with a thief! who can jeopardize anything and everything even the relationship of his son to get cash and still have the audacity to call it a hustle.

I opened my mouth a bit hurt by those words.

Mayihlome: what nonsense is that? Being a hustler doesn't mean breaking your own family apart

I slapped him and lift my finger at him.

Me: wabale amazwi owathetha kum. Ndingu nyoko ndakuzala, andiyo ntanga yakho. (Count your words. I am your mother I gave birth to you, I'm not your agemate)

He held his cheek and nodded

Mayihlome: sorry Mom if telling you the truth is being disrespectful

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sorry I apologize... But wena awuyifuni impucuko (you don't want to become a better person)

I giggled placing my hands on my hips.

Mayihlome: I've came to respect and accept the way you do things. Things you gained helped raising us and I appreciate that. But don't you think you should retire, huh? Mna no Lwande are old men we can look after ourselves plus yourself too. Why can't you just allow to sit back and we look after you huh?

He lift a hand

Mayihlome: but don't answer that cause I know the answer.
Awuyifuni impucuko wena Mama (you don't want to better
your life).

Me: hehee

I scoffed while shaking bmy head

Mayihlome: well I hope you're happy now that you've ruined
things between me and Ashanti.

He walked away.

Me: Mayihlome

He ignored me. I sighed and sat down. I don't like it when I fight
with my son.

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ASHANTI

Limile: Qhwintero

Me: can you stop calling me that?

Limile: it's your surname mos

Me: that doesn't sound like my surname

Limile: well in my language it's how your surname is called.

I sighed rubbing my eyes

Me: can you please tell me how can I help you?

Limile: ohh yah..

He sat next to me

Limile: this is my plan for the material work we'll need. I'd like you to go through it, add few ideas or suggestions before we hand it for approval.

I took the papers and looked through them. He had great ideas, I made a faint smile.

Me: amazing, just add plastic pipes. Limile: yeah I forgot, thank you

Me: cool.

(Silence)

Limile: you okay?

Me: yeah I'm fine

Limile: I asked you okay?

Me: I said I am

Limile: but you're down. I'd like your bossy attitude to surface again.

I raised my eyebrows

Me: am I bossy?

Limile: well you seem so

Me: wow.

We giggled. He then took out something from his pocket and stretched his arm to me.

Limile: have this, it'll lighten your mood.

Me: what's that?

Limile: just open your hand.

Me: huh?

Limile: please

I did and he placed something in my hand. It was a purple rubber band.

Me: "You're Amazing"

I read out loud what was written on it.

Limile: you really are and always remember that. Please wear it more often and keep your head held high, remember nothing in the world should bring you down.

He winked and got up leaving me dumbfound. I laughed shortly and continued staring at this band not knowing what to do with it. I ate up my lunch.

Also receiving a video call from Mayi I rejected it and got up going to my office.

I sorted a few things then I noticed a bunch of Lilac flowers on my cabinet. I took and sniffed them while smiling. I looked for a note but it had no note.

Wow I'm glad that Mayi realized that I love anything Lilac be it the colour or the fragrant. I'm happy he brought me my favourite flowers. I'm definitely forgiving him after this.

I went poured them water and placed them next to my window. I couldn't stop smiling. Now this made my day.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I landed on the airport dragging my suitcases and looked around.

"Waaa!!!"

I startled holding my chest. It was my brother, he likes scaring me off.

Me: nx, hayi mahn wena.

Limile: ayy weles

Me: you don't grow up.

He gave me a hug and let me go

Limile: hey ucothile mahn (you took long)

Me: ungxamele ntoni? Undi ntlonta neh (what's the rush? To play rough with me)

Limile: not really I just missed having my sister around.

Me: ncooah I missed your annoying ass too.

We giggled. He started driving my suitcase

Limile: I can't wait for you to see my place.

Me: uhm..

I cleared my throat. He stopped.

Limile: what?

Me: I'm actually not going to stay with you. I have to be in Johannesburg since I'll be helping a lady nearby there.

He chuckled. What was funny?

Limile: soze uyibone ke leyo (that's not happening)

Me: andiva? (Excuse me?)

Limile: Mhise you're staying with me qha qwaba end of story.
Kakade we're inseparable thina.

I fold my arms and scoffed

Me: Lime-

Limile: hay hay do you think I'd let you stay in Jozi by yourself?
No bhabha whoever you're helping, you'll have to travel back
and forth to them. I don't mind filling the tank full and give you
my car if it's that distant. But what I'll never allow is you staying
far from my sight.

Me: I did live alone mos back in EC

Limile: utsho nawe mos e'EC (you also say in EC) this is nothing
like EC ke sisi it'll never happen.

I sighed defeatedly

Me: why are you so bold kengoku? hee.

Limile: because I love you.

He kissed my cheek. And we walked to his car and got in, while
he placed my things back in the boot. He came in and started
the car.

Limile: where are we eating?

Me: Spur

Limile: cool.

Me: Mom is calling

Limile: reject and make a video call.

Me: okay.

I did exactly as he said and we spoke with our parents. They were happy to see me arriving safely more especially knowing I'll be living with my brother. He's so bossy he forgets that I'm older than him.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 14

KOLOSA

We were doing shopping with my cousin's daughter. Her father decided that she can show me the place and we go get ourselves some air. It was kind of him. I've always wanted to see parts of Johannesburg.

But I don't want to lie my mind wasn't completely here. I kept on checking my phone and wristwatch every minute as we were doing shopping in some clothing store.

Dimpho: Ausi Kolo are we still purchasing something?

I got my eyes off my phone

Me: uhm yah yah sweetheart let's keep looking.

We continued walking isle to isle but my focus was still fixed on my phone.

Dimpho: there are many nice clothes here. Do you like this one? It'd really suit you.

I logged on Facebook and typed.

"Ausi Kolo!" She had called me many times. I rose my head looking at her.

Me: huh?

Dimpho: are you sure we should do this?

I made a fake smile

Me: uhm sweetie actually... Do you think we're far from an airport?

Dimpho: an airport?

I nodded

Dimpho: ay we'll have to travel by Taxi again to reach the airport

Me: if you don't mind sweetheart can we deduct from my money and travel there? That's if you have no problem.

Dimpho: I have no problem.

Though she made an unsure look

Me: thank you

We got out of the shop

Dimpho: if I'm allowed to ask, are we fetching someone?

I didn't know how to answer that

Me: actually we're sort of going to meet someone

Dimpho: okay.

We took a Taxi and we got dropped. Few minutes later we arrived to the airport and waited. I know this sounds stupid but

I was waiting for her. I couldn't wait to see her I don't know why I felt this way.

I kept on dialing her but she wasn't reachable. Dimpho received a call and spoke a bit distant.

After the call she came forward

Dimpho: Mom and Dad just called, they are worried about us.

Me: it's okay we've been here for a long time. We should probably go.

Dimpho: yeah

I got disappointed maybe I'm too forward. My excitement was just too much but I hope she contacts me soon.

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DWAYNE

My phone rang. I walked to a private spot to pick the call. I was surprised to be called this early.

Me: Signora (Mrs)

Laura: Dwayne. We're on our way coming back there.

I looked around

Me: that was soon

Laura: it had to be sooner. How's my daughter?

Me: she's still doing okay nothing new.

Laura: mmh, the maid..

Me: yeah?

Laura: make sure we don't arrive to her being there.

I frowned

Me: how am I going to make that possible?

Laura: you're a man Dwayne you supposed to know what to do. I mean that's what I pay you for. Figure out something quick! I don't care how you do it or what you to do her. Just make sure that she doesn't come in.

I cleared my throat

Me: vuoi dire che dovrei eliminarla? (You mean I should eliminate her?)

She chuckled

Laura: no no no that's not what I mean. It's too extreme, come on. I'm not that type of woman. I'm not a violent person.

Me: ohh?

Laura: all I ask for is for you to make sure that she doesn't come in. I still want to meet her in person and have a woman to woman talk with her.

Me: but she's about to come in soon.

Laura: make a plan!! That's why I called you early it's because I want you to make a plan now!!!

I sighed

Me: okay okay calm down I'll make a plan.

Laura: don't disappoint me

Me: I won't Signora. Buona giornata (Have a nice day)

She already had hang up.

"You can speak Italian?" I startled and placed my phone in my pockets as I turned.

Me: oh uhm how long have you been standing there?

Ashanti: long enough to know that you can speak Italian.

She giggle taking off her earphones and pat my shoulder.

Ashanti: loosen up man, why didn't you say all this time you can speak Italian?

Me: well..

Words couldn't come out. She giggled

Ashanti: like I feel betrayed. No wonder it was easy for you to learn Mexican Spanish.

I giggled. She placed her phone on the table and went to drink a juice.

Me: you'll go jogging?

Ashanti: yeah just need to make my shake before I go.

Me: ohh okay

She disappeared. I glanced at her phone, I quickly reached for it luckily the screen wasn't yet locked. I looked for the helper's number and forward it to myself before writing her a message.

"Sorry for the inconvenience of informing you late that you don't have to come to work today. We're giving you a rest day. Enjoy."

I sent it quickly and wiped off everything then quickly placed the phone on the table.

Ashanti: phew! just thinking of calling Mom she can throw a huge tantrum if I don't.

I giggled

Me: your parents love you

Ashanti: too much they don't want me to grow yet they wanted me to be an independent woman. How ironic?

We giggled

Me: it is... Let me go get useful. Any errands you want me to run first?

Ashanti: not yet

Me: okay, enjoy your jog.

Ashanti: thanks

I walked away and sighed. That was close.

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ASHANTI

I went for a jog after my phonecall with Mom. 30 minutes later I came back home and received another phonecall from my bae.

I smiled

Me: mthuwam!

It went silent

Me: hello? Mayi? You're still there?

Mayihlome: uhm hey

I chuckled

Me: why did you freeze?

Mayihlome: uhm I.. just.. you are being nice

Me: yeah I know

Mayihlome: and you just called me mntuwam?

Me: you are or aren't you?

Mayihlome: yes yes I am.

Me: good. So what pleasure do I owe being called by you?

Mayihlome: I miss you alot. It's hard to carry on when we fight like this. I miss your love and us fooling around and with our long chats.

I smiled twirling my braids

Me: to be honest I did miss you too. I was slowly dying when we didn't talk. I hate it when we fight.

Mayihlome: you're really saying what I think you're saying?

I nodded as if he can see me

Me: yeah we're cool. Let's just put everything behind us. I love you so much the earring can wait cause this has been torture.

Mayihlome: it has been for me too. Tell you what

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how about we meet tomorrow? It's a special occasion. Damn I missed you so much I can't believe we're okay. I'm so happy.

I smiled

Me: I'm glad that your are. Tomorrow you'll just tell me the time.

Mayihlome: okay. My Mrs Pendla

Me: my baby, I love you

Mayihlome: I love you too

Me: how much?

Mayihlome: skyscraper size

We giggled

Me: you're so funny hey

Mayihlome: I'm learning from you

I'm glad we cleared the air. I don't like it when we fight. He's my lover my heart beats for him and for him only

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MAVUYI

I read the message and sat down. I was really looking forward to go to work. Since I prepared so much to speak out but that won't happen and now my spirit is down.

I dialed Ashanti but she wasn't picking. I huff and rest my head on the sofa.

Letty: Ma

I got my head up. She was making her school tie.

Me: Letty

Letty: aren't you supposed to prepare for work?

Me: Ashanti said I shouldn't go in today.

Letty: why?

Me: I'm given a resting day

Letty: how nice to be you Moghel

Me: neh though I wanted to go

Letty: umazisa nini uSisi wami (when are you telling my sister?)

Me: bendigqibe ngo namhlanje kodwa kwenzeka ke. (I was planning today but unfortunately..)

Letty: wee Mana, ugcine nini ukuthandaza? (Mom, when last did you pray?)

I looked at her

Letty: ngicabanga ukuthi kumele ukhuleke Ma kwisimo esinjena ngoba uzothatha isinyathelo esikhulu. And wona amandla uyawa dinga. (I think you should pray about this because you'll take a big step and you'll need strength)

I sighed and smile

Me: enkosi mntanam ngondi khumbuza nzokwenza njalo.
(Thanks for reminding me my child, I'll do so)

Letty: you're welcomed.

Me: now come receive a kiss from Moghel.

She sulked not wanting to give me a kiss.

Me: hee bethuna ndithi yiza! (I said come here!)

She giggled

Me: uthen nha lomntana (what's wrong with this child?)

Letty: mara Ma sengimdala nje (But Mom I'm old)

Me: akho lonto apho yiza (there's no such thing come here)

She came and I kissed her cheek.

Me: have a blessed at school.

Letty: thank you, have a blessed day too Mom.

Me: okay my baby.

She took her lunch and money and left. I ended up sleeping on the sofa. I woke up early today, preparing for my husband, myself and my daughter not knowing I'm not going anywhere.

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LAURA

We got off the car and I stretched my legs smiling as I looked at our house.

Me: home sweet home

My husband held our bags. I led the way as we got inside. We saw Ashanti busy pacing around with a phone on her ear.

Me: Bebita

She gasped.

Ashanti: Mamá!!!

She threw her phone and ran to me squashing me into a hug.

Me: oh my child I can't breathe.

We giggled and she let go of me.

Ashanti: Papá

She hugged her Dad.

Ashanti: why would you guys surprise me like this and not tell me you're coming? I would've prepared something for you.

Me: we wanted to catch you red-handed on your deeds.

Ashanti: deeds? Don't be like that Mom. By the way I'm so happy to see you.

Armando: we're happy too

He introspected her

Armando: are you now fine my girl? We were worried sick about you.

I bit my tongue. My lies were catching with me.

Ashanti: what do you mean Papá I'm completely fine as you can see.

She said laughing. He looked at me then back at her.

Armando: didn't you ha-

I gripped his hand while making a smile.

Me: we'll have more time to talk about that honey. How about we just dine in and admire our baby, huh?

He gave me a strange look

Me: I mean it feels like ages not seeing her.

He continued looking at me.

Me: "smile"

I mimed to him and he starting making a smile.

Ashanti: okay so I guess we should dine or we're ordering?

Me: yeah let's save all the trouble darling. Let's order Panarottis.

Ashanti: okay

She got her phone out while my husband ordered the guards to go place our bags away. Me and Dwayne shared a brief eye contact before he left.

Me: everything will be in order now. Mommy's back sweetheart.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 15

LAURA

We got in our room and I took off my clothes.

Armando: can you tell me what was that? You lied and brought us here, all the way for what? For nothing. Bebita is fine, can you believe it.

Me: she still needs us

Armando: Ashanti is old! you need to understand that. Let her live her life, now we had to leave our own house in Barcelona for nothing.

Me: is the damn house more important than our daughter!?

Armando: don't yell at me

Me: you are pissing me off right now. Didn't we just pack our stuffs not long ago and flee straight to Mexico for Alessandro??

Armando: it was different he needed us

Me: I've always knew that you have a favourite

He pointed at me

Armando: watch out Laura. Don't you dare speak of things you don't know of. I demand respect! And you need to acknowledge that your mistakes.

I sighed with my eyes closed.

Me: okay, quizás tengas razón. estoy equivocado (maybe you're right. I'm wrong)

Armando: we're getting somewhere

Me: but we had to come back

He frowned as he took a sit

Me: Ashanti has a maid

Armando: I already know

I looked at him

Me: that maid is her mother like her biological mother.

He got shocked and it didn't quite register to him.

Armando: how? I don't understand...

I showed him my phone. He saw the picture and placed his hand over his mouth.

Me: Marido we had to come or else we were going to lose our daughter forever.

Armando: does she know about this or?

He gave my phone back

Me: I don't think so. Maybe she was trying to figure a way of coming out with this. I say let's not give her a chance.

He shook his head.

Armando: honey nosotros sabíamos que el tiempo iba a venir.
(We knew the time would come)

Me: what!?! You're not agreeing to this nonsense do you?

Armando: cari-

I raised my hand

Me: no no Armando get real. Where was she all those years? Why now?? I'm not letting that happen. I'd rather die. It's too late anyway what can she do?

Armando: Laura

Me: Bebita may be different from us but she is Mexican okay. (Scoffs) I don't see her starting over with everything. This lady just wants to distract and confuse my daughter more and she doesn't need that right now.

Armando: Laura no matter what you do. You cannot deny Ashanti from meeting her mother. It will eventually happen whether you like it or not and it'll be for Ashanti to decide what she does after that.

Me: I'm Ashanti's mother no one will show up and just decides to be Ashanti's Mom all of a sudden and that's the final word I'll say.

I roughly grabbed the duvets off and threw myself in.

Me: and we're not leaving till we sort this rubbish out. I can't wait to meet this woman and tell her my piece of mind.

Armando: Lau-

Me: just shut up Armando!! Shut up. Bebita has never been your favourite ofcourse you wouldn't stand up for her. So I don't really need your input. Night.

I switched off the lamp and slept very pissed.

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LIMILE

Just woke up to my sister busy in the kitchen.

Me: wele

She wiped her nose

Mhise: wele

Me: did you just have your African cocaine?

She giggled

Mhise: awuse nje (you're so silly)

Me: I know I always am. What are we cooking?

Mhise: just something nice and sizzling.

Me: no grease ke mntase neh? I still want to maintain my 8 pack

Mhise: whuu ayingo matshamba (you're so full of yourself)

I shrugged

Me: ngokwe nyaniso nje (but honestly)

Mhise: fine ke... The ancestors are showing me that you'll bring us a wife.

I smiled alone and made a smirk

Me: well I'd be honoured. I receive, may it come true.

Mhise: uyajola wena (you are dating)

Me: Limise have I ever hidden anything from you?

She moved her eyes around

Mhise: well you haven't

Me: if I am dating I will tell you. You will know before I even tell you

Mhise: yeah I'll tell you even before you realize you're inlove

We laughed.

Me: so do you have any plans?

Mhise: ndiyaqala usebenza namhlanje nzoya eSoweto. (I'll start working today I'll go to Soweto)

Me: can I accompany you? Or atleast drive you ke ndiphinde ndiyok'thatha (then fetch you afterwards)

Mhise: I think we should settle on you being my chauffeur best.

Me: wow can I withdraw my words?

Mhise: thethile-thethile (you already spoken)

We giggled

Me: let me go hit the gym hopefully whatever you're cooking will be ready when I'm back, right?

Mhise: definitely

I kissed her cheek

Me: love you

Mhise: love you too

I took my sports bag and left. I enjoy having her around.

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KOLOSA

I received a call from Limise I quickly jumped for it. All it had to do was to ring once.

Me: hello

Mhise: hi, how did you wake up?

Me: good and you?

Mhise: great too

Me: did you arrive safely?

Mhise: yes I did, I am with my brother in Centurion. I saw your missed calls but you know he just wanted to treat me and...

Me: I understand no need to explain further.

Mhise: yah. So I'm coming to Soweto today.

I smiled

Me: oh really? finally

She giggled

Mhise: yeah we'll start with the work so gather all your family around.

Me: I will.

Mhise: and are you decided? As in like a comfort place I can work in whether at your cousin's place or your uncles?

Me: let me ask them first then I will inform you

Mhise: I'll hear from you

Me: yeah.

Mhise: goodb-

Me: can you be specific what time you'll be coming?

Mhise: say about 14:00

Me: I'll be waiting. Enjoy your day Gog'zin

Mhise: you'll be part of my day Kolie. Stay beautiful, bye.

I smiled.

Me: bye

We ended the call. I bit my nail tips still smiling crazily. What's going on with me? I stared at my ring and sighed then I went out of my room.

I bumped to my cousin and wife.

Me: good morning

Them: morning

I sighed

Me: uhm bhuti the healer is coming ke today and we should call ooTamkhulu to be around. That's if you're okay with her coming to your house.

Sihle: I permit it mzala

The wife laughed in a mocking way

Motlatsi: we're bringing traditional healers in our house??

I raised my eyebrows while facing away

Sihle: yes sweetheart

Motlatsi: wa tseba hore hoo ho khahlanong le melaoana ya rona. Re BaKreste lelapeng lena. (you know we're against those regulations. We are Christians.)

Sihle: I know but this is important

Motlatsi: joale hobaneng usa ee ntlong ya ntat'ao? (Then why don't you go at your father's place?)

Sihle: I won't bother my parents whilst I have my own house and willing to help. Ka hona kere re e etse mona (therefore I say we do it here)

Motlatsi: then me and my daughter don't have to be part of it. We won't stand witnessing demonic stuffs.

I opened my mouth in shock as she walked out. Sihle exhaled while pinching his nose bridge.

Sihle: just don't mind her wethu. Sizoyenzela apha yonke lento (We'll do everything here) call my Dad and my uncle to come over.

Me: I'll do so, tjoo.

Sihle: I'm sorry about that

Me: it's fine you did nothing wrong. Lemme go make the call.

I went to my room to call my uncle I knew Dad had no phone. I used to tell his nanny to buy him with the money I sent her. But I guess she was only there to milk me dry.

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MAVUYI

I was at Ashanti's place. I know today is a weekend and I'm not supposed to be working. But I couldn't sleep this was really eating me up. I have to tell her.

The guards opened for me and gave me access. But I saw a white lady trimming the garden.

She looked my way and dropped everything then made her way to me.

I made a smile

Me: good afternoon ma'am

She didn't say anything just looking down on me then up to my face. I felt so uneasy.

I cleared my throat

Me: is madame around?

Her: I'm the only madame around. What do you want?

Me: I'm looking for Ashanti I need to talk to her.

Her: Ashanti is not around.

I kept quiet

Her: you must be the maid right?

Me: yes

Her: Miss?

Me: Mrs Vilakazi

Her: oh wow well I don't think you're needed here anymore.

Me: askies? Like what do you mean? Did I perhaps do something wrong.

Her: I said you are fired! You're not needed here anymore. I don't want to see your black arse in this residence ever again.

That thorned my heart. Who is this cruel woman? I continued making my beautiful smile nonetheless.

Me: I'll here those words coming from Ashanti because she's the one who hired me in the first place. So long they don't come from her I'm still working here.

She giggled

Me: who are you to even fire me?

Her: who am I?

She laughed more

Her: you're so brave woman. I'm her mother incase you didn't know. I'm back I can take care of my daughter just like I did all those years, oh and I've done a great job didn't I??

I could literally feel the lump stuck in my throat. So they're back? God why did I take this long.

Me: well Mrs Quintero there's no need for you to be rude. You know I know nothing, being nice won't cost a single penny.

Her: what should I do when you're persistent?

She got closer to me giving me a scary look.

Her: careful not to be too persistent cause if you keep on pushing you might end up falling a very hard fall, at the edge, of a cliff.. no one might find you... cause you'd sink deep down.. and you'd be history, forgotten just like that. If you have a family you should always consider them before your actions.

I fold my arms with a wide smile

Me: is that a threat Mrs Quintero?

Her: I don't do threats. I'm harmless as they come (shrugs) it's just a saying. Nice perm by the way

She said touching my hair. I laughed.

Her: you'll receive your salary and let's hope I'll never see you again. You'll depart ways with Ashanti and dare try to cross me Mrs Vilakazi.

I continued looking at her with a smile.

Me: one thing you should know is that you don't intimidate me. Just because I'm a domestic worker and you above me, used to ordering people around and mistreating them. You now think you can come and terrorize me then I feel scared? What a shame. Listen lemme tell you something, racist! You may come from wherever foreign land you come from with your violence but remember you're facing a black woman, one who's used to protests groomed by the streets and lastly you're provoking me in my land?

I giggled

Me: I'd think twice if I were you to choose me as an opponent. I'm not scared of you, I say once again. Only Ashanti will stop me from coming to work. Monday I'll be here same place, same time.

Her face became all red she was really furious.

Me: careful not to rot that much at heart, your flowers might catch the energy and die out immediately. You'd water them till your hands get cramps cause nothing blooms out of evil.

Her: Guard!!!! Guard!!! Dwayne!!!! Get this woman out of here. I want you to throw her out!!!!

Me: relax

I'll save you the trouble. Have a nice day Madame.

I catwalked away. The guards were starting to appear. I lift my hands at them still with a smile.

Me: don't worry boys I know the way out.

I left the premises. I finally relieved my cheeks I've been smiling all the way till I left this place. I could tell by her looks that she knows I'm Ashanti's real mother and already she feels threatened. I won't lie I'm scared as hell but I won't show it. I was taught to never reveal my fears to the other person or else

I'd be giving them power over me. Monday I'm back again by fire and by force.

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ASHANTI

Had the best time of my life with Mayi. He took me out on one of the classy restaurants in Sandton. It got late and he suggested we go to the rooftop and chill there gazing at the stars. He surprised me with a nice necklace and a promise ring, he says he really means it that he'll marry me one day. He see's no other woman perfect for him other than me. We also took pictures lots of them it was really nice.

Hours later he wanted to drive me home but he was called by his Mom so he had to pass by his place first.

He parked at his house.

Mayihlome: so did you enjoy your day?

Me: yes it was so full of bliss

Mayihlome: I'm so obliged to fulfill my job as your man.

Me: right?

Mayihlome: uh-huh

He got closer and kissed me slowly and passionately after few minutes we broke it, before it could lead to other things.

Mayihlome: I love you

Me: I love you too

He brushed my cheeks as he admired me with a smile. I played with his beard.

Me: I didn't get to thank you for the flowers.

He arched his eyebrows as he moved back.

Mayihlome: flowers?

Me: yeah the one you sent me at the-

"Hlohlo! Hlohlo"

Mayihlome: eish that's my Mom let me go attend her.

Wait! he didn't send the flowers? Then who did?

Mayihlome: you don't mind if I leave you here?

Me: I do, I'm not beefing with your Mom so I'd love to greet her.

He was taken by that in a good way

Mayihlome: oh uhm okay fine. Come along then.

I got out of his car and we made it in the house. We saw his Mom and we greeted.

She hugged me.

Ndileka: ohh Shasha sweetheart you're also here. How are you?

Me: I'm fine thanks and you?

Ndileka: I'm fine too. Pleasure to see you and thank God you're also here.

I giggled

Me: it's a pleasure to see you too Ndili.

Mayihlome: why did you call me? You said it's urgent.

Ndileka: son I just wanted to apologize for what I did. I didn't want my pride to separate us apart. I love you so much Hlohlo and I don't want you to move out. You are my life no other parent will love you like I do even your shitty father.

We looked at each other.

Ndileka: excuse my language. Shasha I'm sorry to you too. I didn't mean to ruin things for you and my son. Now I broke one valuable thing that is hard to build, trust. When you go apart I wish to not be the cause of it. Therefore...

She opened her handbag and handed me my earrings back. I gasped and covered my mouth.

Ndileka: you can go evaluate them sweetheart if you don't trust me. To check if they're fake or not. They are exact the way they were.

Me: ohww! thank you Ndili

I hugged her feeling all emotional. Those earrings mean everything to me my grandmother, Papá's mother gave me as a gift on my 21st birthday and said alot of blessings in my life. I was hurt losing them but I was willing to compromise for the one I love. I'm glad I got them back.

Me: I can see they're not fake Ndili thank you so much.

Mayihlome: where did you get them? I'm sorry for judging thinking you stole them.

Ndileka: I did steal them but wasn't really gonna sell them. Wanted to make a risky bet with them, one of my dirty schemes. I acted as if I'm selling them to a certain shop then received the money - the one I bought for the furniture. Later on we went back to the shop and broke-in stealing the earrings back.

Mayihlome: Ma!!! That's risky don't ever do it again.

Ndileka: I promise. I think I need help son no matter how hard I try to stop but I go back strong. I'm addicted. I mean this is what I lived doing almost my whole life.

She said crying silently

Mayihlome: I'll help you Mama I promise.

Me: I also volunteer to find you help since you'll be helping me with learning the culture.

Her smile was priceless.

Ndileka: aww Shasha thank you. I'm glad we're still good

Me: yes

We gave her a hug. Mayi caressed my hand softly behind his Mom and he mouthed a "thank you". I smiled, I found that charming. Man I'm attracted by everything of this man.

Ndileka: okay! okay! Let me get off and go get my man. The house is all left for you kids, play around!

She said running away like she could feel our touches behind her. We laughed.

Mayihlome: aww Ma?

She banged the door. Mayi looked at me with his sexy lustful eyes.

Mayihlome: you heard the woman.

Me: nah nah nah

I ran around playfully lol he caught me soon and picked me up. He spinned me around first as we giggled. Then he ran with me to his room he threw me on his bed and fell on top of me.

He cleared my hair from my face.

Mayihlome: I love you querida

Me: I love you too mthuwam

We had a moment where our eyes were glued expressing how hungry we were for each other. Sooner he leaned forward and took my lips in as he gently kissed me. I hugged his neck tightly and indulged in the kiss going with the flow. As I gave him a soft touch at the back of his head.

He slightly moved my legs apart with his kisses moving to my neck, I gave him soft moans. He then moved his hand under my dress and first caressed my thigh squeezing it a little before lifting the dress all up.

Mayihlome: damn you got nice thighs

Me: stop i-

He attacked me again with the kiss and located his hand inbetween my thighs, rubbing my cooch on top of my lace. With his other hand he zipped off the dress at the back and moved from kissing my lips to sucking my boobs.

He gripped a little hard on my boob as he played his tongue around my nipple, sucking and pulling it with a lil bit of aggression.

Me: ohh yesssss

He got off my lace and threw it away and he fondled with my clit softly and in a most gentle way.

Me: mmmmmh Mayi..

I said softly and grabbed his face roughly kissing him then took off his shirt and unbuckled his belt and pants.

He broke the kiss and took off his pants. Then he was left with his boxers looking like a stretched tent due to his erection. When he came back, I've long thrown my dress on the floor too.

He pecked my tummy for a little while then placed my legs on top of his shoulders as he knelt on the floor, pulling me to the edge of the bed.

He started kissing my shaved pussy then licked the lining of my vjay. He kissed it again then gently parted my vaginal lips and started sucking and playing his tongue around my clit.

Me: ohhhhh Mayi ahhh.. yes Mayi, nice start don't stop.

I couldn't keep steady as I pushed his head more deep. He went from licking to sucking my labia with tender bites to tease me then he thrust his warm thick tongue deep inside my hole.

I screamed and grabbed the sheets feeling all the vibrations about to burst. I shook so bad till my juices spilled all over him.

He licked me clean and stood by his feet and bend to my level kissing me as he buried his finger deep within me gave me a good finger fuck as he kissed me. But I pushed him when it got uncomfortable.

Mayihlome: hmmm querida.. let me get the condoms.

Me: okay.

He pecked my lips and went to get them. He took one in a pack and tear it. Then he took off his boxer with his black huge veiny cock jerking to life.

I got a bit scared cause it's been a while since I got in action. He got back in bed and kissed me but it's like he could sense I was shaken.

Mayihlome: I'll be gentle okay?

He whispered. I nodded.

Mayihlome: you still want to do this?

Me: yeah

Mayihlome: I love you.

Me: I love youuuu t-aahhhh!

He entered me and I clawed his back with my nails as I felt the pain.

Mayihlome: ohhhhww queridaa!

He slowly moved in and out till he buried himself fully inside me.

Me: Omg!! Mayi awwh, yes baby ooooooh. That's how a car starts, keep going aaaah!

I felt myself stretching as he began moving his hips a bit faster and deeper.

Me: ahhh, ahhh, ouwww that's more like it! yeah

Mayihlome: ohhhhh fuuck! No pussy has ever welcomed me like this, uhhh!

He groaned as his strokes got more and more harder and I was screaming in a high hitchy voice also gasping, cause I've never taken such a big size like his before but it was getting nice.

He continued pumping me with our skin clapping and making that funny noise.

Me: baby... gentle... you sai- Ohhh shiit!

I began rubbing on my clit.

Mayihlome: Shasha.. I.. can't.. stop.. it's.. massaging me so good, ahhhh!!

He went very rougher than I thought groaning and speaking dirty inside my mouth. We both cummed. He wiped us clean and kissed me for a moment.

Mayihlome: this is my home from now on...

He tossed me over like a piece of paper and again squeezed his thick cock in from behind.

Me: ohhhhh my word you're killing me!!!!

I screamed. He stopped making movements.

Mayihlome: we try another style or stop?

Me: no! Carry on. I want you to fuck me hard don't even feel sorry for me. This is a good dick.

Mayihlome: oh really?

Me: yeeee....

I shouldn't have said so. He patted my ass and banged me so crazily and hard with spanks and moans engulfing our room. If we weren't alone everyone in the house would've heard us. And we climaxed like nobody's business. He is my husband infact he's the father of my kids this one.

>>>To be continued...

Chapter 16

MAYIHLOME

I opened my eyes to the most beautiful view. Seeing my sweetheart asleep, she looks beautiful even in her sleep. She gave me good last night. I feel so light, it's been a year since I've had some.

I brushed her hair then got closer to kiss her cheek but I stopped midway... I felt some wetness inside the bed. I leaned back then peeled off the duvets, I realized the bed was really wet.

I breathed in shame as I covered my mouth. Did I pee myself? I touched all over my boxers but it wasn't coming from me. I slowly glanced down on Ashanti, it was her she urinated in the bed.

I gently shook her.

Me: Ashanti, Ashanti, querida?

Ashanti: mmm?

I cleared my throat and scratched the back of my neck.

Me: uhm you need to wake up baby.

She first tossed around and finally faced my side while rubbing her eyes.

Ashanti: morning, why wake me so early?

Me: uhm because-

Ashanti: wait...

She sat up straight

Ashanti: feels like there's something wet.

She pushed the duvets off and gasped in shock.

Ashanti: is it.. is it me?

She placed her hands on her cheeks in total embarrassment. I quickly got out of bed and went to crouch next to her side.

Me: babe look calm down okay? Don't feel embarrassed. These things happen.

She covered her face and cried shaking her head.

Ashanti: this is so embarrassing!

I hugged her

Me: come here baby, please don't cry okay. I love you, it's okay no need to feel embarrassed.

She continued shaking her head

Me: baby, querida?

I held her face and made her look at me.

Me: it's okay. Don't beat yourself about it.

She looked down I lift her head up again.

Me: I love you

(Silence)

Me: I said I love you querida

Ashanti: I love you too Mayi

Me: say that word

Ashanti: mthuwam

I kissed her.

Me: that's my girl. Now get up let's get you cleaned up.

I got up and helped her up. She wrapped her body with the sheets, she slept naked.

Me: I'll need to wash those.

I walked to my wardrobe

Me: take my gown

She giggled silently

Ashanti: you wear gowns??

Me: winter is so bad sweetheart I even wear warm tights.

This time she giggled loudly

Ashanti: oh my Gosh!

I handed her my gown. She wore it and I admired her nice slim body.

Me: that wasn't difficult was it?

I said pulling her in my arms kissing her forehead then gave her a french kiss while squeezing her butt. She broke it.

Ashanti: stop it

Me: I didn't get my morning glory vele

She cleared her throat

Ashanti: you know I need to go bath.

Me: come let me show you the bathroom.

I held her hand. She didn't move

Ashanti: wait what if your Mom is around?

Me: well she wouldn't say much. Not like she didn't know what we got up last night.

Ashanti: Gosh I'm so embarassed

Me: nothing doesn't embarass you wena.

I poked her cheek and pulled her out. We walked and met Mom watching TV.

Ndileka: heeeeeee!

She clapped her hands dramatically and stared at us. Lol imagine Ashanti was wearing my gown, I was only in my boxers.

Ashanti: oh my word I told you Mayi.

She mumbled as she turned back hiding her face on my bare chest.

Ndileka: qhubekana banta bam (go ahead) as long as you bring me grandkids I'll be happy.

I giggled.

Me: ndayazi wena Mamzo awuyi tyisi team. (I know you don't let me down Mom)

Ashanti pinched me. I laughed.

Me: okay okay we're going ke.

Ndileka: thank you Shasha on his behalf!

My querida was embarrassed all the way throughout shame, we laughed and I showed her the bathroom and prepared her a bath. I showed her everything she'll use.

Then went back to my room and took off all the sheets and duvets to prepare them for wash.

I won't lie this was a big turn off it ruined my mood but it doesn't change how I feel about her though. I still love her and I

had to protect her feelings, she means a lot to me. I also know Mom knows everything that went on last night. That's why I want to have my own space but she doesn't want to allow that.

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KOLOSA

When Mhise got here she wasn't comfortable with my cousin's house. She told us that the ancestors don't want to connect with her in that house. We should rather go to my uncle's place. So we had to travel from there to Snake Park.

She was burning an incense around the house with candles. After we had pleaded on the altar.

She entered the house pouring droplets of shots on every doorstep in the house and continued speaking.

Mhise: boo Mbuswane, Mthwembotyi, Mayeye, Ntomb' elenye, Noqhazo, Ndluntsha. ooJeke, boo Nyawo ezi pink ezingena ntsente. Ntonga emnyama egawulwa ezizweni. (Clan praises)

Mhise: mna ndiyi ntombi yakwa Ndaba, ooMntungwa no Tshibase. Sizukulwane sakwa Zotsho. Ndizalwe nayi ntombi yase MaNtlaneni ezalwa ngu MaRhadebe. (Introduction in Clan lineage)

She knelt in front of the incense and clapped her hands.

Mhise: Ndiyazazisa ke ngelohlobo njenba ndilapha ekhayeni lakwa Malahle. Ndizothatha unyathelo loncedisa oLusapho lufumane umntana wenu olahlekileyo enihleli nimkhusele. Sizombuyisa ekhayeni lakhe, azofumana amayeza akhe akokwabo aphilisayo. Siyanicela ke nibe nathi kolu hambo nimane ngosibonise indlela neempawo sifikelele phambi koba sishiywe lixesha. Njengoba bese nindi bonisile ingozi ezosi khawulela. (I'm introducing myself in the Malahle household. As I've stepped in

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to help the family look for their lost child whom you've been protecting for all these years. We'll bring her back home, to receive her custom medicine. We plead you be among us as we take this journey. And reveal more signs and directions before we lose track of time. As you've already shown me the danger that'll approaching if we don't fulfill this.)

She went silent and closed her eyes after saying. She nodded like she was connecting with them.

Mhise: mmh, m-mh.

She kept on nodding like they were negotiating. We looked at each other. I folded my arms feeling nervous.

After few minutes she got up.

Me: is it that heavy?

She huffed and looking at us.

Mhise: the ancestor spoke to me. They've enlightened me...
Your daughter is not far, she's closer much closer than we think.

Dad: okay noba uphi? (where could she be?)

Mhise: they're saying the only way to find her is by first reaching out to her mother.

We exchanged looks.

Uncle: Vuyelwa singamfumana kanti? (Can we find Vuyelwa?)

She nodded

Mhise: yes she's also around not far from us and the ancestors are saying we'll reach them through this young man, over here.

She said pointing Sihle with her eyes

Sihle: mna???

Mhise: yes you. You thought you weren't useful right? Everyone will be useful ke.

Sihle: but how? I mean how can I be of help?

Mhise: your daughter. Your daughter has a friend. The friend's mother is the woman we're all looking for.

He furrowed his eyebrows

Sihle: ohh?

Mhise: yes. The ancestors want all of us to work together and each of us has a role to play.. So wena bhut' Sihle try talking to your daughter make sure you don't mention any of this being involved with iizangoma kuze ibe yi success yonke lento.

Sihle: okay so kengoku I should meet with the friend or what?

Mhise: yah do something like that. Ask your daughter to invite her over for dinner or something, say you wanna know the type of friends she has. She'll bring the friend over. Play around with questions don't make it obvious that you're interrogating her, while you know your aim will be gathering us information.

Sihle: okay nzokwenza njalo akho ngxaki. (I'll do so)

Mhise: so we'll have to meet with the mother first before finding the daughter. That's how the ancestors want us to carry our journey.

(Silence)

Mhise: so we're all in the same page?

We all agreed.

Mhise: once uBhut' Sihle has got all the information we need. I'll show up again and accompany you to the mother's house

where we'll apologize and tell her our mission. Because in the end she'll be also needed when we make the ceremony for the child.

Dad: hay sikuvile kak'hle ntombi yam. Kwaye kuyoba njalo. (We heard you my child and we'll do as you say)

Mhise: Camagu

Them: Camagu Gogo

She looked at me I smiled.

Me: Camagu Gogo. Let me go cook us something to eat.

Uncle: please mtshana (niece) ask my wife to help you.

Me: okay.

I went to the kitchen. I'm just relieved atleast that things will work out. Then I get back to my life.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

When we were finished eating I went out looking for Kolosa. She was chilling outside the gate, on top of her cousin's car.

Me: hey there

Kolosa: hi

I looked at her and sat next to her

Me: how you're doing? And why you're here.

Kolosa: just needed some air.

I nodded.

Me: you miss him?

She glanced at me then faced down

Kolosa: no, I'm just thinking about him and my life.

She looked at her ring and exhaled.

Kolosa: just hope to find my sister and wish the ceremony becomes a success. So that I can go back to my normal life again.

She chuckled

Kolosa: having 0.00 in my bank account is so unlike me. What worst nightmare am I in? I now depend on people?

I held her hand

Me: everything will be well trust me. Your life will go back to normal again. We'll find your sister, I'll make sure of that the ancestors are also fighting to get their child.

She glanced at our tangled hands. I don't lie I felt something this moment and she has too, I can sense it. She slowly gazed directly in my eyes.

Me: when life gets back to normal you going back to your husband?

Kolosa: no

Me: "no"?

Kolosa: yes, he treated me like trash. I've survived alot from him. He can't play with his luck whilst some people need it. Gotta know my worth.

I sorta blushed

Me: so what if he demands his Lobola back? That's what most men do when they lose.

She chuckled

Kolosa: I'll pay him back without even feeling hurt. I wouldn't even hassle. I know as soon as this is over I'll get back to my feet cause I know I'm a hard worker.

I bit my lip seductively

Me: so you have anyone in mind whom you can start over with? Or you'll stay a divorcee.

She shifted her whole body looking at me.

Kolosa: well if it happens my target is single and so help me God that it turns out I'm right, thinking they have the same desires and intentions as mine... I'd definitely start something with them.

I moved my thumb around her hand still staring at her.

Me: are you sure I don't know this target?

She giggled

Kolosa: well you mi-

Our flirty moment got disturbed by a car's headlights.

Me: argh and my twin decides to show up.

Kolosa: you have a twin?

She was shocked

Me: yes honey.

I got down the car and waited for my brother to come out. I sent him the location of where I was.

He got out and walked to us. He gave us a strange look as he stood inbetween us.

Limile: molweni (greetings)

Kolosa: molo bhuti

Kolie was nervous and she was drooling a lil. That's the effect my brother has on woman. I used to have many people befriending me because they wanted to get to him.

Me: Lime this is my client Kolosa and Kolie this is my brother, Limile.

They shook hands

Limile: nice meeting you

Kolosa: a pleasure meeting you too bhuti.

I looked at him.

Me: let me go inside and say goodbye then we go.

Limile: sure

Kolosa: I'll follow

I smiled at her and we walked in.

Kolosa: he's hoooooot!

She squeaked as she paced after me.

Me: your target won't be pleased hearing that.

She giggled. I told the rest of the family that I'm leaving they bid me and send greetings to my brother. How I wished to finish the chat with Kolie but another time. I got in the car and my brother drove off.

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LIMILE

I drove silently stealing glances at my sister every while and smile secretly shaking my head.

Me: Benny told me he gave you a contact of the P.I

Mhise: oh yah true

Me: can you hand it over to me so that I can follow up and take over the search? Since you have many things on your plate.

Mhise: won't it interfere with work?

Me: no sis don't worry I can handle. I also want something to do on my spare time.

Mhise: okay fine I have no problem I'll give you. I'll also assist.

Me: thanks

(Silence)

Me: so you're back in your old ways?

Mhise: old ways?

Me: having a thing for women

She giggled

Mhise: did you smoke?

Me: you may deny it but I felt a spark there.

Mhise: she's my client I'm just being nice to her

Me: it's more than being nice sis. My feelings never mislead me.

Mhise: hayi they have ke bhuti.

Me: you deserve to be happy too. Ungaz'ncishi (don't deny yourself a) nice time wele.

She rolled her eyes.

Mhise: okay! I thought I'd stop feeling this way about women since..

Me: since the incidence back home? Come on that was years ago.

Lol she was caught red-handed making out with a girl in our parents' house. We were young and Mom gave her a mouthful of a lifetime.

Mhise: I don't know wele these feelings are coming too strong. I'm scared it might distract me from what I came to do

I shrugged

Me: atleast they're there for a reason. Unlike me you're the most self-controlled twin you can focus at what you do. You should learn to juggle between the two. As long as you don't steal my women yhoo wena.

We giggled.

Me: hey hey hey, here I was thinking you're friends yet you were shagging my girlfriends.

Mhise: (laughs) that was years ago! You were a player dude and I was their violin, their shoulder to cry on.

I covered my mouth

Me: yeyy ndithe ngqa abantwana hey mahn abasena mdlam ndim ngu "Mhise" "Mhise" kanti uyazazi uyenzani emva kwam. (All of a sudden I used to be confused why the huns had no interest in me they were busy "Mhise" this "Mhise" that yet you know what you do behind my back)

She was out of breath

Mhise: those were my naughty days I'm matured now I no longer do that.

Me: I'm glad hey we used to fight alot.

I smiled at her then looked back on the road.

Me: go for her, she likes you too. I can see it in her eyes

She smiled

Mhise: yeah I'll gain courage to ask her out. When we're done with this task.

Me: uzothathwa ke (they'll take her)

Mhise: she's married so I'm chilled

Me: married?? Hay hay hay

Mhise: she told me she'll divorce him

Me: seyi wrong'o bhabha (it's already wrong) I'm against it.

Mhise: Limile

Me: no no no Limise you're not going to date her. I'll do everything to protect you from another heartbreak. Soze mntaka Mama ha.a rather date a lesbian that's sure she's a lesbian, not a bisexual that'll drop you njee. Who's going to pick you up again? Are you even sure she's even into girls or wants to experience?

She swallowed

Me: yabo pha? (See?) And you know you love too hard. So it's a no. Focus on what you came to do please.

The rest of the drive was silent. I'll never fool her, I tell her the truth as it is and I won't like it if anyone hurts her.

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ASHANTI

Mayi dropped me in front of my house. We shared a kiss, there's something about my boyfriend's lips they are so juicy. As soon as he kisses me it turns me so on that I want to grind on top of him.

I placed my legs in between his legs. He rubbed them and broke the kiss squeezing my chin.

Mayihlome: don't be a Tigeress querida. We'll catch up again.

I laughed

Me: I can't wait.

Mayihlome: I love you

Me: I love you too

Mayihlome: will see you

He spanked my butt as I got off and winked at me. I smiled at him and we said goodbye then he hoot before he drove away.

I walked inside holding my clothes in a paper bag. I wore Mayi's Navy shorts, his hoody and Nike flops.

I got inside and saw Mommy chopping the knife aggressively as she threw everything around which made shuttering noises. I wonder what pissed her? I've never seen her like this before even when she fights with Dad, she never reaches this point.

I was about to greet till I saw the leopard appearing on top of the counter she was working on. I moved back and aghast in shock as I dropped the bag down.

She got startled by me.

Mom: Bebita! My baby for how long have you been standing there?

I looked at her with my eyes bulging and my chest moving up and down.

Mom: baby you okay? Where do you come from?

She wiped her hands with the dishcloth and walked closer to me. The leopard followed behind her and circled her then sat in front of her feet.

I couldn't breathe this must be some sort of mistake.

Mom: Ashanti? Ashanti!!

I had long run away upstairs and locked myself in my room. I hugged myself while shaking my head.

Me: this can't be, it can't be happening. It's a mistake. Not my Mom.

I instantly heard a loud roar. The roars never scare me cause I know it won't harm me. It was in my room.

Me: she loves me!! She's my Mom she can't hurt a single fly.

It roared again. I covered my ears shaking my head.

Me: you're mistaken. Don't do this to me please.

I cried. The leopard never misleads me it is always right. But my Mom loves me she raised me all my life. What can she do to me? This is a mistake. The leopard continue roaring trying to bring me to senses.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 17

MTYHILELI (KOLOSA'S FATHER)

I was sleeping peacefully till I felt something breathing on top of me with little growls.

I hesitantly opened my eyes and I held my breath seeing the leopard staring right at my face.

My breath picked off as my heart skipped. How is it going to torture me this time? I thought I've already asked for forgiveness and it'd stop torturing me since I'm here looking for my daughter.

It began roaring on top of me.

Me: Yhooooo!!!

I tried moving but my body was on paralysis. With every roar the house shook like we were experiencing an earthquake it was really aggressive but didn't get physical with me.

I continued screaming.

Me: lyhooooo!!! Yhooooo!!!

Its roars made me feel an excruciating pain in my ear. I pray it doesn't turn me deaf.

As I continued screaming my brother and his wife came running inside my room.

Zolisa: Bafo? Bafo? (Brother?)

The leopard was still there and I couldn't stop screaming.

Nomalanga: Bhuti?

She held me and I still didn't have it.

Nomalanga: Oh my God!

Zolisa: Yintoni? (What?)

Nomalanga: Uyopha, indlebe zakhe ziyopha. (His bleeding, his ears are bleeding)

Zolisa: Khawuleza khawuleza nkosikazi fownela uEsihle rhow sizomsa esbhedlele. (Hurry up and call Esihle so that we can take him to the hospital)

Nomalanga: Okay!

She ran out. My brother picked me up, my body was no longer stiff from the paralysis since the Ingwe was gone. He placed me on my wheelchair and helped me dress up.

Zolisa: Kuyoba right mfowethu bambelela. (It's going to be okay brother hang on)

I remained mute usually it's normal for me to drift on a zombie mode after I've had an encounter with the leopard.

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MAVUYI

Today is Monday I woke up at 4am. First went to wash my teeth then went to the lounge switching on the lights and opened the windows.

I reached for my white candle and burnt it kneeling closer to the couch.

I closed my eyes and exhaled

Me: Heavenly Father I humble myself before You, as I bow my head. Confiding that it has been hard finding sleep these recent days. Something's been eating and finishing me up. Lord You know all these years I've been unhappy not because my husband couldn't make me happy, he has done a good job doing so. But... But how could I be happy not knowing how my Ncumo has been doing all those years? How I left her kept on haunting me...

I paused and smiled

Me: But God you made a way. You reunited me with my baby and now you have left everything into my hands to deal with. I've been trying with failed attempts to unfold the truth but... I

lose courage all the time, she's big, a bit intimidating (sighs) she makes me nervous.

I bit my lips nervously

Me: I have stalled so much time now even her foster parents have come back. And it seems like the mother will be giving me a hard time. Therefore I kneel before you Father asking for your protection, asking for your guidance and please make me stand firm and finally set myself free on telling my baby the real truth she needs to know, so that she can know who she really is.

I pressed my lips.

Me: It will be today God, no other day. In the name of our Saviour please lead me to go about this the right way. Lead me into the right direction and fill my mind with wisdom. Save me from every danger laid out for me. I believe in you God and I trust all your outcomes.

Will give myself time to observe and meditate as you'll show me the way. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

I knelt for few minutes with my eyes closed then switched off the candle and got up.

I started preparing everything for my husband for work and also Letty. When I got done I sat in front of the TV drinking coffee watching Morning Live.

Bheki: Mam'Krila

He said walking while wearing his pants and gave me a kiss. I smiled.

Me: Tata, good morning.

Bheki: Morning my love.

Me: Breakfast yakho ise kitchen

Bheki: Ngiyabonga (Thanks)

I sipped on my coffee while concentrating on the TV. He wore his shirts I glanced back at him.

Me: Kutheni undijamela elohlobo? (Why are you staring at me like that?)

He was buttoning his shirt still giving me that look.

Bheki: Awuyi msebenzini namuhla usagqoke ama gown?
(You're not working today, still in gowns?)

Me: I do but at 10am

Bheki: Why 10am?

Me: Kungoba Ashanti ordered me to arrive at 10am.

He squinted his eyes.

Me: Baba uyabazi abantwana bes' manje-manje banjani (You know how these modern kids are). Turns out she's off but akakwazi ungandiceli (she doesn't want to give me an off day).

Bheki: Angang' jwayeli awusona isigqila sakhe. (She shouldn't dare you're not her slave)

Me: Akandenzi sgqila sakhe Tata (she's not making me her slave)

Bheki: Hay hay hay

I giggled

Me: You know I have to bring in money

Bheki: Ngiyakwaz ukuni nakelela nje mina. (I can take care of you)

Me: If you take care of us then who's going to take care of you?

Bheki: Nkulunkulu (God)

I chuckled

Me: Hayisuka! Uzoba late ne breakfast yakho izobanda. (You'll be late and your breakfast will get cold)

He giggled.

Bheki: Okay awung' cabuze ke (kiss me then)

I got up giggling and we shared a kiss. I love him so much he always brings the best in me.

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ASHANTI

I got woken up by a call buzzing next to my ear. I sat up straight and stretched myself first before reaching it.

Mom was calling, I stared at the screen till she stopped calling. I had slept in my office. I left home very early in the morning before they could realize anything.

My phone rang again. I closed my eyes and huffed massaging my forehead. She kept on calling over and over again. I decided to switch off my phone but her message stopped me.

Mom: "Bebita, don't raise my bp levels sweetheart please. Come back home. Are you ok? You even missed breakfast talk to me Angel, what's going on? Mommy loves you don't do this to me."

I sighed and switched off the phone and continued laying my head on the desk and slept. I woke up early avoiding Mom and now I'm feeling all sleepy.

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NDILEKA

I was doing laundry outside and I saw my son also hanging his bedding stuffs on the line.

Me: And then?

Mayihlome: And then? I'm doing my bedding

Me: Shasha should come more often mos.

Mayihlome: Aww Mama sundenza ivila. (Mom don't make me a lazy person)

Me: I'm seeing a good change it's a compliment

Mayihlome: Nice one, I'm going to the mall. Would you like something?

Me: Can you buy charcoal sweetheart?

Mayihlome: Mmh are we braaing?

Me: Yes we gonna have us a good time my love. Don't worry about anything else leave it to me. I wanna spoil us.

Mayihlome: Okay fine, will see you then.

He kissed me

Mayihlome: Bye

Me: Bye

He left and I focused on my laundry. Minutes later I hang the clothes and my friend came in.

Me: Petlas

Mavuyi: Petla

Me: Nawe you're on some lokishi management ngoku.

Mavuyi: Not really eish yazi andihlelanga ke Ndili (I'm not here to stay)

She sounded too serious. I stopped what I was doing and wiped my wet hands on my dress. Then walked to her.

Me: Hlala phantsi tshomi (Sit down friend)

We took a seat on the bench

Me: Yintoni ingxaki? (What's the problem?)

Mavuyi: It's not really a problem but I need your help.

Me: Okay I'm listening, anything.

She sighed

Mavuyi: I need you to give me the address of Hlohlo's workplace.

I frowned

Me: Ngoba? (Why?)

Mavuyi: I... I'm meeting with Ashanti

I raised my eyebrows and snickered

Me: Oh uhm.. okay sure I'll give it to you.

Mavuyi: I'm just running out of time petla I need to get there. I'll tell you everything once I get back.

Me: Okay no problem. Let me go get the pen and paper.

Mavuyi: Enkosi (Thank you)

I got up and went to fetch the items and wrote her the address. She thanked me even though I could see she wasn't herself but we'll speak once she's back. I walked her out and said goodbye.

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ASHANTI

A knock disrupted my sleep. Where can one get a peaceful sleep?

Lime walked in while I rubbed my face.

Me: I didn't even grant you permission to get in.

Limile: Uhm forgive me, should I walk back and wait for permission?

Me: If you tryna be sarcastic forget it. You're already here so how can I help you?

Limile: Was sent by your mother to call for you.

I immediately jumped to feet.

Me: My mother???

He made a puzzled look on the way I reacted.

Limile: Yah

Me: Is she like here here in my workplace?

Limile: Like I said.

I paced around pushing my braids backwards.

Me: Inside the building?

Limile: No outside the fence.

I sighed in relief

Limile: Are you okay?

Me: Yah I'm doing fine

Limile: Seems like you didn't get enough sleep

Me: I'll manage thank you Lime. Tell her I'm coming.

He nod and walked away. When he got to the door he stopped and looked at me.

Limile: Shant

I looked at him

Limile: Please take good care of yourself. I can cover for you but I really need you to go ease on yourself so that you may come back with your A game okay?

I nodded

Limile: Is that a deal?

I smiled

Me: It's a deal

Limile: Thank you.

He walked away. I tried collecting myself to meet my Mom outside. I'm not ready to face her. I don't know how to face her. I didn't like the revelation about her.

I walked out of the building and shrunk my eyes as I walked closer to the fence. This didn't look one bit like my mother this wasn't Laura.

I scoffed.

Me: Lime must be mistaken. What did he mean? This isn't my Mom?

As I got more closer I realized it was Mavuyi. I laughed out loud, is he on some drugs.

Me: Mavuyi! it's you all this time who's looking for me?

Mavuyi: Yes

She said with a nervous voice. I gave her a hug still laughing.

Mavuyi: What got you laughing so much?

Me: Mc! Another twisted guy. He said my mother is calling for me, imagine. I expected my Mom but it was you all along.

Her face changed

Me: And what did I do to deserve your visit?

Mavuyi: Can we find a place to sit?

Me: Ofcourse. My car?

Mavuyi: Fine

We walked to my car.

Me: How did you know where I work?

Mavuyi: I just made ways.

I nodded

Me: Look I'm sorry about how things went with my Mom. I spoke to her, it was completely unnecessary and she was just being protective.

Mavuyi: I understand sweetheart it's a mother's job so don't apologize. I'm a mother myself.

We got inside my car and sat in silence.

Me: So you wanted to talk?

Mavuyi: Yes, there's something I'd like to share with you.

I arched my eyebrows

Me: O-kay

She took a deep breath rubbing her lap.

Mavuyi: At the age of 17 back in Centane village

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I had fallen inlove with a charming guy.

She smiled.

Mavuyi: He used to make my knees go weak I fell so hard for him, his name was Mtyhileli Malahle. I was raised in a religious family, my Dad was a Pastor. So every Sundays we'd go to Church sometimes attend practices during the weeks too.

She sighed

Mavuyi: Dad was a feared man in the community. Even boys were really afraid to approach me, remembering back in the days I was a very beautiful girl.

I chuckled

Me: Even now.

Mavuyi: Thanks, but with Mtyhileli he was willing to take the risk and gets after what he loves. (Giggles) We had to do our thing in secret though, stealing each other.

Me: You weren't caught?

Mavuyi: Not even once, he was very strategic. At night when he wants to see me I'd hear a flute playing outside from a distance that was his sign of fetching me.

I giggled

Me: Oh my word.

I suddenly saw her face change to being sad.

Mavuyi: Out of what we did I ended up falling pregnant. My life changed. I managed hiding my belly from everyone because everyone expected me to be a good kid since I'm a Pastor's child. I should be taken as an example. But it's true when they say Mother's know their kids, my Mom found out in my early months that I was pregnant and helped me hide tummy since she knows her husband is like. 6 months later I started showing. Tears started filling her eyes.

Mavuyi: My Dad then noticed. He became really furious, he dragged me out and stripped me naked then threw me at the communal tap.

I held my cheeks feeling touched by this.

Me: Oh nooo!

Mavuyi: Everyone in the village watched how he poured water on me and beat my wet body. At least if he didn't care about me then he should've considered the baby inside me. Mommy tried to stop him but Dad was like an angry bull. So he threw my clothes on the streets and kicked me out swearing at me telling me how a disgrace I am and he disowned me.

She cried so painfully. I hugged her

Me: I'm sorry

She wiped her face and sniffed

Mavuyi: He said many hurtful words. So I had no choice but to dress up on the streets and walk to my boyfriend's place. I knew Dad meant every word and he never changes his words. Not even my Mom could do anything about it.

She pulled back from my embrace

Mavuyi: So I went to Mtyhileli's place praying so hard that they accept me. I thought things would get better but they got worse...

I looked at her in suspense

Mavuyi: He denied me, denied knowing me, denied making me pregnant. Only his brother believed me and saved me. He told me he'll take care of me. So I left with him to Gauteng, Soweto.

I nodded.

Mavuyi: Things got better for a few days being here till his girlfriend surfaced. She became so mad seeing me there thinking I was Zolisa's side what what and more worse I was pregnant. She caused too much chaos and began throwing things around even explained to her what was going on but she didn't have it... I decided nah this woman is gonna resort to hurting me and my baby. So I begged Zolisa to let me go.

She exhaled.

Mavuyi: It was hard for him to let me go because he was worried about me. How would a teenage girl from the village find a way back home? He wanted to accompany me to the train station but his lady refused. I had to go alone... I didn't make it, I got mugged. They took my clothes the money. I had no choice but to live in the streets as pregnant as I was.

Tears started trickling down on me

Mavuyi: I spent 4 more terrible months with my unborn baby in the streets. It was really hard, it was by God's Grace that I survived many bad things there, the bad weathers and many more stuffs.

She shook her head.

Mavuyi: the time came for me to give birth. My best friend helped me deliver under the bridge, a baby girl.

She smiled with tears

Mavuyi: I named her Ncumolwam meaning "My Smile" out of all the storms I went through with her, meeting her was worth it. It brought a huge smile on my face.

She thought for a while

Mavuyi: I thought of her safety because the streets weren't a safe place for babies. I thought of an orphanage, my friend helped me to search for one. We did and found one then I... I

gave away my baby. It was very hurting for me cause I loved my baby with everything I got. I knew I had it in me to raise her. But circumstances weren't allowing.

(Silence)

Me: God this is such a touching story

I wiped my face and looked at her

Me: So what happened to the baby?

She kept quiet. I looked at her and she made a different look.

Mavuyi: You are the baby, the baby is you. Ashanti you are Ncumolwam.

Me: excuse me??

Mavuyi: Take a look at yourself in the mirror and look at me. I'm your mother Ashanti..

I covered my face and wept so hard shaking my head.

Mavuyi: Trust me I kept on looking for you with no luck. Ncumo I haven't found peace for a long time but at this moment I am finally at peace, I am free. I'm not meaning to snatch you away from your mother I just want you to know who you are. Your real roots, you're a black child that belongs in a Xhosa tribe that's what you are my child. It's up to you what to do after

this. But always know that I love you, I always have from the beginning I didn't throw you away because I had a choice.

We both burst uncontrollably in tears and sobbed out loud.

She hugged me.

Mavuyi: I love you my child and I'm so proud to see what you've grown up to be. I'm so sorry.

I pushed her away and got out of the car. I felt like I needed some air, I'm suffocating. I don't know how to feel I have so many mixed emotions. I still need to digest this in.

I later got back in the car.

Me: Just show me.

She looked at me

Me: Show me where you used chill in the streets when you were carrying me. Show me where you were when labour pains hit you, show me where you had given birth to me. Show me...

My voice began breaking

Me: Show me the spot where you had left me in the orphanage. I need to know and connect. I have all the time to drive us at every place. I just..

I looked at her tearfully

Me: I need to feel a bond, do you mind?

Mavuyi: I don't darling I'll give you the directions and show you everything.

Me: I'd appreciate that

I started the car and began driving zoning deep in my thoughts.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 18

LAURA

I was fuming and breathing like there was smoke coming out of my nose as I watched through my binoculars, seeing that Vilakazi lady coming out of my daughter's car. Must be the reason why Bebita's been acting strangely lately.

My chest couldn't settle to my anger. It kept pacing up and down. I reached for a bottle of water together with my stress ball to calm myself but nothing helped. I threw the bottle after finishing it and screamed loudly in frustration. Tears filled my eyes as I watched them talking. I could already imagine their bond it tore me into million pieces, is this a way of losing my baby girl?

I was stress free when I tailed them because I hired a low-class car and hid my face with a black scarf and shades.

I hated what I had in mind but I had to resort to it. Unfortunately I had no choice.

I called my son, he picked in the 3rd ring.

Sandro: Mamá

Me: Sandro

Sandro: Are you crying?

He sounded worried. I sniffled.

Me: Don't worry about that son. I just need something from you.

Sandro: Estoy escuchando (I'm listening)

I wiped my face and gulped

Me: Do you love me?

Sandro: Ofcourse Mamá te amo (I love you) how can you ask that?

I clenched my teeth as I formed a fist.

Me: Because I need a favour from you, a big one.

I sighed as I blinked more tears

Me: I know it's been years being against what you do. But I think it's time it got useful now.

Sandro: What do you mean Mamá?

I shut my eyes

Me: Estoy perdiendo a Ashanti. Estoy perdiendo a Ashanti por esa mujer. (I'm losing Ashanti. I'm losing Ashanti to that woman)

I said with a cracky voice then wiped my cheeks after.

Me: Therefore it's where I need you the most son. Mommy needs your save right now more than anything.

Sandro: Nombra cualquier cosa y lo haré. Incluso vale la pena poner en riesgo mi vida pero te aseguro que se cumplirá.

(Name anything and I'll do it. Even worth putting my life at risk but I can assure you that it shall be fulfilled.)

I made a cunning smile as I confidently rose my chin high.

Me: I knew I could count on you hijo (son). It's nice to know you've got Mommy's back.

We giggled more louder before discussing further about our sinister plan.

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KOLOSA

Sihle and I immediately rushed to the hospital when we were told what happened. I was so devastated, we all were. I mean we seem to be getting somewhere we can't afford to lose another family member. I'd be really torn apart if I'd lose Dad cause I have no one else except for him. I can't fully depend on Uncle and Sihle.

But the doctors ran some tests and they didn't find anything wrong with him even with his bleeding, they said he'll be fine and his ears still function normally he just went through a traumatic experience, that's why he's frozen like this his body is still experiencing major shock. Though they're keeping him for observations to see if this will turn to something serious. He's asleep though now.

I sighed.

Me: Andifuni uxoka kodwa indothusile into ka Tata. (I don't want to lie but Dad got me frightened)

Uncle: Wothuse thina k'qala mtshana. Beku worse ngoku besim'bona nomfazi wam. Beku ngathi ngumntu omkelwa zingqondo. (He got us frightened too niece. It was even worse when we found her with my wife it was as if he was losing his mind)

I looked at them. He shook his head.

Uncle: Binge ngo mbono umhle lowana (It wasn't a pleasant sight)

Auntie brought us some coffee and we thanked her.

Me: Do you think all this has something to do with the ancestors?

Uncle: Eyy ingenzeka mntanam ngoba impela ngoku sinyathela ngo nyawo lo sinyeke. Mhlambi siso xwayiso esi soba ikhona ingozi izihlwele ezizama ukusiboniso sona. (It could be my child because we're taking a slow pace. Maybe this is a warning from the ancestors trying to show us some danger of some sort)

I swiftly turned my head to Sihle.

Me: Sihle bhuti how far are you?

Sihle: My wife and I have spoken to our daughter. She'll invite the friend and I'll get on the mission then we start with the search.

Me: Oh ngaske ukhawuleze ke bhuti ngoba sekukho umonakalo ngoku. (Please make quick cause already there's damage)

I said in an impatient panicking voice.

Sihle: Sukhathazeka mzala siyafikelela (Don't worry cuz we're getting there)

I huffed still all worked up.

Uncle: My brother is a fighter he'll come back strong

Me: I pray so

Nomalanga: Have you spoken to the healer?

Me: Good question Auntie, let me go call her. I'll be back.

Them: Okay

I left to call Mhise I was really stressed out by my father. I hope he gets well we can't start this journey without him.

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LETTY

I was on my last period completing my notes as I sucked my Stumbo Lollipop. I could feel my phone vibrate on my skirt. Mxm, one of those FB notifications telling me I'm added by what what.

Seeing this hot guy who added me I smiled so widely. Yho! Hee he's a real Shandis, I accepted him and remained smiling ear to ear.

I felt my friend nudging me with her arm. My deskmate is my best friend.

Me: Yini? (What?)

Dimpho: Wa mamatheka kanjena uthini boyfie? (You're smiling like that what does your boyfriend say?)

I rolled my eyes

Me: Argh akasho nex lowo seng'dina impela. (He isn't saying anything he's annoying me)

Dimpho: Oh shame y'all still in the rough patch ka sona neh?

Me: Yebo and maka blame net soo (He should remain like that)

Dimpho: Heee then if it's not boyfie who put up with that smile then who is it?

Me: (whispers) It's a secret

Dimpho: Ohh! Ontse u mpatela diphiri nou? (So you're keeping secrets from me?)

I giggled once more as I whispered

Me: It's a secret..

Dimpho: Sure case wena Letty ke tla kry'a (I'll get you)

I stuck my tongue out

Dimpho: Ngizok'thola (I'll get you)

Me: Ok'salayo ngeke uyithole (Fact still remains you're not getting any)

She sulked and I laughed in mockery

Me: Just miss out on gossip chommie you won't die.

Dimpho: Mxm!

Me: I love you too

I hugged and kissed her. She smiled.

Dimpho: You know Mom & Dad are inviting you over for dinner

My eyes widened

Dimpho: They're just interested to know the type of friends I have. Not knowing you're my only friend.

Me: Aww really mngee?

She nodded

Me: Wow!!

I felt so excited I'd love having to chill with her parents and see how cool that kind of place is.

Dimpho: So what do you say?

Me: Mina ngiyavuma (I agree) but first I have to ask my parents then I'll get back to you.

Dimpho: Okay no problem

Me: When is it?

Dimpho: This weekend

Me: Okay there's still time. Let's cross my fingers my parent's agree to this.

Dimpho: Bazo Agree'isha chommie (They'll Agree)

Me: Yhewe maan

We giggled till the bell rang for home time.

Taxi dropped me to the stop and I walked back straight home. I froze at the kitchen door amazed by this, it can't be happening.

♪♪" Uthando lwam Dali, lubanzi lujulile

Ngifis' uchith' insuku zokuphila nawe

Ithemba lam Dali, liyophelela kuwe

Yinjabulo ya ntsuku zonke my sweet darling"♪♪

Me: Mama!!?

I was inside amazed Mom knew that song and she can sing. She pulled me while smiling.

Mom: "Sthandwa sami, woza my love, woza my love

Bambo lwami, woza my love, woza my love

Sthandwa sami, woza my love

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woza my love

Bambo lwami, woza my love, woza my love"

Me: Heheee Ma! Who made you so happy?

Mom: Mntanam you won't believe

Me: Believe?

Mom: Mnk! Phoffu it'll be a surprise for you and your father today.

Me: No Mom speak I'm so anticipated right now.

She chuckled

Mom: Okay Okay.

She inhaled deeply

Mom: I finally confessed to your older sister to being her Mom. Mntanam I waited for an outburst jonga wandithini uThixo?

I hang my mouth in ecstasy as I shook my hands

Me: E.ee wakuthini uThixo kaloku Mama? (What did God do?)

Mom: Kchange andidanise Mntanam! (He didn't let me down!)

Everything went cool. She gave me a chance to tell her everything, I even showed her where everything took place.

I screamed in excitement and jumped to hug her.

Me: So when am I meeting my sister? I'm tired of being the only child

She giggled

Mom: No yima kaloku (wait) let's give her time to digest and process this whole thing through. She also has her other parents so we have to hear from her ukuba how will this arrangement go. Let's not rush her.

Me: Oh okay kodwa mina ngi jahile Ma (but I'm so in a hurry)

She shook her head

Mom: M-hm ibano monde mntanam. Oko ndide ndavula isfuba ndatsho ndano xolo. (No be patient my child. I'm finally at peace now that I spoke out)

I smiled at her

Me: That's good right? Now that you're in a good mood. I'm invited by my friend's parents for dinner.

Mom: Which friend?

Me: Dimphe Mama

Mom: Phi? (Where?)

Me: Meadowlands kaloku

Mom: If you give me their cell and address, only by then I can permit. Promise no late comings then I might put in a good word for you ku Tatakho.

Me: Really?

She nodded

Me: Mxm yazi wena Moghel

Mom: Itsho undiphuza kaloku Moghel (Say while kissing me)

I laughed and gave her a kiss.

Me: I love you Mavuyiza wami

She giggled

Mom: I love you too my Letty Peace.

We giggled and I took off my uniform helping her with cooking. She was really in a good mood. I'm glad she finally opened up to her daughter. I can now say I've got a big Sis, if it brings so much happiness to her then I'm happy too.

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LIMILE

I knocked off and got back home to my sister being in another world of her own. Not to sound offending but sometimes I lose her with the gift she has. Sometimes I fail to distinguish if she's not in a good mood maybe she's on some "gowing"/sadness stage or it's the ancestors connecting deeply with her without wanting to be disturbed.

Me: Kwakhona ndabulisa welez (I'm greeting again twin)

Blue ticked again, that hurts.

Me: Yho hayike. What did we cook?

Blue ticked.

Me: I guess I'll have to cook myself then. I'm not a good cook though. What do you feel like eating?

Blue ticked the 4th time. I gave her some space and began singing that "All I know is pain" song from Teen Titans. Yes I know I'm old but used to watch those cartoons with my niece by enforcement ke so I ended up knowing them by head.

I got busy in the kitchen trying to make something light not heavy. Just Oxtail with some dumplings. I really love Umncindo.

"Limile"

She finally came to planet Earth

Me: Sistaz.

Mhise: Jokes aside neh?

Me: Ewe Gogo Manyano.

She exhaled

Mhise: Are you dating?

I chuckled

Me: No

Mhise: Any woman you've found interest in to this place?

I wiggled my eyebrows.

Me: Seems like you've had an intervention with the underground gang.

Mhise: I said jokes aside Limile

Me: The answer is No

Mhise: You're sure?

Me: Yah I'm sure

She made a deep sigh as she slumped in the counter.

Mhise: Indeed I've had an intervention nabaphantsi (with the elders). On the side of the family I'm helping and ours.

Me: Bad one?

Mhise: Not bad not good either. Ones from the other family are complaining that we are running out of time, we should up our socks. Mine are showing me you'll also be part of this as in like a solution. I'm trying to find your link on what's assigned for me.

I dropped the knife.

Me: Yho yho yho ooNdaba ke abakwazi ungandi faki.

Mhise: You can't complain Lime

I sighed

Me: I'm not wele but why can't they for once not involve me. You are the gifted one here not me.

Mhise: But you are half of me. Meaning part of my gift you also do have. You know Limile through anything we encounter in life we have to go through it together. I mean if you can feel what I can feel and I do the same what does it mean? If I face a certain problem you are the solution for it and vice versa, we always have to work hand in hand with each other. Bruu we were in the same womb and I'm sure we even negotiated who should go out first and you were like "nah ladies first" so that you may come out late uzofumana isibuko andithi uqavile wena (so that all eyes may fall on you cause you're forward)

Me: Haha for hilarious sis

Mhise: Honestly somewhere somehow you'll be great help in this. That's what was shown to me and I wish you can take it serious.

Me: Luniko uzohoywa ngubani kengoku yena? (Who'll look for Luniko?)

Mhise: No continue what you're doing mntase it'll happen involuntarily. I will not lead you or guide you on what to do, something will come to you and you'll suddenly act out not

knowing that what you did brought about a big solution to us and what we need.

Me: Really?

Mhise: ooNdaba bathethile ke (The Ndaba ancestors have spoken). Let me go lie down and remind this lady to pray, cause she's not losing her father.

She left. Yet I was still left astounded by what she said. How does this work? But will only see when it happens.

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ASHANTI

Unfortunately today I tried a trick of sleeping in the office but it didn't succeed with the guard who normally checks the company before it gets locked.

So I late parked my car inside the driveway playing music softly in my car dozing off alot at times. Thinking about Mavuyi, Laura and the leopard till my head got hurt. I did feel a bond with Mavuyi and I'm happy to know about my real Mom and where I belong.

Thinking about Laura breaks my heart, she isn't going to take this well and the leopard is making things worse.

I want to make a fair decision that'll be fair for everyone. It's hard to abandon the Quintero family that raised me since I was a baby. At the same time I feel like I need to bond with Mavuyi too, I need to know a true meaning behind my identity and perhaps the leopard's meaning too. Because I believe there is a significance for everything in life.

23:45 that was the time. They must be asleep, now I have to get inside.

I slowly unlocked the door and started tiptoeing.

"Where do you come from?"

I jumped and stopped walking. I switched on the lights.

Me: Mamá?

She was seated in the dark smoking cigarette.

Mom: I know you're not from your boyfriend. You wouldn't sneak up like that cause I allow you to do anything you want. You're old, you have that freedom.

I played with my hands.

Mom: Me estas evadiendo? (Are you avoiding me?)

Me: No, no te estoy evitando (No I'm not avoiding you)

Mom: Then what is it that you are doing?

(Silence)

Mom: Do you have any idea how worried sick I was about you. Since last night you've been acting strange towards me huh.

I still kept quiet

Mom: Is there someone influencing you against me?

Me: No Mom I'd never be against you.

She scoffed

Mom: Since when then are we tiptoeing around? Since when are we having secrets? Since you were 8 years old I've taught you about being open. Did I Bebita give you any reason to be afraid of me?

Me: No Mamá

Mom: Did I ever Bebita beat you up, abuse you or swear you?
Like...

I saw her eyes being clouded by tears.

Mom: Did I never show you any gestures of love my child?

I got emotional cause she was speaking painfully.

Me: No Mamá

Mom: Then what changes now? Why act like I failed you. Why create an unnecessary gap between us?

Tears flooded down as I stood stuck in one place. She killed her cigarette and got up. She held my head and brought it close kissing my forehead then cupped my face.

Mom: I love you Bebita with every fibre in me.

She hit her tummy

Mom: I may not have been blessed enough to carry you in my womb or have my blood running on you but you are my child. Just flashback from today to those years back.... I hope you do not allow anyone that shows up in your life today to camouflage your perspective of me and the way I love you.

She caressed my cheeks with her tears flooding.

Mom: know that all that I do, I do it because I love you... Atleast pretend my love rather than rejecting me, cause rejection would be like a poisoned dagger thrown straight into my heart. If your love wears off for me please atleast pretend sweetheart... pretend.

She wiped my tears and sadly walked away. I covered my mouth with my trembling hand.

I glanced back at her again as she walked upstairs and saw the leopard sitting where she was taking steps. I squeezed my eyes shut and cried out loud as I tilt my head back

Me: (grunts lowerly) No! No!

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 19

[FEW DAYS LATER]

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ASHANTI

Suddenly I saw myself in a gathered place. I didn't know where I was nor the people who were around. This whole place looked strange, I saw men gathered in what looked like an enclosure of the altar they had knives, axe and basin with them.

A goat was tied on the pole. I turned in circles, where am I?

I don't know how but I saw Mavuyi and I felt relieved.

Me: Mavuyi!

Mavuyi: Kunini ndikukhangela, yizo ngena endlini ntombi. (I've been looking for you, come get inside)

Me: Excuse me? What are you saying?

She giggled

Mavuyi: Ndithi yizo ngena (I said come inside)

She pulled me.

Me: But where are we? What are we doing here?

I saw so many strange faces smiling at me. She made me sit down on the grassmat and smiled at me.

Mavuyi: Relax

She started applying something on my face.

Me: Woah woah woah! What is that?

Mavuyi: Imbola, you need this on your face Ncumo.

I frowned and sighed

Mavuyi: It's gonna be okay. I'm here now nothing bad is gonna happen.

I gave her a nod. She applied it on my face then sat next to me on the grassmat, holding my hand.

I screamed startled by the loud sound the goat made. And people were celebrating and ululating. What were they celebrating?

Meat came along our way. Later on I saw another man speaking in Mayi's language while looking at me. Then he later helped me wear a beaded necklace accompanied by the other one with an animal skin.

I saw Mavuyi's lips moving but I didn't hear what she was saying

Got woken up by my phone ringing non-stop. I got up.

Me: Shiiit! Damn no no no.

I peed myself again like what the hell? How long is this going to carry on. Maybe I need to see a gynaecologist. After having sex with Mayi this has been happening regularly. I wonder what is the problem.

I picked his call.

Mayihlome: querida

Me: Mayi this is a bad time we'll talk again, bye!

I dropped the call out of frustration and rubbed my eyes. I sighed and stripped butt naked wrapping a towel over my body and took off all my beddings.

Me: Now I have got myself a job, mc!

I folded them and placed them in my laundry basket, will do them when I get back. Then I went for shower and dressed up for work.

While I collected my stuffs I couldn't stop thinking about Mavuyi. I last saw her since that day and this dream got me missing her more and reminded me of the decisions I had to make.

So I decided to call her. She picked up after some time.

Mavuyi: Ashanti

Me: Mavuyi

A silent moment passed

Mavuyi: Good morning

Me: Good morning, how have you been?

Mavuyi: I've been doing good and you?

Me: I've been coping. Uhm today will you be busy?

Mavuyi: Not really I'm always available.

Me: Can you make time at 2pm for us to meet and talk more?

Mavuyi: No problem for me. Where are we meeting?

Me: You can decide

She giggled that brought a smile on my face.

Mavuyi: Your workplace? Or at your place? I'm afraid of having another encounter with your Mom.

Me: Actually you know what? I'll pick you up from where you stay.

Mavuyi: Okay

Me: Be ready, I'll ask directions from Dwayne.

Mavuyi: I'll be ready

Me: Okay sure

Mavuyi: Bye.

I hung up and let out a deep sigh as I left my bedroom.

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LAURA

I organized breakfast on the table as usual. Expecting my husband and daughter anytime by now.

My phone beeped. I checked the message.

Sandro: "Got everything I need. The day is tomorrow"

I smiled and texted back.

Me: "Brilliant. I'm counting on you."

Sandro: "Won't disappoint 😊"

I placed my phone away feeling happy. My husband came singing and kissed me.

Armando: Esposo (Wifey)

Me: Cariño (Honey)

Armando: This looks appetizing

Me: Have I ever disappointed?

Armando: Oh no you haven't. I feel sorry for those who'll carry my coffin.

I giggled while he took a seat

Armando: Cause by this rate

Me: Marido you could prevent it by going to gym.

Armando: Are we body shaming?

Me: That's why I never wanna touch this topic.

We laughed more

Me: I love you nonetheless

Armando: I love you more

He smiled looking at me.

Armando: Are we decided though?

Me: About?

Armando: Going back or what?

Me: We can't go back at a time like this honey you know that.

He sighed

Armando: How unfortunate then for the house. We have to tell Alessandro to consider selling.

Me: No! No, not yet. There's still more things we're yet to consider.

He frowned

Me: We need to check the coast first

Armando: Is Ashanti aware?

I swallowed. I knew the truth but caught between telling him the truth or continue with my web of lies, if I opt for more lies then my plan will come together perfectly.

Me: No I don't think so.

Armando: Entonces deberíamos liberar a los guardias. (We should then release the guards)

Me: No there's no need for that

Armando: Why not?

I kept quiet

Armando: I mean we'll be here most of the times for Bebita. Why eat our pockets when there's really no need in doing so.

Me: Let's not make rash decisions as yet.

Armando: Laura are you okay my wife?

I fake smiled.

Me: Estoy bien (I'm fine)

Ashanti walked in and looked at us.

Ashanti: Buenos días (Good morning)

Us: Morning

She took a seat

Me: How did you wake up?

Ashanti: Good thanks for asking

She then reached for her plate and started dishing herself. Ever since that lady showed up I'm sensing a tension that keeps growing thick between me and my daughter. The bond we have is slowly disappearing

My husband looked at her.

Armando: Estas cómoda? (Are you comfortable?)

Ashanti: Yes Papá I'm comfortable

Me: Then why aren't you eating?

Ashanti: Actually, there's something that's been buzzing me.

She dropped her fork down. My heart was beating in suspense. It'd actually hurt hearing those words come from her.

Ashanti: I'll just need you to avail yourselves at 2:30pm.

Armando: What's going on?

Ashanti: Just please make sure that you're available I can't tell for now

Armando: Oh

Me: Something bad?

Ashanti: We'll tell as the time comes. I have to get to work.

She pushed the chair.

Me: But you hardly even touched your food.

Ashanti: I think I'll be cool. Bye will see you.

She left. My husband looked at me.

Armando: What was that all about?

Me: I also have no idea

Armando: Guess I also have to get to work. Will see you.

He got up and kissed my cheek

Armando: Bye

Me: Bye

He left and I rubbed my forehead getting stressed more and more by how things are turning.

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ASHANTI

Work was really really hectic felt like I haven't done anything serious these past few days. I owe it to Lime he's been covering for me when I couldn't pitch because I was still dealing with this thing of knowing Mavuyi as my real mother. But now it's time I took control.

It was Week 2 working on the project, we were there to inspect the sufficiency of the materials needed to work on. Then we had to meet the general contractors at the working ground and assist them.

Lime was really good in this thing. Way better than Christian and I. I had never spent more than 3hrs on the working ground. But with him through his patience, determination and love for his work he's making things easier for everyone. He's not much of an ass I thought he was.

I threw myself down on. He glanced my way then spoke his final goodbyes to the guys and ran to my side. He also threw himself next to me.

Limile: That tired?

Me: Yeah

Limile: Not used to hard labour I see

Me: I'm sweating and I'm so thirsty

Limile: nx shame maan I forget you're a lady. Sorry I took long, but I had to be extremely cautious considering the last incidence. You can also see how minimum the team is. One of us has to do more work.

Me: Yeah you're doing a commendable job, you're bringing about a good change to this place. It's all about vision.

Limile: Aww count yourself in too it's both our visions, we're partners.

I giggled

Me: Difference between you and me is that I do have a vision but not good at bringing the work on a 100. Just like you do.

He giggled.

Limile: Uyi nkosazana kaloku

Me: What does that mean?

Limile: A lady.. You're from Spain?

Me: No Mexico.

He made the look I usually get from people

Me: It's a story for another day.

Limile: Well

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how about I piggyback you back to the office?

Me: I'm somebody's fiancé

Limile: Don't lie.

I took off the gloves and showed him my ring. He got really disappointed. I mean he needed to get the message.

Me: And my hubby works here as well but he's one of the people who got affected by the incidence. He's healing and he might come back. Don't want him to bump into such moments.

Limile: So you're restricting me from being close with you even though you know we're supposed to work together?

I stood up and dusted myself

Me: All I'm saying is.. just don't jump the boundary line. It ain't gonna work and I don't entertain such talks, okay? Bye.

I walked away and got in my office. I called my boyfriend to catch up I miss him so much. Amazingly I heard voices of him talking with Mr Phillips.

They got in while giggling.

Mr Phillips: Hey Ashanti

Me: Hi Mr Phillips

He pat Mayi's shoulder

Mr Phillips: Heal quick son, we need you.

Mayihlome: Yeah I might be back sooner than you thought.

Mr Phillips: That'd be great pleasure. Will see you guys, Shante

Me: Yes Boss

He giggled and left. I looked at my yummy bae as he walked towards me. I fold my arms and my lips.

Me: Mh! So you came special on my lunch?

Mayihlome: Thought I should surprise you.

Me: How nice

Mayihlome: How nice. Can't get comfortable while my woman is working with bunch of men.

Me: Jealousy right?

Mayihlome: Oh yeah

He pulled my waist and we shared a kiss. A knock disturbed us.

Limile: Ayy.. should I come in some other time?

I pulled off Mayi's hold

Me: No you might as well say what you came for.

Limile: No it's fine I'll come in some other time.

He stopped and looked at Mayi

Limile: Bud

Mayihlome: Bud?

He left. Mayi slowly turned to look at me.

Mayihlome: Is he the new guy?

Me: Yep.

Mayihlome: I need to see a doc quick and make sure that I come back asap.

I laughed

Me: You're so sexy when you're jealous

Mayihlome: On a serious note querida I'm coming. No one should take a chance.

I wrapped my arms around his neck

Me: Well then it better be quick.

We kissed

Mayihlome: I came to take you out for lunch.

I looked at my wristwatch

Me: Ayy at 2pm I have to be in Tembisa, rain check?

I sighed

Mayihlome: What's important in Tembisa that you have to cancel our date?

Me: Well I have to fetch someone, it's a woman. Will tell you more about it. So please don't sulk.

He pouted his lips. I kissed him.

Me: Mm? I can make it up by going at a Grilling place in your hood.

Mayihlome: Eish okay but I planned for us to go to a restaurant.

Me: Change of scenario hun, let me go change I look dirty.

I got hold of the restroom keys

Mayihlome: And look what we've got here.

Me: What's that?

Mayihlome: Drawing of yourself

Me: Huh??

I dropped everything that's a first. I went to him and looked over the page he held, it was really a nice drawing of myself. I smiled, who did this?

Mayihlome: Did you do it?

Me: Do what?

Mayihlome: This

Me: Err yeah, I was bored so I passed time.

I had to lie cause it would sound suspicious. He kissed my forehead.

Mayihlome: You're talented you should also make my drawing.

Me: I will. Let me uhm go change I'll be back.

Mayihlome: Okay

I walked out and sighed. Seems like I have myself a secret admirer, who keeps on surprising me.

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MAVUYI

I was at Ndileka's place. I told her everything about my confession with Ashanti and how she had reacted. She was happy for me.

Ndileka: I'm concerned though

Me: Ngantoni? (About what?)

Ndileka: Your safety.

I sighed

Ndileka: Andithi buthe benikhe nabhidana ngendlela nala Mama wakhe? Mna petla ndaboyika ababantu serious. (Remember you said you've had an altercation with the mother? Friend I'm afraid of those people)

Me: I am too petla, I just want peace and for us to reach common ground. And make them understand that I'm not there to take Ashanti away from them. I just want us to have a relationship.

Ndileka: Ndakuva (I hear you) let's hope that all goes well.

Me: I hope so too.

I looked at the clock

Me: Eyy it's almost 2 I have to go and meet her.

Ndileka: Ithi ndik'khuphe (Let me walk you out)

We walked out and saw two cars stopping next to the house. I noticed Ashanti's car among the two.

Me: Tshini naba (Here they are)

They got out and walked to us. I smiled at them, Ashanti was confused.

Mayihlome: Molweni (Greetings)

Me: Hi Hlohlo

Ndileka: Shasha

Ashanti: Ndili? Mavuyi?

She took time looking at us individually.

Mayihlome: You know her?

Ashanti: Do you know her? She is the woman I came to fetch.

Mayihlome: Ohh?

I laughed and looked at her

Me: Ashanti, Ndileka and I are best friends

She looked at Ndileka.

Me: She's thee best friend

Ashanti: Thee best friend?

I nodded. She gasped and jumped on her with a hug.

Ashanti: Why have you been quiet all this time? Thank you for doing what you did for Mo- I mean for Mavuyi all those years back. I appreciate it.

She let go of her all emotional.

Ndileka: It was nothing really.. given another time I'd do it again. Mavuyi and I go all way back.

Mayihlome: Can somebody please fill me up?

Ashanti kissed him.

Ashanti: Babe will see you I love you okay. Mavuyi we have to go.

Me: Okay. Petla, Hlohlo keep well

Them: Bye.

We got in her car. She handed me a takeaway.

Ashanti: For you. We were at a grilling place with Mayi, I thought of leaving some for you.

I smiled

Me: Thank you.

She ignited the car and drove away. She glanced at me.

Ashanti: I want you to meet my parents

My heart beat fast as I looked at her.

Ashanti: I just believe it's time we spoke everything out and reach to an agreement or solutions.

Me: Oh uhm, that's nerve wrecking if I must say.

Ashanti: I know but I can assure you that everything's going to be fine. Don't worry about how my Mom acts out, she won't be out of character.

Me: I hope so

The rest of the drive was silent and awkward. All I could think of was the parents, food wasn't even digestible.

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LETTY

Today I was at Dimpho's place it was the day where I was supposed to have dinner with her parents.

We were already dining and got to know each other more. I told them all about myself and how I met with Dimpho.

It was going well so far.

Motlatsi: You said what was your age again?

Me: I'm 17 years old

Motlatsi: Hmm okay. Matric going well?

Me: Yes it is.

Motlatsi: I hope you have study groups. Please take Dimpho with she's a lazy one this one.

Dimpho: Mma!

She shrugged

Motlatsi: It's the truth.

Sihle: So where exactly do you stay in Tembisa so I can drop my daughter off for study sessions.

I giggled

Me: Dimpho knows exactly where I live, she will show you.

Motlatsi: Ayy Lethokuhle. So what do you wanna become after studying?

Me: Radiographer

Motlatsi: Wow hey! So if I wanna go for X-rays you'll be my girl?

Me: Definitely

We giggled

Sihle: Dimpho wants Law

Dimpho: They don't trust me mngee

Me: It's well suited for her, she can stand her ground. Being her best friend I know she has stood for me and defended me many times.

Sihle: Eh kodwa still

Dimpho: Papa you need to have faith in me.

Sihle: I do but..

Dimpho: No but I'll show you my capabilities for doubting me.

Dimpho's Mom paid attention to me more than anyone.

Motlatsi: So do you do any jobs on the side? Just to earn a lil something

Me: No

Motlatsi: Do you want to?

Me: Well err I'm not sure

She sipped on her juice

Motlatsi: Well my child you have to teach yourself independence while still young I'm telling you you'll go places.

I nod drinking my juice.

Motlatsi: You are so beautiful. I see you in modelling. If you'd showcase that beauty...

She whistled shaking her head.

Motlatsi: You'd make real money. I wish to meet the parents that made such a beautiful creation.

I smiled

Motlatsi: Please consider that

Me: I will

Motlatsi: Otherwise let me not scare you, let's dig in before the food gets cold.

We prayed and began eating. I stole looks at Dimpho's Mom she was still gazing at me with a smile. I found that strange but will brush it off. We had an amazing dinner. Thereafter Dimpho suggested we took a walk. Showing me more of her hood and we were free to speak about our own things without them.

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>>>To be continued

Chapter 20

MAVUYI

"You gotta be kidding me. You gotta be bloody fucking kidding me!"

Those words were thrown at us as soon as we entered. She sprang up on her chair.

Laura: It's this woman again! What is she doing in my house?

A man whom I'm assuming is her husband held her down.

Him: Calm down Laura, please behave like an adult.

So her name is Laura. They looked at us.

Ashanti: Mom, Dad I've brought someone with me.

Laura: As if we're blind, we can see that! Tell us what she's doing here?

Quintero: Laura

He held her and she yanked her arm off

Me: I'm here in peace.

Laura: Who are you again? And who gave you the permission to talk.

Ashanti: Mom will you just sit down and listen to why we're here!

She said boldly and it went silent

Ashanti: please give us a chance to explain ourselves before you attack us.

She finally gave in and settled down then we all followed.

Ashanti: Mom, Dad I brought along with me a lady called Vuyelwa and Mavuyi these are my parents Laura and Armando.

The husband and I send a nod to each other except for the mother who gave me an angry look.

Quintero: Nice to meet you.

Me: Nice to meet you too.

Ashanti: I called a meeting to address something. I need to disclose something with you.

Laura: (mockingly) Oh let's wait for it

Quintero: Esposo!

Laura: Okay okay I'll behave

She said lifting her hands. Ashanti took a deep breathe.

Ashanti: The woman besides me I first met her when I hired her as my maid. She worked for a short period of time till you guys came back and so I had to let her go.

She turned her head looking at me

Ashanti: But recently I have discovered that she's my biological mother as you can see the resemblances.

It went dead silent..

Ashanti: I am not doing this to hurt you. Know that I love both of you so so much. But I don't like secrets between us so I thought you all deserved to know.

Laura scoffed with a smile.

Laura: So what then now that we know? We give her a trophy for carrying you? Oh no, but to actually hand you over to her on a silver platter right? So that you can go play happy mother and daughter. Then we as dumb heads will be left behind miserable and lonely, knowing that we gave our all to build and raise the woman you've become.

Me: That's not what I want-

Laura: I wasn't talking to you, shut up.

Ashanti: Mom you're making this difficult.

Laura: *Cómo estoy haciendo esto difícil?* (How am I making this difficult?)

Ashanti: By not giving us all a chance to speak. Everyone here has to express how they really feel but you're already ambushing and blocking us with your victim card. To which it's not gonna work, everyone here has to express their point of

views. And you've said enough, your opinion is no longer needed. After everyone's opinion I will have the final say cause I'm an adult. I have the right to do anything I want with my life.

She sniffed.

Ashanti: Cause at the end of the day I get to go through things you wouldn't understand yet it's all because I need to be taught about my roots. You will never deny me that Mom... I won't suffer for things that could've been handled in an appropriate manner. Your maniac behaviour won't get us anywhere except to the road of doom. No one spoke about taking any one's child here. It's just your assumptions. We're here for solutions and resolving issues that were untouched and lending an ear to what had really happened.

Now that was a mouthful.

Ashanti: One thing you should also know Mom is that I require you to respect this woman next to me. You're not gonna speak anyhow you wish with her or throw threats while I'm around. You may do that to me as your child but not her. And I better not hear you of wishing to send harm on her way.

She placed her hand on my shoulder.

Ashanti: This woman survived beats, humiliation, rains, sunburns, danger, starvation whatelse am I not counting?.. She survived all those things in the streets whilst I was still in her

womb. Now think, if it wasn't for this woman's strength and endurance would you have had an Ashanti in your lives? Would you?

Them: No.

Ashanti: Bashing her and insulting her should be the last thing on our minds. I thought twice too before doing that cause I listened to the full story and took time to sympathize even though I wasn't at my best emotionally. You should do the same too Mom, that's the least you could do.

What a wise child. I was stunned, blown away if I can tell you.

Ashanti: Now if we may proceed. Papá what are your views?

He cleared his throat.

Quintero: I have not so much to say Bebita other than.. I am a proud father seeing myself do a great job of raising you to become this wise, beautiful girl. It's been full 29 years and I know that I may seem like I'm emotionally absent for you. But I have a different way of gesturing my love language for you incase you wonder. Only your toddler self would be able to understand this better.. Cause your mother can also attest that she sometimes feels you are not my favorite, and that's not true my Bebita. I've always loved you equally with Alessandro but in just different ways. When you're a parent you'll understand this one day.

He sighed

Quintero: Which in conclusion supports what I'll say, is that I knew that this day would come and I had waited for it. First question I know that's already flashing in your minds right now is that "Did I ever love you? Why did I expect something like this to happen then." Because if ever you plan on adoption it's something you should always keep in mind. It'll take a person to gain enough strength to accept that. Once you do, don't hold back your love, give it all to the child cause he/she needs it and it'll show great results. Always place that mental note at the back of your head that "there are possibilities" that the child might wanna know about their real parents or the real parents might find a way to reunite back with their child.

It might hurt but living with that mental note since from day 1 to years of raising the kid. You will understand when that day comes and don't worry. God's gonna reward you for taking care of His children in a loving, truthful way. Cause He holds orphans dear to His heart.

He exhaled looking at his wife and held her hand.

Quintero: So I think that's what got my wife behaving the way she is, she has missed those two important parts.

I was getting emotional.

Quintero: So my child, I'm okay with everything if that's what you looking for. I don't wanna be held responsible when something bad happens to you. I knew from the beginning you are an African child. Living in South Africa for many years I've learned about variety of cultures that are performed in each tribes. If you wanna embark on that journey I shall not stand on your way.

Ashanti: (tearful) Thank you Dad so much... Mavuyi?

She wiped her tears. I did too.

Me: I myself have no words Ashanti. I never knew it'd go as smooth as it is with you. I'd like to first thank you Mr & Mrs Quintero for raising this child to turn out to be the way that she is. I applaud your parenting skills it's reflecting good through her. And I know it's not easy raising a child, there's a saying that says "It takes a village to raise a child" it's one thing I can never take away from you. I'm not here to take her away from you.

I did this because I needed it for my own peace. It haunted me not knowing how this kid was doing whether she's still alive or not. Now I'm finally happy I searched and found her in a good place.

Me: Secondly there's another sacred thing we have such as culture. I liked when you mentioned that part Mr Quintero. There are things that could really affect her life if she skips that

part. It what shook me the most and the other thing was that.. what if you leave her and be no more? Who will she turn to? Who will be patient enough to tell her about her roots. Who will teach her about ancestors. Now I'm all here for those things. It's the most major role I want to play in her life, the rest will follow when she decides.

We all looked at each other. She smiled.

Ashanti: My decision is I want you both in my lives. But I feel like I need to catch up more with Mavuyi, for all those lost years, she needs to teach me more about the culture and introduce me to it as well. That doesn't mean I'm abandoning you Mamá and Papá please always remember that.

Quintero: It's fine baby as long as you're happy, right Laura?

She made a faint smile

Laura: Right.

Ashanti: So are you making truce with Mavuyi?

She looked at me and stretched her hand.

Laura: Truce

Me: Truce

We made a handshake.

Ashanti: Now was that difficult?

We giggled. Phew! We might have start off at a wrong foot but I'm glad it all ended well.

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LIMILE

♪♪ " My pride, my ego

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my needs and my selfish ways.

Caused a strong woman like you to walk out my life.

Now I never, never get to clean up the mess I made, oh

And it haunts me everyday when I close my eyes"♪♪

I was chilling inside my car in the dark watching as it rains heavily. Listening to music as it is my only therapy when my heart is troubled.

♪♪" It all just sounds like ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Mm, too young, too dumb to realize

That I should've bought you flowers, and held your hand.

Should have gave you all my hours

When I had the chance

Take you to every party 'cause all you wanted to do was dance

Now my baby's dancing, but she's dancing with another
man" 🎵 🎵

My tear fell down as I played with the purple wristband I gave it
to her, I found it carelessly in her office on the floor. My
emotions came out strong.

🎵 🎵 "Although it hurts

I'll be the first to say that I was wrong.

Oh, I know I'm probably much too late.

To try and apologize for my mistakes. But I just want you to
know.


I hope he buys you flowers

I hope he holds your hands

Give you all his hours, when he has the chance.

Take you to every party 'cause I remember how much you
loved to dance.

Do all the things I should have done

When I was your man." 

I threw my head back on the seat as I shut my eyes together
with my hand that held the band.

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LAURA

"Laura!! Laura!! Laura!!"

Me: My God! Mando what is it?

Armando: Laura!

He yelled and shook me awake. I switched on the lamp.

Me: (yawns) Haaay! What's even the time isn't it too early?

Armando: Despierta, necesitas ver esto. (Wake up you need to see this)

I turned in bed and squeezed my stinging eyes while getting my feet out.

Me: What? it seems serious

Armando: Sandro has been in an accident.

Me: what!!!!?

I shout in shock as I jump up in a blink of an eye. He nodded with tears in his eyes.

Me: No no nooo Papá it can't be true. Where did you see that?

He sniffed

Armando: Just received a call and it's all over the social media.

Me: Is he.. is he.. o-k-kay?

My breathing changed.

Armando: He's in ICU

I fell bottom on my butt as I held my chest and breathed like I was experiencing an asthma attack.

Me: That's not true, that's not true!! (Crying)

Armando: Please Esposo don't cry like that. He's not going to die.

Me: Sandro has alot of enemies they're gonna finish him off in the hospital!!! Oh my son nooooo!! God please.

I sobbed out very loud and my husband hugged me then wept too while on the floor. Can't believe this is happening.

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ASHANTI

I immediately jumped out of my room and ran to my parents bedroom hearing disturbing cries coming from there. I flung the door open and saw Mom and Dad hugging each other on the floor. The time was about to be 6am.

Me: Mamá , Papá? What's going on.

Mom was now crying silently and hiccupping.

Me: Say something, what's going on?

Dad: Your brother...

My heart paced as my eyes widened

Me: What about Alessandro?

Dad: He's been involved in a fatal car accident. He's in ICU as we speak.

I shook my head while tears welled up in my eyes.

Me: No Papá it must be a mistake not my hermano (brother)

He wiped his wet face

Dad: It is true baby I wouldn't lie about something like that

I glanced down and look at Mom, she wasn't in a good state.

My tears gushed down immediately. I ran out and went to take my phone then dialed him.

Me: Please pick pick pick hermano.. this can't be true, you're the most strong notorious guy I know.

It reached to a voicemail with his voice message.

Me: Please... Atleast one talk with you brother (crying)

I sniffed and logged in to FB, the timeline flashed pictures of his car being crashed and pictures of him in a brutal condition I doubt he'd survive.

I sank down the floor and let out a loud scream as I cried.

Me: Not my hermano!!!! Please God save him, save him from his enemies.

I cried so hard. It's no secret that my brother lived a dangerous life back in our hometown and he introduced me to that life. Being here in S.A was my salvation from what he exposed me, we worked together but one day I will get into deep details

about that. I switched up on him ever since living here cause I know him and his tricks. Now I regret that I haven't checked up on him not even once. I know his enemies won't trip they'll take this opportunity to end him. He's dodged every bullet, he always slips away from them. Now is their chance, I wouldn't be in peace if he departs without us talking. I really wouldn't be happy hence I pray to God to save him though he lived a sinful life.

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MAVUYI

Me: How was the dinner?

Letty: It was nice, very nice.

Me: Awuu nah! Kutheni unganxibanga? Siye mall nontombi.
(Why aren't you dressed knowing we're going to the mall)

Letty: No it's fine Ma, I'm not feeling well.

Me: Utheni? (What's wrong?)

Letty: It's just a headache ngifuna uku cambalala kancane nje (I need to rest)

Me: Hayi Letty your'e worrying me mntanam yhini?

Letty: No don't stress zikhona pain killers ne Granpa I'm sure I'm going to be fine.

I walked to check her injection card

Me: And it's not your date yet

She giggled

Letty: Hau na Mana! I haven't been getting to naughty stuffs. I wouldn't keep it a secret kuwe you know.

Me: Ndaziphi nisibhanxa kangaka (How would I know the way you're playing mind games at us)

She giggled

Letty: Trust me I'm going to be fine

Me: Okay I trust you ke.

I kissed her cheek.

Me: I love you

Letty: I love you too Ma.

Me: Will bring you some goodies!

Letty: Please do!

I giggled as I left. Oh my sweet child.

I went to do my shopping in the mall. I bought most of the things we needed for the house. Paid all our accounts and bills. Decided to buy my daughter and husband some clothing with the change and takeaways.

By 2pm was heading back to the rank. I saw an old woman struggling to walk with her parcels.

Her: Yhi ngane yabantu cela ung'size (Please help me).

I went to walk at her.

Me: Molo Mamkhulu

Her: Hello eish, lezizinto ziyaxaka awung'vulele lana ung'tshele ukuthi indodakazi yam ifuna sihlangane kuphi. (These things are difficult please open my phone and tell me where I'm supposed to meet with my daughter.)

I opened her phone and realized an unread message from Funeka.

Me: Funeka yintombi yakho? (Is your daughter?)

Her: Yebo Sisi

I read the message.

Me: Oh okay I know this place, let me walk you kuyo uzolahleka if I just direct you. Plus une plastics they look heavy.

Her: Ayy iNkosi ikubusise impela ngane yam angiyaz lengane kunani ingafuni ungilinda ngiqede la ngaphakathi. (May the Lord bless you I don't know why this child couldn't wait for me to finish with my shopping)

Me: Kumela she did the shopping not you. You no longer have strength to do things on your own.

Her: Empeleni (For real)

I giggled

Her: Ayysuka yazazi lezi ngane.

So we walked to the place as she spoke more about her kids and her youthful days.

Minutes later we saw a car parking, the daughter greeted and we helped Mamkhulu to get inside.

When I turned around, I don't know where the woman suddenly disappeared to. I then saw a glimpse of a man who swiftly turned me around tightening his arm around my neck and suffocated me with a cloth on my face, as soon as the chemical hit my nostrils, I blacked out immediately without even a fight.

>>>To be continued

Chapter 21

LETTY

My headache was getting more intense. I decided to drink painkillers and cold water then lied down a little. It was so quiet and I was bored so I ended up playing with my phone and logged in on FB.

I was welcomed by 4 messages. It was from my bf, my friend, another random person plus the hot guy I had accepted not long ago.

I first clicked on the hot guy's message. It was a simple "hey" I decided to ignore him. He looked fake, like a catfish or so.

I chatted to my friend and Bf so long. Then a message from an unknown number blinged from WhatsApp.

+277894... : "Hey Munchkin"

Me: "Hey?? Who's this?"

+277894... : "Oh it's me, Dimpho's Mom"

I frowned. Oh-kay what am I going to chat with her? Like what business do I have with her?

Her: "Sorry if I seem to be forward or anything. I just took your number from my daughter. Just felt like I needed to have your number since you're my daughter's friend."

Me: "Oh"

Her: "Hope I didn't trouble you"

Me: "No not really"

Her: "Can you kindly save my number? 😊. Wanna see more of that pretty face."

I sighed nervously and saved her number.

Her: "Thank you sweetheart. You may enjoy your day.

Whenever you feel like talking know that I'm here. Even if you have decided you wanna start earning yourself something. I can make it all possible for you. Much love💖"

She logged off. I continued making a confused facial expression as I starred at our messages. This is weird like really weird, my instincts are not sitting well with this woman not one bit. Since at the dinner she's been making me feel uncomfortable.

Me: "Did you just hand out my numbers without my permission?"

Dimpho: "I'd never do that chommie why?"

Me: "Well I'm chatting to your Mom"

Dimpho: "🤔 Really? I don't know how she got your numbers coz she didn't ask me."

Me: "Streynj"

Dimpho: "But she wouldn't do any harm trust me. Mom is a woman of God, maybe she wants to get to know you better? 📱♀️"

Me: "That's awkward. She makes me nervous I swear"

Dimpho: "😊 Don't tatalize she's a nice person as long as you don't rat me out."

Me: "I won't darling"

Dimpho: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too"

The hot guy sent me another text message.

AQ: "So heartbreaking to be ignored by a beautiful lady like you."

Me: "There's a reason why I'm doing so."

AQ: "And what may be the reason?"

Me: "You're a stranger. You are fake & You're a catfish"

AQ: "Lol"

AQ: "I'm real, trust me. Would you like me to prove it?"

Me: "Save yourself your precious time, why go through the trouble for a mere stranger? Just leave me alone."

I exit the app and napped don't have time to entertain strangers.

Hours later I woke up to the house being dark. My head was much better, I switched on the lights and checked the time.

Me: Ukuphi na uMa, yini ethatha iskathi eside kangaka. (What's making Mom take long, where is she?)

I thought out loud and looked for my phone. I dialed her phone but it reached to voicemail. I got more worried, she has never took so long when she goes shopping.

I decided not to overthink it. I ended up cooking so that they may come to something to eat.

But I don't know what was taking her long. More hours passed and passed till Dad came back from work.

Dad: Sanibonani

Me: Sawubona Baba

He hang his jacket behind the door

Dad: Yini ingathi usele wedwa? (Why does it seem like you're alone)

I stood up holding my hands together.

Me: I am really alone Dad

He placed his things and slowly made his way towards me with a frown.

Dad: Hau! Uphi uMa wakho? (Where's your Mom?)

Me: Oko ehambile Baba aye eMall esayothenga into zala endlini akaka buyi. (She's been gone to the Mall for shopping and hasn't come back ever since)

Dad: Hhabe! Bekuy' skhathi sini leso? (When was that?)

Me: Ntambama (In the Afternoon)

Dad: Mihlola (Goodness)

He took out his phone and dialed her. I began becoming scared as I was close to tearing.

Dad: Voicemail. Mall yakuphi le aye kuyona? (Which Mall did she go to?)

Me: Maponya.

He angrily flinched as he furrowed his eyebrows.

Dad: Maponya!? uVuyelwa uyothini kude kangaka seka qabela iTembisa mall maduzana nje? Yini emhlanganisa nase Soweto? iih kodwa lomfazi hay ngisizeni madoda. (Why would Vuyelwa go shop very far skipping our nearby mall in Tembisa? What is she doing in Soweto? This woman.)

He went to his room and soon came out looking like he's going out.

Me: Manje Baba uyaphi? (Where are you going?)

Dad: Ngiyo khangela umfazi wam ngize ngimthole (I'm looking for my wife till I find her)

Me: Kodwa Baba akuphephile. (But Dad it's not safe)

Dad: Ang'na ndaba Lethokuhle! Ngibuya ne nkosikazi yam k'phela into engiyaziyo. (I don't care Lethokuhle! What I know is that I'm coming back with my wife)

He looked at me.

Dad: Sula lezo nyembezi (Wipe those tears)

He pulled me and gave me a forehead kiss.

Dad: uBaba uyak'thanda yezwa? kwaye uzofica no Ma wakho ungakhali. (Daddy loves you okay? And he'll come back with your Mom, don't cry). Just make sure you lock everything and be safe, I'll be back.

Me: (crying) Baba..

Dad: Ngizobuya ngane yami (I'll be back my child) I'll ask Ndileka to come stay with you so long okay?

I nodded

Dad: That's my girl.

He closed the door and I remained sitting down crying. This can't happen to Mom Lord please protect her wherever she is.

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KOLOSA

Sihle was driving us to his father's place. Apparently he managed getting us the information we needed. So we were going to meet the mother before looking for my sister. Dad was discharged and it was like nothing had happened to him. When we got at my uncle's place Mhise showed up minutes later and we were preparing to start out with our journey. She spoke to the elders first before we drove out to the place.

Later on Sihle parked to what seemed to be the house after we had asked for directions. This is it. We have to do this, right now I was crossing my fingers.

Sihle: I think this is the house

Mhise: Enkosi Bhut' Sihle

Sihle: Akho ngxaki (No problem)

She looked at us.

Mhise: I think Tatomkhulu, Kolosa and I should go inside and leave behind uSihle no Tata because he'll have difficulties yena... I mean we don't know what to expect inside there.

I sighed.

Dad: It's no problem my child

Zolisa: Masibe yindlela ke (Let's do this)

We got out of the car and walked inside the yard. My heart was palpitating, my knees were literally failing me. I mean I'm expecting anything thrown at us cause what Dad did back then was completely wrong. What kills me the most is that I'll literally die for his sins.

Mhise: Koko! (Knock-knock)

A young girl appeared and we exchanged greetings.

Mhise: Nontombi wethu ingaba bakhona abantu abakhulu?
(Are there any elders?)

Her: Bakhona (They are around)

Mhise: Besi hambele kubo wethu (We are here for them)

Her: You may come in.

She made a way for us inside

Uncle: Siyabulela (Thanks)

She led us to the lounge. Where we saw a man and a woman, they looked a bit distraught and down. It's like something bad had happened.

Mhise: Molweni

Them: Sawubona/Molo

Mhise: Err ingaba sise mzini o'right nah? Wakwa Vilakazi ngoba sihambele khona? (We'd like to know if we're in a right place? In the Vilakazi household because we're looking for them.)

Man: Nikwi ndawo eright. (You're in the right place)

The other woman stood up.

Her: I'll be back I need to go check my house.

Him: Okay

Her: Yeah, Letty please come with me.

She left with the little girl.

Vilakazi: You may take your seats.

We all sat down.

Vilakazi: Ngini siza ngani? (How may I help you?)

We looked at each other for a moment contemplating who'll speak first. Uncle cleared his throat.

Uncle: Uhm Mnumzana (Sir) first of all we're introducing ourselves. Starting by myself I'm Zolisa, then this is my niece Kolosa and this one is Gog'Manyano. We're the Malahle family. Some of us come all the way from EC some of us are around GP.

He continued paying attention at us

Uncle: We came looking for Vuyelwa, is it possible to find her?

Vilakazi: Nizom'thini unkosikazi wam? (What do you want from my wife?)

Uncle: Err sidinga uthetha naye. (We need to talk to her)

Vilakazi: Nikhulume nithini!?! (To talk and say what!?!)

He was beginning to raise his voice. Mhise quickly humbled herself seeing this was going to get out of control.

Mhise: Tata ndinga phazamisi (not to interrupt) it's really urgent that we meet with her. We came with respect, humbling

ourselves and sincerely apologizing for what had happened to her. See Tata, the ancestors sent us here to talk with her regards her daughter

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the one we had all lost. We want to do right by her plus the child by taking her back home to perform certain rituals before things spiral out of control.

He giggled while pointing at us

Vilakazi: So nini vele? Nini abam' laxaza waphelela eStradeni. (So it's you? You are the people that caused for her to be in the streets?)

Uncle: Tata asizel- (We didn't co-)

Vilakazi: Ningathi "Tata" "Tata" wokunuka maan emzini wam! (Don't come say "Tata" "Tata" my foot in my house!)

We kept quiet.

Vilakazi: Liphutha lenu nonke umfazi wam engatholanga uk'thula ne njabulo iskhathi sonke empilweni yakhe. Manje nizong' tshela ngaba phansi hii? Ukuba bebe ngani velelanga benizo wabona nini amaphutha wenu? (It's all your fault that my wife's been unhappy and not at peace all these years. Now you tell me about ancestors huh? If it wasn't for them when were you gonna realize your mistakes.)

Uncle sighed.

Uncle: Siyayazi sonile yilonto silapha. Sizo ngxengxeza kunye naye silungise konke esaku dalayo. (We know we've done bad to her that's why we're here. To ask for forgiveness and fix everything we've created.)

He shrugged his shoulders.

Vilakazi: Askies I'm sorry ke mfowethu. Ngeshwa sise bhadini sonke, iskhathi sinishiyile. (I'm sorry then my brother. It's all bad luck for us, it's a little too late for you.)

I fixed myself on the seat as I sat forward.

Me: What do you mean Tata?

Vilakazi: Nifika nje sibhekana ne Nkosikazi yam. Udukile, uye waya eMall ngelanga layizolo azange kaze abuye. Silinde kuse siyo report'a icala lakhe loku nyamalala. (You've arrived to us searching for my wife. She's missing, she went to the Mall yesterday and didn't come back. We're waiting for tomorrow to go report a missing case.)

Me: Oh yhini Bawo!

I wailed while shutting my eyes and buried my head on my palms bringing it forward to my knees.

Uncle: uVuyelwa udukile? (Vuyelwa is missing?)

Vilakazi: Ngikubeke kwacaca gca (That's what I just said)

Uncle: Yhoo!

At this instance we were all defeated. No more words were left for us to say. Gogo rubbed my shoulder.

Mhise: We sincerely apologize Mr Vilakazi for these news. Please don't lose hope, you are going to find your wife. God wouldn't let her go through the same pain again. Stay hopeful and pray. As for us, it's tough but oneday we'll meet again. We apologize for everything, keep her in your prayers and we shall do so as well.

Vilakazi: Ngiyabonga (Thank you)

Mhise: Siyabulela nathi, sesi phuma ngoku. (We thank you too. We're heading out)

Vilakazi: Nibe yindlela enhle (Go well)

Mhise: Thanks.

We walked out and I sighed with my shoulders all weighed down.

Me: What now?

Mhise: I'll have to speak to the elders again and tell them how we went. Don't worry we'll find more solutions.

I huffed rubbing my face.

Mhise: Remember I did say this won't be an easy journey. This is our first obstacle therefore we have to be strong and stay hopeful. Giving up is not an option.

Uncle: Ayikho enye indlela. (There's no other way)

Mhise: Ayikho.

I took a deep sigh and nodded

Me: Okay

Mhise: Okay let's go.

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ASHANTI

Today I wasn't going to go to work after what we went through as a family. It's such a difficult time for us and it's been hard to function throughout the day.

I held Mommy's hand. She looked at me and placed her hand over mine.

Me: I'm scared

Mom: I'm scared too baby. I'm so scared.

I wiped her tears

Me: Please don't cry I've still got hope

Mom: I don't know sweetheart. Sandro may have been a bad child but I won't handle losing him.

Dad walked in defeated and took a seat. His eyes were bloodshot red.

Me: Any updates?

Dad: He's immediately placed in a life support machine. That's what my brother said, it doesn't look good.

Me: When are we flying?

Mom looked at me

Mom: Are you sure about that? I mean you just found-

Me: Alessandro matters to me. When are we flying to see my brother?

Dad: Bebita it's fine I can fly by myself and give you updates whilst I'm there. You and your mother need to be here for your safety.

Me: No sé si lo había dejado claro o que (I don't know whether I had made myself clear or what) I'm saying I need to see my brother!!

Mom lift her hands to calm me..

Mom: Calm down baby your father might be right. Let's just stay for a few days. I think our safety matters more than anything right now okay?

I looked at her.

Mom: Sandro's enemies will be roaming around who knows what might happen to us.

Me: What about Papá??

Dad: My brother is there, he's a feared man and well-armed. So don't worry about me.

I thought about it and sighed closing my eyes.

Me: Okay fine then.

Mom pulled me in her arms.

Me: Don't forget to tell him that I love him and I apologize for not giving him my time.

Dad: I will my baby, will definitely tell him.

I made a weak smile as Mommy brushed my arms and continued keeping me in her embrace.

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LAURA

After Ashanti had lied down to rest and my husband went out, I walked to the bathroom to go wash my face. Sandro's call came through. I picked up and instantly giggled out loudly.

Sandro: Hearing you laugh like that means that you are satisfied with my job.

I smirked as I looked at myself on the mirror.

Me: More than satisfied my son, hah! You've outplayed your role I'm more than proud. You should've seen my performance.

I tilt my head and giggled madly

Me: I swear I deserve Oscars for it with my fake overflowing tears. Your Daddy bought it even Bebita bought it, damn. We're winning how did you pull that out? It looks real and everyone in Mexico is feeling touched.

Sandro: I've been in this game for a long time.

Me: For the first time I'm saying this I'm proud of you. Your Daddy is coming over remain playing that card right.

Sandro: And my hermanita? (sister?) I even saw her missed calls.

I smiled while playing with my necklace.

Me: I have her all wrapped under my finger. Let's just say she has remembered the importance of family and has forgotten about that stupid good-for-nothing mother of hers. They were busy preaching about ancestors blah blah blah as if such things exists.

We giggled loudly

Me: How I wished to choke myself being in that conversation and to actually agreeing to it, argh!

I smiled lifting my shoulder up.

Me: But all Ashanti's concerned about now is her brother more than her mother, so we've got her. That woman should give up on her, giving her away in the first place was her losing her for good she should accept that. She belongs to us now, she's part of the Quintero family.

Sandro: And that should never change

Me: Never.

Sandro: So when are we initiating the real deal?

Me: Aah! Be patient, I'm still creating an alibi here. First wanna come face to face with the woman and see how stubborn she can be. If she continues resisting then I'd love to witness her last days on earth.

Sandro: Mamá why didn't I think of making you a lady Mafia in the first place?

We giggled.

Me: Son certain situations change us to people we never thought we'd become. I didn't mean to turn out this way but that lady drove me. If she could just stay away from Ashanti.

Sandro: She better keep her distance before something bad hit her.

Me: Exactly. Listen continue playing what you playing, and I'll continue playing a depressed Mom over here. We'll talk soon

Sandro: Okay

Me: I love you

Sandro: I love you too

We hang up... I smiled staring at Mrs Vilakazi's picture at the place where I ordered for her to be held hostage.

Me: I'm coming for you

I then deleted her picture and went out. Preparing to fake my whole sadness.

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MAVUYI

I slowly opened my eyes, raising my head and looked around. It was so dark, really really dark it was hard to even see myself. Where am I? Last time I remember was helping an old lady then I don't know... Oh yah I saw a certain guy snatching me then he suffocated me. Meaning I'm definitely kidnapped. Oh my God! I began thinking of my baby Letty, my husband, Ashanti. This can't be happening.

I cried and screamed my lungs out. I then realized that I was gagged and tied on the chair. I jumped on the chair while still seated and screamed more muffled screams as tears streamed down my face. Who would do this to me? Why? Who did I provoke? I kept making short prayers as I closed my eyes. I really pray they don't kill me not while I just made out things with my daughter.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 22

MHISE (LIMISE)

I was driving I don't know where to, everything seemed dark like it was late at night. The road was clear and quiet, couldn't see any cars except for mine.

While I was driving my headlights suddenly deemed on someone who was walking in front of the car. I immediately stepped on the brakes and hooted the car. But the person was unbothered he didn't startle nor jump out of the road. He continued walking with his slow pace.

I parked on the side and got out of the car.

Me: Heyyyi!!! Suka endleleni, uzotshayiswa. (Move out of the road you'll be hit by a car)

The person continued walking not minding me. I squinted my eyes taking a good look, and noticed it's a man. Seemed like he was carrying something.

Me: Heyy!! Did you hear me?

No actually he was carrying a person. I followed and ran closer grabbing him back by his shoulder.

Me: Bhuti-

I froze when he came face to face with me.

Me: Lime?? What are you doing out here in the middle of the night? And who's this lady? Why are you (huffs)... Lime what's going on?

He just blinked looking at me still carrying the lady in his arms and made a slow turn then continued with his path without saying a word.

Me: Limile!!? Wele?? Hey!!

I ran to him when I touched him my hand went past through him and he disappeared.

Me: Limile!!!!

I gasped and jumped up.

Me: (breathless tone) Limile.

I looked around for a minute and realized it was just a dream. I got up switching on the lights and wiped my sweaty face.

I sat down on the floor tilting my head looking above.

Me: Bantu abadala what are you trying to show me? Please reveal everything and make it crystal clear. Talk to me, lead me, bring light and unfold it. Maybe I'm not paying attention, maybe there's something I'm not doing right.

I became teary

Me: Please fix me, I promise I'll listen and do everything you order me to. I don't want to see that family suffering because I know the pain they're going through, I pledged to help them. I want to succeed doing so. Show me solutions there must be a way please.

I clapped my hands while rocking myself on the floor.

Me: Ndanicela bo Khokho, ndiboniseni indlela. Cela ucacelwa neli thongo lindi veleleyo ndincede apho ndifuneka khona. Camagu. (I plea with you my Forefathers please enlighten me. Make me understand the dream so that I can help where I can.)

I exhaled while I held my chest. This whole thing gets to me, I sometimes hate feeling powerless feeling like my hands are tight in situations where I'm supposed to help out.

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MAVUYI

Got woken up by an impulsive loud sound of the door, opening. I lift my head up and squinted my eyes to an extreme light coming in, my eyes weren't used to that brightness since I've been locked up in this dark place.

Sooner I heard heels clicking loudly on the floor. Heard people speaking in a language I couldn't understand.

The lights in my room brought about severe pain in my head. I heard someone pulling a chair and placing it in front of me.

I finally regained my vision. I saw Laura in front of me she made a very spiteful smile.

My eyes grew wider and I began moving myself on the chair in anger as I made muffled sounds.

She didn't come alone she was with other two strong men standing besides her.

She folded her arms on her chest.

Laura: Mrs Vilakazi we meet again, sorry it's not in a pleasant way. What do they call you again? Mavuyi. Aaahh yes!

I furiously gnashed my teeth on the cloth gagged at me. She pouted while making those kissing sounds.

Laura: Look at those eyes huh? Those sexy lovely eyes. Burning with fury right?

She moved her chair closer and traced her long nails on my neck. I flinched and gnashed my teeth more intensively.

Laura: Ooooh look at that too, those pretty veins showing hey. She attempted to touch my forehead, I angrily moved my head away from her filthy hands.

Laura: Come on now

She tried again but I got ticked and with great power I jumped closer to her while roaring on top of my voice. I was a lil inch closer to her. She had long chickened out of her chair, being beyond terrified of what happened.

My breathing continued heaving. She fixed her coat and clapped her hands while encircling me.

Laura: Wow, tiny body with great strength. I must have underestimated you, you were right.. you're not my match. And I was trying to be nice with you. I wanted us to conversate more and maybe reach to an agreement before I set you free. But I guess I need that ball of fire for little long in here.

She held my neck and squeezed it.

Laura: I don't like attitude you hear me?

I looked at her in silence not showing any signs of fear or effect to what she's doing.

Laura: Do you hear me!!!!?

She yelled as she squeezed my neck more tight. I closed my eyes and giggled. Satisfaction is not what she'll get from me.

Laura: Tryna act tough? Let's see if this will still keep you tough.

She let go of my neck and moved back. She signalled to one of the guys, shortly he came and gave me a blow of punch on my face. My head hang down.. I saw blood leaking on my lap I knew it came from my nose.

She crouched staring at me.

Laura: Still acting tough huh? And how about this.

She stood up lifting my face with a hot slap. She continued giving me more slaps then pushed my chair down. I fell on the floor so hard and winced in agony as I coughed.

Laura: Are you still fucken tough!!? Huh. Tell me, tell me.

She tried walking closer but her guards held her back.

Laura: Déjame!! (Let go of me!!)

She walked closer and grabbed off the cloth from my mouth

Laura: Speak! Tell me you're still tough enough.

I closed my eyes and panted as I felt much pain. She hit my cheeks.

Laura: Listen here woman, here's the deal. If I set you free you will have to promise to elope and stay far away from Ashanti.

I giggled.

Me: I'd rather die than running away from the child I've spent years looking for. Why are you shaking Laura? I mean I was more convenient with everyone. It's not like I wanted to take Ashanti away from you. But the way you're going I think I'm changing my mind. She doesn't deserve someone like you, worse as a parent.

She stepped on my collarbone with her heel.

Me: (Screaming) Ahhhhhhhhh!!!!

She had no mercy she stepped real hard that I felt the heel piercing through my skin and cracked my bone. I cried in agony, till the guards picked her off me.

She pointed me.

Laura: Try me and you'll end up dead. Let's hope by tomorrow you'll be sane enough to make the right decision or... This will be your last day alive.

She clicked her tongue and stormed off and the guards switched off the lights and locked me in. I remained crying as I trembled still lying on the cold tile. Lord please save me! I need you the most right now please don't abandon me God.

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LIMILE

I remembered to make an important call I was supposed to

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a long time ago.

Him: Hello

Me: Hi, you're speaking to Limile. I'm looking for Ndos

Him: You're speaking to him.

I cleared my throat

Me: I don't know whether you have spoken to my brother or not? Benny Rhadu.

Him: Oh yah yah. I remember the chap, he told me he'll hand my contact to someone who's in need of my skills.

Me: True, that person is me.

Ndosi: Okay I see, no problem. When are we starting?

Me: Even today.

Ndosi: I'm still in Pietermaritzburg for now.

I sighed

Ndosi: But I can work on something while still here. Then we can meet next week. Is it fine?

Me: Yeah it's fine.

Ndosi: So tell me this person you want me to look into.

Me: He's my brother Luniko Solwandle, he's been missing and we're trying to look for him it's hard. He was taken in an ammunition many years ago.

He went silent.

Ndosi: The surname sounds familiar. Give me few days and I'll tell you what I've got.

Me: Cool, don't forget to forward me your bank details.

Ndosi: Will do so.

Me: Sharp

Ndosi: Sure

We ended the call. I grabbed my things preparing to head out for work. I saw my sister coming down.

Me: Welez will see you when I'm back. Have a great day.

Mhise: Wait!

She ran to me and gave me a bone crushing hug then kissed my cheek and held on it.

Mhise: Please take care of yourself and if ever you find yourself in a compromising situation, please do not hesitate to tell or call me.

I frowned in confusion

Mhise: Okay?

Me: Uhm is everything alright sis?

Mhise: Yeah everything is alright. Please promise me Lime.

Me: I do

She made a relieved smile

Mhise: Thank you. Remember that I love you.

She removed her hand from my cheek.

Me: I love you too.

Mhise: Have a great day at work.

I was still puzzled by her whole reaction all of a sudden and decided to make my way out to work. I really wonder what's up with her.

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LAURA

I arrived back home few minutes ago and called Dwayne aside. I handed him an envelope full of money to thank him for his good job.

"I was starting to wonder where you were cau- cause.. I'm ready to go"

He stopped and gave us a questioning look.

Me: We'll speak again Dwayne thank you.

He nod and walked away. I secretly grinded my teeth and turned to my husband filtering a huge smile.

Me: Marido (Husby)

Armando: Was that an envelope?

Me: Oh uhm.. yah just thought he deserved something for doing me a favour.

Armando: What favour?

Me: Running me a few errands

He made another strange look.

Armando: If you didn't run errands by yourself then where were you?

Me: Uhm remember Maureen? We decided to meet up and chill after we've seen each other for a long time.

He looked at my outfit

Armando: Even though you knew today I'm leaving? Dressed like that?

Me: What's wrong with my outfit?

I said looking at my outfit.

Armando: Dime le verdad (Tell me the truth) Laura.

Me: I am telling you the truth.

Armando: Is Dwayne doing other jobs for you?

Me: No

Armando: Call him

Me: What?

Armando: I said call him

Me: You are being unnecessary right now.

Armando: Dwayne!!! Dwayne!!!

Me: Armando!

He walked around searching for him and I tailed behind him.

Me: You don't trust me?

Dwayne appeared.

Armando: How much did she pay you?

He looked at me and I nervously bit my lip giving him a sign to seal his mouth.

Dwayne: Uhm..

Armando: Give me that envelope.

I shook my head on Dwayne

Armando: I said give it here!

His stern voice shook both of us. So Dwayne ended up giving him. I covered my face while turning away.

Armando began counting the money and laughed.

Armando: R50 000? What job are you doing for her on the side?

Dwayne: Sir-

Me: Okay! okay I'll tell you honey. Please just atleast hand him the money back. Please.

Armando: I'll have to hear the story first.

He walked away leaving me with Dwayne. I hissed and angrily banged the table.

Me: Damn!!

Dwayne: I hope I get my payment soon Ma'm

Me: Not you too, just calm down you'll get your payment. Let me handle this.

I walked away thinking of a great story to create.

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ASHANTI

After accompanying Dad to the airport and we came back without him I don't know, I felt different. Like having this unsettling feeling that bothered me deeply in my soul. I couldn't really tell what it is or where it came from. I don't know but something is wrong.

Mom: What do you feel like eating?

Me: I don't know I don't feel like eating anything. I'm not hungry.

It's only me and her now even the guards were gone.

Mom: I'm starting to think that you hate my food.

Me: (giggles) No Ma I've always loved your food you know it. Just that I'm fine, I think I need my therapy. If you need me I'm in my dancing room.

She smiled

Laura: Okay sweetheart.

I walked upstairs. I think it's a good place to offload everything here, I won't even change to comfortable clothes cause my mood is just.. complex.

I took off only my shoes and switched on the music and began dancing.

♪♪" I've been ignoring this big lump in my throat.

I shouldn't be crying, tears were for the weaker days.

I'm stronger now, or so I say.

But something's missing...

Whatever it is, it feels like it's laughing at me through the side of a two-sided mirror

Whatever it is

It's just laughing at me, and I just wanna scream.

What now? I just can't figure it out.

What now? I guess I'll just wait it all out (wait it out)

What now? Oh, oh, oh-oh

What now?" 🎵🎵

This session was different I had no mercy on my body, was just throwing myself around. Displaying my rough emotions by pulling my hair, twisting myself, this room was suddenly not enough for myself alone.

🎵🎵" I don't know where to go

I don't know what to feel

I don't know how to cry

I don't know why [x3]

So what now?" 🎵🎵

I then dropped myself down at the ending of the song, landing on my back as I pant. I then shut my eyes not knowing I'd immediately drift to a sleep.

I felt an object on top of my torso. I stopped breathing and moved my hand around it and felt its legs. I shot my eyes open, it was the leopard.

It got off me and walked around me. I sat up straight.

Me: What?

It had a different attitude it wasn't pleased with me. It walked closer and I crawled backwards, then it groaned a little.

I lift my hand trying to stop it.

Me: What danger can Laura do?

It jumped on top of me and pulled me across the room with my braids as I screamed.

I held on my head screaming as it ran around with me.

Me: (Crying) Heeeelp!!! Heeeelp!!!

It then jumped for my ears and ripped them out with its teeth. I watched it devouring and finishing them in front of me.

I sobbed my lungs out as I touched my ears but couldn't feel anything instead I came back with blood.

I screamed uncontrollably.

Me: Mis oidos!!! Mis oidos!!!! Mis oidos!!!! (My ears!!!)

"Bebita? Bebita? Wake up"

I continued kicking while holding my ears

Me: Mis oidos!!! Mis oidos!!! Mis oidos!!!

Mom: Bebita, hey Ashanti!!

She shook me and gave me few slaps. I immediately stopped and looked at her.

Mom: It's just a dream honey come on. Probably a bad one.

Me: Mis oidos? (My ears?)

She removed my hands and touched my ear.

Mom: Estan tus oidos (There are your ears)

Me: Huh??

She made me touch them.

Mom: Feel them..

Me: Yah

Mom: Yah? (Nods) it's okay baby.

I held my braids and looked around the room. She giggled.

Mom: What exactly did you dream about that took your ears?

Me: It's nothing.

I stood up and fled out of the room. This is my first encounter ever being attacked by the leopard. I took it as an extreme warning there is really something bad for it to act out this way. I better start paying attention.

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>>>To be continued....

Chapter 23

KOLOSA

I was sitting silently in my room thinking about many things. Mainly was the current situation we're in. I found myself thinking more of the time, as in what will happen if we run out of time.

We all know that the ancestors don't play, they stick to their principles. If it happens that we run out of time then my father should start forgetting about me.

Sitting here alone has got me thinking if it's wise to just sit and wait for my fateful day? What can I do in the meantime? What do I bring? How do I play my role? Should I also wait for Gogo to tell me my role? Considering my life being at stake I cannot just wait to be told. I also have to do something to meet the family halfway and contribute in saving ourselves.

And I know exactly what to do... It's one thing only, to pray.

I knelt down and closed my eyes.

Me: Dear Lord. I don't even know where to start, it's been a long time since I did this. I've been lazy when it came to praying. Even in my darkest days where I needed you the most,

I've never thought of running to you... I've dealt with many things on my own not knowing that there's too much a human being can take knowing that there's a divine entity ready to step in if you call for help. For that my dear Father please forgive me.

I'll start involving you more in my life as of today... I need you the most right now. Everything has come crumbling down in my life. Where I had everything under control then the next I lost everything. All because of a sin of one man.. now it has affected the rest of the family.

I sniffled brushing my cheeks.

Me: It's breaking me but I believe this is built for me. I have to come out of this with a lesson and my first lesson is involving you God. We're on the search of finding my sister and we're still experiencing hardships cause we didn't find her mother and we can't do anything without her.

I pray you please protect her from any harm she's facing right now Lord. May all the Angels surround her in army of protection Lord, and in the Mighty name of your beloved Son please free her from wherever she's held captive. I believe in you God and nothing is impossible with you. I know we were told that our first journey was to look for the mother which didn't go well. But please Lord give me something to do in order to be helpful, guide me and help me ease this journey. We are

all fighting for our lives in order to reach my sister. I know you're going to carry us through to the very end. You'll turn our distress to endless joy. I believe in you, please help me Father... and so I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

I exhaled and stood up. I remained standing for a few minutes not knowing what to do. Then I overheard Dimpho speaking over the phone, this house is too quiet you can hear anything.

Only thing I overheard was Letty's name and it came ringing to my head. Maybe I might have found myself a solution sooner than I thought.

I walked out to my room and met with her in the dining room busy with her phone.

Me: Dimples

She smiled

Dimpho: Ausi Kolo

Me: How are you doing?

Dimpho: I'm doing fine and how are you?

Me: I'm good too sweetie

Dimpho: Uyazi fihla maan (You're hiding yourself)

I giggled

Me: Because I'm still getting used to staying here you know and... we could always get out and you show me more of this place.

She made a funny look with her eyes. I lift my hands.

Me: Ndiyathembisa (I promise) I won't interrupt with the moment again.

Dimpho: Ngithemba njalo (I hope so)

I crossed my fingers.

Me: Struue

Dimpho: Okay uyong'tshela iskhathi nini ofuna solule imilenze ngalo. (You'll tell me when you want us to stretch our legs.)

Me: Definitely

(Silence)

Me: Uhm Dimpho yaz ndicela uncedo. (I need help)

Dimpho: I'm listening

I chuckled weakly

Me: Hay yazi it's just my WhatsApp being expired so... I'm struggling it's even hard to buy myself data to download. Ngoku

nzok'cela undincede undithumelele nje ngo Shareit (I'm asking you to please help me by sending it on Shareit)

She giggled

Dimpho: Haa akukho nkinga (it's no problem). Here I was thinking it was something big.

Me: Tuu ke sana

Dimpho: Lemme just...

She punched on her phone for a few times then handed me her phone with a smile.

Me: Uhm thank you

Dimpho: Sow'dlile? (Have you eaten?)

Me: Only breakfast

She popped her eyes.

Dimpho: That was a long time. Oh my word Dad is gonna freak out that's not a way to treat guests.

I giggled

Me: It's fine wethu

Dimpho: No it's not! Kanti uMa ukuphi I thought she was around.

Me: Haven't seen her all day

Dimpho: Hay lemme go make something for us this is not on.

She got up and left. I was left giggling then quickly glanced on her phone in my hand.

I quickly went to her contacts and looked for Letty but I couldn't find her, I scrolled through more and more and my gut told me something about the "Bestie" contact cause I remember we got to the woman's house through her friend who could possibly be Letty.

So I took out my phone and quickly saved the number on my phone. Then quickly pretended to send WhatsApp when she walked in.

Dimpho: I just forgot my apron

Me: (fake laughs) Yah hey

I bit my lips and sighed in relief. Atleast I'm starting somewhere.

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MAVUYI

I slowly opened my eyes and instantly felt cold by the tile I slept on for the whole night. I wore only a strapped top, so imagine the tile came in contact with my flesh.

I closed my eyes and hiccuped in my silent cries.

Me: Lord please if you exist please help me out. I'm crying to you. You can't take what you've already given me, it would've been better if I had shown signs of ungratefulness. But I haven't.. I was so happy after a long time in my life. I've tossed and turned looking for Ncumo and now she's here. Please... It's getting too much now, save me from this evil woman. My family must be worried about me. Please, Amen.

I again felt drowsy and slowly closed my eyes. I suddenly felt something burning my eyelids I immediately opened my eyes, it was a sudden light that got in the room.

I looked around wondering where it came from? Cause this place is too dark.

I noticed there's a little hole above the roof, this places' ceiling is made out of timber. So the rays of the sun were coming through, just that this one was a little.

I moved my head so that I don't get burned, but that little circle of light moved to a certain spot where I noticed a piece of object on the floor.

I frowned taking a good look at it. It was a piece of broken ceramic. Where did it come from? I looked behind my chair. Ohhh okaaay! It must be when I was pushed down hard on the floor then the little piece broke from the chair.

I smiled.

Me: God is this you giving me a sign? Are you seriously giving me a sign. Wow!!

I beamed a little in excitement. I then moved myself a little closer to the ceramic and picked it with my mouth, keeping it inside me. It will be useful in many ways and as you all know I'm from the streets, it's about damn time I allow my streetiness to come out in play. But I have to be smart about this just like my olden days. At this point I don't care even if I have to kill someone but I have to get out of here.

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ASHANTI

He held my one leg up and we continued kissing as I unbuttoned his shirt and threw it off. I continued rubbing his chest up while he lift me up and placed me on top of the table getting between my legs.

"Babe" he murmured inbetween my lips with his deep voice vibrating.

Me: Mm?

We broke the kiss.

Mayihlome: This is risky

He whispered.

Me: That's what makes it more interesting right? Now come before I get dry up.

He giggled

Mayihlome: You're so naughty

Me: Come..

I pulled him and wrapped my legs around his waist then I kissed him with great starve and passion. He took off my dress and unhooked my bra. Then squeezed my butt cheeks and groaned.

Mayihlome: Damn you're sexy.

He kissed me again then went for my boobies, I tilt my head back enjoying the pleasure and gave him soft moans.

I played with my toes around his crotch and fondled with his ear then I pushed him off and got down from the counter tossing and pinning him against it.

Me: It's time I took charge..

He sexily trapped his lower lip with his teeth and I gripped on his jeans, taking them off. Followed by his briefs, he's rockhard manhood jerked around and I smiled, kneeling in front of him and gave him a Handjob looking directly in his eyes.

Mayihlome: Mmmhhhh.

He closed his eyes and held on the counter, then with his freehand he played with my hair.

I directed his dick inside my mouth. The pleasure hit him so hard that his knees instantly went wobbly almost losing his balance.

Mayihlome Ohwww yes Asha..

I began sucking him while massaging his balls softly. I went in deeper and deeper taking him all in and gagged coming out with spit. It moisturized his dick so I kept on giving him intense handjobs with his groans going loud.

I lowered my head and sucked his balls licking him all around and pulling them inside my mouth very careful not to bite him, while giving him a Handjob.

Mayihlome: Haaaahh! Ashanti... I'm goin'.. fall. Oh fuck..

I stopped and pulled a chair.

Me: Sit down.

He took a seat while I tied my braids up in a pony tail. I then took hold of his dick again and ran my tongue around his mushroom head, I thrust my tongue more on his urethral opening. He couldn't keep steady I wished to tie him up right now. He pre-cummed.

I licked him clean then I continued sucking him to dear life. Accompanied by my hands massaging his cock as I went in and out. I also moaned as I did the blow job, lol he spoke in tongues when I deep throated him.

He quickly pulled off and ejaculated. I went to reach for tissues so that he can wipe himself.

When I got back he sat flat on the floor, resting his head back on the seat.

Mayihlome: Sit on my face Hun, you deserve it. After what you did.

I chuckled and went to straddle myself on the chair giving him my full view of my cooch, his head was beneath me.

He placed his hand on my inner thighs giving me support to lean on him when I get tired. He started licking my pussy and wiggled his tongue around my clit. He gently smooched my clit then did the same with my vjay lips and began thrusting his tongue deeper in my hole, with a circular motion.

Me: Ohhhh Lord!!! Yes. Yes, aaah please don't stop. Whuuu yeesss.

I held tightly on the chair enjoying this as I moved myself, swirling on his face. It got uncontrollable till I cummed.

He then got up spanking my butt. He lift me up and placed me on the chair with both my knees. He made me bend.

Mayihlome: Tell me when it gets uncomfortable okay?

I nodded. He inserted his dick from behind me I felt my vagina walls stretching.

Me: Ohhhhh!

Mayihlome: I got you

He said softly with a husky tone. He buried himself inside me and moved a little, stroking me gently as he rubbed my boobs.

Mayihlome: You're enjoying?

Me: a-haaa..

He gave me nice slow thrusts and I helped him too by moving my butt around his dick and twerked on him. While giving him good moans.

Mayihlome: That's my girl, ohhh yeaah.

His pace increased and he humped me so hard. My moans erupted and that fuelled him more he pounded me senselessly till we both cummed.

I then made him sit down. I straddled myself on him and held his shoulders then I began riding him, increasing my pace. Giving him kisses and bounced hard on his dick like I'm on some jumping castle. He actually moaned like a cat.

He took my legs and placed them on his shoulders and made me lie down on his knees

like a wheelbarrow. This was our new style, he fucked the life out of me.

Then we took it upstairs in my room where when we got in he immediately pinned me against the wall, carrying me and gave me a mindblowing sex right there.

Out of all the guys I've had in history he's literally the best one who gives good sex. He's really talented, knows how to use his huge dick.

Me: Aahhh, yes Maaaayi.. Ohhh fuck, you can.... represent the whole of South Ahhhh-Africa.. in best sex givveeer!!

He giggled madly and fell down with me.

Me: Ouch!!

Mayihlome: Babe your dirty talks always drives me weak (giggles) you always say funny ish.

Me: I blame your dick it drives me insane.

Mayihlome: M-hm? M-hm?

He said tossing me underneath him then he sexed me on the floor too. I'm afraid my cookie will burn so bad after this crazy love-making cause we took no breaks inbetween.

Last rounds were taken in my room. Yes, we were in my place. I had to be very good in tricking him to come over and he fell for it.

I played with my braids while staring at his handsome self while in his sleep. He's really handsome shame. I had to take a few snaps then kissed his lips. And played with his nipples.

He groaned faintly and stretched his body before opening his eyes.

Mayihlome: You're awake?

Me: Yah

He lift his head to give me a kiss

Mayihlome: How long have you been awake?

Me: I hardly slept.

He sat up and smiled

Mayihlome: Why? After those long tiring rounds, no ways querida. You must be a machine.

I smiled weakly and shrugged

Me: Just that... I had to. I'm afraid of the last incidence to happen again.

He tangled my fingers in his.

Mayihlome: Last incidence?

I nod in shame

Me: You know..

Mayihlome: Ohhh. But why would you worry about that? It was a once off thing.

I shook my head

Me: No it's still recurring, embarassing as it is.. I think something is wrong with me.

Mayihlome: Have you gone for a check up maybe?

Me: No

He kept quiet

Me: What could be wrong with me?

He brushed my braids.

Mayihlome: You know maybe doctors could find something related to the womb, I don't know I have less knowledge of that. But only thing I know is... if maybe you were Xhosa. I'd say you need a ceremony done for you, one called Imbeleko then this whole thing would stop.

I sat up straight and folded my arms, this was interesting.

Me: Tell me more about this Mbeleko thing.

Mayihlome: Well it's when you are taken to your father's place so that this ceremony would be done for you over there, to be acknowledged by your ancestors...

I nodded

Mayihlome: Now in our culture we have a clan.. A clan is certain groups of descent that are brought together or made one by a perceived kinship.

Mayihlome: It is what you stand for as a representative of them, who are your ancestors. That's why you use your clan when addressing them as in appeasing them and they'll appear spiritually in numbers to protect you or maybe bless something you'll be asking for.... When you're proud and honoured of who you are and where come from, you recite all your clan names

which you learn as you grow or being taught by your family members.

I nodded

Me: Okay.

Mayihlome: With that being said whether your parents are married or not but the dominant clan you'll belong to, is your father's. That's why many of your rituals will need to be performed at your father's place. But most people are raised by single mother's so sometimes it is allowed for them to be addressed in their mother's clan since they were groomed at their maternal homes but the problem begins when rituals need to be performed. Many things could go wrong if it's not done at the father's place cause that's where their customary rights are.

Mayihlome: A clan is your pride it gives you dignity and respect when addressed by it. Mine is Tshawe and my mother belongs to the Mpondo Clan. I use Tshawe cause it's my dad's. With women we add "Ma or Mam" in front of it just like there's a "Wo" in front of Man. Example if you belonged in the Tshawe clan we'd address you as Mam'Tshawe and if you belonged koo Mpondo we'd address you as uMam'pondo.

I smiled widely

Me: Wow this culture thing is really interesting. Never heard of such.

He giggled while kissing my cheek

Mayihlome: It's good to learn.

Me: Now tell me something about animals. Like can they somehow be related to that or what? Since you mentioned that ancestors serve a purpose of protecting and blessing.

Mayihlome: Yes they do, they are very related. Some clans have non-human ancestors which we call Totems. Totems are specified into 3 kinds; first one would be by spiritual being - could be non-related to clans but since you have an ancestry calling you'll gain this spirit within self to guide you. Second kind would be because it's a sacred object. Then 3rdly it would be a symbol that serves as an emblem to a certain family, lineage, clan or tribe.

I nodded.

Mayihlome: Most common ones I can think of is a Snake koo Jola, Lion, Millipedes, Crocodiles, Bees and Ingwe - the leopard.

I shot my eyes wide as my heart paced. I blinked and closed them.

Me: Uhm uhm so... If you do not obey the ancestors what happens?

Mayihlome: You suffer severe consequences. You might lose everything and nothing might work out for you. You will be a problematic person and might get sick health wise... You might be unable to talk, walk or lose your eyesight even become deaf. Struggling to conceive would also be the consequences and lastly you might end up mentally disturbed.

I sprang out of bed.

Mayihlome: You okay?

Me: Yah yah I uh, appreciate every information you've shared with me. I think I need the bathroom.

I rushed to the bathroom. Everything makes complete sense now! Oh my God I have to meet Mavuyi asap maybe she'll be my easy way of escaping Laura. Even though I don't know what danger she is to me but the leopard is persistent and I wouldn't like to suffer the consequences of not obeying it.

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LAURA

I walked back to the secret location to go check on Mavuyi. I wasn't alone for sure. I came with my men.

We opened the door. I looked at her on the floor and smiled.

Me: Good day Mrs Vilakazi

She turned her head looking at me.

Me: Get her up

They went to get her sit up.

Me: Good! How are you? Today I'm in such a good mood.

She didn't say anything

Me: So what have you decided on? With me I've got a bag full of money. Could help you elope. I can also help you with passport cause I doubt someone like you even has one. And then this would be a done dusted deal, we both pretend like this has never happened. Dare try any dirt on me Mavuyi, I'll hunt you and kill you together with your family.

I moved back

Me: So do we have a deal? You'll stay away from Ashanti?

She shook her head. I chuckled in disbelief and closed my eyes.

Me: Excuse me??

She shook her head again

Me: I don't understand what that is? Why don't you speak.

Mavuyi: No

Me: No?

Mavuyi: No

Me: Are you sure?

She nodded

Me: Woman this is alot of money in here!!! Take it and fuck out of our lives. It's millions.

Mavuyi: No.

I scoffed bringing my fist closer to my lips. I clenched my teeth and turned to Dwayne and the other guy.

Me: Dwayne, I want you to kill this woman okay? Kill her dead. Don't just shoot her, make her suffer a slow painful death for being hella stubborn. Then bury her body like a female dog she is. The way I want her to suffer I want it to deeply afflict her soul even on the other side.. with her family in addition. Peace is what they should never get. Snap every picture for proof. Then this bag of 6 meters might belong to both of you. Don't disappoint me boys.

I took the bag and clicked my heels walking away.

I called my son.

Me: Sandro I'm impatient and done with this woman la estoy acabando (I'm ending her).

Sandro: Aah muy pronto? (so soon?)

Me: Yes so soon. It had to be done quicker than later before somebody starts sniffing. Got only one task left.

Sandro: But that's-

Me: We'll talk again, bye.

I hang up and walked to my car. I had to permanently remove this woman out of the picture.

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MOTLATSI

I parked the car next to my house. Today was a long day for me. I was about to climb off the car but my phone rang.

Seeing the caller, my heart beat fast. It was one of the man I work for he's in Singapore.

I picked the call as nervous as I was, clearing my throat.

Me: Jazzman

Him: Mo, why are you quiet?

Me: Uhm I... I.. uhm still gathering some stuffs around.

Him: Are my goods all ready? I've been waiting for shipment for ages!

Me: Yah yah they all ready

Him: Then what's the delay?

I cleared my throat

Me: Just that I'm short of two girls.

Usually when we ship his drugs they don't go alone but with young innocent girls. I'm in this business and it makes me who I am. Being a church woman is all a front. Fortunately I met a good man at the wrong place and he doesn't know who I really am. But I've fallen deeply inlove with him.

Him: You've had a whole two months!!! Of getting things ready on that side. Do you wanna see my bad side?

Me: No no, I'll find the two remaining girls and everything will be good. I am basically short of one cause I think, I've got the other one.

Him: Don't think just do!! Or else don't let me remind you Mo what I do to incompetent people.

Me: I'll do the job.

Him: I'm giving you a week, extend them to 60 girls.

I breathed in exclamation as I held my forehead. He dropped the call.

Me: Oh my God.

I got off the car and walked inside the house meeting my daughter inside.

Me: Dimpho

Dimpho: Mma, where were you?

Me: You know I spend most of my times in church.

Dimpho: Just wished you were here or atleast showed some care to our family member.

Me: Akerr o haufi (you're around) so I don't see the reason why I'm needed here. Plus she's not even my responsibility.

My daughter gave me a disapproving look. I swallowed, I shouldn't have said that.

Me: Uhm askies Nana I'm stressed lately you know I really didn't mean that.

She sat silently and shifted to her phone.

Me: Dimpho

Dimpho: Ho lokile Mma (It's fine)

I sighed and walked over to her and noticed a picture on the phone.

Me: Who's that?

Dimpho: Letty's Mom.

Me: What's wrong with her?

Dimpho: She's missing so we're spreading the alert on social media.

Me: Argh shame maan no wonder she's scarce.

She shrunk in her eyes

Dimpho: Mme hobaneng u utsoitse dinomoro tsa hae? (Why did you steal her numbers?)

I shrugged my shoulder while curving my lips.

Me: All for a good cause.

Dimpho: Without consent?

Me: Honey really now? I just want to know the friends you hang around.

Dimpho: I thought you had already done that in dinner.

Me: It should be more than that

Dimpho: Mme wa mo tshosa (you're scaring her).

Me: Is that what she's saying?

Dimpho: Eya! (Yes!)

I shrugged

Me: Well she should better get used to me. She'll feel grateful ever meeting me.

I left without hearing her respond and quickly texted Jezzman. I sent him Letty's picture.

Me: "Tell me isn't this girl worth it?"

Me: "She's 17 might not be a virgin but she doesn't look like someone who's had much experience. Like look at that amazing beauty."

Jezzman read the messages and typed instantly.

Jezzman: "Hmm! She's stunning 😊 who is she?"

Me: "A girl I can get she's very close. But now it won't be easy I need your help"

Jezzman: "All ears"

Me: "I need something to win her over. Tell your guys to help me find her mother she's missing. If I do she'll be all happy then I'll get her easily for you."

Jezzman: "Now you're asking for too much Mo hey"

Jezzman: "First time I'll be bending rules for you but this girl is all worth it. I'll send my guys, okay? And you'll work on it"

Me: "Thank you 😊. You won't regret it."

Jezzman: "Sure. You've got nice choice this is good quality."

I smiled alone. Now watch me receive all the pleasures of it in my cheque. This is gonna work out just fantastic.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 24

[WEEK LATER]

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LIMILE

I received a call from the P.I and answered.

Me: Got good news?

He sighed.

Ndosi: To be honest nah. I come as the best P.I but... I've tried everything I could and every resources out there. But unfortunately Luniko Solwandle doesn't exist.

I huffed rubbing my lips together in frustration.

Me: He doesn't exist at all?

Ndosi: No

I sighed

Me: That's a bummer. Can't we do something? Like I find this really odd.

Ndosi: How about you tell me more about him. Something you haven't told me before.

I started to think of something.

Me: His mother is my late aunt, Zimasa Solwandle. Zimasa was in a relationship with Qhamani Jezana, who is the man that ambushed my sister's graduation party. He was responsible for taking my brother since he was in denial that Luniko is not his son.

Ndosi: Daarsy! I think I've found something. Lemme quickly look into this Qhamani guy then I tell you my findings.

Me: Please do so Ta

Ndosi: We'll find your brother, trust me.

Me: I do

Ndosi: Okay sharp

Me: Sure

We hang up and I sat there drinking my juice in thoughts. Praying so hard that we find something cause it's been so many years. I believe we deserve some closure of knowing whether he's alive or not.

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LETTY

I took Mama's photo staring at it while tears ran down my face.

Me: Kanti ukuphi Mama? (Where are you Mommy?) Please come back. We can't manage without you.

I closed my eyes and wiped my cheeks. I heard someone shuffling and looked back.

Me: Baba

Dad: Ntombi yam (My daughter)

I stood up wiping my tears and sniffed.

Me: You're heading somewhere?

Dad: Yebo, ukuhlala no kwethembela kwama poyisa odwa ngeke kusi size ngalutho. Ngisayo hlangana nee nsizwa zam sokhangela uNyoko kude kubekho okuthize esik'tholayo. (Yes, relying only to the cops won't help us with anything. I'm meeting my men so that we can look for your Mom till we find something)

I nodded. He hugged me and brushed my back.

Dad: Sizom'thola ngane yam ungakhathazeki. Sobhekisisa kuze simthole. Uzobuya. (We'll find her don't worry. We'll look for her till we find her. She's coming back)

I nodded and held him tightly then broke it off after some time.

Me: Manje akukho enginga siza ngakho? (Is there anything I could help with?)

Dad: Cha ngane yam. Wena bhekisana nemi niningwane oyitholayo kulezinto zenu zama Social media. Ehee, kuko k'phela ongakwenza. Okunye unga khathazeki kuko mntanami. (No my child, only focus on the information you'll receive in the Social media. That's the only thing you should do. Don't worry about anything else my love)

Me: Okay

Dad: Okay. Mangibe yindlela ke (I should go)

Me: Uzofika ukudla kwakho seku ready. (You'll come back to your food all prepared)

Dad: Ngiyabonga, errr ngane yam. (Thank you... My child)

Me: Baba?

Dad: Ungakhohlwa ukukhuleka. Uyazi ukuthi uMa wakho ebekholwa kakhulu wu mthandazo. (Don't forget to pray. You know how your mother believed in prayer). I'll also make sure that I do the same.

Me: Yebo Baba

Dad: Yah awuthi ngihambe, usale kahle ke ngane yam. (Let me go, keep well my child)

Me: Okay Baba

He walked out. This week has been the most roughest week for us. Emotionally we were drained and the police made it worse for not giving us any leads. The house is not the same anymore, it's evident that a matriarch has gone missing and it's so hard to fill her shoes. Even though I'm trying because that's what all of us has to, as much as this kills us but each day we're trying to be strong for each other.

I took time to kneel and pray for her. Then after I got busy with my phone.

I received an inbox on messenger. I giggled lightly after viewing it.

Me: "Omg?"

I replied after receiving some funny GIF

AQ: "I'm glad you got to laugh after having a rough week."

Me: "Yah.."

AQ: "I wish you find your Mom"

Me: "Me too. Why do you care?"

AQ: "Because it don't cost anything"

Me: "I'm a stranger."

AQ: "It's because you like it that way"

Me: "I'm too stressed rn"

AQ: "I understand, I'll give you space if you want to. Just know that you're beautiful and the world deserves more of your smile. Your Mom will be found."

Me: "I hope so 😊... Your real name?"

AQ: "Aless, yours?"

Me: "Lethokuhle"

AQ: "You'll need to teach me how do pronounce that."

I giggled.

Me: "And the Q stands for?"

AQ: "Quiróz"

Me: "Where you from? 🇲🇽"

AQ: "Sinaloa, Mexico"

Me: "😬 Can I block you?"

AQ: "🇲🇽 Why?"

Me: "No I'm afraid of Mexicans, I can't I'm sorry."

I immediately blocked him and threw my phone away breathing heavily in anxiety then covered my face. Learning where his

from got me a lil frightened. I mean those people are well known for drug business, sex trade and many more bad things. I'm still young, still got a bright future, still dealing with Mommy's disappearance. I can't risk it.

I jumped startled by my phone ringing. My heart paced as I slowly tiptoed to check who called. Phew! Atleast it's a South African number but I didn't know the number.

I picked.

Me: He-Hello?

Caller: Hi, am I speaking to Letty?

It was a female voice

Me: Yah who's this?

Her: My name is Kolosa

Me: Kolosa?

Her: I uhm came at your house the other day with a lady and a man.

Me: Ohhh ohhh now I remember

Her: Yeah

Me: How can I help?

She cleared her throat

Her: Did your father mention to you why we were there?

Me: Yeah he did mention something about you looking for my Mom and you being the paternal family of my old sister.

Her: Yes yes true. Honey I am desperate I really need your help and it's a matter of urgency please!

I frowned

Me: What is it?

Her: As you know we're all in search of your sister. We need to get hold of her, if you know any useful info about her I beg you please at the bottom of my heart... to please share it with me.

(Silence)

Her: Please please I beg you, it's a matter of life and death.

I closed my eyes and exhaled.

Me: Okay. Her name is Ashanti Quintero, she lives in Pretoria, in Hazelwood you will have to search around more for her exact address cause I don't know any other thing about it.

She sighed in relief

Her: Okay okay thank you so much for this useful info. I don't even know how to repay you.

Me: It's okay.

She kept on thanking me and I giggled till we dropped the call. I then decided to keep myself busy in the house.

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ASHANTI

I called him again after he had rejected my call.

Mayihlome: Sure

Me: Is that how we answer a call now?

Mayihlome: What do you want?

Me: Mayi please don't do this

He was so cold. We've been fighting alot these couple of days.

Mayihlome: Ashanti if you've got nothing to say I'm dropping this call and I ain't ever talking to you again.

Me: So you're ending things? Is that what you're saying to me, huh. You no longer love me?

Mayihlome: Hell no you know how much I love you don't pull that card out on me.

Me: Then why are you reacting like this?

Mayihlome: How am I supposed to react huh? How! tell me. Should I laugh and be happy for you knowing that you'll leave me and go back to Mexico, huh?

I sighed

Mayihlome: How do I even know that you're coming back, huh? For all that I've invested Ashanti.. for you to not even once considering my feelings... Without hesitating you just simply your bags pack and go.

I could hear the pain his voice carried. And I blinked out tears.

Me: (breaky voice) You know this is for my brother honey. I told you he's getting worse I have to be there.

Mayihlome: Didn't you just say that your father is there? Infact you know what.. Just do whatever, I don't care anymore. Go!

He hang up.

Me: No Mayi?? Mayi, Mayi!!

I banged my phone against the table and burst out in a sob while covering my face. I'm losing him.

Mom: Bebita.. sweetheart are you alright?

Mommy rushed down the stairs. I shook my head and cried more. She walked to my side.

Mom: Ohh my baby I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.

She hugged me tight.

Me: He doesn't wanna understand Mamá. I'm afraid that I'm losing the man I love over this.

She squeezed me.

Mom: I really apologize that you had to go through this in a time like this. But you know.. life is unfair sometimes. There comes a time to choose between your family and someone you love (short laughs) I mean.. I also love South Africa so much but now I have to compromise and be there for Sandro.

I looked at her and she wiped my tears

Mom: It's just for a short period of time baby okay? You're not staying in Mexico forever, you know it's not made for you, you'll come back.

She lift my chin up and took a good look at me.

Mom: Y si realmente te ama, te esperará. (And if he really loves you, he'll wait for you). Regard this as your first test in this relationship. Observe if he will pass it or not.

She went on to squeeze my hand

Mom: One thing I have taught you is to be a strong girl Ashanti. Don't let anything break you not even a man. Whatever outcomes that come, know that you are still strong enough to

stand & face them. Yes, allow for vulnerability to take place but rise again my child okay? You rise again.

I smiled weakly

Me: Thank you Mom

Mom: It's nothing sweetheart

She kissed my forehead and got up.

Mom: Ahora has empacado tu ropa? (Now have you packed your clothes?)

Me: Me pondré en ello (I'll get on it)

Mom: Manos a la obra! (Get on it!)

We giggled and she pat my back

Mom: Big girls don't cry.

She left. I sighed and got up to go pack my things.

Guys I couldn't do it

I just couldn't do it. I wasn't brave enough to walk away from one people I regard as my family. When I thought about it and looked at my Mom, I felt sorry for her. All she ever did was to love me and worse my brother needs me more, he was getting worse. Seeing Mom in constant pain, knowing she needed someone to lean on, how was I gonna leave her at a bad time like that? That'd be so cruel of me honestly. I really apologize to

the leopard, maybe its mistaking to something else. I can't, tonight I'm leaving to Mexico.

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KOLOSA

Getting the information I needed I didn't hesitate. I called all my family along with Mhise at once. Without wasting time we drove straight to Pretoria, it took time but we finally arrived to the neighbourhood. We kept on asking for the Quintero residence and we were directed to another mansion.

Sihle drove us there and parked.

Mhise: This is it

Me: This is it.

I was so nervous and so was everyone in the car, especially Dad.

Mhise: So kuzokhabe kuphuma mna no Kolosa sikhabe sibuzisa lomzuzu neh? (Kolosa and I will get out so long and ask)

Them: Okay.

She looked at me.

Mhise: Masambe (Let's go)

We got out and walked to the gate. We saw a guard sitting there.

Mhise: Hello sir

Him: Hi

Mhise: Uhm we're looking around for the Quintero household

Him: This is it

Mhise: Oh so we're in the right place?

He nodded. She looked at me and we smiled.

Me: Uhm sir we're here looking for Ashanti. Is she maybe available and can you grant us access?

He frowned

Him: Unfortunately you have missed them.

Us: Missed them??

We asked out loudly

Him: Yah, Ashanti and her Mom have just left an hour ago going to the airport.

Mhise: Airport?

Him: They're flying to Mexico Ma'm

Me: No, no, no, no, noo!!

I whined while pacing around and placed my hands at the back of my head.

Mhise: Okay thank you sir. Kolie please calm down.

Me: No Limise! No!

Mhise: Kolie..

Me: I'm starting to believe that this is all a curse. The ancestors want to deliberately punish us. Didn't they bless our journey? Why everything that we try they turn it down?

Mhise: Kolie I know this is frustra-

Me: Ofcourse it is!!! It is damn frustrating and I'm sick and tired of it.

Sihle and my uncle came out.

Sihle: What's going on?

Me: Nooo!!!

I screamed hitting my fists while on the wall.

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ASHANTI

Mom was driving us to the airport. My mood wasn't at its best at the moment, I felt down-spirited and so Mom started switching on music in the car. To make me feel better I guess.

"You with sad eyes

Don't be discouraged

Oh I realize

It's hard to take courage

In a world full of people

You can lose sight of it all

And the darkness inside you

Can make you feel so small"

She looked at me and smiled...

Mom: "But I see your true colours, shining through

I see your true colours, and that's why I love you.

So don't be afraid, to let them show

Your true colours

True colours are beautiful

Like a rainbow"

She moved her head side to side. She again noticed I wasn't getting entertained. So she changed to our favourite Mexicana song titled "Celieto lindo".

We sang along hyping all up.

We were both laughing till the end of the song. Out of nowhere we saw the leopard jumping in front of the road and it threw itself in front of the car, crashing and pushing it over.

We both screamed our lungs out. Mom lost control of the car as it flew besides the road and tossed upside down.

I got hurt badly. I felt something compressing my leg. My vision was deteriorated. I felt something warm coming out of my legs. I also felt blood running down to my face, my mouth was full of blood. I could tell I've lost a few teeth.

Me: Ma.. Mamá

Her body was still tossed upside down. She was lying lifeless there with her face covered by profuse blood. I began crying and looked out of the broken windows. The leopard stared at me as it groaned and walked away.

Me: (crying) Mamà!!

I was in great pain couldn't even move. I patted myself around and reached for my phone. I dialed Mayi while panting.

Me: Pick up please!!!

It rang at first but went to voicemail since it was unanswered. I tried again then it went straight to voicemail.

Me: Ma..a..yi please it's me, I'm hurt. Please help me. I'm.. d-dyin..

My grip loosened and my head fell down. I took my last breath and passed out.

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KOLOSA

Uncle: We have no choice. We have to leave everything t-

Me: Ahhhh!!!

I screamed as I bent down holding my abdomen. Everyone got alarmed and ran towards me.

Mhise: Kolie??

Uncle: Mtshana uright?

Me: Ahhhh!! Ahhhhh!!!

I continued screaming as I winced holding my abdomen. I didn't know where this sharp pain came from.

I squirmed till I fell down on my knees.

Mhise: Kolosa!

Me: (crying) It hurts Tamkhulu!!! It hurts!!! Awww...

Uncle: Sihle get her up quickly we need to rush her to the hospital

Dad: Yintoni ngoku? (What's going on?)

He asked peeking out of the window. I don't know what happened after but I immediately collapsed on the ground and lost my conscious.

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MAVUYI

I was supposed to be killed a week ago. But apparently Madame Quintero has a son who's in communication with one of these men. He kept on begging Dwayne to not act out soon.

But the other guy was impatient because they were promised 6 million.

I've learnt that the other man is called Perez.

Perez: Fuck this! We're doing it Dwayne whether you like it or not.

Dwayne: Perez

Perez: Shut up!!! Sandro ain't paying us shit. We're not gonna miss out on some cash because of that boy.

I started crying

Me: Please I beg you, please don't do this. Don't hurt me I've got a family, I'm a mother and a wife. I've never wronged Laura. All I wanted was my child.

Dwayne: Perez please be human and feel for her.

Perez: What will those feelings do for me huh? Fuck them. I've been way to patient but now, we're doing this or I'll tell the boss lady.

He grabbed me roughly off the chair and I screamed.

Dwayne: Per-

Perez: Man up Dwayne! We're finishing what we've started. Cut those ropes.

He stood still looking at me in pity

Perez: Cut them!

He cut the ropes on my legs and the guy pulled me out as I continued crying.

Me: Please!

He took out his gun and placed it on my head

Perez: Shut up woman or I'll shut you with a bullet. Come.

He dragged me and we went outside to a field. Oh my God what are they gonna do to me? And I wouldn't receive any help at a place like this, it's dispersed.

Perez: Dig her grave.

Dwayne looked at me. Perez clapped his hands to snap him out.

Perez: We don't have all time! Here.

He threw a sack at him. It had shovels and many other things inside. He threw another container.

Perez: Oooh these are gonna feast on you.

I screamed loudly and he instantly punched me on my face, I fell down.

Perez: don't be a nuisance.

He placed the container of scorpions not far from me. Dwayne continued digging and I remained crying.

Perez: What a nice skin to feast on. Shouldn't we help ourselves first Dwayne?

Dwayne: No that's not going to happen

Perez: Just once?

Dwayne: NO!!

Perez lift his hands high for surrender. I secretly wiggled my chest so that the broken ceramic may fall off. I had placed it inside my boobs.

I tried that attempt again and almost got caught. Then I stopped.

Perez: Need help?

I shook my head. I looked besides me and there it was. I picked it in my hand and tried cutting the rope behind me.

An hour later my grave was ready for me.

Perez: You, get up.

She picked me up by grabbing my top that it tore.

Perez: See that? It's for you.

I hyper-ventilated seeing the hole and kicked the dust on Dwayne's direction, it got in his eyes he groaned and took a step falling back in the same grave he dug.

Perez: You bitch!!!!

I made a run for it cause my legs were free. He quickly caught up with me while holding my head and pushed me down.

He kicked and kicked my tummy, I rolled on the floor then he got on top of me, taking out a knife and cut my arm deep.

Me: (Groaning) Ahhh!!

I shook myself and dung my teeth deep on his neck that he bled. He fell down.

Perez: Shiit..

I crawled back in speed but he came back and pulled my leg. My legs are long so it was easy kicking and karating him all on his face.

I crawled again. I couldn't stand up cause I was tied, I felt him grabbing my head and hit it against the ground.

His knife fell off but he didn't see it. I pretended to stop being a fighter cause I won't win this unless I trick him.

Me: Okay! Okay! You win. Do whatever you wanna do with me.

I said inbetween my pants and opened my legs wider revealing my undies. He got distracted looking by the view.

I slowly moved my fingers and got hold of the knife, hiding it behind me. I then laid down.

Me: Do it. I won't fight you

Perez: Really?

I swallowed and nodded. He smiled and unbuckled his belt. He walked towards me while unzipping his pants.

Cautiously I continued cutting the rope off me. He got on top of me playing with my boobs as I closed my eyes and bit my lip.

He kissed me in a most disgusting and clumsy way. I quickly sawed the rope off me like what the hell!!!!? He licked my boobies I coughed & cried at the same time feeling all irked up.

He pulled my undies. I repositioned myself, I was now finally free.

Me: Peri

Perez: Hm?

Me: Kiss me one more time

He smiled and leaned forward I swiftly shoved the knife in his eye.

Perez: HAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

He screamed in agony and I quickly got up and ran for my life while I held my torn top together, covering my boobs.

I got lost on the bushes and kept looking for a way out or some road.

Me: Heeelp!! Somebody please help!!

A gunshot got fired and it crippled my leg. I fell down crying, he shot my leg.

He came closer covering his eye that oozed some blood over his hand

Perez: I'll be the last man standing.

He pointed the gun at me. I got defeated as I looked up the sky with tears falling.

Me: I accept my fate Lord if it's in your will then it is well.
Atleast I'll die a fighter.

The gun fired I squeezed my eyes shut. But strange thing I didn't feel any pain except for my leg. I patted myself around.

Me: Wha.. What?

I sat up. I saw the gun wound in Perez's forehead then he collapsed down. I jumped up then behind me I saw an unfamiliar lady holding a gun.

Her: Come let's go Ma'm

Me: I.. I.. How?

Her: My name is Mo please, let's go. Looks like you need the hospital.

Me: My... My leg.

Her: Oh schucks! Ayt lemme help you.

She took my arm and placed it over her shoulders. She helped me up and I limbed to her car. She took her jacket, cutted the sleeve and tied it on my leg to prevent more bleeding. She then helped me to wear it.

She smiled

Her: It's okay, you're safe now

Me: Thank you

Her: Pleasure is all mine.

She got infront and drove us straight to the hospital. God I'll never doubt your Power again.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 25

LIMILE

I sat down so long and made my order as I waited in the restaurant. I kept on checking my wristwatch, it was really late and I needed to get back home.

A man in a leather jacket with a hat, made his way through, I'm guessing he's the person I'm looking for. He was strongly built and looked way more like Lil Cool J.

I lift my finger up at him.

He made his way and we exchanged greetings.

Him: Limile right?

Me: Yeah

Him: The man I'm looking for. Nice meeting you for the very first time.

Me: Nice to meeting you too.

We sat down and he ordered juice while mine came through.

Me: So tell me about your findings

He huffed.

Ndosi: There's no easy way to say this but, your brother is alive.

I closed my eyes and hands together and thanked God. Oh!
After so many years. I am really happy and grateful.

Ndosi: But... everything about him has changed.

That short-lived my happiness as I furrowed my eyebrows in confusion.

Ndosi: He changed his whole identity, faking to be someone else whilst living in a different country. Discoveries on Qhamani is that.. it's what he did since he didn't want the son to be easily traced.

Me: That man is insane.

Ndosi: So therefore your brother resides in Singapore known as Scavenge L. Jezzman.

Me: What!?

He handed me the envelope.

Ndosi: It has all the evidence you need. Your brother is not a moral man, he runs a big syndicate of drug dealings, kidnapping, trafficking young girls and manslaughter.

Me: Dear Lord..

Ndosi: Around that region he's well known for his bad crooked deeds and everyone fears him. He's the big fish and literally

owns the place. Your brother is a dangerous man and it seems like he's very comfortable with the life he's living, being introduced by the man that raised him, Qhamani Jezana.

I breathed heavily while placing my hand over my mouth. This was really overwhelming. Looking at the pictures, he's filled with multiple inks on him. This was my first time seeing him and he does look like my Dad alot.

Ndosi: So are you satisfied with what you got?

I made a weak nod. He placed his hand on my shoulder.

Ndosi: Be strong man I wish you best of luck. If you need anything from me don't hesitate to call.

Me: Sure

He got up and left. I sighed brushing my head together as I was shaking. I didn't know how to take this in. Didn't know whether to call my parents or my sister. I decided to call Mhise but she was unavailable.

I got up and left the restaurant this was too heavy for me.

I drove back home thinking about this. While driving I squinted my eyes looking closely seeing what looked like a Jeep SUV

crashed and tossed upside down at the side of the road. It was situated amidst the bushy trees, no one could've easily seen it.

I quickly pulled over and walked towards the car. I noticed there were people who were still inside the car unattended. I began calling the ambulance for help. At the moment I didn't care whether the scene was gruesome or not but I felt drawn to the car and wanted to look over it in curiosity.

I bent and looked through.

Me: Ashanti? Ashanti!!!?

The ambulance arrived and they were taken to the hospital. I followed after them.

They were rushed in the ICU.

Me: Doc? Doc? Will they be okay?

Doc: Just allow us do our job sir. Sit down and wait for the updates.

I sat down outside the ward, taking off the purple wristband playing with it in my hands as I laid my head on the wall.

Waiting for the updates. Tonight seems like a bad evening.

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MAYIHLOME

I drank my last beer settling my bill on the table and left the bar. I was quite sloshed I won't lie and what made it worse is that I will be driving. But it wasn't a far distance so I took the risk and got back home safely.

Surprisingly the lights were still on. I wiped my face and got inside while staggering.

Me: Ahw! Ouledi.

Mom: Ndanditheni kuwe ngondibiza ngalonto? (What did I say to you for calling me that?)

I chuckled while placing my hands together.

Me: Askies askies di Mamzo

I kissed her then she pushed me off. I fell on the couch.

Mom: Unxilile (You're drunk)

Me: Aww Ma that's rude

Mom: Rude phi?

Me: I had just a few drinks so I'm tipsy

Mom: Ohh osogqiba waqhuba imoto wena unxile unjalo (then after you drove in a drunk state)

Me: Eish Ma, Ma maani uyandi rasela. Andithi ndikhona ngoku ndisaphelele. (You're making a fuss. Like I'm here now in full and unharmed)

She snickered shaking her head

Me: That should make you happy andisengo mntana (I'm no longer a child) I also deserve a breath of fresh air.

Mom: Andik'phikisi nganto nam qha ndinqanda okok'qhuba unxilile. (I'm not disputing anything but I'm just reprimanding you for drinking and driving)

I lift my hands up

Me: Hayike asobe iphinde yenzeke. (It won't happen again.)

Mom: Good let's hope so

Me: Did you cook?

Mom: Heee noba ucimba ndingu mfazi wakho. Uphi uAshanti? (You think I'm your wife? Where's Ashanti?)

My mood instantly got turned off.

Me: Ohh lowo (that one), she decided to leave me.

Mom: Leave you?

I nodded.

Me: She's going back to Mexico. I don't think she ever loved me as deep as I thought.

Mom: Hay! Hay! Hay!

Mom exclaimed while waving her hands down.

Me: What?

Mom: Ashanti can't go to Mexico

Me: Well she's probably way past S.A right now.

Mom: Hay hay wena Mayihlome akakwazi tuu. Uyayazi ukuba uMamakhe ulahlekile? (No no Mayihlome she can't. Does she know her Mom is missing?)

Me: What Mom are you talking about?

Mom: uVuyelwa Mayihlome! Shasha isn't supposed to go back there

Advertisement

she's supposed to be here with us. Did you even tell her about Mavuyi's disappearance.

I was losing her right now.

Me: Woah woah which Vuyelwa are we talking about?

Mom: Mavuyi who else?

Me: Did you just say she's Ashanti's Mom??

Mom: Hehake andiso stubete kemna andizo phinda-phinda into enye. Kha fownele wethu Shasha umazise ngalento please. (I'm not gonna repeat the same thing I'm not mad. Just call Ashanti and let her know about this)

This was unbelievable. I became sober instantly as I wiped my face.

Me: Okay okay okay

I took out my phone and switched it on. I saw her missed calls flooding in followed by her messages. I listened to her voice message.

She was panting like she was in pain.

Ashanti: "Ma..a..yi please it's me, I'm hurt. Please help me. I'm d-dyin.."

The call got cut. I sprang up.

Me: Ashanti! Asha- Mama I think she's in trouble.

Mom: It sounded like it ohh Thixo onefefe.

Me: Mom we gotta go.

Mom: Siyaphi? (Where are we going?)

Me: To look for her!! Mom please.

Mom: Okay okay but you can't drive like that.

Me: Umqhelo umkile ngoku masambe Mama! (I'm no longer drunk let's go Mom)

Mom: Let me quickly fetch my jacket.

She ran around. I breathed out heavily in panick mode while looking for my keys and we quickly rushed out. I don't know where I'm gonna start but I have to find her. Oh Lord why did I act up on her?

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MHISE (LIMISE)

Kolosa was already taken in. We were waiting for updates while sitting on the bench.

Mtyhileli: Oh Nkosi yhini umntanam

Zolisa: Kuzoba right Bafo (It's going to be okay brother)

Sihle: Kuk'hlala ethembeni qha Tatomncinci. (Let's stay hopeful Uncle)

Me: Yeah I agree with him Tata, we should all stay hopeful and positive. Kolosa is going to be fine.

Mtyhileli: (whining) Kodwa ingaba isono sam sikhulu elohlobo into yoba abaphantsi bando hlwayise ngelihlobo. (Is my sin that great for my ancestors to punish me this way?)

I exhaled.

Me: Tata you're not losing Kolosa, she's coming back trust me when I say so okay? Let's just try to stay calm and strong for her sake. She needs us we can't be weak at a time like this.

He sighed.

Mtyhileli: Okay

We sat silently. This was really worrying me. The ancestors haven't shown me anything about this and it hurts me that everytime we find a lead it tends to not work out.

We saw a woman being pushed right at our passage with a wheelchair. Sihle jumped up after the patient had passed us and all our eyes were fixed on him.

Sihle: Motlatsi??

Lady: Baby

A certain lady I'm assuming is his wife ran to hug him.

Her: What are you doing here?

Sihle: I'm here for my cousin sister she collapsed. Wena why are you here?

Her: Ke thusitse mosadi ea ileng a thunngoa. (I helped a woman who got shot)

Sihle: Na wamo tseba? (Do you know her?)

She shook her head. I glanced at Kolosa's father who kept his gaze and finger pointed at the direction of where the wheelchair was wheeled.

Mtyhileli: That lady looked like someone I know

Zolisa: Looked like who?

Mtyhileli: Like uVuvu

Zolisa: Intoni? Uqinisekile? (What? Are you sure?)

He nodded

Mtyhileli: Yes I'm sure

Me: Who is Vuvu?

Motlatsi: Dumelang dumelang

She interrupted with a greet. All of them responded except for me.

Motlatsi: Madala when you say Vuvu you mean as in Vuyelwa?

Mtyhileli: Ewe mntanam

Motlatsi: Ee ke yena ke mo thusitseng (Yes it's her, I helped her)

I glared at the woman I couldn't get my eyes off her. There's something unsettling about her.

Mtyhileli: Vuyelwa is my daughter's moth-

Me: (groans loudly) Iyheeeey!!! Heeeey!!! Iyhoooh!!!

Aisssssh!!!

I sneezed uncontrollably and continued groaning with a much deeper voice still staring directly at the lady. When I came in contact with her I felt like grabbing her and smashing her against the wall for her vile acts and heartless self. The elders' spirit took over within me and out of nowhere I was overwhelmed by great anger in an extent of wanting to get physical with her.

The family was shook by my actions cause I attracted many eyes with the noise I made. I trembled so bad with my legs forcefully pushing and moving me towards her.

She became shook and ran behind her husband.

Motlatsi: Is this a healer??

She asked pointing at me

Sihle: Mo no don't do that

Motlatsi: What did I say to you about healers? I said let's not associate ourselves with them!!! See now if this is not a demon. She needs an Exorcism he.ee, ha kena ho emela sena (no, I'm not gonna stand for this)

She ran away after that. Sihle looked at us and excused himself running after her. I held on my skirt tightly for control and also rushed to the bathroom to splash myself with water to calm down. The spirit will settle down once I down a gin but how will I get it? being here. It's been a while since this side of mine shows up, it's a very dangerous ancestor of mine.

Sihle's wife is lingered by many souls. Being face to face with her I saw many innocent souls following her who are in a very terrible state. Some had tears, some had blood, some... All I ever wanted when seeing her was to get her in my hands and beat her real hard. I just pray I don't come across her again cause next time I won't be able to control myself like I did today. Oh sweet Sihle, I feel sorry for you what have you got yourself into. She even knows she's a bad person that's why she doesn't want any sangomas she's scared of exposure. Pity I didn't dress up in my attire that's what confused her cause she would've played very far.

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MAVUYI

I just had the bullet removed in my leg and they've stitched me up. I'll be now using crutches atleast pheew! I am so relieved because I was stressed thinking I'll not be able to walk again or maybe I might use a wheelchair. I was gonna die yhuu I'm a very handful woman... sitting around and just lazing wasn't gonna work out for me. Hayi shame I thank God atleast I'll use crutches so that I won't burden anyone.

I asked the nurse to borrow me her phone. I needed to call my husband, shame it's been a week they must really be worried about me.

The phone rang.

Bheki: Hello

I smiled with tears in my eyes. How I missed hearing that heart-warming voice of his, for a whole week! This has been torture.

Bheki: Hello?

Me: Tata

It went silent.

Bheki: (soft tone) Am I hearing right?

I nodded while giggling.

Bheki: Ingabe ngikhuluma ne Ndlovukazi yam? (Am I really speaking to my Queen?)

Me: Ewe Tata it's your Queen.

Bheki: Awwh asbonge uSmakade! Asbonge uMvelinqangi!
Asbonge uMnini wento zonke!! (Thanking God)

I giggled while wiping my tears. I was really happy to hear him praise like that, I could tell they've been through alot and this was a relief for him.

Me: Masibulele (Let's be grateful)

Bheki: Aww Nkosikazi kodwa ukuphi? Ngendlela engikhathazeke ngayo ngize nga ncipha nok'ncipha sthandwa sam. (My love where are you? The way I was so stresseded I even lost weight)

Me: Ohh Baba yhini. Look I'll get to explain everything to you when I get back home. For now I borrowed a phone to tell you that I'm in a hospital.

Bheki: eSbhedlela?? (Hospital??)

His voice screamed all sorts of frightness and shock.

Me: Ewe kodwa I'm fine you don't have to worry. Wena please be here to fetch me ngomso ekseni (tomorrow morning).

Bheki: Which hospital?

Me: Jacaranda

Bheki: Use Pitoli? (You're in Pretoria?)

Me: Yes

(Silence)

Bheki: Lento ihlanganeze ne ndodakazi yakho? (Is this linked with your daughter?)

I sighed

Me: Like I said we'll talk more of it when I get home.

uMongikazi sefuna ifown yakhe ngoku (The nurse wants her phone). Please greet my angel for me.

Bheki: Ngizok'khonzela (I'll greet for you)

I smiled

Me: I love you

Bheki: Ngik'thanda impela nam MaThangana. (I love you too)

I smiled endlessly till we dropped the call. I gave the nurse the phone back and thanked her.

I laid my head down to rest.

"Vuvu" I quickly opened my eyes and sat up. There's only one person who used to call me that. I looked at the door and my heart beat fast.

Me: Mtyhileli?

He was on the doorway but he's now on a wheelchair. I am way beyond surprised seeing him here.

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ASHANTI

I tossed and tossed around the bed I wasn't getting any peace. I was feeling all pain and like I was burning up. I sat up dripping with sweat.

Then I noticed footprints all around the floor but my guardian leopard was nowhere in sight. I took time staring at the footprints and within that moment something overcame me, it got in and took full control of me.

I took off the oxygen mask and got off the bed standing on my own feet. I was surprised seeing myself able to stand on my feet because my legs were compressed in a way that I thought I'll never be able to walk again. But this time I didn't feel any pain.

I took off the drips. Then I stretched and reflexed my body causing audible skeletal cracks on my body.

I stepped on the footprints with my bare feet and followed right after its paths. I got out of my ward. There were two routes where one headed, to a guy who was sleeping on the bench.. I didn't even know him, he was light-skinned. Then the other pointed straight out of the passage.

I turned my head back to the guy taking my time introspecting him. I felt something moving inside my heart. I walked closely to him and took hold of his hand. He was in a deep sleep.

I took off the purple wristband on him and wore it. I smiled staring at it.

Me: I Am Amazing.

I placed his hand back to his lap and looked at the footprints again. I followed them all the way out to the hospital till I felt a strong blow of wind. It was at night time and it was very dark.

I glanced down. Amazingly the footprints still appeared but now with a glittering white colour on the ground as if they were stars. I flashed a smile and began following them.

For sure they'll lead me to my destination.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 26

ASHANTI

I walked and walked till I stopped at some mansion. That's where my path ended and from there I didn't see any other footprints.

I stood at the gate and the guard came to open for me.

Him: Miss Quintero how did you.. where is your mother?

I looked at him puzzled

Me: I don't know my mother please open for me.

He didn't say anything further. I got inside the house and admired it.

What a big house it is, I don't know why I was leaded here. I'm not even familiar with it.

I walked upstairs touring it around. When I got done I looked for a bathroom and first went to sink myself deep inside the bathtub.

An hour later I got out and dressed into a long dress.

Then sat infront of the mirror, nursing my deep wounds then after loosened my braids and began cutting them all off. I also cut my natural to a short hair.

I smiled looking at myself in the mirror. I reached for a headwrap and switched off the lights then got into bed and slept.

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MAVUYI

Me: Mtyhileli?

Tears came flowing down as events of that day came playing just by looking at him.

Mtyhileli: Vuvu

He wheeled himself closer

Me: Ufuna ntoni apha? (What do you want?) How did you even find me?

Mtyhileli: I've been looking for you

Me: Looking for me uzondithini? (to do what?)

He sighed. I shook my head.

Me: After what you done? Why would you look for me Mtyhileli mmh, tell me why.

Mtyhileli: Vuvu-

Me: Ungathi Vuvu!! Don't you dare call me by that andithi you said you don't know me. You don't recognize me, why is it that you're here?

He ashamedly covered his face

Me: Mtyhileli I'm talking to you better answer me back.

Mtyhileli: (cries silently) I'm sorry, I'm so sorry Vuyelwa.

I giggled loudly in disbelief.

Me: Ungak'linge ndoda, ungak'linge sana undenzele lonto leyo uzondi fundekela apha ngento eya yenzwa nguwe. (Don't you dare come crying to me for something you did)

He sniffed and I noticed how red his eyes were.

Mtyhileli: Ndak'cela Vuyelwa ndak'cela ngentliziyo yam yonke. Ndidiniwe, ndoyisakele ziz'betho zabantu basekhaya. Ndijonge ndinjani? Ndiboqokile andiseso ndim ndicula u "in my time" zizenzo zam. Ndiya ekufeni ukusukela apha Vuvu, cela ubeno velo please. (Please Vuyelwa I beg you with my whole heart please. I'm tired, I'm exhausted of being persecuted by my ancestors. Look at me, I'm worn out singing "in my time" for all the wrongdoings I had done. I'm heading to death from here on please Vuvu have mercy)

I scoffed while folding my arms.

Me: Khangе ungayazi ba you reap what you sow. I won't lie I am so satisfied to see how life is roughing you up right now.. it's clear that my cries didn't land on deaf ears.

He took a deep breath.

Mtyhileli: Please I know I was wrong for what I did and I regret it everyday in my life. I shouldn't have denied you and my baby when you needed me. I paid and I'm still paying for the price. Many things are going bad Vuyelwa an-

Me: Yima, undifunani kanye kanye? (Wait, what exactly do you want from me?)

He kept quiet. I rose my eyebrows at him still questioning him.

Me: Hmm?

Mtyhileli: I need your forgiveness and for us to find our daughter.

I chuckled lightly

Me: Daughter? Do we have a daughter thina kanene?

Mtyhileli: Please torho Vuyelwa ndicela singalwi ngalento kubalulekile ukuba simenzele amasiko akokwabo lomntwana (Please let's not fight about this. It's important that we make a ceremony for her)

I breathed and thought about it.

Me: For the sake of Ncumo I'm forgiving you.

Mtyhileli: Ohh!! Ndiyabulela kakhulu. Enkosi Mam'Kрила. (Thank you so much)

He was beaming. I lift my hand in front of him.

Me: Hold your horses. I am still very angry at you Mtyhileli and I'll never forget what you did. The pain you've caused, left me with bad scars I couldn't get over. Ndilele kulendawo nje (Being here) it's because I had fought hard for my daughter almost losing my life. Being in the streets Mtyhileli because of you!! Ndi ndzima (while pregnant).. I had to make a choice most difficult choice a mother could make, giving away my child.

By now I was crying this was still hurting me. I shook my head.

Me: Ndaphulukana nomntana wam for iminyaka ey'29 Mtyhileli ngenxa yakho. (I separated with my child for 29 years because of you)

I wiped my face.

Me: Soze ndiyilibale lonto (I won't forget that). But I'm doing this for her sake. I want her to know her roots and have her rituals done.

He took a moment to digest in all those words. He made a nod.

Mtyhileli: Silapha nje sizele uzoqiniseka ukuba yonke into ihamba ngendlela. Ukuba nyani usixolele then singa qhubeke

phambili. (We're here to make sure that everything goes accordingly. If you forgive us then we can carry on)

I nodded

Me: You will first have to meet with her

He huffs.

Mtyhileli: Eish ingathi kuyoba nzima. (That will be difficult)

Me: Why?

Mtyhileli: Seems like she's in Mexico bikhe sayo mkhangela (we went looking for her)

I abruptly sat up

Me: What?? Ashanti can't be doing that no..

Mtyhileli: Andaz sokwenza njani (I really don't know how we're going to go on with this)

I sighed while shaking my head.

Me: M.hm Ashanti can't leave while I've just met her. It might be that witch yazi!

Mtyhileli: Calm down

Me: Ha.a maan nx!

I was really pissed. I saw Zolisa walking in

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he looked more better than his brother we exchanged greetings. It hurt me knowing that Ashanti left even though we agreed on spending some time together and bond.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

It took me a good while to actually calm down. I left the bathroom and went to the cafeteria then went back to the Malahle family.

I saw Sihle seated alone. I collected myself first before making my way to him.

Me: Hey

He looked at me

Sihle: Hi

Me: Where's the rest of the family?

Sihle: They went to check on the woman Tamnci was talking about.

Me: Oh the Vuyelwa woman?

Sihle: Yes. While I wait for Kolosa's updates.

Me: Ohh..

I sat next to him.

Me: Coffee?

Sihle: Enkosi

He took it and I placed the other two remaining ones next to me.

Me: Bhuti about what happened earlier, I'm-

Sihle: Unga xolisi (Don't apologize)

He cut my sentence.

Me: I didn't mean to make things awkward and attack your wife

Sihle: It's fine Gogo maan. My wife is like that she's...

He clenched his jaws

Sihle: Just don't mind her. She can be offending sometimes but just don't mind her.

Me: Oh, okay

I felt like telling him something about her but it wasn't my place.

I looked at my wristwatch.

Me: Kuba late

Sihle: You wanna go home?

Me: Hayi okwangoku. Siluqale kunye oluhambo kwaye solugqiba kunye. (Not now. We started this together and we'll finish it together)

He smiled

Sihle: Thank you

Me: I'd be really happy if it turns out that the woman is the one we're looking for. Then the ancestors would've made our journey much easy

Sihle: Ewe but the problem will be with the daughter that left to overseas.

I sighed.

Me: Eish kubekho naleyo (Then there's that)

Sihle: Yah

Me: But something will come up. She won't make it to Mexico your ancestors are against her flying abroad. They will make a way of bringing her back then we find her.

Sihle: Kungaba bheterere njalo (That'd be better)

Me: Ewe.

I switched on my phone and stood up.

Me: Uhm I'll be back just give me a moment.

Sihle: Okay.

I walked and stood at a different passage. I stopped for a moment seeing someone that looked like my brother. I shrunk my eyes.

Me: Lime?

I rushed to his side, he seemed asleep.

Me: Hayibo! (shaking him) Lime, Lime.

"Ashanti!"

He blurted as he jumped off breathing heavily. He looked around unaware of his surroundings.

Me: Limile

I held him together by his shoulders

Me: Limile Mhlahlo!

He got back to his senses.

Limile: Wele, where's Ashanti?

Me: Who's Ashanti?

Limile: Another lady I helped she was in an accident. I was.. was still waiting for the updates.

I stared at him I've never seen him this worried about someone before. My presence didn't even matter at this instant.

Me: What relation do you have with her?

Limile: Huh?

Me: Your relation with her?

Limile: She's a colleague

Me: Oh?

Something crossed my mind.

Me: Woah woah what did you say her name was again?

Limile: Ashanti

Me: ...Quintero??

He quickly glanced at me

Limile: Yeah how did you know?

Me: Woah woah woah

I laughed and smiled while adding this sum.

Me: So it's Kolie, Vuvu & Ashanti all in the same hospital, okay I see. I now see.

Limile: Wele what are you on about?

Me: Just take me inside her ward

Limile: Ndisa lindile (I'm still waiting) she's in the ICU.

Me: Masambe (Let's go)

Limile: Mhise...

Me: Sambee!

I pulled him by his arm. But he stood still before we could go in. He retracted his arm from my hold and looked at his wrists.

Me: And then?

Limile: My band is missing

Me: That's normal

Limile: No bendiy'nxibile ngoku bendilapha. (I wore it when I came here)

Me: We'll buy another one

Limile: Something wrong happened. To Ashanti ofcourse.

Me: What? Hay hay Lime ungak'linge usinyebelela, yiza. (No no Lime don't wish on that, come)

I pulled him and we pushed through inside the ward. When we got in we were welcomed by an empty bed.

Limile: What did I say to you? What did I say? I knew it!
Something's wrong.

Me: Wait woah let's calm down. Maybe she's moved in another ward.

Limile: I can feel it Mhise I don't know how but she's gone.
She's missing.

I shut my eyes while holding my head.

Me: No no no wele this can't happen. Not when we're this close.

He cupped his face and sank down

Me: Hayini maan bantu abakhulu kanti niyenza njani dahn.
Tjoo!

I sat next to my brother, everytime when we're close something has to slip out of our hands. I'm so pushing hard to not be defeated right now cause I'm the helper I can't reach to that point. I'm their hope above everything.

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MAYIHLOME

I barged inside while pacing straight to the ward with my mother running after me.

Me: Where is it? Where's the damn ward!!!

Mom: Hlohlo calm down please son. Usenzela izipili (You're causing a scene)

Me: Scene for who? This is my girlfriend we're talking about okay. I don't care! I have to see her.

Mom: Mayihlome

Me: Ma there's a possibility that she's in a critical condition. I just have to see her and at least apologize before...

I gulped and turned around continuing with my walk.

Mom: Kodwa kuthwe use ICU masilinde. (But they said she's in ICU we should wait)

Me: I'm not gonna wait Mama it's fine you can wait wena cause vele she didn't matter to you. Just let me be.

I left her behind. I looked around and my hands were shaking as I arrived to the ICU area.

I immediately pushed through the door and got in. I saw a guy and lady jumping up.

Me: And then whuzet??

Her: Uhm who are-

Me: Khame kancinci sisteri ngathi I realize you somewhere mjita.

Him: We met the other day at the construction company

Me: Ohh? So you're the guy that works closely ne ntsayza yam (with my girlfriend)

Him: Yeah sure

Me: So zishapi ngawe apha? (What are you doing here?)

Him: Askies?

Me: Andi cavi noba kudanyaza ama lights entloko kuwe saan okanye mhlambi ku huhuza umoya endlebeni. (I don't know whether you're dumb or maybe you deaf)

He chuckled

Me: But I'm not asking this again. What's your business here?

Him: Ashanti was in an accident, I send help for her to make it to the hospital.

I giggled while moving back

Me: Kucacile ke mos uba usi smuncu. (You must be dumb)

He smiled

Him: Call me dumb one more time

Me: Smuncu (Dumb)

He jumped to my side the lady pushed her away.

Her: Limile no don't do it. Please! This is not the time.

Me: If I were you I'd listen to the lady. A sissy like you wouldn't wanna get himself battered by me.

He tried coming closer again but the lady held him more tight.

Her: Limile! Myeke (Leave him)

I smirked

Him: Nx.

I laughed and soon stopped when I realized Ashanti was nowhere in sight.

Me: Where's my girlfriend? Where's Ashanti?

I looked at them

Me: Somebody tell me!!

Him: Oh now want us to help? Same people you insulted.

He smirked while shrugging his shoulders

Him: Atleast none of us will get to have her.

Me: Bastard!

I charged at him and grabbed him away from the lady giving him punches on his torso. He didn't fight back just smiling.

Me: Where is she?

Him: How would I know when you don't?

Lady: Stop it!! Yekani lento niyenzayo nina.

Me: Where is my girlfriend?

Him: If you were a caring boyfriend you'd know.

I threw him over the bed and continued punching him. It's the smug in his face that infuriated me more, it's like he knows something that I don't and tries to piss me off deliberately.

The lady came to stop the fight but I pushed her too hard that she fell.

That's where he lost his cool. He flipped overpowering me whilst pushing me underneath him and gave me mean punches.

Lady: Limile stop!!!

The doctors heard the commotion and got inside with security guards they escorted both of us out.

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ASHANTI

Early in the "AM's" I was already up and ready with everything. I realised there were few clothes fitting me in this house so I packed all of them.

I realized something that looked like my passport and a cracked phone.

I booked a flight and picked my bags. I admired this place one more time and left.

Me: Sir

Him: Madame?

He stood up respectfully. I frowned at his reaction. Seems like I was a person of authority.

Me: Can... Can you drive me to the airport?

His facial shows that there's lots he wanted to say but he rather kept it all to himself.

Him: Yah sure

Me: Thanks

He helped me with the bags and we had a silent drive to the airport.

Him: What happened to your trip to Mexico?

I laughed

Me: What are you talking about Sir?

Him: I uhm... Thought that you left with your Mom

Me: I'd engage to this conversation more if I knew what we are talking about.

He kept quiet.

Me: Now if you may, please help me with the bags.

He helped me with the bags and I asked him to leave me by myself I'll be fine.

I sat there waiting for my flight to come. As I sat there I was completely lost of who I am. Who was my mother? Who was my father? Where I come from? What did I do for a living? Did I have a boyfriend, oh about that... I stopped to glance at my wrist.

Was that guy earlier on my boyfriend? perhaps my husband? Cause I'm seeing a ring in my finger. Who am I? Yah I've discovered I'm Ashanti but who exactly is Ashanti?

My flight for Eastern Cape came and I went to climb. If you'd ask me where I'm going I wouldn't give you a straight answer. I just do what my instincts are telling me to do without any

questions. Even if my instincts would tell me to jump right now off the plane as it takes off I'd do that without any doubts.

So I'll see ahead where I'll go from where I land. I laid my head back and rested my eyes.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 27

SANDRO

My father was nursing me. I'm back home, it really ate our pockets being in the hospital playing sick. Knowing that there were real sick people who needed help & the space I occupied. So again we had to bribe for me to get discharged, since I knew that Mom & Ashanti are coming this week. They'll get to live this side for good. When that time comes I'll stop with all this pretending nonsense. I am really tired of it and of putting Dad through the most right now.

Though I'm worried we're not hearing anything from Mom. She was supposed to arrive yesterday. But she's been quiet for 2 days.

Dad: Aquí está tu papilla. (Here's your porridge)

He handed me in a tray.

Me: Thank you Papá

Dad: You gonna need help with that?

I chuckled

Me: No Papá I'm fine atleast my arms are still working.

Dad: But you feeling okay now? As in like there are no other parts of your body where you feeling pain?

I made a weak smile.

Me: Nah, estoy bien (I'm fine) just migraines.

Dad: I should look for your pills.

Me: Not now

He exhaled looking at me

Dad: You scared me, that accident almost killed you.

I faced down feeling guilty.

Me: I know.

Dad: Ver? Dios todavía te está dando una oportunidad (See? God is still giving you a chance) above everything you did. And there's a reason for that son.

I sighed not hiding my irritated facial but I quickly masked it off. I really don't understand why a man like him still believes in God in these days. Seeing how ruthless I am, together with this place. I don't understand why a man like him could still hold on to his faith. I mean I'm a disappointment and I doubt I'll ever change.

Dad: Please change to the man I've taught you to be.

I made a shallow side smile. He sighs.

Dad: Laura and Bebita are also stressing me right now they are not reachable.

Me: Maybe we'll hear from them soon. Don't stress.

Dad: I hope so.

(Silence)

Dad: Well then son will check on you again.

Me: Okay thank you Papá.

My phone rang as he stood up. He tried reaching it but I was way too fast like a mouse itself. I smiled waving it in my hand making one of my crazy grins.

Me: Got it Dad, Got it.

Dad: Okay easy son. I'll see you.

I nodded.

I glanced back at my phone when he left. Dwayne called again.

I cautiously looked around before answering.

Me: Dwayne! better be careful when making calls next time.

Dwayne: Oh sorry didn't realise you're with people.

Me: What is it?

The line went silent.

Me: Dwayne?

Dwayne: It's your Mom..

I could feel everything stop even the rhythm of my heartbeat changed.

Me: Y mi Mamá? (What about Mom?)

Dwayne: She... She..

Me: Dwayne will you just talk!!?

Dwayne: Your Mom! She's in the hospital looking in a bad condition. Seems like she had an accident.

I snickered as I pushed off the blankets.

Me: Accident? That can't be true. No no it can't be true
Dwayne.

Dwayne: I'm afraid it is

Me: It is not!!! Mom and Ashanti are on the way coming here.

I half roared

Dwayne: Alessandro you will have to be strong. Enough about this plan infact let's evacuate it. Please inform your Dad about

this. It's bad no one is by Laura's side right now and it's where she needs her family the most.

I shut my eyes as I held my mouth and sobbed in painfully.

Dwayne: Sandro, Sandro. She's not dead.

Me: It's bad isn't that what you said?

Dwayne: Sì, ma non è morta. (Yes but she's not dead)

I sighed deeply while collecting myself. I wiped my mucus and sniffed.

Me: My hermanita (sister) how is she?

Dwayne: Hermanita?

Me: Ashanti.

Dwayne: I'm not seeing her

Me: What do you mean you're not seeing her?

Dwayne: She is nowhere near the hospital.

Me: Home?

Dwayne: I don't know

Me: Just check till you find her!! She can't be nowhere out of sight. If Mom has been in an accident then that means they were both in it. They should be admitted in the same hospital. She can't be nowhere find her! Dwayne please.

I hang up and threw my phone away.

I slammed my face repeatedly with my hands.

Me: Damn! Damn! Damn!

I have to rush to South Africa. But first I have to come clean about everything to Dad.

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MOTLATSI

Jezzman has been bugging me non-stop. I had to sneak out of our bedroom in the middle of the night to answer him.

Me: Jezzman you can't be calling me this time you know I'm a married woman.

Jez: I don't give a flying fuck. You got in this knowing I'll have full authority of you more than your husband. So tomorrow am I getting what belongs to me?

Me: Tomorrow?

Jez: Mo don't you dare test me. Do you forget what I'm capable of? Since I made you a favour you now think I've lost my touch.

I swallowed

Me: No it's not what I'm thinking. I'll send your 60 girls plus your packages tomorrow.

Jez: Don't forget my Queen

Me: Your Queen?

Jez: You know what I'm talking about.

Me: Look it won't be easy getting-

He cut me short by his loud mocking laugh. I huffed.

Me: Jez I still have to find a way to worm in her life.

Jez: Mo listen to me carefully. I don't have time to play, if by tomorrow I don't receive my Queen along with my packages... I'm gonna make your life a living hell.

I breathed heavily

Jez: Starting by that sweet vanilla daughter of yours.

Me: Jezzman no, please don't do that.

Jez: Hm! how my men would love to feast on her day in & day out. Wonder how will your husband feel watching that knowing his wife is responsible this whole time.

Me: No please

Jez: From there I reveal who you really are. Those Church women who trusted you not knowing what you do to their little angels.

I burst into tears.

Me: Jezzman you can't do that please.

Jez: By the time I get to you, you'll be long destroyed so don't try me Mo... A deal is a deal. If I don't have my belongings by tomorrow. Watch it all happening.

He hang up. I held my phone with my hand shaking and cried.

Me: Oh noo!!

"Motlatsi"

I held my breath in and quickly wiped off my tears.

Me: Baby

I turned looking back at him. He was seated calmly on the armrest.

Me: For how long have you been there?

Sihle: Does it matter?

I kept quiet

Sihle: Who were you talking to?

Me: Uhm Uhm...

I walked to switch on the lights.

Me: I was just speaking to Mme Moruti. We had a few things to run.

Sihle: Ka nako ee? (At this time?)

I hit my hands together not knowing what else to say.

Me: Ne ke-

Sihle: Are those tears?

He said standing up. I brushed my cheeks he helped me.

Me: Yah, Mme Moruti told me about one of the girls passing on. She had received the news tonight and.. she was still in shock and thought of calling me.

Sihle: Askies baby

He pulled me in a hug and I cried more louder in his arms, not for that lie. But for what Jezzman might do to me.

Me: She was a sweet girl, young, had a bright future. I believed in her then all was robbed from her.

Sihle: What actually happened?

Me: Ha ke tsebe empa Mme Moruti ota re joetsa tsohle hosane. (I don't know but she's going to tell us everything tomorrow.)

Sihle: Okay baby askies

He kissed my forehead.

Sihle: Ska nyonyoba hape my love (Don't sneak again) I'll start suspecting things that I'm not supposed to.

Me: I'm sorry love I won't do it again.

He smiled and poked my nose

Sihle: You're forgiven

We kissed then went back to sleep. Whew! That was close. I'm still stressed about Jezzman he never bluffs. This might actually play out if I don't fulfill his wishes tomorrow. This might be the end of me.

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MAVUYI

Letty: Mama!!

She screamed first thing she came in and ran to give me a hug.

Me: Oh mntanam. I missed you so much.

We kissed

Letty: Me too. Ngaze nga njabulo kakhulu ukubona. (I'm so happy to see you)

Me: Andiqondi ba ufikile kum (I don't think you are as happy as I am)

My husband came too giving me that charming smile of his.

Bheki: Sthandwa Sam

Me: Tata

He cupped my cheeks and gave me a real good kiss.

Letty: Hawe Ma!

Me: Gquma. (Close your eyes)

Bheki: Angenzi ingathi akayaz lutho lowo (She mustn't pretend like she doesn't know anything)

We all giggled.

Letty: Ma... the trauma you put us through. (Teary) I thought we were gonna lose you.

Me: Ncese mntanam, ncese nawe mnyenam. (I'm sorry my child, I'm sorry to you too husband.) I didn't mean to scare you. You were all I could think of when I was in that place. It was hard but inside I kept on praying and praying and the more I gained strength.

Bheki rubbed my hair

Me: Kodwa ke here I am, a proof that we serve a living God.

Letty: Indeed.

I looked at them holding both their hands together.

Me: Ndiyanithanda (I love you)

Letty: Siyak'thanda nathi Ma (We love you too)

I glanced up at my husband.

Bheki: Hau usudinga ngik'tshele ke manje ukuthi kukhala esakho sginci enhlizyweni yam?

We laughed out loud.

Me: Ohh Bheki bethuna

Bheki: Hay maan

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soxoxa lubanzi 'me siphuma lana. Suwa sign'ile ama discharge forms? (We'll chat more once we get out of here. Did you sign your discharge forms?)

Me: Yes

Bheki: Then asambeni (let's go)

They brought my clothes. I had already bathed but was just in my hospital gown. So they helped me change into my clothes and then passed my crutches. After we left. Can't believe what

Laura did, that woman deserves to rot in jail. I wish I can have courage and enough evidence to put her in jail. I was really scared of my safety. I have to tell my family everything and it worries me that she did all of this to run away with Ashanti.

When we got outside. We walked to a car.

Me: And then?

Bheki: I rented a car baby ngeke sihambe ngama tekisi ngizo ntofoza umfazi wami (we can't go by Taxis when I'll pamper my wife)

Me: Ohh thank you honey.

He opened the door for me to get in and then after drove us to a restaurant, on his treat! This man has all my heart for real.

When we got there I told them everything that happened and about Ashanti leaving. It shocked them big time my husband encouraged me to report Laura cause she'll do it again. I almost died & got sexually assaulted because of her.

My husband promised to protect me. He'll try talking to his men to come up with techniques of tracing all our movements & locations through our phones. Cause he believes Laura is yet

to not back off from this. I think that's the best solution he's suggested so far.

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LIMILE

I video called my parents.

Mom: Heee hay silahliwe sana (We are deserted)

I made a faint smile.

Me: No it's not true Mom. Yaz it gets really busy and hectic here it's even hard to get our hands on the phones.

Mom: Nice excuse neh

Me: Serious Ma.

Dad: Otherwise how are you son?

Me: I'm fine thanks and you?

Dad: We're fine too. Where's your sister?

I looked back

Me: Ndic'ba usalele (I think she's asleep.) Her work here is really draining her.

Dad: I hope you're taking good care of my princess.

Me: I do Tata I'm trying my utmost best.

Dad: Kuhle ke (That's good)

Mom: Her leave days are almost due. Uzom'khapha ke xa ebuya? (Will you accompany her when she comes back?)

Me: Ewe Mama but this is not the reason why I called.

They looked at each other.

Mom: Ingabe ikhona into wrongo? (Is there something wrong?)

I looked at them and cleared my throat.

Me: I.. I have found Luniko.

They both gasped in shock. Mom closed her eyes I could tell by the mention of that name brought up her pain.

She breathed.

Mom: Praise the Lord. Where did you find him? Kunini besimfuna (We've been always looking for him)

Dad: Zindaba ezimnandi ezo (Those are great news)

Me: I uhm.. Benny hooked me with a P.I where he did an investigation. And you won't like what he found.

Dad: Yintoni Limile? (What is it?)

I took a deep sigh

Me: Luniko is living his life in Singapore as Scavenge L. Jezzman.

Them: (exclaims) Whaaat!!

Me: He has changed everything about himself that's why it has been difficult for us to find him. Luniko Solwandle isn't in the system according to it he doesn't exist. From there he runs a cartel. Being in drugs, human trafficking and many more bad things. But I'll show you all those when I come down there.

Dad: Eish eish eish uQhamani umenzi umntanam? (What did he do to my child?)

Mom: Hayi maan he was a sweet guy when did he drastical change like this?

Me: I'm thinking he couldn't accept that Luniko is not his son.

That came out wrong. I sensed the tension between Mom & Dad.

Me: I am sorry to loosely blurt that out.

Mom: It's okay sweetheart

(Silence)

Me: So what do we do? Do we still continue looking for him.

Dad: Ayy let's give it a try

Me: He's a dangerous man ke Tata

Mom: And are my babies worth risking their lives?

Dad: I can still do it by myself

Mom: Mlamli!!!

Me: Dad you can't risk it and go there by yourself. Look it's fine, me and Benny can handle this.

Dad: Your Mom is right. You can't risk your lives boys. I'll go in Singapore myself.

Mom: Love I'm not ready to be a widow please.

He held Mommy's cheek.

Dad: Babe, it's one way or the other. I have to find my son. I created this mess I have to fix it.

She cried. I wiped my nose.

Me: You guys are making me sad.

Dad: Let's be positive son. This might work out.

Mom: I don't trust that land you're going to mna shame.

Dad: Don't worry, I know who'll help.

Me: Who?

Dad: Usbali (My brother in-law)

I frowned

Mom: Phiweka's husband?

Me: Abednego?

Dad: Yeah. He doesn't hide that he's in the business. I will need his help.

Mom started sighing out of relief

Mom: I can now say I'm in peace

Me: He'll really get you through.. But still I'm not settled about this whole thing. This is dangerous.

Dad: Son it has to be done. Luniko needs to know my side of the story not the lie he was told by his mother.

I nodded.

Me: Eish yah then. Yaz I need to go and take care of my other half. We'll speak soon.

Mom: Bye son. We love you

Me: I love you too.

Dad: Send our greetings to Limise tell her to avail herself on the phone.

Me: Okay.

I smiled while ending the call.

I walked to the kitchen and she was there.

Me: Good day

Mhise: Good day bro

I looked at her rough outfit

Me: Rough day?

Mhise: Tjooo kakhulu. I dedicate this whole day to myself jonga
I'll sleep rhuuu. Abakwa Malahle bazondi bona ngomso (The
Malahle family will see me tomorrow)

I furrowed my eyebrows.

Me: Can I make it worse?

Mhise: Wele...

Me: No like you really need to see this.

Mhise: What is it?

I placed the envelope in front of her. She opened it and saw a
glimpse of it.

Mhise: Umnta..se-kha-ya

She froze as she got disappointed.

Mhise: Oh my word! Is this our brother? Luniko! what happened to him. What.. What..

Me: All the info is right there.

Mhise: I failed him bhuti. I failed him if he didn't slip out of my hands, he wouldn't have been taken.

Me: Ha.a stop this mntase, stop blaming yourself. It wasn't your fault.

I hugged and wiped her tears.

Me: Don't cry. Come, come, come let's go. Let's go play uh tennis.

Mhise: Ndinje? (Like this?)

Me: Ewe tshi, nje uyopholisa ingqondo mntase (just to go freshen mind)

Mhise: Can I atleast shower first and wear appropriate clothes?

Me: Yah.

I let go of her and she went to change. We've been through alot this week, I think we deserve some fresh air and I'll take her out afterwards.

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ASHANTI

I walked down to this village in admiration. What a beautiful atmosphere. It was all green, the air was fresh, the space was widespread. Man something about this place was different, it wasn't busy & noisy like the city. Only sounds I heard were of different animals. It's so refreshing.

This is nice. It's nice being African.

I gazed at the rondavels and women holding buckets on their heads.

I smiled and continued with my walk

I stopped at a certain house staring at it, it seemed homeless and empty. It screamed "abandoned".

This is the place where I'm supposed to be.

I opened the gate and walked in.

I noticed and looked at the altar.

I immediately stopped and held my forehead. Experiencing a headache as a memory flashed through my mind. I remembered the dream I once had, where I saw people gathered and a goat tied on the very same pole I'm seeing right now.

I looked at the door where I remember quite frankly a woman coming out there, who seemed like we had a connection. A mother and daughter sort of connection.

Everything about this place looked exactly as in my dream.

Me: I'm home. (Laughs) This is my home.

I picked up my bags and walked to the door I then realized it was locked. I held my forehead thinking.

Me: Alright think girl, think.

I spend minutes thinking of how to get in. I turned around in circles and stopped.

I crouched and splitted the fine stones with my hand. I stumbled a key underneath and picked it. My attempt of opening the door worked and I was taken aback by this whole thing.

I walked inside and took time observing this place. Seems like I'll camp in here by myself and there's more to why I am here. So it doesn't even bother me not even a little.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 28

KOLOSA

I woke up in a hospital surrounded by my family. I slowly sat up, I don't know for how long I've been out.

Mhise: Hey..

I smiled at her

Me: Gogo, Dad, Uncle, Aunt nawe Mzala. You're all here for me?

They all replied at the same time

Me: Oh my word for how long have I been out?

Dad: Noba intsuku ezimbini (Two days)

Me: Two!? That's alot. Do I look okay? Amehlo wam awadumbanga kengoku? (Aren't my eyes swollen?)

Nomalanga: You are still cute if that's what you're asking.

We all giggled.

Mhise: Especially when you let your locks loose.

I smiled at her as she rubbed my hair.

Me: What are the doctors saying?

Sihle: Couldn't detect anything wrong with you.

Me: Kodwa I've been out for two days?

Uncle: Masilinde mtshana mhlambi soxelelwa. (Let's wait maybe they'll tell us)

Me: They better do.

Mhise: So ke Kolie awuka phuphi nto njen'ba ukhe wase mathongweni. (Didn't you dream of anything when you were out?)

I shook my head. They looked at each other, and I soon remembered something.

Me: My sister, have you found her?

They all sighed.

Dad: Nge bhadi.. (Sadly)

Mhise: I have something to tell you about her.

We all looked at her.

Mhise: But I'll need all of us present including uMamawakhe (Her mother)

I blinked

Me: Yimani yimani (Wait), didn't they say her mother was missing?

Dad: Siye samfumana. Ithe kanti naye bekwesi sibhedlele ndafumana ithuba lo thetha naye. (We found her. She was also in this hospital and I got a chance to speak to her)

Me: Did it go well?

He nodded

Dad: Yah ngaphandle koba siphosene no mtwana (besides is missing the daughter) everything went well.

I smiled making a nod

Me: Hopefully things will work out. We are getting closer and closer Dad.

Dad: Yah that's what I also believe

The doctor entered as we were still chatting. He greeted as he stared at me with a smile.

Doctor: Oh you're awake today? You decided to come back to the world.

I chuckled

Me: Yes

Doctor: Good choice, cause the world still needs you.

We all giggled.

Doctor: I have news and it's confidential.

Me: It's fine Doc. They're family and they've been worried about me so you may speak in front of them.

He looked at them then me.

Doctor: You're sure?

I nodded

Me: Yes I am.

He clears his throat

Doctor: Okay. When you were unconscious we couldn't detect what exactly was the problem... But with our further diagnosis we've discovered something else.

I looked at him as I sat properly

Me: What is it?

Doctor: Mrs Malahle - Qunta.. we've discovered that you have an Adenomyosis.

I frowned.

Me: What is that?

Doctor: Adenomyosis is a condition whereby a growth of cells builds continuously in your uterus, which results in thickening your womb.

Me: Is it a bad thing?

Doctor: Most likely yes because it involves the uterus being heavy and bulky sometimes compressing the bladder.

That's why you'd get symptoms of it such as; Chronic pelvic pain.. which you've experienced when you were brought in. Others would be; Heavy menstrual bleeding & painful cramps. You'd also experience painful vaginal intercourses, pressure on bladder and a "bearing" down feeling.

Me: Is this a long term thing?

Doctor: Yes because it keeps on expanding more and more.

Me: Ohh God

I faced up with tears in my eyes

Sihle: So Doc how could this be treated?

He made a scary look and I began feeling more scared.

Me: Doc?

He sighed.

Doctor: The only treatment would be surgical removal of the uterus.

They all exclaimed.

Me: (crying) No no no

Doctor: I'm sorry Mrs Qunta that's the only option. Because if you fall pregnant this will increase incidence of preterm labour & premature rupture of membranes.

I shook my head crying.

Doctor: And if the surgical is not done you'll continue experiencing intensive uterine bleeding and pain as it'll continue to grow inside you, externally your belly will bloat as if you are pregnant.

I cried this was hurting me so so bad. How I wanted to have kids, but learning that I won't be able to have one. I mean no wonder me and my husband couldn't have them cause we tried without any luck.

Mhise: Sshhh..

Doctor: I'm sorry Ma'm. We will need you to decide what you'll do so that we can give you forms to fill or we discharge you incase you decide against the surgery. I'll prescribe to you Ibuprofen & Naproxen so long.

Mhise: Okay, thanks doctor

I was in her embrace, crying in her arms.

Doctor: I really apologize for this heavy news Ma'm. I'll give you space to heal, will check on you later for your decision.

I nodded.

Doctor: Enjoy your day.

He nodded and left.

Uncle: Ngxesi mntanam

Auntie also came to hug me.

Dad: So ugqiba ntoni? (What will you decide?)

Me: Andaz Tata but I want a baby mna.

Nomalanga: There are other ways of having a baby sanalwam

Me: I wanna carry the baby Auntie!

Gogo itched her ears vigourously while making the "mnkrm" sound usually made by sinus people.

Mhise: Linda (Wait)..

Me: Huh?

Mhise: Abadala (Your ancestors) are telling me you should wait... Don't jump on the decision yet unless if you want to.

Me: Andifuni Gogo (I don't want to)

Mhise: Then wait.

Dad: Abathethi nto ngalomntana simfunayo? (Haven't they said anything about the lost kid?)

She shook her head and made that sound again intensively.

Mhise: Excuse me, I wanna go spit. Call the Mother so long.

She walked out. I sighed, I guess everything lies on us finding my sister or else something precious might be taken from me... And who knows, maybe my life too.

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ASHANTI

I took it lightly staying in the village. It isn't as glitz & glam as I had imagined. Life here is difficult, really difficult. It's a disadvantaged place starting off with a bad network, the toilet is outside and it does not flush... like I can literally see my poop down there. The house has no sink and I didn't know where I should go when I needed water. There was no TV & electricity cause it seemed like it's been a long time since people ever lived in here. I had to literally count and collect coins to buy candles to provide light for myself dangerous as it sounds. Didn't even eat instead the mosquitoes had me for supper. What a terrible first day in a beautiful place like this.

As much as I don't know much about myself.. but I can tell that I had an easy life, wasn't used to struggling and a hard life. But I guess it's something I have to learn being in this place. So I'm ready to be moulded.

My plans for today were to go withdraw money from my card and fix the electricity matter plus have this house painted and fixed. But I don't even remember my damn pin. How am I even gonna get a fare to go to town? But as they say a lady gon' see what she gotta do.

I bumped on a photo album and started admiring just then my phone rang. My screen was ruined so I couldn't see who the caller was.

Me: Hello

Caller: Ashanti! Hi.

A male voice. He seemed relieved to hear my voice.

Me: Hi?

Him: Querida! Ohhh! How happy I am to hear your voice. I was going crazy knowing there's nothing I couldn't do to find you at your place and hearing you disappeared in the hospital. I even cried kno-

Me: Uhm hol'up.. who are you?

Him: Ohw-uh.. Huh?

He toned down a bit

Me: I mean who are you.. the one calling.

Him: Querida it's me

Me: Me who?

Him: Mayihlome your boyfriend.

I smiled. Ohh it must be that yellowbone.

Me: Mayihlome?

Him: Yes don't tell me you don't remember me.

Me: Uhm I actu-

Him: Wait wait wait. Say my name again.

Me: Mayihlome

Him: And since when do you know how to say that right?

I giggled

Me: What do you mean?

Him: You struggled calling my full name you only used to call me Mayi.

Me: Ohh is it? (shrugs) well then I guess things change.

Him: They really do hey. I'm blown away I won't lie.

We giggled.

Him: So where are you?

Me: I'm in Eas-

The phone cut off. I got it off my ear.

Me: Arggh damn!!!

It shut down because of the low battery. There's not even electricity to charge it. I should actually deal with this electricity thing quickly.

I took the empty bucket and walked out of the house to go fetch water. I needed to bathe. The walking distance was a bit long, it was downhill but I took it patiently and finally arrived.

I queued behind a woman who was also waiting.

Her: Tshini Molo

I confusedly narrowed my eyes at her.

Me: Uhm hi.

Her: Awuyazi ba kuyabuliswa xa ubona abantu. (Don't you know you greet when you see people)

Me: I don't understand a word you said.

Her: Ngoba kodwa uNtsundu nje? Kanye uzenza tsolo nawe? (Why yet you're black? Or you making yourself a better person?)

Me: Can you please speak in a language that I understand?
English to be specific.

She dramatically claps her hand

Her: Tsii abantwana ba namhlanje (Children of today). Am say
you why not hello hello to the persons when see.

I squint my eyes not understanding what she said.

Her: Me standard 2 at school... to get in and didn't finish.

Me: Ohhh!!! Mxm I now get you. Sorry next time I'll hello hello
when I see persons.

Her: Good! Me and you will ear each ada rhow wena bonanje.

I smiled at her. It was her turn to go to the tap. She stole
glances of me.

Her: 'Tis your name?

Me: (smiling) Ashanti and yours?

Her: Nosakhele

Me: Nice meeting you Nosakhele.

She nodded and closed the tap. It was my turn to go.

Her: You look together wil da persons I know.

Me: Really?

She nodded

Nosakhele: Surname?

Me: I don't know my surname

Nosakhele: Haww why not know?

Me: Long story.

Nosakhele: Mele Mele you know.

I shrugged

Nosakhele: Tsii, where do you sit?

I tilt my head in confusion again

Me: Where do I sit?

Nosakhele: Before here

Me: Ohh! I was in Gauteng.

Nosakhele: Heeey wena! Goli ghel.

We chuckled. I closed the tap and moved the bucket. I tried picking it up as heavy as it was and put it over my head just like her. But it almost fell.

Me: Tjo!

Her: No no no Goli ghel. Not so.. you do so..

She dropped hers and picked mine placing it over her head instead. Then held her bucket by head.

Me: Give me yours isn't it too heavy?

Nosakhele: M.hm 1

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2-1,2 this. Wena lemme see now where you sit. I'll kick you there.

Me: Okay I'll let you see.

We laughed. I think I already love her can't she be my friend? We walked back to my place even though it was a long distance but we chatted nicely. As hard as it was for me to comprehend what she was saying. But I listened carefully and tried interpreting then responded the way she was speaking not to make her feel small or embarrassed.

She made my journey easy cause I walked with nothing. She's such a strong woman hey and talkative one too.

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SANDRO

I rubbed my hands together and took a deep breath before I made my way to the lounge. Could immediately hear plates breaking.

Dad: Puedes caminar? desde cuando? (You can walk? Since when?) And why are you dressed up.

He asked all that in a shocked tone

Me: Please sit down Papá and I'll tell you everything you need to know.

He looked at me

Me: Please, and try to calm down.

We sat down. I didn't waste time I spoke everything out not leaving a thing. From my planning with Mom up to the accident.

We sat silently with Dad and I couldn't read his emotions.

Dad: Hijo (Son)

Me: Papá

He ran his finger across his forehead.

Dad: Do you see a label "Made In China" on my forehead?

I huff inside my palms feeling worse to even answer that.

Dad: Alessandro!!!!

I jumped.

Me: Papá?

Dad: Do you see a label written "Made In China"???

Me: No Papá

Dad: Then why do you and your Mom make me a toy thing, huh?

He banged the table.

Dad: Why!!!?

Me: Fue un error (It was a mistake)

Dad: It was never a mistake!! Never!! A mistake is me dropping these plates down. A mistake is me missing a step, A mistake is me giving you 4 dosage of tablets instead of 2. That's a mistake! Not what you did. You actually sat this through with your Mom and planned it to kill innocent people who did nothing to you, and just kill them. Why? Didn't you know that Ashanti is adopted?

Me: I did

Dad: Didn't you know that this time would come?

Me: I did

Dad: Then why would you carry on with this with your Mom?

(Silence)

Dad: Then you expected something like an accident not to happen to her? Now what should I do? Should I load up my tears and cry. Jump up and down going back & forth to South Africa? Like a controlled toy by buttons of the remote?

I ashamedly faced down.

Dad: Mhm? must be nice hey. Being nursed by Papá knowing well that you're damn fine. Bebita should forgive me... Oh my sweet girl how unfortunate I'm really sorry for her she must forgive me... But I'm not going back to S.A to face Laura I don't care what the fuck happens to her. I just don't care she might as well die, followed by you because you don't listen!

Me: Dad!!

Dad: Yes you think S.A is Mexico? And you know what is another mistake? Depositing my sperms in your mother's cooch and you were the outcomes of it. That was the biggest fucken mistake I made. YOU ARE USELESS!! I'm tired of trying to make you a better person, I'm tired. God knows I tried way more than my best. Today..

He stood up on his feet.

Dad: Today I'm standing on my feet giving up on you after I had given my all. (Scoffs) Not that it shocks me coming from you,

these are always your acts. Your mother is the one that disappointed me the most. She made me a fool, both of you!

He threw his finger at the door.

Dad: Now you go snake eyes!! Go! You'll die a bastard and cunning as you are. Glad shall be me when that day comes. Cause my Mamá was right about you, you are a complete curse. Now fuck off!!

Me: Aaaaaahh!!!! (screaming)

I finally freed a suppressed cry loudly as I shoot out bullets flying around the house.

Me: Para!! Para!!! (Stop it!! Stop it!!)

I then lowered the gun and pointed him

Me: Stop talking so painfully your words are hurting me.

Dad: They true. You don't change Alessandro. So shoot me, shoot me it'll save me from all the troubles.

I looked at him as I gnashed my teeth hard against my lips with a deep frown, tears filling my eyes.

Dad: Come on snake eyes, do it! Shoot me. Shoot your Papá.

I fired a shot and threw the gun down.

Me: Take back those words.

I clenched my teeth and walked away.

Dad: You're a coward now? Those bullets would've saved me from all the times you've killed me emotionally. What's defeating you scum!!!?

I clicked my tongue and dragged my bags away. He was trying so hard to provoke me so that I can kill him. But I'm not gonna do that. I wiped my tears and took one look at him then walked out without saying goodbye.

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MOTLATSI

I looked at his text again.

Jez: "So you're still resistant about my Queen?"

Me: "Why are you complaining for 1 girl I can get you within days. Yet I gave you all your stuffs plus 60 girls."

Jez: "Don't you know a King needs a Queen besides him?"

Jez: "I hope you're prepared for the havoc I'm about to cause in your life"

Been staring at our messages for about 30 minutes. Then would secretly gawk at my daughter who was laughing loudly watching Grown-ish with her popcorns.

Calls began flooding in it was the ladies from Church and their messages. I closed my eyes and switched off my phone. I began crying a muffled cry.

Dimpho lowered the volume looking at me.

Dimpho: Mama?

Me: Mmh?

Dimpho: Are you okay?

Me: Yes.

Dimpho: Okay.

She raised the volume again.

Me: Dimpho

Dimpho: Mma?

Me: I need you to be careful my child at all times okay?

She frowned looking at me

Me: Please ntshepise ngwanaka (promise me my child)

Dimpho: Kea u tšepisa. Ho etsahalang? (I promise you. What's going on?)

Me: Nothing. I love you, I want you to always remember that.

I got up and hugged her with a kiss

Me: I need you to lock up everywhere. I'll be back, activate the alarm immediately.

Dimpho: Na re kotsing? (Are we in danger?)

Me: Just do as I tell you. I'll see you, I need to get somewhere.

I left the house and drove somewhere just don't know where. I don't even know how I'll go about this, with my mind being all over the place. But it's been years being in this game. I can do it. Jezzman meant business, this guy is gonna ruin me.

MAVUYI

Received a call from the Malahles requesting to meet with me in the hospital it's about Ashanti. I told them I've got a leg problem to travel back & forth to Pta and it's a distance. They should speak over the phone or come to my place if it's that important.

They then told me that it turns out Ashanti didn't go to Mexico. She was in an accident on the way then we were all admitted in the same hospital but then she disappeared. They don't know where she went..

I don't know what to think really. Ashanti is big girl maybe we're suffocating her she needs to breathe, so long I'll give her space. I can't force my way through her till she bursts. Though I tried to call her and it didn't go through.

I received a call from an unknown number.

Me: Hello

Caller: Hi. Ungu Vuyelwa? (Is this Vuyelwa?)

Me: Yah ndiliqhelile elilizwi. (I know this voice)

Her: Yhi wethu ndimu Nosakhele. (It's me Nosakhele)

Me: Tshiiiiini Dadobawo!! (Auntie!!)

I screamed excitedly. She's my Dad's youngest sister, my favourite aunt of them all.

Me: Hayibo Dabawo! It's been a long time.

Nosakhele: Kudala nyani ntombi. Yintoni ungasali cingi ikhaya lakho. (It's been really long. Why don't you think of your home)

I looked down.

Nosakhele: Awugoduki tuu side samfihla uYihlo no Nyoko ungekho. (You're not coming home at all we even buried your parents without you)

Me: Ey. Ndamka kak'bi apho. (I left really bad that side)

Nosakhele: Yhini ntombi inqala engaka (Such a grudge?)

Me: Eyy we'll talk about it some other time Dabs. Khatsho where did you get my number khona hee?

Nosakhele: Wethu matter not (doesn't matter). Intombi yakho ilapha khawu goduke uzolanda uGoli ghel. (Your child is here come fetch the city girl)

I frowned

Me: Goli ghel?

Nosakhele: Ewe uthi ngubani kanene igama lakhe... Ashanti yah Ashanti. (Yes, what's her name again.. Ashanti, yes)

My eyes widened

Me: Ashanti!!!? Heee how does that child know Kwa Centane? Who even directed her there?

Nosakhele: ID's me don't knows (I have no idea) kodwa silapha ke isi aram ndisibone ngofana twatse nawe, khabuye wethu mzali please ucelwa ndim ngoku. (But she's here please come back I saw the resemblance now I'm the one who's begging you)

I breathed heavily and nodded fastly.

Me: Okay okay I'll be the-

I'm guessing she ran out of airtime.

Me: Hayini bethuna. Letty!!! Letty!!

I reached for my crutches and checked on her.

Me: Thixo wam ulele lomtana (God this child is asleep)

I limped out straight to the shop to go buy myself airtime since I didn't have it. I needed to call back the Malahle family.

On my way I bumped to the lady who once helped me when I got shot.

Her: Heeey!

Me: Sisi maan what's your name again?

Her: Mo

Me: Okay Mo ey you really helped me that other day I don't even know how to thank you.

Mo: Don't mention it sweetheart. I was doing what I was supposed to.

Me: Aww bantwini

Mo: Serious it was little things... You live in this neighborhood kante?

Me: Yah

Mo: Helang! How about I walk you home?

Me: No problem

Mo: Are you supposed to walk out like that?

Me: My daughter is sleeping eish didn't wanna wake her.

Mo: Hle bathong you're a kind mother yazi.

She cleared her throat.

Mo: You know can we keep it a secret that I rescued you by shooting that man? just the gun part.

Me: Oh?

Mo: Yah maan people don't know me like that. And you know I trained myself discreetly and bought it for safety reasons cause the universe doesn't favour us women.

Me: True, I should also buy myself one after that encounter.

Mo: True Mama yaz

Me: You were around?

Mo: Yah visiting a friend but luckily I met you.

Me: Oh okay let me show you my home.

Mo: Can't wait!

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 29

LETTY

After a good nap I woke up to a quiet house. I wiped my eyes for a moment.

Me: Mama? Mama!?

A panick attack hit me and I jumped out of bed when I didn't hear her response. She isn't supposed to go anywhere with her leg or what if those people came again to take her? Gosh how can I be so reckless.

Me: Mama!!

I took out my phone dialing her. But I stopped when hearing her voice giggling outside. I held my chest and threw myself against the wall for relief.

"Yhu undincamisile ngabantwana ungaze ufe fii. (These kids never cease to amaze me, you'd die.)

She walked in.

Me: Mama..

I gasped taken aback to see my mother's friend with her.

Mom: Mntanam ixolo wethu ngokothusa. Bendidinga iAirtime, kuba ke ubulele ndonqena ukuvusa. (My child I'm sorry to fright you. I needed some airtime and I didn't want to wake you)

I swallowed hard still keeping my gaze on this woman. She still creeps me. Mom picked something as she pointed us.

Motlatsi: Letty, Hi

Me: Hi

Mom still looked at us.

Mom: You know each other?

Motlatsi: Yah, a small world hey. Turns out she's friends with my daughter Dimpho.

Mom's eyes light up with her smile widening.

Mom: Nyani? (Really?)

Motlatsi nodded.

Mom: This gets much better. Yayazi into andenzele yona lo Sisi?
(Do you know what this lady did for me?)

I shook my head.

Mom: Usindise ubomi bam (She saved my life)

Me: I don't understand

Mom: Undifumene ematyholweni mntanam ndibaleka eza nkabi bezindi bambile. Wandithatha wandisa ngokwakhe esbhedlele. (She found me in the veld and saved me from those men then rushed me to the hospital)

I looked at Dimpho's Mom who was already smiling at me.
There's something about her smile that didn't sit well with me.

Me: Ohh?

Mom: Ewe now we should thank her.

I was hesitant about it.

Me: Siyabonga ngosindisa impilo ka Ma wami. (Thanks for saving my mother's life)

Motlatsi: Argh it was nothing sweetheart. God wanted me to be there for a reason. And so as a Godsend I had to play my part.

Mom: Indeed... make yourself comfortable. I wish you would've arrived when my husband was still around so that he could've meet our heroine.

She giggled

Motlatsi: Aww don't stress there is a next time.

Mom: I'll be more organized next time I promise.

They giggled more.

Mom: Heee Letty khowenze iTea apho uqhaqhe nee biscuits!!
(Make tea and open the biscuits)

She yelled. I closed my eyes I didn't like this, I didn't like them being close. Yah she saved my mother's life I'm grateful for that but why must they be close?

Me: Okay!!

"No I just want juice" I heard her whispering.

Mom: Tea for mna and juice for indwedwe (the visitor)

Me: Alright!!

I sighed and rolled my eyes while switching on the kettle.

Me: Hai uMama ke for easily trusting people njee.

I got busy with my phone while waiting for the water to boil.

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ASHANTI

Nosakhele had helped me boil my water in the fire while she kept telling me how she knows the house I'm currently staying in.

I got done with bathing and changed to fresh clothes. She had waited for me to finish then we went to her house, she did show me where she lives. I delayed going to the municipal and have the electricity issue fixed. Something had drawn me to this woman.

I nodded looking around her place.

Me: So you live alone?

Nosakhele: Yah. Sit and feel home.

Me: Thanks

Nosakhele: You know mos it's your true home this?

I furrowed my eyebrows

Me: What do you mean?

Nosakhele: See here.. is your mother's, her mother's and father's home.

I nodded

Me: Okay?

Nosakhele: Your mother is Vuyelwa. Her mother is Nonzwakazi and Her father is Mvuna. Mvuna and Me are brothers and sisters. We de Krila family. We had other brothers & sister's but all's gone now is me alone cause I'm de smallest.

Me: Alright.

Nosakhele: Yah I'm 69, 70 this year.

I hung my mouth open in shock.

Me: You're what!? Turning 70?

Nosakhele: Heee I'm your Magogo wena.

Me: 70!!? You don't look like someone who's soon gonna turn 70.

Nosakhele: Yho 70 mna Goli ghel. I eat green things it's why I still look like small.

Me: You don't eat meat?

She chuckled and squeezed her forefingers.

Nosakhele: Ncinci nje (Just a little bit) Gholi ghel

Me: I hear you. Do you have kids?

Nosakhele: Yah all in Knysna. This house was alone so I had to come and stay as family.

I nodded with a smile.

Me: So you're my grandmother?

Nosakhele: Yah, wait.

She stood up and came with a photo album. She showed me each and every family member of ours. I saw pictures of my mother when she was young, I look just like her. She seemed to be the only child her parents had. And they looked like a religious family, The father was a Pastor.

I had a great time with my grandmother. She told me every stories of her childhood and how they grew up with her siblings and the kind of family they were. I was just getting along with

her. We prepared something to eat with her guiding me how things are done. I had no idea what we were making but it took long hours to get ready.

She dished and gave me plate.

Nosakhele: Test (Taste)

I took the piece of meat and tasted.

Me: Mhhhh, this is so delicious I've never ate something so good as this.

Nosakhele: You're really one of us wena. This is Ulusu what is it kanene in Isingesi? um um um trice

Advertisement

t-t, tri nton nton maan.

Me: It's really nice.

Nosakhele: Eat it fast before it.. um eish.

I looked at her.

Me: Before it?

She scratched her head.

Nosakhele: Don't mind my child just don't mind. Make sure to eat fast qha.

Me: Okay.

We ate nicely and quietly. She switched on the radio. I told her to stop when I heard an interesting song playing in the radio.

Me: I love that sound

Nosakhele: Thandiswa Mazwai that one.

I nodded and moved my body rhythmically to the song.

" Nizilibele uba nizalwa ngobani? (Oh, nizalwa ngobani)

Nizilibele uba nizalwa ngobani na?

A great song I've ever come across.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

Kolosa was now discharged and her father had received a call from Vuvu the mother, requesting us to go to her house urgently.

We were getting in the car, helping Kolosa get inside.

Me: Take it easy sweetie.

We all got in.

Mtyhileli: Siqala eTembisa kengoku? (Are we starting in Tembisa?)

Sihle: Probably Tamnci

Me: Don't you want to rest Kolie?

She looked exhausted.

Kolosa: Ha.a I'm also coming along.

Her father turned to face us

Mtyhileli: Uqinisekile mntanam? (Are you sure baby?)

Kolosa: Yes Tata I also have to be there.

Sihle: We should go then

He started the car and drove us to Tembisa. Later on we parked next to the house and all got out.

We got in the house and exchanged greetings. We finally met Vuvu for the first time, she was very welcoming and I must say she's a beautiful woman too.

Her: Ningahlalani phantsi (You may all be seated)

We sat down. She brought us something to drink and sat opposite us.

Mavuyi: Ndiyabulela ngobukho benu nonke. (I'm glad that you all came)

Mtyhileli: We're glad you called us.

Mavuyi: Yah, the reason I called all of you is because I have recently found a lead of where Ashanti might be.

Kolosa: Uphi Mama? (Where is she?)

Mavuyi: My aunt called me and told me she's in Centane.

We took a moment of silence to allow that to sink in. This was a first, I don't know I just found myself chuckling out of the blue. They all looked my way.

Me: Tsii hay izinyanya zase Mankabaneni bethuna.

They all joined in and giggled too understanding why I was laughing in the first place.

Zolisa: Heeey! ooJeke basenzele lula bantu bakokwethu. (Our ancestors made it all easy for us)

Me: All this trouble for nothing

Kolosa: Noku bila oku (And all this sweat)

Me: Camagushisani bantu basekhaya (Say thanks)

Them: Camagu.

Mtyhileli: Erm ngoku ke ufikele phi emakhaya? (Where is she staying back in the village?)

Mavuyi: In my home since my aunt informed me.

Kolosa: How did she make it there all by herself?

Me: The ancestors work in mysterious ways.

Zolisa: So that means we should immediately go down to start with the ceremony.

We all agreed.

Mtyhileli: Again Vuvu I apologize for what I had done to you. I really am, I know it's too late and I'm sorry that things had to turn ugly in order for me to finally come to my senses. As late as it is but please allow me to do right by you and our child. I'm pleading please... I know going there might bring back all the memories for you but.. I need you to be there.

We all looked at her. She closed her eyes and exhaled.

Mavuyi: As I said Mtyhileli I forgive you and I'm doing this for my child and for her health. So it's okay I'll go down to Centane but first I need to speak to my husband.

Zolisa: Akho ngxaki Sisi thina inkquba phambili soyiva kuwe. Uzoske usixelele xa evumile usbari then ke thina siqalise ngoko nangoko. (There's no problem you'll give us the "go-ahead" you just tell us when your husband agrees and we'll proceed.)

Mavuyi: Okay

Zolisa: All happy?

Us: Yes

I looked at Kolosa who was getting emotional and taking breaths inbetween.

I held her hand. She smiled at me.

Kolosa: Nzotsho ndiphile (I'll finally get well)

Me: Yes, we're getting closer.

We laughed. I'm glad that we're finally making progress.

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SANDRO

First thing when I landed in S.A I made my stop to the hospital. Dwayne had briefed me which hospital Mom was admitted in.

I walked inside her ward and she was lying there. She was really in a critical condition, her whole face was bandaged it was hard to notice her.

Me: Mamá

I walked to her and held her hand.

Me: Mamá puedes verme? (Can you see me?)

She made a very weak nod. I squeezed her hand and sat down.

Me: I'm here now Mamá, I'm here for you. I'll always be besides you I promise.

The way her face looked I couldn't even tell whether her eyes were open or shut.

She moved a little like she wanted to say something.

Me: You wanna say something?

Mom: (husky tone) A.. Ashanti

I hardened my face as I ran my hands over my mouth

Me: Ashanti is getting along fine Mamá. Don't worry about her okay? We both need you fine, we need our mother back. Just take it easy.

I brushed her forehead and placed a kiss on it. She held my hand tight and continued to sleep. I caressed her hand then took out my phone with my freehand. I texted Dwayne:

"Did you find Ashanti?"

I put away my phone and continued watching her sleep. I can't believe I was so close to losing her.

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MAVUYI

My family and I were gathered in a table eating supper.

Bheki: Uyamsiza ke uMa wakho ebhotweni? Ngoba akumele ame iskhathi eside. (Do you help your mother cook? Cause you know she's not supposed to stand for too long)

Me: Ewe uyandi nceda Tata. (She helps me)

Bheki: Kungcono (That's better) you should hand me your cellphones. Tomorrow I'll work on something to trace both of your movements.

Letty: When Baba?

Bheki: This evening

She sulked looking at me to rescue her.

Letty: Hay phambi kokuthi silale Baba? (Not before we sleep?)

Bheki: Manje Lethokuhle (Now)

I handed him my phone my daughter did the same too.

Bheki: Unlock your phone it mustn't have a password.

Letty: Baba!

Bheki: Yii ntombazana! Kahle kahle unomfana or ithini into yakho? (Do you have a boyfriend or what?)

He shot a look at me

Bheki: Unomfana yini lengane? (Does this child have a boyfriend?)

I shrugged suppressing a laughter

Me: Andaz buza yena (I don't know ask her)

Letty: Cha Baba angina mfana (I don't have a boyfriend)

Bheki: Let's hope so.

(Silence)

Me: Tata there's something I'd like to run by you.

Bheki: Ngilalele (I'm listening)

Me: Uhm uAshanti simfumene (We found Ashanti)

Bheki: Owahu! Yaziz ndabe ezinhle lezo. Nimthole kuphi kanjani? (That's great news. How did you find her and where?)

Me: I've received a call from my Aunt Nosakhele she says she's seeing her in Centane.

Letty: Centane as in where you grew?

Me: Yes.

Bheki: How's that possible?

Me: Masithi yindaba yama dlozi. (Let's say the ancestors had a hand)

Bheki: Aww isimangaliso impela (that's mysterious)

Me: So ke Tata we soon have to prepare a ceremony for her, Imbeleko. Now I'll have to go down to Centane and be present as well. I wanted to first inform you about it and know whether you're going to be okay with it or not?

Bheki: Uhamba iskhathi esingaki? (For how long are you leaving?)

Me: Weekend

He exhaled and nodded

Bheki: It's okay I mean it's important for you and your daughter. So I can't stand in your way.

I smiled widely and hugged his arm.

Me: Enkosi kakhulu Tata yilonto ndikuthanda nje. (Thank you that's why I love you)

I looked at my daughter.

Me: Do you want to come along with me?

Letty: Cha Ma ngi sharp ngifuna ubheka kahle uBaba. (No I'm cool I'll be here to guard Dad)

We all giggled.

Bheki: By now you should know that I've got eyes only for your Mom.

She shrugged while sipping her juice

Letty: Sothembani kwabantu besilisa (What can we trust in men?)

Bheki frowned looking at me

Bheki: Ngisa buza namanje ukuthi lengane iyajola na? Yini ikhangeleka okomuntu onama experience. (I'm still asking again if this child is dating? She seems like someone's who's had an experience)

Me: Hay let me collect these dishes mna Tata

Letty: Then mina ngiyoz'hlamba (I go wash them)

We got up and left to the kitchen.

Bheki: Aww bandla asika qedi lana sisakhuluma (We're not done we're still talking!!)

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 30

[DAYS LATER]

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MOTLATSI

Me: Ratiwa have you packed everything?

Sihle: Yes sweetheart I've packed everything I'll need.

I looked around.

Me: Okay joale re emetse eng? (Then what are we waiting for?)

Sihle: Dimphe baby

Me: Nare tloha le Dimphe? (Are we leaving with Dimphe?)

He nods

Sihle: Something wrong?

Me: No ofcourse not just that this child takes forever we won't have all day long.

He smiled.

Sihle: Just like her Mom.

Me: Ache, Dimphe!!!

"I'm coming!!!"

Me: Make quick your father's gonna miss his flight!!

Today my husband is going to EC, his family is preparing a ceremony this weekend. His cousin and the rest of the family have left days before. He couldn't leave with them cause he had work. I'm glad now he's leaving cause nothing is gonna stand on my way. Everything is coming perfectly well now.

Dimpho: Here I am already parents

Me: No wonder you took long you overdressed.

Sihle: Aowa tlohela ngwana Rato. (Leave the child babe)

Dimpho: Tankie Papa

I rolled my eyes and lift my hands

Sihle: Help me sweetie with my bags

Dimpho: Okay Papa.

She helped her father with his things and they went outside. I brushed my forehead and stopped immediately when I noticed my daughter's cellphone on the table.

I bit my lip nervously and quickly jumped for it hiding it inside my boobs after I switched it off.

Sihle: Babe it's time to go

Me: Okay fine I'll drive

Dimpho barged in while we walked out.

Sihle: And then?

Dimpho: My phone I think I left it inside.

Me: Ayy ayy ayy userious hona joale? Dimpho time is not on our side Sesi your Dad can't miss this flight.

Dimpho: Bu-

Sihle: Dimples mntanam khawume kancinci maan, ixesha asinalo tuu (My child the phone can wait, we don't have time.) You can always look for it when you get back. Let's go.

She still scanned her eyes around

Me: Hareyee (Let's go)

Deeply I felt sorry for my daughter but I had to do this. I drove my husband to the airport and we waited for his flight.

He smiled and gave us both a hug.

Sihle: Please take care of yourselves ladies whilst I'm gone.

I smiled back

Me: We will Ratiwa and we'll make sure to be safe.

Dimpho: Ketla u hopola Papa (I'll miss you Dad)

She hugged him tightly

Sihle: Le nna my Dimples but it's only for a few days and I'll call frequently okay?

She nodded

Sihle: Yah

They broke the hug.

Sihle: My love

We kissed and I held on to his chin

Me: Put all your trust in me

Sihle: I do. I love you, both of you.

Me: We love you too and we wish you a safe journey.

His flight came.

Sihle: Thanks.

He took his bag and we walked and bid him goodbye as he waved to us. I'll miss him for this short while but it'll work in my favour.

I tried driving my daughter to a restaurant but she was very moody since she couldn't find her phone. Well she'll have to suck it up cause she won't get it for 2 days.

I dropped her home. She was surprised that I wasn't climbing off with her.

Dimpho: You're not getting off?

Me: I have to be somewhere else I'll be back soon lala.

She scoffed shaking her head.

Dimpho: And it hasn't been a second Dad's been gone and already you can't stick to your word.

I sighed.

Dimpho: Speaking about a responsible mother.

I abruptly shifted back looking at her

Me: Heeeey wena! Ke motho e moholo, ke batla tlhompho! Ha u na bua le 'na kamoo u ratang. (I'm your adult, I demand respect! You won't speak to me as you like)

Dimpho: Nx! Yah vele kea theoha (I'm getting off)

Me: Are you clicking your tongue at me?

She banged the door and stormed away.

Me: Ey! ngwananya enoa (this child)

I huffed and laid back. I began calling my business partner.

Me: Sylvia

Sylvia: Tlatsi

Me: Did you find her disguise?

Sylvia: Yes she's at my place

Me: I'm coming to see her just to make sure.

Sylvia: Yeah you can come check you know I only provide the best.

Me: Okay will be there in a few before we make it to the place. Are they ready?

Sylvia: Yah

Me: Great we'll speak soon.

Sylvia: Sure

We ended the call. I drove off somewhere I can get my daughter's phone open so that I can access everything inside. This is yet to get intriguing I can't wait.

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MAVUYI

My aunt and I were now walking back home. We were coming from the graveyard. Early this morning I decided to visit my parents' graves before we could start the day and got to talk to them just offloading everything I've felt all these years and

what's been happening in my life. I won't lie after asking for forgiveness & forgiving them that alone made me feel lighter.

Being back home did really indeed bring back old memories, but you know I shouldn't have held a grudge. I should've humbled myself and came back home. But I have no time machine to play for the "could've, should've" game. Right now is to face what is already here and move on with it, with a forgiving heart. Cause what I went through build me to a strong woman I am today.

Nosakhele: Ndinoyolo kakhulu mntanam ukwazile ukuya engcwabeni like Mamakho no Tatakho oko ba uyazi uba balele phi. (I'm so delighted that you went to see your mother & father's grave just to be aware of their resting place)

Me: Kuxole mna Dabawo kwangathi kuthuleke oyena mthwalo emagxeni am obe kade endi shixiliza phantsi. (I'm so delighted as well it feels like a heavy burden has been lifted off my shoulders)

Nosakhele: Good mntanam good! Wenza njalo umntu. Ungalilahli tuu ikhaya lakho, ikhaya laxatyiswa. (That's what a person should do. Don't abandon your home. You should always look out for your home)

Me: Okwenene Dabs (True indeed Auntie) thanks for all this and for welcoming me home.

Nosakhele: Haysuka manzi amancinci lawo ungakhathazeki. (It's nothing don't stress about it)

Me: Okay

Nosakhele: So uzohamba kanjani kengoku umsebenzi ka mzukulwane wam? (How will my grandchild's ceremony go?)

Me: Bathe ngo 2 zesiyo vela kuba ke ibhokwe ithengwa namhlanje. Umcimbi wok'theta ebuhlanti uzo qala namhlanje. (They said by 2pm we should be at the place since they're buying a goat today. The ceremony will start today)

Nosakhele: Oh hay noko lisavumile ixesha loba silungiselele. (The time is still on our side to prepare)

Me: Yes we have more than enough time to prepare.

My phone rang.

Me: Ngu mnyenam (It's my husband) I should to take this.

Nosakhele: Akunanto (It's fine)

I walked away to answer the call while smiling.

Me: Bab' Vilakazi

Bheki: Mam'Krila unjani? (how are you?)

Me: Ndivuka kak'hle unjani wena? (I'm waking up fine and how are you?)

Bheki: Kuyazameka nangona ngik'khumbula kabi sthandwa sam. (I'm coping though I miss you so bad)

I smiled once again

Me: Ndik'khumbula nam Tata (I miss you too) it's just a few days then I come back.

Bheki: Ngeke ngik'qambele amanga sthandwa sam kodwa ngiku jahele ngempela lokho. (I won't lie I am so in a hurry for that)

I giggled.

Bheki: So tell me how are things over there?

Me: Things are still going accordingly. The ceremony will start today and resume tomorrow. I also took time to visit my parents' grave.

Bheki: Kwaze kwa ngijabulisa ukuzwa lokho... ukuthi uxumane nabantu bakini mhlampe lokho kuzok'phathela ukuthula ubukade ubudinga empilweni yakho. (I'm happy to hear that... you, reconnecting with your family maybe that'll bring about the peace you've always needed in your life)

Me: Injalo Tata (True)

Bheki: So ukini? (you're at your place?)

Me: Hau! Where else would I be?

Bheki: Phela ngifuna ukwenza isiqiniseko. Ungu nkosikazi wami ngeke ngivumele bathathe ama chance lapho. (I just want to make sure you're my wife I won't allow people to take chances)

Me: Ngeke balenze ixesha (They won't make time)

Bheki: Haww usho? (You reckon?)

I chuckled as I could feel my Zulu man blushing through that tone of his voice

Me: Ewe. So how are you with my daughter?

Bheki: Sisahlelisene right (We're still okay) though she's really watching me like a hawk.

Me: Good, need I to stress when I have my own Jub Jub?

We giggled loudly as we continued conversating more. I really wished he was here to support me but work was getting in the way. Maybe next time he'll get to see where I was raised.

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LETTY

♪ " Ngisothandweni la

Bona ngehla nginyuka

Ngifuna wena

Ngibona wena wedwa [×2]

Angifun' omunye umuntu ×4

Baby ngise mathandweni ×4

uZandimaz, ahhh finish! "♪♪

I was doing my house chores while jamming to the hit lists. I was all alone Daddy was at work.

I sat down and chatted to this guy. I'm really taken by him I won't lie. Like at first I was afraid of him but him being in South Africa, I realized he isn't really a catfish and we grew close after my break up with my bf. I found out he was cheating, so I ended up unblocking the guy since I needed someone to talk to and how to handle the break up. Yes Dimpho is there, she's my best friend. She told me to be strong and take time to heal and move on. But on an honest truth though it's real hard cause this guy is my virgin breaker. Can't believe he did me like that, but this Aless guy has been showing up for me, he's really sweet and makes me forget about all the heartbreak saga.

My WhatsApp message notification blinged. It was a message from Dimpho.

Dimpho: "Hey mngee 😊. I hope you're doing good. Dude I woke up to great news that I have a job interview today. 😊 Mom's been pushing me to hunt for a part time job, I did and so I'm called in for an interview. Wish me luck!"

I immediately pressed the VN icon and screamed.

Me: Aaaaah!!! Friend I'm so excited for you those are really good news. I'm damn sure you'll get this job.

She began to type. I expected a VN from her as well but ke.

Dimpho: "Thanks for having faith in me but I'm so nervous. Chommie can you accompany me?"

Me: "No problem hun 😊. Venue & time?"

Dimpho: "You'll find me in Plein Street around 12h00."

Me: "Okay will be there"

Dimpho: "😊😊😊😊"

I shook my head smiling over our texts. I was really happy for my friend and I'll give her all the support she needs.

My phone rang. I smiled wider seeing who the caller is.

Me: Hey

Aless: My Calmente (Soothing place)

Me: Aless

There's something about his voice I can't really depict.

Aless: How are you my Queenita?

I chuckled.

Me: I'm doing fine and you?

Aless: I'm doing fine too. Something to cheer you up

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have you received your gift?

Me: Wha- Ohhh! (Screaming)

I saw a guy in a nice suit standing on the door.

Him: Madame Vilakazi these are for you. From Mr Quiróz. I'll need your signature here.

I took the pen and signed.

Me: Thank you.

He bowed a little and gave me the gift box before he made his way out.

Aless: So?

Me: Just received the gift right now. How do you know where I live?

Aless: I'm a man of many surprises

Me: That's creepy you know

Aless: But I'll never hurt you that I promise you.

I blushed a little.

Aless: So are we opening the gift?

Me: Oh yeah.

I unwrapped the gift and first thing I noticed was a rose with a note: "Just to lighten your day" followed by a Ferrero Rocher chocolate. My smile got more wider.

Me: Ohhh my word! This is so sweet

Aless: You like it?

Me: I love it!

Aless: I'm glad. This is still small but I don't wanna push it. Just wanna learn few things about you.

(Silence)

Aless: For now this is just me saying thank you for helping me find a nanny for my Mom. I really appreciate your help, things are getting much better now at home. Thanks to you. I can't wait to meet you, only when you comfortable.

I smiled

Me: I did what I could. But I'm still sitting on us meeting.

Aless: You may take all the time you need.

Me: Yeah thanks again for the gifts. I have to go, I have to be else where.

Aless: Okay please alert me when you arrive at the place and when you get back home. I just wanna assure you're safe.

Me: Okay will do so

Aless: You may get on with your day Calmente.

Me: Bye

I dropped the call while smiling. After Dad, haven't came across a guy that cares about me like him. The time was 10:50am I have to bath and prepare for the day. Funny how I never told anyone about this guy not even Dimples.

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ASHANTI

Happy was me, meeting my family for the first time. I was just glad to have people around and make the house feel alive. I just like how busy it gets. Funny enough I don't remember anything about them but I was really warming up to them. I met my mother too few days ago, with her I already knew cause

immediately when I saw her flash of memories came in strong. Lol if I remember quite well we all used to call her Mavuyi. My Daddy's family is the one I'm not getting any memories of, I'm guessing we're meeting for the first time.

I remember how I came about but I'm not holding it against them. I'm just happy to have a family and it's said after my ceremony my life will go back to normal. I might remember everything, and choose who I want to be and what lifestyle I want to live. This is just nerve wrecking. Apart it all I'm super excited to also know that I have a sister who's three years younger than me. Argh! Besides my grandmother I've also got myself another friend. It really made me happy knowing that I have a sister and it seemed like she was also excited to have me.

Kolosa: Done!

I smiled

Me: Thank you. Now what do we call this?

Kolosa: Imbola

Now she had finished painting my face with a white Mbola.

Me: Now what else should we do? Can I wear a headwrap?

Kolosa: Hell no sweetie! Hell no I'm gonna style your hair.

Me: Style my... short hair?

She giggled

Kolosa: Look I know what you're thinking but don't shoot me for trying. Like damn! I've always wanted a sister in my life to play and doll with. Here's the opportunity and you gonna short-live it? Ha.a sana I'm gonna gel your short hair like nobody's business.

Me: Hee tshini kaloku

I was trying so hard to learn this difficult language lol don't blame me.

Kolosa: Eweeh! Ibe ngu lence emntaneni

Me: And what is lence?

Kolosa: Okay see when a cat licks its fur?

I nodded

Kolosa: And the fur gets too wet and sticky with a push-back? That's how yours' gonna look. A true definition of ulence.

I giggled loudly while tilting my head backwards.

Me: Hayi I used to think my granny is dramatic yet it's the language that's over-exaggerated

Kolosa: I'm telling you and it's still a long road to go.

She came with the hair products and rinsed my hair while we were having the girl's talk. I liked her we're vibing so very well. She styled my short hair with a gel and made nice baby hair edges. I looked wow though the Mbola interrupted my beauty from coming out.

She also gave me her white dress to wear. It was her old dress cause she's a bit thicker than me.

Kolosa: You're always staring at that wristband.

I started hiding my arm.

Me: I believe it comes from someone special.

Kolosa: Mhm bu boyfriend bu so?

We chuckled and out of the blue she gagged and held her mouth running out to vomit.

Me: Kolosa? Eish.

She's been vomiting endlessly after the healer gave her something to drink and she's complaining alot about peeing frequently. They say it's part of healing her. I really hope she gets well.

I walked around and I saw my Dad sitting alone. I sat with him and tried bonding with him though he seemed like a miserable man. Then later on my cousin from Soweto arrived, also Mavuyi & Nosakhele came too. I was more than happy to see my granny she was beautiful. The place was soon getting gathered with family and people from the community. The men had come back with the goat already.

My ceremony began. I sat on the grassmat with Mavuyi. All men were outside on the altar and my Uncle spoke louder for everyone to hear in Xhosa but I couldn't understand what he was saying. After a while the goat made a loud noise, everyone gave thanks & cheered.

Mavuyi told me that the ceremony is approved by the ancestors.

My uncle walked with the goat inside closer to where I sat. My uncle spoke to me as he faced it towards me, it made more of that "bleh" sound. The women inside ululated more. Everything that's happening is as how I had dreamt it even my uncle was in the dream too.

He then left with the goat to slaughter it and called me to the altar to inhale the smoke. Everything else will be continued tomorrow but it was a beautiful day to rekindle with relatives.

He placed his hand over my shoulder

Uncle: My child your ceremony was a success. You've been taught about your clan, tell me how we should call you from now on?

I looked at the men around the altar and felt shy afraid of making a mistake as they were all concentrating at me.

Me: Tamkhulu I'm not perfect but there's that part in my clan that says ooJeke...

Uncle: Tsi madoda come with it my child.

Me: I like that part more therefore I'd like being addressed as MaJack.

All the man burst into laughter some cheered. My Uncle was way too proud as he pat my shoulder.

Uncle: I've never been too proud in my life my child. Never have I felt this proud about someone. You're progressing so well and it's a great accomplishment for us. We are truly blessed to have you as our child. Camagu MaJack

I nod a little.

Me: Mnkabane

Uncle: You can be free and go play with other kids.

I chuckled.

Dad: Come share a plate with your father before you go.

I did exactly that and after went to mingle with the rest of the family. I saw Kolosa coming with the healer, they made their way to me.

Her: Hi Ncumo

Me: Gogo

Her: Can we all go to somewhere private?

Me: Uhm okay let me first inform my mother inside.

Her: It's okay I'll wait.

I told Mavuyi she agreed and then we walked to another different house all 3 of us and got to the Rondavel. I saw 3 other healers inside or should I say trainees. All drums were there and ready, we were ordered to take off our shoes before we enter. I wonder what's gonna happen. Both Kolosa & I were left confused.

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LETTY

I've been at this place for about 35 minutes standing outside and looking around. Didn't see any trace of Dimpho and I tried calling her she wasn't picking.

My phone beeped. It was her SMS.

Dimpho: "Get inside the building mnggee, sorry I had delayed was still getting sorted in the queue."

I bite my tongue a bit pissed and sighed texting her back.

Me: "Friend am I really needed here?"

Dimpho: "Yes please come, I'm in a queue can't get out it's moving quick"

Me: "Okay"

I tucked my phone in my pocket and got inside. I did see people in the queue but couldn't find her. I asked around for Dimpho also in the reception, they told me she was already in.

I saw a white lady coming out calling for me, Okay isn't that awkward? Like my friend is still there busy with the interview why am I called then?

I got inside the room and saw her seated there she was still facing me with her back. When she turned looking at me, I

jumped. It wasn't her! It was a yellowbone lady looking just like her and imposing her style.

I saw the conniving look the white woman made and I moved back till I bumped to something hard behind me. I screamed seeing a big buffed guy behind me and tried escaping out.. but I was grabbed back by my hair and felt an injection being jabbed on my neck.

I staggered in a disoriented locomotion since I was dizzy and collapsed down having a blurry vision. I saw navy heels appearing and disappearing in my eyes as I shrunk them every minute.

" You've done a good job, let's prepare for the shipment."

The voice sounded familiar. I looked at the shoes again.

Me: (muttering) Pierre... Cardin...

I dropped my head down and lost my conscious right there.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 31

ASHANTI

I was placed in the centre surrounded by three of them, each had their own drums ready to play. Gogo took Kolosa aside on the other room, while leading a song.

Mhise: "Ingwe emabalabala.."

Them: "Ingwe emabalabala iyandilandela."

They began playing drums while singing.

Mhise: "Iyandilandela"

Them: "Iyho yho! Iyandilandela.

(Ingwe emabalabala)... ?"

I started being overwhelmed by anxiety, the noise got to me. I covered my ears and bent down closing my eyes. Something pushed me down by the knees and I bowed. My head felt like cracking. For a second I heard the drums stopping. They continued singing without them.

I was calming, and slowly began liking their sound. It felt like my soul was starting to connect with it. Gogo made things worse by blowing the whistle, I revived up by force like something took over me and I began dancing a dance I had no idea of. But felt like the song was leading me to the dance.

They accompanied me with drums again.

I swung my arms around as I shook my shoulders in a way, then would stomp my feet and shake my hips. The trainees were smiling at me seemed like I stunned them with the dance. Gogo was excitedly clapping her hands too rhythmically to the drums. I could see she was taken too.

She then went back to the room.

As I was dancing, I saw myself in a different room. I was wearing pink tights & spots bra, dancing what seemed like ballet it looked like I was doing rehearsals.

From there I saw a white woman coming in and joined me. I felt a motherly bond with her. All memories of her came back flashing.

Me: Laura!

I flinched holding my cheek while still dancing feeling a slap effect on my cheek.

I saw her slapping Mavuyi out of anger and swearing at her. Then I fell down and looked besides me seeing Mavuyi falling down next to me from the chair.

Me: Aahhhh (Whimpers)

The drums stopped. Gogo got out of the room.

Mhise: No don't stop Mathwasa, she's awakening. No matter what happens even if she runs around and throws herself continue playing the drums.

They nodded and continued playing.

Mhise: Harder.

The drums went on harder it drove me up to stand and continue with my dance as I squashed my head and jumping foot by foot.

Mavuyi was running after it seemed like she had a fight of her lifetime. I bent my left leg feeling the gunshot landing on her.

Everything else continued playing out.. Laura's evil scheme, the lie she had created about my brother's accident. Up to when we had an accident on our way to the airport.

"Ingwe emabalabala iyandilandela?"

My vision ended with me seeing the leopard. I stopped the dancing and looked down on my tummy, touching it. And again fell on my knees seeing Mayihlome's smiling face. I sat down in silence in a grieving manner.

Mhise came out raising her fist high for them to stop. I heard Kolosa in the other room gagging and coughing non-stop like she was throwing up.

Mhise: Please follow me Ncumo

Without hesitation I followed her to the other room where, I saw Kolosa curling on the grassmat crying silently while hugging her tummy. Seemed like she was in pain and she was only wearing a towel.

There were candles around, basin containing of water and Gogo burnt an incense.

Mhise: Lie next to your sister

I did. She moved the enamel plate of smoke more closer to me. While calling on my ancestors and speaking in deep Xhosa I couldn't understand what she was saying.

Mhise: Touch your sister's tummy

I touched Kolosa's tummy and seconds later I saw the leopard appearing as Gogo kept talking. Seemed like I'm the only one who could see it, it surrounded us and came to stand above our heads.

It turned its head looking down on Kolie, then walked to stand next to her. It lift its foot and placed it not far from my hand, on Kolosa's belly, then made a faint growl facing up.

Gogo closed her eyes and smiled.

Mhise: I'm feeling a great presence with us.

Me: Our guardian is present.

Mhise: Camagu!

She bowed. I did too.

Me: Chosi.

Mhise: They are happy and pleased with the session we had.

Kolie, tell me how do you feel right now?

She sat up straight only by then the leopard moved away.

Kolosa: I'm feeling much better, the pain is gone. Just...

She held on to her abdomen with a smile.

Kolosa: It's just a feeling I cannot describe.

Mhise: Go for a check up again and you'll see a miracle.

Kolosa: Huh??

Mhise: What I'm meaning to say is that you'll be able to carry children.

She screamed in excitement and clapped her hands thanking the ancestors, me and Gogo. We laughed and I noticed the leopard sitting down in front of us staring at us and disappeared while making a lil smile. Gogo looked at me.

Mhise: Though I'll have to cleanse you 2 days to come. Cause they've shown me about your miscarriage during the accident. That's why in our session you were overwhelmed by grief.

I nodded while looking down. I was still overwhelmed by it.

I remember Mayihlome, I remember Limile. I loved Mayihlome & Limile was annoying me to the core at first but... Seeing him in the hospital being there for me and helped me & Laura, it meant a lot and I sure developed feelings for him right there and then.

Me: So Gogo there's this-

Mhise: Woah woah isn't that my brother's wristband?

I frowned

Me: What? Your brother?

Mhise: Limile, I swear it's his.

Me: Lime yah I know him and it's definitely his. We work together, he's your brother?

Mhise: My twin brother

Me: Whaat!! Omg actually to realize, you do look alike. Wow.

Mhise: A wow indeed. Let's dress up and get going they must be asking for us back in the house... Lemme go sort my ladies.

We nodded. And she went out to go sort the trainees while I smiled at my "over the moon" sister. I'm so happy for her right now.

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SANDRO

Mamá's speech therapy session just ended and I spoke to the lady asking about her progress.

Her: She isn't doing bad though she's a bit difficult. Seems like she isn't concentrated in what we do. It's like there's something occupying her mind disturbing her from reality. I think your Mom is still in trauma. Find her a psychologist or psychiatrist to help her. But I'll keep having sessions with her let's hope it'll get better from here.

I huffed and nodded

Me: Okay I'll consider that

Her: Till next time

Me: Thanks till next time.

She left and I made few breathing exercises before entering her room. She was nicely seated in her wheelchair staring at the view over her windows. It's what she prefers lately.

Me: Mamá

I walked closer pulling the wheelchair around so that she can face me.

Me: Mamá listen I'll need you to cooperate with the speech therapist as you heal. Or else they're gonna take you away from us.

She kept quiet. I glanced down then back at her.

Me: I have found where Ashanti is and I'll be bringing her back home.

She lift her head up in a fast reflex.

Me: I promise you by tomorrow she'll be here.

The accident has left my Mom disabled. She'll live the rest of her life in a wheelchair and it injured her badly and affected her head too. She's struggling to talk and everything of hers is slow but she does have memory of us, all she needs is tender care. But amazingly where Ashanti's involved she's quick, she might

heal fast as long as we keep on mentioning Bebita. And as hard as it is

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I've come in terms of accepting that she'll forever love her more than me.

I held her hand.

Me: I'm leaving tonight to bring her back. Ma C will sleepover to look after you.

I leaned forward and kissed her forehead

Me: I love you

Ma C for MaCele walked in. She's her nanny, I asked her to sleep over and look after her because I'm leaving and I'll pay her an extra overtime money. She was fine and brought food to her.

Ma C: Sir

Me: Ma C, I'll see you. Take care.

Ma C: Alright.

I walked out and kept on checking my phone. It frustrated me not receiving a single message from Calmente telling me

whether she has arrived safe or not. Considering what's happening to women these days I cannot rest at all.

I continued dialing her for the 10th time and without luck, I threw my phone away.

Me: Damn! Letty You're stressing me out.

Never for once did I think I'd catch deep feelings for her. Me being close to her was ofcourse not for a good course at first, had to tail her for my own devious reasons getting updated about her Mom & Ashanti since I knew all about the truth. But somewhere along the line I've ran soft for her... Staring just at her beauty sort of tamed my fire and beast inside me, that's why I'm calling her my soothing place. I've never come across such beauty in my life and I just fell inlove with her.

Haven't told her though for now just want my actions to speak louder. I don't wanna scare her cause we have a huge age difference. I'm willing to wait for her to grow first.

Dwayne came all prepared for our trip and was just talking on how we should go about this. But my mind was just not here.

I dropped my bags down.

Me: You know what? Let's just forget about this whole thing.

Dwayne: Excuse me?

Me: Ashanti and the whole thing of going to the village, it has to wait. I'm worried about a certain girl and I have to find her.

He chuckled while raising his eyebrows and moved back, taking a good look at me.

Dwayne: Didn't know you'd settle for a South African woman.

Me: She's not my woman

Dwayne: Then why would she be more important than your sister?

Me: Enough with the chitchat and let's go find her!

I said sternly.

Dwayne: Okay fine. Where are we even gonna start?

I grabbed my keys.

Me: We'll see where the road leads us.

I got out with him following behind me. I hope she's fine wherever she is.

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MAVUYI

It was late, my aunt and I were preparing to leave the place and go home. We met with the girls as we headed to the gate.

Me: Girls! Beniphi? (Where were you?)

Kolosa: We were bonding

I smiled

Me: Mhm I like the sister sister bond.

We chuckled.

Nosakhele: Anisafani lonto (You're look alike though)

Me: Do you see..

We laughed.

Ashanti: Are you leaving?

Me: Yes baby it's late we have to get home.

Ashanti: Can I have a word with you before you go?

I looked at my aunt.

Nosakhele: Ku right nzokhabe ndiy'cutha (It's fine I'll walk so long)

Kolosa: Nzok'khapha (I'll walk with you)

They left. I sighed and smiled at my daughter.

Me: Your ceremony was a success. How do you feel?

Ashanti: Happy

I nodded.

Ashanti: Plus I remember everything.

Me: Oh?? Wow that's... that was quick.

Ashanti: And I know what Laura did to you?

I immediately tensed up

Ashanti: I'm sorry for all the terrible things she did to you. You almost lost your life and... I'm so ashamed to be brought up by such a woman. She must've fooled us with her kindness.

She looked at me.

Ashanti: You didn't deserve all of that. I'm gonna deal with her.

Me: No Ncumo you don't have to

Ashanti: I will Mavuyi I sure will! I did tell her that she shouldn't dare think of putting you in any harm's way and she did anyway. No one should do you like that and I'm gonna deal with her.

Me: Ncumo...

Ashanti: By the way was thinking of going to the home affairs and make my first name Ncumolwam.

I widened my eyes and beamed in joy while clapping my hands.

Me: Really??

She nodded. I closed my eyes facing up.

Me: Oh Lord this is like a dream come true. I never knew this time would come. Aah! thank you.

I hugged her and we later broke it.

Ashanti: So other than Kolosa do I have other siblings?

Me: Well yah cause I also have another daughter, Letty

Ashanti: Mmh how lucky I am. I mean I grew up with only a brother, only to be blessed with both sisters whom I've always longed for.

Me: Must be wonderful neh? Okay let me call so that we can Hala at her, how about that?

Ashanti: Please do that

I dialed my daughter but she wasn't picking.

Me: Argh she isn't picking. Tough luck then, I'll resort to showing you her pictures.

I paged through my gallery and showed her pictures of my daughter.

Ashanti: Oh Heaven's descend down to earth!

I chuckled.

Ashanti: Wow Mavuyi, such beauty? God took his time creating this one. She's so beautiful man. I can't wait to meet her, how old is she?

Me: 17 she always says the same about you

Ashanti: No I'm actually taking you home. Tell me more about my baby sister.

I chuckled and we walked down to my place. Never in a million years imagined that I'd bond with my daughter or even find her after so many years. I'm so glad that things are working out for us very well.

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BHEKI

I had knocked off. My transport was driving me back home whilst I was on a call with my wife.

Me: Hay kuhle uma uthi umsebenze uhambe kahle. (It's nice to know that the ceremony went well)

Mavuyi: Ewe so tomorrow will be the last day and I might come back home.

Me: I can't wait. Are you bonding with your daughter?

Mavuyi: A lot and she's regained her memory back. How amazing the ancestors work.

Me: Really amazing.

Mavuyi: Ndimxelele nango Letty (I told her about Letty) she can't wait to meet her.

Me: Aww Letty will be happy to hear that

Mavuyi: And akafumaneki kwenzeka ntoni ngaye. (She's unavailable what's up with her?)

Me: Err angaz sthandwa sam awuthi ngimzame ngise ndleleni ephindela ekhaya. (I have no idea my love let me try her, I'm on my way going back home though)

Mavuyi: I'll hear from you.

Me: Yebo, ngiyak'thanda yezwa? (I love you, okay)

Mavuyi: I love you too

Me: Sobe sikhulume (We'll chat soon)

We hang up.

20 minutes later I got dropped at my place. I checked the time it was 8:30pm. Yet the lights were off.

Bheki: Aww pho lengane ilale early ka so? (Did this child sleep so early?)

I opened the gate and locked it making my way to the house. I pushed the door it was locked. I knocked.

Bheki: Lethokuhle! Wee Letty vula les'cabha. (Open this door)

I knocked again. It's impossible for her to not be home by this time. I clicked my tongue and took out my keys then unlocked.

I switched on the lights.

Bheki: Aw'phekanga no pheka (You didn't even cook)

I walked around and noticed how quiet it was. It could be possible that this child is not home.

Me: Lethokuhle??

I looked for her in all the rooms. I panicked seeing that she wasn't here.

Me: Umuntu sekalingwa ke manje (I'm getting tested right now)

I called her it rang twice and reached voicemail after. I made a voice message.

Me: Yi wena ntombazane ndini ukuphi? Usung' khohliwe ukuthi ngiyamkhanda umuntu ongalaleli imithetho yam. Sabelo

ucingo, ubuyele khaya ngingeka sangani. (Hey you little girl where are you? Have you forgotten that I beat someone who's not abide to my rules. Answer your phone and come back home before I go crazy)

I ended the voice message and sat down sighing heavily as I rubbed my eyes.

Me: Nkosi ngizothini kwi Nkosikazi eyy ave zinga laleli lezingane. (Lord what will I say to my wife, these kids don't listen)

I thought of tracing her whereabouts and I did exactly that. I sprang up seeing that she was heading to Tzaneen.

I hang my hands on my head as my whole body started heating up.

Me: Hay hay hay ngeke kunga nyeka ke manje.

I went out don't know where but I have to make a way of fetching my daughter back home. This can't happen, I can't even get to think of the worst. My wife's been through the most.

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LETTY

I felt something vibrating in my pocket. I had to force my eyes open being welcomed by a stinging pain in my head.

I felt something moving and bumping like I was in a moving vehicle. My arms were tied behind me same with my legs. My mouth was gagged. I'm taking a wild guess that I'm inside a lorry, it was very dark inside couldn't even see myself.

I screamed while moving myself. I continued screaming hoping to be heard but that's impossible.

I began crying painfully as it dawned to me what will happen next. I'm scared I don't think I'll survive this. It shattered knowing that Mom will go through the same pain again. Also Dad must be so distressed wherever he is, he doesn't deserve this with his only child.

I looked at my pocket. Maybe he could trace me and find me cause I still have my phone with me. I have to try and get it off the pocket, I don't know how I'm going to do that but I have to do it and hide it.

Another plan B was, I have to get closer to the corner of this lorry, it's a pity it's not a car where I was gonna kick off the headlamp from the trunk and signal out for help. I don't know how I'm gonna go on about this since it's a different case.

I'll have to pray that if it's a door it's not complete shut down underneath and that it's still daylight, so that I can find something to discharge out of the vehicle which will alert and bring attention to other drivers on the road of something that's odd. Hope all this will work but I should first work on getting my phone out first. Crying won't help at this moment I have to toughen up before things get more brutal for me. If I fail accomplishing this, I'll never be saved again.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 32

LETTY

Okay it was now time to implement the plan. Getting my phone out of my pocket has been a great hassle I won't lie. Whatever I tried to do was just impossible. So one failed attempt, I should focus on another one. I don't know how I'm gonna carry on with this cause I have poor eyesight in the dark.

I hopped with my butt trying to get to the corner, mind you I was sweating the temperature was real high in here. I hopped non-stop till my hips began to hurt. I gradually lift my hand from the back and fumbled around. I hopped once more and touched.

I closed my eyes and sighed. It indeed was a door. I leaned against it as if I was gonna lie down, fidgeting with my hand, checking if it was shut underneath, but there was little air space left. Atleast that was something, now second plan is to find something, anything to try and deposit out. My disadvantage was the darkness.

I had to move with my butt to just search around something though I couldn't see, or stretch my arms that far. I felt my feet kicking something by accident. I kicked and kicked more to realize that it was just a box. I moved more closer to it, seemed

like it was packed all the way up. Okay! Now my Gymnastics skills should come in handy.

I moved against the wall with my back and pushed my knees up then I tried getting up, but I fell first due to imbalance.

I tried again then I was up on my feet. The rope was really tight on my legs I won't be able to walk. So I jumped a little closer to where I estimated was the box. I leaned closer with my chest to distinguish the length of the boxes, it reached up to my neck. That was good.

I laid my face on it and brushed my face against it till I felt a sellotape. I moved my lips a little and gnashed my teeth on the cloth, while protuding my teeth. It was hard really hard and straining, but I have to do this by all means and find a way to tear this tape out with my teeth.

After forever it got open, the road was bumpy I'd stop and fall against the lorry then balance myself straight again. I unfold the box open with my head then placed the tip of my nose to feel what was inside, I felt another packet of something. I needed no rocket science to be aware that it was drugs. This will work perfectly then, cause I'll deposit the powder out. I have faith I'll complete this mission.

I pushed myself hard against it so that the boxes could fall. And I could feel many of them falling down. I jumped my way to sit

down but the lorry took a turn by force, I got thrown against the corner that my head got hit. I was out immediately there and then.

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SANDRO

Dwayne: What are we doing here? Like seriously. You're basically sending me straight to jail.

Me: Okay this is not about you Dwayne.

I huff

Me: I'm so anticipated to go in

Dwayne: And do what exactly? You're trespassing.

Me: Just... I'll figure out when I'm there.

Dwayne: Sandro

I kept quiet holding on to the steering while looking at the house. I was so full of doubts but I can't turn back now that I'm already here.

Dwayne: Sandro no me digas que es la niña. (Don't tell me it's the little girl)

I looked at him.

Me: No es lo que piensas (It's not what you think.) I'm doing this for Bebita. This is her sister I think it'll hurt her.

Dwayne: Hurt her how? Cause they hardly know each other.

Me: Dwayne don't be a dickhead they'll meet one day. Once her real mother is upset Ashanti will never be fine cause she's her weak spot.

Dwayne: Funny you couldn't consider that when we kidnapped her.

Me: Just fuck off Dwayne! Won't stand being discouraged by you.

I climbed off.

Dwayne: Alessandro! Think about this man.

I stood by the gate and noticed it was locked. I tried hitting it, Dwayne stood behind me.

Dwayne: Man stop this delusion okay? It's not too late. Let's just get away from here.

I wiped my face and turned grabbing him by his jacket.

Me: Just back off. If you don't wanna help me it's fine just simply back off! I'll do this by myself. What I know is that I

wouldn't feel like this for nothing. So if you won't be useful... just mind your business.

I pushed him away and jumped over the fence. I know this is the bravest act ever. I don't mind what they do to me just as long as Letty is safe... that alone will be my peace.

I protested standing there and finally knocked. I placed my hands inside my pocket.

The door opened it was a different woman, I was expecting the father. She screamed I quickly fled in and pushed her in while covering her mouth and kicked the door shut.

Me: Sshhh, ssshhh, no need to overreact I'm not gonna hurt you.

She continued crying.

Me: Hey hey I said I'm not gonna hurt you.

She shook her head rapidly

Me: Just promise me you're not gonna scream.

She quietened down.

Me: Promise?

She nodded slowly

Me: Good. I'm letting you go.

I sceptically moved my hand off her mouth. She gasped and panted.

Her: What do you want?

Me: How about you drink yourself some water and we talk when we're calmed.

She did exactly that. I looked around.

Me: Is it you alone in the house?

She paused drinking her water and dropped the glass down trembling. I lift my hands.

Me: Look I may look scary but I'm not here to hurt you. I just need to know if Letty is home & safe.

She kept quiet

Me: Ma'm please just tell me

She blinked avoiding eye contact with me. I know you can't look at my eyes for long.

Her: She... She...

The door got open and who I'm assuming is the father of the house got in with other two other men.

He walked and stopped while looking at us.

Him: Mgodoyi waphi lo? (Who's this moron?)

I gulped and we all exchanged strange looks.

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ASHANTI

My ceremony was done. We ate the meat it was a real challenge knowing that it was required for me to eat almost the whole meat. Like I was literally forced to eat. Couldn't understand why Mavuyi didn't eat it yet she's my mother. She explained that she can't eat it because she doesn't belong in the Malahle family. And she has never had an Imbeleko done for her since she comes from a family that's strictly Christians. They weren't big on doing things related to the ancestors. She even went as far as saying if she ate the meat she'd choke to death because of that reason. It was shocking to learn such things I'm introduced to. All she could do was to invigilate me to eat the meat finish.

Mavuyi: Sweetie I think this is more than enough.

Me: Are you sure?

Mavuyi: Ewe yhu hayi Ashanti

We giggled.

Kolosa: Ngoba ke it'll take longer to travel to Gauteng more especially if you travel by bus.

Mavuyi: Guys can you see me right?

We nodded

Mavuyi: See this figure? I still wanna maintain it. So these goodies are more than enough. I promise you guys.

We chuckled.

Me: Sure you won't need anything else?

Mavuyi: Tuu.

Me: Okay let's go get your hair done then.

Mavuyi: Hayini lomntana!

They laughed. I just wanted to create a bond. I'm spoiling her because she's leaving. I'll miss her. I'm leaving 2 days later cause Gogo will first cleanse me.

We got done in the salon. She made an Upstyle hairstyle. Her beauty came out more, heads were turning vha! I'm speaking

about guys who were my age and younger. They were drooling at her endlessly.

Me: You look like my sister

She giggled

Mavuyi: Hayisuka a 46 year old yonke?

Me: Yho me and Kolosa be looking like your aunties. Our age mates are skipping us.

We laughed uncontrollably. She was really beautiful no lie. I drove her to the bus station, I borrowed a car from our relative we left back home.

I hate goodbyes. We all hugged.

Me: So this it?

Mavuyi: Yeah. I had a lovely weekend with you girls.

Kolosa: We did too.

We smiled at each other.

Me: But we'll meet again when I fly over there.

Mavuyi: Looking forward to it. Aaah my girls, goodbye. I'll miss you.

Me: We'll miss you too. Bye

She hugged and kissed my cheek. Then hugged Kolosa too and waved goodbye at us. I sort of felt teary watching her go away or am I melodramatic? Hay maan I'm too attached I don't know whether that should make me guilty or not.

Kolosa hugged me.

Kolosa: You got only me for now

Me: Yeah yeah

We walked back to the car and I drove us home.

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SANDRO

Him: Ndileka

Her: Bhekisizwe

Him: Why am I seeing strangers in my house?

Her: He just-

Me: I'm sorry I had to invade your space but I wanted to know how Letty is doing.

He jumped for me and collided me with the wall.

Him: Nhlobo yini ek'hlanganisa ne ndodakazi yam hii? Nhlobo yini!!!? (What business do you have with my daughter?)

Okay this was nothing to me and I'm not about to fight an old man.

Me: Okay okay let's calm down now

Him: Ngang'tsheli ngo calm down emzini wam. Uyang'jwayela wena ng'jwayela masimba! (Don't tell me to calm down. You're taking me for a piece)

His friends moved him from me. Telling him to calm down.

Him: Nx!

Me: Just tell me what's going on.

He ran back towards me but he quickly got blocked by his friends.

Me: Okay maybe it's because I didn't introduce myself. I'm Sandro, Ashanti's brother I've been talking to your daughter since I wanted to be informed about my sister. I-

Him: Wuwe iqela beli thumba inkosikazi yam? (Did you take part in kidnapping my wife?)

I kept quiet.

Him: Khuluma! (Speak!)

Me: Maybe if you speak English I'd be able to answer you.

In split seconds I felt a punch landing on my face. I moved back while massaging my jaws.

Him: Ngang'tsheli ukuthi ngenzeni endlini yam!! (Don't tell me what to do in my house)

Lady: Hay ima ihla Bhuti, ihla (Calm down)

I held my jaw.

Me: You may beat me as much as you like. But I'm not the enemy here you may never know maybe I might be help to whatever's frustrating you.

(Silence)

Me: Just tell me what's going on. Where is Letty?

He made a sad frown covering his face and had a moment to himself. My heart skipped as I looked at them.

Me: What is it?

Friend: Letty is heading out of country.

Me: Out of what!!? (Scoffs) You must be kidding. There's no way she'd be doing that.

Bheki: You think this is a joke?

I looked at his miserable face.

Me: Ofcourse not.

Bheki: You have any idea how I feel right now? Seeing my child go further and further not knowing how I'll get her back. Seeing myself fail as a father and a husband. My wife won't take this well what am I gonna say to her? And what are they doing to my child right now.

I blew some air in my fists this is too much but I don't wanna be dramatic and sell myself.

Me: Okay no sir don't say that. Don't lose hope we're gonna find her.

Bheki: How?

Me: I'll help you.

He gave me an unsure look

Bheki: What's in it for you?

Me: Nothing, absolutely nothing

Bheki: Don't fool us

Me: This is me making up what I've done please, allow me.

He looked at others and nodded

Me: Right. I'm sure you were tracing her movements. Can we try her current location?

The men got right to it. The lady spoke looked at Letty's father.

Her: I'll be going home.

Bheki: Okay Ndileka thanks for helping.

She smiled and left

Friend: She's in Maputo.

I hissed and kicked the wall. I lift my hand in embarrassment and apologized for doing that.

Bheki: Ohhh! ingane yam bay'saphi Bandla. (Where are they taking my child)

I walked closer to their laptops.

Me: Can we check all tracing records please.

The guy did so and scrolled down.

Me: Woah woah woah I know this one.

Bheki: It was in 13h30 and it looks familiar.

I pressed my eyes shut and banged my head in anger.

Me: Shit! Shit! Shit! Jez.

Bheki: Say what?

I cleared my throat as I fixed my posture. Hoping I wasn't too loud.

Me: Uhm what I mean is that I know that building. It's a location mostly used to scam women for interviews, it's a... uh a trafficking operational.

Bheki: INI??? (WHAT???)

Me: Relax sir, I assure you that I'm gonna find your daughter all in one piece. Just trust me, I'm not just any ordinary guy I make things happen. I owe it to you.

I looked at the location and ran my hand over my mouth thinking how will I tackle this. I mean Jezzman is no bull crap, he's a hard nut to crack, heartless as they come. He's a bull dog in the game. I may dodge all bullets but not one specific from him. Everyone knows of him and what he does. Shaking in my boots is what I'm currently experiencing right now. I'm risking my whole life but I hope it's all worth it. Sinaloa & Jezmir cartel have formed an alliance. I belong in Sinaloa we specialize only in drugs. Jezmir which is Jezzman's they do everything, but the field they're mastering is sex trade and killing. Drug wise, we are the champs and we are the providers for them. They've kept us running and untouched in Mexico. Though this is a dangerous business cause I keep ticking people off. I hope us being alliances will work on my advantage though I might be a dead man walking afterwards.

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MALWANDE (NDILEKA'S 2ND SON)

I drove back from work and made it in my woman's place. I'm sleeping over for the night. My sugar Mamma, lives by herself in this big house. She told me her husband passed away many many years ago, her kids they live overseas and have done well for themselves. She has 2 children, girls.

I took off my shirt and dressed roughly. I have some of my clothes left here.

I heard her singing while I just wore my shorts with nothing above.

Me: You're so happy what's going on with you? Should I be worried?

Sylvia: Come on! Why would you be? Stop being insecure. You know I no longer have power to attract. You're only mine.

I squint my eyes

Me: Then why are you so happy? Cause I haven't seen you for a day.

She chuckles and threw the bag next to me.

Me: What's this?

Sylvia: Open..

Me: What is in here? Suku ndoyikisa babe (Don't scare me)

Sylvia: Vhura! (Open!)

Me: Okay okay... Should I expect an explosion?

She spanked my shoulder impatiently. I laughed.

Sylvia: Heeey! Mukomana wee stop playing and open.

I shrugged.

Me: Alright.

I opened the bag and exclaimed as I jumped up on my feet.

Me: Sylv!!!

She smiled wider.

Sylvia: What? Way'thanda (Do you like it?)

Me: (stammering) Where... Where.. Hun.. Where?

I pointed as I struggled to breathe and blew air to myself.

Me: Where did you get such money?

Sylvia: You shouldn't be stressing about that. Tell me... what car would you like to upgrade to? Huh?

Me: Sylvia-

Sylvia: Lamborghini isn't bad. You have to be high there and it should show that you're well taken care of. Start browsing for that car and go spoil yourself with the boyzins.

Me: Sylvia!

She was already out. I held my waist looking back at the money.

Me: Whaaat.

I touched and felt it, it was real. What the hell is this woman doing for a living?

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 33

MAVUYI

Me: Molweni Ngaphakathi!

I said in excitement while smiling and walked inside my house. I saw my husband having company.

Me: Preparing to go somewhere?

He looked at his guys and excused them. There was something about their mood I didn't like.

Me: Tata is there something wrong?

I looked at them as they walked out. He sighed while squeezing his eyes.

Me: Bhekisizwe?

Bheki: Woza (Come)

He pulled my hand and wrapped his arms around my waist and kissed me. But I could feel that he wasn't himself.

Bheki: Welcome back

He said softly with his voice already showing how tired he was.

I broke off from him and walked to the lounge concerned.

Me: You haven't told me what's going on. Who died and why were those men here?

Bheki: We need to talk.

Me: Okay. Letty!! Where's Letty? I miss my daughter yaz. You know I've been calling her all weekend niks uchola ifown (but she's not picking). Is she back to losing her cellphones a-gain... Aww mnyenam? Yintoni ngoku? (What's up?)

He sniffles as he painfully grins with tears falling.

Bheki: Kukhona ek'mela ngik'tshele kona. (There's something I need to tell you)

I held his hands and pulled us to go sit down on the sofa.

Me: Yintoni? (What is it?)

Bheki: Nkosikazi ngifuna uk'qala ngokuthi yobe. (I first wanna say sorry)

Me: Yobe ngantoni nah Tata! (Sorry for what!)

I snapped impatiently while cringing my shoulders.

Bheki: Ngo Letty, ulahlekile (Letty... she's missing)

I snicker with my lips partially open and my eyes glued down.

Bheki: Ngiyaxolisa (I'm sorry) I failed you together with my daughter. This is taking a toll on me it's been hard sleeping. Bengise msebenzini (I was at work) next thing I arrive home lengane ingekho (this child not being around). I trusted her but ngokuzwa kwam uye waya kwelinye ibhilidi edolophini (she

went to a certain building in town) which I'm suspecting it's where they had abducted her...

(Silence)

Bheki: Ngiyam' tracer efownini ngiyathembisa sthandwa sam sizom'thola. (I'm tracing her and I promise we're gonna find her)

Mucus ran down to my mouth and I silently tilt my head up.

Me: Yithi uyaphazama (Say you mistaking)

He didn't say anything. I wiped my mucus and looked at him with glasses clouding my eyes.

Me: Yithi uyaphazama!!!! (Say you mistaking!!!!)

He startled and roared back.

Bheki: Chaa!!! Angiphazami! (Noo!! I'm not mistaking!)

I smiled and chuckled with tears running down. I bit my upper lip as my lips trembled.

Me: For how long has she disappeared?

Bheki: Lu suku (It's a day)

Me: A day?

He nodded I nodded too. I stood up and walked straight to the room and banged the door behind me locking it.

Bheki: Mavuyi, Vuyelwa, Vuyelwa!

He knocked. I fell on my knees as I rested my elbows on the bed, letting out a cry.

I closed my eyes. My heart is shattered deeply.

Me: Why? Why God!!? Why me?? What have I done for you to not want to see me happy? Why do you keep on breaking me like this. I've dealt with so much in the process of finding Ncumo. Now that I did find her and had completed everything I needed, to bring her closer... My baby Letty disappears? What exactly can I do to please you Lord? Have all my cries reached to deaf ears? Don't I deserve to be happy? Is it written in your books that all my life should be miserable? Well it's too much now I can't take it any longer I have no strength to be a soldier this time. If this is a test I'm surely losing my faith... What will it do for me? My child's abducted! From there you'll let me fight with my husband so that he can throw me out as well then I'm striped off with nothing. That's what you want right!? You have favourites kaloku wena andithi?

I broke down so terribly and coughed in pain.

Bheki: Vuyelwa!

I calmed down and wiped my face as I sat on the floor with my eyes still closed.

Me: Okay, okay, okay forgive I've said all that Lord. Please erase it, it's my emotions. I'll be more obedient I promise. Please save my little girl. Protect her from wherever she is. Please give me strength. I will die if I lose another child. Hopefully my faith will keep me strong but if I lose her... I don't know what might happen to me. Show me your love by protecting my baby please I'm begging you Lord. I pray and ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

I sat against the bed while covering my face.

Me: (crying) Letty!

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-TWO DAYS LATER

KOLOSA

Gogo was around again to complete my sister's cleansing. Everything traditionally went well and has been done but as a family we've set another date to make a ritual of Thanksgiving to our ancestors that's been protecting Ashanti throughout the years. We'll do it in 5 months to come.

Right now we were taking a walk with Gogo. I was showing her more of our village.

Me: So I'll never see you again?

She looked at me and smiled.

Mhise: Well my job here is done. I have to focus on finding my brother.

I gulped. She looked at me

Mhise: You sad?

I shrugged

Me: Just that I'll miss you. I'm used to your company.

Mhise: Well I can make it in the ceremony to see you again

Me: Yhuuu! That's 5 months to come

She looked at me.

Me: Ikude shame andifuni uxoka (That's too far I don't wanna lie).

Mhise: Heee! Kutheni ingathi awufuni ndihambe nje. (Why does it seem like you don't want me to go?)

Me: Andifuni nyan nyan. Hayi andifuni shame. (I don't want you to go, I really don't)

Mhise: But Kolie you know at some point we all have a life to live.

(Silence)

Mhise: Emzini wakho... ngoobani ifani yabo? (What's your matrimonial surname?)

I cleared my throat

Me: Qunta

She nodded. I looked at her.

Mhise: Heard anything from them?

Me: No

Mhise: You will soon

I closed my eyes.

Me: I'm not ready to face that man

Mhise: Ngoba? (Why?)

Me: Cause I don't think we'll ever work out. Things he did, he cheated on me. Once you forgive cheating it'll happen again.

She nodded.

Me: Limise.. I love you.

Mhise: Excuse me?

Me: Ndiyak'thanda

Mhise: Kolosa you're not thinking straight.

Me: Yes I am Mhise. Hell yes I am, I've fallen for you and this is the first time I ever felt and looked at any woman ngawe. You give me goosebumps and it's just unexplainable. Andazi noba yindlela okhathala ngayo nah endenza ndixozeke elihlobo (I don't know whether it's the way you care about me that makes me so attracted to you)

She exhaled.

Mhise: Kolie you're married okay? I understand there's many things you've been through and right now you are overwhelmed by many emotions, and this is just a passing by feeling you need to get over. I'm.. I'm sorry for leading you on..

I looked at her and grabbed her towards me as I smashed my lips against hers. I fondled with her hair and held on tight to her. She gripped on my arm and ran her hands down to my waist and she squeezed me as she responded perfectly to the kiss. I then pulled off.

Me: Then tell me you don't feel the same.

She still had her eyes closed.

Mhise: I do from a long time. But we can't, you need to decide on your marriage.

Me: I'll divorce him. Ndifuna uba nawe Mhise ndithanda wena (I want to be with you, I love you). Please give us a chance.

She opened her eyes and decided on it then she picked me up, kissing me. I didn't know she was able to do that. We locked our tongues together as we smooched nicely, it was a great moment. Then she pulled off biting my lower lip in a teasing way and gave me a peck.

Mhise: If you knew how many times I held myself from doing this.

I smiled looking down on her

Me: If you knew how many times I wished to taste those lips.

Mhise: Mhhhh!

She pouted and I kissed her pink lips.

Me: Now lemme go down before I become the next real gobhoza of the vil tomorrow.

She furrowed her eyebrows

Me: Trust me there are CCTV's around here even though the path is clear.

We chuckled and she dropped me down on my feet.

Mhise: Aww ziphi? (Where are they?)

Me: Hidden behind the curtains

We giggled.

Mhise: Mxm hayi wena. Can't we go somewhere hidden?

I made a naughty look while licking my lip and pulled her hand.

Me: Ahaa I know a place come.

I took her to my parents' house I know the rest of the family is above on the other family house. We can get our privacy here, uninterrupted.

Immediately when we got in we couldn't get off each other. We pushed each other against the wall and kissed. Next thing our clothes were flying around.

I screamed in fright as she lift me up.

Me: Gosh! Where do you get strength to lift me up like that?

She laughed.

I wrapped my arms around her neck and we continued kissing.

She held on my butt for dear life and walked me to the bed, placing me down.

She got on top of me and brushed my locs off my face. Then we kissed passionately with so much love, she was rubbing my other boob up and down. Then pulled my lower lip and tickled the inner part of it with her tongue.

I laughed.

Mhise: You like that?

I nodded. She grabbed my boob and directed it inside her warm mouth, she sucked and quench on it like it fed her thirst. She ran her other hand down under my lace and rubbed on my already throbbing pussy, she played her thumb around my clit.

Me: Ahh yes Mhiss...

She has very soft hands and her thick fingers felt like everything. We continued kissing, I unhooked her bra and shook her saggy boobs their movement turned me so on. I gripped on them so hard, I really stan their firmness and suckled on them.

Mhise: Owhh ahh! yes... Ima (Wait), sorry to short-live your moment.

She went down lifting my knees up and took off my lace. She first kissed my honey pot all over the place. Then would usually thrust in her tongue and out, specifically aimed in my clit.

Me: Eat me already Mhise yhuuu!

My body was already trembling for it. She first licked her index finger wet and began sucking in smoothly my clit while thrusting her finger in my hole. She first did that gently & slowly. Then moved her tongue in circular motion around the clit area, and more closer to the g-spot, she then inserted her second finger.

Me: Ohhhh!!!

I involuntarily squel to the pricking pain.

Mhise: Is it uncomfortable?

Me: I can take it.

She smiled naughtily while trapping her lips between her teeth.

Mhise: You sure?

Me: Ye- aaaahw yes!!

She vigourously moved her fingers in and out of my pussy then would press her fingers a bit intense inside the corner of my vaginal walls. I didn't know how she did it but she was hella good.

This time when she went down to muff me, she made sure!!! she really ate me up. She had her own unique way of licking and tendly pulling my clit with her tongue then would intentionally misplace her tongue deep inside my hole.

Me: Ohhh Mhiss! Yess babe.. dig me like that, uhhhh.. Fuck yess.. don't stop! pleaaase...

She stopped when I climaxed and licked me clean. Then she stood on her feet and took off her G-string, mmh damn! Her yellow curvious body.

She got in bed again and spread my legs open, placing each leg on her shoulders.

Mhise: Ohh I'm so gonna take this pussy on some adventure.

She leaned and bend forward placing her wrist below her abdomen... This time she hit it differently she was literally moving and humping me, with her fingers sliding in and out of me

deep inside I could feel her curving her fingers as in like strokes, thank God she cuts her nails. And physically our kitties were slapping against each other making that pleasurable sound.

Me: Haaaaah! Aahhw my God. Not even Loyiso hits that good. Please baby don't stop..

She continued fucking me more like a man, as if she's making push ups on top of me, with only one arm. The other arm was busy inside with her fingers doing all the job for her. Which makes me believe she does work out.

She directed my other hand on her coochie, I rubbed her and entered my middle finger in her pussy. She moaned loudly in pleasure.

Mhise: Aaarr Kolie!! Please thrust your tongue inbetween my cleavage please. Yes, Yes, Ohhh..

Me: Fuck please marry me Mhiss.

She grabbed my face and we collided with a kiss while fucking. The room was filled with our moans. I don't know if we'd be caught, damn her soft fingers were doing the most inside me, makes me think she's an expert in this cause she clearly knows how to give a fuck with her touch.

We kept on changing positions, I realised she likes being dominant. And she wants to be touched there and there in order for her to also climax. I was enjoying our steamy session.

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ASHANTI

Uncle: My child what are you passionate about?

I smiled

Me: Is it okay if I mention my hobbies?

Uncle: Ofcourse yes.

Me: Dancing is my first love, I do have a job I work as an architect but it's not my first love as dancing.

He nodded and looked at my father

Uncle: Yah ngubani kanene ebengu mjaiv'i kwi family yethu?
(Who was a dancer in our family?)

Dad: Err ingathi ngu Gog' Nompucuko.

Uncle: Yah see... That's her, our great grandmother from the third generation. She was a great dancer look at her.

He showed me pictures of her in a photo album. She had paints on her face and nice beads lol smoking pipe too.

Me: She's so beautiful

Uncle: Gqiyazana eli ntsundu elo. (Black beauty queen). Our father used to tell us alot of our family history. Another thing I wanna give you is this...

I frowned looking at Dad who just smiled. Uncle came back with books.

Uncle: The first man in our family, our great grandfather was a legend. Known for his best talent in writing and he was the Best Author but you know their endless politics with the Boeres got in the way and he was limited. Even though they did so but he continued with a manuscript. Here...

I took the brown too soft vintage paper from him.

Me: Tamkhulu how old is this?

He giggled

Uncle: You will faint if I tell you.

Me: Please do I'm so curious.

Uncle: 160 years old. 1860 Sobantu had wrote this.

I hung my mouth open.

Uncle: You know the great Enoch Sontonga?

I nodded

Me: The composer of the National Anthem?

Uncle: Yes, he used to mentor him and they ended up working closely together. Sobantu started out writing poems and that's what drew uMankayi (Enoch) kuye cause he loved that part about him ibe yena uEnoch just focused on being a music composer. Their age gap was 10 years, our grandfather being the older one.

I nodded looking at the manuscript.

Me: Remarkable! Headman Sobantu Malahle. How is this book pronounced?

Uncle: Ityala lama wele.. I know it'll be difficult to pronounce. But see this second book here, will teach you more about Xhosa literature, he also was a translator.

I took the books in.

Uncle: He was big on tribal genre, I think you will know alot more about your roots if you follow among this two books then you challenge yourself with the third one. I give you a year reading his work and you'll speak perfect Xhosa. His books are also available in the Library institution such us Fort Hare, Rhodes & Walter Sisulu Uni..

I smiled as he handed me everything

Uncle: An inheritance given to us as young boys and now I'm passing it over to you. Use it usefully.

Me: Thanks Tatomkhulu

Uncle: Yah. I think we should now prepare going back to Gauteng.

He stood up and left. I looked at Dad I tried conversating with him just so that he can be comfortable you know. I didn't like his silence, he tells me he wasn't always like that he was more of an arrogant person, full of himself & a talker more than his brother. But life humbled him in a way that he's still in disbelief. He told me about losing his sons in a tragic way. He insisted that we go to his house before I go. He wants to show me their pictures.

I later went to pack everything of mine including the books and cleaned myself. I dialed Kolosa she's been out like almost forever after my cleansing, she's unreachable. I sense there's something more between her and Gogo. But anyway I wanted to check on how Mavuyi had arrived but her phone wasn't going through.

I got nervous while dialing my boss.

Phillips: Miss Quintero

I sighed

Me: Boss I'm sorry that I had went Awol alot has been happening, I was involved in a car accident and I...

Phillips: Ashanti let me cut you short. Don't even bother we've found your replacement.

I widened my eyes

Me: What?

Phillips: I'm sorry but the company had to function with or without you.

Ungrateful bastard! I've always knew

Phillips: Will be waiting on your resignation.

He hang up. I sighed heavily and fanned my eyes.

Me: It's okay, it's fine. I'mma be strong. Yah big girls don't cry.

I laughed looking at myself on the mirror as tears trickled down and looked at the books as I packed them.

Me: Will use this time to learn more about my roots. Maybe this is my new beggining.

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MOTLATSI

I was playing Gospel music on blast. I didn't care what time it was or whether people were sleeping or not. I was just in high spirits today, my phone blinged with a huge amount of money getting in my account.

Jezman is indeed pleased. He cleared every turmoil he tried to create about me since he had doubts about me fulfilling the job. I'm so happy.

I continued smiling while waving my phone around.

Me: " You provide the fire

I provide the sacrifice

You provide the spirit

I will open up inside

Fill me up God

Fill me up! Till I overflow

I wanna run over, I wanna run over"

Dimpho: Yho! Mama noise ekana (so much noise)

Me: Good morning to you too my baby. I'm gonna sing my darling when the spirit says sing nothing will stop me. Worship

has no time schedule my child any time you feel like it you just let it out

Dimpho: But you have to be considerate Mama maar to wake us early in the morning.

Me: Shoo boo Dimpho.

She went to the kitchen

Me: Going somewhere?

Dimpho: Yah I'm planning to go see my friend in Tembisa it's been a while since I heard from her.

I blinked feeling a lil guilty.

Me: Oh?? U sitoa ho emela sekolo? (You can't wait for school?)

Dimpho: No Mama that'll take ages yhu he.e. She's not even answering my calls and her last seen was 4 days ago. That's a red flag, something is up I have to find out what's going on with my friend.

Me: And you didn't tell me that you found your phone.

Dimpho: That doesn't matter okay. Fact is I'm going to check on my friend, this isn't normal.

She walked away.

Me: Dimpho

She stopped.

Dimpho: Mma?

Me: Kea u rata ngwanaka ke kopo u itlhokomele. (I love you please take care of yourself)

She narrowed her eyes with a puzzled expression.

Dimpho: Oh-kay. Le nna kau rata ene kea u tshepisa hore ketla itlhokomela. (I love you too and I promise that I'll take care of myself)

I smiled at her.

Me: Good.

My phone rang.

Me: It's your father lemme take this.

Dimpho: He's coming back!!!

I chuckle.

Me: Yeah I'll be back.

I walked to my room. Argh I miss him so much. I believe with the money I have we should consider moving out of this hood. And opt for living in the suburbs, it's time to be on that level.

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SANDRO

Jezzman: Mi amigo (brother)

Me: Migo, I'm ready for another shipment.

Jezzman: (sarcasm) Hohooow! That's too fast. We just received the stuffs few days ago. What's the rush?

Me: You saying no to good money?

(Silence)

Me: You might be lying and floating around a pool of money right now. But then there's us, who are not familiar with the word "rest" in our books. Hustle is the only thing we strive for. If you rest you rust.

He giggled softly

Jezzman: Guess it's a deal then. Though it doesn't happen everyday.

Me: You didn't make a mistake by choosing to work with us. This shipment will be different, we're meeting man to man. I've got a proposal to make.

Jezzman: Mhm looking forward to this. I get thrilled everytime I get a call from you.

I made a faint smile

Me: Just alert your men about my visit.

Jezzman: It's like a home for you

I chuckled

Me: We'll talk soon

Jezzman: For sure.

I hang up.

Me: We'll see about that.

I was informed about them receiving a bunch of girls from Mozambique knowing that Letty's truck took a route from Maputo I had no doubt that she was amongst those girls.

I'm once again preparing for my flight. My men back home have prepared everything for me. Though they have no knowledge about my masterplan. Can't afford to sabotage anything, with such things you can't trust anyone. I hope and pray my Calmente wasn't touched in anyway as yet or I'll literally kill someone.

I'm doing this.

" No hagas esto (Don't do this) "

I turned in shock.

Me: Mamà, you can talk?

Mom: No hagas esto (Don't do this)

I crouched in front of her and brushed her now short hair.

Me: I have to Mà, I have to do this

She shook her head rapidly while murmuring.

Me: Ma C will look after you

Mom: M.hm! No hagas esto

Me: Maybe with this we might win Bebita over.

She looked at me with tears falling.

Mom: Sandro..

I kissed her cheek and hands.

Me: I love you Mamá. I'll come back I promise you not only that but... This might redeem us with Ashanti.

I brushed her cheek with my thumb

Me: Don't cry it's gonna be alright okay? Sssh.

Her pills are making her drowsy so she fell asleep and I lift her and placed her in bed. I walked on the door and stared at her for a moment and cupped my face as I got emotional and left. It's now or never.

>>> To be continued...

Chapter 34

ASHANTI

I just landed back. I stood and stared at what I call home... it makes me feel anger arising within me. Knowing what Laura did, if I had a choice I wouldn't have returned back home. If it was up to me I'd find my own place, but I have no job anymore. I might run bankrupt then what? Guess I'll have to suck it up. Though it'll be difficult to face them everyday.

I sighed and buzzed outside the gate. I heard an unfamiliar voice answering, I told her who I am and minutes later she accessed me in. I walked in dragging my bags.

I saw a maid, she's African. She seemed to be in her mid Fifties if I'm not mistaken.

Me: Good day

She made a friendly smile.

Her: Good day Madame.

Me: Ashanti

Her: Okay Ashanti. I'm MaCele by the way the new maid. They call me Ma C in short.

I nodded.

Me: Where's everyone?

Her: Your brother has left for overseas. Your Mom is the only one around.

Me: Ohh?

Her: Yah... Can I take your bags upstairs?

Me: Uhm..

Her: I know the way they've shown me around.

I chuckled

Me: Oh yah that's obvious, you may.

Her: Thank you.

She took my bags and left. I sighed before continuing to take my walk inside. I stopped when I saw Mom sitting there quietly eating her food. She was facing me with her back, I must say she looks good in her short hair.

I formed a fist as I collected myself and exhaled freeing my hands.

Me: Good day Ma... Laura.

She took a lot of time turning around and face me. She flashed a wide smile with tears dropping.

Mom: (slowly) My... My Bebita. How are you? I missed you so much my child.

She brushed the table

Mom: Please come sit and join me. Tell me all about your journey.

I didn't move a single inch but glared at her with rage. Her face instantly became frail as she frowned in worry.

Mom: Bebita?

I snort and closed my eyes.

Me: I can miss it. I don't dine in with devils

I stormed away.

Mom: Bebita? Bebita??

God I can't stand the sight of this woman. I don't think my stay here will be long. I just can't.

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LETTY

I curled myself in some corner as I covered my ears. My body was shivering, my eyes were sore. It's been 2 days not sleeping. I'm so traumatized by this place.

I don't know where I am but I know that I'm far from home. Last thing I remember was working on my plan then fell unconscious.. next thing when I woke up to resume with it, I woke to a truck full of young girls like myself who were more timid than me. By then I had accepted my reality.

We were taken to another place, which looked like a prison. Each of us were placed in our own cells we were able to see each other. It's been hard catching sleep every night I hear piercing screams & cries of the girls. The men get in their cells and sexually violate them, it could be many of them in one girl. Some get beaten in a brutal way when they refuse and fight back, we all witness such while in our own cells.

I am traumatized and I'm sitting here wondering when will I be next? I am slowly losing my mind. How did I get here? Was my friend really responsible for me being here?

I jumped startled as I heard whistles and footsteps coming. It was the men, many of them. They opened the cells and released some of the girls and grabbed them out roughly.

Mine too got open and I continued sitting further in the corner.

Him: Should I now tell you to get out?

I looked at him

Him: If I fetch you by myself it won't be nice.

I remained seated.

Him: Okay

He charged my way and grabbed me by my hair. I punched him as he threw me on his shoulder.

I screamed kicking him.

Me: Where are you taking me!!!!? Leave me alone!!!

He walked out with me and threw me down. All eyes were on us. The other guards focused on us.

Guard 2: Is this one problematic?

Guard 1: Very

Guard 2: She's pretty though, why couldn't we start with her?

They made disgusting grins. A strong built guard came and stood in front of me. He held a stick with him and he looked like someone who doesn't take bull, he has a very mean face.

Guard 3: Get up

He said coldly. I glanced at the stick he kept hitting on his hand, it disturbed me. In seconds I was on my feet.

Guard 3: Let's get going.

I sighed and we all followed behind him. I don't know where they were taking us. The first two guards were walking behind me, they kept whispering. I hated that.

I felt his hand grabbing my butt. I turned to look at him, he winked and blew kissed me.

I continued with my journey. They tripped me almost making me fall. I exhaled and continued walking, they began pushing me around and passing me like a ball on one another typical for grown men to find this funny. The other one tear my T-shirt.

From there they went on to pushing my head. Everyone minded their business like nothing was happening.

Me: Stop it!!!!

I said flexing my arm and landed a slap on one of them. He held his face and ran his tongue around his inner cheek before he spat. He came at me and kicked me down I coughed as I fell down. They dragged me from the floor away from the people, I cried out.

Guard 3: Andreas!!!! Jackson!!!! You do not touch her or the boss will behead you.

They immediately let me go.

Guard 3: Now stop playing and let's get going.

They helped me up and we continued walking with them behaving this time.

We made it to this other big bright place. It was fancy and beautiful you'd swear we were in a different place not the dirty one we came from underground.

Before us we saw 7 men dressed in flashy suits. Their English was difficult to comprehend. 4 were white and the other 3 were black. There was another 8th man who was dressed differently from them. He was casual

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had a lot of chains and Golds on him. He had a cut with a ponytail and many tatoos going up to his neck. I'm guessing he's the boss.

He looked at us and smiled.

Him: Are those all my Mamasitas?

Guard 3: Yes exactly in numbers you've requested. We have 15 left overs.

He sipped his whiskey and nodded.

Him: I'm impressed Charles. Align them.

Guard: Yes Jezzman.

We were sorted in a straight line. We made 4 rows I was in a front row. The guy introspected us row by row.

Him: Gentlemen come fish for yourselves.

The 7 men stood up from their chairs and made their way to us. The tattooed guy came and stood at my row. I crossed my fingers as I closed my eyes. I felt his steps nearing, his cologne hit first in my nostrils. I opened my eyes he was standing in front of me.

He lift his hand I flinched a little. I stood properly again, he brought his hand closer to my face and cleared my hair off my face.

Him: This one is mine.

I widened my eyes and he made a shallow smile.

Him: Jackson bring one from the extras to fill her spot. Andreas call Geraldine quickly.

He brought his hand closer to me.

Him: Should we?

I looked at his hand and realized how everyone was being obedient around him. He seemed powerful and I wouldn't want to start trouble with him.

I gave him my hand. And he made me stand aside from the girls. The men continued introspecting them. I'm guessing they'll be taking them. He kept looking at me and it scared me the way he was looking at me.

The guard came pushing another girl to be placed on my spot..

Man: We're taking the first row.

Him: You're happy?

Man: Yes we are.

Him: Aaaaaaaah look at that? My day just got better.

I looked at where he was looking and I gasped in shock.

Him: Quintero!

He made a fake smile

Aless: Amigo

He dropped the full 3 bags and they bumped their shoulders. He acted like he didn't know me they exchanged pleasantries with the boss. Aless was with 2 men.

I couldn't move my eyes off him, he stole a look at me and moved his eyes signalling "I shouldn't sell us off". I swallowed and looked forward. Kanti he's into the illegal stuffs? What did I expect from a Mexican man mara.

I saw a very beautiful lady making her way with the guard.

Her: You called for me Jezmir?

He looked at me.

Him: Buat dia kelihatan seperti Ratu saya. (Make her look like my Queen)

Her: Saya akan melakukannya tuan. (I will do so sir)

She looked at me.

Her: Follow me.

I looked once more at Aless who wasn't looking my way at all. I then followed the lady. I'm not ready for what's gonna happen to me I'm really not. I miss my Mom and Dad!! I need to be home.

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MAVUYI

" Hi, this is Letty-Lets and I'm not available at the moment.
Please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.
"

I drop the call and call her again just to hear her voice.

I heard a knock, Bheki was standing with a tray of food.

Bheki: Hi, wenzani? (what are you doing?)

Me: I'm listening to her voice messages.

He got in and handed me the food.

Me: Andina xesha lokutya utya ntoni yena umntanam? (I don't have time for food what's my baby eating?)

Bheki: But you need strength

Me: Bheki please toe..

He placed the food away

Me: Wena into ek'mela uyayenza kundi xelela nge progress.
Ithini iprogress? (What you're supposed to be doing is telling me the progress. What's the progress?)

Bheki: We're still looking

Me: (mockingly) Ha! Still looking? Kodwa usahleli apha? (Yet you're still here?) You're really relying on your men ngentombi yakho. Atleast mna I was able to go to the police station and that's the first thing you were supposed to do. Today they're going to the location to investigate and that's something.

Bheki: So mina angenzi nex ngokwase mcondweni wakho? Angithi uyang'bona ukuthi nami ngizama konke okuse mandleni 'am. (So in your mind I'm not doing anything? You also see I'm doing my best.)

Me: Best phi Bheki!?? Kuthe cwaka. (Best how!?? When it's quiet)

Bheki: Kuthulekile ngoba (It's quiet because) we lost trace of her while in Mozambique. We are working on that what more do you want.

Me: What more do I want? It is you doing something!!!!

Bheki: Skhathi sonke mina ngidlala upuca kanti? (All this time I'm playing games?)

I chuckled.

Bheki: Kanti what I'm doing is not good enough for you? Yini ezoba good enough? Me going overseas ngiy'1 and look for her?

Me: Ngeyona kanye ezoba (It's exactly what's gonna be) good enough.

He chuckled.

Bheki: Ukhohlwa into eyodwa wena Mavuyi. That nam ngiyay'zala lengane ngingu Baba'yo. Lokhu kuyang' caphazela nami. Nami ngingawo imizwa, nicabanga ukuthi nini nodwa abane mizwa nina bantu besfazane. Thina madoda kumele siqine skhathi sonke sibe ngama lobhothi? Singabi mthakathaka hii? (You're forgetting one thing Mavuyi. That I also father this child, this affects me too. I have feelings, you think it's only you women who have feelings? We men must always be tough like robots right? And that we aren't allowed to be vulnerable)

(Silence)

Bheki: Yisho vele ukuthi anginoba is'yoyoyo. (Say it I can't be weak)

Me: Bheki...

Bheki: Si deal'a nee nkalanzinzi lana (We're dealing with villains) can't afford to take the lead being an emotional wreck as I am I'll mess this up. I always have to be that guy at the backseat and trust my men to do it whilst I'm there.

His phone beeped. He took it out.

Bheki: Yabo? (You see?) My guy just informed me about seeing Lethokuhle.

I jumped up on my feet smiling.

Me: Phi? (Where?)

He wore his jacket.

Bheki: You're still asking the so-not-good-enough guy ngok?

Me: Bheki maan khawuyeke uchuku (Stop being dramatic)

He kissed my forehead.

Bheki: I'll see you.

Me: Fighting at a time like this is not right we should stand together. Bheki!!

He had already left. I never met such a stubborn man. I saw a girl standing at the door.

Me: Hello

Her: Hi

Me: Can I help?

Her: Erm igama ngu Dimpho bengizofun' uLetty. Ngiwu mngane wakhe. (My name is Dimpho I'm looking for Letty. I'm her friend)

I squint my eyes.

Me: Dimpho?

Her: Yebo (Yes)

Me: Who's your mother?

Her: Mo... Motlatsi.

Me: Yah yah she did mention her daughter being friends with mine.

Dimpho: You know my Mom?

Me: Yah

(Silence)

Me: Letty is not around. We're looking for her she's missing.

Her eyes popped out.

Dimpho: Cha Ma. Awung'dlalisi mhlampe? (No.. you're not kidding right?)

I sighed rubbing my eyes.

Me: I wish I was mntanam but I'm serious. It's draining, arriving to my child gone. This place doesn't look lively without her lovely soul anymore.

She kept on blinking

Dimpho: He.ena yinto yanini leyo Ma? (When did this happen?)

Me: Almost 5 days ago

Dimpho: Sho! Moes that was.. was... same day I lost my phone.

Me: Heee?

Dimpho: Cha ak'si lutho Ma. Moya wam usu uphansi manje. Akukho engika siza ngako? Umgane wam wok'gcina voo loyo. (No it's nothing. My spirit is down hearing this. Is there anything I can do to help? It's my one and only friend)

Me: You could help me spread this on social media.

Dimpho: Okay ak'na nkinga Ma (there's no problem)

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ASHANTI

I was preparing to go to Home Affairs and have Ncumolwam as my first name. The house seemed quiet, I went out and in the

garden. I saw Mom sitting with the maid playing cards and they were laughing.

I stared at them for a while. A part of me was feeling sorry for her but she deserved what happened to her. They looked back at me. She smiled and I immediately walked away to my car.

I got in and sat there covering my face. I called Dad, I didn't know who to talk to.

Dad: My princess!

Me: Papà

Dad: It's so good to hear your voice my child. I thought I had lost you when I heard about your accident.

(Silence)

Me: Yet you never checked on me or even booked your flight. Just making efforts to show that you care.

He exhaled

Dad: I do care sweetheart I really do. I just can't face your mother right now after what they had done with your brother. I am mad at them.

Me: Even if that's the case, it had nothing to do with me.

Dad: I know I should've-

Me: Anyway that's not the point. I just want to know if you're coming back?

Dad: As I've said I don't think I'm coming back.

Me: Why not? You deserve to be here besides your wife right now. She needs you. How long will you be angry at her?

Dad: How long will you be angry at her?

I sigh

Me: Esto no se trata de mi (This is not about me.) I... Actually cannot do this anymore staying with her makes me more angry. We are not in talking terms and... Am I perhaps wrong?

Dad: You're not wrong you're reacting as how you supposed to. Your Mom knew that this time would come, there was no need for her to attack the woman. Not like she didn't mention that her intentions were not to steal you from us.

Me: Yah and today I'm changing my name.

Dad: Ohh!

I could tell that came as a shock

Me: Yeah Ashanti will remain my second name. My first name will be the one I was given by my real mother.

Dad: Uhm what can I say? Good luck on that.

Me: Yah, I guess I have to go. We'll speak again.

Dad: I love you

Me: I love you too Dad.

We hang up. I start the car while dialing Mavuyi. She didn't sound like herself in the phonecall.

Me: Are you okay? I've been trying to reach you.

Mavuyi: I can't say I am

Me: What's going on?

Mavuyi: (sniffles)...

I pulled to the side of the road and switched off the engine.

Me: Mavuyi?

Mavuyi: Letty... They took her. She's out of country and I don't-

Me: Woah woah woah I'm coming right now don't move.

I quickly started the car.

Mavuyi: Ashanti..

Me: I'm coming Mavuyi just try to calm down okay? I love you just stay put.

Damn! This can't be happening to her. It just can't, this is too much.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

My brother and I just made it back home in G.town. We arrived and catch up with thee parents. My niece was also around.

Me: Hey Imo

Imolathile: Auntie. Maluuuume!

Me: Oh I see I'm no longer a favourite.

They laughed.

Imolathile: Undiphathele ntoni? (What did you bring for me?)

Limile: You know Malume never disappoints. I bought you your favourite sneakers and guess what else?

Imolathile: What?

Limile: Go check in the boot.

He said handing her the car keys and she ran out.

Mom: Mawele wam (My twins)

Me: Mom.

We hugged and kissed her same with Dad.

Limile: You'd swear we are your only children. Thuli & Benny never think of coming home?

Mom: Yabazi (You know them) they're too driven to their work. Just waiting for Christmas so that we can have a big family reunion.

Me: Yah neh?

Dad: And then yintoni ngoku le emqaleni? (what's up with your neck?)

He asked touching my neck. I cleared my throat as I covered it.

Me: What?

Dad: I thought you went to help a client.

Me: I did nje

Mom: Explain the hickey then?

Me: Hi.. Hickey?

Limile burst into a loud laugh

Me: Hay hay uhleka ntoni wena? (What are you laughing at?)
No maan Rents yi ngcongconi (it's a mosquito) nothing much.

Limile: Let's hope it's not a girl

Me: Mxm! Shouldn't we get on about Luniko?

Dad: We should.

We all settled down. Limile handed them the envelope.

Limile: The photographs and evidence of him.

Mom and Dad took time going through them.

Mom: Hay shame he looks exactly like you Mlamli I'm not seeing my sister here. He's matured not that innocent young boy I saw once before.

Me: So Dad you still sticking on going with uncle Abeddie?

Dad: Ewe and he agreed. When Limile is flying back I'm going with him. Will spend a day with Lime before leaving with Abednego.

Me: How about you visit Auntie Zimasa's grave before you take the journey?

Dad: It's what I had in mind.

Mom: You'll be coming back with him kengoku?

We all looked at each other.

Dad: It'll depend kuye (on him). I'll be there to tell him everything he needs to know.

Mom sighs.

Mom: I'm still nervous about this whole thing.

Me: I'll give Dad something to protect him. For now we have to speak to the Ndaba ancestors. Then from there aye kwi ngcwaba (he goes to the grave). He'll come back unharmed.

Limile: Xaw'se jongile wele ngumntu ongaba nomsindo ngaku Tata uLuniq? (By the look of things do you think he'll react by anger with Dad?) I'm really concerned for his safety.

Me: I can't really tell how he'll react. But what you should know is that Qhamani has fed him lies and painted Dad as a very bad person. They had a good bond since he was a toddler, so Luniko has been very fond of him even though the truth came out because he was still in disbelief... And that's why he was easily manipulated. But let that not scare you, ooNdaba will be with you, they'll accompany you. They've always wanted this. If my leave days weren't over I was gonna come along.

Dad: Don't stress mntanam I've got this.

Mom held his hand then his phone rang.

Dad: It's Thuli, let's expect a tantrum.

Immediately when he picked we already heard her crying and shouting.

Me: Seems like you have another grandchild on the way.

Mom: Please Mhise don't say that torho

Me: Break my finger if I lie. Even with Imo I was the first to tell.

Thuli: " Uthini lowo? (What is she saying?) "

I waved at her with a big smile

Me: Hi Sis.

I went to my room leaving her having alot to say. I miss Kolie can't stop thinking of our bang the other day. I need to check on her.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 35

DIMPHO

After coming back from my friend's place. My mind was out of place, there were things I could not get over. Hunches that infiltrated my mind playing over something that seemed like Déja Vu. The way I was too zoned out. It was like I was in another planet, listening to my spirits clash internally and caught in war between my heart and mind. We all know that the mind is powerful and rational compared to the Heart. The heart is the weakest link.

Okay I might not be making sense right now. But my mind is telling me that "it is exactly what I think it is". All the question gaps I've had from all those years are finally being filled. Yet my Heart is denying me to think of such from a loved one.

I so wanna listen to the mind right now...

I massaged my forehead as I glanced at Letty's picture on my phone. Then on the other side, I had a photo album with my childhood friend's photo, Dimakatso.

I closed my eyes as my mind reminded me of certain events.

``Her: Dimpho?``

``Me: Yebo``

``Her: Who's your mother?``

``Me: Mo... Motlatsi``

Why would her first question be my mother?

``Me: You know my Mom?``

``Her: Yah``

How on earth would they meet to know each other? Like how? While I'm still closing my eyes I can already visualize my texts with Letty, when she asked me whether I gave my mother her numbers or not and it happens that I did not. Funny how I took it lightly and meaningless to not even ask about it.

``Me: He.ena yinto yanini leyo Ma? (When did that happen?) ``

``Her: Almost 5 days ago``

``Me: ...Same day I lost my phone``

``Her: Heee?``

``Me: Cha ak'si lutho Ma (No it's nothing) ``

And come to think of it, after I had found my phone. Strange thing was that all my chats with Letty were cleared. Why and how? See the power of the brain? How it can lighten someone from reality.. I can feel the Heart wanting to intervene but I

pushed it far away and picked a picture of Dimakatso staring at it closely.

[FLASHBACK]

Being 6 year olds we were playing dolls together. Drinking from toy cups and laughing as we were overly dressed playing roleplay. Dimakatso was a child of our neighbour.

"Dimphe!!!"

Me: Mmaa!!?

I looked at my friend smiling.

Me: Maatso keya tla hona joale, seke wa sisinyeha. (I'm coming right now, don't move)

She smiled.

Dimakatso: Okay.

I ran and went to my Mother she hand me two coins of R5.

Mom: Mona, eyang le ithekele dichips le motswalle wa hoa
(Here, go buy yourselves some chips with your friend)

I jumped around excitedly.

Me: Kea leboha Mme! (Thank you Mom)

She held me still and crouched in front of me.

Mom: Kopa Lefa hore a tsamaye le rona. (Ask Lefa to accompany you)

I nodded excitedly and ran out back to my friend. I told her we should go buy chips but I first went to look for my brother Lefa. He first sulked but he took us to the stores playing around with us on the road.

Next thing we got back, we resumed with our playing. This time we played hide and seek. I kept looking for my friend but I couldn't find her, I searched and searched without any trace of her

Me: Maatso!!! U ka tsoa hona joale. Papali e fedile. (You can come out now. The game is over.)

I said taking pants in between cause I was tired.

Me: Dimakatso!!

I checked at the backyard and saw Mom getting out of my brother's flat.

Me: Mme na u tseba hore Dimakatso hokae? (Do you know where Dimakatso is?)

Mom: Che, ke qetetse ho le bona le bapala. Naha aka a kgutlela hae? (No, I last saw her playing with you. Didn't she go back home?)

I thought a bit.

Me: Mmm mohlomong (maybe)

Mom: Etla re pehe (Come, let's cook)

She wrapped her arms around me. Then we went to cook with just me watching her and passing things. It's weird cause Dimakatso never leaves without saying.

Daddy came back from work and we ate supper without Lefa joining us. Daddy was about to ask the question.. until Dimakatso's mother stormed in looking for her child. Mom defended and said she left saying she went back home, but that was a lie. Maatso disappeared without saying anything. One neighbour said He saw my brother carrying her over his shoulders going to the shops.

Me: Le nna ke ne leteng. O ile a tsamaya le rona bobedi! (I was also there. He had left with both of us)

I jump in defence.

Dima's Mom: Hlalosa hee hore morali waka o hokae!?? (Then explain where is my daughter!?)

Mom stood up from her chair.

Mom: Look Mantwa we're not hiding anything. If you don't take our word search around our house and look for your daughter. Go ahead not forgetting the flats too akere you suspecting our son? Go! We have nothing to hide. Do it.

Dad: Motlatsi..

Mom: No! They should do it.

They continued searching around the house others divided themselves and went outside. They didn't find anything inside.

"Heeeeyi ntjaa ke yone!!!"

Dad: Yintoni ngoku?? (What is it?)

We all jumped out and ran outside to the commotion happening. Mom pushed me back.

Mom: No stay inside Nana okay, it's for adults you'll get hurt.

I was left alone inside. I stood closer next to the curtains and watched outside what was happening while shaking. I didn't understand what was going on. I saw my brother being ganged

up almost by the whole community they weren't hitting him but they surrounded him barking and poking on him, he was only dressed in his undies.

Lifa: Andenzanga nto! Yhini bahlali?? Ndinga mdlwengula njani umntana olingana nowasekhaya? Noba sendi khohlakele kangaka nani na. (I didn't do anything!! Please my neighbours. Why would I rape a child having a sister the same age as her? Even if I'm that cruel I wouldn't)

They threw a small panty on his face.

Neighbour: O leshano MoXhosa ke wena. Ngwana oho kae?? (You're lying where is the child?)

Crowd: (Uproars) Ngwana okae!!!??

Dad: Lifa wenze ntoni? (What did you do?)

Lifa: Tata ndaziwa nguwe more than umntu wonke olapha. Andenzanga nto Tata ndifunga ngo Yesu!!! (Dad you know me more than anyone in this place. I didn't do it I swear by Jesus!!!)

I covered my mouth and cried seeing my brother cry like that. Later on I saw the Police vans parking and they took him in and tamed the crowd. I ran to my parents room and cried. What really happened to my friend? Was my brother really responsible?

I stopped sniffing when I noticed her shoe next to Mommy's bag.

[FLASHBACK ENDED]

I broke down hugging Dimakatso's photo on my chest and held on tightly to my phone

Mom: Aw! Dimples are you okay baby?

I clenched my teeth looking at her and wiped my tears.

Dad: Mntanam?

I sniffed.

Me: My friend is missing

Dad: Hayibo, which friend kengoku?

Me: I have only one friend Tata.

Dad: Oka Mavuyi?? Lord no this can't be happening to her.

I moved my eyes to Mom and stared her deadly in the eyes.

Me: I brought my friend to meet my parents jiki-jiki she disappears just like that? (Scoffs) It's not only that... there were incidences like this before. Don't you find it strange?

I glanced at Dad asking that question.

Me: Just when I had accepted that maybe I'm not meant to have friends cause something bad always happens to them. I found a great one... one mistake was bringing her home.

Mom: What are you insinuating Dimpho Malahle!?

Me: What am I insinuating? Oh you wanna know what I insinuate? Will you be ready for it? Will you stand for it?

Dad: Dimpho don't speak like that with your elders.

I looked at him.

Me: When last did you visit your son in prison to check how he is?

I struck a nerve as they both got triggered.

Me: In 2 days time it's his birthday. I'm not your only child Dad. Check on your son too.

I looked at Mom again.

Me: But hey excuse my behaviour. I'm just stressed that my friend's missing. I'm sleeping.

Mom: Dimpho.

I looked at her.

Mom: I'm sorry about your friend okay? I'll help look for her.

Me: Yah ofcourse you would.

I left them like that. It's confirmed, she's taking my friends. I can't believe my Mom right now. Lord, where can I even begin with something like this? I love her so much but she needs to be dealt with. Can't believe she's been fooling us all this time she's so evil.

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MAVUYI

Ashanti came in as soon as possible. I was surprised how quick she drove to my place.

Ashanti: Mavuyi.

She threw herself

Advertisement

giving me the strongest tight hug. I don't know whether her hug made me feel like crying. You know sometimes consolation can make one release out more that's stored inside.

Ashanti: I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

We let go and I placed my hands on my face. She held my arm.

Ashanti: Oh hi Ndili. I didn't see you.

Ndileka: Hi Shasha I'm happy to see you. Uhm let's sit this way.

We walked to the chairs and sat down.

Ashanti: I came as soon as possible.

Me: Thank you

I sniffed.

Ndileka: Can I pour you some juice?

Ashanti: No I'm fine Ndili.

I also lift my hand.

Me: Nam wethu Petla ndi right (Me too friend I'm fine)

I sighed taking time looking at her.

Me: Lethokuhle got abducted while we were still in Centane busy with the ceremony. Apparently, she had went to a building in Plein street, Jhb I don't know for what reasons but she didn't make it back home. It is said that the location is used to recruit people in for job interviews then would be taken for trafficking.

Ashanti: Nooooo.

I nodded pressing my lips.

Me: The police left seconds ago. They told us they went to check the place and it happens that it's shut down, which makes our suspicions true.

I huff facing up

Me: So your sister who I was gonna introduce you to is... God knows what's happening to her but she's out there in the wilderness amongst girls who'll be soon traded.

I wiped my running tears.

Me: (cracky voice) She's too young, she can't experience those type of things. I wish I had took her with me.

Ndileka: Sshhh m.mh Sisi, akho xesha lozisola nojonga ngasemuva ngoku. Into ithi masijongane nale, sibeki dolo phantsi. (No sis, there's no time for regret and looking backwards. We should face this and pray more)

I got off her hold.

Me: But likhona ithemba loba angabuya? I mean bangaphi abantwana aba xhwilwayo banga buyi. (is there even hope that she'll come back? I mean how many kids have been taken and have not come back)

Ndileka: Your focus Vuyelwa should be on the positive side only. Don't think about the negatives you'll make things worse

and uzobatyhafisa naba bhuti bak'ncedayo ngalento (you will drain the men that help you with this.)

I sighed.

Ashanti: I don't know why I feel at guilt.

We all looked at her.

Me: No don't feel guilty Ncumo you did nothing. We couldn't have ignored the ceremony it had to happen.

Ashanti: Fun' nceda ke. (I wanna help)

Ndileka got shocked as she pointed her.

Ndileka: Can you..?

Ashanti: Just a lil. I have reliable resources Mavuyi I can participate in helping too.

Me: Ncumo I just found you I don't wanna lose you.

She laughed.

Ashanti: We talking about my sister here! Whom I want to meet. By now you should know where I go, I go with my ancestors. You not gonna lose me, I just wanna do something too.

(Silence)

Ashanti: So do the men have any idea where she is?

Me: They said she's-

"In Singapore"

We all startled and looked back. I stood up.

Me: Mnyenam? (Husband?)

He gave me a side smile as he walked in with the guys.

Soka: Yah Sandro had just informed us about being inside and he's already seeing her. He's currently executing his plan and doesn't want to be disturbed he'll be the only one to make contact with us. He's GPSing us everything.

Ashanti got up.

Ashanti: Okay let's pause.. Sandro who?

Bheki: Oh! You're Ashanti?

Ashanti: Yes I am.

He smiled stretching his hand

Bheki: Welcome to the family. I'm Bhekisizwe your mother's husband.

They shook hands.

Ashanti: Pleasure to meet you sir. But I need to be answered.

Bheki: It is indeed Alessandro your brother.

Ashanti: Whaat!??

Me: Laura's son?

Bheki: Yes and to your next question he's doing this for the both of you.

We were left speechless and in shock. I called my husband to the side and apologized for lashing out on him earlier. He was forgiving and understood that we were all frustrated. How I wish my daughter was here to witness this. I still pray she's protected and untouched.

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LETTY

I just came out on a bath with this lady sitting there watching me. They took me to this large bedroom that had a royal sense of style. Everything was gold & black. Whoever's bedroom it is, it's clear he's obsessed with Gold.

We walked out of the ensuite to the bedroom. I saw a Black silk of lingerie placed on top of the bed. With a long fancy dress that was Gold in colour.

She threw a set of lotions and perfume on the bed.

Her: Those are what you're gonna apply.

My heart beat fast.

Me: What's gonna happen?

Her: I don't have much time okay? Make quick so that I can get on with your make up already.

Me: Are you condoning this as well?

She chew her gum looking at her wristwatch not minding me.
Tears filled my eyes.

Me: Why??

I whispered.

Her: You done sulking?

I didn't answer but cried. She stood up.

Her: Come here

(Silence)

Her: Come!

I didn't move. She came closer.

Me: What are you doing? Stay away from me! Don't come near me.

She grabbed me up by my arm and pulled me.

Me: Stop. Stop!

We went over the balcony.

Her: Look over there!!

I immediately gagged covering my mouth and fell on my knees vomiting.

Her: That's where you and I are both gonna end! With our heads decaying there. Jez doesn't play. So don't you dare give me a hard time. Now pick yourself and do as I tell you.

I coughed while crying.

Her: See you've made more job for me. Pity party is despised in this territory! This is your reality as from now, accept it without fighting. Now get up.

She pulled me up.

Her: Up! And let's go.

My knees failed me as she pushed me to walk. I took off the towel lotioning myself. I'll never delete the image I just saw, seeing those bunch of heads collected in the garbage trailer. This man is really cold-hearted and I'm scared for my life.

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ASHANTI

Me: Hermano? (Brother?)

I heard shuffles before he spoke.

Sandro: Hermanita it's a wrong timing I'm in a middle of something.

Me: When can we actually talk?

Sandro: I'll call you later

Me: Okay I'll hear from you.

(Silence)

Sandro: You home?

Me: Yeah.

Sandro: Please take care of Mamá. I know you still upset about what she did. But please try to forgive her she's hurting and needs you more. Having you around will heal her quickly.

I kept quiet.

Sandro: You're the only Bebita she knows and ever wanted please don't turn your back on her.

(Silence)

Sandro: I'm saying this because I know there's a possibility I might not come back. But either way I'll make sure that your sister comes back.

Me: No don't say that Hermano I can help you. We can do this.

Sandro: We're outnumbered.

Me: With the skills you taught me back I can-

I stopped when I heard a little groan. The leopard stood in front of me.

Me: Eish okay, get me a floorplan of Jezzman's mansion.

He scoffed.

Sandro: Impossible.

Me: There's nothing impossible. I hear you say you can see Letty. If you think of rescuing her today cancel it you won't make it out alive all of you.

Sandro: If I don't get her today he'll touch her!

Me: You're inlove with her?

Sandro: That's not the point.

Me: You're in a quiet spot?

Sandro: I'm safe

Me: Listen, there's many ways to distract Scavenge. I'll make sure he'll not touch her whilst I'm here. What I need from you and your guys is to get out of there clean.. I mean really clean.

Sandro: Bebita!

Me: A menos que quieras morir (Unless you want to die)

He breathed out heavily.

Me: So you promise?

Sandro: I promise.

Me: Good. I'll collect my gadgets make a few calls to meet you halfway. You'll need to find an excuse to meet with Jezzman again.. This time you go prepared and not with your feelings!

Sandro: Can't you come?

Me: No I'm prohibited from crossing the borders.

The leopard disappeared. He sighed.

Me: You will need an earpiece with your men. You should also be armed including sharp weapons being plastered on your bodies. Uncle is gonna help you with that. Bullet proofs you'll need them too & silicones. And you Sandro will specifically need to buy eye contacts, make sure they're black. Chewing gums too will be needed. Teargas sweetheart please make sure you don't forget.

Sandro: The list is compiling

Me: I'll update you if there's more. This is war, my first priority is you & Letty I need you both to come back in one piece.

Dwayne was your man?

Sandro: Uh yeah.

Me: I have a job for him too. For now we're done. Make sure you walk away, they're waiting on a stunt from you, disappoint them.

Sandro: How do you know this?

Me: I'm sure you made a few eye contacts with my sister. One or two guards must've noticed.. eyes don't lie so they're alert as we speak.

He chuckled.

Sandro: Are you god?

Me: I'm human.

I dropped the call. And scrolled down my contacts making another call.

I smiled when he picked.

Me: Marquis my friend! Remember me?

Him: Yes you've been scarce.

Me: I know right. How have you been?

We catch up a little more before I came to the real deal.

Me: Listen I need a favour.

Him: Anything I'm on standby for you always.

I smiled

Me: There's a certain hospice I'd like you to pay a visit.

Him: I'm all ears.

A great way to start with my proceedings.

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SANDRO

Me and my guys were being escorted. Waste of hour trying to score a deal with Jezzman. He was willing but then my sister's advice came along which is not bad as well. Security here is real tight we were gonna flop.

As we were walking a guard bumped to me.

Me: Hey! Watch where you going?

He lift his hand in an apologetic manner. I clicked my tongue pissed. As I was about to dust myself. I saw a glimpse of folded paper tucked in my pelvic area.

I quickly coughed as I closed in my jacket and faked my cough more.

Me: Uhm man I think I need the bathroom.

Guard: This side.

Me: Champs, I'm coming.

They nodded. I walked to the bathroom and noticed there were cameras. Shit!!

I coughed inside my jacket more while unfolding the paper. It was the floorplan, damn! Ashanti is real quick.

I know she said we should leave this place clean but I couldn't help to check where's Scavenge's room is. I saw his floor and flushed making my way out.

I walked to the corridor of his room and saw the door was a lil open. Calmente was there all dressed like Cinderella for a monster like Jez.

I quickly hide off when I saw him walking towards the room.

Jezzman: Hello. What?? What happened? Fuck this can't be happening. Okay I'm coming, I'll be there in 30 minutes.
Aaaaaarrrrr!!!! (Roaring).

I ran downstairs. Seems like everything is coming in motion.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 36

LETTY

I don't know what happened or why was I dressed for. But all I know is that we waited and waited for whomever had to come till I fell asleep.

I heard faint voices speaking followed by the door shutting. I took time opening my eyes as I rub them and sat up straight. I searched with my eyes looking for the lady. Till I felt my heart stop when I made contact with the boss.

He was standing there with a facial expression I couldn't make out. He looked worse than earlier on, like he was infuriated by something judging by his audible breaths.

He finally stared at me. Oh no, he walked closer to the bed. I clung on the fleece for dear life. I noticed his hands were full of blood along with his shirt.

I closed my eyes in fear burying my face on my knees as I sat in a foetal position.

I felt his hand on my head. He unpinned my hair and all my hair fell down. He then brushed it. I was trembling so bad.

Me: Please don't hurt me

My shaky voice sold me off that I was in a verge of crying. He didn't say anything but continued brushing my hair.

Me: Please..

(Silence)

Jezzman: Look at me

I was just afraid. He stopped brushing my hair.

Jezzman: I said look at me

His voice was now vibrating with aggression and not as calm as before. I had to obey so I looked at him. He's not a bad looking guy but he's really scary.

Jezzman: Good evening

Me: Eve-ning

He bent and kissed my cheek then held on my chin and caressed it with his thumb.

Jezzman: I need to take a shower I'll be back.

I fake a smile and nod. He moved and I took a breath, he came back and wiped the blood off my chin with a towel then threw it over his broad shoulder and left.

I heard the water running and he was still busy in the shower. I bit my nails looking at the doorway, it was open. I looked back at the ensuite and slowly picked myself up from the bed and tiptoed to the...

"Don't even attempt. It won't succeed."

I froze on the spot and looked back. He was nowhere in sight and the shower was still running which means he's still there. I contemplated with it while looking at the door. I didn't care and ran out for it, all the passages were clear.

I ran around looking for an exit but yerrr this mansion is huge, I was getting lost along the way. I'd see guards appearing and would hide myself in some corner. Then cautiously look around if the coast is clear before walking out.

I spend 20 minutes looking for the exit. I don't know how many floors I had to run past.

I finally saw the exit door, I quickly laid flat on my stomach seeing the guards standing there and talking. One was drinking coffee and the other one was playing with his phone, he then left and followed his friend.

Me: God may I go past through there successfully.

I said the prayer softly then looked around and got up. I ran downstairs faster than my feet could carry me. I stopped at the door while panting and opened the doorknob feebly. I didn't

waste time I ran for my life but I got caught in seconds, the guy carried me back to Jezzman's room while I screamed my lungs out.

We got in, to him whistling and folding his clothes calmly. He was wearing only shorts with his bare chest.

Guard: Caught her trying to escape

He nodded.

Jezzman: Place her down, thanks.

He did and left us there. He continued with what he was doing and I awkwardly stood there.

Jezzman: I did tell your attempt won't succeed. You carried on didn't you?

Me: I wanna go home

Jezzman: Home? This is your new home.

He smiled and angrily threw clothes my way they hit my chest so hard that I stumble back.

Jezzman: Don't try to piss me off!!!! Or it'll work. I'm longing for so much blood and I wouldn't mind having yours too

He walked closer and I moved back getting supported by the wall.

Jezzman: I've already had a long, bad day and you wanna make it worse? I lost my father God dammit!!! I'm mad at everyone and what makes you think I won't come for your blood?

He placed both his hands on my neck. I gasped and touched his hands.

Me: I'm sorry, I'm really sorry I didn't mean to ruin your day.

He snickered and made a serious face in split seconds. He had this cold look on his face.

Jezzman: You're sorry?

I nodded. He swiftly grabbed me towards his body with his arm wrapped around my waist

Jezzman: Make it to me then.

He leaned closer and kissed me as much as I didn't want to but I didn't want to fight him so I responded to the kiss. He kissed me so intensively pressing his heavy body on me against the wall, I was suffocating. He clasped on my waist and I involuntarily let out a whimper as I break the kiss. His touch wasn't gentle at all, it was rigorous.

He threw me on the bed. I could see his cucumber all drawn on his shorts I got more scared as he climbed on top of me and took off my dress throwing it away. First time seeing him smile wide like that when he saw the lingerie. He took off the straps and pressed on my boobs.

Me: Ouch!

He couldn't care less he devoured my lips and send wet kisses on my neck. He then rip off the lingerie on me. I hiccuped with tears coming out of the corner of my eyes.

Me: Don't do this please..

He took off his shorts together with his briefs then he dragged my legs closer to him as he separate them. I closed them again. He gave me a death stare.

Jezzman: Dare try that again and see what will happen to you.

Me: (crying) Please!!

He got off bed then went to his drawers. He took handcuffs and cuffed me. I shook myself more and kicked crazily but with his manpower he forced his way inbetween my legs.

He rubbed his head on my entrance and moved in a little my cries got more uncontrollable, this was going to be unbearable for me. And out of the blue I suddenly felt everything stop, I froze and looked at him.

He had bend down keeping his head focused down on my tummy. I didn't know what to do from hereon. He kissed my tummy and rose up brushing my cheeks. His eyes were moist and he sniffed.

Jezman: I think I need another shower.

He pulled off his manhood and got off wearing his briefs. He was still erect but then went to shower again.

I glanced on the ceiling giving thanks to God that it didn't go that far.

Later he came back took off the cuffs and laid behind me pulling me closer in his arms and he hold me tight on lockdown. I couldn't even breathe but I didn't wanna bother him. I slept still in his hold and prayed that he doesn't do something worse, cause he's capable.

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ASHANTI

I was on a call with Marquis.

Me: Does it look believable?

Marquis: Yeah. Though it was hard shooting the old man.

Me: But he's healing right?

Marquis: Yes I'm healing him. As we speak he's resting and he isn't troublesome as I had expected.

Me: Good and no one saw you?

Marquis: Por qué me tomas? (What do you take me for?)

I smiled.

Me: Ofcourse you're the best as they come. But just ensuring that we don't leave careless mistakes, it might cost us.

Marquis: Trust me

Me: I do. Keep him like that I'll tell you when to release him and trust me it'll be very soon.

Marquis: Okay

Me: You'll receive your payment and we'll talk soon.

Marquis: For sure

We ended the call.

I spinned my chair while sucking my lollipop, brainstorming through the floorplan. I already have a picture of Jezzman's premises outside.

Me: Now how do my people access in and get Letty out of there?

I kept on drawing out my plan. 10men vs 50 obviously the place will be full of guards roaming everywhere. I want Scavenge to believe that Sandro is only coming with the same men he came with. Not knowing 7 more will actually enter and attack silently. Now the master question is who'll get to rescue Letty? I'm weighing on options right now to distract Scavenge so that Sandro may do what he does best.

I took my phone and dialed someone I had in mind.

Uncle: Bebita

Me: Uncle, how are you?

Uncle: I'm fine sobrina! (niece!) How are you?

Me: I'm good. Did Sandro fill you in?

Uncle: Yes he did, I'm in. I must say though I'm shocked you're back to this life. I thought you left it as soon as you grew wiser.

Me: Let me say I'm forced back in my old ways. I have to save my sister.

Uncle: Taking on Jezzman-

Me: La haremos si usamos nuestro cerebro. (We're going to succeed if we use our brains)

He exhaled.

Me: And I specifically called you for a job.

Uncle: Yah.

Me: I don't want you on the violent side for this one.
Remember your ex?

Uncle: I'm a married man and got a whole lot of exes, how can I remember the one you're talking about.

Me: Mm the unforgettable one?

Uncle: Ashanti I won't remember

Me: Come on Tío (uncle). The one who snitched on me and Sandro when we stole your hat then you gave us a good beating.

He giggled

Uncle: Ohhhh Elena?

Me: Yes! Elena.

Uncle: Yeah what about Elena?... No, no, no, it isn't what I think it is? No!!

Me: Please uncle do it for me. Atleast it'll be an easy job for you.

(Silence)

Me: You've got the same structure, can fake her voice. You can actually impose her for that day.

Uncle: Who the hell told you she's working there?

Me: It's irrevelant for you. Are we making a deal?

Uncle: What do I have to do?

Me: Just say yes and buy yourself some leg stockings then trust my plan on it.

We both giggled

Uncle: I trust you enough to say yes. If my wife catches me you'll have to explain.

Me: Now that's suicide.

We giggled. And spoke of other things before dropping the call.

I called my informant to ask if Jez touched my sister? He said his room isn't installed with Cameras but he heard cries coming from there.

I banged the table as I sprang up on my feet and took my untraceable phone and stared the picture of his mother and brother. I started typing.

" Too much for a man that steals our daughters & sons, kills them, feed them drugs - to even protect his own? See how easy it was to track your brother and mother? 😊Thought sending them away would help? What a shame! Same fate that has befallen your father might fall on them too. Or perhaps I might surprise you, cause uhm death is declared once there's a body right? Maybe I know where I can find the body."

I sent the message. The phone beeped a message immediately.

Jezzman: " Who are you? "

Me: " Your worst enemy. "

Jezzman: " What do you want? "

Me: " Your new queen

17 of age. "

20 minutes later he replied.

Jezzman: " You playing with fire. "

Me: " And you tricking hell to open loose for you. I give you 48hrs sir to set free of the girl dare touch her. Or else your whole empire will crumble down before your eyes. "

Jezzman: " Try me "

Me: " I like that you initiate it. It'll be obliged "

Jezzman: " Best man shall win "

Me: " We'll see about that "

I placed the phone down brushing my head. I hope he didn't sleep with her cause I'll be damned. I stared at his picture on my laptop.

Me: 1 bird maybe 5 stones.

I went to go drink water I've been up all night. I deserve to rest. I hope Alessandro has bought everything that'll be needed so that we can begin with the war.

I went to check Laura in her room. I stood and watched her sleep for a moment.

Me: I forgive you. And if you could prove you're a better woman - the one that raised me and taught me good morals. Not the stranger who goes around killing people. Maybe just

maybe, things could go back to normal. I still love you even though I'm mad at you. Your son is out there in the wild proving how sorry he is, by his actions and I'm impressed. I know you're ill but... your actions can only convince me that we're worth trying having our relationship back again.

I pulled the duvet to cover her up.

Me: Goodnight.

I then left and closed the door.

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DIMPHO

I took upon visiting my brother in prison after all my deep thinking yesterday. I needed some air, needed to see him after so many years.

"Di... Dimples? "

I stood up and tears trickled down my face while I covered my mouth.

Me: Bhuti?

I ran to him and hugged him tightly. Our hug got cut by the guard. We separated and took a seat. He looked so good and grown. I loved his plaits they made him look like Omarion.

Lifa: Mntana wase khaya (Sister)

He was also emotional.

Lifa: Look at how grown you are.

Me: You too bhuti, you also look good and you've gained.

Lifa: Zi ntsimbi ke sisi wami (I'm lifting weights)

Me: Kanjani? (How?)

Lifa: Welcome to prison where nothing's impossible.

I looked at him in pity.

Me: How has it been here?

Lifa: This place is hell. First 3 years of my life were really bad and crucial I'm even shocked to be still alive but ke yinceba ka Mdali (it's by God's Grace) I am indeed a survivor.

I nodded.

Lifa: Kugcwele ubu krelem bodwa apha ba umisa ingqondo unga surviv'a. (There's lots of dirty tricks in here but if you're smart you might survive.) I am also studying. I study Law since the Law failed me this is my last year.

Me: Wow Bhuti I'm so glad to hear that.

Lifa: Mmm yazi when I heard that I have a visitor I thought it was uTata and Sis' Mo. Never in a million years thought ungaza wedwa kwindawo enje (you'd come alone in a place like this)

Me: Well I had to. I missed you alot and remembered that tomorrow is your birthday since we never make time to come. So Happy Pre- Birthday brother and I bought you some nice stuffs.

Lifa: Aww Dade thank you so much. I really appreciate it. This is really big may God bless you. You know, last seeing my family 11 years ago and seeing my inmates reuniting with their families kinda brought pain to me.. it contributed more pain to the one I already had. But seeing you, my heart instantly warmed up.

I nodded with a smile

Lifa: Banjani kodwa bona? (How are they doing?)

Me: They're good, awesome. Uhm Lefa..

Lifa: Yes?

Me: I know you're innocent. I know you had nothing to do with Dimakatso's disappearance. You don't deserve to be here.

He made a faint smile

Me: I know Mommy did it. Thinking about it when I was young I later discovered Maatso's shoes in her back and... She silenced me.

I looked at him playing with his hands

Me: What can I do to prove it?

Lifa: Do nothing

Me: Huh?

Lifa: Suyenza nto (Don't do anything) I'll just serve my remaining 4 years and get out of here. There's nothing we can do I had already wasted my 11 years in here what difference will it make? I won't even seek for vengeance. Your mother never liked me since day 1 yet she came in Daddy's life knowing I was already there raised by a single father. That move from her I had expected. What I did not expect was the justice system failing me and Dad not giving me support, knowing without him I'm an orphan. But it's fine if it's how God laid out my life then it's fine. Maybe I had to be moulded the hard way. Though I'm not angry at anyone cause I spent 6 years doing that and it sucked away something in me which was, happiness & peace. I had to accept Jesus in my life to let go of many things and I had forgiven them without even asking for it. My life couldn't have gone better and I already have great plans when I get out of here.

I digested that in.

Me: That's uhm inspirational. So you'll exclude us out of your life as soon as you get out?

Lifa: I'll never exclude you but with them it'll be different. I'll never trust them again.

I nodded.

Lifa: Xa sele ndikujonga ingathi ikhona into ek'hluphayo
(Looking at you, seems like there's something bothering you.)

I let off a deep sigh

Me: Yah... mngane wam ulahlekile. (My friend is missing)

Lifa: Mngane wakho? Kutheni nje soloko ulahlekelwa ziz' shlobo. (Your friend? Why do you always lose friends)

Me: It's my Mom!! (crying) she's taking my friends Bhuti angazi ubenzani kodwa uyaba thatha (I don't know what she's doing with them but she's taking them)

Lifa: Dimples... your Mom is part of the human trafficking operation.

I quickly jerk my head up looking at him in shock.

Me: What?

Lifa: I'm sorry to say this but it's exactly that.

Me: Why is she always targeting my friends? And... How can I put a stop to this bhuti? Nginga mdalula kanjani? (How can I expose her?)

Lifa: Want my piece of advice?

I nodded.

Lifa: Your Mom's been running this for years. She's way smarter than you think. Telling Dad will be your mistake.. he couldn't stand up for me his son. What will stop Mo from making him believe the opposite of what you saying?

Me: Manje uSuggest'ani? (What do you suggest?)

Lifa: Fika ekhaya (Get home) and be a good girl. You're way closer to her more than anyone. It'll be easy for you to snoop info on her & evidence. Mo is human she makes mistakes too. Then uqale ubonisa uTata ubungqina bayo yonke lento (Then you start showing Dad all the evidence). But many could go wrong if you start with that, cause your Mom is good in manipulating. You'll have to contest your love for her enough to take the evidence to the police... before actually telling Dad.

I looked at him

Lifa: It's all on you whether you wanna see more girls being taken or end this - your choice. But make sure she doesn't catch you and remain with good attitude even after knowing this.

I looked at him thoughtful. That was an idea and it could work.

Lifa: So tell me about your life. I've been missing alot on my Sis' life. Any boyfriends khona how old are you this year?

I smiled still thinking about what he said to nail my mother.

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MAVUYI

Just got out on a heavy prayer with My husband, the two guys & Ndileka.

I really appreciate her support. After we got done we left the men alone and went to cook in the kitchen.

Me: Petla I really appreciate your support yazi. Wena no mnyenam (you and my husband) have been giving me great support and strength even when I feel like giving up sometimes.

She smiled rubbing my arm

Ndileka: It's what I'm here for Petla. I'll always be by your side come sunshine and rain.

Me: Yazi you're a great friend.

Ndileka: Kwak'dala nje nawe mos (Since day one, you too)

We smiled at each other. I focused back on the pots.

Me: Yaz I'm thinking of fasting.

Ndileka: Oh?

Me: Yah I feel like I'm in a battle. And I need to fight it with God on my side. Atleast I'll regain more strength if I focus on that side.

Ndileka: Yabona ke, nanku lo Mavuyi ndimaziyo. (You see, this is the Mavuyi I know)

We giggled till we got disturbed by a knock. We both looked at the door. My smile got wider.

Me: Ohh Mo!

Motlatsi: Mavuyi! Sanibonani (Greetings)

She walked in wearing her black & white Ethiopian Church uniform. She wasn't alone she came with two other church women.

She came to hug me. She then went to hug Ndileka but Ndili moved back looking at her.

Me: Hayibo Ndili!

She fold her arms giving her a piercing stare.

Motlatsi: Hay it's nothing it's fine. How are you though Sesi? My daughter told me what happened. It's so sad yazi what has become of the world hee? I came as soon as possible and brought the ladies to come pray for you.

Me: Enkosi.. Molweni nakuni boo Ma.

I greeted the ladies they greet back.

Me: I'm coping wethu sisi.

Motlatsi: Shame ngwaneso mma. O s'ka Ila, Modimo otlo araba a khutlise morali wa hau. (Don't cry, God will answer and bring back your daughter)

She hugged me. Ndileka laughed.

Ndileka: So now you're BFF's?

Mo let go of me.

Motlatsi: Excuse me?

Me: Ndileka! Aloxesha lo khweleta eli. (This is no time for jealousy)

Ndileka: No I'm just asking Petla since you never told me about her.

Me: She saved my life

Ndileka: Can it be elaborated how?

Motlatsi: That won't be necessary

Ndileka: Wasn't talking to you wena Mafikizolo.

I was about to talk but Motlatsi led a song.

Motlatsi: " Ukholo lwami ndonyuka nalo"

Ladies: " Ukholo lwami ndonyuka nalo ndilu bambe nge sandla.
Ndiyo ngena nalo ekhaya ezulwini. "

Motlatsi: " Noma sekunzima.. "

Ladies: " Noma kunzima, noma kuye nyukwa kodwa ukhoho lami
ndiyo ngena nalo ekhaya ezulwini. "

Motlatsi: " Timomo Timomo... "

Ndileka chuckled more I nudged her arm scolding her with my
eyes.

They sang and prayed for me. My husband came in the kitchen
lost of what was happening. We then said Amen.

Ndileka: Yazi Mavuyi I think another solution of knowing your daughter's well-being is by consulting that good healer who was once here. I like her so much.

Motlatsi choked and coughed.

Motlatsi: Ke kopa... Ke kopa metsi (Can I have water?)

Ndileka: I'll get it for you.

She poured her a glass and hand her. When Mo tried reaching for it she retracted her hand back.

Ndileka: Yazi I know a crook when I see one. Cause I myself am a crook, just tread carefully near my friend okay? Ina ke (here)

She gave her the glass back.

Ndileka: Salani nama fongkong enu. (Remain with your fake people then)

She walked out.

Bheki: And then??

Me: Andaz ke (I don't know) please forgive me for that.

Motlatsi: It's okay. Can we page through the book of Proverbs?

Me: Okay Tata are you joining us?

Bheki: Cha makung' shiye. (No I'm skipping.)

I smiled with the ladies and we sat down preparing for the session.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I was hallucinating as I tossed and turned in bed. My body trembled uncontrollably as if I'm suffering from epilepsy.

I shook my head still in my dream. A very a unpleasant one.

Me: (muttering) M.hm, m.hm, m.hm. Tata, Hayi. Tata!!!

I jumped up panting and still felt pain as I cried. I switched on the lights, Gogo was sitting besides my bed.

Me: Gogo yhuu (weeps softly) hayi hayi hayi Gogo.

Gogo: Balandele (Follow them)

I looked at her

Gogo: It could all be prevented if you follow them.

Me: Umsebenzi wona Gogo? (What about my job?)

Gogo: Manyano you know your destiny is this my child. Since from the beginning. It was negotiated that we let you study, work and yes we didn't put pressure on you. To which you've

achieved everything except for building yourself a family... we see you're still being indecisive about that and we're not gonna force you. But what we're here to ensure is for you to carry out your duty which is helping people, bringing things in unity. You're for the people and that should never change. It should be your priority.

I squint my eyes.

Me: So Gogo you're saying I should quit my job?

Gogo: It's about time. You can't balance both. Follow your father and bring our grandson back home this is the only chance. There's a family also in need, your presence there will help with many things.

Me: What if he doesn't want to come back?

Gogo: Your brother may be cruel. But remember that's not in his nature he was tainted to be so. Seeing his father yes will build more rage and he might kill him. But then you, he remembers you. That certain day when he saw you, he saw you with eyes of love not a sibling kinda love but romantically. It's where you gonna get in and clear things out. Who knows maybe you might tame him. And remember you'll not be alone we will be there with you.

I looked at her.

Gogo: Time isn't a patient friend Manyano. Follow them, ndiyay'shiya indawo ngalo mazwi (With those words I'm departing)

Me: Camagu Gogo.

She left in a smoke. I sat down and sighed now I have to rush back in Pretoria. To say this doesn't make me nervous would be a lie, I'm hella shaking. But I trust my ancestors more than anything.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 37

NDILEKA

I made myself coffee I just cannot start my day without coffee.

"Mamzo "

Me: Hlohlo, atleast it's better than calling me Ouledi

He giggled.

Mayihlome: Why you hate Ouledi so much?

Me: Ouledi is making me age

Mayihlome: I mean you're getting there sooner or later

Me: I'm too stubborn to age kuyofuneka kuliwe nam (there'll have to be a fight)

He laughed. I turned around to face him.

Me: Hm! and I was about to ask what made you wake so early in the morning.

Mayihlome: Yeap I'm starting with work today. It killed me staying here not doing anything and just lazing around yhu.

I smiled at him

Me: You're really passionate about your job.

Mayihlome: I truly am. And by the way don't wait up on me tonight.

I frowned.

Me: Why?

Mayihlome: I'll be searching around for a place to stay.

Me: Uyaphuma ngoku? ndandicimba sasigqibile nah. (You're moving out when I thought we had already decided.)

Mayihlome: Ma I'm reaching my 30's I'm growing. Can't be an old man still living under my Mom's roof. Hay! That's for Malwande not me. I wanna have my stable life in my 30's probably with a wife and kids, we can't strain you here.

Me: Kodwa Hlohlo

Mayihlome: Hay hay Mama I'm growing let's not run away from it.

Me: Eish, how I wish you'd go back to being a 6 year old.

He giggled.

Mayihlome: Too impossible! By the way I never asked... how is Ashanti? I didn't want to intrude since she had loss of memory just needed to give her a breather. Did she gain her memory back and any updates on Letty?

Me: Well...

" Lifestyle, yeah my lifestyle

Yeah my lifestyle on the high now

Lifestyle, yeah my lifestyle

Yeah my lifestyle on the high now "

Mayihlome and I shared a brief look then back at Malwande.

Mayihlome: And then? who won Lotto?

Malwande: "She told me she loving my lifestyle. I'm young and I'm living my life now. Lifestyle, yeah my lifestyle. Yeah my lifestyle I'm a vibe now, skkrrrrir!"

He made a dab and I chuckled.

Me: Yii Malwande.

Malwande: Mama

He placed the car keys next to me

Malwande: They are yours now.

Me: Mine? By that what do you mean?

Malwande: Ngeyakho itransie Mama ndiyakupha. (It's yours I'm giving you my car)

Mayihlome: What will you use?

Malwande: Hehe!! Thul' ubheke wena mnakwethu ubone iVrr phaa endizobuya ngayo later (Watch and see the brand new car I'll be bringing later on)

I looked at Mayihlome while placing my hand on my hips then back at Lwande.

Me: Urhola imali enkulu ngoku wena Malwande sowukwazi uzithengela enye imoto? (Do you earn such a huge salary for you to be able to buy yourself another car?) with just only 2 years of work experience.

Malwande: Kanti ke Mama there are other places your son specializes in and gets rewarded for.

I made a puzzled look.

Me: Huh?

He kissed my cheek and hits his brother's chest.

Malwande: Nzonibona xa ndibuya (I'll see you when I'm back)

Mayihlome: How will you travel to work without your car?

Malwande: Just miss the feeling of travelling by Taxis. I won't die don't stress. Later Fam!

He made the peace sign and left. I looked at Mayihlome still bedazzled.

Me: Hee! What did this child mean when he said there are other places he specializes in?

Mayihlome sipped his coffee

Mayihlome: Surely it has something to do with the sugar Momma.

Me: Eeuw sies maan. Just the sight of them-

He cuts me short by lifting his hand.

Mayihlome: Ha.a ungazenzi ngcono (don't make yourself better) you are no different from him.

Me: Do you have to rub it on my face kengoku?

Mayihlome: Sorry but you should lead by example kudala ndisitsho sukuyenza izinto phamb'koo Lwande (I've been always saying don't do things in front of Lwande.) But I've also got work to get to.

He pecked my cheek

Mayihlome: I love you.

Me: I love you too son.

He also took his things and left. I nodded a bit far with thoughts.

Me: Sylvia neh, ayy!

I snapped out of that dirty thought and sipped my coffee while walking to the lounge and called my people for our next job.

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MOTLATSI

I was standing in front of the mirror fixing myself for church. I called Jezzman but he wasn't answering I had to update him about something, damn why isn't he picking the call!!? I quickly dropped the call when my husband walked in.

Me: Oh! Babe you're around?

Sihle: You look surprised? Did I catch you off guard?

Me: Off guard ka eng? Argh! There's no such thing. I thought you're at work.

Sihle: It happens I'm off today. Here's your breakfast.

He placed it down on the bed stand. I turned around and smiled walking to him and gave him a kiss.

Me: Thanks you're such a good husband one could ever wish for.

He smiled looking down and took a seat on the bed.

Sihle: Can you spare us the moment?

Me: Uhm ofcourse

I went to sit next to him. He took hold of my hands.

Sihle: I wanna spend my day with you

Me: Empa ke tlababa busy mo kerekeng (But I'll be busy at church)

Sihle: All I'm asking is for your time.

I looked at him and sighed

Me: Okay fine I can compromise.

Sihle: Now that's my wife.

I looked at my breakfast

Me: This is impressive

Sihle: I tried my best didn't I?

Me: You sure did, are rapele (let's say grace)

We closed our eyes and gave thanks. I took hold of my breakfast and started eating.

Sihle: You know we should pay Lifa a visit in prison.

I coughed the food suddenly got in the wrong pipe. I reached for water.

Sihle: Babe? Hun? You okay?

Me: I'm (coughs) okay just (coughs)... that was unexpected.

Sihle: Yeah I know we never speak of him but Dimpho just reminded me. Today it's his birthday, we have to buy him something special and show that we still care.

I fake smile. Do I really have to be there?

Me: Wow never new I'd cancel something important in church to be actually paying visits in prison. I thought the day is only for us two.

Sihle: Yeah but remember Lifa is our son he should be priority.

Uh-ha! You mean YOUR son. I maintained my fake smile.

Me: True yazi actually what am I saying. Yeah let's go pay him a visit.

Sihle: Thank you. Dimpho spoke of things that kinda opened my mind and like...

He looked at me.

Sihle: Don't you really find it weird that all her friends are disappearing after that incidence?

Me: I do Ratiwa it's so strange even at times it gets me wondering about our daughters' safety. How about we move out and go live in the suburbs?

Sihle: You know I can't afford that. I mean being the only one that brings in income.

I smiled

Me: Well a family relative of mine made a call past few days ago. Letting me know that our Granny's land money is coming within a week... It's good money babe. So I'll get my shares, I thought for a change I should do something huge you know. Like buying us a house.

Sihle: Wow ka nnete baby? (serious?)

Me: Yes I wanted it to be a surprise but geh I couldn't keep my mouth shut.

Sihle: That's amazing honey yho hee. I really didn't expect this.

Me: We should start searching.

Sihle: I'll leave that all in the hands of yours and Dimples.

Me: Right?

Sihle: How about for now we think of what we'll gift Lifa.

I cleared my throat with my smile fading quicker and shrugged.

Me: For sure.

Why does he always have to include his useless son. I thought I got rid of him for good in our lives. I don't know what Dimpho's playing at I seriously need to have a real talk with her. Can't have her finding my dirt after so many years playing it nicely to sweep it under the carpet.

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LIMILE

Was chilling with my father in Centurion at my place. He's spending a day with me bonding, and we had a couple of drinks while playing chessboard. We're Sundaying well.

Me: So Auntie Babalwa is the only sister you never got close with?

Dad: We once were but that lady was always out for my blood. We had to grow apart cause she wasn't a good person. Even though in the end she freed me from my witchful aunts.

Me: Butchered them?

Dad: One and shot the other. She was really proud of what she did even when she was behind bars.

He glanced at me

Dad: I know I cheated on your Mom with her sister. Though I hope if I go well with Luniko

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your relationship doesn't turn out like mine and Babalwa.

Me: Mhise and I are all good, it'll depend on him.

Dad: Oh! And look who's calling, Abednego. I have to answer this.

Me: Okay

He went to take the call while I drank more shots.

He walked back in.

Dad: This is it. We're doing this tomorrow, Abednego will be here all ready for us to leave.

Me: So you'll go there unarmed?

Dad: I'll be there for peace you're not expecting me to shoot my son are you?

Me: But for your protection Tata! You're entering a Lion's Den. His men won't even waste time thinking of peace and whatnot.

Dad: Well maybe I'll accept whatever is being thrown at me cause I'd deserve some.

Me: Deserve? Tata what about us? uMama? I see you're heading there already ready for your death. Don't you think it might hurt us lonto!?! How can you even get to think like that?

He swallowed

Dad: I know it will but.. I'm not going there armed I stand on that. My only protection is what Mhise gave me to use and Abednego's men covering me up. Whatever else happens there would be because it should happen.

Me: Maybe Benny and I should've taken this journey for once.

Dad: Hell no! You shouldn't, there's no backing down son. We're doing this whether you like it or not.

He placed his hand on my shoulder

Dad: Always remember these moments son if ever it happens... (Clears throat) Uhm I need to check on your Mom and your other siblings.

Me: Dad!?

He walked away. I felt a little teary when he spoke like that. Seems like he doesn't have faith at all and we don't need that right now. We still need him, I still need him to yet witness my

wedding and bringing him grandkids. Luniko better not ruin that.

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ASHANTI

I saw Jezzman making a cunning smile before he laughed and clapped his hands slowly. Gunshots then followed and bombed around... I looked around and saw many bodies lying around with only me standing.

Jezzman: Last woman standing. How brave, how smart. All along I'm dealing with a woman.

He laughed again. I looked around and noticed my outfit was covered in blood from my jeans all the way up to my Top beneath my breasts.

I knelt and cried in so much pain

I gasped waking up already attacked by anxiety. I ran to my bathroom and drank water from the sink then splashed my face.

Me: God forbid. Wheeew! What does it mean? Victory.
Scavenge can't win, something is definitely done wrong here.

I went back in my room to reach for my phone.

Mavuyi: Hey Ncumo.

Me: Who else knows about us helping?

Mavuyi: Excuse me?

Me: Who else knows??

Mavuyi: Other than my husband and I it's Ndileka.

Me: Ndileka is harmless, anyone else?

Mavuyi: No we haven't said anything else to anyone why?

I sighed closing my eyes.

Me: I guess it's just my anxiety kicking in. I'm just having a feeling that something will go wrong somewhere somehow. BUT we're gonna pull this off well. Nothing is gonna stop us. Don't worry.

Mavuyi: Ncumo?

Me: I love you, we'll talk again

I hang up not waiting for her response. I had to take a quick shower I had things to do today.

Walked in to Mom with her physiotherapist in their session. I greeted them Laura smiled more seeing me being able to say something towards her than last time.

Me: I'm seeing a doctor. Gonna get my front teeth done since I lost them.

Laura: That's good. Can I make your favourite meal?

I looked at her

Me: You're not 100% healed to stand on the stove.

Laura: I can send out instructions to be done exactly as how you like if it's what you'd like.

I made a side smile

Me: It is what I'd like. I'll see you.

Laura: Ashanti... I love you.

I nodded and left without giving her a response. Can't just pretend like nothing happened, we'll be cool once she apologizes not only to me but to the right person.

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MALWANDE

I was out of control I couldn't stop flaunting with my new car! I took many pictures next to it. Would hoot around with it on the road eish I could see many people admired and envied to be me right now and get to control these engines as they looked at it.

My sugar Mommy doesn't play it's exactly the Lamborghini Aventador she promised me.

Me: Damn baby I thought you were bluffing all this time.

Sylvia: I don't do bluffs honey. You should know by now.

Me: I do tjoo this is a real beast. I swear I'll earn respect after owning such a car.

Sylvia: That was the whole point honey. Stick with me and you'll go places.

Me: Aaah thank you so much. The sex I'm gonna give you tonight! your ovaries won't dodge if you're not on menopause.

I kissed her neck and she giggled.

Sylvia: Chaizvoizvo? Ahee! handigoni kumirira (Really? I can't wait)

Me: But first I'd like to show Mommy my beast.

Sylvia: Mama's boy well I won't take away your shine. Go show Mommy but remember I'll be waiting for us to go celebrate later on.

Me: So I'm dropping you first?

Sylvia: Wanna cheat in peace with the fresh ones?

I gave her a disappointed look.

Me: Haa nangoku awuka ndithembi nah baby? (You still don't trust me?)

She laughed.

Sylvia: Aww can't I play with you na baby wangu? Ofcourse! Diyakuthemba (I trust you). Know by 9pm we go celebrate neh?

Me: Okay sure. I love you

Sylvia: I love you too. Please play that piano of yours on high please.

I giggled and kissed her.

Me: Okay

♪♪ " Ndibulela idloz' lami, woo Mame!

Woo Ndabulela mna, wowowowo "

She made a video of herself jamming to the song. Magriza doesn't wanna age, I was also included in the video can't complain. I dropped her home and we had a good kiss before she climbed off.

I shook my head and took 15 minutes driving home. Couldn't get over how people were staring at my car it made me confident in a way. When I parked home I heard a phone ringing.

Me: Tshini hee! this lady mara. Mnk, hay old age must be creeping in.

I took her phone. Was a missed call from a Motlatsi. I continued holding it and got off with it in my hand.

Didn't even take long for me to get out men from my hood were already there whistling getting closer to admire & compliment the car. Mom also parked next to mine using the old car. She got out taking off her sunglasses and took a good look at it. She crouched down touching its wheels a few times.

Mom: We need to talk!

She sounds serious. I thought she'd be happy but instead she was too serious like I was in trouble.

Me: Bu-

Mom: Make sure you drive the car in the garage. You'll find me inside.

Me: A congratulations wouldn't kill.

Mom: Malwande!!!! Now.

Me: Yhoo okay ke ixolo (sorry)

She stormed inside the house. My Mom kodwa ke can be a mood spoiler yaz.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 38

NDILEKA

I waited for him inside. He whistled making his way in as I paced up and down.

Malwande: Mamzo?

Me: Is that what you've become?

Malwande: What?

I looked at him and shook my head

Me: Ndiyazile (I knew it) you wouldn't afford another car. Is that what you are Malwande? Ulala nama xhekwazi ogqiba uthengwe nge moto (you're sleeping with old women then get bought with a car.) Do you know what that makes you?

He chuckled shortly

Malwande: Ever seen me meddling in your business xa ubusy nabantwana abancinci (when you're busy with young kids?) Typically my agemates.

Me: Uthini? (Say what?)

He moved backwards

Malwande: Even if ndizithandela amaxhekwazi (I love old women) it's my preference okay? I'm old enough to do whatever I want.

I nodded while sucking through my teeth.

Me: Malwande Pendla. You goin' go back in the garage, start the car and drive it back to Sylvia. Return it back to her.

Malwande: Intoni!? (What!?)

Me: Andithethi nesthulu (I'm not speaking to a deaf person)

Malwande: Ngoba Mama? Why should I return it back when it's been gifted to me.

Me: Because I say so!!! Lento izobane mibuyelo emibi and mna njengo nyoko ndikhusela wena (This will have a bad ending and as your mother I'm protecting you)

Malwande: Protect me how? Cause all I see is jealousy.

I scoffed

Me: Jealousy?

Malwande: Yes jealousy. At first I took it light but now it's all clear (laughs) you can't even hide it Mama. Sylvia won't take your place su tatazela (don't be afraid).

Me: Malwande ndak'khuza (I'm warning you)

Malwande: All she's ever doing is love me, she loves me. Why can't you be happy for me? I'm sure if Mayihlome was in my shoes you would swallow it and let it slide kuba kaloku it's your favourite son.

I snorted and wiped my mouth.

Me: You are going to return that car back wena Malwande.

He clenched his jaws staring at me

Malwande: If I say No?

I walked closer to him and he moved back.

Me: You going to say No?

Malwande: Mama why?

I paused walking and sighed while holding my hips.

Me: Wakhe wambona ephangela kwa bhasi bani uSylvia
Malwande!!? (Where have you ever seen Sylvia working!?)
You're the one walking in and out of her house going to work
while yena she sits there with her phat ass doing nothing. Yet
she's able to buy you a luxurious car? Wodlula wena
mphangeli! (She beats you while you work!) Don't you ask
yourself where she gets the money?

(Silence)

Me: Noko umdala Malwande izindza zigcwele awudingi
ucingelwa ndim (You're old Malwande your pubic hair is full I
don't need to think for you) She's into illegal stuffs I can smell
it. What I do is minor to what she does. Now son you want to
be caught up in that and end up losing your life?

That kinda shook him as he glanced at me.

Me: By just having that car do you know you're already a target kwiinto ezinintsi (in many things?) Son... I may not be a good example or rather an ideal role model for you but learn from Mommy. This side honey we hustle for the soft life. We work and sweat for it, you look at your achievements knowing where they came from. You know what it took for you to have it and that makes you proud as a person. Not just ivele njee ifike ungayazi noba isuka phi (seeing the achievement and not know where it came about)

He dropped his eyes down taking in what I'm saying.

Me: Malwande stay in your lane, stay in your lane mfanam awuzo phuma nto (nothing's gonna happen to you.) Trust me, I might look like a jealous person today but if you apply my words - continuing with your job and work for yourself. You'll realize I wasn't fooling you and would actually get yourself saved from many things out there.

We had a silent moment till a phone disturbed us. He opened his hands.

Me: Who's phone is that?

Malwande: Sylvia's

Me: Who's calling?

He shrunk his eyes in looking at the screen.

Malwande: Motlatsi, I don't know whether I should answer it.

That name... it sounded familiar.

Me: Khay'bambe uyibeke ku loudspeaker (Pick it and place it on loudspeaker)

He picked and was about to talk but the woman was too fast she didn't give him a chance.

Her: "Hi Sylvia! Can you quickly reach out to Jezzman I don't know why he isn't picking my calls and I won't be able to try him I'm trapped by my husband, I'm in the loo as I'm speaking. Listen tell him that his supplier Sandro & Ashanti are tracing everything to get the girl, Letty. I'm getting close to her mother and I must have underestimated them, soon that child will be rescued... "

She went on and on and I was immediately struck by a headache right there and held on my forehead as I stumbled back.

Her: "Sylv are you there? Do you hear me?"

Malwande looked at me terrified.

Me: Cima cima cima (Drop it)

He hang up with his hand trembling and the phone slipping out of his hand. I quickly catch it before it hits the floor.

Me: Benditheni? Bendisando thini kuwe? Yabo khange kube nak'dala. (What did I say? What did I just tell you? It didn't even take that long)

He sat down covering his mouth.

Malwande: She.. She's... She's involved in taking Letty. Sylvia??

Me: I need to deal with this before it gets to the wrong hands. Just stay there and try to calm down okay?

Malwande: Mama

He was still in disbelief. I left and rushed to the kitchen to bring him water.

Me: Just calm down my boy. Mommy will always save you. Give me the car keys.

Still absent-minded he handed me the keys without any fuss.

Me: I'll be back now son. Will you be able to take care of yourself?

He was still zoned out. I held his chin.

Me: Lwande.

Malwande: Yah yah I think I'll be fine Mama.

Me: Put my number on speed dial okay? I'll come as quick. I love you.

I kissed his cheek and ran out. I got inside the car and called my bf.

MaThousand: Aww stove sam samalahle.

Me: Khawume nge jokes MaThousand. Are you available?

MaThousand: Why so serious? Yah for wena mabhebheza I'm always available.

Me: I have a job for you let's meet.

MaThousand: Sure sure name the time & place and I'll be there.

I started the car and drove off.

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SANDRO

We had bought all the equipments needed. It was all packed in our room. The men were loading bullets some were polishing their Ak47's & pistols. I was sitting there laying out all the knives, daggers and many other sharp objects while also testing technical faults on our earpiece.

Me: Yo, we going be like bitches. We'll put a strap around our thighs and ankle socks to hold these sharps objects in.

They giggled.

Ricardo: No vamos a tener dificultades con eso? (Aren't we gonna have difficulties with that?)

Me: Dude that's why there's silicones in the first place and we'll be having our own special costumes.

Ricardo: Aren't you on the upfront?

I smirked while smiling

Me: Trust me when I say all of us will have our own costumes.

José: Man your Lil sis planned all of this? I've long seen that child got brains.

Ricardo: No cap (lies) bro!

I smiled making my way to the mirror to try out the contacts.

"Speaking of costumes. Como me veo? Y cómo puedo servirles a ustedes, jóvenes? (How do I look? And how may I serve you young men?) "

I turned around and instantly burst in a loud laughter till I fell on the floor. All the men were also in stitches with their erupted laughs.

Me: Ay Ay Ay uncle I'm dead, there's no come back.

Uncle: Don't say uncle I'm Auntie Elena to you.

I chuckled with tears coming out. He was faking his ex's feminine voice and hell damn he was good. He also got the makeup on with a wig lol I like the way they blushed his cheeks.

José: Damn you got legs for days.

Me: Mmmh and those yummy boobies

José: Please turn around for us

Uncle: Fuck off!

We giggled.

Ricardo: Was Auntie Elena's uniform that short?

Uncle: Err'body needs something new. Hope the fucker will be charmed by my ass.

Me: Bend your ass so we can see your thongs. It might work on him, every man's got a weakness.

Uncle: You're enjoying this don't you?

We laughed.

Me: Lemme shoot a snap. And who taught you to walk in heels?
You've got many skills Tío (Uncle) hey.

" I taught him "

The room went silent. It was one of the girl I used to string along just to shag no feelings attached. It took me a lot to involve her in this.

Tatiana: So ain't I getting any credits for making a well known Mafia into a believable woman?

Ricardo: You did a good job Madam

She laughed lightly

Tatiana: Mhm thank you.

She walked to my direction while biting the tip of the makeup blush and sat on top of me, bouncing seductively on my crotch. That was real tempting.

Tatiana: And did I do a good job on making myself look all innocent?

I cleared my throat picking her off me

Me: Err time to play is over, let's get serious and start with the work gents.

I stood up.

Tatiana: Come on Sandro are you ashamed of me? Don't act like you never fucked me!

Me: Oh yeah that I did, but I ain't coming back to that reformed pussy again. Stay in your lane.

Guys: Ooouuuu!

Tatiana looked at me and stormed off.

Uncle: That was mean.

Me: She's too proud.

He raised his eyebrows

Uncle: Bedroom politics. Make sure you never do business with pleasure.

I went to the laptop to be in communication with the informant at Jez's place.

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DIMPHO

Today I woke up to my parents gone. Daddy's at work obvious and Mom, maybe fishing for other girls. I need to put a stop to this it's really enough.

I went to my parents bedroom to search for something, anything for a starting point.

Me: Come on, come on there must be something.

I looked through her clothes, drawers, everywhere. I banged the dressing table.

Me: Damn!

I ran my hands down my face while huffing. My eyes moved on the floor I thought of something.

Me: The secret box! Omg why couldn't I think of this in the first place?

I ran back to her closet and reached for a screw driver and knelt on the tile. Just when I was about to get under the bed I heard a car pulling off outside.

Me: Flip!

I quickly slid out of bed and ran faster to place the screw driver and fixed where I messed up. I ran out and threw myself on the couch pretending to have fallen asleep.

Mom: Dimpho

I yawned while stretching my arms.

Me: Mmm Mama.

Mom: What are you doing?

Me: Uhm I was watching a movie next thing I was out (yawns) I don't know for how long though. What's the time?

She gawked at me in a scary way.

Me: Mama!

Mom: 3:30pm.

She gave me that scary stare again

Mom: Going somewhere?

Me: No, I better go make myself something to eat.

I walked passed her she roughly held on my arm. I looked at her hand on me.

She smiled

Mom: Can we have a talk before you go make yourself something to eat?

I swallowed and nodded

Me: Ofcourse.

We went to sit down.

Mom: Dimpho, you are my child. I gave birth to you. I know you more than you know yourself. What are you up to?

Dimpho: Ake tsebe hore u bua ka eng (I don't know what you're talking about)

Mom: You trynna fool me? Kea tseba hore o belaela nna ho nyamela ha metsoalle wa hau (I know you're suspecting me with your friend's disappearance)

I narrowed my eyes.

Mom: And probably for others too.

Me: I didn't even get to conclude that

She fold her arms.

Mom: Ohh??

Me: Serious Mama or are you guilty of something?

She cocked her brow with attitude

Mom: No

Me: I was just trynna make sense out of all of this just all. And it just didn't make sense why all my friends were victims.

Mom: Do me a favour baby. Stop talking about this okay? I'm helping out looking for your friend. We're gonna find Letty I promise you.

She tilts her head

Mom: Right?

Me: Right

She squeezed my cheek

Mom: Good girl. Would you like Mommy to treat you maybe go out as girls?

Me: Nah thanks Mma

Mom: Need some air? we go visit your cousins?

Me: I just need to be indoors Mama I'm not in the mood for people. Let me go lie down.

Mom: Your brother sent his greetings.

I stopped walking

Me: You went to see him?

Mom: Yes with your father, it was his birthday. We bought him nice stuffs.

Me: Ohw wow that's sweet.

Mom: Yah, go lie down and I'll take a shower. When you wake up we'll read Bible scriptures.

I jeered at her, she eyed me.

Me: Oh I mean yah yah ofcourse Ma.

I said composing myself. She squint her eyes at me and I cleared my throat.

Me: Let me go lie down.

Mom: Ofcourse baby.

I walked to my room. That was intense

damn I can't believe this woman! Doesn't she fear what she does to other girls might be done to me too? Sometimes I wish she wasn't my mother.

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MAVUYI

My husband and I were snuggled up on the couch. While we were looking through Letty's photos from ever since she was a baby.

Me: Look at her, this was her graduation day

He giggled

Bheki: Aww awubheke lesa smile (Look at her smile)

Me: She's so cute one would swear she's not an African child.
Look at those chubby cheeks.

Bheki: Bus' Ndiya neh? (She looks like Indian right?)

Me: Yah where did she get that gene from?

Bheki: You asking? Isn't it obvious ukuthi yimina uqobo (it's exactly me)

Me: Haaa!

Bheki: Phela ngishade no Mubizana mina njee (I'm married to an ugly duckling)

I hit him

Me: Bheki!

He pulled me in his arms and kissed me.

Bheki: Hau ang'sakwaz ukudlalisa nah sthandwa sam. Uyazi uyi smadzadza sam esiqhakazayo nje. (Can't I play with you my love? You know you're my beautiful ravishing woman)

I smiled and it soon faded remembering it's no time to be happy. I exhale.

Me: Look how joyous she is here

Bheki: Yeah, she was performing on stage the traditional dance.
She's so live and made for the stage.

Me: I didn't get it at first when she said she wants to be a Radiologist cause I've always seen part of her being in the media, a singer or something. Ngoba yena nje she's made to be a performer.

Bheki: Ngempela (For real)

(Silence)

Bheki: I just hope kuyo yonke le nyaka-nyaka (in all this mess.) She comes back still our bubbly child. I hope they don't damage her to a point of...

His voice trails off while he squeezed his eyelids with his finger. I hugged him.

Me: Tata

He breathed out heavily

Bheki: I just miss my princess

Me: I miss her too, so so much.

My phone interrupted the moment.

Me: It's Ndileka, Petla.

Ndileka: I need you and Bheki to come here asap it's urgent.

I held my neck

Me: Ndileka yintoni?

Ndileka: Mavuyi I'll send you the location make quick or else you'll never find your daughter again.

Me: Hayi!

I stood on my feet and looked at my phone.

Bheki: Yini?

Me: Ndileka says we should meet or else we'll never find Letty again.

Bheki: Ang'zwanga? (Pardon?)

He also stood on his feet meanwhile I covered my mouth.

Bheki: Uyisholo ni into ekanjalo? (Why would she say that?)

Me: I also don't know.

My phone beeped.

Me: Nantsi location masinxibe sihambe. (Here's the location let's dress and leave)

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ASHANTI

I giggled on top of my voice when I saw a picture of my uncle dressed like Elena.

" What's so funny that I can hear you from 3 rooms away "

I stopped and looked at her. I couldn't keep a serious face shame lol this was out of control. I chuckled again.

Mom: Bebita!

Me: I can't Mamá I can't. Look at this.

I showed her my phone, she wheeled herself closer and laughed till her face turned red.

Mom: Goodness gracious! What has gotten into Fernando?

I chuckled

Mom: Is this a prank or what? Where's Armando to see his brother.

She handed me my phone.

Me: He'd be amazed

Mom: Really amazed. Wonders never cease, he looks good though.. like a pretty woman.

Me: Yeah.

Mom: When last did you speak to your brother?

Me: A minute ago.

Mom: Nice... getting along?

Me: Pretty well.

I was scrolling down my phone

Mom: Ashanti I'd love for you to call in your mother.

I froze and moved my eyes from my phone to her.

Mom: I need us to talk, I need to apologize to her for what I did.. and to you.

I blinked still in shock didn't expect that from her since she was so adamant in hating Mavuyi.

Mom: Sé que soy una persona terca pero... lamento lo que hice y necesito paz. (I know I'm a stubborn person but... I regret what I did and I need peace)

Me: I also want peace

She nodded

Me: But it's a wrong time, you can't see her. She lost her daughter and... we still working on getting her back.

Mom: That's bad.

Me: Yah maybe when everything is soothed down then I can arrange your meeting.

She smiled

Mom: Thanks I'd appreciate that

(Silence)

Mom: Ashanti please find it in your heart to forgive me. Honestly I got scared knowing that I'd lose you, I felt threatened and jealous of your biological mother. That she'd take away my spot from you. I know you're bound to be together but... I'm learning to accept things as they are. I'm willing to learn ways where we can both play our roles nicely in your life. I'll make it easy to make that space for her.

I smiled and held her hand.

Me: Thanks that's all I ever wanted. And yes, I do forgive you. You'll always be my Mamá

She hugged me while she teared up

Mom: Ah! Thank you Bebita, thank you so much. I thought I'm losing you forever.

I held on her arms.

Me: Never, I was waiting for you to make the right move and you did.

We broke the hug and chuckled. My phone beeped, I frowned it was a message from Ndili saying we should meet she also gave me the locations.

Me: Ma I have to go we'll catch up soon.

Mom: Okay.

I walked away dialing Mavuyi

Me: Ndili send me a message saying we should meet. Have any idea what it's about?

Mavuyi: We have no idea she also sent us the same message. My husband and I are also heading there.

Me: Okay I guess we'll meet there then

Mavuyi: Yes, I love you Bubu.

Me: I love you too Vuyiz.

We ended the call and I quickly went to grab my keys.

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LIMILE

Dad: Lime son, I really really have to go now. You stalling time.

Abednego: It's okay Oke, it's okay. Trust us.. we are the best men to go out on war. It's been ages being through this and came out alive... even now I can guarantee you. I can make even a stone cold person turn soft, Jezzman is nothing to me. Your father is in safe hands I assure you son, trust me.

I looked at him as he had his hand on my shoulder.

Dad: Now let go son, just let go.

He patted my back. I couldn't let go of him, I couldn't let go of Dad. I held on him tightly.

Dad: Limile.

Me: (tearful) Tata, Tata.

Dad: Son I have to do this. I'll come back, I'm going with best men. Believe in us please.

I reluctantly released him from my hold and wiped my tears.

He placed his hand on my neck

Dad: Subane singqukru mntanam, khulula intliziyo yakho. Kholelwa ukuba olu luzoba luhambo oluhle. Then konke kuzoba kuhle. (Don't be troubled my child, set your heart free. Have faith that our journey will be well then all will be well)

I blew out air and nodded repeatedly

Me: (hoarse tone) Tata promise me you'll come back.

He looked at me with a sort of uncertainty but he tried hiding it off from me but I could see it.

Dad: I promise you son.

He squeezed my arm with tears welling in his eyes.

Dad: (lowerly) I love you son

Me: I love you too Dad.

We grabbed each other again and hugged more tightly.

Another emotional goodbye hug.

Abednego: Okay time is against us.

We let go. He picked his bags and walked away. I enclosed my mouth with both hands as I shrunk my eyes weeping more in silence watching him leave.

"Tata! Tata! Tata! "

Like a tornado Limise fled in with her bags. Her face was really wet.

Mhise: Tata!!! I'm coming with you. We're going all together in Singapore.

Us: Limise!!!!

Mhise: It was suggested by izinyanya (the ancestors). They believe everything will be smooth when I come along.

Dad looked at Abednego.

Abednego: Ayy you have old cry babies Papa.

He laughed and made a tough decision

Dad: When the ancestors are involved, I'm willing to take the risk.

Mhise: Thank you.

She looked at me and ran to give me a hug then placed her hand on my chest feeling my racing heartbeat.

Mhise: Wele please calm down brother, trust me okay? Please trust me. Don't make this more dreadful. Ina (here)...

She gave me my long time locket. It was a half picture of young us. I think I had lost mine ages ago.

Her tears ran down and she held tightly on our hands.

Mhise: Remember our old songs. You're my balance Limile when I'm weak you fight. Just like when you are weak I fight... I know this is all new to you but I need you to pray for us everyday. Midnight I need you to join Mama with prayer. Help us make this journey easy.

She stood on her toes and kissed my cheek.

Mhise: I love you.

I held her hand over my cheek.

Me: I love you too Half.

She let go and I walked them out. Just like that I watched them walk away my heart was pained already. I pray to God he keeps them safe at all times.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 39

MOTLATSI

"I alerted Jezzman about the girl, he says he's gonna deal with it"

I smiled reading the message from Sylvia and sighed for relief.

Me: "That's good"

Sylvia: "Can you come over at my place? We need to discuss something."

Me: "Is it serious?"

Sylvia: "Not such. You'll be thrilled cause we gonna score a great deal from it. Please come I can't say more over the phone."

Me: "Okay I'll be there"

Not that I had anything important to do. I got up and grabbed my bag.

Me: Dimpho! Dimpho!

I walked to her room she was still asleep. I shook her.

Me: Baby

She opened her eyes.

Dimpho: Mma?

Me: I'm leaving honey just meeting an old time friend. I won't take long okay?

Dimpho: Alright

Me: Take care of yourself and the house.

Dimpho: I will Mama

I brushed her cheek

Me: I love you

Dimpho: I love you too.

I smiled and left her room. I got in my car and drove straight to Sylvia's place.

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DIMPHO

I looked over the curtains as soon as she left I went to her room and continued looking for the secret box. I opened it and came across certain pictures and documents. It wasn't much of what I

wanted. I saw pictures of different kind of schools & churches. I picked a page that consisted lists of names.

I was unsure of what concrete evidence I could come out with cause I impatiently want to tell Dad about his wife's doings.

Me: Eish!

I searched thoroughly for something more. Till I picked a picture with a certain white guy posing with a group of kids, seemed like they went for an outing or camp. I don't know but they were posing next to a bushy place in front of the bus. I placed the photo aside, it looked legit no dodginess in it.

Me: Damn Mama you can't be this careful, there has to be a lousy mistake somewhere.

I was panicking a bit. I picked another picture I've never seen this one before. Mom was posing with a guy, he is also white.. it looked like an old picture couldn't miss how cosy they were. I tossed the photo at the back, was written. "Mo & Elveous - High School sweethearts"

I stroked my chin in thoughts staring at the picture. Why would Mom keep this whilet she's with Dad? My eyes frantically moved back to the photo of the man posing with the kids.. He is the same man as Mom's high school sweetheart.

Me: What's going on here?

I shrunk my eyes looking attentively to the picture and at one kid.. I noticed her neck, it had a little ink of the letter word "S". Wondering who on earth would ink a child such. I spotted the same tatt on few kids but strange thing was that none of the boys had this tattoo, that's a red flag.

I snapped my fingers when something clicks my mind. I think I have my first lead on this. It's clear this Elveous person is working with my mother and he seems to be her significant other. And there must be something wrong that happened to the trip cause clearly this indicates that the girls with the tattoos are marked as victims of human trafficking. I may not have gotten exactly what I wanted but I'm getting somewhere.

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NDILEKA

"Sylvia! Sylvia"

I looked at MaThousand and nodded. We went to hide ourselves.

She opened the door and walked in

Her: Aow Sylvia I'm here where are you?

She walked in far ahead and gasped seeing her friend tied in on the chair. When Sylvia was about to signal MaThousand jumped for Motlatsi on her neck and wrapped his arm while placing the knife on her.

She screamed

MaThousand: Yeyy! Yeyy! Ungayenzi into ezi snaaks okanye nzok'qhaqha ngok ngok. (Don't do funny stuffs or I'll cut your throat open right now)

Motlatsi: Okay Okay no need for that. We can talk nicely about this. What do you want?

I brought an extra chair and placed it next to her friend.

MaThousand pushed her and I pinned her to sit on it. Tying her arms and legs.

Motlatsi: Tell me what do you want? If it's money that you want I can give it to you with no hesitation. I have money.. plenty of it.

Me: We don't want your money.

She looked at me.

Motlatsi: You! I know you. Release me!!! What do you want from me? Why are you doing this?

I fold my arms.

Motlatsi: Do you hate me that much to hold me captive when I did nothing?

I walked closer to her.

Me: Like I said; "tread carefully near my friend" and you didn't. I spotted you from day one that you're a snake with both heads and you thought I'd let you bite my friend and get away with it? No darling there will be consequences.

Motlatsi: I don't know what you're talking about. Just let me go.

I looked at MaThousand and nodded. He walked to her.

Motlatsi: What are you doing? Nooo! Noooo! N-

He plastered her mouth with a tape. She shook herself and screamed. I picked her handbag and reached for her phone.

Me: Ina, yenza odume ngazo (Here, do what you know best.)
Let's see what we can find in here.

Her screams got more crazier her veins even started popping on her neck and forehead.

MaThousand is an expert in opening passwords so it'll be easy for him to access the phone.

Me: You both are going to pay for this.

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ASHANTI

I parked next to the house given the directions. I got out and saw Mavuyi and Tat'Bheki making it inside.

Me: Hellows

Them: Hi's

Me: For how long have you been here?

Mavuyi: We just arrived.

Me: Wonder what is Ndileka up to.

Bheki knocked for a few times. A certain guy opened and let us in.

Bheki: Haww! Kanti asibizwanga wu Ndileka lana? (Weren't we called by Ndileka?)

Him: Ewe Tata nizomfumana phambili (You'll find her inside)

He made space for us to get in.

Mavuyi: Molo

Him: Hi

I looked at him and just nodded and he returned it. He led us more inside, the house was big and nice.

Bheki: Kanti wena mfana uwubani? (Who are you?)

Him: MaThousand ndisebenzisana no Ndileka (I work with Ndileka)

Bheki: Ohh.

Mavuyi: Ohhh my God Ndileka what are you doing???

She screamed running to her. We all rushed closer to Ndileka had two women tied on the chair. Ndileka held a knife in her hand after cutting the light skinned one.

I looked at the lady who was crying.

Mavuyi: Motlatsi! Are you out of your mind Ndileka??

Ndileka: You wouldn't think I am after I tell you what these ladies have done.

Bheki: Yini? (What is it?)

She looked at them.

Ndileka: Ndibaxelele (Should I tell them) or you'll do the job?

She directed to the lady who she cut. She blinked her tears away and nodded fastly. Ndileka yerked off the tape from her and she moaned.

Ndileka: Thetha (Speak)

Motlatsi: She's lying Vuvu! Whatever she says don't believe her. All she's doing is being jealous of us, of our relationship you've seen for yourself how she behaved when we were at your place. Don't believe anything she says I'm a Christian woman I wouldn't behave like a heathen!

Mavuyi folded her arms

Ndileka: Nabu bungqina (Here's the proof)

She handed us a phone.

Ndileka: This fongkong Miss holy holy and that one over there lured your daughter using her friend Dimpho, the one they disguised. For what reasons I don't know. She's been planning this for a while. Thanks to my son for being inlove with a sugar momma who happened to be careless with her phone. This same Tlatsi rubbbish called Sylvia to alert Jezzman on behalf of her about our developments on finding Letty. I had to fake and pretend like Sylvia had sent the message to Jezzman at the same time tricked her to coming here.

Everything Ndili stated we could see on the phone.

Me: Damn that was too close!

I grunt in frustration

Mavuyi: So you saving me wasn't genuine?

She kept quiet.

Mavuyi: (Shaking her) Answer me!!!!

The lady looked at Mavuyi and began laughing.

Me: You find this funny?

Her laughs got more worse

Mavuyi: Why did you do this? Why would you do this to my daughter? What do you have against her? What has she done to you?

Bheki: Usuyay'bona ke manje lento yakho yothemba mi nabani na? (Do you see this thing of yours of trusting everyone?)

She turned to him with tears

Mavuyi: She saved my life Tata I never thought she would do this to me.

Bheki: Ucabanga ukuthi wonke umuntu la ngaphandle une nhloso enhle? (Do you think everyone has pure intentions?)

She hiccuped more while looking down in shame.

Bheki: Sinaba Profite aba fake, abantu abagcoka amabhatyi be tora, linkomo zidla umuntu ephila aze ashone fii. Uphinde wena wethembe umuntu nge nhlobo aziveze ngayo? (We have fake prophets, we have people hiding behind the church uniform yet they're witches, we have cows eating a person alive till they die. Then you trust someone the way they present themselves.) Do you think an evil person will exactly reveal themselves as an evil person?

Me: Okay I think we should all calm down.

Bheki: No Ashanti your mother needs to hear this. She's really careless she almost jeopardized our plan we were never gonna find our child if it wasn't for Ndileka, asbonge sisi.

He looked at his wife

Bheki: I keep telling you over and over again same things Vuyelwa when do you learn? I hope this is your lesson.

Motlatsi: Nchoo what a moment

emotional one it got me tearing too. But what use are we now huh? Let us go there's nothing we can do to bring your daughter back. Unless your master plan works ofcourse that would be by a snake making a moonwalk dance first. IMPOSSIBLE with Scavenge.

Mavuyi jumped for her grabbing her blouse in her hands.

Mavuyi: Vala lo mlomo ubolileyo! (Shut that rotten mouth of yours) You will go to jail and stay there for a long time.

Motlatsi: Oh really? Honey I'll never set my beautiful foot in that place. Cause you know why? I'm a pimp. We run the Police Service territory there are many in our payrolls. Even with what you're doing you'll not go far with it you'll get hunted and killed. So I'd be careful if I were you set us free and we'll act like nothing happened.

Mavuyi: You're so evil!!

She said back slapping her. I held Mavuyi back and calmed her down.

Me: Don't fall in her trap Mama.

I looked closely at the other women

Me: Why is this one quiet?

I removed the cloth on her mouth

Ndileka: She's acting all innocent yet she wanted to drag my son into this, nx! What do we do with them?

I lift my hand still introspecting them

Sylvia: Please musukana wechidiki (young lady,) let me go. I'll drop all of this and go back home. I promise, I'm old I need to go home.

Motlatsi: Traitor!

Sylvia: Ndapota ndinokumbira (Please I beg you)

I looked at her crying.

Me: Beautiful Zimbabwean. What confuses me is that both of you have daughters for what you're doing.

They both looked at me in shock.

Motlatsi: U tseba joang? (How do you know?) Don't you dare come nearer to my baby!

Me: I'll be doing my cousin a favour by the way. MaThousand!

He came forward.

Me: Bring forward a cloth, vinegar the crystal clear one, Bicarbonate & Epsom salt.

Mavuyi: What are you doing?

Me: Let's just say I know a Game reserve that consists of wildlife in Dinokeng.

I giggled a bitter laugh.

Me: Some people are gonna find themselves waking there and maybe not in one piece.

Mavuyi: Ncumolwam!

The women cried out loud hearing that.

Motlatsi: Please! Please!

Me: Aow akerr you were gloating not long ago. That pimps get away in places like prison? So... I know a place where it'll be hard for you to escape. Just like you sent the young innocent girls in the wild (laughs) that's what I'm gonna literally do to both of you. And I don't bluff, MaThousand!!

He came back with the items. I opened both the Bicarbonate & Epsom poured half of them on the cloth then half of the vinegar.

I started with the old lady, I grabbed her head and suffocated her between her nostrils. She screamed fighting for her life then quickly let loose and passed out.

Me: How nice was it to gloat huh? Haha! You'll know not to mess with us again or any other female.

I did the same with her. She was fighting and biting my hand, I didn't mind cause I know soon she'll be unconscious

Me: Daarsy..

Her head lazily dropped down and she was out.

Me: Good, now we gonna take their bodies put them in the boot and ditch their bodies in the reserve okay? Who's brave enough to drive with me?

Everyone froze in silence this really horrified them. I clapped my hands.

Me: They don't deserve our pity! These ladies are the reason your child is out on the foreign land we don't know what those cruel men are doing to her as we speak! We don't even know if she'll come back alive. This is the perfect time to take out your rage.

(Silence)

Me: Ndileka??

She shook her head holding her body in fear.

Me: Baw' Bheki?? MaThousand??

MaThousand: Let's do it.

Mavuyi: Ncumo this is wrong!

Me: I know but doing things the right way they're gonna get away with it and continue more.

I untied them from the chair and let them fall down. I then tied them all over again.

Me: I'll carry this light one and you will take the heavy one.

MaThousand: Sure.

Me: Don't worry we'll be safe trust me. So long Ndili find us gloves even if it's garden gloves it doesn't matter.

She immediately left.

Me: Ma please clean up so long.

I said to Mavuyi. I lift up Motlatsi and walked out with her and placed her on the kitchen floor. I first drove my car in then placed her in my boot.

MaThousand did the same with Sylvia on the Lamborghini car and he drove behind me. I wouldn't have gone too far if this lady didn't tick me too hard with her proud face and gloating. That's what really pushed me to the edge, I want them dead! But not killed by my own hands.

LETTY

I was in the bathroom peeing and I come here more often when it's late at night. Geraldine, my lady guard is always standing outside. She respects my privacy I don't know whether it was the boss' instructions or what considering the last time she didn't.

What they didn't know is that everytime I come here at night. I switch the lights off for the Camera in here... Then I dig something looking like a hole on the wall at the back of the

toilet seat so that, I may escape through it one day. These few days I've studied this place. I know at the backdoor of this toilet there's an exit gate. I'll see later how I'll escape through the guards there. That's why I insist on coming on this bathroom other than the ensuite. Made an excuse of not standing the heads that were down the balcony. Jezzman has been a bit soft on me and lets me be...

I don't know maybe it's because I've watched many criminal documentaries or series but I have these unending crazy ideas of escaping in here and on top I live by the "Ilwa Ntombo" concept I left back home. So that's what I'll do till I leave. Next to my hip I've snucked in that steel part of the drill. I realized since the man of the house likes slaughtering, I could steal one from a dozen of them and break it down till that part gets off. That's been my weapon to dig the wall and feeling it with my hand it is getting deep. Just need for it to form a hole so I can get through. See where determination takes you? You don't rest in places like this.

"Letty are you done? "

I quickly stood up and sat back to the seat.

Me: Yeah almost! I'm having period pains!

I snuck in the steel again. I heard Geraldine speaking with someone outside it seems more like an argument and soon the door flung open.

He hits the lights on.

Jezzman: I knew it! You must think that I'm dumb bitch.

He smacked me hard that I almost fell off the seat but I held on it tightly.

Geraldine: Bos!

Jezzman: Stay out of this Geraldine! Would you explain why you always switch off the lights in here?

He directed the question at me. I held my face

Me: (cracking voice) Because I love the darkness.

Jezzman: Bullshit!!

He walked at the back of the seat and noticed what I did. He gave me another blow of slap and the steel fell off me. He grab both my feet like a wheelbarrow, I fell off the seat while hitting my head on it.

Me: (screaming) Awwhh!!!

I lost my vision. He continued dragging me my legs, the floor made a squeaky sound as he dragged me.

Geraldine: Boss stop she's a child and she's bleeding!

He let go of me and I soon heard Geraldine suffocating.

Jezzman: You knew about this?? Huh?? You want me to deal with you? Fuck out of my way then. I've been way too soft on this little tramp and tonight I'm gonna deal with her.

I kept on patting around the floor I was unable to see, everything appeared black yet I could hear voices. I crawled away not knowing which direction take. I felt him grabbing my hair and he pulled me. The pain at the back of my head stung and my hair was tearing. My neck was wet by what I'm assuming is my blood.

He dragged me on the floor like that with my panty and trouser still halfway down my thigh, my butt was exposed and my nunupie was swiping the floor.

He threw me on the bed and out of nowhere I felt a sharp pain when he penetrated me in my anus. I remember crying my lungs out until I couldn't feel anything at all, I became unconscious.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 40

JEZZMAN

I released my load and felt much lighter as I collapsed next to her. I faced up the ceiling as I panted and reached for a towel to wipe myself.

I laid for a few seconds looking at her. She was out, I cleared her face and felt her pulse.

I sat up and dressed up then reached for my phone. I dialed Eric, my Indonesian business associate.

Eric: Jezmir

Me: Eric, you good?

Eric: Still good my man how are you?

Me: I'm fine. You looking for a girl?

Eric: Aah man we have plenty of them here.

I smiled

Me: Ini bukan gadis mana pun. Dia berlian sejati. (This isn't just any girl. She's a true diamond)

Eric: Mmm for sure, anything recommended by you is sure good.

Me: You know how I roll. So when are you coming?

Eric: I can make time and space next week.

Me: No problem, we'll speak by then.

Eric: Sure.

We ended the call. I looked at her and continued rubbing her soft skin.

Me: See now we were doing so fine. Now you pissed me off. I can't keep you here anymore you'll become trouble for me.

I looked at the bedding which was full of blood. I stood up.

Me: Geraldine!!

She came running.

Geraldine: Bos..

She opened her mouth in aghast and closed it again, seeing the gruesome sight before her.

Me: Geraldine

Geraldine: Bos

Me: You becoming weak?

She shook her head

Geraldine: No

Me: Good cause I could do with a fresh head as decoration of my headboard rod.

She gulped. I touched her shoulders.

Me: Relax, was a joke. I want you to call the doctor on her aid okay?

She nodded

Me: I wanna come back to her clean and awake. Did I make myself clear?

Geraldine: Crystal.

Me: Good, look for Elena to clean up the mess

She nodded. I made my way out.

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ASHANTI

I was still driving to the reserve. We were a few minutes closer. The leopard appeared sitting on my passenger seat.

I sighed slouching my shoulders.

Me: Hi, it's been a long time. What is it now?

It just looked at me growling underneath its breath.

Me: I won't know whether that's a restrain or approval. Either way I don't care I'm doing this. These women deserve whatever's coming for them.

It extended its foot placing it on top of my hand on the steering wheel.

Me: What.. you're restraining me? Why? Why? These women deserve to die! After everything they have done? They took my sister and still have the audacity to gloat in our faces! How can I let go of such? I'm doing this whether you approve or not.

I pushed it's foot away and held on tightly to the steering still driving. It jumped on me, clawing and dragging my clothing with its teeth. It teared my top and roared.

Me: Aaahhh stop!

I screamed losing control of the car

Me: I'm gonna cause an accident stop!!! Okay okay.. I won't continue. I promise I'll stop and turn back home I'll not get the women killed, stoop!

It got off me then the car screeched going out of path and almost ran in a tree but it stopped few inches closer.

I sighed in relief holding my chest. MaThousand parked next to me

Me: Now what am I going to say to him?

The leopard disappeared, just right! I clapped my hands once.

MaThousand: And then sisteri what did I just witness?

Me: It's just... Let's just drop this whole thing. Like it's not okay.

MaThousand: (exclaims) Hih!?

He opened the car and got in.

MaThousand: Sisteri you were so sure of this why change of mind now xasele sifikile (when we're closer?)

I exhaled

Me: I've been battling with this while on the road... Like we're approaching wild animals that'll not only put them in danger but us as well. There has to be another way.

MaThousand: Ngeyiphi ke lo ndela? (Which is the other way?)

Me: I think I have an idea.

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JEZZMAN

I was getting frustrated as I was on a call with my PI.

Me: You know you're useless, very useless. How many days did I give you to find my father and the culprit behind this.

Him: I'm trying but they too good to-

Me: I'm not paying you to compliment them!! I am paying you to do your job and find those dogs who did this.. But it's clear that you're failing to do so.

Him: No sir please give me a chance, give me another day. I'm gonna find them.

Me: Consider this the last day spending time with your family.

Him: What! No plea-

I cut the call and sighed sitting down. My phone rang again it was a call from Mom.

Me: Mom

Mom: Son, how are you?

I huffed

Me: I'm doing good. How are you and my Lil bro?

She made a long sigh.

Mom: Ohh! How I wish your father was here.

I swallowed painfully

Me: Any problems?

Mom: Kevin keeps on having these weird dreams. They are torturing him and distracting him from school. I'm drained son I wish you were all here.

Me: We can't take the risks Ma.

Mom: I know I know.

Me: Is he having hallucinations like Dad?

She sighed.

Mom: I think we should go back to South Africa maybe everything will make sense.

Me: What! No, you know Dad is against that.

Mom: Di mana Ayah kamu semasa kita bercakap? Dalam kegilaan! (Well where is your father as we speak? In the lunatics!) Leaving me with everything to deal on my own.

She sniffles while crying.

Me: Ma, Mama? Please don't cry. Okay look I'll make time to come over there. I'll be more careful trust me.

Mom: Okay

Me: Please don't cry

She sniffs.

Mom: Otherwise how is the business over there and your father? When last did you see him?

I heard a knock.

Me: Uhm look Ma, we'll catch up some time. I have to attend something.

Mom: Scar?

Me: I love you.

I hang up and sighed closing my eyes. That was a good rescue I don't want her stressing.

Me: Geraldine.

Geraldine: Letty is awake and the doctor is calling for you.

Me: Atleast I can do with some good news.

I got up and we left.

We got in and I saw the Doctor still examining her. She was lying still in bed facing up not moving, her eyes were open but

she wasn't blinking. She had a bandage around her head and she was cleaned up.

I held her hand and kissed her cheek.

Me: So what are the updates? Why is she like this?

Doc: Mr Jezzman this girl needs to be taken to the hospital asap and have a surgery performed.

Me: The surgery can be performed in here.

Doc: But we will need hospital facilities.

Me: Doc I can buy anything in the world just gather a trustworthy team and do the surgery here. Now what really is the problem?

He curved his lips making a scary look. I looked at Geraldine and she left.

Doc: She had a very severe concussion that led to internal swelling of the brain. There was a really bad collision in her cerebral cortex which damaged her occipital lobe that is responsible for her visuals.

I wiped my face looking down at her.

Doc: In simple English that means she's temporarily blind. If we don't do this surgery immediately it might lead to her being permanently blind. Because that part of her brain is running out

of cerebrospinal fluid due to the collision. It's important we do this surgery to construct her cortex together.

I nodded continuously.

Me: Gather the team and bring them here. I'll make sure every facility needed will be here.

Doc: Okay

I scratched my head

Me: What about her genitals are they damaged or what?

He breathed heavily.

Doc: I managed reducing the prolapse in her rectal, so far I had her stitched. She's in pain I need you to give her time to heal.

I nodded and held her hand. It scared me that she was still and not blinking her eyes

Me: Okay thank you Doctor.

I let go of her hand and walked out making a call to cancel on Eric but I cut it seeing Elena.

Me: Elena

She stopped.

Her: Sir?

Me: Can you please prepare the girl something to eat?

Her: Yes sir

Me: You cleaned the mess?

Her: All the bedding is floating on the line.

I smiled

Me: Good news.

I navigated her

Me: Your uniform is looking a bit short today.

She giggled.

Her: Ah! I blame my grand daughter. The way she's so obsessed with sewing, she's into design so, my maid uniform happened to be victimized.

Me: I understand

Her: And you, can I prepare you something to eat?

Me: Yes, you'll find me in the office.

Her: Okay.

A guard came to us.

Him: Jezmir you have visitors, the Sinaloa guys.

Me: Oh yah! Been expecting them.

I nod at Elena and left to meet them.

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SANDRO

I cleared my throat and whispered "I'm in" on my earpiece.

Jezzman: Ahh! Sandro nice to meet you again. It's been 3 times a row?

I smiled as we hit hands he did the same with my guys.

Me: Guess ain't nothing wrong with being ambitious.

Jezzman: Not at all so long the money is coming in.

Me: Hell yeah.

We took a seat. He looked at my bags.

Jezzman: Again?

I nod

Jezzman: I didn't place an order

Me: Yet you agreed on us meeting

Jezzman: Thought we were gonna mingle on something different like creating new developments as partners.

Me: Other words I should take them elsewhere?

Jezzman: No, no it's fine. This will be for my prostitutes. But you need to rest Sandro it's too much.

We laughed.

Me: After this I definitely will

Jezzman: See you brought someone with you. Who's the young girl?

I looked at Tatiana, yes we came along with her. She's part of the plan, she has a tiny body and we dressed her differently to look like a young, disadvantaged girl.

Me: An extra package for you. Her name is Rachel she's 16...

He stood up and walked to her pulling her up to stand and encircled her.

Me: Her father is an enemy. He's ruining our business. He's also hiding his family in indigenous parts of Mexico, leaving them stranded. I took his only daughter for payback knowing what you run... I think it's a perfect place for her to be.

He stopped walking around her and stood in front of her.

Jezzman: Perfecto

He held her face and moved it side to side.

Jezzman: She's good quality if she gets cleaned up, she'll be flawless. Take her to the confinement.

He said to the guards. One guard came and held her arm taking her away. I looked back at her and turned my head in front making a fake smile.

Jezzman: So how much are you bidding her?

I was about to talk when a knock came.

Guard: Sir you have a visitor from South Africa.

Jezzman: Wow, too many visits in one day! Who is it?

Guard: He says he's Mr Sumbu

He made a wide smile

Jezzman: Abednego?

Guard: I believe so

He looked at us.

Jezzman: Excuse me we'll get to business some other day.

We nodded and looked at him as he left.

My guys and I exchanged looks signalling amongst us and glanced back at the guards.

We stood up.

Me: Well then I guess we should take our leave

They nodded. I pretended to walk out while my guys followed behind me.

They rapidly flossed and threw daggers on both guards they fell down with blood squirting out of their necks.

I got out of the office checking the coast.

Me: Okay let's pull and hide their bodies.

They did just as I said and hide the bodies. When we saw they were dead, they plucked out the daggers from their necks.

Me: Okay let's go!

I fixed my earpiece looking at the camera.

Me: Did you glitch that?

I was speaking to the informant in charge of the Camera.

Him: Yeah it's cleared

Me: What about the other guards with you?

Him: They're long dead in their sleep "Auntie Elena" took care of that.

I smiled

Me: Great. We're moving to the second phase of the plan. Look into this Sumbu person, his arrival is working in our favour. We need to keep Jez distracted at all costs.

Him: Sure

Me: Cool.

I walked in to the bathroom with my guys splitting themselves, they threw a bag at me. As soon as I got in. I took off my clothes and was left with my feminine costume underneath. It was a sparkling short dress. I took the fringe wig and wore it. I covered my beard with a facial silicone, with it I needed no makeup just only lipstick on. I also put on the black eye contacts and touched my fake boobs. I huffed and wore my heels then made my way out with the bag.

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ASHANTI

Today I started the day with a prayer. I prayed real hard for their safety and protection. It'll relieve Mavuyi and her husband if their daughter comes back home. I really need them to be happy. I prayed for our mission to become a success with no one dying.

I spoke to my sister Kolosa to guide me on addressing my ancestors. She taught me all about my clan names. So I burnt the incense and spoke to them and apologized for the way I carried myself earlier.

I sent Sylvia and Motlatsi to be taken by Dwayne. They are held hostage I'm still deciding what I'm going to do with them.

I connected my things and connected with the guys.

Sandro: Hermanita

Me: What are the proceedings?

Sandro: It's still going accordingly. No one has noticed us yet, we're moving in silence. I'm heading to your sister right now. I'm in disguise the heels are killing me.

I giggled.

Sandro: But yah I'm doing my job, Uncle is poisoning them to sleep, your informant is cleaning all the mess. Plus Jez is distracted by a certain visitor.

Me: Okay so how many down?

Sandro: About 6 or 7

Me: Ohkay! What happened to the girl you involved?

Sandro: Tatiana, she's taken in to the confinement

Me: Where they're imprisoned right? Okay okay okay

I looked at my floorplan

Me: Confinement.... It is underground. Okay thanks Hermano, you may resume with what you're doing. Keep on updating me.

Sandro: For sure.

We hang up. I tried communicating with my uncle on my untraceable phone.

He responded to my texts.

Uncle: "I'm trying to get to him. He looks like he has 3 visitors; 2 men & 1 woman. I don't know whether they danger or what. But I'll carry on with the plan. It's said they're from S.A. "

Me: "Okay"

I put my phone down rubbing my eyes. I stood up again grabbing my phone and dialed Marquis.

Marquis: Shanti

Me: It's time to release the old man. You'll go with him to Jezzman's place.

Marquis: Okay

Me: You'll make your entrance at the back, there's a confinement at the back where girls are imprisoned. Remain outside a girl will make her way out, you'll hand over the old man to her then your job is done.

Marquis: Just like that?

Me: Just like that and don't worry about the guards. I'll send you the girl's picture.

Marquis: Okay

Me: Sure we'll chat again

Marquis: Bye.

I looked for Tatiana's picture and send it to him.

" Fill in Tatiana about Jezzman's father"

I send the text to my brother he replied with a "sure". I sigh laying back on the chair I hope all goes well.

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SANDRO

I clicked my heels catwalking in the passage where I heard Letty is currently situated in.

Guards immediately came approaching me and pushed me back.

Them: Woah woah woah! Di mana anda fikir anda akan pergi?
(Where do you think you're going?)

I held on tightly to my bag looking at my wristwatch.

Me: I'm supposed to be meeting with Jezmir.

I said faking a Russian accent.

Guard: He's not in this floor.

I smiled at him and began charming him, I slowly walked to him and brushed his cheek.

Me: I'm sure you wouldn't mind showing me the way, handsome.

He was falling for it as he kept on curving and shaking his lips.

Guard: (stammering) I.. I.. uhm..

The other guards shouted for him to focus.

Me: Please hold my hand these shoes are killing me.

He held my hand and we began walking a different direction.

Me: Oh wait..

I took one heel off.

Me: We can now walk.

Guard: With one hee-

I smashed the heel on his neck he staggered and let me go.

Guard: (groaning) Ahhhh!!!!

The guards got alarmed and ran to us. I quickly took out my guns they both had a silencer.

I began shooting them all. One fired a shot but I grabbed the guard I stabbed and shielded myself with him, the shot got through him and I threw him aside. I shot the last standing guard and finished off the other one I used as my shield.

I heard many of them coming and shouting since they heard that one fired shot. I looked at the dead bodies.

Me: Shit! Shit! Shit!

I picked the bag and limped as I ran with one heel on my foot. I barged in the room where Letty was in. I shot the doctor. A lady came and attacked me, kicking the gun & bag off.

She gave me mean punches and kicks. She threw and slammed my face on the glass table. Thank God I had a silicone face cause the glasses pierced through.

She grabbed my wig off and I elbowed her tummy. She kicked my crotch.

Me: Ouuww!! Ohww Fuck.

She was really well-trained she kneed my face. I bled on my nose. She tried kicking me again I got hold of her leg and pulled her down she fell. It was my chance to get up... so help me Lord, she made that Shawn Michaels getup jump and we stood at the same time.

Me: You gotta be kidding me!

She came at me with a punch but I blocked it and punched her back. I grabbed her hair and clashed her face on the wall then pinned her with a strangle

She tried squirming her way out of my hold.

Me: Stop it I don't wanna kill you

Her: (panting) I'd rather die trying

She bites my hand I let go of her and groaned. She hit me with the vase, I pulled her and tossed her backwards as I locked her down. I then twist her neck. She fell down dead.

I bend down holding my knees as I catch my breath.

Me: Pheew!

I wiped my sweat and stood straight looking at Letty.

Me: Calmente..

I got to her and looked at her.

Me: What happened to you?

I carried her over my shoulders. She began crying in pain.

Me: What's wrong honey?

We heard footsteps.

Me: Sssh! Keep it down. You're safe now we need to get out of here.

I took off both my heels and left them carelessly. I picked my bag and wig then hide off with her.

Me: (whispers) Can you stand?

She shook her head.

Me: Okay okay just be calm and silent.

We continued hiding off. We heard guards getting in the room. They shouted madily realizing that Letty has escaped. They turned everything upside down looking for the culprit.

I covered Letty's mouth so that her breaths wouldn't make sounds. I could see them picking my heels and threw them down again.

" Let's go! Let's go! Find the culprit it's a woman. Check all the rooms and floors immediately."

They ran out. Letty sighed for relief a guard stopped and walked back.

I slapped Letty's mouth shut again. He was so close to coming at our spot but he was immediately called by the other guard informing him about a girl escaping the confinement.

He ran out. I'm proud of Tatiana.

Me: We're free now let's get out of here.

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JEZZMAN

We sat down and indulged the food brought to us. I took few spoons and stopped, looking at them.

Me: Okay now out with it why you're here? I can see Abednego you're not here for me. So who's this man you brought along? I know the lady I don't know him.

It went silent. There was this certain look my guards kept giving me and this other man

Me: Speak!! I don't have all day long. I have business to run.

He cleared his throat.

Mlamli: I'm your father

I squint my eyes and leaned forward with my ear.

Me: My what??

Mlamli: Your father

I snorted in anger and took out my gun, cocked it and pointed it at him. They all jumped up.

Mhise: Nooo!

Abednego: Scavenge

Me: Lemme hear you say it one more time. Come on, say it... you are my what? I swear in god's name I'm gonna blow your brains.

He swallowed.

Me: (tearful) Say it!!! Same father who left me and my mother in the cold?

Mlamli: I swear I didn't know about you

Me: It didn't matter whether you cheated with sisters, but you had a responsibility of raising me. You sidelined me!!

Mhise: Luniko

I closed my eyes moving my hand

Me: Don't, Don't call me by that name

I looked at them

Me: I buried that name and that sweet boy the day he took my mother.

Mlamli: Whaat?? I didn't take your mother what do you mean?

Me: You killed my mother on the graduation. You were the one amongst the men who ambushed and killed people

Mhise: No that's not true! He didn't kill your mother.

Mlamli: Why would I kill Zimasa? (Laughs) Okay, so I get inside there and suddenly ambush my daughter's graduation party? Wait does that make sense?

I kept quiet

Mlamli: Qhamani has been feeding you lies. All this time he's been brainwashing you against us. He couldn't accept the fact that you're not his son.

I jerked my head up and walked to him placing the gun on his head.

Me: Well he's the only father I know. He's the only father that raised me and we've always had an unbreakable bond. You're not gonna come here and try to break it.

He raised both his hands in surrender

Mlamli: Look I'm not here to break anything. I'm just here to tell you the truth and that you do not belong here.

I clenched my teeth.

Mlamli: I am your father. Yes, I had an affair with your mother. When she discovered she was pregnant I suspected that it's my child but Qhamani was there at the time. Zimasa said you're his and Ofcourse it was a happy moment for him.

Ever since that day I have never seen your mother again.

He exhaled.

Mlamli: Till the day of the graduation. She tried talking to me but Qhamani, the best father of the year - ambushed us with his people and tried to wipe out everyone.

I flickered my eyebrows remembering how Dad was becoming a bit obsessed with Mom even when the truth came out and they broke up. We ended up living in hiding. But why would he swap this around and shift the blame?

Mlamli: I knew everything was aimed at me or rather he was preventing the real truth from coming out, that you're my son.

Zimasa jumped in front of the bullet to save me.. and that's where she told me everything about you being my son. I saw them taking you.

Explains why he's been hallucinating about Zimasa. My tears trickled down. I still remember it like yesterday, her looking at me lying in blood with another man holding her as I screamed out

Mlamli: Your same hero killed your mother. Maybe he's raising you out of guilt or maybe love we may never know. But look what he turned you to, for what? Just like himself.

My hand that held the gun trembled. Mhise stood in front of him

Mhise: That day I was meaning to introduce you to him so that you know everything. Now if you still become as heartless Luniko, you will have to shoot me first.

Me: YAAAAAH!!!!!! (roaring)

I shoot out everywhere and they kept ducking. I shoot out till the bullets ran out and threw the gun down. I hit the tables and tossed them upside down creating a mess as I sank down and teared up.

Mhise came to hug me. All of a sudden the room became red and the alarm went on and buzzed loudly.

Me: What the fuck is going on? Move!

I place her aside and ran to go take my weapons. I saw there was chaos and war going on and there was an explosion causing earthquake in my mansion.

I quickly rushed to check Letty and saw she was gone, with the Doc dead and also Geraldine.

I groaned in anger and went to take my weapons.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

We were running out for our lives it was a mess. There were many bodies lying around this place, it is so dangerous for us.

Dad staggered.

Dad: I'm getting di..dizzy.

Me: What? We're almost out to the exit Dad please hold on.

His eyes rolled and he fell on me.

Me: Tata!! Omg what's going on?

I thought a bit. It must be the food.

Me: Noo! He's poisoned. Abednego quickly take us to a nearby tap.

Abednego: What?

Me: Now! Now!

He carried him and we ran to the tap. Luckily Abednego and I didn't indulge in the food. I took out my bag and mixed my herbs. I let him drink and he vomited everything out.

We spent 40 minutes there, later on Dad came back to himself.

Dad: I'm too weak.

Me: Tata you have to be strong we have to get out of here.

It was really hard. We kept on running and ducking everything thrown and shot towards us.

When we got to the exit, we saw a white prostitute carrying a child who had bandage and threw her in the car. The prostitute got shot in the hip and fell down. I directed my eyes and saw the shot coming from Luniko.

Me: Luniko!!!

He looked at the prostitute

Jezman: Bring that girl back to me.

He gunpointed her.

Jezman: Bring back the girl!!! I won't say this again.

" You let us go with the girl if you want your father "

We saw a tiny little girl holding an old black man on gunpoint.
He was wearing white scrubs.

Dad: Qhamani?? You bastard!

He ran and went to fight with him they wrestled. It was hard to stop the fight because at the other side we where running away from bullets then it was this.

I looked at Luniko who pointed the gun at them.

Jezzman: Stop it

He staggered and his eyes got lazy. I think the poison was starting to kick in.

Me: Tata!!!!

Luniko let loose and the loaded AK-47 bombed all the shots while Jezzman was going down and collapsed to the ground.

Me: (screaming) Tataaaa!!!!

I wept piercingly as both my father and the man were lying on the ground. The prostitute was taken in the car and they drove off.

I remained crying.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 41

LIMILE

I was shivering and hissing as I hugged myself tightly. I kept on moving my head side to side, my heart was palpitating in an abnormal way. Fear overwhelmed me.

I sat up and breathed heavily as I rubbed my eyes. I slept on the couch. I looked around and sniffed.

All of a sudden the apartment was filled with smoke.

Me: Oh noo!!

I jumped up I forgot that I was cooking. I went to the stove and quickly killed out the fire. I coughed till I fall down. I dragged myself on the floor and got up with the balance of the door. I stumbled and walked outside as I continued coughing.

Later on when the smoke died out. I dialed my sister but it reached to voicemail same with Dad and Abednego. Their trip has really got me stressed up and worried.

I end up calling Mom.

Mom: Lime??

She picks immediately. I could already catch her distressed tone.

Me: Mom. Are you okay?

Mom: No I'm not. How can I be okay when my husband and daughter haven't made they way back. God I'm praying that they're still safe and unharmed.

I sighed.

Mom: Yazi oko ndinovalo and your niece has been doing funny things ndikuxelele. I found her sleeping next to the fridge I don't know why and she's been restless too.

I frowned.

Me: Imo? Fridge?

Mom: Ewe yho phez'kwe si stress ndinaso. (Yes, on top of the stress I already have)

Me: Hee yazi nam ndiphantse ndatshisa iApartment yam ndibiwa bubu thongo. (Do you know I almost burnt my apartment too while falling asleep)

Mom: Tshini!

Me: Hay Mama I don't know what's going on. I tried calling Dad, Mhise and Abednego all their cellphones are going to voicemail.

Mom: Kwenzeka ntoni maani? Ne ndodakazi yam bi fowna malunga ngo mnyeni wakhe. (What's going on? My sister in-law also called regarding Abednego)

(Silence)

Mom: What if something happened?

Me: Hay! Hay! Mama..

Mom: No serious I mean the things that you and Molathile did could be signs, that something bad really happened. Something we both wouldn't like.

I could feel a panick attack slowly creeping in as my chest began to wheez.

Me: Mama sumcinga lo Sathana umcingayo (Don't think like that)

Mom: Anything could be possible

Me: No! Listen, we gonna pray. Right now I'm gonna connect us to a video call. Bring Imo with you, we gonna gather and pray. Pray like our lives depend on it. Bazobuya bonke bephelele ndayazi lonto. (They'll come back complete, all of them)

Ndaba ancestors wouldn't put one of their own in danger no. They might be in a life threatening situation right now but we gonna pray for them to come out of it.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I couldn't stop crying. I cried till my tears couldn't come out no more. Dad was really shot by his son and the other man. Abednego and his men rushed us to a hospital, the other second man died on the spot. Dad is in a critical condition, he bleed too much. My clothes are stained of his blood it scared me too much that I'm beginning to have little faith on him.

We were waiting for updates.

I continued hiccupping and crying in silence. Hugging his bloody clothes closer to me.

Abednego: Here's some coffee.

I shook my head

Me: I don't need no coffee. I need my Dad alive.

He dropped both coffees down and came to sit next to me, hugging me in silence and didn't say anything more.

Few minutes later we stood up seeing the doctor coming.

Me: Doc how is my father? Is he okay? Please tell me he's okay.

She sighed.

Doc: We've removed all the bullets but... I'm sorry your father is in a comma.

My lips trembled as tears blurred my eyes. Abednego wrapped his arms around me hugging me tightly.

Me: Are there hopes that he's going to be fine?

She unsurely curved her lips.

Doc: We can't tell for now. The situation is bad, there were many bullets that have done damage. He'll also need blood supply since he has lost excessive blood.

Me: I'll donate

Doc: Okay we'll also look into that. Otherwise we just have to stay hopeful.

(Silence)

Me: Can we see him?

Doc: Yes for few minutes

I glanced up at Abednego, he nodded as he let me go.

Abednego: (clears throat) Erm Doc can't we have him transferred to South Africa?

Doc: Yes, yes we can but we'll have to get paperwork and you fill out the forms.

Abednego: Can we do that as in immediately?

Doc: Yes, follow me... you may go see your father.

She said smiling at me. Abednego patted my arm and I walked in my father's ward.

I immediately covered my face and cried all over again. Seeing all those machines connected to him. It all feels like a bad dream, one that I've always prayed it wouldn't reach to.

Me: Tata, please come back to us. I need you, we need you. This is gonna break Momma's heart. We love you, you are our anchor how will we live without you?

I held his hand.

Me: Please I beg you. Please come back. There's lots we have to do. I know you're a peaceful person please don't leave us like this. Hear my plea Tata ndak'cela.

I got his hand closer to my heart.

Me: Feel my heart too, how it's beating against my ribcage in fear of losing you. I love you Tata.

I faced up blinking.

Me: Ndanicela boo Ndaba, Bhadela, Nonunu, Tshibase. Let your son live don't let him die. Not when he's closer to your grandson.

I then faced down with tears streaming and closed his hand then I brought it closer to my face while sniffing.

Uncle Abednego came back and my time was over.

Abednego: Should we call the family? I see many missed calls

Me: No, let's do it when we go back home.

He nodded

Abednego: We've got forms to fill

Me: ...And I have to check if I'm a match, I hope I am. I never felt so powerless.

Abednego: It's gon' be okay

Me: Yeah

where do I go?

Abednego: This side.

We walked to do the procedure. I pray that he really wakes out of comma. I'm so hurt seeing him like this. I'm scared they're gonna freak out at home hearing these news.

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JEZZMAN

I opened my eyes welcomed by a massive headache. I was yet still feeling drowsy.

Me: Ah...

Felt like I was hit by a truck. I lift my hand to massage my forehead but I felt stuck and realized I was tied.

I moved myself on the chair my legs where also tied. I saw black goons standing before me and staring.

Me: Who are you and whom are you working for?

Didn't get a response

Me: Where am I? Where's my fa.. both of them where are they?

I bulged my eyes

Me: Letty! Where's Letty?

I shook myself more roughly.

Me: Untie me better untie me now! Do you know who I am? No one gets to play with me like that. I will get out of here and as soon as I do, you're all gonna be dead. This whole place is reigned by me! no one else. You'll have nowhere to hide.

They maintained their silence and walked away carrying their guns.

Me: Heeey are you even listening to me!!!? Hey!

They slammed the door. Leaving me all alone.

Me: Damn, what even happened earlier? How did I end up here?

I know for sure I have many enemies to even count grains. But I don't remember the last events that took place. I only remember when my Dad appeared out of nowhere then everything else appears blank. I felt a little shuttered seeing my

empire go down like that. My worst enemy wasn't bluffing when he said I'll see my empire crumbling down. I know for sure this is all linked to Letty. I just need to find her and ofcourse this person. Rachel... she is Mexican mhm I think I might be getting to something.

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SANDRO

Uncle: We need to take you to the hospital.

Me: No! No hospital. They're gonna finish me off right there. Uncle you gonna cut me open and take off the bullet now.

Ricardo: Bu-

Me: No buts!! You gonna heal me now and we fly to South Africa immediately. Now somebody better gimme a shot.

I lied on the couch flat with stomach with only my boxers on.

He prepared all the tools and I drank few shots. He began penetrating a needle-like tool which can be also split in two ways, in my wound.

I screamed while biting hard on the lil ball given and took shots. Uncle kept on digging more and more inside and rotated the thing around. It was really painful, no lie. I was literally crying.

He finally came out with a bullet inbetween the thing.

Uncle: Aquí vamos (There we go)

I panted taking more shots.

Me: Thank you uncle

Uncle: Now let's stitch you.

I saw Tatiana walking towards us.

Me: How is Calmente?

Tatiana: She's fine. Just tried to make her comfortable not knowing I was driving her to sleep.

I smiled..

Tatiana: She's blind?

Me: It's a recent thing the place wasn't a kind place for her.

She nods.

Tatiana: She's in pain too.

Me: That son of a... (huffs) if I wasn't gonna take her home I would've dealt with him. How dare he violates the kid?

(Silence)

Tatiana: You like her

Me: I...

Tatiana: Wasn't a question I'm telling you, you like her alot.

Me: Well true. Tatiana-

Tatiana: Noo! Don't worry about me. I'm just a chick with a reformed pussy remember? So nah. I'm just glad I could help.

I made an apologetic face

Me: Look I didn't mean it that way.

Tatiana: Passports are ready. I'd like to start my life in China hope y'all organized that for me.

I sighed to her ignoring me. She left.

I checked on Letty when they finished stitching me. She panicked at first but I told her who I am and about everything. She understood and got thankful that I saved her life. She was shook that Ashanti was also involved in rescuing her and us being siblings.

We were finally travelling to the airport. I made sure to be very careful with her in terms of walking and sitting. I then bought her a nice warm jacket and fluffy hat that also covered her ears.. the weather wasn't nice here. I ordered one of my men to go purchase. Didn't want to be seen with her publicly cause I wasn't pretending to be a lady no more.

Our flight came. I said goodbye to the rest of the team. Was an emotional moment for us. But I'm glad we fulfilled it. Though we couldn't save many more other girls but I'm sure after yesterday's chaos some managed to escape out.

I whispered to my uncle that he should always look out for my stubborn father. Enemies when they can't get to you, they get to your Family.

Me: South Africa here we come.

She grips on my arm as the plane takes off. I giggled.

Letty: First time being in a plane

Me: Really?

She nodded

Letty: I'm even having a panick attack.

Me: Calm down and just enjoy the moment.

Letty: Yah, I so wish I could witness it with my eyes.

I looked at her feeling sorry for her.

Me: Can I?

Letty: Touch me? Ofcourse

I pulled her in my chest and pecked her hat lightly

Me: I'm gonna capture every moment for you so that when you are able to see again, you can see it

Letty: The surgery...

Me: Don't worry trust me when I say you're gonna see.

She smiled

Letty: Okay.

How can Jezzman do such a horrible thing to such an angel?

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ASHANTI

Hay Amankabane ancestors are strong cause I didn't cause an accident. The way I'm so overjoyed driving to Mavuyi's place.

My brother called me saying the mission was a success and they're flying back home with my sister. Though it was hard but they finally managed getting Letty back.

My prayer was answered. Thank you King of kings, My Sovereign Lord, oh! How I wish to give you a hug right now for coming through for us.

Took a while for me to arrive at Mavuyi's place. I wanted to bring the news face to face. I prepared myself standing on the door to keep a straight.

I knocked and made my way in. They got up with a smile looking at him.

Me: Greetings

Mavuyi: Hey Ncumo

I sniffed and made a sad face.

Me: I got news for you.

Bheki: Wakhala? (And then you crying?) Did it go well?

I sniffed again wiping my eyes.

Mavuyi: Ashanti ungadlali elohlobo mntana ndini. (Don't play like that child)

Her voice exposed her for being ready to break out into a cry but also it was a firm tone.

I took out my phone.

Me: (sniffs) I'll just hand you my phone.

I fake bursting in a cry as I covered my face. Mavuyi followed and cried too, like crying for real. I suppressed my laughter underneath, it was sitting on my neck passage.

Mavuyi: (crying) Umntanam Ashanti! Umntanam.

Bheki: Kahleni Kahleni! Yini le niyenzayo?? Yekani lento niyenzayo maan niyas'hlolela oe! Ashanti uyas'tshela kanye awus'tsheli ukuthi lengane isindile yin? (Stop it. What are you doing? Stop it you're attracting bad luck! Ashanti are you telling us or not that our daughter is saved?)

I pointed my phone.

Me: The phone is gonna ring, you'll hear for yourself.

I looked at Mavuyi her face was wet. I folded my lips together holding back a laugh and pretended to wipe my tears when she looked my way.

My phone rang Bheki swiped to answer fast.

Bheki: Halo?

" Baba "

Mavuyi's eyes dilate as if she just witnessed a corpse coming out of a coffin. She looked at me in confusion I looked down laughing silently, then looked at her husband and she ran to him.

She got hold of the phone.

Mavuyi: Lethokuhle!

She got more emotional.

Letty: " Ma ngaze ngajabula uzwa iphimbo lwakho, kade ngihalela ukuzwa Ma (I'm so happy to hear your voice Mom, I've always wished to hear your voice) "

Mavuyi: Ohh mntanam masibulele ku Thixo bakwazile ukusindisa. Nam ndavuya uva ilizwi lakho mntanam sendi ngxamele ufike ekhaya. (My child let's be grateful to God that they were able to save you. I'm also happy to hear your voice I can't wait for you to come home.)

They giggled.

Bheki: Awubheke iinyembezi, bam'khohlisile ucabange ukuthi ayisekho indaba yakho. (Look at your mother's tears, they fooled her. She thought you were no more)

She giggled more

Letty: "There was no way I couldn't make it with this best team. Nam ngilwile njengo Ntombo"

Mavuyi: Ohh mntanam, shii yazi nzombetha uAshanti! (I'll beat Ashanti!)

I laughed.

Letty: "Is she there? Can I please meet my sister for the first time?"

Mavuyi: Ofcourse

They looked at me. I slowly walked to them and got hold of my phone.

Me: Hey

She smiled

Letty: Hi Big sis..

Me: How are you? You so beautiful yaz.

Letty: Thanks, you too. Thanks for playing a part in saving my life I really appreciate it.

Me: That's what big sisters do right? I did my job. I just couldn't wait to meet you in person.

She laughed. I could see my brother was sitting besides her but he gave her space to talk. There was something about her eyes.

Me: Can you see me?

She became uncomfortable as she moved around.

Letty: Can we gossip in private?

"Hehe!!" Her parents got surprised by that.

Me: For sure.

I smiled and walked away. Sandro appeared.

Sandro: Please convert it to a normal call.

Me: Okay

I did so.

Sandro: Listen something serious happened. I don't want you to freak out okay? The parents are having a joyful moment let's not spoil it. But yes, she's blind temporarily... she will need surgery immediately so that it won't be permanent. I'm willing to contribute, I have lots of money. So please don't freak out and don't say a word just yet. We'll explain everything when we get back.

Me: What did he do to her?

I asked while gritting my teeth

Sandro: You'll hear of it when we get back

Me: What did he...

"So what are you gossiping about?"

Sandro hang up. I bite my lip and faked a smile.

Me: Just sisterly things

Mavuyi: Ooooh! Can't wait for her to arrive. Like I'm so ready for her, we should prepare a mini surprise party right?

Bheki: And when are they landing?

I raise my eyebrows.

Me: They'll land tomorrow.

Mavuyi: Okay enough time to prepare.

I fake smile which it soon turned into a scowl. I'll be so damned if he touched her. I glanced at the parents they were really happy, I then loosened up for their sake. I also have to be in the same mood as them.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 42

MAVUYI

My friend was helping me prepare and decorate everything. It won't be a big thing just a mini surprise for welcoming my daughter back home.

"Knock-Knock"

Me: Ncumo

Ashanti: Ladies

She came and gave us both a hug.

Ashanti: Are you guys ready to go to the airport?

I took a deep breath

Me: Yeah I think so.

Ndileka: Don't be nervous you're getting your daughter back.

Me: Can't believe this is finally happening. I mean intlahlha engaka umntanethu ebuya esaphelele (we're fortune enough our child is coming back in one piece)

Me: Not that I had bad expectations but ngokuva kwam ziye zibenintsi into ezenzeka pha kla mazwe (by hearing things there are many bad things happening at these countries)

Ndileka: I am glad we all managed working together on bringing her back. Especially you Shasha and your brother, you played a major role.

She smiled faintly

Ashanti: We did all we could. Baw' Bheki, where is he? we need to go.

Me: Useza (He's coming) he's around.

It wasn't long he came back with his guys that have been great help with us through this.

Bheki: Ashanti, good morning ndodakazi.

Me: Morning bawo

Bheki: Let's not waste time and go fetch my princess.

Ashanti: Thought you wouldn't say

He giggled. I looked at Ndili she placed her hand on my shoulder.

Ndileka: Unga khathazeki (Don't stress) I'll take over from here.

Me: Thank you.

We walked out and went to Ashanti's car. She drove us to the airport. I can't explain how happy I am right now. I'm even shaking. Can't wait to kiss my baby and hug her in my arms.

Upon our arrival we waited for about an hour till they landed. I saw them, saw my daughter and Ncumo's brother.

I screamed and ran to her and attacked her with hugs and kisses.

Me: My baby!

Letty: Mama

Me: Ohhh mntanam ubuyile (you're back.) I'm so happy to see you, ah! Look at you bakwenzeni? (what did they do to you?)

I said touching her cheek.

Letty: I'm still well and fine Mama. I'm glad to be home.

I wiped her tears and smiled.

Bheki: Ngane yam woza ku Baba. (My baby girl, come to Daddy)

She took a step and tripped. Bheki held her in time before she could fall.

Bheki: Careful

She giggled

Letty: Ngiyabonga Baba

They hugged then he let go of her.

Bheki: Mana ke (Wait...)

He held her face and stared thoroughly at her face.

Bheki: Lethokuhle uyang'bona? (Can you see me?)

I rushed to their side. Why couldn't I see this? She does look blind.

Me: Letty?

Letty: I think we should all go inside the car and talk.

We all looked at each other and asked no more. My husband guided her to the car this affirmed our suspicions. My heart sank seeing my daughter become real blind.

In the car my daughter, husband and myself were seated at the back. Ashanti and her brother were in front, they've been silent throughout.

Ashanti: Letty nice to finally meet you sweetheart.

Letty: I'm glad to meet you too sis even though...

She froze.

Bheki: Tell us my child what's going on?

She took time to sniff, facing down and her tears dropped. I brought her in my embrace.

Letty: Yebo I'm blind. A doctor that side told me it's temporary kodwa it's gonna be permanent if angiyenzi surgery ngok'shesha (I don't go for surgery in time)

She teared up

Letty: Lapho bengikhona bengizama ngandlela zonke uku phunyuka. Kepha ngabanjwa bese... bese... (Where I was I tried everything I could to escape. But then I got caught and then... then..)

She burst out and sobbed.

Me: Sshhh sshhh mntanam xolo

I comforted her. My tears also came running down it hurt hearing my child cry like this. I don't know whether I could stand what she'll say next.

Letty: Bese wangi nqakula wang'shaya wang'shaya. Ngabetheka nge khanda ngaze ngalimala... usukela lapho wang' dlwengula.

(He grabbed me and manhandled me. I collided with my head that I got hurt... From there he raped me)

Me: Oh! Oh! Oh!

I cried out while closing my eyes. Bheki banged the seat at the back of Sandro's head. I cried and hugged my daughter tightly. It just got uncontrollable in the car.

Ashanti: He... He did what?

Letty: He raped me!

Ashanti leant forward blowing air in her palms and shifted back to face us. She placed her hand on Letty's knee and mouthed "sorry"

Me: I'm sorry my baby. I'm really sorry you don't deserve this...
Oh!

My husband and I squashed her in a hug.

Bheki: Forgive me for not being there to protect you, I'm so sorry.

This was heavy news for all of us.

Letty: I came back alive other girls didn't. Yes it hurts and things will never be the same again. But I don't want you blaming yourselves. What you did was already enough.

She brushed her cheeks

Ashanti: I insist on finding you therapy.

Me: Thank you Ncumo, we're here baby we'll support you all the way. We thank you too Sandro for helping us, you are totally forgiven.

Sandro: No problem

Bheki: Ngane yam iyang'hlupha lento yakho yongaboni (It bothers me that you can't see) I heard you say something about being "temporary blind."

Letty: I'll need to do brain surgery to get my eyesight back.

Sandro: If you allow me, I can cover all costs to avoid the delay for further damage.

We gave it a thought.

Me: Tata?

He gave me a nod. I smiled looking at Sandro.

Me: We don't mind Sandro. We just want our daughter okay.

Sandro: I can assure you

Bheki: It's all settled then

Ashanti drove us back home. Where Letty received a blast of "Welcome Back Home". It shocked and made her happy at the same time. Ndili and her sons were here, then it was the guys who helped my husband. Atleast we made the thing gatherable.

I watched everybody warming up to her. I couldn't stop thinking of what she told us and asked to be excused.

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JEZZMAN

The door opened and I saw Abednego making his way in. He took a seat in front of me.

I looked at him.

Me: Don't tell me you are responsible for holding me captive.

Abednego: I am

Me: Why would you do that? I thought we got along well and not just that, you are one of the people I look up to. What misunderstanding did we have?

Abednego: This is not about us

Me: But?

Abednego: Your real father

I chuckled

Me: What happens to Q? the father who raised me?

He smiled

Abednego: Oh today you don't know?

Me: Don't know what?

Abednego: That you killed both of them - your fathers? One is dead and the other is fighting for his life. Guess who?

I shook myself in anger.

Me: No! Just set me free so that I can fix my mess.

Abednego: Not that easy.

He stood up

Me: Abednego don't mess with me okay? You have a family I don't. You don't know how far I can get to torment a human being even Satan will step back and take notes.

He crouched closer to me with a smile.

Abednego: True, I agree with you. Q groomed you well yet same way he groomed you was his ending for him. You killed him dead.

Me: That's not true

He nodded

Me: You're lying!!

Abednego: I'm sure these might help.

He took out his phone and swiped it. I saw pictures and began weeping.

Me: I wouldn't do this to him. I was intoxicated, I was drugged!

Abednego: I don't really care Scavenge. What I like is that the universe has a way of turning things around, and it always pays attention. Your empire is destroyed, the girls are finally free.

I sniffed and glanced up at him

Me: What do you want from me Abednego?

Abednego: You to make peace with your father. But your deeds won't go unpunished. Mlamli is very close to me... You will be held hostage, tortured till your father wakes out of comma. If he dies same will apply with you but if he lives, you will be set free and get an opportunity to catch up with him.

I glare at him as I flare my nose out in anger like smoke came out of them.

Me: Abednego I suggest if you wanna kill me you do it now. Cause when I come out alive... I'll be coming for you and everything you care about.

He smiled

Abednego: Remember I've been in this game way before you were born, way even your father was born for that matter. I'm an oke that never loses its touch. Try me, see if you'll live to tell the tale. You better pray your father lives.

He stood up.

Abednego: Till next time, bulldog.

He winked and patted my shoulder making his way out.

Me: Abednego you gon' regret this. Abednego!!!

I shook myself more as I continued screaming like a mad man.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

Uncle Abednego came back from wherever he went. It took too much than I had expected. We were waiting for our flight, Dad was already taken in. I'm scared to bring not so good news to them.

Abednego: You anxious?

I nodded

Me: But I have to make this call, they deserve to know.

Abednego: Yes. I'm gonna give you space.

He walked away. I sighed then dialed Mama.

Mom: Mhise!!

Me: Mom...

Mom: How are you? How is everything there? Can I talk to your father? Is he still in strength? Did he eat? Did Luniko make pea-

I closed my eyes with a tear rushing down.

Mom: Limise. Oh my baby I'm so sorry to bombard you with so much questions it's just... stress is overwhelming me right now I'm even shaking.

I touch around my face wiping my tears and swallowed a lump.

Me: Mama

Mom: Baby?

Me: We are returning home.

Mom: Nonke?? (All of you??) Did everything go we-

Me: He was shot by his son... (sniffs) it was many bullets. He's in a comma

Advertisement

right now he's getting transferred sibuya naye (we coming back with him.)

My silent cry came out more loud

Me: Ma we have to stay more strong Dad is gonna come back please don't lose hope!! I know you might want to blame me but... the ancestors know what they're doing. It's not his time Ma trust me I know and I can feel it, it's not his-

I heard a beeping sound she cut my call off.

Me: Mama? Ma?

I looked at my phone and placed it back on my ear.

Me: Ma?? Ma!!

I lowered my phone and cried. Abednego came out of nowhere.

Abednego: I can't stand seeing you cry like this, come on now.

Me: I'm worried about Mom. I don't think she took this well. I need to call my brother.

Abednego: I don't think that's a good idea.

He said grabbing my phone

Abednego: How about we tell him when we get there? We can call your Mommy's friend to check if she's okay or... rather we call your older brother.

Me: Benny, he knows how to get through her. Let me just do that.

I made the call while we were walking to the plane.

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DIMPHO

I came back from all the schools and few churches I visited, that were listed on Mom things. Turns out that it's true, all the kids were gone missing and we're not just talking about any kids. But a group of 40 - 60 kids.

I searched about Elveous, he is the most wanted guy as we speak.

His full name is Elveous Jerome Spencer. A dangerous suspect involved in children abduction, it's hard for the police to find him. He was once caught on the run in Graaf-Reinet but speculations go as far as saying he's skipped the country.

Stuffs I've read about him made me sick. Apparently the guy is a Pedophile and isn't well upstairs. I wonder how can Mom associate herself with such? I mean.. and she's disappeared for more than 24hrs. I honestly am not worried about what happened to her but rather more disturbed on what I've stumbled on.

Dad: I've tried everything and everywhere looking for her. I've tried Mme Moruti, Mma Gladys like everywhere but I can't find her. Even her cousins have no knowledge of where she is. Her phone is ringing but she's not answering. Yazi Motlatsi is worrying me sick ngoku.

He continued pacing around.

Dad: She lied about the land monies and I'm wondering what else is she lying about? For sure nale tshomi athe uye kuyo bubuxoki (I'm sure even the friend she said she's meeting it's a lie.)

He sighs.

Dad: If umamakho akandi dyoleli! ngoba bingeno khala ifown yakhe uba bese ngxakini. (If your Mom is not having an affair! Cause her phone wouldn't ring unattended if she was in trouble)

I shut my eyes.

Me: Baba

Dad: But sothini ke? masinxibe siye station siyom'bhaqa esenza lama nyala akhe (But what can we do? Let's dress up and go to the station and catch her doing her abomination)

Me: Baba!

Dad: Hiih?

Me: uMama is a human trafficker

Dad: Whaat??

Me: uMama udayisa iingane ezincane kwa mazwe for sex trade! (Mommy is selling young girls overseas for sex trade)

He blinked endlessly losing his breath and stumbled his way to the seat. I was afraid thought stroke was hitting him.

Dad: Mntanam, those are huge allegations akudlalwa ngento ezinjalo (you don't play with such things)

Me: Kubukeka ingathi ngiyadlala Baba? Ngibheke emehlweni ung'tshele ukuthi ubona ni? Amehlo am abomvu lokhu ngiphenduka embhedeni ngingesa tholi buthongo. Ngihlelele ngenzana no phando (Does it look like I'm playing? Look in my eyes and tell me what do you see? My eyes are red it's hard to sleep. I stay up digging and doing endless research.)

Me: Mi (Here)

I throw the box in front of him and stood up.

Me: Look at these pictures... Kids, churches, list of names all of them VICTIMS! Church woman, my mother?? All a façade! This woman is there for the kids.. see this man here.

I pointed the photo.

Me: Her "high school sweetheart" just a sick pedophile bastard! All these kids were gone missing, half being female with this man. Search about Elveous Spencer you'll see.

I threw myself on the couch and sighed. Also calming myself down as I massage my head.

Me: Okay Baba I'm sorry for the raise of tone. But we living with a monster here. I know that 2 out of 10 in these items are concrete. Which is the white man, secondly would be the list. I already did a follow up on 5 schools, truly turns out all the kids were gone missing in a trip if not staged as an accident. If you don't trust me let's do a follow up on the remaining other schools then we could tell if they're allegations or not.

I pressed my lips as tears fell

Me: It all started with Dimakatso, then my other friends... then Letty. It had to take Letty for me to smell the coffee.

I looked at him.

Me: I'm sure you told her about where Letty lives. She became friends with her mother and apparently I heard she saved her life.

Dad: The hospital...

He uttered softly with teary eyes

Dad: She appeared with her in the hospital.

Me: Now why the hell would she do that? She was preying on my friend! Dad you married a wolverine in a sheepskin! If you don't realize that now than I'm sorry. Lefa is innocent, I knew from the beginning.. pity how all the evidence was pinned on him.

Dad closed his eyes and cried

Dad: God what have I put myself into? Oh Lord what have I got myself into? All these years I've been blind? How couldn't I see.. what's the way forward? Show me the way

Me: The way is putting her behind bars.

He gave me a quick gaze and wiped his tears. It's either that or the kids will continue missing. They deserve justice.

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ASHANTI

Me: Whatelse you wanna know about me?

She smiled

Letty: I think that's all, I don't wanna push it. We still have all time to ourselves.

Me: Definitely. I still have more dates to take you out on.

Letty: Can't wait for those.

I smiled

Me: Hope you'd love shopping sprees. I'm a sucker on girly's stuffs you'd swear I'm a guy.

Letty: You look stylish though

Me: How do you know?

Letty: I once stalked you.

Me: Oohwoah!

We giggled

Me: Why didn't I get a request then?

Letty: Didn't wanna push it

Me: I swear that's becoming my favourite line of the day.

We giggled crazily.

Letty: I'm so happy that I have a sister.

Me: Don't think you are as happy as I am. Glad you're here all safe and sound. I'm sorry for everything you went through, it kills me.

Letty: I believe time will heal me. So don't blame yourself.

(Silence)

Letty: Can you watch me sleep?

Me: Ofcourse.

She lift her legs placing them inside her covers.

Letty: Hug me please to ensure that I'm safe.

I nodded

Me: Ofcourse no problem.

I took off my shoes and laid next to her, hugging her. We're almost the same height but I'm shorter than her.

Me: You'll be safe from now on. I promise.

An hour later I sneaked out of her room when she was asleep. I had somewhere to be, I saw Mayihlome was gone haven't gotten a chance to speak to him. But I do have his number, will make time for him.

I informed the fam about my departure. My brother joined me as well, before we took it.. I called Ndili to the side and asked for Motlatsi's phone. She told me her pin and gave it to me.

We left.

Sandro: Why we're here?

Me: It's my cousin's place. I have something important to tell him about his wife.

Sandro: Can I follow?

Me: For sure.

We got out and walked in Sihle's house. We greeted. We saw him a bit distraught with his daughter, as we did lil introduction and greetings.

Me: Sihle I'm gonna keep this short and simple. We've kept your wife because we've discovered that she was involved in kidnapping my sister, Mavuyi's daughter Letty. I'm here to bring her phone back. Her pin is Elv07... you can surf through her phone to see all the proof if you don't believe us. Everything lays in your hand on what you'll do ke bhuti. I'll show you where we kept her. We didn't touch no single hair on her. We just came to drop this.

I placed her phone down

Sihle: Thank you Ashanti.

I smiled and looked at Sandro, who's eyes were fixed on his daughter. I nudged his arm.

He cleared his throat

Sandro: Keep well

He said before we made our exit.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 43

[5 MONTHS LATER]

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LETTY

I had my reading glasses on. Studying hard for my final exams, it's been a tough year. I've been through alot this year but I must say counseling did play its part. Though the rape and trauma still gets to me but I like the woman I'm becoming. I am slowly but surely bouncing back way stronger than I had expected and I know how to handle my anxiety.

My eyesight is back but I'm now poor-sighted. I always need reading glasses on without them I see foggy. But I'm getting the hang of it. Jezzman really ruined me, after the surgery the Doctor gave me hope that there'll come a time where I'll no longer need glasses. Meaning my vision might come back clearer as the time goes. I have faith and I'm happy atleast I can see.

Sandro really came through for me and he had covered all the costs. I discovered he has feelings for me. He even came out about them, I'd be lying if I say I didn't feel the same about him. So we're trying this relationship thing. It's been 2 months now but our parents don't know anything. He's really careful when it comes to me. I like his tenderness but I keep reminding him to be himself.

Mom: Letty

Me: Ma?

Mom: Andik'phazamisi? (Am I not disturbing you?)

Me: Not at all Ma

She smiles hiding her hand behind.

Mom: You have a visitor

Me: Who is it?

Mom: Uzombona (You'll see) should I let her in?

Me: If you'll be present nawe

Mom: Okay.

She looked back and nodded. I saw Dimpho making her way in. I got triggered again my body tensed.

Dimpho: Letty

I just looked at her.

Mom: You sure I shouldn't give you guys space?

Me: You may we'll be okay.

She left us alone. Dimpho pulled a chair and sat opposite me.

Dimpho: Mngane (Friend)

Me: Dee

She swallowed

Dimpho: I deeply apologize for what happened. I'm truly and sincerely sorry. I hate how this broke our friendship. It infuriates me knowing what my Mom did. I'm sorry for the pain she caused you. You almost lost your life far from home, because of her. (Sighs) Letty I am constantly living with guilt for what she did to you.

Glasses formed in her eyes.

Dimpho: I love you so much friend, you were the only friend that understood me and loved me. I don't know what I would've done if I had lost you.

She looked at me.

Dimpho: I made sure that my Mom pays for what she did. I sent all the evidence to the police, she's in jail. No longer a threat. All I need is your forgiveness my friend.

(Silence)

Me: Angizwisisi kahle ukuthi uxolisela ni ingelo phutha lakho. (I don't understand why you sorry yet it was never your fault)

Dimpho: Huh??

Me: I know everyone who was behind this. Guess what? I already forgave them before they even came to apologize. I'm doing it for me... it's part of my healing process. I don't belong there anymore. It hasn't been easy for me I've been fighting daily battles. But you, have completely nothing to worry about. You should live with a clear conscience cause you're not part of the people that caused me pain.

She was surprised by my response at the same time, made a relieved face.

Dimpho: So awung' bambelanga igqubu? (you're holding no grudge?)

Me: No! Why would I??

She giggled

Dimpho: Thank you. Does that mean we're cool? As in like still friends?

Me: I'm unsure about that, not when ungu mgijimi (you're a runner)

She opens her mouth in embarrassment and laughed.

Dimpho: No maan shomii...

Me: Cha there was no reason for you to change schools Dimples.

Dimpho: I was feeling really bad Letty. Didn't know how to face you after everything.

I sighed.

Me: Like I said before, it's not your fault you did nothing. We were still gonna be fine. Mina manje ngizo hloba njani namagwala? (How will I befriend cowards?)

We laughed.

Dimpho: Aah ngicela ung'xolele hle (please forgive me)

Me: Aww ngeke (never) I'm all alone now at school. I have no friends because my best friend decided to leave me by myself.

She made a puppy face.

Dimpho: Pleeeeeease.

Me: So long your Mom plays at further distance then I see no reason why we can't be friends.

Dimpho: Really?

I nodded. She came to hug me.

Dimpho: Thank you, ngibonga kakhulu mngce. I promise you, she'll never come nearer again.

Me: No problem then.

Dimpho: Yaz I missed you so much feels like a hundred years not seeing you.

Me: Neh?

Dimpho: Yeah. Otherwise what are we studying?

Me: Life Sciences, Human Endocrine.

Dimpho: Woo di hormones kedi rata ngata! (I love them alot) please move.

Me: Sure.

I made space for her to sit.

Dimpho: Look at me I didn't even bring my things.

Me: It's fine we'll share

She kept still and looked at me with a smile.

Dimpho: I love your new look, your afro, the glasses.

Me: Thanks. Okay! Let's start with ADH..

Dimpho: Yeah. It's released by the Hypothalamus right?

Me: Yes and also the Pituitary gland.

I hand her an extra text book and study guide. We began studying together and would catch up with other things when we took a break.

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ASHANTI

He walked in the restaurant. I had asked for us to meet since it's been a while. I stood and gave him a hug then we sat down.

We took time staring at each other.

Me: I'm glad you came

Mayihlome: I had to. You look good I must say.

Me: Thanks, you look good too

He smiled

Mayihlome: Mom told me about the ceremony back in Centane. How did it go?

Me: It went well. I officially belong kwa Xhosa even got my first name changed to Ncumolwam.

Mayihlome: Nice, really nice congratulations. You no longer my querida anymore.

I giggled

Me: Oh please!

Mayihlome: Ujikile ngoku ungu 560

Me: Rhaaa

He cracked up.

Mayihlome: You really getting perfect in the lingo.

Me: I've been learning everyday. Though I didn't really discard my Mexican background.

Mayihlome: I hear you

I played with my fingers.

Me: Uhm Mayi, reason why I called us is because I know we haven't made time to sit and talk. As you know we've made it

clear that we're dating. I'd also like for us as adults... to make it clear where our relationship stands at the moment.

He nodded slowly.

Mayihlome: You disappeared on me.

Me: I know, I know and I'm sorry. There were many things on my plate. I had to drop everything and prioritize on them. They needed my attention, there was just many dilemma in my life.

Mayihlome: And what happened to communicating?

I sighed rubbing my eyes

Me: Mayi..

Mayihlome: More than 5 months is alot. Just one phonecall to tell me what's going on in your life. I deserved to know cause I was also part of your life wasn't I?

Me: Ewe but, when my mind came back I thought of the nature of our relationship.

Mayihlome: And how would you describe it?

Me: You wanted nothing to do with me.

Mayihlome: Bendi wrong'o? I was hurt Ashanti you were leaving me how was I suppose to react? I didn't mean it exactly like that. When you were in an accident did I not jump and go to the hospital? I did and arrived to you gone. Even when you

went kwa Centane I called and we spoke. I still wanted to push more and go there but I was let known about your condition and didn't want to suffocate you more.

Me: So ndimu lo uwrong? (Am I the wrong one?)

Mayihlome: No. We both let pride and lack of communication get in the way.

(Silence)

Me: So where does that put us?

Mayihlome: I still love you alot

Me: I love you too.

He curved his lips

Mayihlome: But I wouldn't hurt you by lying to you. There's another woman I'm involved with, I was lonely and..

My tears ran down

Me: How long?

Mayihlome: It's been 3 months.

I nodded and wiped my tears.

Me: I wish you two good and please don't apologize. I'm a strong girl, I'll be fine. I just appreciate your honesty

I looked at him with teary eyes

Me: (whispers) I just need one thing from you, a goodbye kiss that's all. I need you to hold me just one more time and I'll.. I'll let go I promise.

He got up fighting his emotions from displaying. He held me up and looked direct in my eyes.

Me: There are people and.. to prevent your girlfriend from bumping to us. Let's go to my car.

He nods and held my hand as we went out.

We got in my car and kissed with passion. His lips felt so good, they were thick and welcoming. My clit was already misbehaving. The way our tongues twirled and fused... it rekindled something deep within me. His touch, Lord am I ever gonna get a man who'll ever touch me this specific way again? He ran his firm hand slowly under my dress and squeezed my thigh. I grabbed on his shirt and sat on top of him.

Like a rolled impact of a mini pillow that's how hard his shaft was.. I could feel it on my cooch, which had already developed a heartbeat.

I broke the kiss with a moan and breathed heavily on him.

Me: Gosh! This feels so good yet so wrong. I think we should stop.

His hands held both my butt cheeks under my dress. He bit his lower lip seductively while facing up the car roof.

He breathed heavily.

Mayihlome: (soft lustful voice) Damn, I want you querida. I want you so bad.

I felt like crying.

Me: I want you too so deep within me Mayi. This will be the last time ever. I swear.

He grabbed my face kissing me again as he moved his lower body stroking me a little, above our clothes.

Mayihlome: Let's do this, let's drive somewhere private.

I nodded

Me: Before we'll need to purchase condoms.

Mayihlome: Yeah let's go babe.

I got off him and he spanked my butt. Damn I'm so wet, how will I drive like this. I first fanned my face and drove where he'll purchase the condoms.

I then drove to a quiet place. I immediately took off my lace seconds later after switching off the ignition. I straddled on top of him.

Me: So where were we?

He smiled and we began smooching. While his finger made its way to my honey pot. He rubbed on my clit I rolled my eyes back, it's the soft hands for me.

I unbuckled his belt while he was still busy fingering me. His other hand reached out to my boobs, he adjusted my dress so that he could get them off my dress.

He wet my nipples with his tongue, running it around them. He then sucked them so pleurably while working his fingers in my hole.

Mayihlome: I missed this so much.

He whispered closely in my ear and placed a kiss there. I helped him lower his pants together with his briefs, and there I was welcomed by his erect cock standing like an Eiffel tower. I

thought twice before giving him a blow job, cause he now has a girlfriend. So won't take any chances in contracting sexual infections.

I just massaged his dick with my hands and gave him a good hand job, he was enjoying.

Mayihlome: Ohw yees.

Me: Condoms?

He reached for them in his trousers and handed me. I massaged him with one hand as I tear the wrapper with my teeth.

I rolled it down on his dick, it filled him tight.

I got up as I rubbed my nuna with my fingers then I held his manhood directing it in my vjay... I slowly sat on it, I gasped.

Me: Ohhhhw!

Mayihlome: Ahhhh yes.

Damn it was painful. Maybe because it's been a while. He held my hips tight and thrust more deeper.

Me: Ohhhh lord

ahhh

Mayihlome: Fuck, you're so tight. You goin' get me mad horny.

He spanked my ass. I tried grinding on him little by little, little by little. He also helped but when he got out of control I'd grasp on his shoulders to stop him.

I now got the hang of it, I was getting more wet.. the pain turned to pleasure. I was slipping nicely in his dick. I began riding him nicely.. I moved my hips more flexile and bounced more harder on him. I didn't even need his help.

He was moaning like a skunk. He grabbed my butt and fucked me underneath. I grabbed his arms and pinned them against the seat.

Me: I'm in control, your time's gonna come.

I ride him senselessly with no mercy. While I gave him moans in appreciation of his good dick. I placed his hands on my boobs.

Me: You gonna miss this pussy?

Mayihlome: Ye- Ye-eaah! Oww shit Ashanti mmmh... you're so good keep going, ohhh!

I started changing my rhythm. By now when I go midway in his dickhead I'd stop and twerk on him then go down and fuck him more like that.

In the middle of nowhere I got emotional realizing this is the last time ever doing this with him.

Me: I... I... Ouhh! Love you.

Mayihlome: I love you too

We kissed as I continued going up and down on him till we both cummed. He cummed first cause I felt the heat of the condom... I moved to the passenger seat breathing heavily as I closed my eyes.

He discard the condom and wore another one as he lift me up and placed me at the backseat. He took off my whole dress and made me bend for doggy style. To him it was gonna be a challenge... But he seemed to have a better plan.

He inserted his dick and took it from behind. He wasn't playing at all, he pounded and hammered me like no child's play. It was so flippen nice though I felt like I couldn't take it, but he'd get

his dick off and shove it in again.. then in and off again. He did it a few times then fucked me gently when I was too comfortable, he'd rough me up again, he was unpredictable. Yet it reached in all kinds of angles and exactly in my g-spot. Basically I was in Cloud 9.

Me: Maaaaayi!!

My legs began shaking uncontrollably and I cummed

Mayihlome: Uhhh! That's what I'm talking about.

I let him continue pumping me till he cummed as well... then he made me lay on the side, placing my leg on his shoulder, let's be grateful that I'm flexible or else I'd crack few joints on my hipbone.

He kneeled with one leg on the seat the other one was down. He got more zoned in our sex. I just kept on rubbing my clit only... It was really our last time. We had emotional moments but we satisfied each other. So from hereon, it'll really be over.

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MAVUYI

I was so happy with what I'm seeing. Seeing the girls bonding and studying together. I couldn't stop smiling.

Me: Hey ladies mantombazane

Them: Mamzo

I handed them food.

Me: I've been watching you girls studying. Hay niyasebenza (you work real hard) so I made you something to eat nje nithathe ikhefu (just to take a break)

They thanked me and I smiled at them.

Me: Hay nina nizophuma ephepheni ukuba nihamba ngalo layini. (You will definitely appear in the newspaper if you keep this track)

They smiled.

Me: Are you okay baby? Do you need your pills.

Letty: No Ma don't worry. It's just a passing by pain. I need to rest my eyes.

She took off her glasses and squeezed her eyes.

Me: Ufun' ulala? (Do you want to sleep?)

Letty: No Mama I'll be okay

Me: Okay let's say Grace ke.

We gave thanks to the food.

Dimpho: Erm Ma ngiyabonga ngempela ngesidlo kodwa iChakalaka angiyidli ngamandla, ingenza izinduna. (I appreciate the food but I don't eat much of Chakalaka it gives me more pimples.) But I'll appreciate just only samp

Me: Oh! Askies I'll sort that out for you.

Dimpho: Thank you.

I took her food and placed it aside. I dished for her another new dish of just only samp. I handed her back.

Me: Ungahambi ngee taxi mntanam akho safe and seku mnyama ngoku (Don't take Taxis when you leave it's late and not safe)

Letty: I'll ask Dwayne to drive her home

Dimpho: Don't stress I'll call my father to fetch me.

Me: I'm now relieved

My phone rang, it was a landline number. I walked away from the kids to answer it.

Me: Hello

Caller: Hi, are we speaking to Mrs Vuyelwa Vilakazi?

Me: Yes sir.

Caller: We're calling from Letsibogo Girls High.

Me: Yes?

Caller: We are pleased to inform you that you'll start working in our school next week Monday, during school hours.

I gasped covering my mouth.

Caller: You're still there Ma'm?

Me: Yes, Yes, I'm still here just overwhelmed by excitement. I promise I'll be on time.

Caller: Enjoy your evening then.

He hang up

I smiled excitedly. I applied to work for feeding schemes at schools and also become a cleaner. I believe as a woman I need to earn something, it could be little but I believe it can make a difference.

Better than doing nothing. But first I need to assure my baby's safety. I'm glad for Ncumo being in our lives cause she's really protective of her sister.

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SANDRO

I got in the room and Mom was laughing on the phone. Soon as she noticed me she hang up.

Me: You didn't have to do that because of my presence.

She smiled.

Me: Who was that?

Mom: Your Dad.

A smile instantly formed in my face

Me: You getting back together? For once I thought you have a new man, that Dad is being old news.

Mom: Armando and I can never be old news. We've come a long way to give up, he's my soulmate.

Me: Mhmm so any chances of him coming back here?

Mom: All I'm saying is that there might be a possibility.

Me: Is it? I like the charms you using.

She threw a pillow at me

Mom: Otherwise how's life for you this side?

I released a deep sigh

Me: I can't complain. Living a straight, clean life is very unusual for me. I'm used to dodging bullets, planning some scheme, distribute products.

Mom: Alessandro!

Me: No not that I'm thinking of going back to that life. I've been off it for months but...

She tilts her head.

Mom: Pero? (But?)

Me: Ugh Mamá!

I slump next to her

Me: This life is too plain for me - too boring. No cash floating, I don't know what to do. Where to start..

Mom: Now you think of going back to your old ways huh? Live by bullets.

Me: No Mamá

Mom: You can start somewhere son. Find your inspiration, more like something that makes you look forward to another day.. something that pushes you and keeps you going. Don't lose the same drive you had... only difference should be what you aiming for. This time it should be something legal, something that brings out a positive impact. One that'll make you sleep with clean conscience at night.

I glanced at her.

Mom: I'm no motivational speaker or ain't Jesus but I wish you could change your ways for better. Calmente is bringing the good side of you.

I blushed.

Mom: See?

Me: Lemme just leave you to it Mom.

I kissed her saying goodnight and left to my own room.

I called my babe.

Me: Did I wake you?

She had her eyes half closed and reached for her glasses.

Letty: Yeah was having an early night.

Me: Oh just wanted to check you nothing much. How was your day?

Letty: Great, made peace with my friend.

I furrow my eyebrows quick

Me: Friend?

Letty: Dimphe.

My face changed.

Letty: Don't judge. Don't judge.

Me: I'm not, just don't want the same repetition of mistakes again.

Letty: There won't be don't stress baby.

We gave each other smiles

Me: Just don't wanna keep you from resting, you got important exams. So keeping it short, I'm here to say I love you.

She smiled

Letty: I love you too

Me: Can't I fetch you Monday? I miss those lips.

Letty: The agreement was after my exams.

Me: Aah! Calmente

Letty: Your own words let's stick to them, good night.

I sulked.

Me: Night

Letty: I ain't talking to you again I said goodnight.

I pulled a big smile.

Me: Good night.

And send out dozens of blow kisses. She got pleased. My lady is all about consistency, the energy I introduced to her should be the same energy I maintain till the very end. Though she bullies me alot but I love her. I can see she's healing and nothing makes me happy as that.

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MLAMLI (MHISE'S FATHER)

I was stuck in a burning veld. It felt so real, I tried pushing my wheelchair but it wasn't moving I was stuck.

Me: Heeeelp! Ncedani!!

Luniko's mother appeared before me

Me: What do you want from me?

Zimasa: I want my son. You promised me that day before I took my last breath that you'll get him and take care of him.

Me: I tried but he doesn't want to. Funeke ndithini ke? Ndizibulalise? (What should I do? Get myself killed?)

Zimasa: I want my son Mlamli. I want my son!

Me: I can't force him when he doesn't want to. I just came back from comma Zimasa please I'm tired and not well please give me peace.

Zimasa: They're labouring and hurting my son. Bring him back home!!

Me: I can't go back there Zimasa.

She strangled me I coughed.

Me: Kill me all you want but you're directing your anger to the wrong person. If you came out with truth beforehand we wouldn't be here. I seriously can't be blamed for your actions and Qhamani's.

She looked at me with tears

Me: Luniko will come back when he decides to. The child is old enough and I'm powerless right now.

"Tshini Thiza. Mlamli! Mlamli! "

We saw the headlights deeming in front of us. Zimasa screamed louder letting me go. My wife ran to my side.

Thozama: Oh my Gosh Tata. What are you doing here in the middle of the night? Don't scare me like that again. Who drove you all this distance?

Me: Just take me home nkosikazi ndak'cela.

Without any words she wheeled me to the car and drove us back home giving me a mouthful of course.

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MOTLATSI

I curled myself in a corner. My body was sore from all the beatings I receive in here. Ever since my bail has been denied. I'm abused and ganged by many inmates. Can't tell how many times I've got stabbed lucky how I survive, many aim for my death in here.

After last night's attempt I was placed on a single cell. I don't know who would do such favours for me.

Still can't believe my daughter and husband turned me in. And the cherry on top was him serving me with divorce papers whilst I'm here. I'm really going through alot but I love my husband we can't break up over this.

The cell gate opens. I lift my head, I saw a guard standing there.

Me: What?

Him: Get up

Me: What for?

Him: I said get up

I cried and begged closing my hands together.

Me: Please just for this night. I can't stand another attack in other cells I'd die this time around.

Him: Woman

He impatiently turned looking at me as he parts his legs. I jumped and walked to him, then continued going out when he didn't say anything.

He held me back.

Him: Are you telling me you can't see me?

I moved back squinting my eyes at him.

Me: Elveous??

He took off his hat. It was really him, he looked good.

Elveous: In flesh.

Me: Oh my God

I ran and jumped on him for a hug.

Elveous: Come on now, I've came to get you out of here.

Me: Thank you so much!

I pulled his face and kissed him.

Elveous: Ahh my partner in crime, sweet lips. I had to come back for you. Come let's go.

He grabbed me and we ran away.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 44

MOTLATSI

I woke up and stretched my arms as I yawn but instantly cover my mouth with my hand. Caught in surprise as I'm seeing myself in a comfy bed. Where am I? I noticed I was wearing a night dress as well.

Me: What??

I sat up straight and touched myself.

" Wouldn't do something without your consent. "

Me: Elveous!

Elveous: Good morning.

He kissed my forehead.

Elveous: Made breakfast for you.

He handed me the tray

Me: Thank you... When did I pass out? Cause all I remember is us escaping nothing else.

Elveous: You must have clearly forgotten but I completely understand.

I furrow my eyebrows

Me: The night dress, when did you..?

Elveous: Mo you forget I know everything about you up to your bra size. You're my soulmate.

I looked at him silently

Elveous: I missed you alot, it's been years since I last saw you. This was bound to happen.

Me: You still taking your medication right?

He chuckles.

Elveous: Can a mad person plan an escape so perfectly like I did? Ofcourse! I'm taking my medication.

Me: Still living that same life or you quit?

He scoffs moving back

Elveous: Honey, will this really be an interrogation? Aren't you happy that we're finally together? It's what you've always wanted. I mean you ensured that by sending those millions. This is for our future, I've build this for us, for our legacy. I'm no more about that life anymore. I'm a changed man Mo. I've lost you before I can't lose you again.

I made a faint smile as he brushed my face.

Me: So where did you buy this mansion?

Elveous: Zambia

I raise my eyebrows impressed

Me: Wow nice

Elveous: As much as we'll start our lives on a clean slate but we're not off the hook. Authorities are still searching for us, we're on the run. This is how our life will be, forever in the run. There's no other better place we can hide than this. We have to get used to it.

I nod slowly.

Me: I believe I can adapt

Elveous: I hope you happy atleast

Me: What? I'm more than happy thank you. I mean that's why I fell inlove with you in the first place. You use your brains well.

We kissed.

Elveous: I'm glad to hear that. I gotta run few errands, entertain yourself so long and tour around the house. I won't be long.

He got up. I did too as I close my robe.

Me: Can't I come along?

He wore an artificial beard & bushy eyebrows plus a hat.

Elveous: Unfortunately not. You can't go out until I find plans for you to look different.

I huffed sadly. He kissed my shoulder.

Elveous: Be patient I'll work out something. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He walked away. Atleast I'm free from prison. I walked to the mirror staring at my bruised face. I sighed moving away from it and took a tour to this beautiful huge house. I made a right choice with Elveous, he never disappoints.

I made a way next to the fireplace... I saw a frame and picked it up. It was me, Dimpho and Him??

He cropped Sihle out of the picture and instead placed himself. When did he even get to the frame? It's this behaviour that scares me, he can be too creepy sometimes.

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ASHANTI

" But I know I have a fickle heart and a bitterness, And a
wandering eye,
And a heaviness in my head.

But don't you remember
Don't you remember
The reason you loved me before?
Baby, please remember me once more.

Gave you the space so you could breathe
I kept my distance so you could be free
And hoped you'd find the missing piece
To bring you back to me.

Why don't you remember
Don't you remember

The reason you loved me before?

Baby, please remember me once more.

When will I see you again? "

I wiped my tears off inhaling deeply as I face up the ceiling.

Me: Ohh! Mayihlome. It's really over

I went through all our pictures and deleted them. As strong as I try to remain but it hurts I won't lie... and the sex made it worse cause I kept reminiscing and imagining he'll be giving someone's daughter good orgasms and love.

I deleted his number, unfriended and unfollowed him in all social medias.

I hope this will ease my healing process.

Me: Okay, Okay Ncumo drift your mind somewhere else. Drift your mind somewhere else.

I closed my eyes for a moment. Something came in mind. I got up and came back with books ones I was gifted by my Uncle back in the Eastern Cape... I had no chance to read them. My Xhosa isn't 100% but it won't be difficult for me to interpret since I've been learning and I'm yet still to learn more, cause I have translation apps and one of the books I have are translating as well.

I wiped the dust from the books before I open them. I receive a call from an unknown number.

Me: Hello?

Caller: Querida

I breathe heavily

Me: Mayi...

Mayihlome: I'm checking if you woke up fine. Honestly I can't get over you.

Me: Mayihlome I will need you to restrict this tendency of calling me and communicating with me. I believe you have a girlfriend whom you suppose to be giving all this attention to. Yesterday it was all to it, we're over. So please, you making it

difficult for me to move on. Don't disturb my peace please... by that I mean don't call me again. Have a nice life, bye.

I hang up holding my phone closer to my chest. I snapped out of my thoughts and blocked his number.

I picked the books and started reading.

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KOLOSA

Just came back from shopping with my father wanted to spoil him. We had a good father and daughter moment. I bought him new clothes

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ayy right now I wish to put him on a dating app. Wouldn't mind having a Step-mother just to see him happy.

Me and my dad have recently moved in a small town Somerset East. I got a job, working in a Cadbury factory. The salary is not bad, it can maintain both of us. I was also able to buy myself a second-hand car.

Haven't heard anything from my husband. Me and Mhise are still pushing it lol it's been 7 months and we're serious. I go to Butterworth for sleepovers and she also drives down here to spend time with me, we haven't come out to Dad. He thinks we're friends and we rather keep it that way.

Limise also found my Dad a trustworthy nanny. She's in her late 30's, she sometimes does sleepover if necessary.

For now I can say me and dad are at peace.

Me: Do you like your new clothes Tata?

Dad: Kakhulu mntanam (A lot my child)

Me: I'm glad you do. So what are we cooking?

Dad: Ndibawela umfino (I'd like to eat spinach)

I chuckled

Me: Ndiye ndabhadla (I was smart) by buying vegies kule nyama inintsi ndithe nday'thenga (with this bunch of meat.)

Dad: Hayi mntanam I'm guarding my high blood pressure so I'm less on junk food. My family has history with Diabetes and Zolisa is suffering from it, won't take any chances.

Me: Ndiyakuva Tata (I hear you Dad)

I began rinsing the Spinach in the sink.

Dad: Kolosa

Me: Ta?

Dad: Are you sure uGogo akaku ncwasanga? (Mhise isn't attracted to you?)

I froze holding my chest in shock.

Dad: Heee?

Me: I... I'm not sure. Why you asking?

Dad: I can see she likes you judging by the way she acts around you and looks at you. You both planning an outing neh?

Me: Ee but it's no rush you come first Dad.

Dad: No go, don't worry about me I have a nanny.

Me: Oh okay. But we just friends ke nothing more.

Dad: Even if you were something more I wouldn't have mind. I know it's taboo for most of us "old folks" to approve of such.

But lamntana usincede kakhulu kolu sapho (that child has been really helpful in this family)

He looks at me

Dad: I want you to know that I approve of any relation you guys have. Ndiyani nika nee ntsikelelo zam ngaphezulu ingaske ningayifihli lento ninayo qha (I give you my blessings on top I just wish you don't become secretive about it)

I had no words but just smiled at him.

Just then I received a call from Mhise I blushed even more knowing we just spoke about her. I got hold of my phone about to answer.

"Nkqo Nkqo molweni emzini "

I startled and hid my phone behind me. Seeing my mother in-law.

Me: Makaziwe?

Her: Molo Landise molokazana wam. Ndize ngo mba apha ombi ombi ukufa. (Hi Landise, daughter in-law. I came with news it's bad really bad)

I looked at Dad while breathing heavily.

Her: Molo xhego

She greets my father and he greeted back. She sat down.

Makaziwe: Make me a cup of coffee Makoti. I hope you have Jacobs.

I still didn't expect her visit. Wonder who told her where we live.

My husband's mother, she's a bold woman who doesn't take nonsense. I hope those bad news don't involve Loyiso being dead.

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ASHANTI

I was enjoying the books. I'd look up for words I couldn't understand, when I didn't find the translations. I'd list them down on paper and called Mavuyi. She'd be patient enough to explain to me. I laughed uncontrollably as I understood how my Great-grandfather had a good sense of humour. Was enjoying the Twin Novel he wrote about.

After I kept myself occupied for the day. Would do drawings in my dancing therapy room while playing soft jazz... the music connected with deep parts of my soul and took me more into the nature world.

That's where my drawings were mainly focused on things like; waterfalls, mountains, rivers, rondavels and other landscapes.

I picked my other sketch and stared at it with a huge smile.

Me: Ntombi entsundu, ntsundu, n-s-h-u-n.. argh!

Here's a trick about Xhosa it is difficult! Difficult to speak and write.

"How do you say Black girl in Xhosa? Don't use the umyama word"

Mavuyi: "Intombi entsundu."

Me: "Yes! Thank you."


Mavuyi: "👍📱. We miss you."

Me: "Have Dinner with us tomorrow. You, Baba Bheki & Letty"

Mavuyi: "Laura???"

Me: "She wont mind. She's been wanting to meet you and talk."

Mavuyi: "Nyani? (Really?)"

Me: "Yes trust me. Please come 

Mavuyi: "Okay will talk to my family"

I smiled and placed my phone away.

I erased my error on my sketch and wrote the "ntsundu" word correctly to my Intombi entsundu (Black girl) caption.

This sketch had a black woman, carrying a Calabash above her head. Her boobs were out and exposed only wearing a short skirt with traditional patterns. Her face was dotted and there were beads around her short coarse hair. I smiled as I pasted my sketches around my wall.

Me: Definitely need to do portraits and decorate this room.

I thought out loud. I need to bring life in these sketches by painting them it'll be more creative of me.

I pasted the last sketch that had a woman wearing a skirt & crop top made out of skin... with an Ingwe leading her ahead. I captioned the drawing "Ncumolwam MaJack " and smiled proudly as I stared at it.

I must say right now I'm all about intently focusing on my roots more than anything.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I was on a phonecall with Kolosa

Me: Kolie please don't cry babe.

Kolosa: I'm so pissed Limise I'm so damn pissed!!! Bebephi ababantu ngokuyana unyana wabo beka ndiphatha njengo dothi? Ngoku unama gama amathathu funeke ongiwe kwa ndimu lo bemnyela. (Where were they when their son treated me like trash? Now he has the HI-Virus they want me to nurse him.)

I closed my eyes and exhaled

Kolosa: Hay maan hay! Worse no Mamazala had no nice way of putting it. She wasn't even considerate that I stay with my

father who can't do anything for himself. Had the gall to tell me I should move in with Dad in their household. Sibengu mthwalo wobani sana? (And be a burden to whom?) This can't seriously happen.

Me: Babe please calm down

Kolosa: Ha.ana I can't calm down at a time like this tuu.

(Silence)

Me: Kolosa. Kolosa.

Kolosa: Mmh?

Me: Do you trust me?

Kolosa: I do

Me: If you do then don't resist.

Kolosa: Whaaat? What about my father? What about our trip?

Me: Don't worry about your father and the trip. We have all the time to ourselves. I'm here for you, we'll deal with this together, uyandiva?

Kolosa: Kodwa njani? (But how?)

Me: Kolie don't stress about that. What I need from you is to go at your matrimonial home, take care of your husband. We don't want the Qunta ancestors angry at you right? I did tell you

about this before. Be there, you need this it's your closure sweetheart.

Kolosa: Kodwa for how long? Won't I lose my job?

Me: M.hm if you do the right thing you won't. It's just a matter of time for things to be okay. Do you trust me?

Kolosa: I do.

Me: Now calm down yevha? If I was closeby I was gonna make you feel better.

She sighs

Kolosa: Akunanto wethu (It's fine) I also appreciate you for just listening.

Me: Nanini na (Any time.) I love you uhlale ukhumbule ke vha (always remember)

Kolosa: I love you too sthandwa sam.

Me: Will check on you on my lunch.

Kolosa: Okay.

We dropped the call. I sighed moving my neck side to side.

I was really drained.

I checked the time, my brother is surely busy in construction right now so I can't call him.

I wrote him a message instead:

" If ever I ask you to sleep with my girlfriend so that she can carry my baby, would you agree? "

I let out a deep breath before sending the message. I'll wait for his response. I know he'll call immediately when he sees it.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 45

LIMILE

Me: Uthi k'theni??? I just saw your message.

She sighs.

Mhise: Wele there's absolute no reason to freak out okay?

Me: But jeez Limise inkulu lento uyicelayo (what you asking for is huge.)

Mhise: Would you do it?

Me: Hell no! Izimanga akudlalelwa kuzo (Sex is not something to play with.) We speaking about spiritual ties here, possibilities of emotional attachments. What if something goes wrong nje.

She snickers

Mhise: Kutsho umdlali wonke ke phoffu, bekulula mos kwamanye amantombi. Ngoku yintoni enokohlula ku Kolosa and uzobe wenzela mna ifavour nje. (Says a whole player yet it was easy with other girls. What will be difficult with Kolosa? And you'd be doing me a favour)

I laugh out in disbelief

Me: Yhi dadewethu uyaziva kodwa ba uthini? (Are you hearing yourself?)

Mhise: No really Lime what would be difficult for you? Not like you have a girlfriend mos.

Me: Limise NO! There are many other options you could opt for when you want a baby. Hayi lena dade I'll never sleep with your girlfriend.

She sighs

Mhise: It's not like I wanted you too was just asking "what if?" qha. Worse I didn't even touch this topic kuye.

Me: Who you fooling? It's what what you really want Limise.

Mhise: Kuyo nceda ntoni ke? (What will help then?)

Me: Sisi tell me, what's bothering you?

(Silence)

Me: You are frustrated by something I can feel it. Tell me what is it? Is it a client? Work? Underground gang? The parents? Or one of your fights with Kolosa?

Mhise: Hayi it's her husband he's back and sick so her in-laws are demanding her back to look after him.

I didn't say anything

Mhise: Itsho (Say it)

I breathed while closing my eyes.

Mhise: Itsho Limile ngoba uyafuna (Say it because you want to)

Me: Ndifuna ukuthini? (What do I want to say?)

Mhise: That you told me so

Me: I'm not gonna say it Limise. I can't stand in your way of happiness, I have no right. You've made your decisions I just hope you won't get hurt.

Mhise: I love her so much I'm afraid she might end up changing her mind about us. I mean ababantu batshatile and mna ndiye ndamncedisa ukrexeza (they are married and I'm helping her commit adultery)

Me: Now you feel like it's best to trap her with a baby? Even ngaphandle kwez'gqibo zakhe (without her decisions)

She huffs

Mhise: Eyy wele

Me: Uyamthemba uKolosa sisi? (Do you trust Kolosa?)

Mhise: Yes

Me: Then trust her with how she'll handle this. It's out of your hands ngoku. If it turns out her love was real for you, she'll make a right decision for the both of you.

Mhise: Okay

Me: Yah for now you need to relax and give her the space she needs.

Mhise: I'll do as you say. Since when are you wise wena?

Me: Kuyakhulwa mntase bungayazi (I'm maturing didn't you know?)

We giggled.

Mhise: Hay I see no more jerky days

Me: As I've said before

Mhise: Still single? Hayi inoba zinyuke zafikela entloko (They must be up in the head.)

Me: Ain't discussing my sex life with you, never!

Mhise: Your soulmate is right there why don't you send a letter already cause she's meant to be yours

Me: Actually to think of it, you actually wanted me to sleep with her sister.

Mhise: Yhoooo!

She exclaims in shock.

Mhise: Hayini I've totally forgotten about Kolosa being sisters with uAshanti. My God ooNdaba were gonna kill me.

Me: Nantsoke!

Mhise: Damn, I wasn't in my rightful mind please forgive me.
But make the move already bhuti tshini.

Me: I'm not her favourite person at the moment and she's still madly inlove so I don't wanna interrupt. We'll see as the time comes.

Mhise: So long what do you do?

Me: Ndiyalinda (I wait)

Mhise: Hehe I love this side of you yaz. Lamkhulisa umntu iPitoli

We chuckled more. We discussed about other things. I also wanted to help her forget about what's stressing her and it's working.

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MOTLATSI

The door finally flungs open and he gets in carrying loads of parcels.

He sighs.

Elveous: Sorry I took long I saw many things we'll need for ourselves.

He went to place the parcels in the kitchen and kept loading them.

Elveous: Bought few of your toiletries though some other women stuffs I don't know. You'll need to write me a checklist next time and please be more precise.

I felt his lips on my cheeks and glanced up on him.

Elveous: Am I talking to myself?

I tap the frame against my finger tips.

Me: Where did you get this?

Elveous: What?

He looked down and started noticing the frame in my hand.

He smiles and got hold of it.

Me: Is there something to smile for?

Elveous: Yeah I mean seeing my family here..

I sprang on my feet.

Me: Question is how did you get it

He looked at me and frowned.

Elveous: Why you mad?

Me: Answer me Elveous

Elveous: I think you know the answer.

He walks away

Me: Elveous! You went in our house and invaded, are you insane??

Elveous: Insane?

He chuckles and pours himself wine

Elveous: Caring about you isn't insane. I was checking on you and couldn't help it.

Me: But that was too risky. You could've been caught.

Elveous: You know I'm cautious.

I scoffed shaking my head

Me: Can't believe you actually went there and disrespected my husband's property and space.

He banged the glass down.

Elveous: Ex-husband! Weren't you fed up living that fake life of yours huh?

I gulped swallowing my saliva.

Elveous: Otherwise you wouldn't be keeping contact with me and allow me to fuck every now and then in your "meaningless vacations".

I still remained quiet staring at him. He ran his finger on my face.

Elveous: Why are we sad now mmh?

He brought my face closer to his and kissed me.

Elveous: Mmh baby?

Me: (whisper) What more did you do?

Elveous: I'd rather keep it to myself. Don't worry didn't exceed to something detrimental.

My breathing changed. He rubbed the side of my arms.

Elveous: Just relax...

He let go of me and walked away to pour another wine.

Elveous: I just need us to be a complete family. Something is missing, our girl.

Me: Our.. You speaking about Dimpho?

Elveous: Dimples as they call her.

Me: You leave my daughter out of this!!!

I angrily pointed him. He drank his wine.

Elveous: She's my daughter too. She needs to be here with her parents, we can't leave her with that man.

I scoff as I open my mouth widely

Me: Dimpho is not your daughter Elveous are you sick!!!?

Elveous: Days before our separation we made love before you met that futile good-for-nothing man of yours. I nudded in you and Dimples is definitely my child.

Me: No! I made sure to get emergency pills to not fall pregnant for you. Dimpho was conceived the night you were taken in the mental institution.

He shot a hurtful look at me.

Elveous: (shaking his head) No, no it can't be. It is not true.

Me: It is true!

Elveous: No, you lying to me!!!

He roughly shakes me

Elveous: That child is mine! She's my seed. She looks exactly like my grandmother Gertrude. You lying because you've fallen for that moron!

Me: I'm not lying.

He then pats my arm gently and let go of it. He chuckles with tears going down his cheeks.

Elveous: Look, I understand it's been years being with this guy. Yes you couldn't deal learning about my mental illness and with the things I did. So you end up falling for this guy since he was the right guy for you. But honey no need to lie, I'm a changed man now. Dimples is mine.

Me: No! Sihle has always been there okay. It's his child I wouldn't lie about something like this.

(Silence)

Elveous: So you cheated on me?

Me: You pushed me to cheat on you

He nodded repeatedly while pointing me.

Me: Elveous, Elveous please... we right off just the two of us. A third party will jeopardize our plan. My daughter handed me to the police, it's not a good idea. Please s-

A glass shattered in front of me and I screamed in terror.

Elveous: SHUT UP!!!

I covered my mouth with my shakey hand. He was breathing heavily with fume.

Elveous: You.

He pointed me and left.

Me: What about me? What you gonna do with me? Elveous!!

He already banged the door leaving. I slowly sat down and burst out in a loud cry, hiccupping in pain. I didn't expect this can of worms to open at such a wrong time. For all I know Elveous might resort to something stupid and screw us up. This can't happen!

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ASHANTI

" Zeni mphanthe kakuhle, uSisi wethu ×2

Aza ngalambi, aza ngadlakazeli ×2

Zeni mphanthe kakuhle, uSisi wethu ×2

Aza ngakhali, aza ngakhathazeki ×2"

There were lot of ululations

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singing and celebration. People were gathered in numbers at my homestead in EC. They were well dressed in their Xhosa attires, there was also a Xhosa Poet reciting ahead of us. I didn't know whether this was a singing competition or what?

Kolosa and Letty were singing besides me against the other crowd facing opposite us. Funny enough I saw Gogo in that other crowd. What's going on?

My uncle kept my arm under his, walking me to the other crowd while singing. I looked stunning in my attire as well, had beads all over me covering my face, then a doek and a netty shawl over my shoulders.

I was handed to another gentleman, couldn't see his face. He was facing down, holding a red & white beaded stick.

When I got closer to him I got pulled by another man.

Me: Ouch! Careful.

I looked at him he seemed to be in his mid-forties. He smiled.

Him: MaJack, nice to finally meet you.

Me: Uhm...

Him: I'm your great-grandfather

I furrow my eyebrows

Me: Njani? (How?) You look younger than my father.

Him: I'm the great Sobantu Malahle

Me: Whaaat? Tamkhulu!

I hugged him.

Me: I must be in my dream neh? Like not long ago I was reading your books. It's such an honour to be envisioned with your presence.

Him: Can we take a walk mzukulwane?

Me: Ofcourse.

We walked a bit far from the crowd.

Him: Something wonderful is gonna happen as you've witnessed. Unga libali ubhiyozela emakhaya (Don't forget to celebrate home.)

I narrow my eyes in confusion.

Him: I know right now I'm not making sense but one day I will. Igoli isn't your home this place is your real home. Any special events of your life should take place here. Uyandiva mntanam?

Me: Ewe Tatomkhulu.

Him: Kunge njalo nzoqumba kakhulu uba into zakho ezibalulekileyo uzenzele egoli kwaye nzok'hlawulisa kakhulu. (Otherwise I won't be happy if you do your significant things in the city and I'll make you pay a huge price for it)

That scared me a little.

Him: And we still standing on our word of not letting you cross over the country unless it's for the honeymoon.

I laughed nervously. He touched my shoulder to ease me up.

Him: Make it a habit to dress in leopard prints. Could be a headwrap, vest, shoes or earrings anything. But what you should make use of, is always sleeping with the headwrap on.

I nodded respectfully.

Him: Lastly I will reincarnate in a form of a son. He'll be strong with wisdom, gifted both spiritually & intellectually. His sense of humour will be triple than mine. Everything he touches will turn into Gold. He'll be an ancestors child, he'll be born a leader. 2 families will be blessed to have him.

I looked at him in surprise.

Him: Name him Onamandla.

He hugs me when I was about to ask more questions.

But then I heard an alarm.

I rise up rubbing my eyes. The sun brightened much more in my room. I enjoyed the dream. I glance at the books and smiled.

Me: It was nice meeting you Tamkhulu.

I got up and prepared myself for the day. Vuyiz and her family are coming over so we have to impress.

I got done dressing up in a floral black & white jumpsuit, with a white bucket hat.

I met Mom downstairs.

Mom: Aah Ashanti how can you oversleep knowing we having guests.

Me: Má it's 9, it's still early.

Mom: I don't want any mistakes I want everything outdone.

Me: Wow forgive me Lady Q

Mom: (yells) Ma C!!!!

Me: Haybo Manyoko.

Mom: What?

Me: It's nothing.

Mom: You getting uncontrollable with Xhosa.

" Madam? "

Mom: Thank God! Ma C I need you to go with my daughter to the mall and buy these piles of things.

She handed MaCele a notebook.

Ma C: Okay. I'm cooking neh madam?

Mom: Don't worry I'll watch over the pots honey.

Me: Couldn't Sandro go perhaps?

Mom: Bebita don't start please please, you not gonna enslave my baby boy go, go, go.

Me: Baby boy? I thought I'm the only baby here

Mom: Go!

We chuckled and we left going to the mall.

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KOLOSA

I called my mother in-law. I took time thinking about this out.

Makaziwe: Ntombam (Daughter)

I closed my eyes.

Me: Mama I gave it a thought. And erm I won't be able to come eTamarha with my Dad to look after my husband. Things changed in my marriage your son wasn't treating me good. I can't compromise so much for someone who didn't care about me. Ndiyasebenza ngoku Makaziwe (I'm working) I can't leave my work for uLoyiso.

Makaziwe: Ngamanye amagama awuzoyenza lonto? (In other words you won't be taking care of him?)

Me: Wena Nyokozala kungoba kutheni ungeni monga unyana wakho? (Why can't you look after your son?)

Makaziwe: Landise uyandi qatsela? (Are you patronizing me?)

Me: No bendibuza njee Mama kuba ndino xanduva olunintsi (I was asking since I've got so many responsibilities)

Makaziwe: Then don't forget your husband being also part of your responsibilities. What do you think your for better & worse meant hee? Naso ke isfungo sakho sisi hoye indoda yakho (Fulfill your vows here's your man.)

Me: Kodwa Ma-

Makaziwe: Landise Qunta! If you're not here by tomorrow I'll personally drop your husband at your place yandiva?

Me: You're being unfair ko... Hello? Makaziwe? (Groans) Ahhh.

I lowered my phone and placed my hands on my face.

Me: Thixo ndizothini? Ndizokwenza njani? (God how am I gonna deal with this?)

I sighed looking at Dad and continued making him porridge.

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ASHANTI

Our shopping with MaCele went well. We got home and got more busy. I changed my bucket hat to my leopard headwrap.

I bought it in the mall earlier.

Hours later The Vilakazi family came and we all had a good time. Laura and Vuyiz settled their beef and made truce. They ended up discussing ways of co-parenting me lol a whole 30 year old. But we gave them space as folks to catch up while discussing other things.

Meanwhile I hangout with my sibs next to the pool.

I keep threatening my brother about snitching him for being inlove with my Lil sis. Sandro is older than me so that makes him way older than my sister. He told me that he's willing to wait for her to grow and concluded that he hasn't done the deed with her. Doesn't want to get arrested. Atleast he'll wait when she's 19/20. I laughed my lungs out Sandro the bad boy? Survive 3 years without sex? Never! But I'll definitely watch this with my eyes wide open

We all engaged and had fun until it was time for them to go.

I went to get my leather jacket and went out, driving to Sihle's place. Something pushed me to see him.

Sihle: Aww mzala

Me: Mzala

We hugged

Me: How are you?

Sihle: I'm coping thanks for asking. How have you been?

Me: I'm still going strong can't complain... Just checking on you man. My blood felt like coming here.

Sihle: Aneh? (Right?)

Me: Ewe mntase. Otherwise how's everything with Mo and your daughter?

He takes a deep breathe while giving me something to drink and we went to sit down.

Sihle: Me and my daughter are trying to get used to my ex-wife not being here. We are meeting each other halfway by all means. Even though I can't deny that it hurts. I married an evil woman who have done such impious deeds. I also failed my son. She isn't what I thought she was.

I saw tears filling his eyes. He sniffed and wiped his nose.

Sihle: I'm divorcing her, she deserves to rot in prison. Nothing will bond us again except for our daughter. I'm also sorry for your sister.

Me: It's okay Mzala don't worry about it, it wasn't your fault.

(Silence)

Me: How about a weekend away? You take your daughter, your father and I'll take Kolosa and Dad... we go down to Centane and have fun over there. Or maybe plan a family vacation? Just to clear your mind.

Sihle: That's not a bad idea.

His phone rang.

Sihle: Excuse me, lemme take this.

Me: Okay.

He left. As I was sitting there a girl appeared whom I'm thinking is Sihle's daughter.

Her: Sawubona sisi

Me: Hi

Her: Have you seen my Dad?

Me: Still busy on a call

Her: Ohh

I got up and stretched my hand to her.

Me: Ashanti or Ncumolwam the newly found cousin.

She giggles and stretches her hand too.

Her: Dimpho the daughter. It's nice to meet you.

She says as we shook hands

Me: Nice to meet you t...

**I don't know what happened next but I saw her in a place screaming in pain with her skin changing into many blisters and they were spreading very fast over her body... it's like she was having an allergic reaction. I saw a girl same age mate as her helping her out... They trying to escape but a white man stands in their way.. next thing they're all crowded by a bunch of little kids who mostly were girls, hitting the man with a spade... Mo appears and she gets attacked too they drag her body on the ground.

Motlatsi: Dimphoooo!!!

They threw her in a deep hole and they did the same with the white man.

Girl: Dimpho it's now or never let's run for our lives.

Dimpho looks back at her mother's grave.

Dimpho: (crying) Mama!

Girl: Dimpho!!!

The place bombed into an explosion.**

"Ashanti! Ashanti! Ashanti!"

I jumped gasping as I swiftly let go of her hand. I stumbled back almost falling.

Dimpho: You okay?

Did I just have a vision? I held my head feeling dizzy.

Dimpho: You bleeding! Oh my God your nose.

She ran to my side holding me in balance.

"Motlatsi escaped prison!!!"

Sihle's voice was the last thing I heard before falling unconscious.

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>>>To be continued...

Chapter 46

[A MONTH LATER]

FUNERAL DAY

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KOLOSA

I was screaming watching his coffin go down.

Me: Buya!!! Buya!!! Ndizosala nabani ngoku?? Ngowuphi omnye oyaba ngu mhlobo wam. (Come back!!! Come back!!! Who will I be left with? Who else is gonna be my friend)

Uncle: Sshh it's gonna be fine mntanam, come this side.

He hugged and comforted me as he picked me from the floor and walked me back to the seats.

Uncle: We here for you ngxesi mntanam (condolences.) Set your heart free, mkhulule ayolala ngok'phumla apho angazova ntlungu khona (set him free to go rest where he won't feel pain.)

♪♪ Sewakhile enhliz'weni umhlobo wam (He has built in me, my friend)

Nguy' omkhulu ezihlotjeni umhlobo wam (He is great among relatives, my friend)

Ngoba nguye owangimela (He's the one who stood for me)

La' ngilahlwe okwempela (When I was forsaken)

Ngal' uthando wangifela umhlobo wam. (With His love he died for me, my friend)

Uyathwala umthwalo wami umhlobo wam (He carries my burdens, my friend)

Uthi wongithwala nam' umhlobo wam (He promises to carry me as well, my friend)

Waye hlatshwa njenge mvana (He was slayed like a lamb)

Aze angenze owakhe umntwana (To make me His own child)

Yek' inhlanhla yokwazana nomhlobo wam. (What a privilege to know my friend.) ♪♪

It's my father's funeral he passed on. On the day he departed.. it was like any other normal day. He woke up chatted nicely with me, told me to make his favourite meal, make him dress on his favourite outfit and he was very specific about it.

He then took our photo albums spoke about all our memories in there. Told us to sing his favourite church songs remembering my mother, who was also a church woman. He told me his favourite song was on Hymn 214.

He was also starting to get along with Loyiso. We all lived in the same roof. Anelisa the nanny was helping when I had to go to work. I made sure to pay her double extra money because she was taking care both of my dad and husband that wasn't a walk in the park.

So Dad on that night held my hand. Thanked me for everything and gave me blessings, I couldn't understand what was going on at the time. Then he made a call to Ashanti and spoke quite too long with her... he was laughing too much next thing we saw him going out with just a small smile then his life ended right there, it was a peaceful death.

My life turned upside down since then. I'm used to this man, my father was my everything. I loved him so much he was my advisor, everything I could ask for. Even when I lost my Mom he handled both roles well and did a good job on me. But now he has left me.

I have no parents anymore. I'll be so lonely without him. How will I stay in my house without him? When I'm so used to him. He even made the tension lesser between me and my husband. I don't understand God's will shame I'm so heartbroken. But I believe it was his time so I can't dispute that. I just hope I'll get used to it and be okay.

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ASHANTI

I was in a world of my own. I see everyone getting busy doing something. But they were all just moving in fast blurred motion before my eyes. My mind wasn't in this service at all it still hasn't dawned that he's really gone. Cause I mean not long ago we were on a vacation, all happy then this happened.

I can't explain the hurt I'm going through right now. I know I just met this man yesterday and he hasn't done much for me except for introducing me to my ancestors and making me aware of my roots.

I'm truly grateful for that and I wished he could've lived more longer so that we could get time to catch up.

I remember how I used to engage on making him talk and be comfortable cause he seemed to be a silent man. Then he had to take his last breath on a phonecall with me. Not only that I also lost the father I knew all my life, my hero Armando Quintero. He got shot in Mexico, today he's also being buried.

Unfortunately I can't go and it saddens me.. that both men who meant the world to me had to be buried same day. This is too much and I don't think life can ever get back to normal for me after this.

I didn't have time for people I just went to lock myself in the room and rather nurse my feelings.

I heard a knock it was Mavuyi. She is doing everything she can to comfort me but I don't think anything will help.

Mavuyi: Ncumo baby you have to atleast eat sthandwa sam.

I closed my eyes as I breathe out.

Mavuyi: I know you're not in a right space to talk. I respect that but please open just for your food and I promise I'll leave.

Tears trickled down as I cough and cried more.

Mavuyi: Ncumo..

She knocked

Mavuyi: Mntanam sundimosha elihlobo (Don't do this baby) please open.

I hugged the pillow tight tearing up silently.

Mavuyi: Ashanti?

She knocked faintly once more and let go. I heard her footsteps and sighed. Food won't even get in.

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SANDRO

We were sending off Dad. Can't believe my last encounter with him wasn't a good one. He didn't take well what both me and Mom did.

He was starting to come around, planning to come back to South Africa but unfortunately on his way to the airport he got shot.

I know Jezzman's people are behind it. Even by just burying my own father unsettles me cause I know they hunting for us. Right now I'm considering Mom's and Ashanti's safety. Cause these people are all over the place and have divided themselves in SA.

I completely feel guilty for Dad's death it's all my fault. But I have to be strong for both Mom and Bebita. Cause I'll be the only man in the house.

Mom threw herself down her wheelchair. I jumped from my seat.

Me: Mom! What are you doing? You're hurting yourself.

All eyes were on us. She dragged herself on the floor crawling towards Dad's grave.

Me: Mom stop it.

I walked towards her

Mom: No te acerques a mí!!! (Don't get near me!!!) Don't you dare!

Me: But Mom you can't-

Mom: I said don't!

Uncle made his way to us

Uncle: Laura please listen to your son. He's right you gonna hurt yourself. We can't sit and watch you do this

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come let me help you.

Mom: Fernando keep your distance from me I'm not gonna repeat.

Uncle: I'm sorry but I can't do that. I understand you're hurting but this is not it.

Mom: (crying) I just wanna get close to him one more time. I just wanna give him the last hug. I'll be at peace, it'll be my goodbye. Please Fernando I haven't been close to this man for a while don't deprive me.

He sighed looking at me then at her.

Uncle: Okay fine.

Me: But I'll carry you, you can't crawl all the way.

Mom: Please my baby.

I picked her up and walked her to Dad's tombstone.

I placed her down and she crawled closer to the tombstone hugging and kissing it. Her sobs got more uncontrollable. I ran my hand over my mouth and teared up as well. Mommy's cries were just making it worse. I can't believe Dad is gone.

Me: (whispers) Rest In Peace Papá.

I knelt next to her and hugged her.

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ASHANTI

Me: So how did the funeral go?

Sandro: It went well but quite emotional.

Me: Ohhhh Papá. I can hear his voice already "Bebita I keep telling you to stop following your brother you'll become a crook like him."

We chuckled.

Sandro: He died trying to change me to a better person. I can't disappoint him even in the grave. I have to fulfill his wish and take care of you and Mamá.

Me: Yeah

Sandro: Otherwise how are things going that side?

Me: It's been hard this side. I can't stop crying.

Sandro: You've been robbed an opportunity to get to know your real father better.

Me: And that kills me but atleast I met him and I know where I belong.

Sandro: Yeah, you gonna be strong Bebita. And don't worry about Mom I'm staying strong for her. She needs all my attention more than anything.

Me: Thank you. Uhm.. please send my greetings to all the family. Tell them I love them and I'm sorry for not going.

Sandro: It's fine Hermanita.

Me: I love you Hermano

Sandro: I love you too, will check on you later.

Me: Okay bye

Sandro: Goodbye

We hang up. I decided to get out of this room I've been here for too long.

I walked out and saw my sister chatting with Dimpho. I chitchat with them for a little while. Then pulled Dimpho from the side.

Me: How are you?

Dimpho: Hay sisi I think I should be the one asking you that question.

I held both her hands and smiled

Me: I'm a strong woman I'll get back to my usual self, don't worry about me. I'm concerned about you... your life is in danger.

She looked down

Me: Are you protected at all times?

Dimpho: Yes I am sisi I even know the white man you spoke about.

Me: Okay?

Dimpho: His name is Elveous Spencer. He has a history with my mother and I think he's involved in Mom's escape. I know there's nowhere else Mom could be but with him.

Me: You told your Dad about this?

Dimpho: Yes

Me: And did you report it?

Dimpho: Yes but they're still searching for them.

I sigh.

Me: Okay you need to stay alert at all times sweetie okay. If I was 100% fit I was gonna help hunting them down but as you know... just buried my father both of them. So I'm not at my best.

Dimpho: Askies

Me: But if you feel like you in any sort of danger you can dial me and I'll be there in a matter of seconds okay?

She nods. I place my hand on her cheek.

Me: Stay sweet honey

Dimpho: Thanks sisi

I walked to the gate. When I opened the gate both my hands and a certain gent's landed on the same spot, almost touching each other.

I cleared my throat moving back and rose my head up.

Me: Limile??

Limile: Shant.

I frown and he smiles.

Me: You're here?

Limile: Yah I came to the funeral. Uhm I'm sending my condolences haven't had a chance since it feels like centuries not seeing you.

Me: It's fine thanks.

We stood there still staring at each other

Limile: Uhm, I'm happy to see you

Me: Maybe I am too

He giggles.

Me: What?

Limile: It's nothing. Again it's nice seeing you but I think I should go.

Me: Now??

I sorta felt sad by that

Limile: Yeah I'll just put the leftovers and drive back to Grahamstown and rest for my flight tomorrow.

I nodded

Me: Uze wedwa? (You came alone?)

The way he flounces his eyebrows really amused me.

Limile: Hii madoda uthetha isXhosa ngoku? (You're speaking Xhosa now?) No more Spanish woman?

I giggled.

Me: No more

Limile: This gets interesting shame

Me: Yah I guess.

We again had a moment.

Limile: Uhm let me just, continue putting the leftovers.

He points back with his thumb. I just smile at him as he turns to leave.

Me: Limile

He stops and looks back

Me: Mind if we chill together under the tree to catch up?

Wow his smile is so charming.

Limile: It's what I've been longing to hear. I'll join you soon.

Me: Okay.

I turned and walked to sit under the tree. It was a quiet spot away from anyone.

He came back. Coming with a takeaway and a cooldrink.

Me: You taking that home?

He sat next to me.

Limile: No it's for you. Which gent would allow a beautiful lady like yourself starve all day?

Me: But I'm not hungry

Limile: Nzok'tyisa inkani ke (I'll feed you by force then)

Me: Haaa mara who told you I haven't eaten all day?

Limile: I'm well informed of those I care of.

Me: Those you care...

I actually blushed.

Me: Okay! Seems like you'll be a nuisance. So hand me that takeaway I'll eat it in front of you

Limile: Now we getting somewhere

He passed me the takeaway I took it and he froze.

Me: What?

He took hold of my hand and touched the wristband.

Limile: You've had this all this time?

Me: Yes.

Limile: When did you get it back cause I had picked it in your office the other day. Or ohh! you must have stolen it while I was passed out in the hospital.

I shrunk my eyes.

Me: You said my office?

I saw his lips moving but quite went deaf on what he said next.

I remember waking to an unknown guy in the hospital and took this wristband from him. Now that he's mentioned an "office" my old memory is coming back stronger.

I remember a mystery guy drawing a nice sketch of myself and bought me Lilac flowers in my office... now adding this purple wristband and another validation of him saying "he's well informed of those he cares of" meaning he cares about me.... so it's him!

Even in the dream, the mystery guy, the complexion and shape of his head it's the same as his. It's all him! The ancestors have chosen me for him & him for me!

"Ashanti?"

I snapped out of it. My gaze fixated on him.

Me: Do you want me to surprise you?

The baffleness my question took him through. But he still nods anyway out of curiosity I guess.

I held his face and kissed him. Dumbfound as he was he carried on. Till we were satisfied enough to stop.

He seemed out of this planet when we stopped and touched his lips in disbelief.

Limile: What was that for?

Me: The flowers, the sketch, the wristband, your heartbeat, ancestors matching us... If it all makes sense to you then that kiss means I yes you.

His eyes portrayed so many emotions. He was happy but still stuck whether this was a reality or what hence he couldn't express it.

Me: Give me time to heal and rearrange my pieces together. Once they're all set I'll find the missing piece to complete a perfect picture.

I placed my hand on his chest gently and got up leaving him to digest all that in.

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DIMPHO

We arrived home very late from the funeral

Dad: Pheeew! It was a long day

Me: A long day indeed. But I'm glad to see where you really come from. It's a nice calmful place. I'd go there to clear my head or hide myself.

He giggles

Dad: To clear your head from what? Don't tell me you're stressed. Cause you too young to be stressed.

Me: Shoo awuyaz lutho wena Baba shame mangik'yeke. (You have no idea I'll leave you so)

Dad: Khandi hlebele kaloku (Don't say it out loud, bring it out.)

Me: Hay! Some other time wethu Baba right now I need to sleep.

Dad: It's okay baby go and sleep. Uhlale uyazi ukuba ndak'thanda (Always know that I love you)

We hugged.

Me: I love you too Dad. Good night.

We parted ways and I went in my bedroom. I locked the door and changed into PJ's. I switched off the lights, got under the blankets and slept.

Hours later I don't know whether it was my ears or what but I heard a door creaking. As if someone was trying to carefully make their way in.

I sat up and reached for my phone. I torch on the light and saw my door was open, my breaths began to escalate.

I tried typing Ashanti a message but my phone shuts down from flat battery.

Me: Baba...

I utter softly my voice was gone cause of fear. I got out of bed and tried to switch on the lights.. I felt someone grabbing me from behind before I could even reach the switch. He covered my mouth.

Him: Sshhh. I'm not gonna hurt you just need you to behave. Daddy is taking you back home.

I tried screaming but it was a muffled scream. He squeezed my cheeks and jabs my neck with a needle.

Him: Just nice and slowly yah, we going nice and slowly.

I felt dizzy and melt down in his hold.

Him: That's my girl that's Daddy's girl.

My lashes got heavy and I blacked out.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 47

SIHLE (DIMPHO'S FATHER)

I was irritated by my phone buzzing next to me. I tried sleeping through to ignore it but it kept on ringing.

I stretch my hand reaching for it and answered without checking the Caller ID.

Me: Hello. Hello? He...

I sat up rubbing my eyes and checked the screen, I saw that it's an unknown number. I placed it back on my ear.

Me: Are you talking or what?

Caller: It's me.

Me: Me who? Motlatsi

Motlatsi: Look as much as I'd love to chitchat but I don't have much time. I'm here to ask you to please watch over our daughter at all times, promise me.

Me: I'm already doing that, protecting her from you and your sick man.

She sighs

Motlatsi: Look he's a dangerous man Sihle. He's hunting for our daughter as we speak, he just disappeared on the face of earth

for days. I'm suspecting he's there... please Sihle check on my daughter now and tell me she's fine.

Me: What! What do you mean?

I got off bed.

Me: Motlatsi where are you? See the things you attract.

Motlatsi: Just lecture me later! and check if our daughter is fine please!!

Me: Ungak'linge undi ngxolele ungakulinge undenzele lonto leyo, undincede awuna lungelo. (Don't snap at me don't you dare. You have no right to do so)

She sighs. I got in Dimpho's room with her door already open.

Me: Dimpho? Dimples? Lala..

I walked to her bed.

Motlatsi: What's going on?

I peeled off her covers and just saw pillows placed as if she was sleeping. My heartbeat began pacing.

Me: No no no

Motlatsi: What??

Me: She's not in her room.

Motlatsi: Did you check the whole house?

Me: Uhm I... no!

My breathing changed as I panicked.

Motlatsi: S'ka tšoha (Don't panick)

Me: Se ke wa mpoella hore kese ka tšohe!!!! (Don't tell me not to panick!!) I just told you our daughter is not in her room and that's just not it! Her bed was shaped with pillows as if she was still sleeping there.

Motlatsi: Oh noooo.

Me: (yelling) Dimpho! Dimpho! Dimples!!!

I looked door to door in the entire house but I couldn't find her. I couldn't hold myself together and sobbed silently, I'm not finding her.

Motlatsi: Sihle...

Me: I swear Motlatsi if anything happens to my daughter you will pay! You will not see the sunrise! You will regret ever meeting me. I'm gonna kill you myself.

Motlatsi: Okay just calm down-

Me: CALM DOWN HOW!!!!? Hee tell me. Cause I'm not finding her in the house your boyfriend took her.

Motlatsi: I'll-

Me: Where are you?? Tell me where the hell you are so I can get my daughter back.

Motlatsi: I'm in...

She cut the call.

Me: You better not tell me that you just hang up on me...

Motlatsi? Motlatsiii!!!!

I got my phone off my ear and dialed the number again. It did not go through I screamed throwing my phone against the wall.

Me: I curse meeting this woman in my life.

I went to dress up. I was a bit cooled from my anger and so I picked my cracked phone on the floor. Then locked the house and drove straight to the station.

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MOTLATSI

Elveous: Give me that phone, gimme.

Me: Elveous

Elveous: Gimme!!!

I jumped to his roaring voice and handed him the phone while trembling. He smacked me so hard that I fell down.

Elveous: You've been always a bitch just acting to be an innocent saint. Could've only knew.

He dragged me on the floor and placed me on the chair tying me.

Me: (crying) Elveous please don't do this.

Elveous: Tryna give you a nice life after saving your arse. Could've been better if I left you in prison cause clearly you like to be treated like a prisoner and that's what I'm gonna do instead of giving you a special treatment.

He pulled the ropes tightly on my arms.

Me: Ahh

He did the same with my legs.

Elveous: Mommy was right about you if only I wasn't a lovestruck teenager I'd know better. Busy finding excuse of my sickness to leave me yet you were a longtime whore.

I closed my eyes and cried

Elveous: Forget about your husband you'll never see him again. You'll be forced to spend your last days on earth with me. Even

if he sends a search party he'll never find you cause we changing locations and we're getting further and further.

He discard the simcard on the phone.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Elveous: Because you are denying me an opportunity to get closer with my daughter after so many years. Do you know how difficult it was to sit back and watch?

Me: You not doing things right, you're kidnapping her!

Elveous: As if your husband would smile and hand her willingly. I had to do what I had to!

(Silence)

Me: She's not your daughter.

Elveous: Either way it'll have to proved in Black and white.

I looked at him.

Elveous: I'll do a DNA test maybe by then I'll start accepting and facing the reality of it.

Me: If the results are not as you wish. What then?

He gave me a short glare as he clenched his jaws.

Me: Mm?

Elveous: I'll then make her my wife infront of you.

I heave my short breaths captivated by fright. My nightmare is coming to reality.

Elveous: I'll screw her piece of ass unstoppably in front of you, while watching. Till she gives me the daughter I've always wanted from you... and guess what? I'll fuck it too! Waiting for it to turn atleast 5.

He then chuckles bitterly. I furiously jumped on the chair screaming.

Me: You are a sick bastard!!!! You deserve to go to hell.

Elveous: I vacate there.

He got up slamming my kneecaps as he bent forward towards my face

Elveous: Was trying to change for the better but then you pricked me once more. In the end you always feed my demons, just like you fed me with the girls.

I shook my head with teary eyes.

Me: Biggest mistake I ever did was trusting you and falling for you again, thinking you changed. You never changed you still bipolar!

He smiles.

Elveous: I'm glad you bought the lie, soulmate. Now all you have to do is wish good for the DNA results. Before witnessing a wrenching nightmare coming true.

He kissed me.

Elveous: For now be a good girl. Will see you in 24hrs with the results.

He walked away.

Me: Elveous, Elveous!!!

He came back and gagged my mouth then locked me in.

I cried in so much pain. I know for many years I played with God acting to be a firm believer whilst I did all evil deeds and took his children. But right now I really need Him to just save my daughter from this cruel man. He can punish me as much as he likes but just spare my innocent daughter.

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ASHANTI

The whole family members have left after the funeral. It was just only me and Kolosa left. Mavuyi is leaving today with Letty I'll have to see them before they go. I've been in a depressing

state after losing my father but I'm nothing compared to Kolosa. So I had to make sure that I'm here for her to support her as she'll feel more alone now that her hero is gone.

Me: Mnta' kayise (My father's daughter)

She blinked.

Me: Here's something to eat.

I place the tray of porridge in front of her. She just looked at it.

Me: Just to keep strong for the day. I hear that ipapa yo mealie-meal ain't it without Tartaric & vinegar.

I smiled.

Me: I almost overdid it with peanut butter but luck-

Kolosa: Andikufuni (I don't want it)

Me: Huh?

Kolosa: I don't want it I have no appetite.

Me: Kolosa...

Kolosa: Yey yey yey Ashanti ungandi chekri please! (Don't bore me) I said I don't want it.

I looked at her.

Kolosa: And please give me space in my father's house. I just need a moment to myself, alone.

I rubbed my hands looking at her. She turned looking at me with attitude.

Kolosa: Will you?

I snort and made a fake smile then stood up and left

Kolosa: iTray uyishiya nabani!? (Who you leaving the tray for!?)

She yelled. I came back

Me: Forgive me.

I took the tray and left clenching my teeth. I hate her tone but I'll forgive her since she's in pain and grief just like I am. I could've came back at her and fix her way of speaking, but I choose not to cause she won't like it, I will sound mean. So rather I let her be when things are normal I'll address it again if she doesn't apologize.

I left Daddy's house and walked to the family house. I got there and kept myself busy by doing all the chores and bathed myself clean.

I wore my headwrap and started drawing something anything, to keep my mind distracted.

I heard a growl. I stopped and turned seeing the Ingwe, my ancestor standing before me.

I dropped everything down and sat on the floor bowing next to it.

"All that was revealed in your vision is becoming a reality "

I jerk my head up shocked to see the leopard now speaking.

Ingwe: We are your ancestors all we needed was for you to acknowledge us, show gratitude and understand what you stand for before unraveling this gift to you.

It walked around me.

Ingwe: Gracefully adapt to the new changes... Your brother's daughter has been taken.

My heart beat fast.

Me: Dimpho?? Oh no! That's bad. Please don't let the vision go according to how you showed me, it's bad. The poor girl can't die from the explosion. She can't fall for her mother's sin.

It looked up and roared.

Ingwe: A life for a life.

I shook my head.

Me: Noooo.

Ingwe: Your brother is gonna come running to you for help, act useless.

Me: What do you mean?

Ingwe: The child is out of country you know you can't cross over the country.

Me: But I can help with resources.

Ingwe: Asoze uyenze ke lonto (You will do no such thing)

I sprang up on my feet a bit mad.

Me: Why???

It jumped on the sofa as well

Ingwe: Let us deal with the matter

Me: But it seems like you are forsaking your son when he needs you! And you want me to do the same? The man that took the child is a Pedophile, he will harm her.

Ingwe: It's his price to pay just like he has forsaken our own grandson in prison.

Me: Huh?

Ingwe: With this massive loss he'll gain something even greater. He should be lucky that we still favouring him even though we suppose to be at wrath with him.

I squint my eyes.

Me: Favouring him how when he just lost his daughter nikhona? Are you meaning to tell me that Dimpho will be his "massive loss" that you'll actually watch her get killed? Hayini boo Jeke!

Ingwe: Let us deal with it. You be useless.

Me: This doesn't make sense

Ingwe: Why do you think we let you spare the woman from throwing her to the wild animals? Let us deal with it. Be useless!

It disappeared. I looked around still fumbled by this whole thing. I scoffed making sense of it.

" Why do you think we let you spare the woman from throwing her to the wild animals?"

Me: So all this is about Mo? Kodwa ungenaphi umntana yena
(But what has it got to do with the child?)

I took out my phone.

Me: No I won't just sit and be useless. I'll do something!

I dialed Sihle.

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SIHLE

After forever queuing I was finally next to be assisted. I jumped for it and walked ahead.

Officer: Molo bhuti how can we help you?

Me: My daughter is gone missing. Please help me find her,
please sisi

Officer: Okay for how long?

I thought about that...

Me: It's been 72 hours sisi please ndincede torho.

I had to lie so that they speed up the process of finding her. She
bites her apple.

Officer: Her name, surname and how old is she?

Me: Dimpho Malahle, she's 17

She noted down

Officer: Tell us about the day she disappeared. What was she
wearing, did she say anything about her whereabouts?

Me: No, no she uhm.. she was at home next thing I woke up to
her gone.

She let go of her pen and rubbed her eyes

looking a bit dis-interest.

Officer: That was 3 days ago you say?

Me: Ewe.

Officer: How sure are you she's missing?

Me: Cause her clothes are there, her cellphones are there, everything she owns is still there except for herself.

Officer: Why wait 72hrs to report?

Me: Is that damn important!!! Or are you gonna find my daughter?

She folds her arms calmly and bites her apple again. I compose myself.

Me: Okay look, I took the extra day looking for her all over the place, went to her close friends, relatives and anyone close to us but they don't know where she is. That's when I realized she's really missing.

She picked her pen again.

Officer: Are we dealing with possibilities of abduction?

Me: Yes!

Officer: Anyone in mind?

Me: Elvis.. Elveo Spencer something like that.

Officer: Why jump to him?

Me: Cause he's having an affair with my wife and he's a sick pedophile. Not long ago he helped my wife escape prison and now.. he took my daughter because I believe in his own mind he's trynna build a family of his own with mine.

Officer: Those are deep accusations

Me: Until proved true

Officer: So the day/night she disappeared did you hear anything, a sound or anything?

Me: None officer! None.

She huffs.

Officer: Okay show us her picture.

I took out my phone and just then Ashanti was calling me, I'd do with her help right now. When I was about to answer, my phone shuts down. Wtf!! Like my battery was still sufficient on 70% how can that be possible? I tried switching it on but it was pap flat.

Was brought back by the lady tapping the desk.

Officer: Wee bhuti I don't have all day. See the queue? I've still got many more people to help.

Me: Uhm my phone is flat.

She snickers.

Officer: Mnk, give me her descriptions.

Me: She's light skinned-

Officer: Yho Messiyah! Kule nqwaba ye yellowbones ezingaka
(At these bunch of yellowbones)

I looked at her I don't know whether that was a silly comment or what.

Officer: Continue

Me: Light-skinned, tall and slim, has black long hair..

Officer: What was she wearing?

Me: Blue pyjama shorts and top.

She jotted down more.

Officer: Jonga ke bhuti sit right there. I'll call for a man who'll help you, you gonna describe to him all your daughter's features. He'll try to sketch her appearance and then we'll place her on search.

Me: Thank you.

I was about to go.

Officer: Khame (Wait,) you said this man helped your wife escape prison, right?

I nodded

Me: Your wife being?

Me: Motlatsi Malahle

Officer: Hayibo! Yima kengoku the man who helped her ngu Elvenus, Elveous?

Me: Yah kwezo zthuba (somewhere along those lines)

Officer: He sounds familiar wait lemme call the Detective.

I just hope I find help quick before he harms my daughter.

Officer: Detective can you familiarize with the name Elveous something like that?

Detective: Jerome Spencer???. I've been long hunting for that bastard! He's an abhorrence child molester. Was working on his case years ago where he took school children on a trip and they never made it back. They staged an accident yet only boys were found on the scene - dead, the girls were nowhere in sight. I'd catch him few times but then he'd slip again, making his unstableness an escape goat from prison.

Officer: Well I guess you might catch him again. Cause this man has just reported a case of him possibly abducting his daughter in his house because he's close with his wife, who supposedly got rescued by him in prison.

He looked at me.

Detective: Sir won't you mind following me to my office?

Me: No I don't

He looked at the officer.

Me: I am taking this case.

Officer: No problem.

They let me in and we walked through to his office.

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DIMPHO

" Rise and shine " it's the first thing I hear when I lift my eyelids open.

Male voice: Look at how beautiful you are when you wake up. I've been long waiting for you, my angel.

I blinked myself awake a few times. Then looked around calling out for Dad.

Me: Dad!

Man: I'm here.

I screamed in fright and hurt my ankle in the process. He chained my ankle and wrists to a pole, in the middle of this empty room.

Me: Stay away from me! (Crying) Stay away from me, I want my Dad! Where is he? Daddy!!!!

Elveous: I am your Daddy.

Me: No.

I shook myself away from him but instead he crouched closer and touched my face.

Me: Don't touch me with those filthy hands. You are a monster!

He smiles.

Elveous: Stubborn like your mother.

Me: Both of you are a match made in hell.

He raised his eyebrows.

Elveous: Aww and I'm impressed to see our mini demon has done her research.

I shook myself.

Me: Let me go please. You can enjoy both of your lives together without including me please.

Elveous: No I can't exclude you. It's been long since I missed out on your netball practices, when you collect your academic achievements, watching your annual concerts, all the Christmases we should've spent together.

He smiles at me.

Elveous: You've done a good job on Rocky too. I'm sorry he had to die.

My eyes bulge as I stare at him. Rocky was my puppy I had discovered him when I was very young, it just appeared out of nowhere in our yard. So I took him and looked after him till it grew tired and died.

Elveous: Remember the ballerina dolls and chocolate gifts that came out of nowhere till you were 13 then they stopped.

Me: (mutters) It was you.

Elveous: Yes your real father. I've always been there even though I was absent but I was there.

I made a scowl shaking my head

Me: You're not my father!

Elveous: I hope you could take a closer look in the mirror and you'll find answers. I may be a monster but I really care about you. And I'll never hurt you, you're not here because I'll hurt you. I'll tell you a story that you need to hear later on.

(Silence)

Me: Where's Mom?

Elveous: You'll meet her later. Eat so long, you must be hungry. The drug knocked you off for too long.

He handed me a plate but I pushed it with my chest and it broke down. He chuckled.

Elveous: I would be turned on by that if you were not my kid.

He walked closer to me.

Me: What are you doing? What are you... Haaaah!!!

(Screaming)

He pulled my hair tightly. I felt him cutting it. He held my hair in his hand.

Elveous: Let's see what the DNA is gonna say. Unfortunately that meal was gonna sustain you for the day. You'll have to wait until I'm back to have another one. Will see you again.

He kissed my forehead and left. I groaned in anger as I shook myself more from the chain. I need to get out of here before he does something drastic.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 48

ASHANTI

Couldn't wait for it to be the next day. I packed every belonging of mine, I'm heading back to Pretoria.

I changed my plans of extending my days in this place. Sihle needs me.

I strongly believe that the vision wasn't gonna be revealed if I wasn't supposed to help. So I'm defying what the ancestors are saying that I should become useless? What was the point of the vision revealed to me then? I'd rather die doing good than bad.

Kolosa: Hey

I folded my clothes and stopped

Me: Hey

Kolosa: How you doing?

Me: Good. You?

Kolosa: Good.

I continued sorting my clothes in silence.

Kolosa: Ashanti look, about yesterday I'm sorry for speaking to you like that. I was rude and you didn't deserve that, I just... I'm in my worst right now and I wanted to find reason to lash out on someone. To make myself feel better I guess. It's wrong, it was really wrong of me. I shouldn't have spoken to you like that especially as my elder sister. Please forgive me.

Me: I forgive you

Kolosa: Really?

Me: Really. You're in pain and you've lost a loved one who meant everything to you. It's not easy, so I have no right to crucify you at a time like this.

She smiles and hugs me

Kolosa: Thank you

Me: I just wish you heal from all this

Kolosa: Hopefully.

Her eyes land back on my bags

Kolosa: So you leaving?

Me: Yes

Kolosa: Am I the reason?

Me: No, no it's just an emergency I have to attend.

Kolosa: Ohw. Was hoping you could stay longer.

Me: Me too but this needs me. If I don't attend, a terrible damage might happen.

She exhales and nodded

Kolosa: I understand sisi

Me: Guess Loyiso wouldn't mind babysitting?

Kolosa: Tsss argh!

She rolls her eyes and I laugh.

Me: What? He's not that bad he looks reliable.

Kolosa: Doesn't change the fact that he's a cheat. We are where we are because of his cheating. But I'm now doing it with an open heart.

She sighs.

Kolosa: As drained as I am I still wish for sufficient strength to look after him.

Me: You will get it sister, you will.

We stare at each other.

Kolosa: I'm gonna miss you

Me: Aah I'm gonna miss you too

I pulled her into a hug.

Me: Don't become a stranger

Kolosa: I won't I promise

Me: Whenever you need me feel free to call. I love you.

Kolosa: I love you too.

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MOTLATSI

Elveous got back and closed the door behind him. I rose my head up looking at him tryna read his emotions and the outcomes he got.

He seemed a bit far with thoughts. Seemed more down and quiet.

He place his hands on his hips and paced around in front of me still in deep thoughts. I did tell him though what the real outcome is.

I tried coughing and choking. Only by then he acknowledged my presence.

He turned glancing at me and took off the gag on my mouth. I coughed once more.

Me: What are the results saying?

He sat in front of me

Elveous: You wanna know?

Me: Yes

Elveous: Well you knew the answer

I looked at him

Elveous: You were right, she's not mine.

I blinked countless times my tears were threatening to come. Not because I'm scared of the results but scared of what awaits my daughter.

Elveous: So you weren't bluffing. You really never wanted my baby.

His tear dropped.

Elveous: Used to think what we had was real, until you switched up on me. To even utter words like you "never wanted to carry my baby." After everything I've done for you Mo?

Me: Baby...

Elveous: This is my repayment I get from you?

He laughs in pain

Elveous: How I really wished to have a child with you. I had high hopes for Dimpho to be mine. Just wanted to start on a good direction, with you and us as a family.

He laughs

Elveous: I had everything all planned out. I guess maybe I was too forward.

He placed the envelope on the bed then bent forward resting his head on his palms.

Me: Please don't harm my daughter please I beg you Elvy.

I sniffed

Me: If I ever meant something to you and if you really loved me. You won't hurt my daughter.

He glanced at me. I smiled with my tears running down.

Me: We can always try for another baby it's not too late, we still have time.

He abruptly got up facing down on me with anger flashing on his face.

Elveous: I told you what I will do prior the results. And I, Elveous Spencer always stick to my promises you know that. And I hope you'll be ready for it.

He left me crying alone in the room. This will be hard for me. How can I watch my child get violated in front of me? How will I stand to succumb such sight. This is my punishment for what I've been doing to other girls.

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MAVUYI

Me: Eat finish wena we have to get going your father is already panicking.

Letty: (mouthful) I'm almost done

I gave her a death stare and she chuckles.

Me: Uyayaz andiyfuni lento uyenzayo (You know I don't like what you doing)

She apologetically placed her hands together and continued eating. I wheeled our bags forward.

We heard the door flying open as Ashanti storms in. She greets as she closes her eyes and intakes her breath.

Me: And then?

Ashanti: (panting) Forgive me... Forgive. I thought I'd miss you.

Me: Uphantse (Almost.) You woke up late.

Ashanti: I was early but I had to make sure that Kolosa is fine with everything before I leave.

She pulls Letty and kiss her

Ashanti: Lil sis.

Letty: Hey sis. I'm seeing bags are you leaving as well?

She nods

Ashanti: Yes I'm coming along with you. I'm going home.

Me: You guys did the ceremony of releasing the dark cloud from following you, before leaving?

Ashanti: Yes my uncle made sure of that before he left.

Me: Oh that's better. Yintoni ingxamisisa? (What's the rush?) I thought you said you were gonna remain a bit longer.

She froze while staring at Letty.

Me: Yintoni? (What?)

Ashanti: I need to help uEsihle something bad happened.

I place my hand on my waist

Me: What do you mean?

She gulps looking at us, her look sent shivers down my spine.

Me: Thetha Ncumo uyandoyikisa (Speak you're making me scared)

She takes a deep breath.

Ashanti: Dimpho is kidnapped.

Letty drops her plate and it breaks. She shakes her head fastly.

Letty: (teary) No, no they can't have her. This can't be happening to her too, no! Don't tell me they're back for her.

I quickly got on Letty's side and embraced her.

Me: Ohhh Nkosi yam yhini. Siphuma k'le singene kwenye, thethelela Nkosi. (Oh Lord, we come from one tragedy to another, please have mercy Lord.)

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DIMPHO

I was starting to nap but I was startled by the door. He walked in coming with a plate. Couldn't quite distinguish his mood whether it was good or bad. I wonder what were the results saying.

Elveous: Good day

Me: What's so good about it?

He made a side smile

Elveous: Here's your food.

Me: How do I know it has no poison?

He still maintains his smile and moves the plate closer.

Elveous: Here, you don't trust me?

I kept quiet

Elveous: Okay

He ate few spoons from the plate.

Elveous: I'm not a monster atleast I wouldn't kill you through poison.

He placed the plate next to me. I looked at him.

Elveous: What?

Me: You don't expect me to eat with my hands cuffed right?

Elveous: I'll feed you, don't give me a hard time.

Me: Wow.

He grabbed a chair and sat opposite me. He started feeding me and I did not protest because I was hungry, he left me starving all day and night. And now it is morning so my attitude will have to wag 'n bietjie (wait.)

Me: What are the results saying?

He stopped feeding me and kept quiet.

Me: I am curious to know where my mother's morals lie.

He drifted his whole attention on the plate stirring the food.

Me: Sir??

He looks at me.

Elveous: Your Mom had a tough upbringing, she got abused real badly. I met her in High school she was a very pretty woman and I loved her first time I laid my eyes on her. She seemed into me as well so we decided to hit it off.

Elveous: Being in a relationship with me, she opened all about the bad things that happened to her. And you could easily see

her home situation from school. She wasn't given care, always late and untidy.

He sighed

Elveous: But because of my love for her I decided that she should move in with me. Her parents tried pulling their usual stunt but my parents didn't give them a chance. They were quite intimidating so they backed off and we did our thing and did well in school as we grew older.

He breathes heavily

Elveous: I also have a bad traumatizing past myself.

When I was kid, before my teenage years I was sexually violated by my nanny. My parents those times loved traveling and would leave us under the care of our nanny.

He begins sniffing.

Elveous: Out of all my siblings she chose to victimize me. One day, she bumped into me in the bathroom. There was no one in the house my brothers were away. I asked her to excuse me but she kept on looking at me in a strange way. I even covered my parts with a towel feeling uncomfortable. As young as I was, she told me to trust her then she made me touch her all over the place

her breast, her bottoms, made me touch and insert my finger in her vagina.

He sighs.

Elveous: After that encounter she insisted on taking me to the park where she actually took a different direction and rather took me to her place. She showed me scary pictures then took me to her backyard and exhumed body remains, of young boys she had buried in her yard. She told me I'll end up being one of them if I ever tell my parents about what we're doing, she wanted it to be an ongoing thing. She was attracted to young boys, and the dead ones were also her victims. But they failed to keep quiet that's why they ended up there.

His tears fell.

Elveous: That day before we left her house she forced me to have sex with her. I was 8 years old, 8!!!! What did I know about sex? That traumatized me too much that it killed my sanity and I got ill mentally without them noticing cause I was secretive about it. As she kept on going and going on about this and I'd be quiet. It changed me and I bottled a lot of things inside. Where my sadness turned to fury. I grew old still doing this, then when I reached my teenage years, about 14

I did the usual thing had sex with her but our encounter was a bit different and intense. I wasn't my usual self.

I went rough on her, at first it excited her but then... it was like I blacked out on her. I strangled her till she was no more, don't know where I got all the power from but I killed her. My anger channeled exactly in that moment and I couldn't control it.

He exhales.

Elveous: I drove to her place and buried her there. I then met her younger daughter, I was 14 she was 9. For me it was just revenge, I did what her mother used to do to me and killed her too. That became a habit for me to more other young girls till I met your mother and stopped.

(Silence)

Me: Why are you telling me this?

Elveous: Because I truly loved your mother. Whenever we fought I'd go feed my demons with the girls, she once caught me and wanted to end things between us. But I blackmailed her badly to recruit her in my doings. For weird reasons she enjoyed what I did more than me and came up with a better plan of us making money out of it and build ourselves a future by trafficking girls. My mother busted her red-handed and began hating her, they had alot of fallouts until my Mom threatened to have her arrested. She snitched on me and spilled deep secrets I shared confidently to her and expected them to stay between us. I was angry, I beat her up senselessly

almost killing her cause it triggered me when she called my mother "useless" for not seeing all the things that happened under her nose. I was gonna get arrested but I don't know how I got saved by being thrown in the loony bin.

Me: Whole point of this?

Elveous: I was willing to change from the monster I was. But your mother kept betraying me more and more. I didn't just wake up and decide to become a Pedophile.

Me: Wow so that's your excuse? Raping young innocent girls? Who had no contribution to what happened to you. I feel sorry for what happened to you, really I do. But how can a world become a better place with men like yourself horrifying these young kids? For an experience that had nothing to do with them. It sounds more like an excuse and it doesn't make things right at all. You should've strived for becoming a better person than what you went through. Help out these young boys who've also been through the same experience as yours, let them come out, let them deal with their emotions. Make them become better men rather than becoming monsters to protect our sisters out there. Run a campaign or something, something you were unable to receive, you make it happen. But what did you and Mom do? Make things worse! So are you now happy that you'll live the rest of your lives in hiding?

(Silence)

Me: What's the DNA saying?

Elveous: I.. I (clears throat) I'll give you a moment to prepare meeting your Mommy. She has the results.

He walked away.

Me: Why can't you say them? Huh! What are the results!!!?
When are you freeing me??

He slammed the door. I cursed under my breath as I lay my head against the pole. I'm getting nervous as I'm being kept in here Dad must be really devastated about me.

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SIHLE

Dad: Son calm down. What are you saying?

Me: U..u..

Nomalanga: Ina amanzi sela bhuti (Here, drink water)

Me: Enkosi Mamnci

I gulped the glass of water finish. I started going to my normal breathing.

Me: Dimpho has gone missing.

Dad: Hayibo! Zinto zanini ezo (When did that happen?)

Me: It's been a day

Nomalanga: What happened nyanam (son?)

Me: We were coming from the funeral and everything seemed to be fine. We said our goodnights, next morning I woke up to her gone. Phofu ke ndiyaziswa ngu Motlatsi nalonto (I was alerted by Motlatsi)

Dad: Motlatsi uyazi njani yena? (How did she know?)

Me: Her lover is up to it. He wants to steal my family for good and I'm sure it's something they planned together cause he was able to let Mo escape from prison.

Dad: Tsii hay that's bad news son. Really bad news.

Nomalanga: What are you going to do kengoku? Have you went to the police?

Me: Ewe they helping me with it. Auntie I'll need you to borrow me your phone right now. I need to call someone for help.

Dad: Who?

Me: Ncumolwam

Nomalanga: Akazilanga nah? (Isn't she still mourning?)

Me: Ewe Mancu but I really need her cause this appeared in her vision.

Dad: Ubonisiwe?? (In her vision??)

It seemed more like a surprise to him. I gave him a nod.

Dad: Have my phone and make that call quick.

Me: Uhh actually that's not a good idea. Manci's phone is alright.

Dad: Itheni eyam? (What's wrong with mine?)

I sceptically looked at it

Me: I don't think it will work. I need auntie Nomalanga's.

She sighed

Nomalanga: Okay ina mntanam

I called Ashanti it actually went through.

Ashanti: Hello?

Me: Hi, Ashanti you speaking to Sihle, your cousin.

Ashanti: Sihle! I've been trying to reach you with no luck.

Me: Eyy strange things been happening and my phone was problematic cuz. That's why I borrowed Auntie's phone.

Ashanti: Oh okay

Me: I need your help mntase please. Exactly what you told us is happening, my daughter is taken. (Crying) She's taken Ashanti.

Ashanti: Ohh Lord.

Me: (breaking voice) What if I never see her again?

Ashanti: Hay! Hay! Hay! Don't talk like that. That's not gonna happen, nothing like that is gonna happen mzala. Dimpho is gonna come back we gonna push for that okay?

I wiped my face.

Me: Okay

Ashanti: I'm on my way coming back to Gauteng. I need you and Tamkhulu to buy everything that'll be needed to speak on the altar. We need to beg our ancestors to bring back Dimpho okay?

Me: Okay I'll do just that

Ashanti: Please Sihle it's gonna be fine. The storm will pass and it shall bring you peace in your life after. Trust me.

Me: I trust you

Ashanti: Yeah please greet the family for me. I'll be there in few hours.

Me: Okay sure, goodbye.

We ended the call. I looked at them and smiled with hope.

Me: Ashanti is on her way coming back. She's willing to lend a helping hand. She says we should prepare for addressing the ancestors in the kraal.

Dad: Yah maba ngenele ooNdluntsha (The Ndluntshas should intervene)

Me: Yeah

Nomalanga: Let me leave you men as I cook something for our guest.

She got up and left.

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DIMPHO

I was left here all day I'm sure by now it was evening. I'm starving and I also needed a bathroom. When did my life turn out this way? Because of my Mom? Is this what my best friend has survived? Then that makes her the strongest warrior I know. This all looks like Karma and it hits deep cause I'm falling for my mother's sin. Makes me sad and wished I could change mothers if I had a choice.

The door opened, finally! Yho one can die here. And I'm meaning to meet my mother. I really need to have a deep conversation with her.

"Hi, I brought you food, after I'll take you to your mother."

I continued hugging myself as I shivered. It was cold in this room.

"Sesi?"

I raise my head up and gasp in shock.

Me: Dimakatso!??

Her eyes widen and she instantly breaks the plates down.

Dimakatso: Dimphe??

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 49

DIMPHO

Me: Maatso is this really you?

She nodded with tears in her eyes

Dimakatso: It's really me my friend.

She ran to me and squeezed me into a hug. This was an emotional moment for us. Imagine meeting your longtime friend, whom you never heard from or seen for years. I last saw her when we were 6.

We broke the hug.

Me: I can't believe my eyes

Dimakatso: I didn't expect this too never did I think we'd cross paths again.

Me: Me too but here we are. Oh my gosh look at you!

Dimakatso: Look at you! How grown you are

I couldn't stop crying this was a blissful moment for me. I still can't believe I'd see this day coming.

Me: You're still alive, God is good. After so many years we thought you were...

Dimakatso: Dead? I've survived alot in here.

She came to sit next to me

Dimakatso: It's been really tough. I still get shocked seeing myself stable after everything I've went through... One would lose their mind in here or would want to kill themselves. But look at me still standing.

I smiled faintly feeling sympathy for her.

Me: You're really strong friend. I'm sorry for what you've went through. My Mom is all the reason for you to be here. I...

Dimakatso: It's okay.

Me: Why did God give me a vile mother. The pain she's put you and your family through.

She closed her eyes.

Me: They've accepted that you no more. I know my sorry won't make up for all that's happened but I truly am. I had no idea of what Mom's been doing I just recently found out.

Dimakatso: Dimpho I said it's fine. Don't fret about it, you done nothing wrong.

(Silence)

Me: My brother is in jail paying for the price and he was also accused for raping you.

Dimakatso: Whaat! Lefa?? Your brother can be anything else but he would never do such a thing. How did we even get there?

I sigh.

Me: Well your underwear was found in his room and that's where the community concluded.

Dimakatso: My God! So all these years your brother's been serving years in jail for something he didn't do??

I nodded. She chuckles.

Dimakatso: Wow your Mom is good she's really good shame. That day I never made it in Lefa's flat. We were playing hide and seek, I hid behind the flats. I thought it was you but your Mom grabbed me and covered my mouth. She shoved me in the storeroom and tied me there... for weird reasons she took off my underwear and shoes and left me there. Later on I did hear the ranting of the community but couldn't scream out for help cause she had my mouth covered. When it was quiet she hand me over to a white man and that's how I ended up here.

Me: Oh no.

She shows me her hand

Dimakatso: I'm married and mother of two. (Scoffs) At 17, imagine.

Her tears welled in her eyes

Dimakatso: I have a son he's 4 and a daughter she's 2. All by him, first time I came here he stole my childhood away. I lost counts of how many times he'd force himself on me, at the age of 6. Those years it was even hard for me to hold back my pee or waste, I still have that problem. Imagine those early years of my life, panty liners were nothing I had to wear pads every day of my life yet I never started with periods.

She laughs painfully.

Dimakatso: Or even resort to nappies. I really don't know how I survived in here really, if I knew I'd tell you.

She looks at me and wipes her face

Dimakatso: It's not only me he does these things to, with other girls too and kill them later. Don't know why he spared my life... We'd move places to places because he was hiding, police were always looking for him but he's good at hiding. Wherever we relocate he'd hunt for these girls and...

She burst in a soft cry.

Dimakatso: Slaughter and bury them when he's done violating them.

How I wished to comfort her the pain she's feeling I'm also feeling it too that I began getting a headache. How I wished to hug her but my hands were cuffed.

She collects herself.

Dimakatso: To this day I still ask myself what have I done to your mother. To hate me so much and destroy my life. I basically have no future everything in me died. I wouldn't even wish this on my worst enemy.

(Silence)

She looks at me.

Dimakatso: Why are you here?

Me: He kidnapped me having beliefs that I'm his daughter. Apparently Mom's been having an affair with him while married to Dad. Now they wanna start a family together and I believe I'm being part of that family.

She raises her eyebrows in shock.

Dimakatso: Yho! that's news to me. Out of all the things, I wish he doesn't do you what he's been doing to us. Daughter or not he's an evil man. He told me straight out that he's waiting for our daughter to turn 5 then he starts molesting her too. It scares me and as much as I've conceived these babies in a painful way same with giving birth to them. I still love them and

I'll try by all means to protect them. For now I just don't have any plans.

Me: Maatso I'm so scared for my life. I really need to get out of here.

She touches my arm.

Dimakatso: Atleast you have me now, friend I will look out for you. I've lived long with this man I know how his mind works.

She got up and starts collecting the broken glasses of the plate.

Dimakatso: For now let's stick to obeying everything he says before we tick him off. I'll re-make your food and take you to your mother. Please promise me you'll be in your best behaviour.

Me: I promise

Dimakatso: I got you. I'm glad to see you again, old time friend.

Me: I'm more than happy to see you too friend.

Dimakatso: I'll be back.

She collected the glasses finish and left. I sigh for relief, my friend is here all well and alive. Atleast when we aim to escape out of this place this will mean many good things for us. She'll reunite with her family and it'll prove my brother's innocence then he'll be set free. I pray to God we both make it out alive.

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ASHANTI

When I landed I decided to make my first arrival at Uncle's place. Mavuyi, Letty and I had already separated paths by then. I was welcomed warmly in their household. Uncle's wife is a really kind woman. When we got done with all the pleasantries and food. We left her by herself in the house and we went outside to the altar just the 3 of us.

Uncle Zolisa opened the bottle and poured shots around the pole, while Sihle assisted him with the snuff. Uncle did that while reciting our clan. Then he came back to stand with us.

Uncle: Njenga nyana wok'gqibela oseleyo kwelikhaya lakwa Malahle. Iinto zimele mna, iinto ziqalwa kum, zibuzwa kum kuba ndim ona mava ale likhaya. Naba ke abantwana phambi kwenu, abazukulwana benu bezo khalela kuni manyange amahle. Indlela nantsi ndibavulela yokuba nibezi ndlebe kule

ngxaki sijongene nayo. Njenga nkulu ndiya ngxengxeza ndicela nibamamele abantwana, nibavisise, nibaxolele, niba nike konke abak'funayo, nisikhusele maxesha onke ngaphezulu. Sendibiza ngaphambili isilo sethu esiz'dlikizayo sisilwela ezintshabeni, Ingwe emabalabala ime nayo isibhokele nakolu dabi. (As the only son left in the Malahle household. I stand for every family matters, things begin with me, questions start at me cause only I have better insights of this family. Here are your children in front of you, they come crying to you my ancestors. I opened the way for them please listen to them - to the problems we bring and currently face. As an adult I plead on their behalf to please lend an ear, reason, fulfil their desires and protect each and everyone of us with your blood at all times. I even call forth our great, fierce leopard which defeats our enemies to also take part of the involvement.)

He exhales as he glanced at us

Uncle: Ndinikela kuni ke bantwana bam (You may take over my children)

We were both quiet. I looked at Sihle signalling to him he should start first.

Sihle: Bantu abadala, ndiza kuni ngozo xolisa k'qala.
Ndinimoshe kanintsi, njengo ba ndikhule ndisiva ukuba zikhona
iimpawu eniz'vezayo xa ningawa mkelanga umcimbi namphi
nah. Amafuyi aye ajike afune ukuba myama emini, kubaneke.
Zizo ezonto zayenzeka ngexesha ndandi nxibisa umkam,
andaz'hoya ezonto ndiphikisana nabazali bam ngotshata
uMotlatsi. Amasiko wona ndine ndawana ingathi ndawalahla...
ngezozinto ke ndicela uxolo ngoba nini oo mabona kude, ukuba
ndandi mamele mhlambi ngendi ngekho kule meko ndikuyo,
kodwa nayo intliziyo ngu mkhohlisi. (My elders, I come before
you by apologizing first. I messed up many times. Growing up
I've heard that you reveal signs when you disapprove of any
ceremony made. Clouds gather together and become dark in
daylight

thundering occurs. All those things happened the day I brought
Motlatsi in this home as my wife, my parents tried warning me
about it but I didn't have it. I ignored all the signs. I abandoned
my culture and customs... by those things I ask you to please
forgive me. You see before time if only I had listened. I was
fooled by the heart)

Sihle: Even my son Lifa, I abandoned him and never stood for
him. He's in prison for something he didn't do. I realize these

are the things that upset you my ancestors please forgive me. I'll do anything to get him out of jail, I'll fight for him and be a good father that he needs. Lead me to the right direction, protect my daughter where she is and bring her back please I beg you. I don't mind you punishing Motlatsi and I, cause we fully deserve it but please spare our innocent children out of it. Dimpho is not her mother, Dimpho has all your blood running in her veins. Do we harm one of our own? If we do, I hand myself. I beg you Jeke, protect my child and bring her safe home. Camagu.

It was now my turn.

Me: Noqhazo ndiyas'funda isiXhosa (I'm still learning Xhosa) please don't see it disrespectful as I will address you in English. I don't have much to say but here to apologize as well. With full respect to my guardian totem... I can't sit back and become useless. This is affecting me too please don't shut me out.

I need to help even if it's the little I can do. Forgive me for being stubborn but the child is innocent, she was dedicated to do the right thing by sending her mother to jail. With that move I wish you noticed something good about her. Her father also mentioned something about her being the eye-opener. Please Mthwembotyí bring that child back we need that child back

unharmd. Don't stand in my way of doing good. If you approve please give us a sign.

We stood still for few minutes and nothing happened.

Me: We will wait even if it takes morning to get a sign.

20 minutes of standing there the rain began to pour.

Us: Camagu!

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DIMAKATSO

I heard my baby girl cry, it sounded more faint and afar. Last thing I remember was making Cassie sleep after dropping Dimples where I was instructed to. Didn't know when I actually dozed.

I opened my eyes, the cries were still going, I pat next to my bed. She was not there. I sit up looking around in panick and looked up on the ceiling.

I screamed higher than my voice could take me but my screams were filtered by the groans of a... a leopard??

I began getting scared and trembled. I tried jumping out of bed but I was stuck couldn't move an inch, I was on paralysis. I tried screaming again but my voice was gone, I was on mute.

Tears streamed down as I watch my daughter swing on top of the ceiling. With a fabric attached to the ceiling, supporting her tummy.

She kept on crying. How did this even happen?

The leopard was still staring at me. It walked and looked up on Cassie then roared, the fabric got loose and she fell down. I blinked trying to scream but I couldn't I only murmured a low stifle scream.

It dragged something and came to my side, I saw my baby lying on the mattress already passed out. That's where she fell. The leopard got closer to my ear and breathed in it. In my ear the breath sounded more like a soft whistle which soon transformed into gibberish speaking, then I was hearing whispers clearly. Maybe I'm crazy but the words were becoming vivid and that's when my fear began to cease.

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LETTY

Sandro: Hey. Why do you sound like you not fine?

I sigh heavily

Me: I miss you. When are you coming back?

He chuckles

Sandro: Might come back next month.

Me: Haa I'm sure by then you'll come back married to a Mamacita.

Sandro: Ayy Calmente you know I've only got my eyes on you.

Me: Let's hope you'll survive a few couples of pretty Mamacitas over there neh?

Sandro: They may be pretty but not your level.

I chuckled.

Me: Ah you know how to make me blush my ocean eyes.

He laughs and exhales at the end of his laughter.

Sandro: I feel like there's something you not telling me. I can sense there's something wrong over there, just something.

I huff.

Me: You know me too well

Sandro: What is it?

Me: Remember my friend Dimpho? She's kidnapped.

Sandro: What! When did that happen?

Me: Ashanti says it's been a day and she's full decks on it. She couldn't even mourn properly for her father. She left the village.

Sandro: No babe that's bad. Do you think it might be Jez-

Me: It has nothing to do with him!

I snapped. I want nothing to hear about that man again.

Sandro: Oh I...

Me: Uhm sorry, I'm sorry to snap at you I didn't mean to. Just don't wanna hear his name again.

Sandro: Are you still attending therapy?

Me: Yeah, plus this is not about me. Can you come back and find my friend?

He kept quiet.

Me: Please baby do this for me, I'm begging you. I will make it worth your while please. Ashanti was bound to ask you anyway I'm making it easy.

Sandro: Are there any clues on who took your friend?

Me: Some psychopath who's a pedophile. He's been having an affair with her mother, same mother who pimped me.

He breathes heavily.

Sandro: Let me think about it.

Me: Thanks. Know that I love you, always.

Sandro: I love you more babe. We'll chat again.

Me: Later

We hang up. I hope Sandro pulls through if he does I'll do something big for him, he needs to assist bringing my friend back.

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DIMPHO

Mom: Dimpho, Dimpho ngwanaka nchebe hle (look at me)

Me: Leave me alone I don't wanna talk to you wa nnyonya (you disgust me.) You are a shame of a mother!

She cries at me blurting those words

Mom: (hoarse voice) Dimpho!

Me: He.e what are your crocodile tears gonna do for us huh? We are here because of you. I am here because of you! And we don't know what that crazy lover of yours might do to us.

Mom: Baby listen to me. Trust me okay? I'll talk him out of this, he won't hurt you whilst I'm here. I promise you.

Me: Utlo etsang hee? Mpolelle (What are you gonna do huh? Tell me) cause we are both tied in here and stuck.

Mom: Yes I'm tied but I can make a plan and we gonna leave this place.

Me: Is this what you really left Dad for? How low Mama. I swear if anything happens to me I'll never forgive you and I'll never consider you my mom again.

Mom: Nothing's gonna happen to you my baby.

Me: How sure are you? Cause by the look of things these are you sins catching up with you. Pity I'll be a tool used to hurt you.

She broke down.

Mom: Forgive me please forgive me

I shook my head.

Me: You are a woman who has a daughter and you go out there and destroy other girls lives. You destroyed Maatso's life, you tried with Letty's but she's a fighter and a survivor. How many more kids? I'll never see you as the same loving mother again. What you did Mom is really unforgivable.

(Silence)

Me: Am I even his child?

Mom: No, you're not his child.

The door opened.

Elveous: Okay party time is over. Mommy I thought by now you'd fill in your daughter about the consequences of the results. Seeing that you didn't I will gladly do so.

He walked in and threw the shopping bag on the bed. He turns looking at me.

Elveous: Dimples my loving. I told your mother if the DNA comes back saying you're mine, I'll drop this life and start afresh being a good man, with you being my family. But if the DNA comes back saying you're not...

He whistles.

Elveous: We'll get it down in front of your mother, by that I mean having intercours. So guess what did the results say? Oh yah ofcourse your mother did tell you not so long ago. So I guess you know what that means.

I shook my head rapidly with tears streaming.

Me: No no no no no

I looked at Mommy crawling back.

Me: Mama mo emise... Stop him!!

Mom: Elveous please stop!! don't do this.

He didn't listen he came and took off my pyjama shorts when he got to my top, I fidgeted so that he couldn't hold me steady.

He placed the gun on my neck.

Mom: Dimpho!!!

Elveous: You gon' stop the fuck you doing and not make things difficult for me, okay? Or else I'll pull the trigger.

I remained still with my heart racing.

Elveous: Good. First thing we gonna dress you into nice thongs and matching bra.

Mom: Elveous stop!!

He fired a shot and it went grave silent.

Elveous: Shut up! Next time I'm not gonna miss.

My mom remains silent and hiccupping. He took off my top exposing my perky boobs. He smiled looking at them and dressed me in a red bra, he took off my undies and reached for the thong then stopped placing it back down.

Elveous: Maybe we're not gonna need this as yet.

He knelt closer to me and placed his hand on my vjay. I forced my eyes shut.

Me: (crying) Mamaaa

She sobbed too looking away as she choked in her own tears.

Elveous: This is for you Mo, come on look at us.

He sprang up on his feet and pulled her braids

Elveous: I said look at us! Don't you dare turn your head away from us.

He was about to get on with what he was doing but we heard a loud bang on the door.

He stopped with a pissed facial expression.

Elveous: Who the hell... What!!!?

"It's me"

That was Dimakatso I got relieved. I have hope she'll rescue me.

Elveous: What? I'm in a middle of something.

Dimakatso: It's urgent.

Elveous: It can wait!

Dimakatso: Cassie fainted please I'm not sure whether her pulse is there or not.

He punched the wall.

Elveous: Shit! Okay I'm coming.

He got up and fixed his trousers

Elveous: Fuck. This is not over.

He rushed out. I closed my eyes and sighed for relief.

Minutes later Dimakatso came in running and sneaking after Elveous was gone.

Dimakatso: (whispers) Dimpho here quickly, eat this.

I sat up frowning

Me: What's this?

Dimakatso: Eat it fast before I get caught.

I gasp.

Me: A biltong! You know I'm not supposed to eat biltong.

She held my cheeks.

Dimakatso: Do you trust me?

I looked at her hand doubtfully

Dimakatso: Do you trust me? I'll never fail you mgotsi (friend)

Me: This is not good for me you know it it's lethal!

Dimakatso: You'll thank me later. Just do it please with no questions asked.

Mom: This will-

Us: WHO ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION??

We both barked at her. Tears streamed down my face and I nodded.

I opened my mouth wider and she fed me the biltong. I chewed the first one and burped while coughing. I quickly stuffed them all in. I began scratching myself non-stop and burped.

Mom: You have officially killed my daughter Dimakatso.

I grunt more louder as I dig my nails deep in my skin, scratching myself.

Me: I'm burning Maatso, I'm burning!

Dimakatso: Be strong.

She pats my arm and left.

Me: Ahhh! Mama thuseng, thuseng!!! (Help!!)

Mom: I'm coming for you wena Dimakatso!!!

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 50

MOTLATSI

I watched her lying there shaking helplessly. Her body had bad looking blisters that spread faster like an Eno acid.

I closed my eyes while biting my lower lip and cried.

Me: Dimphe, Dimphe! Can you hear me? Please wake up my baby, do it for Mommy! I still need you. We need to mend our relationship come back.

I jumped on my chair.

Me: Dimphe! Dimphe ngwanaka?

She was still not moving. I tried moving myself off the rope.

Me: (crying) Dimpheoooo!

I hang my head down and wept in pain. My baby cannot die, my one and only baby. I swear I'll get Dimakatso for this.

The door got open and Elveous made his way in.

Elveous: So where were we?

He smiles and walks over Dimpho. When he started seeing the condition she was in he immediately covered his mouth and vomited.

I rose my head up looking at him. By now he had knelt down and vomited everything out.

Me: Elveous, you need to take my daughter to the hospital now. Please or else she'll die!

He was really irked up by Dimpho. He felt like vomiting more as he held his chest.

Me: Come on now, man up! If you had your bitch in control none of this would've happened. If I dare lose my...

He got weaker and laid flat down

Me: Elveous? Elveous?

Oh my word I forgot Elveous is Trypophobic - meaning he's fearful of holes, they literally make him sick and Dimpho's blisters had those small holes.

Me: My God what's happening? Elveous! Dimpho!

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ASHANTI

I was driving back home. I come from a herbal shop around went to buy an incense. I hear I must be best of friends with impepho when I want to connect with my ancestors. Didn't forget the green tobacco as well.

I drive in home and parked my car next to the garage. When I took off the seatbelt I suddenly had this overwhelming feeling of wanting to scratching myself.

I scratched my wrists, my neck, my face everywhere. It was getting uncomfortable.

I got off my car still scratching myself. I rushed in the house.

I took a small source plate, plastic bowl and matchsticks. Made my way to the room and dressed appropriately. I took an atlas and went to my dancing room.

I sat down and laid everything out. When I was about to switch on the candles the leopard appeared.

I stopped everything and bowed in respect.

Ingwe: You do not connect with your ancestors when you are on periods. You're still impure.

Me: Ohh apologies I didn't know

Ingwe: It's okay. I'm appearing because you're desperate and I'll tell you what you looking for.

I nod.

Ingwe: They're in Zambia, Bancroft.

Me: Okay okay can't I atleast try to go there?

Ingwe: I give you a hand and you want a whole arm.

Me: Please, Please I beg you. Sandro will take long to come. I don't know what's happening to Dimpho as we speak.

Ingwe: The answer is No

It disappeared. I sigh in frustration why can't I cross abroad though?

I don't know how I can get hold of Dwayne. I dialed my brother maybe he might come with better suggestions.

Sandro: I'm booking a flight Hermanita

I sigh heavily.

Me: Hah! That's a relief but you'll take long to land. We need to save the girl as in immediately. It beats me heavy that I'm not allowed to fly out of SA.

Sandro: You know where they are?

Me: I just got told they're in Zambia, Bancroft.

Sandro: Okay okay.

Me: What can we do?

Sandro: I think I have an idea how I can bring Dimpor back.

Me: Okay that's good, that's good. But what about Mamá? Quedará atrapada en medio de eso? (Will she get caught in the middle of that?)

Sandro: A-ah, I am actually thinking she should take this flight by herself. I'll stay behind.

Me: Won't that delay the process?

Sandro: Trust me Ashanti I'll handle this well, remember I've got Letty to not disappoint... cause she's gonna kill me if I don't come back with her friend.

I sigh heavily.

Me: Okay I trust you and I'm counting on you.

Sandro: Good thing you do.

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DIMAKATSO

Dior: Mommy what are you doing?

Me: Sssh I also have no idea but I'm doing it. I need you to take your sister and stay in one place, okay?

Dior: Okay but where?

Me: In Cassie's room we'll meet there okay?

He nods. I hand him the keys.

Me: Lock and don't open for anyone except for me okay? Don't even open for your father.

Dior: Why?

Me: Don't ask me why just do as I say.

Dior: Okay Mommy

He ran out almost tripping.

Me: Careful.

I watch him disappear and exhale.

Okay so I have a task and for weird reasons I'm doing it cause I also wanna get out of here. I've been fighting to leave this place but gave up at number of times being caught. When Dimpho's ancestors reached out to me and told me what to do, I vouched for it and trusted their plan.

I got door to door at the rooms where these little kids were kept in before they died and opened a container with a red-powdered herb poured it in my hand and blew it around the rooms, sprinkling a liquid bottle of a mixed herb.

Me: Arise! (blows powder) Arise! (blows powder) Arise!

I went to each and every rooms were they were sexualized by this sick man and did as I was instructed.

Not forgetting every passages I sprinkled the mixed liquid only. I blew the powder only in the rooms. When I got done I went outside where they've been buried... I poured the powder on all the spots where I estimate they've been buried till the powder got finished.

I threw the container down and dusted my hands. I looked back.

Me: Dimpho!

I ran back in the house and looked for Dimpho. She was lying there.

Me: Oh God!

I half screamed while covering my mouth.

Motlatsi: "Nnyoh God" eng? "Nnyoh God" eng?? Wabona seo ose etseng ho morali waka? Ke phoso ya hau! (See what you did to my daughter? It's your fault!)

I lift my hand in annoyance

Me: Motlatsi Motlatsi somblief toe

Advertisement

ntlohele he (leave me alone.)

I walked slowly to her daughter, my body cringed as I got to view her more closely and placed my hands over my face.

Me: Oh no.

Elveous was also lying not far from her but I didn't care about him.

Motlatsi: Pray I don't unleash from these ropes cause ketlau nyisa moertu! for what you did.

Me: Go to hell! Just go to hell Motlatsi. Your day is coming and it's not far.

I knelt next to Dimpho and shook her.

Me: Dimpho? Dimpho? Dimpho?

She was non-responsive. I felt her pulse.

Me: Dimpho?

Motlatsi: You'll follow next

Me: Shut up!!!

I looked around and dress her back in her underwear and shorts. I tried to untie her but noticed she was cuffed.

Me: Uhm Uhm Uhm...

I glanced at Elveous searched his pockets and came with a key. I uncuffed Dimpho and carried her.

Motlatsi: Aow nna hleng? (What about me?)

Me: Fuck you.

I got out with Dimpho carrying her in bridal style. I ran to another private room, where I had prepared just a basin with water and laid her on a mattress.

I began crying while I placed a wet cloth on her face.

Me: Come on Dimples, come on. Come back to me... I can't lose you. We need to get out of here.

"Mmm"

She mutters. I jumped and smiled at her, while holding her cheeks.

Me: You're back! You're back!

Dimpho: (low tone) Ke tlwa bohloko (I feel pain)

Me: It's gonna be okay sis, you gonna be alright. You gonna heal. I'll leave you here to heal on yourself.

Dimpho: M-mmh!

She gripped on my arm tightly shaking her head with tears.

Dimpho: Please se ke wa tsamaya (don't leave)

My tears trickled down.

Me: But I have to, you'll be safe trust me. Nothing's gonna happen to you. I promised that I'll look out for you. I won't let anything happen to you.

I rubbed her hand then removed it and got up leaving her.

Dimpho: Maatso!

I got to the door and looked at her curving my lips sadly and locked her in.

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MOTLATSI

I kept fumbling my hands on the rope not giving up till I felt the rope getting loose. I aghast while smiling and dilating my eyes in excitement. I really didn't expect that to happen I thought it was gonna be a struggle. I shook my hands till the rope fell off. I then flexed my hands and rubbed my wrists.

I bent and untied my legs. I stood up breathing heavily. I went to search Elveous and came out with a gun. I'm gonna show Dimakatso who I am made of. Then I get my daughter and myself out of this place.

Me: Dimakatso!! U hokae? Ke batla moradi waka feela. (Where are you? I just want my daughter.)

I tiptoed on the passage while pointing out with the gun. I expected her appearance so that I'll shoot her right on the spot.

Me: Dimakatso!

I heard running footsteps on another direction. I swiftly turned pointing the other side, I changed and slowly walked to that direction. The footsteps ran to the first direction. I turned.

Me: Dimakatso don't make a fool of me okay? There's no time for games come out now!

I walked to the end of the passage and heard giggles. I fired 2 shots.

Me: HEY!!!

The giggles went on and on. The door of a certain room opened itself.

Me: Dimakatso?

I walked to the room and stood at the doorway. I got pushed inside, my gun slides to the other end and the door instantly shut itself. I screamed and got up, I was locked in.

I banged the door.

Me: Hey!!! Open the door. Bula!!!

I roughly pulled the door handle and banged the door.

Me: Hey!!!

"♪♪ There is someone walking behind you. Turn around and see. There is someone walking behind you.♪♪"

I froze with my heart skipping. I was literally shaking... I turned to a small girl gunpointing me.

I raise my hands and tried to reach for the gun.

Me: Hey Hey sweetheart, please put that down it's not good.

Her: Really?

Me: Ye- Yes. Hand it over.

She tossed it and looked at it smiling.

Me: Give it here.

She extended her hand and gave me. When I touched it she shot my hand.

Me: Aaaahhhhhh!!!! (Screaming)

I bent down crying and groaning in pain while holding my bleeding hand. She giggles.

Her: You must think that I'm stupid. You want the gun so that you can shoot me right? Shame I can't die twice.

Me: Huh??

She giggles again

Her: You can't recognize me?

Me: No

She got closer and adjusted her collar, showing me her neck. I realized the "S" tattoo we made for the kids we were gonna traffick.

I shook my head.

Me: I don't remember you.

Her: Should I jog your memory?

I looked up at her feeling terrified. She made an mischievous smile. In a blink of an eye many kids appeared in the room. Filling it with a bus behind them.

I covered my ear with my other fine hand.

Me: No! No! Nooo!

Her: You now remember us?

Ofcourse I do, the kids we took to camp and didn't bring them back.

Her: We wanna play.

They all walked closer. I shook my head fastly.

Me: No stop. What are you doing?

They grabbed me by my braids and float around with me high on the ceiling, I screamed my lungs out. Then they would drop

me down on the floor and pick me up again, throwing me against the wall. With shots following after me but they weren't hitting me. Another child set my braids alight with fire.

Me: (screaming) Tjoooomama weeeh!!!

Her: We're having fun and playing with you since you short-lived our childhood.

I continued screaming staring at the fire that was getting closer to my real hair & skulp.

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DIMPHO

I was lying there shivering from the coldness. I heard something growling I got scared and sat up straight breathing heavily seeing the leopard in front of me. I crawled back and it followed me till I got backed by the wall. I close my eyes praying it doesn't hurt me.

Surprisingly it licked my feet, legs and my whole body. The pain, burns, itchiness and blisters were amazingly going away. It stopped and looked at me.

I checked out my arms and my skin was getting back to be clear. I touched myself all over and smiled laughing. When I looked back at it, it was already gone.

Me: Oh my God.

I touched my face it was really clear. I jumped up and my strength was back too.

Me: Dimakatso!!! Wow.

Can't believe this is really happening.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 51

DIMPHO

When I ran to the door I realized that it was locked. I hit it.

Me: Dimakatso! Dimakatso I'm all well now, open. Dimakatso!

I banged and banged. God we need to escape this place. I'm so grateful the leopard healed me, this seems so unbelievable.

I looked at the door about to bang once more but.. it got open.

Me: Dima...

She got in and looked at me in astonishment, seeing that all my blisters were gone and I have my strength back.

Dimakatso: Wow

Me: Unbelievable right?

Dimakatso: Yeah I'm glad you're fine

We looked at each other.

Dimakatso: We need to go, we need to get out of here.

Me: Where are they?

Dimakatso: They're the least of our problems now. What we should be focusing on is escaping.

I nod.

Me: Okay Okay... Are they your kids?

She was carrying a baby girl on her back and holding a baby boy on her hand.

Dimakatso: Yes, on my back is Cassie and this is my son Dior.

I smiled at them

Me: They're so beautiful. Nice to meet them.

Dimakatso: Now I'll need your help. I need you to carry Dior and we run without looking back. I collected every keys we'll need to access ourselves out.

Me: Okay

I took Dior and carried him behind my back.

Dimakatso: Let's go.

We ran out of the room and we were trying to find our way to the exit.

We heard a sharp loud cry and we stopped. I looked at Maatso.

Me: Isn't that..?

Dimakatso: Let's go

She ran and I stood looking back.

Dimakatso: Go!

She dragged my arm and we continued running when we'd get blocked, she'd unlock the doors and we pass through.

I screamed seeing a trailer running by itself and a boy appearing who wore a cap with his ears cut out and they were still bleeding.

I fell with Dior down. Maatso looked at us.

Me: Where do they come from?

I said pointing the kids, some were passing through the wall it was a whole lot of circus.

Dimakatso: Don't mind them Dimpho, out of everything just let them be. Now get up and let's go.

She helped me up and placed Dior on my back. We continued running.

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ELVEOUS

I opened my eyes to a girl standing in front of me. She was half-naked, smiling at me. I quickly sat up and moved back.

Me: You're dead. You're dead. You're dead.

Her: Well I came to visit you. Missed me?

Me: Get away from me! Go to where you belong.

She chuckles. I pat my hip searching for my gun but it wasn't with me.

Her: How can I go to where I belong when you know where my soul is wandering?

I looked around for Mo and Dimples

Me: Damn!

I cuss under my breath realizing they were gone. She got more closer.

Her: You hid my body, I'm not resting, my family is still in misery. You then tell me to go where I belong? I belong right here with you.

She got more closer, my heart beat faster.

Me: Go away.

Her: Until you free us from where you hid us, we'll go away. But for now we all belong here with you.

I took out a cross in my pocket and flash it in front of her.

Me: Go away Satan! Go away!

She looked at me and chuckled.

Her: I'm not a demon that's not gonna harm me. You know what I am? An angry spirit, don't ever come across it.

With just a look she sent me flying across the room. I groaned, she catwalked to me.

Her: Should I... call my mates maybe? cause this is boring with just me and you.

I grunt while dragging myself on the floor. I got up balancing myself on a chair, then I threw it at her when I stood on my feet.

She disappeared into thin air.

I turned in circles looking for her

Me: Where are you? Show yourself bitch!

Her: Right here daffy

My hand was suddenly placed on her breast as she appears. And I jumped moving back shaking my hand till I felt a rope groping tight on my neck. They pulled me by it till I fell down, crying for help.

School kids appeared singing and the other one continued rotating me around with the rope on my neck. I gasp out of breath and held tightly to the rope.

Me: Help! Heeeelp!!!

They took off my trousers and wore it on my head then suffocated me with it. They stopped strangling me and took off my boxers.

Me: Hey!!! Heyy!! What are doing??

" We gonna braai it "

I screamed kicking cause they held me on lock down. I felt one of them holding my manhood and dipping it in steaming hot water.

Me: (groaning) Ahhhhhh!

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MOTLATSI

They finally let me go when they've tortured me enough. I was unrecognisable, if they needed actors for horror movies.. ones that creep the hell out of people I'd be a perfect role. My hair was all burnt, but they killed the fire before it could reach my skull. Now I had those hair holes (amatshanda 😊) on me.

After forever, I got up and limped out of the room running out. Just running for my life. I kept hearing their giggles echoing wherever I go.

I bumped to Elveous also running for his life while screaming and holding his private part, he was dressed but without his pants on he was only with his boxers.

Me: What happened to you?

He looks at me and my hair

Elveous: As if you care, as if you fucken care!

He limps and runs away. I hold him back.

Me: What? Where you going?

Elveous: I'm going to save my family from this destruction okay? They out for blood and I'm not gonna allow for them to have my family's blood.

Me: What about me and Dimpho?

He looks at me

Elveous: You no longer my responsibility. So you're on your own.

He was about to go and I hold him back again.

Me: Nooo! You brought us here so we are your responsibility. You better make sure that we're safe too.

Elveous: I don't give a damn!

He says yanking his arm off causing me to fall.

Elveous: Right now I care about those who care about me and surviving is the only thing on my mind... How about you call your husband so that he can save you? Good luck on that.

He continued running away.

Me: Elveous, Elveous.

He ignored me. Just when I slouch to cover my face, a knife passes through me and lands on the wall next to me like a dashboard. More kept coming and coming I begin running more further. This was a nightmare I wish I wasn't in.

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DIMPHO

We were outside and we were not prepared for what we saw.

We saw many open holes around the yard as if they were preparing graves for people and more kids were crowding this place. Cassie was even starting to panick she cried. I could feel Dior was scared too on my back. These kids were blocking our way to the exit.

Dimakatso: Okay let's take the other way.

Me: Are you sure? I mean this seems like the only way out.

Dimakatso: Have faith come.

We ran to the other side. Cassie couldn't stop crying.

Dimakatso: Shhh my baby. They're just kids like you, they not gonna hurt you. They're just playing.

Dior: But why are there too many of them? Are they even real humans.

Dimakatso: Yes honey

Dior: They're so creepy.

" You not leaving with my kids "

We bricked and moved back seeing Elveous appearing in front of us.

Dimakatso: Take a look around you, forget it if you think I'm gonna leave my kids with you in such situation.

Elveous: I'm not gonna repeat myself Dimz.

Dimakatso: Well then challenge me

He looks at us.

Me: You better think twice before doing something stupid. Don't forget you're not everyone's favourite at the moment and you're by yourself.

Elveous: Ha! Look who's talking. Maybe I should've eaten that coochie maybe you wouldn't be so brave.

Dimakatso: Mind the language around kids and move out of our way.

He remained still

Elveous: Under one condition. You take Dior and leave Cassie with me.

Dimakatso: Over my dead body!

He jumped for Dimakatso and tried to snatch the baby away, they were still fighting over the baby.

Me: Hey!!

I placed Dior down and ran to push him off Maatso. But he pushed me down and punched Maatso, she lost balance and the baby slip off her hands. Elveous caught Cassie.

He ran away with her but on the way he got hit by a spade on his head and fell down. We ran to fetch Cassie, we watched the kids dragging his body.

Me: Dior come

He ran to me and I held his hand. I looked at Dimakatso

Me: Where do we go from here?

" My baby thank God you're here and safe "

I shrunk my eyes taking a good look at the woman.

Her: It's me Motlatsi your Mom. Let's go my baby let's get out of here.

She looked different and her face was like it was applied with charcoal

Advertisement

I don't even wanna get to her hair. I wanted to ask what happened but I stopped myself.

Motlatsi: My good Lord. Look at your face it's clear, what healed your Allergy?

I remained silent. I didn't know what to say to her.

Motlatsi: Come baby let's go

She holds and runs with me but I pulled back

Me: No! Don't think I'll easily forgive you like that. I almost got raped in front of you and because of you! So no, things won't be as smooth as they were between you and me before.

Motlatsi: I'm sorry sweetheart

Me: Will your sorry help with the trauma I went through? No. You go on your own way and I'll go with mine.

I looked at Maatso

Me: Let's go Maatso.

We continued running leaving her behind.

"Dimphooooo!"

I heard her screaming I saw the kids jumping on her and beating her. They then threw her in one of the holes together with Elveous.

Me: Ohh no!

Dimakatso: Dimpho it's now or never sesi let's run for our lives.

I wished to go back.

Me: (crying) Mama!!!

Dior: Mommy look!

He pointed and we saw a leopard approaching us with rage. It roared and began chasing us. We ran for our lives as far as our feet could take us.

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SANDRO

Me: Look I can see two girls over there! Don't you think the one we should save could be one of them?

Ricardo: And they're running for their lives... seems like they come from the direction of that mansion.

Me: Yeah maybe they've escaped and Dimpour could be the other girl. Let's land down.

Ricardo: Okay.

We came with an helicopter, I specially organized it to rescue in time.

We were going down as they were now slowing their pace. I stood on the door bringing my microphone closer.

Me: (yelling) Hey Ladies!! We're looking for Dimpour, we're sent by Ashanti. We're here to save you!

She jumped up and down waving her hands. We land down reaching closer to them.

Dimpho: Thank you so much sir, please save my friend too. We live in the same neighbourhood.

Me: It's fine, it's fine come ladies.

I brought her in my arms and helped her get in the helicopter, I carried the kids and the second lady as well. I jumped in last.

Me: Let's go!

The helicopter took off again. The mansion exploded burning the whole of the neighbourhood. I fell back being blown by that gust of wind. It also blew the helicopter to fly higher in speed.

Me: Jesus Christ!

Ricardo: We were close really close

Me: Thank God we came right in time.

The girls looked emotional

Girl: Thank you, thank you so much sir for saving our lives.

Dimpho: We really appreciate it, it means a lot to us. May God bless you.

Me: It's alright girls, you welcome. You now going home.

They smiled.

Them: We going home.

I smiled and texted my woman.

" Looks like someone owes me 😊 "

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ASHANTI

The cops paid us a visit along with the detective. I was at Sihle's place.

Sihle: Make yourselves comfortable gentlemen.

Detective: No we're fine this won't take long.

Sihle: Okay.

Detective: Mr Malahle we're sorry to bring you these so-not-good news. We've been trying everything that we could to find

your daughter but we aren't getting any leads. This Elveous is a ghost, his deeds are hard to trace. But we'll continue searching till we get to something. Let's remain hopeful.

It's something that I had expected from them. If it wasn't for my ancestor then I don't know.

Sihle sighs heavily.

Sihle: Okay sir, thank you

Detective: Anything you'll need from us?

He was about to answer when my phone rang.

Me: Excuse me, I have to take this it's Sandro.

Sihle: Sandro??

He got up and the cops paid close attention.

Me: Hello

Sandro: Sister, can you believe it?

I held my neck with my heart beating in great suspense.

Me: Believe what?

Sandro: Who would've thought? From the most notorious druglord to a superhero. Shouldn't I be an agent or something?

I gasp and chuckle with a huge smile.

Me: Omg! Come with it, is it what I think it is???

Sandro: Yeah I got Dimpour with me. She's coming back home.

I screamed hysterically jumping up and down and around the house. They all looked at me in curiosity.

Sihle: What's he saying?

I continued screaming in excitement and laughed.

Me: He got your daughter. Dimpho is coming back!

Sihle: Ohhhhh! Thank you Lord. Thank you Mankabane amahle, ohh, ohh.

He was too emotional I also shed tears. The cops were left stunned by this yet relieved.

I sniffed.

Me: (tearing) Thank you Hermano. I really don't know how to thank you. You're the best brother who's changed his life for the better. I swear you got all my love and you deserve honour.

Sandro: I appreciate those heartwarming words sis. We almost arrived late to an explosion.

Me: But thank God that didn't happen. You bringing the girl home.

Sihle was speaking.

Me: Her father wants to speak to her.

Sandro: Tell him to wait, there's even something better in store.

We heard the sound of an helicopter.

Me: What! What! Is that you???

Sandro: Yeah.

Me: Oh my word you full of surprises Alessandro, damn!

Cop: What's that??

I hang up and looked at them.

Me: He says he has a surprise for you. Let's make it out.

I said to Sihle. We all got out.

The helicopter was flying around our area, but it wasn't gonna land cause it's a residential area not an open space.

" Daddy, Ashanti it's me Dimpho. I'm back! You don't have to worry, you don't have to cry no more I'm in one piece. I love you! "

We heard her speaking on the microphone. Oh my God the way Sihle cried while facing up, this was a priceless moment that deserved to be captured. The whole community was out making the streets full watching this.

" Hi Mama I'm also coming back. I wasn't dead all this time, I was alive and surviving all these 11 years. Lefa had nothing to do with my disappearance let's not fail him as a community. It's me Dimakatso bahlali! We'll meet soon."

We saw another woman falling down and crying her lungs out as she held her chest.

Woman: Ngwanaka! Ohh ngwanaka! Ohh Modimo all these time you heard my cries. You are truly a living God of miracles.

I looked at Sihle who's eyes were popped out.

Me: You alright?

Sihle: Dimakatso... My son...

Me: What?

He looks at me

Sihle: He'll be free. Lifa is in prison he was accused of raping and being involved in Dimakatso's disappearance.

Me: Woah woah woah, the ancestors did mention something like that - of their grandson being in prison. So they went extra miles for him to be set free? Like that's so wow, hebanna!

He grabbed me tightly and hugged me.

Sihle: Thank you so much Ashanti. You are a true blessing to this family. I'll definitely show tremendous gratitude to you I won't lie.

Me: No you don't have to we're blood I had to do what I had to.

Sihle: Nonetheless I'm gonna extend my gratitude yhu, you played a major role.

I chuckled.

Me: Now let's go get your daughter. Tjerr your son is gonna come out a stinking rich man... They'll pay him for serving a crime he didn't commit for all these years!

Sihle: Yho! I can't believe this is happening.

I smiled at him then looked back at the woman who was crying.

Me: Yiza Mama, yiza. Come get a lift and go meet your daughter.

Woman: Wooo! Thank you so much Sisi.

She was still not getting used to it. We all got in the car and drove to go meet them. I looked at the rear-view and saw the

Ingwe smiling, I send a smile too. Task done! We can say the storm is over, for now. I'm so in delight to be introduced to my roots never knew such magnificent things would happen in my life.

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 52

[4 YEARS LATER]

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ASHANTI

♪♪Ngoba wena awuyaz' oyifunayo (Hee wena awuyaz'
oyifunayo) x2

Ndakunika isandla, ndakunika ingalo, ndakunika amabele

Hee wena awuyaz' oyifunayo ♪♪

It is as how my dream had revealed to me 4 years ago. It's my wedding ceremony we decided for it to be traditional and it's taking place in Centane. A wonderful day it is! Everyone is gathered in numbers and there's great singing happening outside. It's bringing all that oomph and va-va-voom in my wedding. I am really happy.

I looked at myself in the mirror smiling, it's like I'm staring at a completely different person. I was so dolled up and looked good in my mustard traditional dress, which hugged my body in place

and exposed my lil cleavage. My father in-law made me a nice beaded necklace before he passed on and the other one covered my face. He said he'll keep it for this special occasion.

Mavuyi: Look at our bride!

I turned smiling at them

Mom: Bebita! Ohh te ves tan hermosa (you look so beautiful)

Me: Thank you Mamá my makeup artists did a wonderful job I must say. (Sighs) I can't believe this is really happening.

Mavuyi: It is my baby silapha njena sizobhiyoza kunye nawe (we're here to celebrate with you)

I nod with a smile.

Me: Ewe neh? You also don't look bad yourselves. You're both slaying with your Xhosa attires. And Mamá... is this your wedding or mine? Cause hey!

We giggled.

Mavuyi: Shi I told her she looks more good in the traditional attire. You could've seen her singing.

Me: Really?? Mamá!

We laughed.

Mom: I have to adapt to the culture since it's part of your life now.

I smiled.

Me: Thank you. I appreciate both of your support. Thank you for being there for me, for your advices, for being my role models, for teaching me many things and shaping me to the woman I am today.

I walked closer to them and held their hands.

Me: Many are still crying for losing their mothers. Yet here I am, blessed with two I am really grateful. Grateful you were able to work with each other without any fights. I hope you are proud that I'm growing to be a wife and a...

I touched my bump

Me: A mother. Hope you won't get tired when you guide me in the paths of motherhood.

They laughed.

Mavuyi: We can never get tired of you or our grandkids for that matter

Mom: Never!

Me: I want both of you to walk me to my groom.

Mom: Aah mi deseo se está cumpliendo (my wish is happening)

Me: It is Mamá

" Mama! Mama! U beautiful! "

She ran to me I catch her while jumping and carried her then kissed her.

Me: Heee beautiful? You beautiful nawe njee.

Itha: Enkosi Mama. Dad is waiting for you, they need to see how gojas you are.

We all laughed.

Me: Okay okay Itha. They're all gonna see how gorgeous Mommy is

That's my daughter for you. Her name is Ithalethu meaning "Our Light." She's 3 years old and she's an amazing daughter I have. I don't know whether her father couldn't believe that we were together or what lol cause he told me straight out that he was gonna trap me with Itha. He impregnated me few months after dating. 2 years later he asked to marry me, he then engaged me and had my Lobola handled. But then we couldn't continue with the wedding cause his father was sick in a bad

way then he died. He gave us his blessings before he passed on and got to hold his granddaughter. He regarded Itha as his very first grandchild. He also told me about the son I'm gonna bring after her, which happens year after his funeral I discovered that I'm pregnant again. We don't know the gender yet cause we want it to be a surprise for us.

Mavuyi: I think it's time to go. Itha come baby.

Me: Iya ku Makhulu (Go to granny)

She got down and kissed my belly before she walked to Mavuyi.

Me: Who taught you that?

Itha: Dad said I should do that when he's not around.

Me: Hayibo!

We all giggled.

Mom: Aaah that's so cute, kids are really growing you know.

She wheeled herself closer to me and brushed my belly.

Mom: No está la bebé sofocada? (Isn't the baby suffocated?)

I held my tummy.

Me: No, their granny made sure the dress fits me well. It may look like it's holding me tight but it's comfortable.

Mavuyi: Hope you're not lying

Me: I am serious don't worry

Itha: Mama asambe maani! (Let's go!)

She was impatient.

Mavuyi: Well then start for us young lady.

Mom: Are you ready?

I nodded with a smile.

Me: Yes I am.

We were preparing to go out as my daughter started the journey for us.

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LIMILE

I was standing there nervously.

I can't believe this was happening, it feels like a dream. Just this time I wasn't her favourite person and she was in a relationship

at the time with someone else. While I fell hard for her, as hard as it was for me but I had to hold my horses back and wait for some miracle to happen. And before you know it, things just magically came together. We fell in love, she bore me a baby girl and made me a proud father. Now I'm making her a part of me by giving her my surname, she'll now become Mrs Mhlahlo.

How I wish Dad was still alive to witness this beautiful day. But he had already blessed our union before left us.

When my angel appeared everyone stood up and divided themselves while singing.

♪♪ Mama ka Ncumo, uyeyee! ii-hi-iiih (Sivulele singene) x2

Iyho sangena sangena (sangena, sangena)

Iyho sangena phakathi (sangena,sangena) x2 ♪♪

[* More Ululations *]

As my wife appears and walks in with the poet reciting & praising her while walking in front of her.

I looked at her, omg what a goddess! She brightened this whole place, her melanin skin complementing very well with the dress she wore, her smile, wow!

Yes she had makeup on, but her raw, african, natural beauty displayed brighter than anything I've seen.

Pity my daughter couldn't steal more of her momma's look but took mine instead.

Man seeing your woman whom you gonna spend the rest of your life with, that beautiful. Man you can't just hold back the tears. I wiped my tears as I gazed at her with all smiles.

Mhise: Good thing you're crying rather than not crying.

My twin sister was besides me.

I chuckled while wiping my tears. Both of her mothers hand her over and kissed her on the cheek. Itha was sitting on my Mom's lap who couldn't stop ululating proudly. My siblings were also here, even Thuli.

We held hands as soon as we met. I couldn't remove my eyes from her. We declared our love in front of the audience. Then it was the vow proceedings.

Pastor: Ingabe uyamthatha uNcumolwam abengu nkosikazi wakho? (Do you take Ncumolwam to be your lawfully wedded wife?)

Me: I do mhlekazi

They began ululating. I looked at her, we couldn't stop smiling at each other.

Pastor: Ncumolwam ingabe uyamthatha uLimile abengu mnyeni wakho? (Do you take Limile to be your lawfully wedded husband.)

Ashanti: Ewe ndiyamthatha (I do)

He raised his hands high

Pastor: Hayike ndinazisa njengo Mkhwenyana no Mtshakazi. Ncamisa iNkosikazi yakho ndoda. (I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss your bride)

Me: Ibisi ngathi awusatsho mhlekazi (I thought you wouldn't say)

They all laughed. I carefully pulled her waist and we kissed. While more cheers and ululations came.

♪♪Sathana udanile, uThixo uvumile

Sitshatisele ke, iyho namhlanje x2

Halala, Halala. Halala, Halala

Nguwo ke umtshato, iyho namhlanje x2 ♪♪

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DIMAKATSO

I took a deep breathe and looked at them.

Me: Good afternoon everyone. Let me take this opportunity to greet and thank the principal, teachers, learners, cleaning staffs and the rest of the SGB for gathering themselves today and prepare to listen to what I bring to you.

I exhale.

Me: My name is Dimakatso Lebuso. I am 21 years old, living in Soweto. I work at Siyavikela Agency I work as a call assistant. Alongside with me I have my fellow partners Chad, David & Ricardo.

They took a box of pamphlets and started handing them out.

Me: Today I come to you talking about our campaign and innovation. Siyavikela Agency which means "We protect" has been founded 3 years ago. The aim is to protect women & children against violence, danger and possibilities of being traded/trafficked outside the country for sex.

I walked around.

Me: Our target was primarily women and young girls but seeing that our perpetrators also look for boys and men who form part of the LGBTQ community.... We now aim for all gender-based. Our main offices run in the CBD of Johannesburg we are also planning to expand all over the country and worldwide.

I looked at them.

Me: Today I'm coming to warn girls and boys. I also come to warn teachers, parents, cleaners and everyone present with us to stay cautious at all times. These perpetrators are not only strangers but some are amongst us, we live with them, they are close to us. They are our neighbours, they are our relatives and they are also our friends. They are watching us. They look as descent as possible or rather act so

to have us lowering our guards so that they can easily trick us. So I please urge you to always be alert wherever you are and to whomever approaches you.

To parents I warn you to not remove your eyes from your children. When you send them to school always make sure to call the teachers to make sure they've arrived safely and same when they leave school. Check with the transport person, wait for them at the bus stops when they come from school. Tell them to walk in numbers and not alone. If you allow your kids to play outside at home you need to be extra careful with them and always check them every 5 mins cause it's easy for them to be taken on the streets.

I looked down.

Me: I, myself was a victim. I was taken at the age of 6 while playing with my friend at her place. The perpetrator took me away from home for 11 years. He had violated me at a very young age that I fell pregnant with 2 kids and he married me. I was there when he'd violate other kids and killed them. I was sitting there wondering when am I next? To also die just like them. But miraculously I was saved already a damaged person. I believed that I didn't have it in me to continue achieving my dreams... but I got encouraged to go back to school. One of the guys who saved me, started this campaign and hired me to be part of it and today I'm a living testimony to the experience I went through.

I sigh looking at them all.

Me: So I urge you little angels to please watch out for strangers who hand you out items like sweets, lolly's out of the blue don't take them and don't speak to none of them, go the other way instead or run if you have to. Even if it's someone you know don't allow them to take you to places where you don't know without your parent's being there.

Adults and young women, watch out for people who approach you with business, advertising of certain products & policies. Be careful of those who appear as if they need assistance nearby a car. Job interviews and their venues, watch out! If you're unsure about the venue you can send us an email @siyavikela.co.za where we gonna verify the address for you. Social networks! Limit yourselves from posting too much info about yourself, restrict check-ins and agreeing to meet up with strangers online. They have many ways of hiding and you don't know who's watching and who you dealing with. Check the transport you climb in.. women are also made part of the perpetrators and pimps; where there can be only a driver and a woman so that you may think that you're safe to climb in that transport. Yet it's part of their trick. They also place helpless kids on the roads so that you may help and they catch you. Also try not to take the same routes over and over again when coming back from work or school, try a different routes for a

change cause you don't know who's watching and aiming for you.

Me: These days you can no longer differentiate whether someone needs genuine help or not. Cause perpetrators pose as "vulnerable people" to get to their victims. They're no longer approach you with aggravation. So to keep you on the safer side...

I walked and opened a new set of boxes.

Me: Since one of our campaign has good technicians. We came with an innovation to create a bug device where you clip it in your clothing. It has a panick button where you press it when you're in danger and it'll automatically direct us to your location, then we will follow up to rescue. Sometimes when you're in dangerous situations it's difficult to reach for things such as a cellphone and call for help, hence we made things easier with these panick buttons where we'll immediately be alerted with emergency. But those who are able to reach our landline number underneath the pamphlet... please participate and be helpful by calling us when you suspect or witness someone being in danger so that we can help immediately.

I took one of the device.

Me: So this is how you clip it underneath your clothing. Just as easy as that.

I then took it off after showing them.

Me: Right here it's the reg number.

I pointed to show them.

Me: Please, when you get it Sms your reg no to 3882 it's free of charge. We'll call to ask for your personal details as the owner of it, so that once you in danger it'll be easy for us to access you and reach out to your family while placing you on the lookout.

My guys took the boxes and started handing out to everyone.

Me: We advice you to wear it everyday cause you may never know when harms day comes. Teachers also please inform the junior learner's parents about this and help them throughout the process.

Our aim is to keep you safe and protected at all times. Let's be united as a community and make the world a better place for our kids and women. I spread my love to all of you and give thanks for your special time and attention. Stay blessed and have a nice day, thank you!

They all clapped hands for me. I smiled getting off stage. We do this week by week, visiting schools and informing them more about safety measures. I thank Alessandro Quintero for picking me from my worst when I had lost hope of becoming a better person and he made me part of his team. I can say this is what I'm passionate about, helping people to not go through what I've went through, cause some are not lucky enough to come out. I'm doing this to create a safety environment for our daughters and all other women out there.

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ASHANTI

♪♪Ndikujonga ndinovalo

Ngath' uthandolwethu

Balubek' eskhaleni


Ubona mina ngedwa

Boy, you're so focused on my door

And we've been through the moons

So here's the toast to our lives

Kad' uhleli nam sthandwa sami
Kad' ukhula nami ke
And we've been through the moons
So here's the toast to our lives

Thandolwethu lunamandla
Izitha angeke zilunge
Bazamile, banamanga
Izitha angeke zilunge
(Repeat) 

We were dancing with my husband and everyone joined us in

Limile: Be careful Mrs Mhlahlo

I giggled

Me: I am, relax I won't hurt the baby. I'm wearing flats
underneath the dress by the way.

Limile: Mmhmm and ndikuxelele kanene indlela omhle ngayo?
(did I tell you how beautiful you are?)

I shook my head

Me: Kchange uqalise tuu (You didn't begin to tell me)

Limile: Umhle kakhulu Mama wabantwana bam. Ngase ndinga wasusi amehlo 'am kuwe. (You're so beautiful mother of my children. I wish to not remove my eyes off you)

I smile

Me: Ndiyabulela (Thank you.) Nawe you're so handsome.

Limile: Thank you. I love you kakhulu vha.

Me: I love you too.

He kissed me and I enjoyed his lips. Our relationship was too sudden and I wasn't getting used to having him as my boyfriend. But I became patient with him and gave it time to know him much better and that's where I got to fall more and more inlove with him till this very day. He's an amazing guy lol too demanding though, speaks his mind. But I love him he's getting gentle as the day goes. Within these period of years I've learnt every seasons of him. Like when he had lost his father and how he became when all his world crumbled down. But me and Itha were his only light & joy at the moment. Our fights

would also get mean but the ancestors had a way of bringing us back. I really pray this should remain like this forever.

Thozama: My look-alike. Can I have a word with my look-alike?

We giggled

Limile: Ofcourse Ma eish.

He pecked my lips.

Limile: Don't hurt her

Thozama: Eshee mpaa!

We giggled and left.

Ask Limile what attracted him to me and he'll tell you because I look like his Mom. Lol apparently my mother in-law also happens to be a dark beauty, and has a very serious intimidating look like myself. So that's why ke u'Guy is all heads over me.

She took me to her family just to have a chat and introduced me to her friends. From there Sihle's son, Lifa pulled me.

He was released from prison when Dimakatso was known to be alive. They paid him a lot of money that he also gave share to his father and sister.

He's a billionaire, apart from the money he was paid. He was also investing while in prison. Don't ask me how he did it but he says he didn't do anything illegal. Him and his wife have a Law firm. Hee! Look at how life is turning. He also invests an organisation his wife is running for ex-cons who struggle finding themselves back on their feet. Since they can't be hired with their criminal records. He's running and giving them hope.

Lifa: Sisi maan haven't had a chance to thank you for what you did. I really can't get over it even to this day. I'm just glad my name is cleared out and all the torture and pain has been repaid.

I smile.

Me: You don't have to thank me. The ancestors sent me to do my job. They freed you, they fought for you to be here. And you deserve to be here. So let's enjoy ubukho bakho bhuti (your presence)

Lifa: Enkosi, eyy ngeke ndiwalahle amanyange asekhaya ngalento bandenzele yona. (I'll never desert my ancestors for what they did for me)

Me: Ungaze bayo chaphuka gqith (Don't they'll be upset)

We laughed.

Lifa: Lonto umhle umcimbi wakho (Your ceremony is beautiful)

Me: Thank you. I'm glad you came too with your wife.

Lifa: We couldn't miss it for the world.

Me: Where is your father?

Lifa: Upha no Mam' Swazi (He's there with Swazi)

I looked back at them and squint my eyes.

Me: Yima (Wait...) Are they??

Lifa: It could be yho uyamaz uTata

We laughed. He looked at me.

Lifa: After everything settles and when you've given birth. I want us to talk more about you considering to open a gallery for yourself. I believe you're talented and I think it's time you elevate and become your own boss... Just to return the favour.

I gasp in excitement

Me: Lifaa!

Lifa: Don't be too excited or else the water is gonna break.

We burst into laughter. We got disturbed by Mayihlome.

Lifa: We'll talk again Mzala, have a nice one.

He hugged me and left.

Me: You too.

Mayihlome: Can I also get a hug? If it won't bring trouble.

I look at him and smile

Me: Ofcourse not.

We hugged for a little and let go.

Mayihlome: Ohhh! Bambino is getting jealous of this hug.

He says smiling at my tummy. I just made a weak smile.

Mayihlome: Be free around me. It's no hard feelings. Plus our mothers are best friends so we can't act weird around each other we're forced to be cool.

Me: (laughs) Yah.

Mayihlome: This is what I've always wished to see happening in your life. I know I loved you so much God can agree too. I still do, but things sometimes don't go as we plan. As long as you

happy Ashanti it delights my heart more than anything. It may not be with me but if just... someone treats you well and make that brown skin glow more. I'll sleep peaceful at night.

I smiled feeling a bit teary

Mayihlome: I'll start being concerned where you are not treated right. That's where I'll take a step forward. I just want what's best for you that's all.

Me: Yah

Mayihlome: No more Mrs Pendla now my querida is gone, eish!

Me: Noooo don't make me feel bad.

He laughed.

Mayihlome: It's fine. Just happy that you're happy.

Me: Mmmmh

(Silence)

Me: What about your girlfriend?

Mayihlome: Yhoo! I wasn't dating her I was dating her family instead.

We laughed.

Mayihlome: She's gone, good riddance by the way she was toxic yho! But I'm grateful for the daughter she gave me. I'm a single father to Othalive.

Me: A nice name.

Mayihlome: There she is...

He pointed.

Me: Playing with my daughter? Oh my word she's so cute! Like her father.

Mayihlome: Yeah thanks. We're doing good together. Just don't wanna be a burden and enter a relationship with her and she suffers on bad treatments of stepmother's. One thing I can't handle... Be grateful you giving babies to the same man you're marrying.

Me: I am I really am.

Limile walked to us.

Limile: Hlomesta

Mayihlome: Mr Lime

They hit hands and shoulder bumped. I'm stunned, when did they become friends?

Mayihlome: Nice wedding mfethu. You did well I salute you, just treat her right if you want us to get along.

Limile: She's on safe hands.

Mayihlome: Hayike you speaking like a real man.

Congratulations once more guys.

He looks at me.

Mayihlome: It was nice talking to you Ncumo, goodbye.

Me: Goodbye

He left. Lime held my waist while brushing my tummy.

Limile: I think you're starving my baby come let's go eat.

He pulled me but I stopped.

Limile: What? Whaat?

Me: When did you become friends?

Limile: (sarcasm) Hee hayike Mamabo. Let's go eat first I'll tell you

I walked with him to get more food.

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LETTY

I was busy chatting with Dimpho till Sandro pulled me out of nowhere and kissed me.

Me: Heeey! Not in public

He continued pulling me all the way out. Our parents finally know that we seeing each other and they have no problem with it. But that doesn't give him the right to do this in front of all these people.

He lifts me up and carries me while kissing me.

Me: Sandro stop!

Sandro: I love you Letty don't you love me?

Me: I do.

Sandro: Then I'm craving for my woman. Is it fine?

One thing about him is that all these years, he always asks for consent. He never feels entitled to my body just because we're dating.

I nodded with a naughty smile.

Sandro: Gracias! (Thank You!)

We continued kissing each other not giving a damn about the world.

Sandro: Hmm! Couldn't hold myself to those thighs.

I giggled. He kicked the door.

Me: Who's house is this?

Sandro: I have connections.

We resumed kissing as he ran his hand underneath my dress. Our breaths escalated. He moved to kissing my neck and ran his tongue there then nibbled my ear.

Me: Ohhh Sandro.

I felt his erect dick on his pants. He got off my dress and laid me down on the bed as he also stripped himself off.

He climbed on top of me while grabbing my boobs and massaged them while still kissing me. He unhooked my bra, then crossed my legs around his waist.

Sandro: I love you Calmente

He says inbetween the kisseres.

Me: I love you too Sandro

Sandro: Don't think what I'm about to do it's because I don't love you.

Me: Huh? Ahh!

He ripped my underwear off and began rubbing my pussy before I could say anything. He then went to massaging my clit with his thumb.

Me: Ahh that feels so good.

He pulled my lips in his and sucked them dearly. While he works his fingers inside me, he kept on moving them in and out then would go around in circles in my hole. As his other finger remained massaging my clit. That created a great stimulus on my body, I started feeling vibrations and something building up.

He stopped and kissed my tummy before bending down then he ate my coochie... he worked the magic of his tongue in me. I couldn't keep steady as I moved madly in the bed, side to side. He took his bvd's off and rubbed his hard penis. Then continued going down on me again. I pushed his head further deep and he ate and sucked me like he was eating a mango.

Me: Ohw... Ohw yes, ahaa!!

I cummed. He licked me clean and had me tasting my own taste by grabbing my face and kissed me lustfully and a bit roughly. Seconds later I felt him hitting his dick on my entrance.

Me: (whispers) Condoms... Condoms, let us please use condoms.

He pecked my lips

Sandro: Okay

He moved away and went to pick his pants and searched through till he got them. He tear one and rolled it in his dick. He got on top of me placing his hand on my face while gazing deeply at me. Our eyes glowed.

Sandro: I love you

Me: I love you t... (mini screams) aaah!

I close my eyes as I let out a moan while he makes his entrance. He moves in and out slowly as he breathes on top of me. He pulls my face to look at him

Sandro: Look at me... goddamn Calmente this feels so good.

Uhh! I can feel your walls stretching and welcoming me nicely.

He closes his eyes as he squeezed my chin and shoved his tongue in mine as he kept thrusting and it was now changing to pounding me a lil faster. I dung my nails on his back.

Me: Sandrooo! ahh ahh ahh ohhh lord! Pump me like that yeahh!

He grabbed my face and licks my cheek as he gave me hard, hammering strokes.

Sandro: Don't move your eyes from me. No matter... oww fuuuuck! Just always keep them... on me.

I nod out of breath as I watch him zoning in deeply in our sex. It was so good first time seeing him vulnerable in the moment yet he was concentrated on staring at his dick sliding in and out of me.

He placed his fingers in my mouth. I sucked them but seems like just by doing that I just unleashed a beast. He fucked me so hard - without mercy, that even the headboard began to make noise and our bodies were clapping as if they're giving us "a round of applause" .He moved his finger out of my mouth and rubbed my clit gently. Then he raised my legs high up above the

headboard and place them there.

This time I couldn't suppress my scream.

Me: Baaaaaaaaby!!!

Sandro: Ye my love?

Me: Ohhhh fuuuuuuck, you killing me!

Sandro: Shit baby shiiiiit

He looked in my eyes and noticed the tears. He then paced down on chowing me fastly and wiped my tears.

Sandro: Babe? I'm sorry.

Me: (tearing) It's so nice, please don't stop just... make me paralyzed with your dick!

He giggled and picked up his pace again. Slamming his body against mine while groaning.

Me: Ohhhhhw yeaah

He kissed me next to my ear and whispered.

Sandro: I love you.

Me: (crying) I love you too. I love you so much baby!

He continued giving me those nice fucks to our satisfaction till we both climaxed and he went for doggy before we rest. I think Brazzers should hire us, the steam was just moreover the fire.

I woke up to my coochie burning and I felt like peeing. I covered myself with a sheet.

I heard someone shuffling outside the room.

Me: Sandro why didn't you wake m..

Jezzman: Letty

I screamed and ran back to the room and banged it pressing my back against the door. It didn't have a lock, Lord this can't happen again!

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>>> To be continued...

Chapter 53

LETTY

Jezzman: Letty I just wanna talk please open the door. I won't hurt you I swear.

Me: Stay away from me! I've got nothing to say to you.

Jezzman: Letty...

He got closer to the door and I pushed it closed.

Me: No! I swear I'll scream and a mob will come and deal with you.

Jezzman: Just hear me out for a second.

Me: I forgive you if that's what you want to hear. I do! You did what you did and we cannot undo it. Now please go away. Just go away.

It went dead silent. I froze for a sec and looked back.

Me: You..You still there? Hello?

There was no response. I breathe out for relief and close my eyes.

Me: (whispers) I hope he's really gone. Where the hell is Sandro?

I carefully shifted and looked through the door latch. The view was clear, he was really gone.

I quickly run to pick my clothes and dress up. I grab my phone about to call Sandro but just then, the door swings open and I startle dropping the phone down.

Jezman: Please don't call anyone.

Me: What do you want from me? I said I forgive you why don't you leave me alone.

Jezman: You saying that because you wanna get rid of me I couldn't hold back my tears.

Me: What do you expect? After everything you've done to me. You still expect me to stand here and hold a conversation with you?

Tears also formed in his eyes as he blinked.

Jezman: I just need you to look me in the eye and see that this, is coming from the deepest core of my heart. That I am really sorry for what I did to you.

He stepped closer and I moved back

Jezzman: I regret what I did. My conscience has been eating me... I shouldn't have done what I did to you.

He stares at me

Jezzman: I'm not here to hurt you please understand that. I had learnt best not to treat women like that ever again. I'm just here to apologize and... and to attend my brother's wedding.

Me: Your brother?

Jezzman: Yeah. I'm here to make things right with the Mhlahlo family, more especially with my Dad.

I swallowed while fluttering my eyelashes in shock.

Jezzman: Please find it in your heart to forgive me. I know what I did was terrible and impossible to be...

Me: I did tell you that I forgive you. So I'm begging you please to leave.

Jezzman: Are you really meaning it?

Me: Leave

Jezzman: Don't be scare-

He got closer

Me: I said leave!!!

I quickly reach for a brittle object and held it closely to myself. He looks at me as I pant heavily in fear. He nods and slowly walks away.

I sigh and went to pick my phone. I saw Sandro's missed calls. I dialed him and Jezzman jumped back in snatching my phone and he broke it down.

Me: Stop. Stop it!!!

I ran to him but he pushed me back and I fell on the bed. He continued stepping on my phone.

I pat myself around and pressed the bug on me.

Jezzman: I told you not to call anyone! I'm on the run.

He glanced at me.

Jezzman: What are you doing?

He noticed my hand moving from my chest. He came at me and grabbed me. I stabbed his shoulder and ran away.

When I got few distances away. He got hold of me and lifts me up, carrying me back in the house while screaming.

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ASHANTI

I heard faint screams downhill while chatting with Ndileka and Dwayne. They were busy having a smoke, distance away from the wedding.

Ndileka: Shasha, you still here?

I pointed back

Me: Did you hear that?

Ndileka: What?

Me: Hayi maan, you telling me you didn't hear that?

Ndileka: Hayi noba zindlebe zakho (It must be your ears)

Dwayne: Or you probably higher than what we've been smoking.

They giggled. I blinked for a couple of times, no man I'm not imagining things and my heart wouldn't be beating this fast for nothing.

Me: Where is Letty?

Ndileka: She's probably inside

Dwayne: Letty?

Ndileka: My petlas other daughter

Dwayne: Woah woah I just saw them leaving not long ago with Sandro.

Me: Alessandro? But I just s.. you know what just give me a moment.

I hold my dress up and walked faster to where I heard the sound coming.

Ndileka: Uyaphi!!!!? Umithi (Where are you going!!!!? You're pregnant) it's not safe for you to go there.

Me: I'll be back!!

I walked carefully down the hill. My gut feeling is telling me I should follow up to that scream.

" Mama! Mama! "

I looked back and my daughter was following me.

Me: Itha go back!

Itha: But uyaphi Mama uyaphi? (Where are you going?)

Me: I'm fetching a friend please go back mntanam nzobuya (I'll be back.)

Itha: But ku jaynjaras (it's dangerous)

Me: Ithalethu! I won't repeat myself ndithe hamba. Go back and join the others I'll be back soon I promise.

She dramatically folds her arms.

Itha: Kodwa Mama!

Me: Hamba, Hamba (Go, go)

I picked the stones and pretended to throw at her.

Itha: Tju! Tju! Hay hay.

She dragged herself while sulking and ran back. I sighed and continued with my journey.

I heard screams on a certain house. I slowly got inside the yard... getting closer I could tell it was Letty's voice.

I slowly got the gun off my garter and kicked the door open while gunpointing.

Me: Leave the child alone or else I'm gonna shoot you.

He turns and gets face to face with me.

Me: Bastard!

I instantly cock my gun seeing it was Jezzman. He raise his hands.

Jezzman: Go ahead and shoot. Let's see how hubby is gonna feel knowing you shot his blood brother.

Me: What???

He giggles

Jezzman: Clearly there's a lot you don't know.

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SANDRO

Just got us a takeaway and drinks from the wedding. If there were restaurants I'd take my babe there.

I called her again it was on voicemail. Ricardo's call came through while I was still at it.

Me: Ricardo?

Ricardo: We just received an emergency at your location. Should we come or you'll handle it?

I stopped walking

Me: Emergency? From who?

Ricardo: Your girlfriend

I dropped my parcels

Me: Letty?

Ricardo: Yah

Me: Uhm don't stress I'll handle it.

Ricardo: You sure?

Me: Yeah thanks for letting me know

I hang up.

Me: Shit!

I jogged straight to the house where I left Letty alone. Why was I so careless though? Just couldn't think that something like this would happen.

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ASHANTI

Me: What do you mean when you say you're my husband's brother?

Jezzman: I mean just that... Your father in-law happened to play sisters. Then the unmarried one, carried me as an outcome of his infidelity. Half-brothers I can say is what we are with Limile,

so that makes you my sister in-law. So whatever it is that you think of doing better quit it.

I kept breathing heavily as this was hard to get in. One of my enemy being my husband's brother?

Jezzman: It's either you shoot now or drop that gun.

Me: Firstly let go of my sister. Why you always after her? What exactly do you want!?

He turns to look at her and snickers

Jezzman: So you're sisters? And you're the one that destroyed my empire?

I smiled

Me: I thought by now you would've known.

He walks around and I followed him with my gun still aimed at him.

Jezzman: Ohh I'm not here to hurt anybody. Just needed to make peace with her, her forgiveness is all I needed. Secondly I'm here for my brother's wedding and I needed to settle things with my father.

Me: Doesn't look like it when I came in here. Letty come.

She ran and stood behind me

Jezzman: Wasn't gonna hurt her I just wanted her to keep it low and not expose me.

Me: So you running away from your sins, hmm?

I shot at him but he ducked. I walked closer to him.

Letty: Ashanti!

She grabbed me tight on my dress.

Me: Do you think I give a damn about you being my brother's husband? Do you think that's gonna stop me from killing you? Well I don't give a shit! You raped my sister almost turned her blind then killed my father. Give me a valid reason why I shouldn't fuck you up.

He raised his hands high

Jezzman: Ashanti I'm a changed man. I'm not that person anymore.

Me: Oh damn you aren't.

Jezzman: Okay! Okay! I don't mind dying. I really don't. Just atleast give me a chance to talk to my father and siblings.

I chuckled

Me: What father are you talking about? You mean the one who passed on?

Jezzman: What... What did you just say?

Me: Your father passed on. He blessed all of his children and grandchildren except for you. You were right where you were you shouldn't have come back!

I felt an excruciating pain arise in my abdomen. I close my eyes and bend for a second.

Jezzman: What no no.. this can't happen no.

He says struggling to breathe and moved back. While my contractions got more intense. I held my hip.

Me: Ahh.

Letty: Sisi are you alright?

She held me. I nod while pressing my lips harder.

Me: Yeah just help me sit

Jezzman: No Dad can't die. Not when we didn't have a chance to make things right. He cannot just die.

The guns slips off my hand and slides on Jezzman's side.

Me: (whimpers) Oooooohh! It's painful... it's yhuuu! Letty I need to get to the hospital now. The baby is on the way.

Letty: Oh God no no. Uhm breathe sisi breathe. Relax and uhm just keep on breathing.

I lay down and took breathing exercises.

Me: Call my husband now

Letty: My pho-

Me: Ina ina (Here!) Just call him and tell him to come, yhoos!!!!

I hand her my phone but Jezzman snatched it.

Jezzman: No one is gonna call anybody.

The pains were unbearable as I cried out.

Letty: We need to call someone! She'll be giving birth soon.

Jezzman: We gonna help her deliver the baby, more or like I'm gonna help her deliver the baby.

I got my head up.

Me: That's not gonna happen you bastard! There's no way I'm gonna let your filthy hands touch me

awww!!!!

Jezzman: Unfortunately it's not up for you to decide. Bring a basin Letty and remember, I have a gun.

He says to Letty who got up. I kept tossing and turning. I ripped the hairpiece off my head and threw it at his face. I tried crawling away but he picked me back.

Me: (crying) Aahhh! Take me to the hospital please.

I suddenly felt like I'm peeing myself

Jezman: Hooray and the water just broke. What's taking this girl long now?

Sandro stormed in. He didn't ask questions he went straight to attack Jezman. They wrestled and the gun fell off whilst they continued bickering.

Me: Letty!!! My baby is... ohhhh my God!!!

I lay down as I held my tummy screaming.

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LIMILE

My phone rang.

Me: Sballi?

Letty: Bhuti please come Ncumo is in labour the baby is gonna come and... your brother is attacking us.

I stood up and got outside.

Me: Whaaat? Niphi? (Where are you?)

Letty: Ezantsi ngase- (Down the-)

The phone got cut.

Me: Hello? Letty? Letty? Damn!

My mother and mother in-law came running.

Mom: What's going on? Uphi uMakoti? She's pregnant for crying out loud. She can't go missing in our eyes.

Mavuyi: What if she meets with snakes? And Letty naye where is she?

Me: I just-

"Tata! Tata! Tata!"

I ran to meet her halfway and pick her up.

Me: Baby where do you come from?

Itha: Ezantsi, we need to fetch Mommy. She's not safe, she chased me away we need to fetch her.

Mom: Uphi?? (Where is she?)

Itha: I'll show you masambe (let's go)

Me: Okay let's go.

We all went to where she directed us. Mhise also followed us.

Mhise: Yintoni??

Me: We're looking for my wife. She's in labour and there's a possibility that Luniko is back.

Mhise: Whaaat?

Me: Let's go.

We all ran and got to the house Itha showed us and we found Sandro and Letty helping my wife while she was crying in pain.

I ran to them as I hand Itha to my mother in-law.

Me: I'm here baby now, I'm here.

I cupped her face and kissed her.

Ashanti: Wooo! the baby is coming Limile.

She kept pushing. My mom ran and look for a towel in this strange house. I picked her up and ran out with her. Mhise's fiancée had already parked a car next to the house and helped us in. My wife's mother accompanied us and sat at the back, busy helping her daughter with breathing. I sat in the front.

Ashanti: Mavuyi it's getting closer. (grunts) Arrrrrrr!!!!

Kolosa begins driving.

Mavuyi: Ndayibona intloko Nkosi yam. (I can see the head)

Me: What! Kolosa can't you drive a little bit faster?

Mavuyi: No no no you'll have to park somewhere until she delivers.

Kolosa: Are you sure?

Ashanti: Yhooo! Ha.a Mama, ha.ana ndiyafaa! (I'm dying!)

She screams while I quickly call for an ambulance. Kolosa parks aside on a not busy spot.

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JEZZMAN

I ran away as far as I could, so that I couldn't get spotted. I stopped when I reached the far end of the cliff.

I ventilated as I cried and looked all the way down. I gulp as I shook my head.

Me: I have nothing to live for, totally nothing. My life will only get worse if I choose to live. Many are hunting for my blood. I can't do this life thing anymore I'm sorry.

I placed the gun on my head still crying.

" LUNIKO NO DON'T DO IT! "

I looked back and saw Mhise running to me. I faced ahead and shot myself.

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MHISE (LIMISE)

I ran too late as I watch his body falls down the cliff and hits rock bottom down.

Me: (crying) Luniko!!!!

I faced up.

Me: Ndehlulekile ndiye ndohluleka ukubuyisa umntanenu ekhaya. (I failed bringing your son back home.)

I cried and grieved for the moment.

Voice: There was nothing you could've done to prevent this. It was way beyond your control. Forgive yourself.

I looked back at Gogo

Gogo: Iya esbhedlele uyo kwamkela umtshana wakho qha ngoku into funeke uyenze. (Go and welcome your nephew that's all you can do for now.)

I got up wiping my tears and smiled.

Gogo: He'll be the greatest thing he's ever happened to us. Go and meet him.

Me: Okay.

I stood up and walked away.

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ASHANTI

I cried so much when the nurse handed me my son after she got done with everything that needed to be done. All my family members were here smiling with me.

Mavuyi: Yabona kungona uzizele kengoku (You see now, the baby finally looks like you)

We all laughed.

Limile: I feel so sad he took all his mother's looks other than mine.

Me: Andithi I never complained when it was you and Itha so ke please.

We admired him

Me: Just look at him, he's so cute and chubby. Itha will finally have a brother and a friend.

Mavuyi: Kwa indlela aku ncela ngayo (Even with the way he's suckling on you.)

They laughed. Limile hugs me.

Limile: That gives you no choice ke mkami but to eat more than you usually do.

Me: Andithi I already done that when he was still in my tummy.

Bheki: Hay mkhwenyana kuyomela um'phoqe ma kunje (You will have to force her)

Limile: Nzokwenza njalo Tata unga worry (I'll do so don't worry)

Mavuyi: Yes she should stop eating like a rabbit.

Me: Hello! I'm still here guys.

They chuckled.

Sandro: Next time you come here guys it'll be for us. Bebita can't beat us twice.

Bheki: Awh ngeke! (never!)

Mom: What will Bebita's babies call you two huh?

Sandro: Don't be a spoiler Má come on.

They continued with their debates while I still stare at my calm baby still in surprise, while running my finger on his cheek.

Me: What do we name him?

(Silence)

Mhise: Lafikiqhawe

She says coming in. I smiled liking the name.

Mavuyi: Kuthenco

I frown.

Me: What does that even mean?

Mavuyi: It means being still.

I raise my eyes looking at Limile

Me: What do you think honey?

He thought a bit.

Limile: Lujulile

I nod and smiled thoughtful.

" I will reincarnate in a form of a son. He'll be strong with wisdom, gifted both spiritually and intellectually... "

Limile: Wena sthandwa sam what are your thoughts?

I looked at him and smiled.

" Everything he touches will turn into Gold. He'll be the ancestors child, he'll be born a leader. 2 families will be blessed to have him. "

"Name him... "

Me: I name him Onamandla. The Powerful One.

I smile at them and they all seemed tantalized by the name. Judging by their looks and the smiles they kept giving my son.

Limile: We're taking it. Onamandla Mhlahlo.

Mhise: And uzoba namandla nyani lona umntwana (he'll really be powerful)

Mom: Aah congratulations once again to our newly weds.

Them: Congratulations!

The leopard groaned at the door smiling at us, it stood with my great ancestor Sobantu. He took off his hat and bowed at me... those were all his words. I returned the bow back faintly and kissed my son.

The whole family continued crowding me with my son. They still couldn't get over him.

Who would've thought? A mexican lady taking a huge transformation to the person that I am today. All I can say is that I am glad to be exposed in all of that, learning throughout everything about my existence. This feels more like a home, it warms my heart. I now look at my skin and know the story behind it and where I belong. I'm a living descendant of those who couldn't partake the footprints that were laid out for them to compass, before my time. But I'm here as their representative ready to accomplish them. Now these are my roots!

My Name is Ncumolwam Ashanti Mhlahlo this was my story.

>>>> THE END <<<<<

